UNIVERSITÉ DE GENÈVE
FACULTY OF SCIENCE
Section of Biology

ARCHÉOLOGIE AFRICAINE & ANTHROPOLOGIE

POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP (F/M/D)

In the framework of the SNSF funded research program
HUMAN SETTLEMENT AND PALEOENVIRONMENT IN AFRICA - FALEME PROJECT

We offer a

POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP IN ARCHAEOLOGY

form January 1st to May 31st, 2024
(5 months, full time)

Research focus:

The Middle Stone Age lithic industry of Missira III site, Falémé Valley, Senegal.

Conditions of appointment:

- Hold a PhD in archaeology for less than 5 years,
- Experience in Middle Stone Age or Middle Palaeolithic lithic study,
- Excellent teamwork skills,
- Fluency in French and English (oral and written),
- Be willing to reside in Geneva or its vicinity during the contract period.
- Salary scale of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)

Submission requirements:

A cover letter, 2 letters of recommendation, and a detailed curriculum vitae should be sent before September 1st, 2023, to:

Dr Anne Mayor (anne.mayor@unige.ch) and Dr Katja Douze (katja.douze@unige.ch)

Hosting institution:

Laboratory of Archaeology of Africa and Anthropology (ARCAN), Biology Section, Faculty of Sciences, University of Geneva.
https://arcan.unige.ch/

Integration of the Post-Doc Fellowship in the Falémé project:

The research program "Human settlement and palaeoenvironment in Africa - Falémé project" which started in 2012 in eastern Senegal is currently entering its final phase. This project follows an interdisciplinary approach to the cultural and technical dynamics at work over the long term in the Falémé Valley, from the Pleistocene to the recent past. The final phase of the project focuses on four main research lines: 1) the Acheulean in the Falémé Valley; 2) the Middle Stone Age (MSA)/Later Stone Age (LSA) transition and the different LSA facies between the end of the Pleistocene and the Holocene, 3) the technological and cultural variability of iron metallurgy from the 1st millennium BCE to the 1st millennium CE; 4) the peripheral societies of the Falémé during the period of Medieval Empires. The proposed fellowship fits into research focus #2.

The transitional period covering the disappearance of the MSA and the development of microlith industries of the Later Stone Age (LSA) is articulated around a phase of major climatic instability that was most extreme during the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM), during OIS 2, and that seems to have affected human populations in variable ways from one region of Africa to another, depending on the ecological zones. In West African areas now characterised by the Guinean, Sudanese and Sahelian savannahs, the MSA, which is relatively well documented from around 70 ka onwards at several sites in the Ounjougou complex in Mali (Soriano et al. 2010; Tribolo et al. 2015; Chevrier et al. 2018), at Tiémassas, south of Dakar in Senegal (Niang et al. 2018, 2020), as well as at Missira III and Toumboura III in the Falémé Valley (Chevrier et al. 2018; Mayor et al. 2018; Schmid et al. 2021), would persist until the early Holocene at several sites in Senegal, such as at Saxomununya located upstream of the Falémé Valley and dated by a *terminus post quem* around 11.6 ka (Scerri et al. 2016, 2017, 2021).

Parallel to this persistence of the MSA, the LSA, which is documented by very few sites in the savannah zones, appears fully developed only after the LGM, in environmental conditions that become more humid. In the Falémé Valley, we identify the LSA between 16 and 12 ka at Toumboura I (Chevrier et al. 2018), Toumboura I-2017 and Ravin de Sansandé (Ndiaye et al. in Mayor et al. 2019, 2020, 2021; Ndiaye et al. in prep), where it shows typically LSA geometric microlith industries. One goal (Pruvost current PhD topic) is to characterize and understand the question of the "loss of technicality" that is presumed to occur in assemblages chronologically comprised between pre-LGM MSA industries (Schmid et al. 2021), and post-LGM blade-bladelet LSA industries (Ndiaye et al. in prep). A second research goal is to better characterize the MSA sites of the Falémé Valley which, although few in number, could provide better knowledge on whether the MSA shows great stability over time, as in the case of Tiémassas, or whether, conversely, the MSA of the Falémé Valley shows drastic differences from one site to another in the short chronology of OIS3, as in the case of Ounjougou. Understanding these pre-existing dynamics would allow providing new insights on a broader chronological scale, and the possible effect of the LGM on cultural behaviors, as well as the process of development and diversification of the LSA in the region.

Assignments of the Post-Doc Fellow (5 months):

The Post-Doc Fellow will contribute to this major research focus by carrying out the lithic analysis of the Middle Stone Age site of Missira III dating from the OIS3, for which the archaeological field data as well as the chronological and palaeoenvironmental data are already acquired. This study, on a corpus of ca. 1'500 lithics, should report on both technological and typological attributes and combine qualitative and quantitative approaches. The post-doc position also includes the writing of a scientific paper reporting on the results of the study to be published in an international journal in English. The post-doctoral fellow will have to work in close collaboration with the specialists involved in this research focus (lithic analysts, geomorphologists, geochronologists) who will support the Post-Doc Fellow on the contextual background.