

AT A GLANCE

A look back at archaeological missions
Two new projects launched



What happened in CFEE?

LIFE AT THE CFEE – Archaeological Missions

- **Abaya Mission**

The Abaya archaeological mission, led by Vincent Ard and Anne-Lise Goujon and supported by a multidisciplinary Franco-Ethiopian team since 2018, focuses its research on the eastern escarpment of Lake Abaya, at altitudes between 1,500 m and 3,000 m, in the Gedeo region. To date, over a hundred sites featuring phallic and anthropomorphic stelae have been recorded there, making it a site of global significance.

In 2026, the mission took place over two weeks between 16 and 27 February. It had four main objectives: firstly, to continue the archaeological exploration of the periphery of the famous Tuto Fela cairn.



It also involved monitoring the site's condition following the conservation and restoration work carried out since 2024, utilising the photographic archives of Adolphe Jensen's mission (1934–1935) to understand the site's development, and to expand large-scale surveys to search for quarries used for shaping the stelae as part of Ermias Yeshitla Sengi's doctoral thesis (supervised by L. Bruxelles, University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès).

The results obtained are significant, particularly for the site of Tuto Fela, where we now know that the necropolis covers an area of nearly one hectare.

More information here: <https://cfec.hypotheses.org/14672>

- **Konso Mission**

From 19 to 22 March, Constance Perrin-Joly, Director of the CFEE, Manon Routhiau, Scientific Secretary, and interns Elvire Stévenard and Sarah Martin travelled to Konso to visit the archaeological mission led by Anne Delagne and Yonas Beyene, associate researchers at the CFEE. This visit enabled them to get to know the excavation team and discover the reality of the site, its logistics and challenges, as well as the incredible archaeological wealth of the Konso sites.



The Konso Gardula complex occupies a major place in African prehistory: it is home, in particular, to KGA 6-A1, considered the second oldest Acheulean site in Africa. During this visit, CFEE members were also able to take stock of the situation and discuss future prospects for the ethnological museum, which received support from French cooperation in 2008. This visit thus provided an opportunity to address the challenges of research, conservation and knowledge transfer in a region as rich in archaeological heritage as it is in living heritage. Finally, the trip also gave the team the chance to meet the Konso clan chief, Kaala Gezahegne Woldu.

A highly informative mission, which enabled the team to gain a first-hand understanding of the scientific and practical realities on the ground.



- **Sustainable Heritage Mission in Ethiopia**

During a four-day field mission in Lalibela, a training session led by Manon Routhiau, focusing on stratigraphy and its importance in archaeology, was delivered to several members of the SHE project. This session helped to strengthen the participants' skills in reading and interpreting stratigraphic layers, which are essential for understanding the evolution of archaeological sites. At the same time, the mission resulted in a detailed stratigraphic survey of one of the site's trenches, thereby contributing to the ongoing scientific documentation. Finally, this trip also helped lay the groundwork for future work by identifying priorities and consolidating the organisation of the next phases of research.

- **A look back at the Fejej mission in november 2025**

From 1 to 30 November 2025, the Institute of Human Palaeontology (Albert I Foundation, Prince of Monaco), with the support of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the backing of the CFEE, conducted a field mission in the Fejej region, in south-eastern Ethiopia (Dassanetch Woreda).

This campaign brought together eight French researchers and students as well as sixteen local staff members. It enabled the exploration of new areas, the identification of new sites containing Pliocene hominins, the collection of geological samples, and the gathering of several fossils of terrestrial and aquatic species. Deposited at the EHA, these materials will be restored and studied during a forthcoming mission scheduled for May 2026.

New Projects

- **PAGENS Launch – Kick-off Meeting and Training**



The PAGENS project (Pathways, Ages, Generations in the Global North and South), funded by the European Commission under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, was officially launched on 9 and 10 February 2026 in Lomé, Togo. Coordinated by the CFEE, this project brings together over a hundred researchers from nine countries in the North and South.

Over two days of intensive seminars, nearly 30 participants gathered in person, whilst many colleagues followed the discussions online. This event marked the start of an ambitious scientific venture: from 2026 to 2029, PAGENS will explore how age groups and life courses are shaped by social, economic and cultural dynamics in Europe, Africa and South America. The kick-off meeting enabled the partners to meet, exchange ideas and define the scope of this international collaboration.



From 11 to 13 February 2026, a three-day intensive training course on the theme of ‘Science Communication through the Arts’ was held at the Insuco Togo premises. Aimed at all members of the PAGENS project, this hybrid training explored innovative research methods, structured around three themes: “Digital Humanities and Mixed Methods”, “Playful and Creative Methods” and “Visual Methods”.

As part of the first 2.1.1 mobility programme, “Art-Based Approach”, led by the Ethnoart association and the CFEE, this session provided participants with practical tools to enrich their scientific approaches through the lens of art and creativity.

- **Launch of the ANR Afrobee project at the CFEE**



On 26 March 2026, the CFEE hosted the *kick-off meeting* for the AFROBEE project in Addis Ababa, led by Yvonne Treis (LLACAN, CNRS) in collaboration with Yoseph Yonas (Wolkite University). Dedicated to the study of the language of beekeeping and honey hunting in Africa, the project explores the practices, knowledge and terminology related to beekeeping and honey in various African languages.

The event provided an opportunity to present the programme’s scientific objectives and its main French and Ethiopian partners. The programme featured a number of presentations on Ethiopian-French scientific collaborations, research into bees and beekeeping in Ethiopia, as well as initial studies focusing on beekeeping terminology in Kambaata, Hadiyya, Oromo, Baskeet, Bayso and Amharic. Beekeeping practices among the Mursi were also presented by Jean-Baptiste Eczet.

Designed as an opportunity for scientific exchange and socialising, the event also included a lunch, as well as tastings of Kambaata honey and tej. This event marked the official launch of the project for the period 2026–2029.

Arrivals, Departures and Visits

- **Departure of Davide Ciuffini**

At the end of his internship at the CFEE, Davide would like to thank the entire CFEE team for their help, warm welcome and constant support:

“Thanks to this internship, I had the chance to immerse myself fully in the work of a social science research institute in East Africa. I had the opportunity to work on several projects, including organising conferences and seminars on Ethiopian history and heritage, reflecting on current issues and undertaking communication activities. I benefited from a stimulating and enriching environment, and I learnt a great deal from the various tasks entrusted to me. I am going to resume my Master’s degree in International Governance and Diplomacy, specialising in migration policy in Africa and the Middle East, with the aim of writing a Master’s thesis and, eventually, returning to Ethiopia.”

- **Sarah Martin joins the team**

Since the end of February, the CFEE has welcomed a new intern to its team: Sarah Martin, on a six-month end-of-studies placement. She is taking over from Davide Ciuffini, who has moved on to new ventures. After a gap year in journalism, Sarah joined the centre to contribute to communication initiatives, the organisation of scientific events and the promotion of the CFEE’s activities. Warmly welcomed by the whole team, she is enthusiastically discovering her new working environment, as well as Addis Ababa and, more broadly, Ethiopia.



Just one month after her arrival, she has already taken part in a field mission to Konso, where she conducted interviews and worked on communications for the project, with the aim of sharing some highlights soon. A wonderful way to settle into daily life at the CFEE, combining fieldwork, discussions and the centre’s vibrant atmosphere. She looks forward to discussing current projects, upcoming events and ideas to share with the centre’s researchers, partners and friends.

- **Elvire Stévenard and Juliette Christophe**

From 16 February to 27 March, the CFEE hosted two heritage conservation students specialising in Archaeology from the Institut national du patrimoine (INP). Juliette Christophe, for one month, and Elvire Stévenard, for six weeks, contributed in particular to the cataloguing of a large part of the centre’s archives. This work notably enabled the identification of collections relating to the history of the administration of research and archaeological excavations conducted since the 1950s, a task that proves essential for outlining the institution’s development and ensuring the long-term preservation of these documents.



Furthermore, Juliette and Elvire helped proofread manuscripts and took part in projects relating to the conservation and promotion of Ethiopian heritage. Finally, they provided support to the

Ethiopian-French Alliance as part of the renovation of the permanent exhibition galleries at the National Museum of Ethiopia. This enriching experience has enabled them to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges involved in scientific and heritage cooperation between France and Ethiopia.

- **Visit by Somaliland’s Minister of Trade and Tourism, Abdirahman Hassan Nur**

The Minister of Trade and Tourism of Somaliland, Abdirahman Hassan Nur, accompanied by several of his colleagues, was welcomed to the CFEE for a visit focused on heritage issues. Alongside researchers Julien Loiseau and Simon Dorso, the discussions provided an opportunity to present the CFEE’s activities, particularly in the fields of archaeological research and heritage promotion. This meeting served as an opportunity for dialogue on the preservation and promotion of Somaliland’s heritage, as well as prospects for cooperation in these areas.

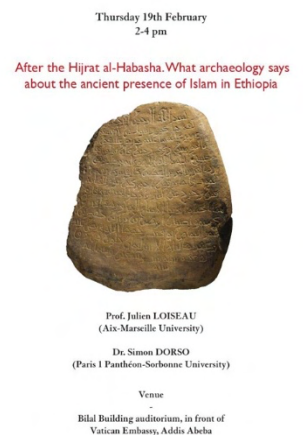


EVENTS & SEMINARS

FEBRUARY

- **Seminar: ‘Islam in Enderta’, Simon Dorso, Desta Haileyesus Gebregzabher and Julien Loiseau**

On Friday 20 February, the CFEE hosted the seminar “Islam in Enderta”, comprising three lectures. Simon Dorso (Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, ERC HornEast project) presented an overview of current knowledge regarding Muslim communities in northern Ethiopia during the Middle Ages. Desta Haileyesus Gebregzabher (Aix-Marseille University, University of Mekelle, ERC HornEast project) presented the initial findings of his doctoral research on the development of a typological chronology of pottery from the Kwiha site, spanning from the Aksumite period to the late Middle Ages. Finally, Julien Loiseau (Aix-Marseille University, ERC HornEast project) presented the results of his comparative research on the Koranic epigraphy of Muslim funerary stelae in Tigray between the 10th and 14th centuries.



- **Seminar: ‘Charles Martel Films Ethiopia – 1909’, Hugues Fontaine**

Following an initial seminar held in October 2025 at the CFEE, the French director and author Hugues Fontaine came to present a selection of film archives from the “Charles Martel Films Ethiopia – 1909” collection by the early 20th-century French director Charles Martel. This screening took place in conjunction with the work of setting Charles Martel’s archives to music, which was being carried out at the same time at the Ethiopian-French Alliance. Restored and preserved by the Centre national du cinéma et de l’Image animée, these exceptional images—among the oldest films shot in Ethiopia—offer a fresh perspective on historical, military and traditional scenes in Abyssinia at the turn of the century, and capture the presence of major figures such as Menelik II. The commented

screening led to discussions with the audience, which helped to shed light on the meaning and context of these images.

- **Seminar: 'Becoming mature: the intersection of age and gender in a pastoral society (Mursi, Ethiopia)', Jean-Baptiste Eczet**

On 5 February 2026, the CFEF hosted a seminar by Jean-Baptiste Eczet (EHESS), devoted to the relationship between age and gender in the Mursi pastoral society in Ethiopia.



Entitled "Becoming mature: the intersection of age and gender in a pastoral society (Mursi, Ethiopia)", this presentation offered a reflection on social and political relations within the pastoral world, focusing in particular on the figures of *the Elder* and the *Mother-in-law*, as well as on the disparities in status between men and women in terms of access to social maturity. Through this case study, the seminar highlighted the complexity of the relationships between gender, the life cycle and social organisation among the Mursi.

PUBLICATIONS & BLOG POSTS

The CFEF recently published a series of blog posts on its Hypothèses blog dedicated to the research of the 2025 grant recipients. These contributions reflect the diversity of the work supported by the centre and provide an overview of the fieldwork, themes and questions explored by its grant recipients.



Below you will find all these posts, listed in order of publication, from the most recent to the oldest:

- Osman Alp Cibikli, *Transformations Beyond Empires: Race, Slavery, and Geopolitics in the Ottoman Red Sea Basin (1839–1885)*

- Yosef Tefera, *Techno-Typological Analysis of Middle Stone Age Lithic Assemblages from the Kibish Formation, Lower Omo Valley, Ethiopia*
- Mengistu Gebremedhin, *When Tears Aren't Dry: Political Disillusionment and Media Avoidance in Post-Conflict Tigray*
- Maxine Huguet, *The Legacy of däqiqä ጃጥifanos in Tigray*
- Daniel Abeya, *Broken Pots, Daily Lives: Uncovering the Medieval Domesticity of Ertu.*
- Mussie Hayelom, *Understanding the Experience and Strategies of Rural-to-Urban Migrants in Mekelle City, Postwar Tigray: An Ethnographic Approach*
- Rania Larifou, *Is the history of the fascist presence in Ethiopia reduced solely to the armed struggle of the arbegnoch? 90 years on, rethinking and rewriting the history of fascist colonialism in Ethiopia*
- Demuma Amdisa, *Beyond Autonomy: How Women Navigate Antenatal Care in Jimma Zone, Ethiopia*
- Addise Daba, *Taphonomic Analysis of Faunal Remains from Lake Beseka, Ethiopia: Implications for Site Formation Processes and Paleoecological Reconstruction*

These posts can be read in full on the CFEE's Hypothèses blog: <https://cfee.hypotheses.org/>

THEY VISITED US *(In alphabetical order)*

Abeba Amare, Assistant Professor, Addis Ababa University

Shiferaw Bekele, historian (Addis Ababa University)

Giuseppe Bettoni, Professor, University of Rome "Unitelma Sapienza"

Simon Dorso, medieval archaeologist (ANR ECOMED project)

Desta Haileyesus, PhD student (Aix-Marseille University)

Tristan de la Haye, **Expertise France project manager in Somaliland**

Mehdi Labzaé, political scientist (CNRS, ISP, University of Paris Nanterre / CFEE)

Julien Loiseau, medieval historian (Aix-Marseille University, IREMAM)

Caterina Scalvedi, historian (Freie Universität Berlin)

Afrobee Team

- **Yvonne Treis**, **Research Fellow in African Linguistics (CNRS, LLACAN)**
- **Yoseph Yonas**, Assistant Professor, sociologist (Wolkite University)

Abaya Team

- **Vincent Ard**, archaeologist (CNRS, TRACES, University of Toulouse – Jean Jaurès)
- **Anne-Lise Goujon**, archaeologist (CFEE / TEMPS laboratory, University of Paris Nanterre)

Konso Team

- **Yonas Beyene**, paleoanthropologist (Ethiopian Heritage Authority / CFEE)
- **Anne Delagnes**, archaeologist (CNRS, University of Bordeaux)
- **Aline Galland**, research engineer (University of Bordeaux)

Minister of Somaliland and his delegation

- **Aidarous Abdi**
- **Yusuf Ahmed Ali**
- **Abdirahman Hassan Nur**, Minister of Tourism and Heritage, Somaliland
- **Ridwaan Sheekh**

Ethiopian National Museum Project

- **Jean-Pierre Avannier**, Cooperation Attaché
- **Abebaw Ayalew**, Director of the EHA
- **Sara Dimaria**, Project Coordinator, (Cultural and Creative Industries), Ethio-French Alliance
- **Alula Pankhurst**, anthropologist
- **Laurent Serrano**, Cooperation and Cultural Action Adviser

What's Up in the Network

Cette section est la vôtre, faites nous parvenir vos actualités !

- **Listen**

The CFEE is delighted to present two podcasts dedicated to projects it supports in Ethiopia, ranging from research into human origins to the preservation of living heritage.

At the dawn of humanity, the first witnesses of Fejej

Supported by the CFEE, the Fejej project is featured in this episode of *L'Entretien archéologique*, broadcast on France Culture on 20 March 2026. Over 28 minutes, the programme looks back at the history of the excavations carried out in this region of southern Ethiopia, one of the oldest sites explored to understand the origins of the human lineage.

The episode features Anna Echassoux (Institute of Human Palaeontology), head of the Origin of Humanity project. It highlights the research relaunched in 2021 at Fejej, as well as recent discoveries of hominin remains dating back between 4 and 4.3 million years, which make this site a key location for studying the early stages of human evolution.

Preserving Lalibela in Times of Crisis

Produced as part of the Sustainable Lalibela project carried out in collaboration with the CFEE and the EHA, this audio documentary was broadcast on 13 March 2026 on RFI as part of the programme **Afrique, mémoires d'un continent**.

Lasting 48 minutes, it features the voices of those who work every day to preserve Lalibela's living heritage: artisans, researchers, heritage professionals and local residents. It includes testimonies from Kidanemariam Woldegiorgis Ayalew, Marie-Laure Derat, Marie Bridonneau, Ambachew Tegegn, Antoine Garric and Sosina Daniel.

Conceived, written and recorded by Yvette Jallade Maestroni, and produced by Samuel Hirsch, this podcast—in Amharic, French and English—explores the challenges of preserving a fragile heritage in a context marked by crises and conflicts.

What's Next



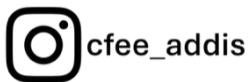
- **IMAF / UMIFRE Africa Guest Researchers Programme**

The CFEE is partnering with other UMIFRE units based in Africa and the IMAF as part of a mobility programme designed to host colleagues from African academic and research institutions at the IMAF (Institut des Mondes Africains). This scheme supports one-month stays in Aubervilliers or Aix-en-Provence, with the aim of facilitating integration into international scientific networks, the development of new collaborations, and dialogue with teams at IMAF and the UMIFREs.

Applications must be jointly submitted by a UMIFRE and a member of the IMAF. They may be submitted at any time, except during the summer period (15 June – 15 September) and the end-of-year holidays (15 December – 15 January), and must be prepared at least three months prior to departure. The UMIFREs cover the cost of the flight and assist with the mobility arrangements, whilst the IMAF contributes towards living expenses up to €2,500 for a one-month stay.

During their stay, visiting researchers are expected to present their work at an IMAF scientific event. Promotion of the partnership with the host UMIFRE is also encouraged upon their return.

Reach Out



For any questions, feedback, article ideas or contributions, please email the secretariat (secretariat@cfee.cnrs.fr), and we will get in touch with you.

Read the previous newsletter on our blog: <https://cfee.hypotheses.org/>