ARCHAEOLOGY IN TIGRAY

CURRENT RESEARCH ON THE LATE ANTIQUE AND MEDIEVAL PERIODS

Archaeology in Tigray has a long history, with scientific research beginning 120 years ago with the Deutsche-Aksum Expedition. Since then, pre-Aksumite and Aksumite remains have received the lion's share of scholarly attention. More recently, however, the transition between the end of Aksum and the subsequent periods has attracted growing interest, shedding light on the so-called "Dark Ages" of northern Ethiopia (7th-12th centuries) and partly compensating for the silence of textual sources.

Excavations and surveys have been conducted in and around sites that are key to the history and memory of events linked to the arrival of Islam in the region, the Metropolitans of the Ethiopian Church, and the later-sanctified Zagwe dynasty. Previously overlooked themes, such as landscape evolution, agriculture, and the presence of Muslim communities during the Solomonid period, have also been the subject of new research, drawing on epigraphic discoveries and the development of archaeo-environmental approaches.

These advances in archaeological research are increasingly complemented by social anthropology, which makes it possible to study how communities living on archaeological sites construct memory around them, as well as their current practices in preserving these places. This approach also sheds light on how archaeological fieldwork is perceived locally.

This workshop brings together archaeologists, anthropologists, and geographers from Ethiopia, France, and Poland to share recent advances in the field and to discuss perspectives for future research in the historical archaeology of northern Ethiopia.

cnrs amU Maison méditerranéenne des sciences humaines et sociales UAR 3125 IREMAM anr agence nationale de la recherche cfee Centre français des études éthiopiennes

Friday 20th November 2026

Centre de la Vieille Charité, Marseille

Centre Norbert Elias



Workshop - ANR INTERMEDE

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Image: View of the nave and monolithic pillars of Maryam Nazret (S. Dorso)

PROGRAMME

Centre Norbert Elias

Workshop

Coordination

Desta HAILEYESUS GEBREGZABHER
Aix-Marseille Université, Iremam

Simon DORSO
CNRS, Iremam, ANR InterMedE

Amélie CHEKROUN
CNRS, Centre Norbert Elias, ANR InterMedE

Organisation

ANR INTERMEDE (ANR-24-CE27-4509)
CNRS - Centre Norbert Elias

Venue

Centre de la Vieille Charité
2, rue de la Charité
Marseille

Contact

Desta HAILEYESUS GEBREGZABHER
E-mail: desta.gebregzabher@etu.univ-amu.fr
https://https://intermede.hypotheses.org/

Join online:

https://visio.numerique.gouv.fr/bfm-izbs-bdx

MORNING

9h-9h30 - Welcoming coffee

9h30-9h45
Introduction
Desta HAILYESUS GEBREGZABHER
Aix-Marseille Université, IREMAM (UMR 7310)

9h45-10h30
Landscape, environment and agriculture evolutions around the site of Wakarida during the Holocene
Ninon BLOND - Nicolas JACOB-ROUSSEAU, Yann CALLOT, Charlène BOUCHOT, Olivier BARGE, Emmanuelle REGAGNON., Jérémie SCHIETTECATTE, Iwona GAJDA, Anne BENOIST
ENS Lyon, Département des sciences sociales, SFDAS, MAFTOr

10h30-10h45 - Buna break

10h45-11h30
Gud Bahri: a newly radiocarbon dated settlement and iron production site
Hiluf BERHE WOLDEYOHANNES
Mekelle University, Sustainable Heritage in Ethiopia Project

11h30-12h15
Negash – combining tangible with intangible
Kamil KURASZKIEWICZ, Zuzanna AUGUSTYNIAK
University of Warsaw, Faculty of Oriental Studies

AFTERNOON

13h45-14h30
Bilet and the Medieval Muslim Cemeteries of Tigray
Julien LOISEAU - Simon DORSO, Anna LAGARON
Aix-Marseille Université, IREMAM (UMR 7310), ERC HornEast

14h30-15h45
Kwiha's pottery: insight from a Late Antique and Medieval assemblage
Desta HAILYESUS GEBREGZABHER
Aix-Marseille Université, IREMAM (UMR 7310), ERC HornEast

14h30-15h45
Exploring the Aksumite-Medieval Transition: archaeological perspectives from Maryam Nazret and the Endarta région
Marie-Laure DERAT - Simon DORSO, Hiluf BERHE, Anaïs LAMESA, Pascal MORA
CNRS, Orient & Méditerrannée (UMR 8167), Sustainable Heritage in Ethiopia Project

15h45-16h - Buna break

16h-16h45
Perception of archaeology in Maryam Nazret and Negash
Woldehiwot BIRHANU ASSEFA
EHESS, Laboratoire d'anthropologie sociale, Sustainable Heritage in Ethiopia Project

16h45-17h
Conclusions
Simon DORSO