PhD position

Food composition and safety in Greco-Roman Egypt

at University of LIEGE (ULiège), in Belgium, Laboratory of Food Analysis, Department of Food Sciences, Research Unit of Fundamental and Applied Research for Animal & Health -Veterinary Public Health (FARAH-VPH).

The University of Liège is offering a PhD position in the framework of the project “AGROS : Agriculture, diet and nutrition in Greco-Roman Egypt. Reassessing ancient sustenance, food processing and (mal)nutrition” (selected from the EOS 2021 call, funded by FNRS/FWO). PI of this project are : ERDKAMP Paul (Coordinator, Vrije Universiteit Brussel), LEROY Frédéric (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), MOTTA Laura (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (United States)), PREYS René (Université de Namur), REDDING Richard (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (United States)), SCIPPO Marie-Louise (Université de Liège), VANDORPE Katelijn (KU Leuven)

Abstract : The AGROS project challenges the main assumptions underlying the current historical and archaeological paradigms of ancient diet and nutrition. It has long been held that one-sided and low-quality diets, largely comprised of foodstuffs with high levels of anti-nutrients and poor in micronutrients, resulted in chronic malnutrition. Recently, these views have been challenged on the grounds of being anachronistic since the modern nutritional data on which they are based are from ingredients, foodstuffs and preparation and processing practices modified by the 20th century Green Revolution and its aftermath. The AGROS project will remedy these knowledge gaps by producing the first empirical data on various nutritional parameters by studying a unique collection of archaeological plant and animal remains from Greco-Roman Egypt. It will also reconstruct ancient food processing and preparation techniques and recreate ancient foodstuffs. By measuring the (anti)nutritional changes at each step of the production processes of these foodstuffs, it will elucidate the relative changes that occur during historical food processing. The project brings together experts from the diverse fields of ancient history, archaeobotany, archaeozoology, papyrology, Egyptian archaeology, food biochemistry and microbiology, and stable isotope chemistry. Overall, the fundamental research within this study has the potential to revolutionize how ancient diet and nutrition are approached.

The PhD position in ULiège will be funded for 4 years.

In the framework of the AGROS project, the research subject of the PhD enrolled in ULiège will be more specifically to study the nutritional composition (including antinutrient toxic compounds) and chemical hazards (such as acrylamide, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons or secondary fatty acids oxidation products) of ancient remains and recreated foods using ancient recipes.

Education, qualification and experience :
Master Degree or equivalent in Biology, Biochemistry, Biomedical Sciences, Bioscience engineering Pharmacology, Toxicology, Analytical Chemistry, Food Science, Veterinary Sciences or related discipline.
Knowledge about food composition and analysis, as well as in analytical chemistry.
Skills : mainly, to be able to read and write scientific publications in English, to be able to communicate orally scientific results in English, to be able to work independently and within a team.
To be eligible and qualified for enrolment in the PhD programme at ULiège (see admission conditions on the web site of ULiège : https://www.enseignement.uliege.be/cms/c_9096635/en/doctorat).

Enquiries: Prof. M.L. Scippo, mlsicippo@uliege.be

Closing date for applications: 31 of March 2022
Start date: Between May 2022 and June 2022

Please send a CV and an application letter to mlsicippo@uliege.be