



UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA



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EQUIP DE RECERCA ARQUEOLÒGICA I ARQUEOMÈTRICA  
de la  
UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA



**ERAAUB is organizing the Conference:**

## **Human settlement and paleoecology of the southern African interior during the Middle Stone Age**

### **Michael Toffolo, Junior Research Chair**

Institut de Recherche sur les Archéomatériaux-Centre de Recherche en Physique Appliquée à l'Archéologie (IRAMAT-CRP2A), UMR 5060 CNRS, Bordeaux Montaigne University, France.

### **Abstract**

The Middle Stone Age (~300-30 ka) is a key period in human evolution that saw the emergence of modern humans, as indicated by fossil and artifactual evidence found across Africa. In particular, several coastal cave sites in southern Africa have produced important insights into subsistence practices, stone tool technology and symbolic thought. The larger interior of the subcontinent, instead, features only a few caves and therefore archaeological information must be retrieved from open-air sites. These offer a privileged view of foraging behaviours typical of hunter-gatherer groups that took place in the wider landscape, and thus hold considerable value for paleoenvironmental reconstruction as well. However, these sites occur in active sedimentary systems that may alter or obliterate traces of past human occupation. There is thus a need to better characterize the depositional and taphonomic contexts of open-air sites by looking at both the macro- and microscopic archaeological records. This presentation aims at illustrating the methods used to extract information from open-air sites and how they can improve our knowledge of Middle Stone Age ecosystems in the southern African interior.

### **Bio**

Michael Toffolo is Junior Research Chair at Bordeaux Montaigne University, France. His research focuses on the reconstruction of site formation processes, paleoenvironments and ancient human activities based on the study of the microscopic archaeological record. He uses this approach to determine human interactions with the environment at prehistoric sites in southern Africa.

The conference will take place on:

**Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup>. At 12h pm at room 209 (2<sup>nd</sup> floor)**

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