2 Post-Doctoral & 2 Doctoral positions in Flanders, Belgium

The LOCO project – *The Low Countries, Crossroads of Europe from the Neolithic to the Late Middle Ages* – is an interdisciplinary and interuniversity project between the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), the KU Leuven (KUL) and Ghent University (UGent). It brings together experts from different fields: C. Snoeck, B. Lambert, B. Veselka, Ph. Claeys (VUB), G. De Mulder, F. Buylaert, I. De Groote, W. De Clercq, K. Deforce (UGent), P. Degryse and M. Fantoli (KUL).

LOCO aims to document the driving forces behind the movement of materials, people, and ideas in and out of the Low Countries, in diachronic way from the Neolithic into the Late Middle Ages. Combining the strengths of archaeological, historical, anthropological, literary, and geochemical approaches, the LOCO project develops an holistic, complementary and adaptable methodological framework applied across a 7,000-year period, covering both pre-historic and historic times. Situated at the crossroads of human, material, and intellectual exchanges between Eastern, Western, Southern and Northern Europe, the Low Countries provide an ideal case study to test this framework. To reach these objectives, we are looking for:

Two 4-year post-doctoral researchers (VUB & UGent) to coordinate the project and ensure the integration of the different topics (materials, people, and ideas), research areas (archaeology, geochemistry, history), and periods (Neolithic to Late Middle Ages), with digital humanities. The final two candidates will be selected based on their complementarity.

Essential

- PhD in archaeology, archaeological science, history, and/or digital humanities, and significant experience in inter-disciplinary research
- Eagerness to coordinate the LOCO project
- Experience with statistical analyses of large and variable datasets (from isotope data to literary sources)
- Highly motived to be part of an international and inter-disciplinary team
- Team spirit and excellent communication skills (B2 English level or above)

Desired

- Experience in digital humanities
- Driving licence

One joint PhD (VUB-UGent – B. Lambert, I. De Groote & C. Snoeck) **in bioarchaeology of the Middle Ages (2 + 2 years)** – The aim of this doctoral project to better understand the mobility of people in the Low Countries during the early, high and late Middle Ages (500-1500). The doctoral candidate will combine non-metric dental and skeletal trait analyses with isotope analyses (O and Sr) of human remains from burial places in use during this period. They will be supported by an interdisciplinary team of researchers, including (bio)archaeologists, historians and physical anthropologists.

Essential

- A master in physical anthropology, (bio)archaeology, forensic science (or similar)
- Expertise with the osteological and non-metric dental and skeletal trait analysis on human remains from inhumation sites
- Highly motived to be part of an international and inter-disciplinary team
- Team spirit and excellent communication skills (B2 English level or above)

Desired

- Eagerness to work in a lab environment and experience with stable isotope analysis, in particular O and Sr isotopes
- Openness to insights from other disciplines, in particular history and archaeology
- Familiarity with the history of the medieval period in Europe
- Driving licence

One joint PhD (UGent-VUB-KUL – F. Buylaert, B. Lambert, M. Fantoli) **in history of innovations and movement of ideas (2 + 2 years)** – This PhD project aims to chart the circulation of ideas within the Low Countries between c. 1100 and c. 1500 by drawing on recent Digital Humanities breakthroughs. It provides the first systematic discussion of how isolated pools of knowledge merged – or not – with the passing of time. The test case pertains to the governance of villages in the Low Countries between c. 1250 and c. 1600. While the political organization of medieval towns has received extensive scrutiny in the past decades, the organization and regulation of social life in rural communities is still something of an enigma. Recent surveys have revealed the existence of substantial numbers of village regulations for Flanders, Holland, Brabant, Hainaut, and other Netherlandish provinces. Drawing on a comparative analysis, both at the macro and micro level, of these normative documents, which may or may not have varied greatly from region to region, the PhD candidate is expected to write a dissertation on how village communities developed policies on contentious topics (e.g. the management of natural resources, migration, or social discipline), the ideological norms that underpinned these policies, and the social circulation of these norms and ideas. Moreover, the PhD student will experiment with the application of computational methods to the corpus, such as topic modelling and text-similarity scores, to identify large-scale patterns in the circulation of ideas across the different villages.

Essential

- A master in history, digital humanities (or similar)
- Expertise with palaeography
- Mastery of Dutch
- Highly motived to be part of an international and inter-disciplinary team
- Team spirit and excellent communication skills (B2 English level or above)

Desired

- Experience with French
- Openness to insights from other disciplines, in particular history and archaeology
- Familiarity with the history of Ancien Regime Europe (we welcome applications from both medievalists and early modernists)

TO APPLY

To apply, send your complete academic CV, the e-mail addresses of two potential referees, as well as a cover letter (max 1 page in English) explaining how you could benefit the research the trans-disciplinary study of materials, people, and ideas before 30 April 2025 to Prof. Christophe Snoeck (csnoeck@vub.be). Interviews will take place on the 5th of June 2025 with a desired start date between 1 September and 1 December 2025. If you would like to receive more details about these positions, don't hesitate to contact Prof. C. Snoeck (csnoeck@vub.be).