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New research project „Epigones and Forerunners – adaptative strategies…" is concerning studies upon two crucial stages of the ancient human cultures formation – Palaeolithic and Neolithic in the Middle Nile Valley and Sub-Saharan Africa in broader sense. Uniquely preserved archaeological sites complex of Affad Basin allows comprehensive analysis of adaptation and similar environment exploitation (tree savannah and riparian forests) existing during Terminal Pleistocene and Early Holocene (16 – 7th millenia ago) with a short break of dry climate between 12 and 11th millenia. The older model (Palaeolithic) assumed close symbiosis of the human culture and environment. However, the Neolithic adaptation of much bigger communities with plants cultivation and animals husbandry referred to the environment interference. One of the previous concepts preferred climatic change driven cultural adaptation shift, but the Affad evidence suggest that it was not the main factor in the Middle Nile Valley. Interdisciplinary studies of the proposed project should answer the question of the other – non-ecological reasons of dramatic change of subsistence and land resources expoiting in Early Holocene Sub-Saharan Africa.

Preservation of the stratified archaeological sites in Affad Basin allows to analyze the settlements range and spatial organization as well as advanced lithic assemblages studies. Comprehensive archaeozoological researches enables palaeoenvironment reconstruction, pointing hunting strategies and husbandry models. Domesticated species remains will be additionally studied through their isotopic composition (strontium and oxygen) for evaluation animals diet and migrations. Also the pottery finds will be analyzed. Wide spectrum of analytic tools and methods includes petrographic analysis of sediments as well as stone artefacts, Optically Stimulated Thermoluminescence (OSL) dating, radiocarbon dating (AMS C14), tooth enamel dating by Electron Spin Resonance (ESR), magnetometric prospection for the buried topography understanding, creation of high resolution Digital Elevation Model (DEM), comparative collection analysis of the osteological remains (e.g. in Belgium and Kenya) as well as experimental production and usage of stone tools necessary for traseological studies.

The subject of the proposed project inscribes into a vivid scientific discussion concerning very long-lasting survival of the Middle Palaeolithic communities in the Sub-Saharan Africa and the reasons of extremely late appearance of demographically and socially developed societies (c.9 millenium ago) in Central Sudan. The project results would also support the important global interests of climatic and environmental influence on ancient human cultures but also early anthropopression signs.