Postdoc in zooarchaeology

Applications are invited from qualified and highly motivated candidates for a one-year research position (subject to renewal) as a post-doc in "Zooarchaeology and taphonomy of mammals and birds from Middle-Upper Palaeolithic transition contexts" within the team led by Prof. Stefano Benazzi at the Department of Cultural Heritage, University of Bologna, Italy.

The candidate will join the project "Our first steps to Europe: Pleistocene *Homo sapiens* dispersals, adaptations and interactions in South-East Europe" funded by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 101019659- FIRSTSTEPS) to prof. Katerina Harvati and prof. Stefano Benazzi. This interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary project aims to apply novel and cutting-edge methods from the fields of scientific archaeology, zooarchaeology, paleoanthropology, paleoecology and isotope analysis to understand 1) whether the presence of early *H. sapiens* in southern Europe, as suggested by Apidima, can be supported, 2) whether the adaptations of early *H. sapiens* differ from those of penecontemporaneous *H. neanderthalensis*, 3) the role of behavioural adaptations in the Late Pleistocene *H. sapiens*, and unravel the biological and/or cultural features that allowed them to disperse and establish a sustained presence in Europe, 4) whether there is fossil / archaeological evidence of cultural/biological interactions and exchange between modern humans and Neanderthals.
Applicants should have a general knowledge of Middle-Upper Palaeolithic transition in Italy, to design zooarchaeological investigations at specific MP-UP contexts, to undertake zooarchaeology by mass spectrometry analysis (ZooMS) and set up temporary laboratories aimed to carry out preliminary analyses, preparing material and training possible collaborators. The ideal candidate should be able to integrate and cooperate with a multidisciplinary environment and work directly with Palaeolithic archaeologists, Environmental archaeologists, Paleoanthropologists and Geochronologists. The investigator is also requested to integrate the reference anatomical collection at the laboratory of Osteoarchaeology and Paleoanthropology (BONES Lab).
The candidate will be requested to carry out: analyses for species and skeletal-element identification, using also paleoproteomics (e.g., ZooMS), to determine palaeoecological contexts surrounding the sites and faunal exploitation modalities; analyses of bone surface modification, breakage patterns and the relative abundance of the various skeletal elements to provide further details on the taphonomy of the sites.