



## PhD position in South American megafaunal ecologies, diets, and mobilities

The **'The End of the Journey: The Late Pleistocene-Early Holocene Colonisation of South America (LASTJOURNEY)'** led by Prof. José Iriarte of the Department of Archaeology, University of Exeter is pleased to announce a new vacancy for a PhD student in stable isotope analysis of South American megafauna to reconstruct their diets, environments, and migration patterns. The position will be hosted at the Department of Archaeology, Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History for a period of up to 3.5 years and supervised by Dr. Patrick Roberts.

The **LASTJOURNEY project** is newly-funded Advanced Grant of the prestigious European Research Council and runs for 5 years. Headed by Prof. Iriarte, **LASTJOURNEY** seeks to determine how humans colonised one of the most challenging landscapes in Earth and impacted plants and animals, including now-extinct 'megafauna'. South America was one of the last places on Earth to be occupied by our species, and represents an exciting 'laboratory' to determine its adaptive capacities and potential role in extinctions and landscape alteration and degradation.

### Candidate tasks

The successful candidate will play a central role in the project and its outputs. They will be expected to undertake sampling of existing museum archaeozoological and palaeontological collections, as well as newly-excavated assemblages from South America, spanning environments from the Pacific coast to the Andean Highlands. They will then analyze the resulting samples from megafauna, and other associated animals, for different isotopic parameters in order to reconstruct changes in diet, environment, and migration patterns of different taxa across space and time.

The candidate will work in a leading global centre for archaeology, the Department of Archaeology at the MPI-SHH, renowned for combining archaeological, anthropological, geochemical, and palaeoenvironmental expertise in field and laboratory methodologies. They will also work closely with project PI Prof. José Iriarte and Prof. Alan Outram (University of Exeter), and other project researchers to integrate their data with palaeoecological



insights from environmental DNA, pollen, charcoal, and *Sporomiella* analyses, and archaeological datasets relating to human-faunal interactions.

## **Candidate qualifications**

The ideal applicant will have a strong background in Archaeology, Palaeontology, Palaeoecology, or Geochemistry. Practical and theoretical interest in isotope approaches to past human and animal ecologies are essential, as well as broader interest in Late Pleistocene Archaeology and Palaeontology. Other prerequisites include evidence of strong oral and written communication skills and promise to develop a strong publication record. Willingness to work as part of a team, travel to field and museum sites in South America for extended periods of time, and the ability to complete tasks in a timely and structured fashion are also necessities.

### *Essential:*

- Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Archaeology, Archaeological Science, Geochemistry, Earth Sciences, Palaeontology, or a similar discipline.
- Practical and theoretical interest in working in isotopic approaches to Archaeology and Palaeontology.
- Experience in fieldwork or working with museum connections for significant periods of time.
- Knowledge of Late Pleistocene 'megafauna' extinctions and Archaeology.

### *Advantageous:*

- A track record of archaeological or palaeontological fieldwork, particularly in the tropics.
- Strong Spanish language skills.
- Experience with archaeological, palaeontological, and palaeoenvironmental datasets.
- Practical and theoretical experience of isotope approaches in Archaeological Science and Palaeontology, as well as their relative pros and cons.
- Knowledge of Archaeology in South America or the tropics of the Americas more widely.
- Experience working as part of a field team on a project.
- Outreach skills in the context of communicated Archaeological Science, Palaeontology, or Palaeoecology.



The position offers a unique opportunity to develop cutting edge research in the city of Jena that is renowned for its position at the intersection of Biogeochemical, Ecological, and Archaeological research. The Max Planck Society and the European Research Council both promote these multidisciplinary connections and this position offers the candidate the possibility of making the most of such networks and become a leader in novel approaches to the utilization of archaeological datasets.

We offer

- Opportunities to learn new skills in the archaeological sciences
- Integration into our interdisciplinary research group as part of the **LASTJOURNEY project**  
<http://humanities.exeter.ac.uk/archaeology/news/articles/majornewstudywillrewriteh.html>
- Support for field and laboratory research as well as conference presentations.
- Access to cutting-edge facilities and equipment
- An excellent, friendly research environment
- An English language working environment
- Full funding for top applicants (3.5 years)

The position will begin on the **1<sup>st</sup> of August 2020** though some flexibility in start date is possible. The Max Planck Society is committed to employing more individuals with disabilities and especially encourages them to apply. The Max Planck Society also seeks to increase the number of women in areas where they are under-represented and therefore explicitly encourages women to apply. Remuneration will follow the standard PhD salaries given in the Social Sciences Section of the Max Planck Gesellschaft. In addition, social benefits are offered as per the regulations of the German Civil Service.

Please submit your application (which should include a cover letter, CV of no more than 3 pages, list of publications, and any relevant certificates) by **March the 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020**. You are also required to submit three references which are also due by **March the 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020**. Please submit your application as a single pdf file in English using the link below.

[https://lotus2.gwdg.de/mpg/mjws/perso/shh\\_d020.nsf/application](https://lotus2.gwdg.de/mpg/mjws/perso/shh_d020.nsf/application)

Contact for more information:



Dr. Patrick Roberts

Email: [roberts@shh.mpg.de](mailto:roberts@shh.mpg.de)

Prof. José Iriarte

Email: [J.Iriarte@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:J.Iriarte@exeter.ac.uk)