

PRESS RELEASE

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Gibraltar Museum attendance at international congress in Ronda

The city of Ronda has just held its first International Congress on “the occupation of the Serranía de Ronda and the western Betic Range by prehistoric, protohistoric and ancient societies”. This was a historical and archaeological congress covering a wide chronological framework, from the earliest peoples to the time of the Romans.

Professor Clive Finlayson of the Gibraltar Museum was invited as key note speaker to the event and his lecture focused on a comparison of Palaeolithic sites on Gibraltar with others in the high mountains of the Betic Range. The essence of Professor Finlayson’s thesis was that it was impossible to homogenise vast and topographically heterogeneous geographical areas, such as the southern Iberian Peninsula, by using evidence from single archaeological sites. His comparison showed how the Gibraltar sites had been, because of their privileged geographical location, privileged and acted as magnets for people. In contrast, some of the high mountain sites inland were only sites of sporadic visits by humans. The comparisons drew on the extensive literature which the Gibraltar Museum team, led by Professor Finlayson, have been producing for over two decades.

The subject of the lecture features in a new paper, co-authored with other members of the Gibraltar Museum and other institutions abroad, which has just been accepted for publication by the ISI-ranked journal *Quaternary International*. This journal has also just published a new paper by Professor Finlayson and co-authors entitled *Pigeons and Choughs, a usual resource for the Neanderthals in Gibraltar*. The paper adds to the findings published last year which revealed that Neanderthals frequently consumed pigeon meat and adds the choughs – species of corvids – to the menu. The prolific publication of papers in major international journals is one key indicator of the importance of the *Gibraltar Neanderthal Caves and Environments* site, currently subject of a bid for World Heritage Status; Gibraltar’s presence in key international events, such as the one just held in Ronda, further strengthens the site’s reputation.

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