



HM Government of Gibraltar

Ministry of Sports, Culture,
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Calpe 2016 Conference - Past Worlds: Neanderthal and Modern Human Response to Climate and Environment Change

The Calpe 2016 Conference will be held at the University of Gibraltar from the 29th September to the 1st October 2016. The programme offers scope for a varied audience, ranging in subject matter from Pleistocene humans to life in Gibraltar in the 19th Century. It is divided into three days: one discusses general topics, another focuses on case studies of humans in South America and the third on the Gibraltar Neanderthals, this being the first time since World Heritage inscription that an overview of results from the Gorham's cave Complex will be presented. Registration is free to local residents.

In the last half-a-million years two human lineages – Neanderthals and Modern Humans - appear to have occupied large areas of the Old World. The Neanderthals were confined to Eurasia but Modern Humans, originating in Africa, were the first to colonise Australia and the Americas. During this long course of occupation and geographical expansion, Neanderthals and Modern Humans interacted with their environment in subtle and sophisticated ways that we are only beginning to understand now. These interactions were not unidirectional and were not limited to simple responses to climate and environment. For example, recent evidence from Gibraltar has revealed that Neanderthal camp fires were already a source of chemical pollution inside the caves in which they lived 40,000 years ago.

In spite of this early evidence, studies of human impact on the environment, and most recently on climate, have tended to focus with Modern Human population growth associated with the development of sedentary, often agricultural, societies. Recent studies show a greater appreciation of the onset of human impact on their environment, apparently predating sedentary life. When humans started to modify their surroundings and act as agents of change will be a major theme of this conference.

Case studies focusing on recent work in Pleistocene Europe and Holocene South America will give focus to the questions to be discussed. For instance, papers will examine the relationship between humans and water supplies, from the seasonal responses of Neanderthals living in semi-arid environments in Europe to the construction of complex hydraulic architecture by Holocene humans in South America.

For further information and registration please contact the Calpe Conference registration desk at 200 74289 or email enquiries@gibmuseum.gi.

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