



AWARDEE REPORT FORM

NAME	Ricardo Miguel Alves Correia Godinho
TWITTER HANDLE* <i>optional</i>	
UNIVERSITY	University of Algarve
NAME OF AWARD	Symington Bequest Fund
PURPOSE OF AWARD <i>conference/event attended/organised (full name) with city and dates.</i>	
Deliver a podium presentation at the Eleventh International Conference on the Mesolithic in Europe (Meso) 2025 meeting.	
REPORT: What were your anticipated benefits? <i>Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.</i>	
<p>Attending the Eleventh International Conference on the Mesolithic in Europe (MESO25) in Ferrara (Italy) would allow me to present the podium talk “Mandibular morphological changes in the Mesolithic – Neolithic transition are impacted more by population history than by diet”. It examines the hypothesized main drivers of mandibular morphological changes in this critical transition in modern human evolution and concluded that such changes are mostly driven by population history rather than by diet. Because this is a very debated topic in archaeology and bioanthropology, I anticipated that delivering this presentation would promote discussion with fellow colleagues and provide potential networking opportunities with people with common interests. Moreover, this meeting focuses on the Mesolithic, and so I anticipated that other talks would present contexts and/or methodological approaches (e.g., aDNA based population history analysis, stable isotopes based analysis of diet and mobility) that could be potentially relevant and of use for my research. Last, I integrate the organizing committee of the proposal to organize the next Meso2030 meeting in my institution (ICArEHB, University of Algarve). I anticipated that attending this Meso2025 and presenting the research that other colleagues and I undertake would increase the probability of a successful application.</p> <p>Altogether, the anticipated benefits included input from fellow colleagues, networking and enhancing the probability of co-organizing the next edition of the International Conference on the Mesolithic in Europe (MESO).</p>	
COMMENTS: Describe your experience at the conference / lab visit / course / seminar/ event. <i>Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.</i>	

Although I was aware of the International Conference on the Mesolithic in Europe (MESO) meeting for several years now, this was the first time I was able to attend in person. The meeting was very lively and with plenty of interaction between participants. While there, I was able to watch several presentations showing numerous relevant archaeological contexts (containing human skeletal remains) for the research I undertake. After I gave my talk, focusing on the drivers of mandibular morphological changes in the transition from Mesolithic foraging to Neolithic farming, there was time for questions and answers. Several people asked relevant questions that provided important and constructive feedback about the research I presented. Moreover, while at the conference I had the opportunity to approach (or was approached by) fellow colleagues who gave talks presenting methods and/or materials that are potentially relevant for my ongoing research. After brief discussions, common interests were clear and opportunities to collaborate emerged. This includes, e.g., discussing a collaboration with a colleague from another foreign reference research centre in a research project I aim to submit later this year. Altogether, this allowed me to experience a new meeting, present my research and receive relevant feedback, and provided me potential international networking opportunities.

REPORT: In relation to skills, what were the most important things you gained? *(does not apply to equipment grant.* For public engagement/outreach awards what did your audience gain and how did you evaluate success?

Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.

In the conference, I was able to deliver my oral presentation, and receive and answer questions from colleagues. This provided me the opportunity to enhance my oral communication skills and interact with fellow colleagues. Moreover, other talks presented multiple archaeological contexts that have provided human skeletal remains that can be used to address some of the standing research questions that I am tackling. Several other researchers also presented talks in which they used methods that I would like to apply in the research I undertake. While that is naturally insufficient to provide me new technical skills, it did give me the opportunity to approach the colleagues delivering those talks and briefly discuss common interests and potential future networking ideas. The discussions were very fruitful, and we agreed on keeping in touch to collaborate in the near future (including in applications to research funding). So, another very important soft skill that I enhanced was the ability to approach and network with fellow colleagues. The practical result of these soft skills I applied and enhanced (i.e., communication and networking) is that I will most likely not only have access to relevant samples, but also collaborate with colleagues that undertake research that supplement the methods I use.

REPORT: How do you think you will put this learning experience into practice in the future? For public engagement/outreach awards how with the materials/knowledge generated by this activity be used in the future?

Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.

Attending conferences always offers the opportunity to develop communications skills, not only for the presentations but also to approach colleagues and discuss potential collaborations. This is especially so in meetings which gather colleagues from a wide span of research areas. That was the case of this meeting, in which common interests included the examination of human skeletal remains and what drives their morphological variance. As such, I had the opportunity to see numerous contexts that are relevant for (along with methods that supplement) my research, and to enhance communication skills to bridge across somewhat contrasting areas. Moreover, and importantly, by being able to network, this experience opens prospects for further collaborations and so of new research opportunities which, in turn, will result in future publications.

Beyond academic research, MESO25 has equipped me with knowledge and ideas that are directly relevant for public engagement and outreach. Communicating human prehistory to a broader audience requires translating complex archaeological findings into accessible narratives, and the conference highlighted innovative approaches to presenting research, including digital tools, interactive reconstructions, and storytelling techniques. I plan to integrate these ideas into outreach initiatives, such as public lectures, school workshops, and media contributions. In particular, I aim to use materials and insights from MESO25 to enrich exhibitions and science communication projects I organize or partake in Portugal.

Data Protection/GDPR: I consent to the data included in this submission being collected, processed and stored by the Anatomical Society. **Answer YES or NO in the Box below**

YES

Graphical Images: If you include graphical images you must obtain consent from people appearing in any photos and confirm that you have consent. A consent statement from you must accompany each report if relevant. A short narrative should accompany the image. **Answer N/A not applicable, YES or NO in the box below**

NA

Copyright: If you submit images you must either own the copyright to the image or have gained the explicit permission of the copyright holder for the image to be submitted as part of the report for upload to the Society's website, Newsletter, social media and so forth. A copyright statement must accompany each report if relevant. **Answer N/A not applicable, YES or NO in the box below**

NA

SIGNATURE		DATE	2025/09/26
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