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# A MULTI-ANALYTICAL STUDY OF ROCK-ART PAINTINGS FROM MEGALITHIC BARROWS OF THE NORTH-WESTERN PORTUGAL

César Oliveira<sup>\*1,2</sup>, Ana Bettencourt<sup>3,4</sup>, Luís Gonçalves<sup>5</sup>, Maria Isabel Alves<sup>5,6</sup>, André Ribeiro<sup>7</sup>, Alessia Barbosa<sup>8</sup>, Jorge Guedes<sup>8</sup>, and Cristina Delerue-Matos<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>REQUIMTE/LAQV, Polytechnic of Porto - School of Engineering (ISEP) (REQUIMTE/LAQV/ISEP) – Rua Dr. António Bernardino de Almeida, 431, 4200-072 Porto, Portugal, Portugal

<sup>2</sup>Department of Heritage Studies, University of Porto (DCTP/UP) – Department of Heritage Studies University of Porto Via Panorâmica Edgar Cardoso, S/N 4150-564 Porto, Portugal

<sup>3</sup>Landscapes, Heritage and Territory Laboratory (Lab2PT) – Campus de Guimarães, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal, Portugal

<sup>4</sup>Department of History, University of Minho – Campus de Gualtar 4710-057 Braga, Portugal

<sup>5</sup>Earth Sciences Centre (CCT), University of Minho (CCT/UM) – Campus de Gualtar 4710 - 057 Braga, Portugal

<sup>6</sup>Landscapes, Heritage and Territory Laboratory (Lab2 PT) – University of Minho, Portugal, Portugal

<sup>7</sup>Municipality of Maia (Maia) – Portugal

<sup>8</sup>University of Minho – Campus de Gualtar 4710 - 057 Braga, Portugal

## Abstract

Some Western Europe megaliths are well known for their paintings. Despite their diffusion throughout Europe, they are most common in Northwest Iberia, predominantly in the Galicia and centre-north and north of Portugal. The rock-art paintings motifs have been interpreted as part as the funeral practices. However, archaeologists are often unaware on both the colorants composition and the technical solutions used on their production, which, also have a symbolic importance.

In that context, the colorant composition of three northern Portugal megalithic barrows decorated with rock-art motifs (Leandro 5, Maia; Leira das Mamas, Braga and Eireira, Viana do Castelo) was studied using a multi-analytical approach. The use of XRD, SEM-EDS and FTIR combined with GC-MS allowed the characterization of the painting techniques, pigments, and the organic compounds used as binders.

The analytical results obtained allowed the recovery of important data about North-western prehistoric communities, namely the way they exploited existing resources and their ability to transform them.

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\*Speaker

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