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Taste for colours in Basque country during Upper Palaeolithic - Integrative approach to contextualise rock art.

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Scientific questions

Is there a shared selection preference for colouring materials across the Gravettian territory in northern Spain?
Are the colouring materials part of a specific chain to produce cave art, or are they part of a cross exploitation for multiple uses?

Materials & Methods

- Four rock art caves: Lumentxa, Ondaro, Morgota, Armiña with cave art & colouring remains in archaeological layers
- Multiscalar observations & analyses: Microscopy (optical, SEM) & geochemistry (LA-ICP-MS)

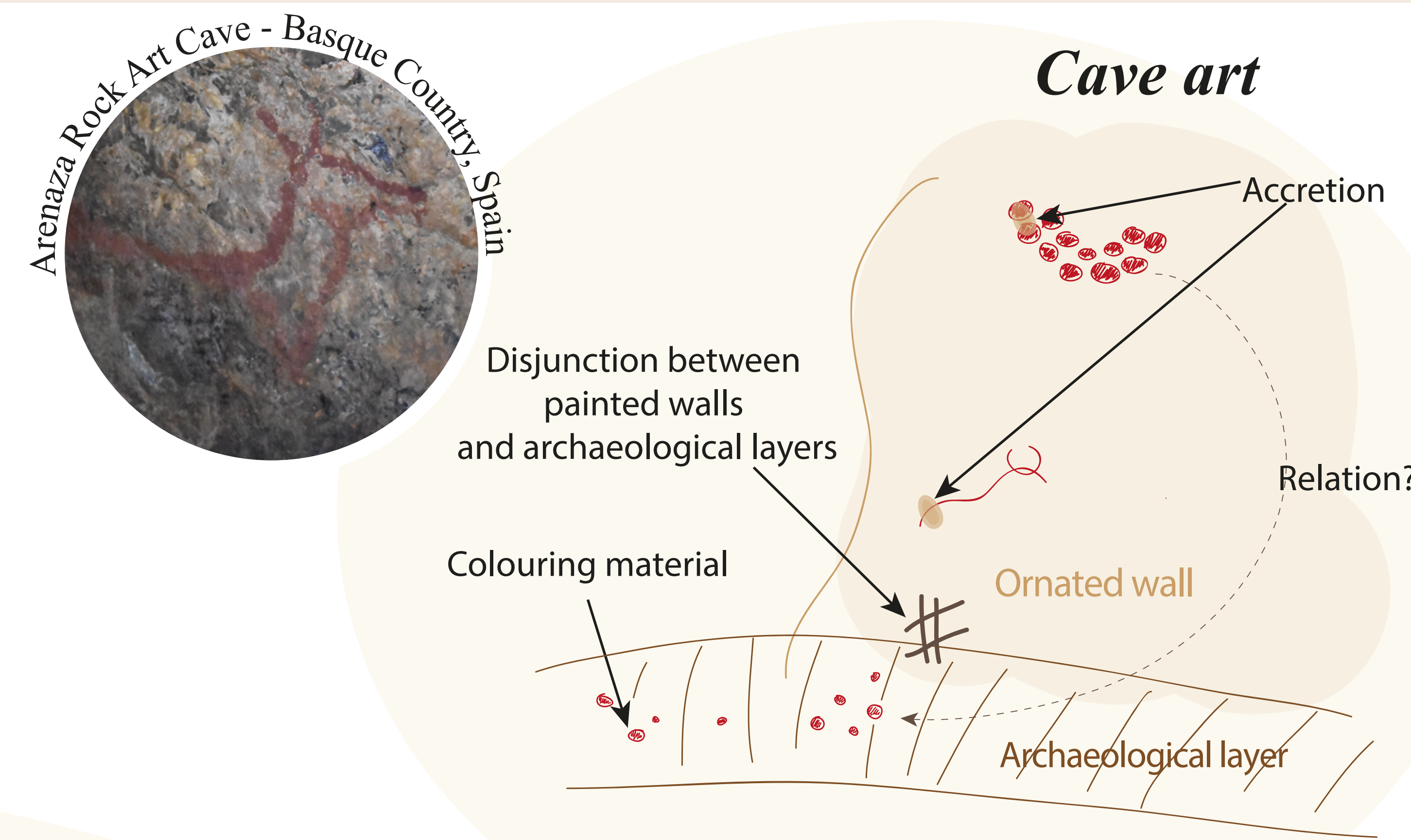
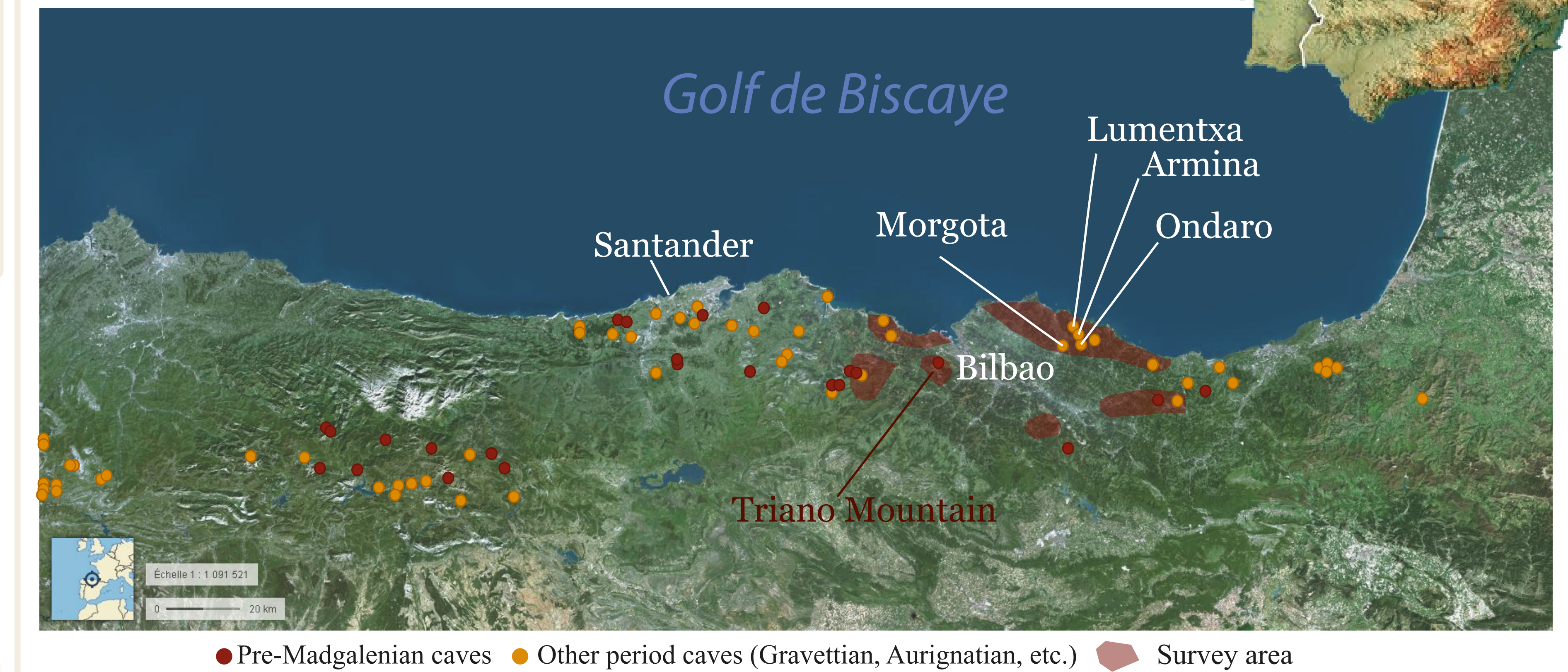
First Results on 4 caves

- 9 different lithologies toward the 4 caves
- Lithology A & D: same material, at different stages of weathering present in the four caves.

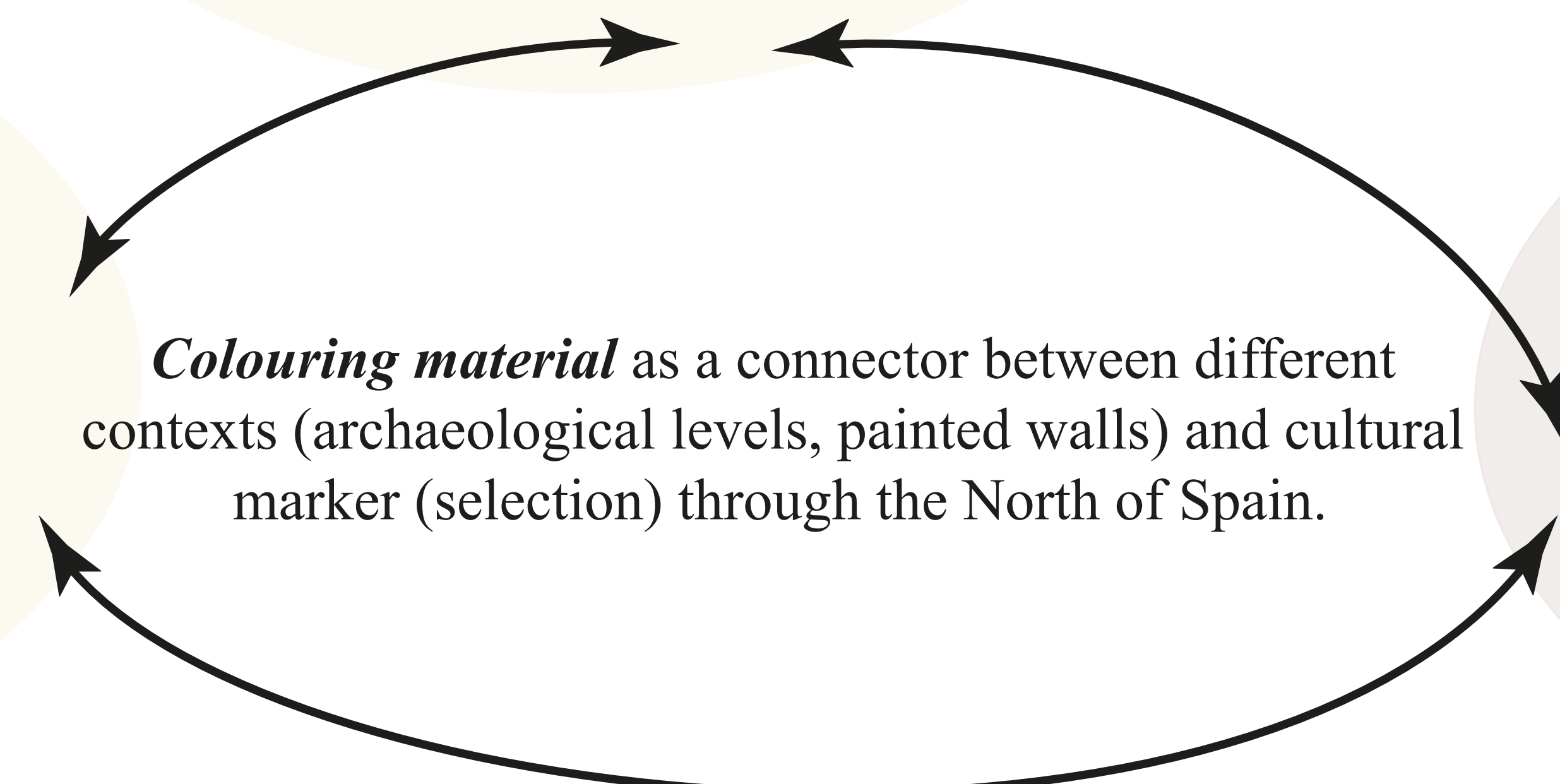
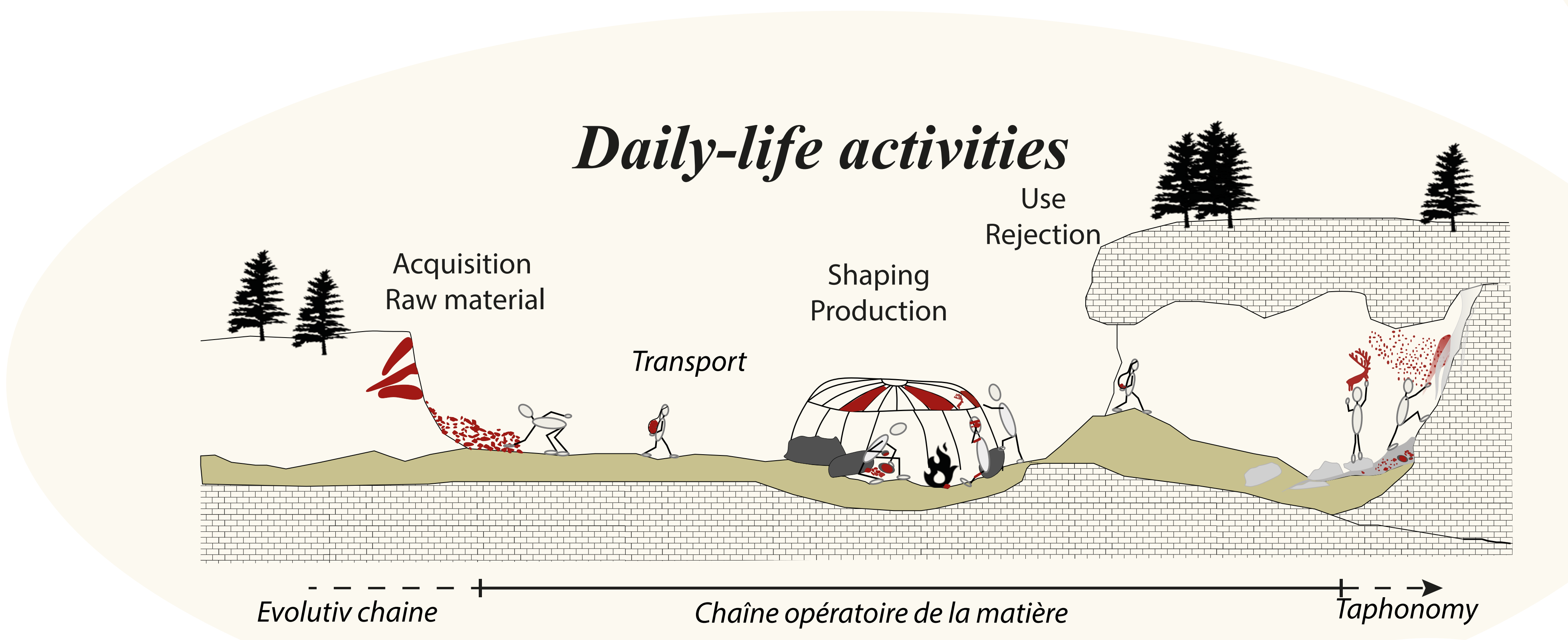
A shared taste for a specific material

Geographic & archaeological context

A montaneous area with a high concentration of caves and rock art caves from different prehistoric periods.

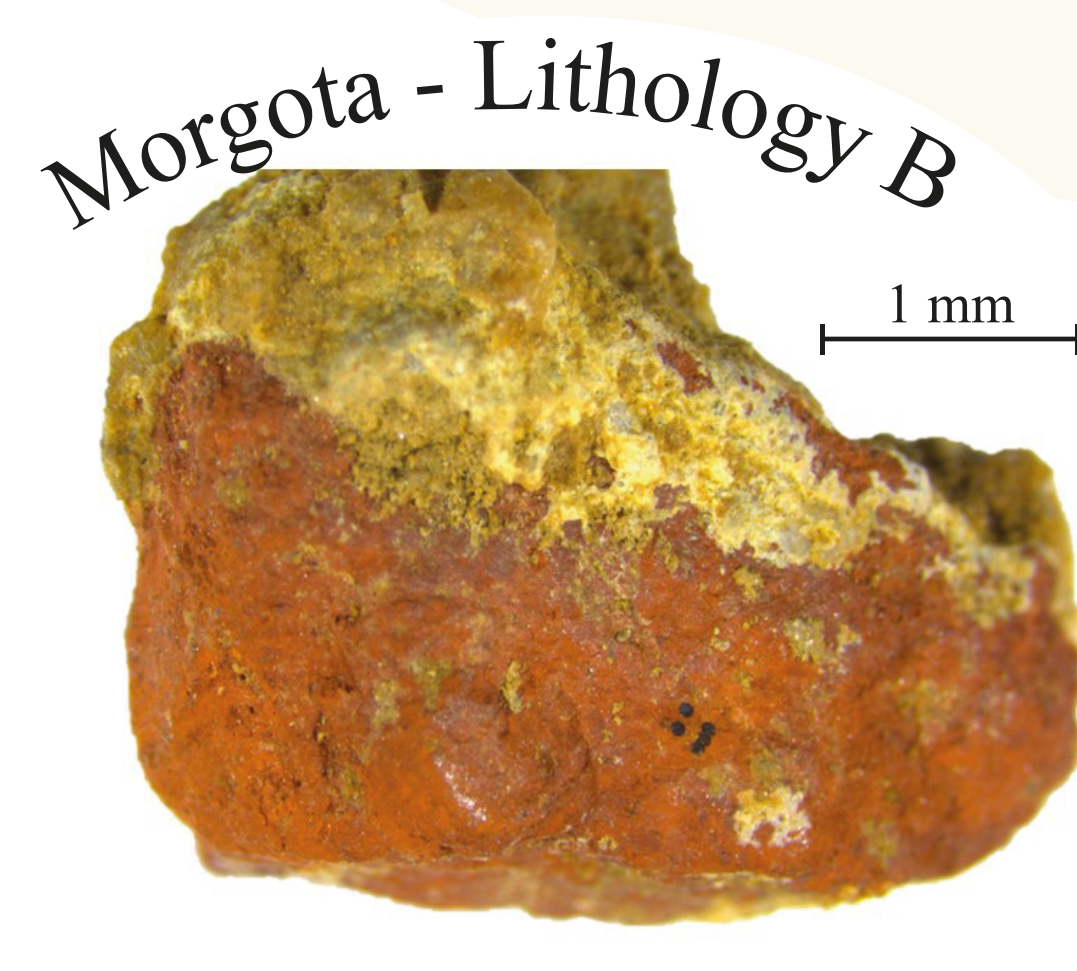
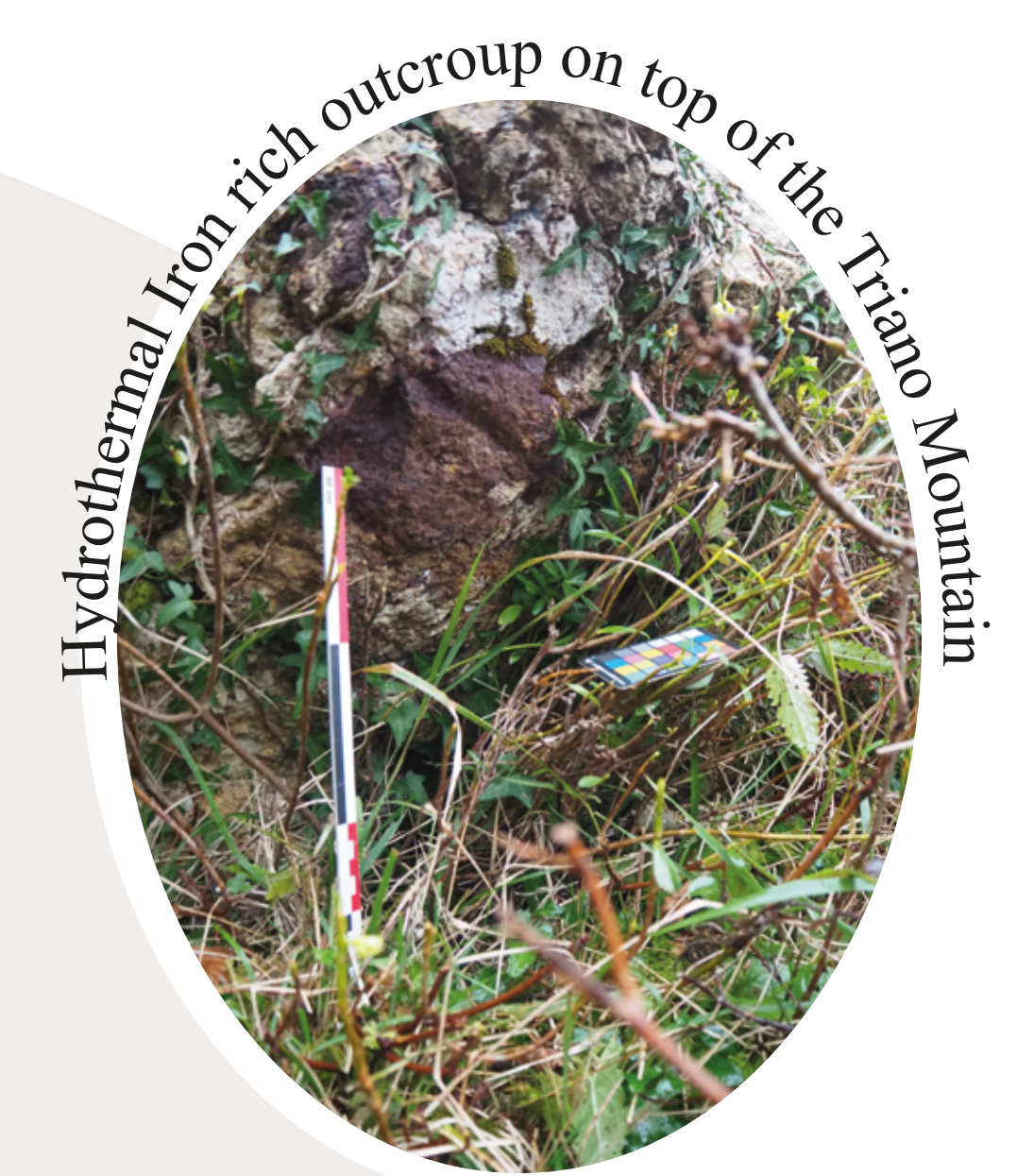
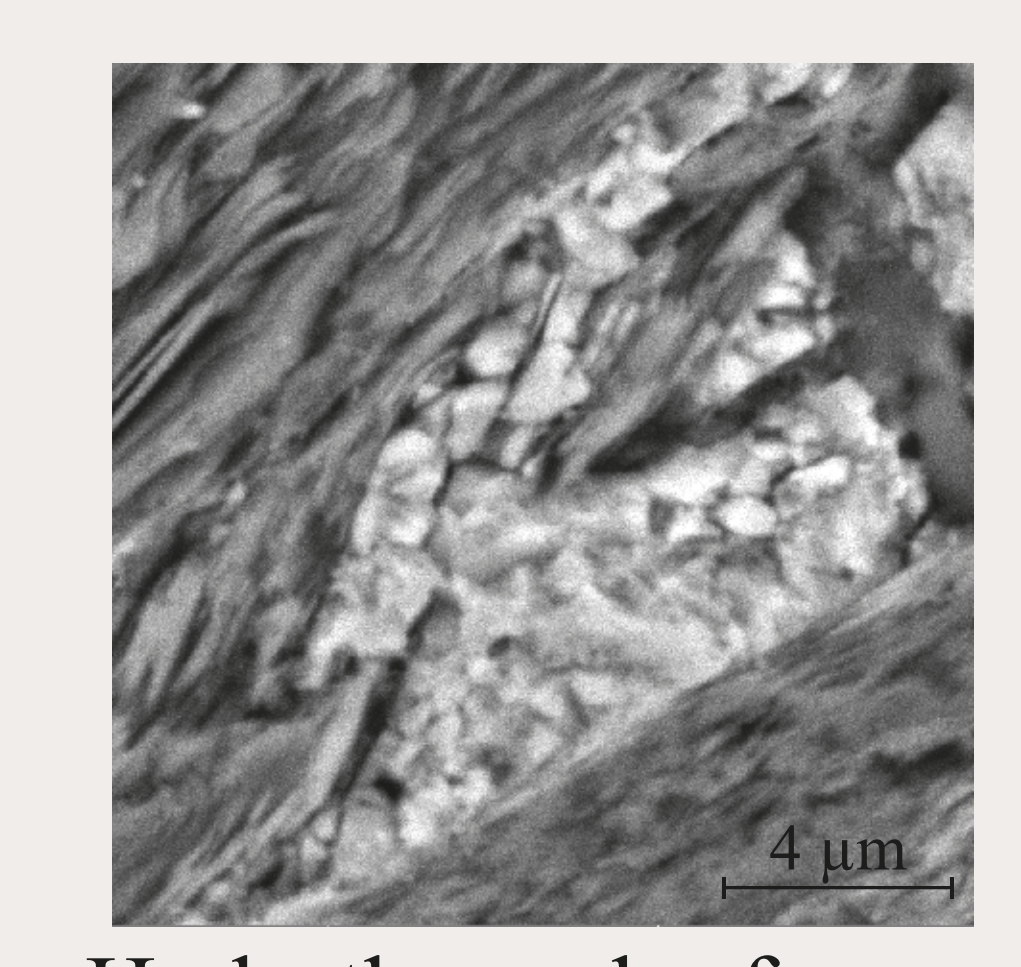
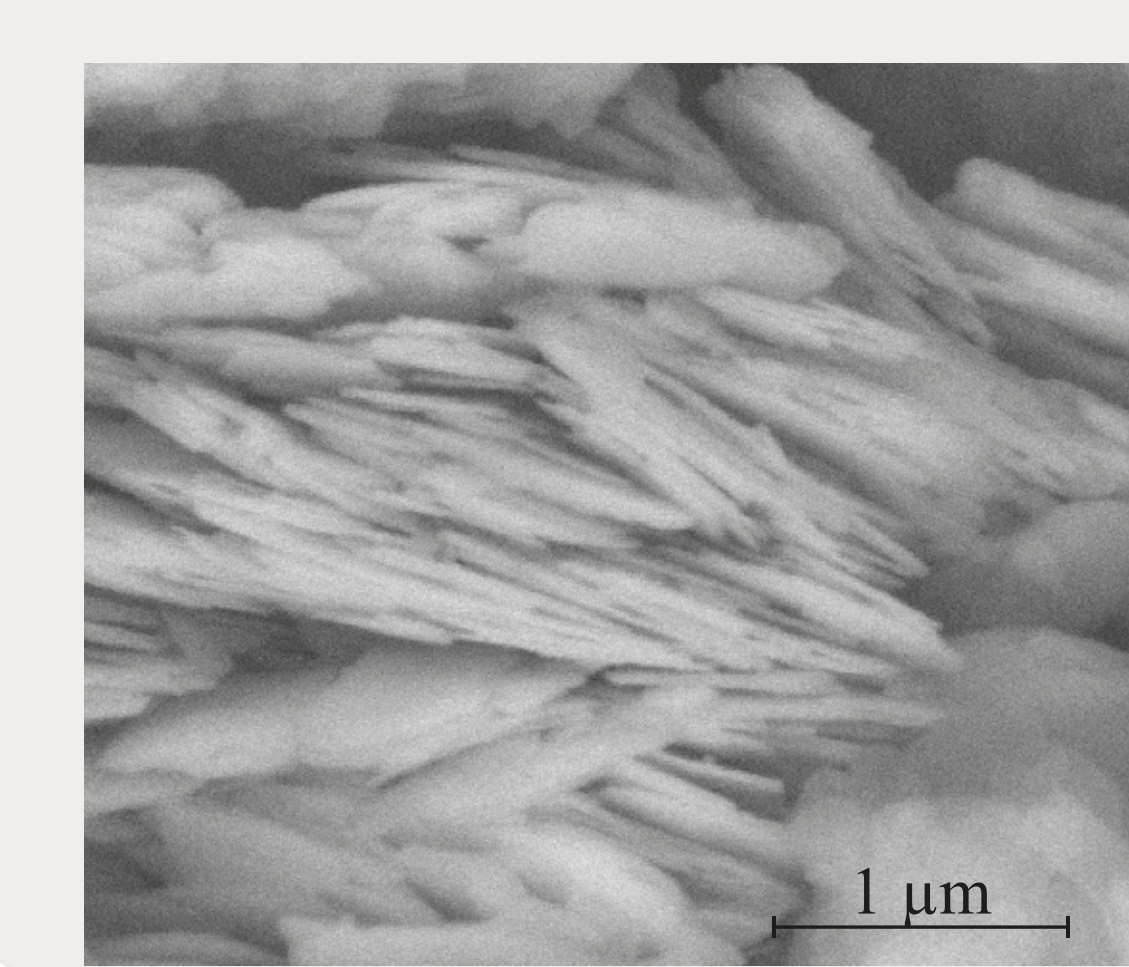


A probable hydrothermal origin (local)
Hematite morphology of lithologies A, C & D are compatible with hydrothermal formation.



Mineral landscape

A diversity of formation, rock type and outcrop availability



Project Prospect

- Expanding the number of caves to cover a bigger area over the Gravettian territory
- Acces to µ-samples from paintings and drawings on the cave's walls to establish links with archaeological layers based on pigment morphology and geochemistry
- Opening the study to induce open air sites

Bibliography

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