

DRAWING Rui Oliveira

BETWEEN LAND AND SEA: THE MONTE CASTÊLO DE GUIFÕES

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EXHIBITION
May 14 to November 1, 2026
Museu da Memória de Matosinhos

10 YEARS
of an archaeological research project

matosinhos

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FLUP FACULDADE DE LETRAS
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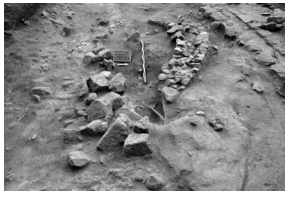
The GUIFARQ archaeological project, initiated in 2016 through a protocol between the Municipality of Matosinhos and the Faculty of Letters of the University of Porto, with the support of the APDL as the owner of the plot where this study is conducted, aims to investigate and enhance the Castro do Monte Castêlo de Guifões. Also functioning as a practical teaching space for future archaeologists, the project is developed in an area near the bank of the Rio Leça designated as "Campo da Ponte", an area that proved crucial for the maritime-fluvial interaction in the daily life of the site.

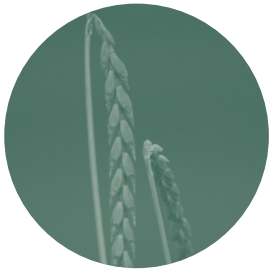
Aerial view of the **paleoestuary of the Rio Leça**, between the sea and Monte Castêlo, later altered through the expansion of the Port of Leixões. *c.* 1950.



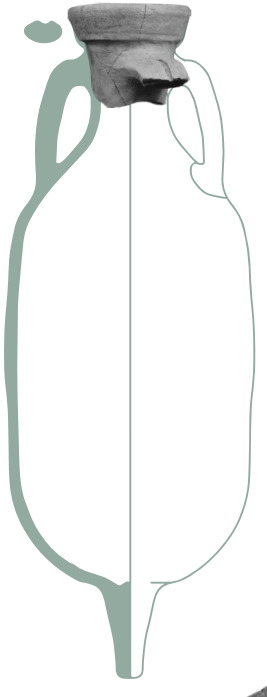


Located on a spur on the left bank of the Rio Leça estuary which, in Antiquity, possessed a wider mouth and good navigability conditions, the settlement records almost ten centuries of human occupation. Its primordial phase, around the 5th century BC, is attested by handmade ceramics and constructions made of perishable materials. Between the 2nd and 1st centuries BC, the first buildings erected with stone elements emerged, with a partially preserved circular-plan structure and a clay hearth base, decorated with sequential impressed circles, standing out in the intervention area.





AMPHORA MOUTH
Mouth and neck, with the spring of a handle of a Haltern 70 type amphora. Baetica, Guadalquivir River Valley.
1st century BC – 1st century AD.



The evolution of the site was accompanied by profound changes in the surrounding landscape. Through archaeobotanical data, the clearing of forests to make way for agricultural fields is attested, where a wide variety of plants were cultivated, such as spelt wheat, barley, and broomcorn millet. With the arrival of the Romans, new crops were introduced such as rye, which complemented the gathering of wild species such as, for example, Portuguese crowberries, blackberries, and acorns, existing in the region.

Its privileged topographical position transformed the Monte Castêlo into a place of stopover and exchange, integrated into maritime routes that connected the Atlantic and Mediterranean worlds. These contacts are attested by the presence, in an initial phase, of Punic ceramics and, later, Campanian amphorae and adornments from North Africa. With the integration of the region into the Roman Empire, which occurred during the Principate of Augustus, the gradual assimilation of new architectural models is evident in Campo da Ponte, materialized in orthogonal structures with ceramic tile roofs (*tegula* and *imbrex*) and in a growing influx of imports from Hispania, mainly from the province of Baetica.

During Late Antiquity, from the 3rd and 4th centuries AD onwards, the space underwent important remodelling, substantiated by the construction of larger buildings. Evidence of propitiatory rituals, such as an oil lamp deposited in the foundations of a building, illustrate the beliefs of the Romanized populations. The strong commercial dynamic continued to guide life at the Monte Castêlo site until the second half of the 5th century AD, proven by the use of fine wares such as African red slip ware and of olive oil amphorae originating from North Africa.



ROMAN OIL LAMP
Typology
Dressel-Lamboglia 30B
3rd-4th Century

