

Archaeological Work in the Évora Area – Preamble

Gordon Moir

A field-walking campaign in the Alentejo region of Portugal lasted for 6 summers, 1986-1991. The area field-walked, about 250 sq km, is shown on figure 1. The aim was a total cover of the area on foot, with monuments of all periods recorded and surface finds recovered. In 1990 trial excavations at Monte do Casão and the Alto do Castelinho da Serra took place. There were further excavations at the Alto do Castelinho in 1993. Also in 1993 some field-work was carried out to the south of the area indicated on figure 1, but no report of that work is included here. Geomorphological work was also undertaken between 1986 and 1990. An account of what was achieved in the first three years, the Interim Report, can be found in Burgess, 1990. Unfortunately Colin Burgess never completed the final report that he had promised. The purpose of the following narratives are to describe as much as is possible the subsequent findings to the Interim, and summarise the overall implications of the work carried out.

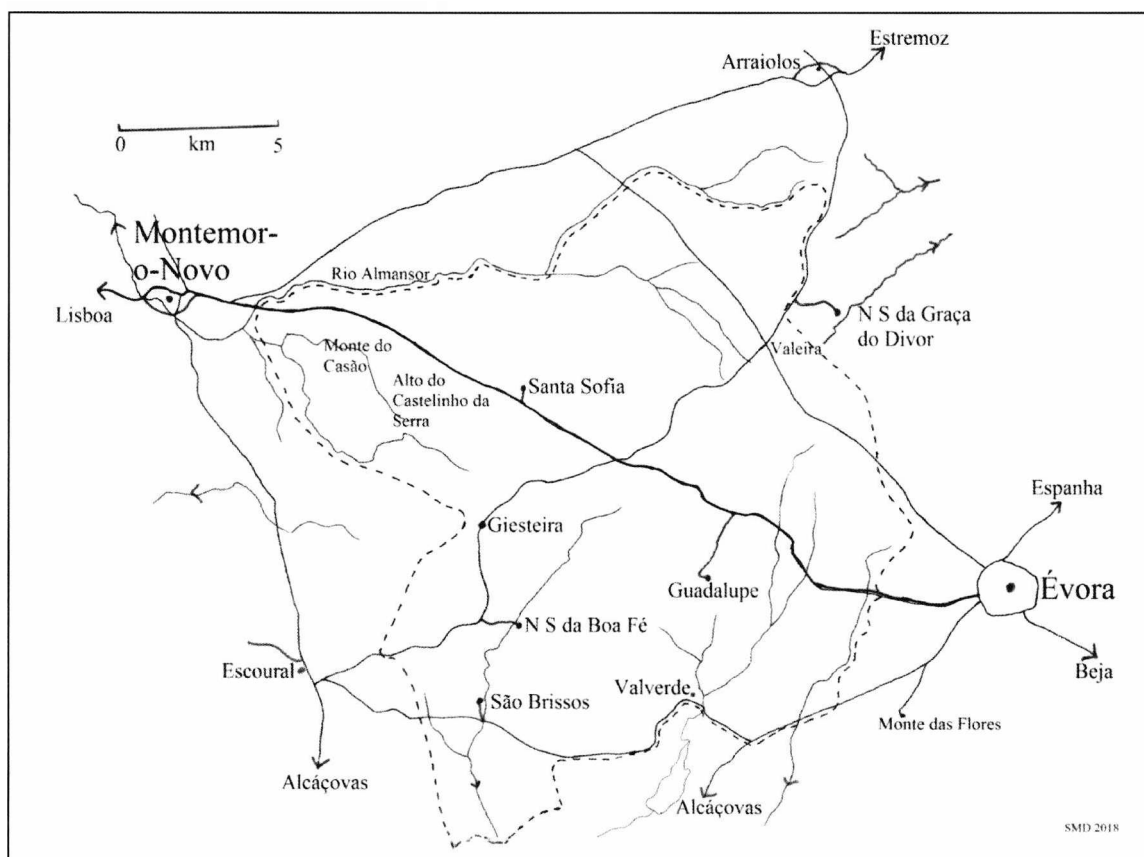


Figure 1. Sketch map of study area, as it was in 1986. The approximate boundary of the survey area is shown by the pecked line.

The Interim Report, appendices 3 and 4, describes the work done in 1986 and 1988 on the geology, soils and vegetation of the area by Messrs Harrison, Immirzi, Macklin and Passmore. In 1990 Harrison, Macklin and Passmore returned to complete their study of alluvial sequences. The survey of current land-use was extended to the northern half of

the study area by Ms. Stockdale. Unfortunately at present the reports produced cannot be located.

The results of the trial excavation at Monte do Casão are presented elsewhere in this volume. Burgess et al (1999) published plans of nine hill-top sites in the area, including a discussion of the results of the excavations in 1990 and 1993 at the Alto do Castelinho site. Gibson, this volume, provides a more detailed discussion of these sites. Also in this volume Lynch provides an overview of the project and a summary of the Anta report given to the Câmara Municipal of Évora; Willis discusses the Roman findings; Correia details the effects on Portuguese archaeology, and Maddison describes the fieldwork aspects of what was after all the most important component of the enterprise – the field-walking.

Subsequent to the studies here described, which of course took place more than 25 years ago, a motorway, the A6, was built that cut right through the survey area; and a dam was constructed on the Rio Almansor in 2003, creating a large lake, see figure 2.

A leaflet guide to some of the prehistoric monuments of the region was produced: *Roteiro do megalitismo*, which is now available on the web: www.cm-evora.pt/pt/Evoraturismo/mais/Documents/EVORAMEGALITICA.pdf.

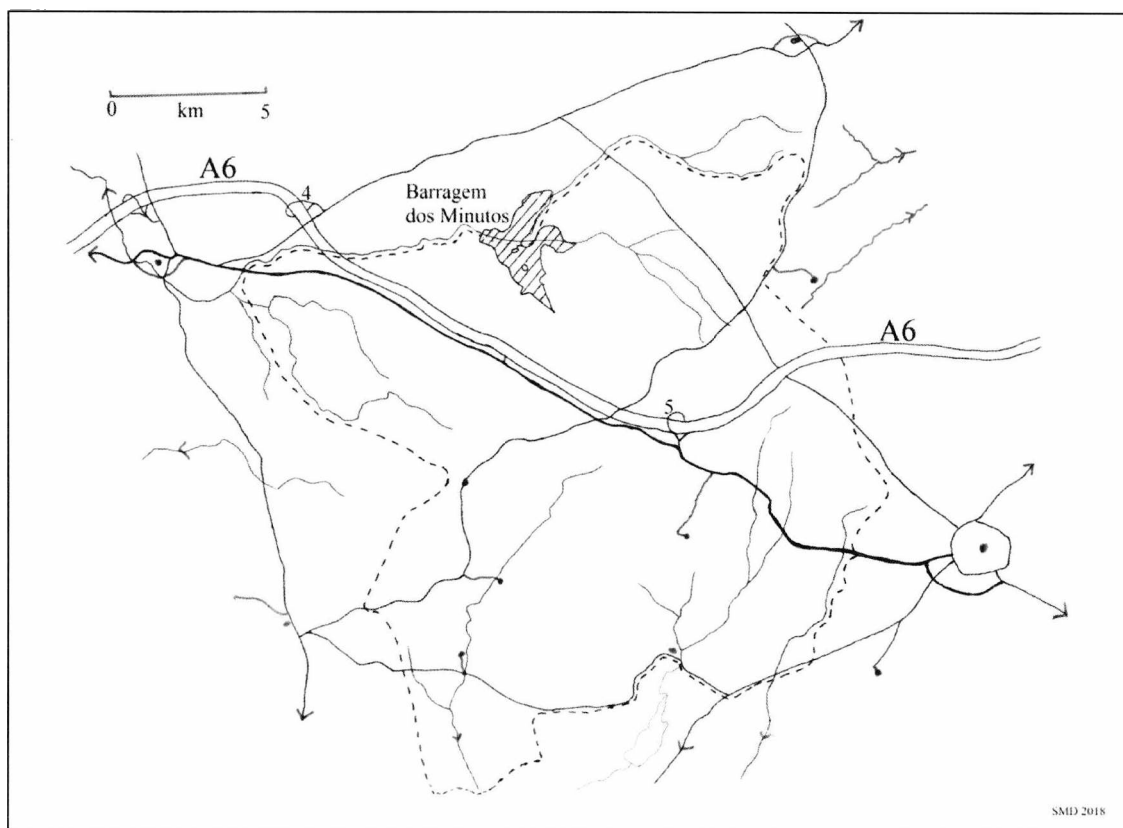


Figure 2. Sketch map of the same area as it is today. The A6 motorway linking Lisbon and Spain crosses through the survey area and the *Barragem dos Minutos* floods part of the area field-walked, though two small islands of dry land remain.

Burgess, C., 1990. *Northern Archaeology*, **8**, 35-105.

Burgess, C., Gibson, C., and Correia, V., 1999. *Northern Archaeology*, **17/18**, 129-147.