



2020

Campo Arqueológico de Proença-a-Nova

TALHADAS – MORADAL DEFENSIVE LINE. Second archaeological campaign to excavate a cannon battery (18th and 19th centuries)

Calendar July 22 to August 4, 2020

Aims Following work carried out in 2016 and 2018, this campaign aims to accomplish digging the entire inner area of the battrery. In addition, we also hope to offer participants the opportunity to get contact with the excavation methodology for this typology of sites. For further information about work already carried out see <http://www.altotejo.org/acafa/docs/Estudos e Trabalhos/O Forte das Batarias.pdf>

Location The village of Catraia, overlooking the bridge over the River Alvito, Proença-a-Nova Municipality, Intermunicipal Community of Beira Baixa.

Programme (course content) Archaeological excavation (17 days).

Archaeological excavation team Site Director: Mário Monteiro (mario.monteiro@emerita.pt) ■ Sector coordinators and collaborators: to be appointed ■ Participants (total): 7.

This work focuses on 18th and 19th century military structures, namely the Battery of Batarias 1 (Fig. 2), where the first campaign was held in 2016. This battery, located at the half slope, worked in conjunction with Fort of Batarias 1 (which occupies the top of the hill and is already excavated and musealized), both structures being part of a Defensive Line (Fig. 3) constructed in 1762 for the Seven Years' War, and restructured in 1801 in the context of the War of the Oranges. Up to date, this military structure has been the focus of archaeological surveying and excavation at the Achada Battery in Vila Velha de Ródão, and at the Fort of Batarias 1 in Proença-a-Nova (Fig. 4).

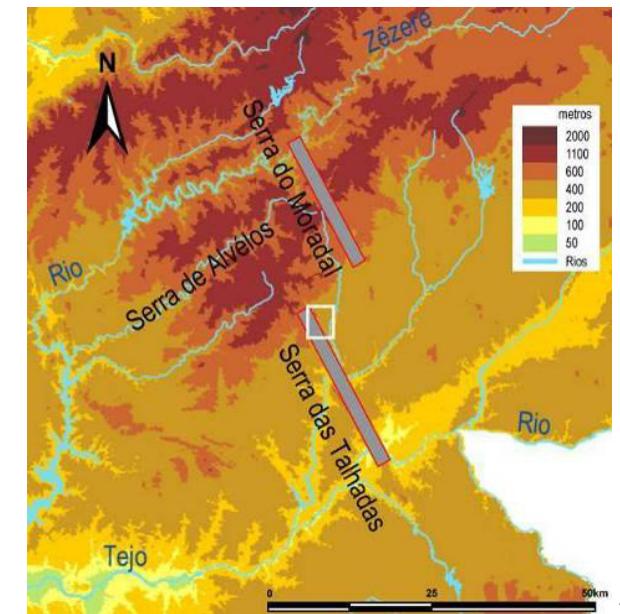
The work programmed for 2019 is integrated in Talhadas-Moradal Defensive Line and includes a project conceived within the scope of the Auri Tagus Programme from the Upper Tagus Study Association, and a plan for the constitution of a Visitors' Centre for the Forts and Batteries in Sobreira Formosa, under the auspices of the Proença-a-Nova Municipal Council.



1



2



Archaeological sites and structures

The Battery of Batarias 1 (Fig. 5, 6, 7 and 8) is located in the half slope, which stands out from the surrounding countryside, overlooking the River Alvito, at an altitude of 280m. It overlooks the bridge of Alvito and controls the Royal Road from Castelo Branco to Sobreira Formosa, a broad view as far as the horizon in the direction of the city of Castelo Branco.

The Battrey of Batarias 1 and the Fort of Batarias 1 was part of a defensive structure designed to prevent the progress of invading armies coming along the road through Portela da Catraia, and consisted of various structures strategically laid out.



4. View of the hill of Fort of Batarias 1 and Batery of Batarias 1.

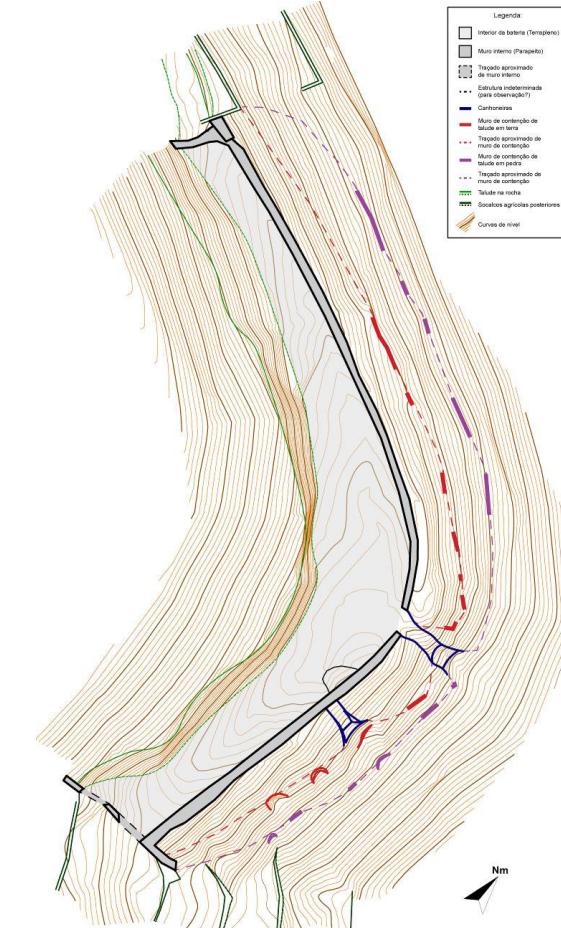
After conclusion of the work carried out in 2016, the data obtained showed a structure that was well built in accordance with the building techniques common for the period, with vestiges of use and two phases of construction ad occupation.

The Battery of Batarias 1 is located halfway up the slope at the point where the gradient suddenly becomes steeper, east of the fort. It consists of schist walls forming an obtuse angle that accompanies the curve of the level of the hill and earthen slopes on the outer part. On the inner side, there is a broad platform excavated in the rock. At the junction of the two arms, which forms an angle, there is an opening, which probably corresponds to an embrasure. Regarding its state of conservation, it seems to be average, though there are trees and earth covering the structures.

In 2016 a transverse probe was opened with 2m wide. And an 1m wide strip being completely dismantled to identify the apparatus and construction techniques used in the structure, to evaluate the state of conservation of the same and to propose future works. It was found that there were two outer walls on the embankment containing different fillers, which formed a structure for damping bullets fired against the battery.

However, these two walls were completely dismantled in the area of the survey, certainly for the use of the stone in the construction of agricultural terraces existing contiguously, being only perceptible as its foundations. The identified walls and dismantled structures of the battery are already rebuilt in the survey area, with only this sloping area being rebuilt to provide the visitor with a glimpse of what the structure should be at the date of the rebuilding in 1801.

In 2018 the entire internal wall of the battery was defined, and it was found that it was a closed structure at the ends, with two gunboats and a probable access path to the fort from the south side. In 2020, it is intended to continue this work, with the aim of excavating the internal embankment, identifying the location of the gunpowder warehouse and confirming the route to the fort.



5. Topographic survey of the Battery of Batarias 1 (2018).

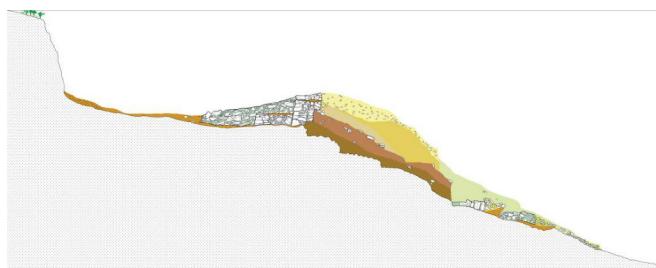


6. Battery of Batarias 1



Excavation work

In the future, it is intended to carry out excavation work on the whole internal area of the battery (the embankment), to define walls and gunboats and to identify the location of the warehouse, thus making it musealized and didactically exposed for the visitor's enjoyment.



7. Profile drawing.



8. Beginning of the day in the excavation of the batery.

Some texts about the Talhadas – Moradal Defensive Line

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Projecto de Investigação da
Linha Defensiva das Talhadas-Moradal

See de video

http://defensivelinecongress.pt/uploads/1/0/7/2/107201007/fortes_movie.mov