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Bajoimperiales de Hispania**

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THE LATE ROMAN *VILLAE* OF HORTA DA TORRE AND MONTE DE SÃO FRANCISCO AND THEIR RURAL CONTEXT (NORTH ALENTEJO, PORTALEGRE DISTRICT, PORTUGAL)

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RESUMEN / ABSTRACT

Resumen: La investigación en las *villae* ilustra la consolidación del control administrativo y económico de territorios marginales y al mismo tiempo, presenta interesantes contextos para comprender el colapso del control romano sobre el territorio y la aparición de realidades sociales alternativas. Desde 2018 hemos comenzado un nuevo proyecto de investigación sobre el desarrollo del Alto Alentejo desde la conquista romana hasta el bajo imperio, en este caso presentamos algunas preguntas de investigación y resultados preliminares relacionados con las *villae* de este último periodo. Nuestro trabajo comprende el uso de métodos no-invasivos como prospección artefactual, reconstrucción fotogramétrica del paisaje, prospección geofísica mediante georradar y también diversas campañas de excavación. Haremos hincapié en dos *villae* con *floruit* de ocupación bajoimperial, Horta da Torre y Monte de São Francisco que focalizan nuestro estudio sobre el territorio rural en época tardía.

Abstract: The development of large, Roman-style *villae* have been seen as powerful illustrations of the consolidation of Roman administrative and economic control, even in supposed backwater territories in far-flung areas of the Roman Empire. Their demise, moreover, sheds light on the collapse of Roman control and the appearance of new social realities. In this paper, we approach these research questions from the point of view of a new landscape archaeology project launched in 2018, researching North Alentejo (Portugal) from the Roman conquest to the Late Roman Empire. Our research, still work in progress, deploys non-destructive methods such as archaeological survey, landscape photogrammetric reconstruction, ground penetrating radar (GPR) surveys and several excavation campaigns. Here, we preliminarily discuss the examples of Horta da Torre and Monte de São Francisco to illustrate the situation in this rural area in the Late Roman period.

Introduction

In this paper, we offer some preliminary thoughts on two large *villae* that are located in the area of modern Northern Alentejo, Portugal (Municipality of Fronteira) referring to both excavation and field survey evidence. In antiquity, the area was located in the margins of the territory of the major Roman town of Emerita Augusta (fig. 1). The two *villae*: Horta da Torre, near Cabeço de Vide, and Monte de São Francisco, in the outskirts of Vale de Maceiras, have been studied intensively by A. Carneiro.¹ Based at Évora

University, Carneiro has carried out excavations in selected areas of the two *villa* sites. More recently, the two *villae* have become the object of study also as part of a new collaborative landscape archaeological project, the so-called *Frontier Landscape Project (FLP)*.² This project has been made possible by the Dutch Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, and is coordinated by T.D. Stek from the Dutch side (Leiden University, Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome) and by A. Carneiro (Évora University) for the Portuguese side. The *FLP* aims to study the long-term development of Iron Age to Late Roman Portugal (Lusitania), using

¹ E.g. CARNEIRO, A., "O final das villae na Lusitânia Romana. O exemplo da Horta da Torre (Fronteira)", *Urbs Regia* 2 (2017a), pp. 56-59; CARNEIRO, A., "A villa romana como projecto de poder. Da romanidade à interpretação arqueológica" in NOGALES BASARRATE, T. (ed.), *Lusitania Romana: del pasado al presente de la investigación*, *Actas IX Mesa Redonda Internacional De Lusitania* (Museo Arqueológico Nacional, 29-30 septiembre 2016), 2017b, pp. 233-254.

² STEK, T.D., A. CARNEIRO & J. GARCÍA SÁNCHEZ, "Frontier Landscape Project. The archaeology of Roman colonialism in the Fronteira area, ancient Lusitania (Northern Alentejo region, Portugal, 2018)", *TMA* 59 (2018), p. 55; CARNEIRO, A., J. GARCÍA SÁNCHEZ, T.D. STEK & R.A.A. KALKERS "Primeiros Resultados do Fronteira Landscape Project: A Arqueologia da paisagem romana no Alto Alentejo", *Al-Madan Online* 22.3 (2018), pp. 46- 54.

the modern Municipality of Fronteira (Portalegre district, Portugal) as one of its case-studies.

Drawing from existing excavation data and on the preliminary data of the first season of the *FLP* in 2018, in this paper we aim to shed light on the issue of the development and demise of large *villae* in the Roman and Late Roman periods. As methodology, we combine various non-destructive approaches which were developed in other case-studies in Italy: notably in the *Tappino Area Archaeological Project*,³ the *Colonial Landscape Project Aesernia*,⁴ and the surveys in the *Ager Venusinus*.⁵ These methods include low-altitude aerial photogrammetry,⁶ artefactual research, and geophysical prospection using Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR).⁷

The annual excavations since 2012 at the site of Horta da Torre unearthed a huge reception room with a double apse including a *stibadium*. For the post-Roman period, the excavations suggest that this room was re-used, by ‘squatters’ as it were, who built a longhouse and probably were responsible for the re-purposing of the precious materials and marble decoration from the site. The chronology for this demise can be dated to the mid-5th century AD, after the abandonment of the *villa* but before the collapse of its walls. In Monte de São Francisco, around the *villa* buildings, a large necropolis was installed, with inhumations beginning around the late 5th century AD.⁸

Landscape and site approaches

The point of departure of the 2018 campaign of the *FLP* has been the site catalogue of North Alentejo that was created by A. Carneiro over the last two decades, and in particular his detailed regional survey within the boundaries of the Municipality of Fronteira⁹ (fig. 2). These two site catalogues address the long-term

settlement history of the region from Prehistory to the Late Roman period. The information contained in these volumes is the basis for a regional understanding of Roman period settlement trends in the countryside. On this occasion, we will not dwell on the discussion of the Iron Age (well-illustrated by the important hill-fort settlement of Cabeço de Vaiamonte in Monforte, and Evoramonte), early Roman expansion in the area or the subsequent integration in the Roman socio-political system (as evidenced by the “twin” towers that control the passage of Serra das Penas, or the monumental fortified tower of Mariano, south of Vale de Maceiras (in the Municipality of Sousel).

Instead, here we focus on areas with dense settlement of the Roman period that can be divided in three major groups (fig. 2):¹⁰ Zone 1: the high site density area alongside Via XII and the Guadiana valley, indicating intensive economic activities; Zone 2: The countryside that was controlled by large *villae* with *fundi* in between, indicating a latifundial system; and Zone 3: The area with an extremely low density of Roman sites along the corridor from Avis to Gavião through Ponte de Sor, possibly indicating that these were marginal areas and that the sites in these areas only facilitated those travelling to or from *Olisipo*.

The lack of urban sites in the territory is also worth mentioning. The incorporation of *Lusitania* in the Roman political system was achieved with the foundation of regional capitals, in particular the colony of *Emerita Augusta* with Italic veterans from the war against the *Cantabri* and *Astures* (29-19 BC). Besides *Emerita*, *Ebora Liberalitas Iulia*, *Pax Iulia*, and other minor centres such as *Ammaia* and *Albelterium* are present. This situation reinforces the importance of the large *latifundia* in controlling the countryside economically as well as socially and politically together with the aforementioned minor centres. Moreover, the

³ STEK, T. D., “Exploring non-urban society in the Mediterranean: hill-forts, villages and sanctuary sites in ancient Samnium, Italy”, *Antiquity Project Gallery*, 92 (2018), pp. 1-7

⁴ STEK T.D., E.B. MODRALL, R.A.A. KALKERS, R.H. VAN OTTERLOO & J. SEVINK, “An early Roman colonial landscape in the Apennine mountains: landscape archaeological research in the territory of Aesernia (Central-Southern Italy)”, *Analysis Archaeologica*, 1 (2015), pp. 229-291.

⁵ PELGROM, J., G. CANTORO, A. CASAROTTO, L. LECCE, J. GARCÍA SÁNCHEZ & T.D. STEK, “New approaches to the study of village sites in the territory of Venosa”, *Agri Centuriati*, 11 (2014), pp. 31-59; J. PELGROM, J., L. LECCE, J. GARCÍA SÁNCHEZ & T.D. STEK, “Le indagini olandesi sul pianoro di Masseria Caslini Sottana (2013-2014)”, in DE SIENA, A. & T. GIAMMATTEO (eds.), *Palazzo San Gervasio Modalità insediative e pratiche funerarie dal territorio*, Venosa, 2016, pp. 277-289; A. CASAROTTO, A., J. PELGROM & T.D. STEK, “A systematic GIS-based analysis of settlement developments in the landscape of Venosa in the Hellenistic-Roman period”, *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences*, (2017), pp. 1-19, doi.org/10.1007/s12520-017-0561-y.

⁶ VERHOEVEN, G.J.J., “Providing an Archaeological Bird’s-Eye View – An Overall Picture of Ground-Based Means to Execute Low-Altitude Aerial Photography (LAAP) in Archaeology”, *Archaeological Prospection* 16, (2009), pp. 233-49; STEK, T.D., “Drones over Mediterranean landscapes. The potential of small UAV’s (drones) for site detection and heritage management in archaeological survey projects: A case study from Le Pianelle in the Tappino Valley, Molise (Italy)”, *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, 22 (2016), pp. 1066-1071.

⁷ SARRIS, A., G. CANTORO, R.A.A. KALKERS, J. PELGROM & T.D. STEK, “Geophysical prospection in the territory of the Roman town of Aesernia, Central-Southern Italy”, *Archaeological Prospection*, 53, (2015), pp. 345-350.

⁸ CARNEIRO, A., *Povoamento Romano no Actual Concelho de Fronteira*, Coimbra, 2004; CARNEIRO, A., *Carta arqueológica do concelho de Fronteira*, Lisboa, 2005.

⁹ *Ibidem*; CARNEIRO, A., *Lugares, Tempos e Pessoas. Povoamento rural romano no Alto Alentejo*. Coimbra, 2014.

¹⁰ CARNEIRO, A., “Nos limites do Império: Dinâmicas de povoamento na transição para a Antiguidade Tardia no Alto Alentejo”, in TEXEIRA, C. & A. CARNEIRO (eds.) *Arqueologia da transição: entre o mundo romano e a Idade Média*, Lisboa, (2017), pp. 41.

lack of urban centres suggests that the local population was mostly composed of labourers, whose settlement pattern was twofold. Some inhabited these vast territories in a close and unequal relationship with the estate owners, while others settled in medium-sized sites with indicators of wealth and consumption (coins, *terra sigillata*) or in small nucleated settlements ('aldeias' in Portuguese).

The marginal situation of the landscape far from urban centres is similar to the historical development north of the River Duero, where one of the authors of this paper, J. García Sánchez, is conducting parallel research on the evolution of the Roman settlement pattern, and the creation of the so-called *villa* landscape along the Odra river in Burgos.¹¹ The isolation from major urban centres, especially far from the *conventus* capital of *Clunia* (only *Segisamo* and *Iulio-briga* were relevant enough to be considered part of the urban network) fostered the appropriation of large estates by private owners. This eventually led to the creation of big fortunes (or fortunes re-invested in land) and henceforth the monumentalisation of some of the Early Imperial *villae* in the 3rd century AD (in line with similar processes of monumentalisation occurring in the rest of the Western provinces). These developments are linked to the administrative and territorial reorganisation of the structure of the Empire itself¹² or the ex-novo construction of new *villae*.¹³

Survey results

The archaeological field survey was carried out following methodological principles that tie in with the established survey tradition in the Mediterranean world. Our take on this type of survey has been developed in diverse case studies in Italy, most notably the aforementioned *Tappino Area Archaeological Project*¹⁴ and the *Colonial Landscape Project* in the territory of *Aesernia* (both in the modern region of Molise in Central-South Italy).¹⁵ It consists of the systematic intensive coverage of all accessible fields, using arbitrary units of max. 50 x 100 m. Surveyors are spaced at ten metre

intervals and collect all archaeological finds in a two metre-wide strip. This strategy results in a surface sample with a coverage of 20% of each unit, from which every archaeological item is collected, bagged, tagged with metadata indications (day, time, team, surveyor, type of sampling procedure) and processed in the laboratory according to the ware and shape classification defined by the project.

As a preliminary quantification, an arbitrary threshold of 5 sherds per square metre is used by the teams in the field in order to define site boundaries. Sites could be subjected to alternative pottery collection strategies, such as the sampling of only diagnostic materials during revisits. The main advantage of this method is that it allows further quantitative and qualitative analyses of the survey data, on both at site and off-site scales.¹⁶

In the first survey campaign (January 2018) we discovered ephemeral traces in the landscape that are potentially related to the Iron Age occupation phase of the hillfort of Castelo de Mau Vizinho (F403). Very tentatively, a first moment of conquest could be recognized at a site located on an artificial elongated platform (F405), known prior to our survey and referred to as Caniceira 1. Carneiro has suggestively interpreted the site as a Roman camp or a *mutatio* controlling the movement east-west in between the two Iron Age hillforts at Cabeça de Vaiamonte and Castelo do Mau Vizinho respectively.¹⁷

The survey results around Horta da Torre (fig. 3) suggest that at least in the late Roman phase, a burial area developed directly to the south-west of the *villa*. To the west three sites were identified (F204, F205, and F206). In the eastern and north-eastern part of this sample area, the situation is rather complex. A few small sites (F201, F202 and F203) were located closer alongside the river Ribeira do Verdigão. To the south of that narrow stream, more sites were identified. Some of these have a clear Roman chronology, and they vary in size from small (F405 and F406) to medium-sized (F407 and F408).

¹¹ GARCÍA SÁNCHEZ, J., "El poblamiento y la explotación del paisaje en la meseta norte entre la edad del hierro y época romana altoimperial. Una aproximación a través de la arqueología espacial", *Zephyrus* 59 (2009), pp. 81-96.

¹² BROGIOLO, G.P. and CHAVARRÍA ARNAU, A. "El final de las villas y las transformaciones del territorio rural en Occidente (siglos V-VIII)" in FERNÁNDEZ OCHOA, C., V. GARCÍA-ENTERO, and F. GIL SENDINO (ed.) *Las villae tardorromanas en el occidente del Imperio: arquitectura y función. IV Coloquio Internacional de Arqueología en Gijón*, Gijón: (2008), p.195.

¹³ GARCÍA-ENTERO, V., "La investigación de las villae romanas de la Meseta" in REVILLA, V., J.R. GONZÁLEZ, & M. PREVOSTI (eds.) *Les villes romanes a la Tarraconense. Implantació, evolució i transformació. Estat actual de la Investigació del món rural en època romana*, Lleida, 2007, pp. 27-47.

¹⁴ Cf. STEK 2018, *op. cit.*; STEK, T.D., J. PELGROM, A. CASAROTTO, J. GARCÍA SÁNCHEZ, L.C. GÖTZ, A.C. HAMEL, K. IANNANTUONO, R.A.A. KALKERS, M.K. TERMEER & J. WAAGEN, "Santuari, villaggi, centri fortificati e prima urbanizzazione tra sanniti e romani", *Archeomolise*, 26 (2016), pp. 24-39.

¹⁵ Cf. STEK *et al.* 2015, *op. cit.*

¹⁶ Examples of off-site survey analysis: WAAGEN, J., "Evaluating background noise: Assessing off-site data from field surveys around the Italic sanctuary of S. Giovanni in Galdo, Molise, Italy", *Journal of Field Archaeology* 39 (2014), pp. 417-29; GARCÍA SÁNCHEZ, J., J. PELGROM & T.D. STEK, "Comparing re-surveys in Isernia and Venosa (Molise and Basilicata, Italy)", *Mediterranean Archaeology & Archaeometry* 17 (2017), pp. 39-52-

¹⁷ CARNEIRO, A., 2005, *op. cit.*; CARNEIRO, A. 2004, *op. cit.* The interpretation as a Roman camp is suggestive but still has to be verified.

The off-site survey of the direct surroundings of the Horta da Torre *villa* yielded a very large quantity of finds –in fact, more than most small sites in the area, but the finds are very evenly distributed throughout the unit, suggesting a “halo” of intensive exploitation. In future campaigns we plan to intensify the research strategy in selected places in order to gain a better understanding of these areas where rural sites are barely noticeable over the low-density background noise.¹⁸ Hopefully, this method will allow us to gain a better understanding of the *fundus* of this type of large *villae*.

The situation sketched above, based on on-site and off-site survey results, seems to support the relevance of this location in the formation of the Roman landscape. The area harnessed the pre-existing indigenous landscape, the construction of Early Imperial settlements, and eventually the foundation of *mansiones* such as *Abelterium* (Alter do Chão). The area benefited from the vicinity of the Roman road which connected the area to the wider Roman world, and enabled goods entering the area controlled by Horta da Torre in exchange for the economic surplus produced in the *pars rustica* of the *villa*. One could argue that eventually it was also this vicinity to the road system which caused the occupation and repurposing of the site by ‘squatters’, and the systematic dismantling and exporting of the marble slabs that decorated the *villae*, possibly to be recycled in lime production, on which more in the following paragraph.¹⁹

In tandem with the field survey, we also applied geophysical prospection at the sites of Horta da Torre and Monte de São Francisco, in order to better understand the spatial layout of both sites and its direct environment. A GPR survey was carried out by a team from Universidad de Cádiz-UCA GPR service, led by Lázaro Lagóstena Barrios, using a Stream-X 200 mHz antenna.

The *villa* of Horta da Torre and its *stibadium*

The GPR survey provided major new insights in the understanding of the spatial layout of Horta da Torre. Previous excavations focused on the area devoted to the representation of the *villa*’s owner, especially around the *stibadium* (fig. 4 and 5). This feature has special relevance for the archaeology of Late Roman Lusitania because it represents one of the very few examples of this type of luxurious facilities known in the Western Empire. Besides the example of Horta da Torre, we only know the *stibadium* at Faragola-Ascoli Satriano,²⁰ Rome,²¹ El Ruedo,²² Rabaçal,²³ and Cañada Honda in Italica.²⁴ Carneiro’s excavation campaigns unearthed the room complex where the *stibadium* and the *cenatio* were located; moreover the successive processes of abandonment, collapse and re-occupation were remarkably well-preserved and henceforth documented by the excavators.

Around the mid-5th century AD the *villa* was abandoned and the room complex was occupied by what can be described as a group of squatters who installed a longhouse, perforating the *opus signinum* of the *cenatio* in front of the *stibadium*, and used the *impluvium* and the almost collapsed peristyle building as a shelter for animals and as a dump area (fig. 4).²⁵

The plan of the rest of the *villa* complex remained largely unknown, despite a site-oriented survey being conducted in the few fields that are ploughed annually. The area is covered by a pasture, which thin grassy cover did not reveal any anomalies on (recent and historical) aerial imagery that could have provided us with information on the layout of the *villa*. The GPR survey, however, did reveal a large building structured around two big courtyards, delimited by a large number of rooms or *cubicula*, and the continuation of the sector previously excavated by Carneiro. While the full interpretation of the GPR survey results is still in progress, this already enables us to cau-

¹⁸ For a similar approach, see: MAYORAL HERRERA, V., A. URIARTE, T. CHAPA, J.M. VICENT, & A. CABRERA, “‘Background noise’ and landscape exploitation in the Late Iron Age Andalusian countryside”, in VAN LEUSEN M. (ed.) *Hidden Landscapes of Mediterranean Europe. Cultural and methodological biases in pre- and protohistoric landscape studies*, Oxford, 2007, pp. 265-270; GALLANT, T.W., “‘Background Noise’ and Site Definition: A Contribution to Survey Methodology”, *Journal of Field Archaeology*, 13 (1986), pp. 403-418.

¹⁹ CHAVARRÍA, A., *El final de las villae en Hispania (siglos IV- VII)*. Bibliothèque de l’Antiquité Tardive 7. Turnhout, 2007; MUNRO, B., “Recycling, demand for materials, and land ownership at villas in Italy and the western provinces in late antiquity (5th-6th century AD)”, *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 25 (2012), pp. 351-370.

²⁰ VOLPE, G., “Stibadium e convivium in una villa tardoantica (Faragola - Ascoli Satriano)”, in SILVESTRINI, M. T. SPAGNUOLO VIGORITA, & G. VOLPE (eds.) *Scritti in onore di Francesco Grelle*, Bari, 2006, pp. 319-49.

²¹ SAVIANE, N., *Domus e Balneum*, in: M. BAUMGARTNER (ed.), *Roma Rinascente. La città antica tra Quirinale e Pincio*, Roma, 2017, pp. 107-23.

²² VAQUERIZO GIL, D. & J.M. NOGUERA CELDRÁN, *La villa romana de El Ruedo (Almedinilla, Coirdoba). Decoración escultórica e interpretación*, Murcia, 1997.

²³ PESSOA, M., “Um *stibadium* com mosaico na villa romana do Rabaçal”, *Revista de História da Arte* 6 (2008), pp. 139-161.

²⁴ HIDALGO, R., I. CARRASCO, F. TEICHNER & F. HERMANN, “El proyecto de investigación arqueológica en la Cañada Honda de Italica. Planeamientos, objetivos y primeros resultados”, *Antiquitas*, 30 (2018), pp. 45-61.

²⁵ CARNEIRO, A. 2017, *op. cit.*

tiously identify parallels, both locally, regionally, and supra-regionally.

The nearby *villa* of Torre de Palma in Monforte offers an obvious parallel, also concerning the after-life of the site at the end of the Late Imperial period.²⁶ In the Lusitanian province recent excavations and GPR surveys also revealed a monumental building nearby modern Fresno-Alhándiga (Salamanca, Spain), alongside the *Iter ab Emerita Asturica*.²⁷ Finally, a supra-regional parallel, though not far from the previous example, can be found at the *villa* of Vegas Negras (Burgos), also subject to ongoing research using diverse non-destructive methods such as GPS-based artefactual survey²⁸ and geophysical prospection.²⁹ Common features between these four examples, including Horta da Torre, are their location in vast and open territories, devoted to dry farming and isolation from major urban centres, seemingly disconnected from forms of urban power and control. In one case, Torre de Palma, the construction of Christian buildings may in fact have been urged by the need to densify the network of worship facilities due to the large distance to the nearest cities.³⁰

The *villa* of Monte de São Francisco

The second case study that we would like to present in this paper, is the *villa* of Monte de São Francisco. The site was previously known from the survey

of the Municipality of Fronteira carried out by Carneiro, which identified a large area comprising several dense pottery scatters, and the excavation of three inhumation graves in 2015, after the incidental discovery of human remains (fig. 6).³¹ The excavation revealed three graves with scarce grave goods and bone remains, and were identified as inhumations from circa the 6th century AD. At the time of discovery, this was one of the first testimonies of necropolisation of a Late Roman *villae* in the area. However, the extent and spatial layout of the building remained unknown and as stated, the character of the site was defined purely on the basis of the pottery scatters on the surface.

The GPR survey, though only partially finished, identified possible new burials around those excavated in 2015 and gave us an indication of the layout of the *villa*. Though the GPR survey did not cover the full extent of the site during our first campaign, we can already identify two sides of the main building with small rooms and, similarly to Horta da Torre, another open central space. Moreover, at a distance of circa 75 metres from the building we spotted several fragments of burnt and sintered building materials (bricks) on the surface, which overlapped with an anomaly in the GPR survey. This anomaly has for now been interpreted as a kiln/furnace, with a still unknown intended purpose, though the presence of numerous metal slags in this area could suggest metallurgic activities.

²⁶ LANCHÁ, J. & P. ANDRÉ, *Corpus dos mosaicos romanos de Portugal. II – Conventus Pacensis. 1 – A villa de Torre de Palma*, Lisbon, 2000.

²⁷ DE SOTO R. & R. PÉREZ DE DIOS, personal communication.

²⁸ Survey methodology similar to: GARCÍA SÁNCHEZ, J., “Metodologías de prospección a escala regional y artefactual en la comarca. La prospección del Ager Segisamonensis; comarca Odra-Pisuerga (Burgos)”, *Complutum* 24 (2013), pp. 9-28.

²⁹ CARMONA BALLESTERO, E., CORTÉS BÀRCENA C., GARCÍA ROJO, A. CONDE MORENO, J.F. & VEGA MAESO, C. in this volume.

³⁰ MALONEY, S.J., “The early christian basilican complex of Torre de Palma (Monforte, Alto Alentejo, Portugal)” in *IV Reunião de Arqueologia Cristã Hispanica: Lisboa, 28-20 de setembro, 1-2 d'octubre de 1992*, 1995, pp. 449-458.

³¹ CARNEIRO, A. 2004, *op. cit.*; CARNEIRO, A. 2005, *op. cit.*

Types of reoccupation	Toponym	Municipality	Remarks
Squatter re-occupation	Argamassas	Campo Maior	Kitchen over mosaic
	Quinta das Longas	Elvas	Perforated pavements
	S. Vitória do Ameixial	Estremoz	Kitchen, fauna consumption
	Monte de São Pedro	Fronteira	Space sub-division; excavated storage (silo)
	Horta da Torre	Fronteira	Perforated pavements; kitchen
	Torre de Palma	Monforte	Mosaic restoration; kitchen
Necropolisation	S. Salvador	C. Maior	Necropolis outside of <i>pars urbana</i>
	S. Pedro dos Pastores	C. Maior	Necropolis in between structures
	Ovelheira	Elvas	Grave in apse space in between <i>villa</i> structures
	Terrugem	Elvas	Necropolis in between structures
	Silveirona/Coelha	Estremoz	Necropolis in between structures
	Horta de S. Pedro	Sousel	Necropolis in between structures (?)
	Pombais	Marvão	Necropolis in bath house
	Mascarro	Castelo de Vide	Grave in between structures
	Vale da Bexiga	Castelo de Vide	Graves in between structures
	Monte de S. Francisco	Fronteira	Graves in between structures
Christian building	Torre de Palma	Monforte	Basilica outside of <i>pars urbana</i>

Table 1. Different types of *villa* reoccupation (after CARNEIRO A. 2017b, *op. cit.*, 59)

Conclusions

This paper focused on two *villae* in the Late Roman period: Horta da Torre and Monte de São Francisco, located in modern-day North Alentejo. The archaeological features located and studied by Carneiro's excavations reveal the importance of the site of Horta da Torre. The *stibadium* and the *cenatio* clearly suggest a culture of self-representation linked to Roman-styled local elites, with similar tastes, and connections as their peers living in other parts of the Roman Empire, such as *Corduba*, *Italica*, or the Italian peninsula itself. Moreover, the intensive use of the surrounding countryside shows the projection of the power of the *villa* owner on the *fundus*. Extending our sample areas, while intensifying our methods on selected sites in planned campaigns in the near-future, should enable us to gain new insights in the organization and use of the countryside in Late Antiquity.

Our understanding of the process of Late Roman presence, abandonment, and re-occupation is still far from complete. Nevertheless, the approach combining non-destructive methods with excavations can help us to identify processes and strategies at the regional and local scale. As has been seen, the case-studies already present us with two different strategies of post-abandonment use of *villae*. Firstly, the 'squatter' re-occupation and the recycling of the marble slabs to

produce lime. Secondly, the 'necropolisation' of places that used to be part of the *pars urbana*. Both phenomena are to be understood in the broader context of Hispania in the 5th century AD, where similar patterns of post-*villa* re-use have been detected and studied in depth (table 1).³² Hopefully, our future campaigns can contribute to these research themes.

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³² CHAVARRÍA, A., "Interpreting the transformation of Late Roman villae: the case of Spain", in CHRISTIE, N. (ed.), *Landscapes of Change: rural evolutions in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004, p. 76.

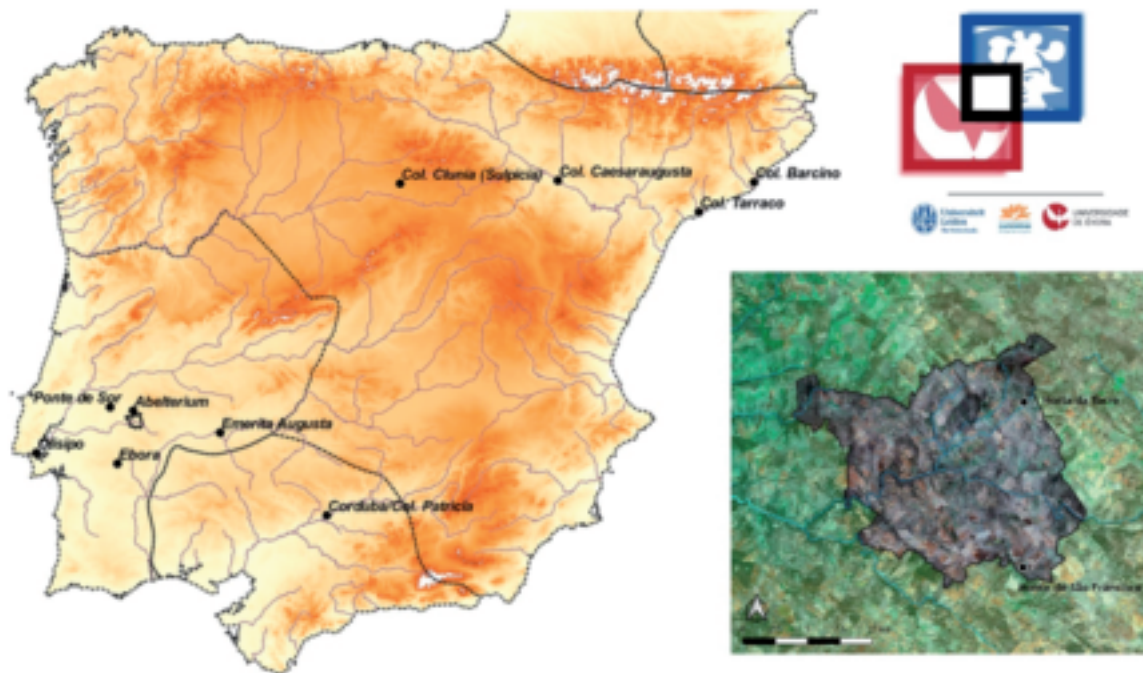


Fig. 1. Left: location of the research area on the Iberian Peninsula, indicating Roman provinces. Base map: SRTM. Right: Overview of the research area (Municipality of Fronteira). Base map: Sentinel 2-ESA (J. García Sánchez).

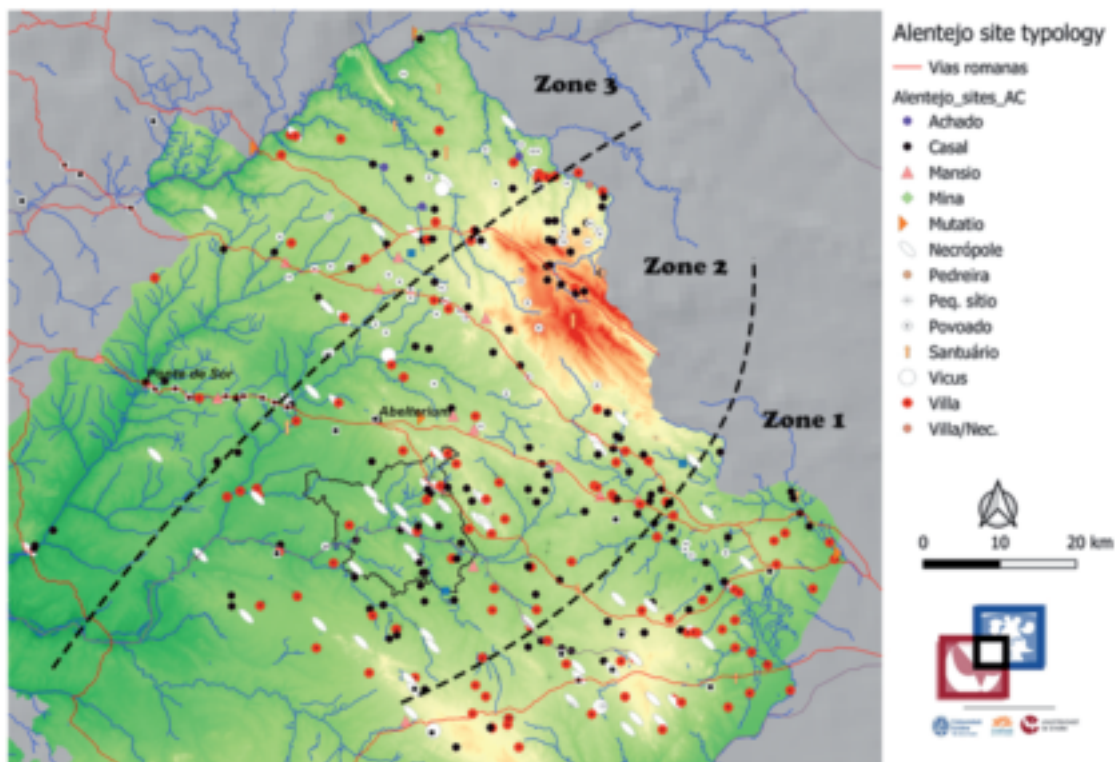


Fig. 2. Roman settlement typology in North Alentejo (after Carneiro 2014) and boundaries of the research area, with zones as referred to in the text. Base map: SRTM (J. García Sánchez).



Fig. 3. Results of the intensive off-site survey around the *villa* of Horta da Torre. Base map Google Earth (J. García Sánchez & R. Kalkers).



Fig. 4. 3D model of the *cenatio* of Horta da Torre, with visible postholes from the post-abandonment phase longhouse (A. Jansen & A. Carneiro).



Fig. 5. Virtual reconstruction of the *stibadium* and *cenatio* of Horta da Torre (C. Carpetudo, G. Lopez & A. Carneiro).

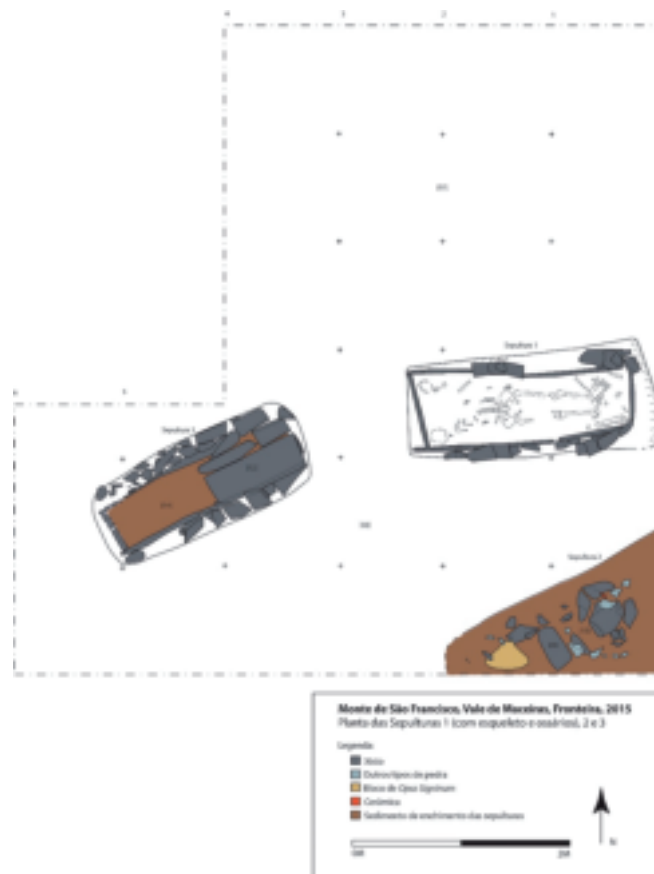


Fig. 6. Results of the 2015 excavation at Monte de São Francisco (A. Carneiro).