

A new resource on Muge archaeological sites: a 1932 film

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The archives of Cinemateca Portuguesa (Chamboeira-Freixial, Portugal) hold films donated by Frederico Sodré Borges, Director of the Museu de História Natural da Faculdade de Ciências da Universidade do Porto (Luís Gameiro, in litt. 20/08/2013) during the period when the curator of anthropology, A. Huet Bacelar Gonçalves, was retiring (Gonçalves, pers. comm. 27/03/2013). The films were subsequently conserved and some have been digitized and put online. Many of these films seem to have been taken by J.R. dos Santos Júnior, whose role at Muge is briefly summarized in Cardoso (2010/2011).

The record of the donated films lists two 16 mm and twenty three 35 mm reels and six of unknown format. The list is under the heading “cultural anthropology” and some films are labelled as being of ethnological interest. However, the listing includes specific references to the shell middens at Muge in central Portugal in films 11, 12 and 14: one film section is labelled “Amoreira and Moita do Sebastião?”, another film refers to archaeological work at Amoreira, and a third has the label “Arruda or Amoreira”. It is not clear whether these are varying copies of short segments of one occasion or represent different episodes of filming at the Muge sites or their environs. The eight itemized sections, one noted as only of 39 seconds duration, one of 40 seconds, may in fact all represent the one occasion when a party of visitors viewed the archaeological sites.

Following requests by Jackes in 2013 and 2014 with regard to a plan to visit and view these films, and the signing of forms to affirm an academic rather than commercial interest, the director of access at Cinemateca Portuguesa, Sara Moreira, provided the information that two films of cultural interest made by Santos Júnior had previously been digitized (in litt. 7/08/2014).

The film “Excursão a Muge, Santarém e Alpiarça, J. R. dos Santos Júnior”, was recently uploaded to <http://www.cinemateca.pt/Cinemateca-Digital/Ficha.aspx?obraid=8137&type=Video> (Sara Moreira in litt. 2/10/2014). It is specified as from a 35 mm negative, lasting 00:05:18 at 18 frames per second and dated “c. 1933”. However, there are clues that 1933 is not the correct date. In August 1933, there were first three, and then five sieves being used in the northernmost of the two trenches at Cabeço da Amoreira. The film makes it obvious that activity there was going on only in the northern trench, with one sieve: we see one man excavating, and apparently only three local women had been hired to screen sediment.

The major clue that the film was not from August 1933 came from our identification of the part of the trench shown in several frames (Figure 1). The view can only be of the northern trench, looking south towards an already partly excavated section consisting of a part of square E8 and all of square E9. A photograph taken by Georges Zbyszewski of the Abbé Breuil at Amoreira in 1941 (Roche, 1951) provides a clear image of a comparable view of the site, showing that squares E8, in part, and E9 had indeed been superficially excavated, and field notes for 20th August 1931 (Cardoso and Rolão, 1999/2000:165)¹ record this.

The 1931 work at Amoreira had finished with the removal of the upper level of squares F9 to I9 and the next field season was delayed until 1933. Work in early August 1933 began on the middle level of squares F9 to H9 (C&R: 166). There were visitors to the site on 15th August 1933, but the major excavation on that day was undertaken in squares G10 and I10 (C&R: 168). Thus, the identification of the sequence as from 1933 was confusing: in Figure 1 we see that a man was excavating in F9, and the material from there was being sieved below that square, with the one screen standing in F8. The film was therefore not taken in August 1933.

¹ Some Muge records of the Mendes Correia excavations in the 1930s were sent to the Museu Geológico de Lisboa and were retained by O. da Veiga Ferreira. These have been published by Cardoso and Rolão (1999/2000), cited hereafter as C&R.



Figure 1: Cabeço da Amoreira, June 1932, built up from stills (at 4 minutes and 16:04, 19:01, 22:01, 25:15 and 29:02) to form a view looking south from the northern trench. The man is excavating in square F9 with E9 beyond him. The screen is in square F8.

The date of the film was then confirmed by focussing on the individuals shown, particularly one young woman in a distinctive dress who appears in many frames, turning towards and smiling broadly at the camera. She is also in some photographs taken of one particular occasion in June 1932, and details of the trench walls confirm the agreement of the film and those photographs. The photographs are reproduced in Abrunhosa (2012, Docs 32-04, 32-05, 227-229)². While there is no record of excavation in 1932, we have information, both scanned and transcribed, regarding a visit to Muge on 26th June 1932 (AA, Doc 32-03, P4, 226, 340) which is outlined by Mendes Correia in his note book as leaving for Santarém, arriving there, and after touring some sights, leaving again from Santarém:

8h,20 - partida p^a. Santarém / - 9h,28 - chegada a Santarém / - Visita ao Relógio do Sol. Falcão Mach^o. / - Partida p^a. Alpiarça e Muge (Armindo) / - 22h,48 - partida de Santarém p^a. Lx^a.

One further detail was noted: the participants in this tour to Santarém and environs, who viewed a sun dial and then went on to the archaeological sites at Alpiarça and Muge, were students – four anthropology, two palaeontology, and two physical geography students – explaining the range of sights evident from the film.

The film begins with what appear to be images of horses along the Muge River (cf. AA: Doc 32-06, 228), raising the possibility that the sequences in the film as digitized are not in strict chronological order, because such images would be expected to appear in the film much later, after the arrival at the Casa Cadaval in the village of Muge, a scene in which Mendes Correia is prominently featured. This particular segment provides evidence of the stitching together of short segments of film: Mendes Correia is shown chatting with people at Casa Cadaval and this is followed 20 seconds later by his arrival there, warmly greeting those same people.

We then have the excursion participants (at 03:07:05) climbing what is likely to be the eastern slope of Moita do Sebastião (cf. MP album photo XXVI.21.C; AA, Doc 30-18, 131). While we might expect that Cabeço da Amoreira would be visited after Moita do Sebastião, since the two sites are close to each other on the same side of the Muge River, it seems that Amoreira was filmed after Cabeço da Arruda, apparently during afternoon heat, judging from the women's parasols, the gatherings under trees, and the fact that the shadows show the sun to have been well in the west, unlike the Arruda sequence shadows. Amoreira was visited for longer and filmed in much more detail than the other sites, important because, for example, the full extent of the Amoreira southern trench is shown in images unavailable elsewhere.

² Many of the Mendes Correia records were retained by Gonçalves and have been prepared as a master's thesis by Ana Abrunhosa (2012). The thesis will be cited as AA. Negative and positive photographs remaining in the Museu de História Natural do Porto were digitized in 2010. These will be identified as MP. Some are in an album, others are loose as negatives, negatives on glass or positives.

A distant and unclear 1932 photograph of Cabeço da Arruda (AA, Doc 32-07, 228) suggests that the site was approached from the west on foot rather than by car. A 1930 contour map of the site (Jackes et al. in press a Fig. 1) confirms that the road lay at some distance from the site, and indeed the film shows the visitors and their local guides walking across land that has been deep ploughed (e.g. 04:01:07 and 04:02:24), sending cattle running ahead of them. Then we see the visitors standing on top of the eroded/excavated scarp face (04:03 to 04:16). The site itself is unfortunately viewed only from that one angle in the film, although further information can be gleaned when Figure 2 is viewed together with Figure 3 (MP neg 1933/2). At the bottom of Figure 2 (and from 04:14:03 to 04:15:20 in the film) we can see that the photographer is standing in an area where there was a platform of earth from earlier excavations, confirming Mendes Correia's statement to that effect (AA, Doc 33-21, P2, 256, 361). This platform is clearly visible in Figure 3 and again in Figure 4 (MP neg 37/2) where it is dissected by the trench created in the O line of squares to allow water to drain away and wheelbarrow access.



Figure 2: Cabeço da Arruda, June 1932, built up from stills (at 4 minutes and 07:11, 10:10 and 14:03) to form a view looking north from below the excavation/erosion face.

Although we have only one view, the picture we get of Arruda (Figure 2) is important because nothing quite comparable is available elsewhere. The location can be identified by comparison with Figure 3 which shows the laying out of a grid at the start of the Arruda excavation in August 1933. We know from one photo (MP album LXXII.143.A) that a preliminary small excavation took place at Arruda in 1928, and the location of that trench can be confirmed from the film, shown indistinctly below the man furthest to the right. No other 20th century excavation along the face shown in Figure 2 had taken place at the time of the film. Thus the film allows us a glimpse of Arruda as it was over 40 years after the extensive 19th century excavations.

Since the 1933 photograph (Figure 3) is sharply angled across the excavation/erosion front, scaling is difficult, but we can see pegs marking the 2.5 m squares. A photograph from 1937 (Jackes and Lubell in press, Fig. 7, see also Jackes et al. in press a, Fig. 4) clearly shows the final profile stretching from the partly dug square L7 across the greater, but still incomplete, depths of squares M7 to P7. The 1937 profile would have been 7.5 metres further into the mound from the start of the trench, which eventually, though apparently not initially, must have been at the bottom of the slump seen in Figure 3. In 1933 there was a confusing change of strategy part way through the short excavation season (AA, Doc 33-21, P15-16, 258, 364) involving the renumbering of trenches and lines of squares into 1937 (C&R:172): precise details of the location of some 1933 finds are uncertain. The outcome can be seen from grid plots (C&R Fig. 22:173; AA, Doc 37-02, 273; Cardoso 2010/2011 Fig. 29:649), from field notes and from labels with the burials examined by Jackes in 2010, as well as annotations accompanying photos in the museum album and those retained by Gonçalves and provided to Abrunhosa.



Figure 3: Cabeço da Arruda, August 1933. Museu de História Natural da Faculdade de Ciências da Universidade do Porto, neg 1933/2. We suggest that the pegs set out along the slope mark squares O, P, Q and R, the last remaining undug during the future excavations.



Figure 4: Cabeço da Arruda, August 1937. Museu de História Natural da Faculdade de Ciências da Universidade do Porto, neg 37/2.

In Figure 2 we see what must be ~30 m across the NNW face of the mound, the face then curving slightly away at the extreme right side. It echoes the Pereira da Costa profile from the 1860s (cf. Jackes et al., in press b, Fig. 2).³ Mendes Correia chose to concentrate on this section of the mound, and this is the face that was excavated in the 20th century, the late 19th century focus having been further east, as was recognized in 1933 (AA, Doc 33-21, P13, 231, 363). Indeed, it was thought that the eastern section of the site had been richer in finds than the area excavated in the 20th century (C&R, 234). While Mendes Correia also excavated a trench further away to the west, the main 1937 excavation was into the face shown in Figure 2, as demonstrated by the 1937 profile photographs. The 1937 excavation included the area of a depression and path over the mound face, seen in Figures 2 and 3, and shown on the excavation profile to have been associated with an earlier pit into the site – a pit at least 75 cm wide and 1.75 m deep (see Jackes and Lubell in press, Fig. 7). This pit cannot have extended much further into the mound since it is not apparent in the Roche profile (1967, see also C&R, 233), 2 m deeper into the mound. While the precise placement of the 9 m long Roche profile might be argued, the excavation in 1965 definitely included the Mendes Correia square M and thus the area of the pit.

The scarp face shown in Figure 2 allows us to make one further observation. The area to the right was not included in the grid shown being laid out in Figure 3, the reason no doubt being that that particular section was apparently extensively eroded and disturbed (as well as having had the small excavation dug into it in 1928). The actual 1933 and 1937 excavation did not extend the full width of the grid to the final peg shown in Figure 3. While we do not know whether there was excavation along any part of this face of the site in the 1880s, our research suggests that any trench was not likely to have been extensive, perhaps at the most limited to the disturbed area on the right of Figure 2. This is further supported by reference to a map (DGT 1960) in which a scarp edge was recorded during a 1950s cadastral survey, indicating that the erosional/excavation face turned sharply from its NNW orientation somewhere around 7 m east of the Mendes Correia 1930s trench (square Q6). The film appears to include the change of orientation at the extreme right of Figure 2, at a point little more than 7.5 m beyond our reconstruction of the location of the 1933 square Q6 on the face shown in Figure 2.

Conclusion

The digitization by Cinemateca Portuguesa of a short sequence of film from June 1932 is very welcome. It provides a deeper understanding of the 1930s excavations of Cabeço da Amoreira and Cabeço da Arruda. There is fairly extensive footage of Amoreira, giving a clear idea of the state of the site after the 1931 excavation, including confirmation of superficial excavation into two E squares which was ignored in later publications. The film notably provides several extensive views of the Amoreira southern trench for which there is a very limited photographic record in comparison with the northern trench, thus adding usefully to our knowledge of the site during the 1930s excavations. For Arruda, we are given a unique glimpse of the condition of the area which was later to be the subject of all the 20th and 21st century excavations, providing information that supports our recent reconstructions of the site during its long period of excavation. Other details are of interest, for example the fact of deep ploughing and free ranging cattle in the vicinity of Arruda, adding to the flooding of the Muge onto the midden site as sources of disturbance.

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³ The 1864 profile is estimated to be ~25 m in length. The profile was not flat, but angled (Jackes et al. in press b, Fig. 1): the top is estimated to have been at least 3 m further south and the bottom of the profile to have been at least 5 m further south than the face shown in Figures 2 and 3. The placement of the profile is discussed in Jackes et al. in press a.

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Short notes

Human bones, burials and cemeteries: new sources

Christopher Meiklejohn

This is the first of what I hope will be a regular addition to bibliographic items listed regularly in *Mesolithic Miscellany* and *Mesolithic Miscellany Monthly*. There is wide spread interest in burials and human bone finds, from bioanthropology to symbolic archaeology to palaeodiets to the rapidly expanding discussion of loose human bone (LHB) finds. I begin with eight sources that have come to my attention over the past year or so. Seven are articles and one is a volume that has not received the attention it deserves. The general format gives full bibliographic details, the published abstract and a brief commentary on why the article may be of interest to readers.

- Boroneanț, A., McSweeney, K. & Bonsall, C. (2014) Schela Cladovei 1982 – a supplement to the original excavation report of Vasile Boroneanț. *Analele Banatului (new series), Arheologie Istorie* 22, 17-31.

Abstract: Schela Cladovei is one of the most important Mesolithic–Neolithic sites in Southeast Europe. It belongs to a group of Stone Age settlements that were discovered ahead of dam construction in the Iron Gates section of the Danube valley in the second half of the twentieth century. It is arguably the only one of these settlements to escape flooding when the river was impounded, although the rise in the river level has led to extensive erosion of the site. However, like most of the sites investigated, published accounts of the excavations at Schela Cladovei are few and lacking in detail. In this paper we review the results of the 1982 season of excavation at Schela Cladovei, directed by Vasile Boroneanț. Our account places emphasis on both the burial remains and the pit and hearth features and is based largely on the original field notes, plans and photographs of the excavations.