

**Working with the communities for the valorization  
of the paleontological heritage: the fossil trunks  
from Vila Velha de Ródão (Naturtejo Geopark,  
Portugal)**

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**Abstract:** The fossil trunks from Charneca (Vila Velha  
de Ródão) are the only remains of organisms inhabiting  
the Portuguese sector of the Ródão-Moraleja Cenozoic  
Basin and some of the few fossils found in the

continental deposits of Beira Baixa. The first 5 fossils dated from the middle-upper Miocene were found in 1990. The biggest trunk was identified by Prof. João Pais from the Universidade Nova de Lisboa as *Annonoxylon teixeirae*, enclosing amazing taphonomic, paleoclimate and paleogeographical dimensions valorized as one of the 16 more important geomonuments from Naturtejo Geopark.

In 2006, during cartography works for the revision of the Archeological Map from Vila Velha de Ródão, the AEAT team visited the fossil site and found two more specimens in the rubbish of a Roman mine. These fossils were redeemed by the municipality and lodged in the House of Arts and Culture of Tejo. At this stage, a project to valorize the findings was started:

- Fossil trunks were identified by Prof. João Pais with the help of the Natural History Museum of the Petrified Forest of Lesvos.
- An interpretive panel of the Geopark communication project is placed close to the fossils, with the support of AEAT.
- With the support of AEAT and Proença-a-Nova municipality there is the edition of a pamphlet promoting the trees from the past of Vila Velha de Ródão and the 4 living monuments of Proença-a-Nova, protected by law.
- During the Day of Forest, and with the help of the Primary School of Vila Velha de Ródão, the living closest relative of the protected fossils is planted next to them at the garden of the House of Arts.
- During the European Geoparks Week, and supported by the two municipalities, a visit is promoted to the Living Science-Forest Museum and the protected trees of Proença-a-Nova, as well as all the fossil trunks from Vila Velha de Ródão.



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