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**...and more!**

# CRUZIANA

**GEPARK NATURTEJO DA MESETA MERIDIONAL - UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK - E-MAGAZINE**

## **GEO-stories of our places and people: Vila Velha de Ródão**

Vila Velha de Ródão is a land of gold! Starting in its location spilled from the slope of the Serra das Talhadas to the banks of the Tejo River, which here inflects to carve, in three million years, the magnificent Portas de Ródão. There is no place more symbolic than this giant mountain of very hard carved quartzite, bed by bed that crosses its bed, by the incessant abrasion of the running waters. Portas de Ródão is the most significant geomonument of a particularly geodiverse landscape in the context of Naturtejo UNESCO Global Geopark. Included in its territory is the most complex part of the Ródão syncline, with the two (almost) twin crests of Perdigão and Talhadas mountains, between Ocreza to the north and Tejo to the south, here we will find 21 sites of geological relevance, partly protected within the National Natural Monument of Portas de Ródão, or by its cultural relevance. These geosites are related to the marine paleobiodiversity preserved in a chronological period established between about 500 and 435 million years ago; to the intense tectonic deformation that, from 400 to 280 million years ago, folded the marine sediments giving body to the Ródão Syncline; to the numerous faults, among which the great Ponsul Fault, resulting from the alpine reactivations of old Variscan scars; the erosion that has shaped the landscape in the last millions of years, and includes all the natural history of the Tejo River told in a staircase of river terraces formed in the tectonic depression of Vila Velha de Ródão; the magnificent Portas de Almourão, a mirror of Ródão with multiple natural and human specificities that give this geomonument superlative values that deserve its legal protection as a Natural Park; and the use of natural resources, whether by the Palaeolithic communities, of which the record of Ródão is particularly important in the Portuguese context, or by the Roman mining operations of gold on the terraces inscribed in Charneca de Ródão, or of copper and other minerals from legendary wells, such as the Sítio do Cobre and the mines of Ingadanais, which reached us until the first half of the 20th century.

The 17 villages and town existent in this 90.41 sq km territory express well the ancestral connection of man with the abundant water resources that the quartzite mountains provide, as well as the use of the best soils, which can be found in the Ponsul palaeovalley, where Monte da Coutada is located today, and the downtown area of Açafal to Charneca, which is filling up with intensive crops. For about 400.000 years, the carving of quartzite rock has offered a voyage to ancient human presence, including the earliest occupation by Neanderthals in Western Iberia, but also to the last moments before their still mysterious disappearance, about 30.000 years ago. This was accompanied by some of the most extraordinary elements of the Pleistocene megafauna which, in the middle of the Last Glacial period, would be evidence of massive extinctions caused by climate changes. Foz do Enxarrique, together with Vilas Ruivas and Cobrinhos, represent a rare record of the Middle Palaeolithic in Portugal. The Neolithic and Roman archaeological sites, of agricultural and mining origin, are abundant in Vila Velha de Ródão, as the megalithic monuments are. At the top of Cabeço dos Mouros the Templars erected a watchtower in a magnificent position, a true nest in the largest griffon vulture nesting area of the country. Already in the 18th century, this space would be readjusted to the defence needs of Lisbon, of which the batteries of Talhadas-Muradal Line, are still memory built.

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In the village, lined with tile panels executed by its most renowned artist, Mestre Cargaleiro, stands out the Pillory, the oil press factory, the House of Arts and Culture of Tejo and the Rock Art Interpretative Centre of Tejo, which today grows in relation to the Iberian heritage dimension of the Tejo Valley Art Complex.

The vast knowledge of Ródão results in a substantial part from the existence of the Alto Tejo Studies Association, linked to the protection of the environment and local youth, and which for four decades has developed and supported scientific studies and projects for the protection and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage, not only in Vila Velha de Ródão, but throughout the Geopark territory.

This dissemination work has underpinned a number of municipal actions to promote cultural activities but also quality local products under the "Terras de Oiro" brand. The Tejo Flavours Festival is just one of the great events that relate the community with its river, in the noble space of the Natural Monument of Portas de Ródão. The quality hotel units grow in Ródão in the shade of its Geomonument and the five footpaths that help to discover so many wonderful spaces. The magnificent village of Foz do Cobreão, perched in Ocreza on the edge of its Portas de Almourão, is one of these astonishing places: a river beach of tiny beauty that takes advantage of the quality of the waters of the "Nascente" spring; the traditional architecture preserved, from the old hydraulic-powered oil press, now a local museum, to the watermill at the mouth of Cobreão stream. And then a walk through an unusual geological nature at Portas de Almourão, which fills our eyes with spaces and landscapes of an orogenic volumetry, marked by large cliffs and imposing tectonic folds.

Vila Velha de Ródão, with such a long history and such a diverse heritage, is today an accessible place to the world. The centuries-old tow walls which accompany the ascent of the Tejo River in the most atrocious rapids and which made Vila Velha de Ródão a border post and exit point for products from all over Beira Baixa. It is crossed by the Beira Baixa Line since the last quarter of the 19th century, with the elegant steel railway bridge of Ribeiro de S. Pedro. Today crossed by the highway connecting Tejo to Europe. From here tonnes of processed paper come out, including for export, from an industrial cluster set up in the 1970s and in recent years. Nevertheless, the last fishermen continue to go up and down the great river in the traditional wooden boats. Otters feed on the exotic crayfish in the late afternoon near Bico do Açafal. Archaeologists open a work camp at Foz do Enxarrique where new generations will learn to build the history of this Iberian river. While tourists cross the heart of Portas de Ródão overwhelmed by this scenery.

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The editor  
Carlos Neto de Carvalho  
Scientific coordinator  
Geologist

Cover: (Projecto Objectiva: Geopark)



# MONTHLY ACTIVITIES



**December 3rd and 5th - Reforestation in Tapada do Sobral, Idanha-a-Nova to celebrate Native Forest.** On this day, aiming to celebrate and learn more about the Portuguese Native Forest, an activity of planting and sowing in Tapada do Sobral in Idanha-a-Nova took place. This time, 96 students from the 9 classes of the Professional School of Raia in Idanha-a-Nova - EPRIN planted and sowed small trees and acorns of oaks, cork oaks and holm-oaks. The students were accompanied by 7 teachers and the activity was supervised by Manuela Catana and Catarina Caria.



**December 5th - Naturtejo Geopark collaborates with academic project in tourism of Lusófona University.** Naturtejo Geopark was invited to participate in the academic project Tourism Innovation Journeys, promoted by the Lusófona University of Humanities and Technologies, which has as its main goal the valorisation of community-based tourism in the Central region of Portugal.

The Opening Conference, in Lisbon, gathered representatives of the Regional Entity of Tourism of the Centre of Portugal, Tourism of Portugal and six destination brands of the Centre Region, namely Historical Villages of Portugal, Military Tourism, Dão Wine Route, iNature, Estrela Geopark and Naturtejo Geopark, as well as a start ups mentor. Joana Rodrigues presented the territory of Naturtejo UNESCO Global Geopark, its touristic potential, as well as the main challenges.

During the school year 18 teams of students from Tourism and Design areas of Lusófona University work on relevant, innovative, feasible and sustainable value proposals for each of the destination brands.



In parallel, the teachers who coordinate this project, Álvaro Lopes Dias, João Estêvão and Mafalda Patuleia, are developing an empirical analysis, with scientific nature, on the performance and perceptions of the six destination brands regarding the development of creative tourism offers. A focus group with the various representatives was also carried out, aiming to eliminate one of the gaps in tourism research, which relates to the role of destination organisations in the field of creative tourism and the factors that influence their performance in this field.



**December 5th - National Geographic Exodus across the Geopark.** The National Geographic Exodus Group crossed the territory of Naturtejo Geopark in a full day dedicated to photography, to the local landscapes and to the local flavours. The caravan joined Carlos Neto de Carvalho in the symbolic roman bridge of Segura, and crossed it for the desired photo. Here the participants learned about this bridge and one of the Geopark geomonuments, the epigenetic gorge of Cantchais de Segura, no Rio Erges. From here, the caravan followed the area Tejo Internacional Nature Park, with a short stop for a coffee in the small village of Cegonhas. Already at Portas de Ródão Natural Monument, the group had the opportunity to have lunch on a boat to find, after tasting the Lands of Gold local products, the amazing landscapes and the wildlife of this Natural Monument.



**December 7th - Olive Oil Workshop in Sobral.** The tenth and last thematic workshop on culture and gastronomy of the "Ten Parishes Ten experiences" initiative was held, which has travelled through the territory of the municipality of Oleiros. The parish of Sobral promoted the Olive Oil Workshop, in another activity that involved the municipality, parishes, local associations and communities.

During the walk through the village and its surroundings, about 100 participants knew trails and corners of Sobral, with many experiences, stories, legends and traditional flavours.

Besides the visit to the main values of the built heritage, it was possible to approach several aspects related to the production of olive oil, with a visit to an old traditional mill of sticks with animal traction, an abandoned mill moved by the force of the waters of the stream and also a modern farm (Casa Fernandes), with an important olive grove plantation of the Galician variety and a fully functioning mill, under the direction of a master miller, through methods that combine tradition and innovation. Throughout the walk, the marks of olive oil production were clearly visible, with centenary olive trees and schist terraces. Geologist Joana Rodrigues approached the characteristics of the schist soils and the orography of the region, in the cultivation of olive trees, besides the main geological aspects of the landscape, related to the formation of the Oleiros Mountains and the Zêzere Meanders.

The historical-ethnographic reconstitution of the olive harvest preceded the closing of the activity with a cod Tiborna and with emphasis on the sweet "Sobralinho", a pastel created by the Regional Union of the Parish of Sobral, for the celebration of its 60th anniversary.





**December 7th - Bird Watching Walk in S. Pedro de Vir-a-Corça.** On the last day of Out of Place – International Festival of Ancient Music, in nature activities, it was time to go on a bird-watching walk in S. Pedro de Vir-a-Corça. This was guided by two instructors of the Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds (SPEA), at the base of the Inselberg of Monsanto, Naturtejo Geopark geomonument. It was a fantastic morning, in which 26 species of birds were observed, with emphasis on the woodpecker (*Dendrocopos minor*), the smallest woodpecker present in Portugal! Manuela Catana participated in the walk, having done a geological framing of the Inselberg of Monsanto formation and the chaos-type landscape of blocks for the 27 participants.



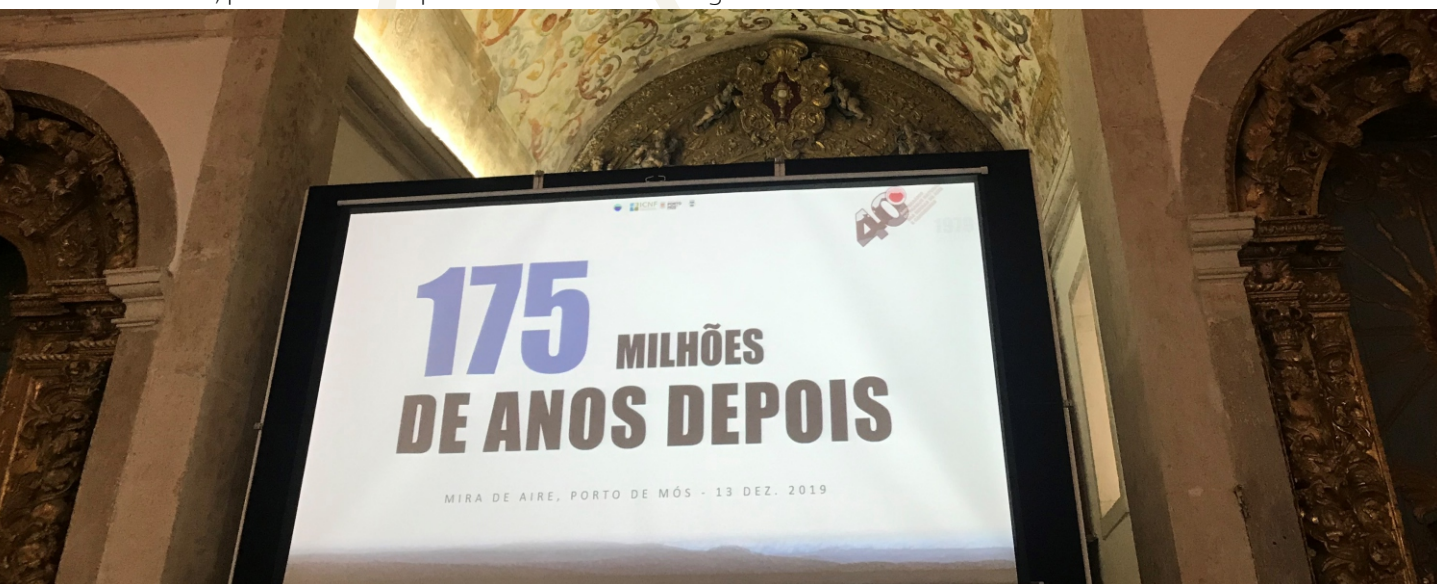
**December 9th - Doctoral Thesis on Geopark region megalithism with Distinction and Praise.** João Caninas is one of the archaeologists who know best the territory of Naturtejo Geopark. He has more than 40 years of experience in archaeological prospecting and excavation, being the coordinator of the International Archaeological Field of Proença-a-Nova and having hundreds of scientific papers published. At the University of Évora, he was finally able to defend his doctoral thesis on the megaliths of Naturtejo Geopark area at the north of Tejo. In front of a jury of thesis surrendered to the valuable contribution of this archaeologist to the knowledge of an important period of human occupation of this territory, João Caninas could only obtain the maximum evaluation, with distinction and praise. Congratulations to Dr. João Caninas!





**December 10th - ESART students complete cycle of visits to Mata da Rainha region.** For the last time, students of the Superior School of Applied Arts of Castelo Branco invaded the streets of the small village of Mata da Rainha to conclude their projects around the theme of mining in the old mines described in the work of the great writer Fernando Namora. In small groups of 4, about 30 students entered the life of the inhabitants of Mata da Rainha, related with them and discovered themes that transport the period of mining exploration to the present. Teachers Isabel Marcos and Carlos Reis could not be more enthusiastic about the work development. The interviews, which included the historical contextualization of Carlos Neto de Carvalho, the imaginative exploration of the old mining spaces, the discovery of the places, the small staging of the time, will all result in a new chapter that will portray the mining history of Mata da Rainha. But also a present reality of population ageing, the abandonment of the land by younger generations, the progressive disappearance of the economic fabric, but also of new settlers with alternative approaches and more sustainable provenance to the use of land resources.

**December 12th - Christmas Dinner of Naturtejo Team.** Once again Rainha Dona Amélia Hotel, an associate of Naturtejo Geopark, received the good humour of Naturtejo team. This was the annual celebration dinner that gathers the colleagues who work in several municipalities. It also counted with the presence of António Marcelo, president of the parish council of the village of Toulões.



**December 13th - Celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the Serra d'Aire and Candeeiros Natural Park.** Serra d'Aire e Candeeiros Natural Park, located in central Portugal, is one of the reference protected areas and now celebrates 40 years of existence. Naturtejo Geopark has been collaborating with this natural park for 5 years for the study of the Paleontological Site of Cabeço da Ladeira, located near the village of S. Bento. Carlos Neto de Carvalho is part of the Scientific and Technical Commission that has accompanied the process of geoconservation of this paleontological site, in the characterization of its international relevance for the paleobiological, evolutionary and ecological study of coastal marine communities during the Middle Jurassic. The 40th Anniversary Celebrations of the PNSAC - Serra d'Aire e Candeeiros Natural Park, whose programme was under the theme "175 Million Years Later", took place at the Mira de Aire Exhibition Centre.



During the morning, after the Opening Session, the Lecture Session "175 Million Years Later" took place, with moderation of Maria de Jesus Fernandes, Regional Director of Nature Conservation and Biodiversity - Lisbon and Tejo Valley, and counted with the interventions of the following speakers:

- Octávio Mateus (Department of Earth Sciences, Faculty of Sciences and Technology, Nova University of Lisbon);
- Carlos Neto de Carvalho (Naturtejo Geopark da Meseta Meridional – UNESCO Global Geopark);
- Bruno Pereira (GeoBioTec, Department of Earth Sciences, Faculty of Sciences and Technology, Nova University of Lisbon);
- Ana Rainho (Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Change – Faculty of Sciences, University of Lisbon);
- Miguel Porto (CIBIO – InBIO, University of Évora);
- Ana Sofia Reboleira (University of Copenhagen Natural History Museum of Denmark Zoological Museum).

The lectures developed by invited national experts wanted to show the strength of this protected area as a natural space of relevant scientific interest, as well as the paths to be followed in the future. For Carlos Neto de Carvalho it was a great honour to have been invited to this event that determines a historical moment in the life of the region.

**December 14th and 15th - Flavours with tradition in Idanha-a-Nova.** Gastronomy, sports, lots of music and Christmas fragrances. These were the ingredients of the "Flavours with Tradition" that enlivened the village of Idanha-a-Nova during the Christmas period.

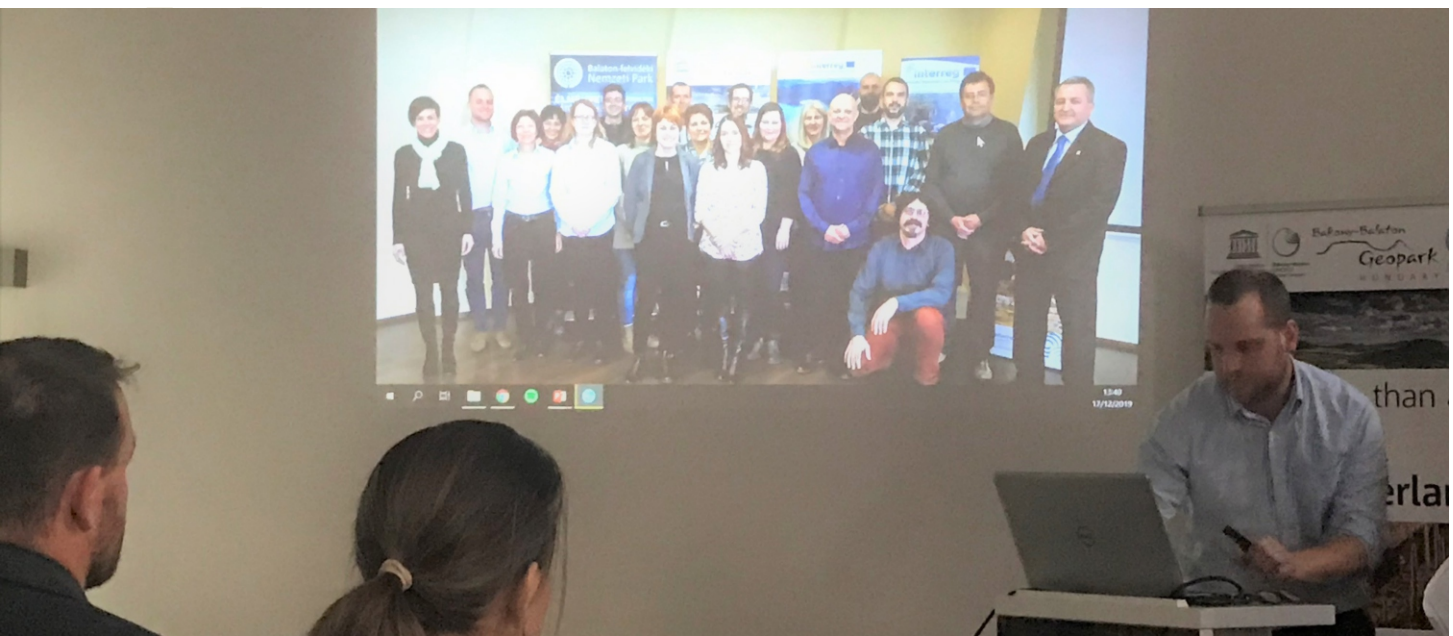
The event was organised by the Municipality of Idanha-a-Nova and by the Union of Parishes Idanha-a-Nova and Alcafozes, with the collaboration of collectivities from the region, in particular the historic Clube União Idanhense. "The activity 'Flavours with Tradition' comes to brighten up the Christmas period, a period in which the people of the villages and towns of Idanha gather around the wood, the traditional Christmas food, our music and culture, our habits, customs and traditions", said the president of the municipality of Idanha-a-Nova, Armindo Jacinto, at the inauguration.

The traditional São Silvestre Race had 250 athletes from all over the country. The Portuguese marathon runner Alberto Chaiça was, once again, the godfather of the race and showed himself satisfied with the growth of this race integrated in the Flavours with Tradition. In fact, the weekend was great. Besides athletics, other highlights were the opening of the Christmas Crib and the Creative Christmas Tree Exhibition (to be visited until January 6th 2020); the workshop "Healthier Christmas Sweets"; the Slaughter Soup; the "Dogwalking" in favour of animals; the entrance of the Logger of the Child Jesus in the village; and lots of music for all tastes!



**December 14th - Penamacor has planted 80 cork oaks and other species in the Municipal Forest.** Among family and friends from Crew of 99 and visitors to Penamacor Bonfire Village event, about eighty volunteers took part in the "Let's plant a cork oak and other native species" walk. During the initiative about eighty native forest species were planted in the Municipal Forest and an orientation activity with identification of these same species took place. This initiative was promoted by the Municipality of Penamacor and Crew of 99, with the collaboration of forestry sappers.





**December 16th to 18th - Participation in the closing event of the Interreg Danube Geotour project at the Bakony-Balaton Unesco Global Geopark.** The Interreg project which has brought together the different global geoparks of UNESCO and other entities of the countries united by the Danube River is coming to an end. Bakony-Balaton UNESCO Global Geopark in Hungary received the last meeting of this project, where Carlos Neto de Carvalho was also present as an expert partner. Besides the working meetings, the participants were able to experience in loco the valorisation of one of the most significant geosites of this geopark, as well as its new interpretation centre, as well as taste some of the geoproducs developed with local partners.



**December 29th to January 1st - New Year's Eve at Naturtejo Geopark.** Tour Operator Arawak brought 56 people to the territory to pass the Reveillon. During these days of great activity, they walked along the Fossils Traile, in Penha Garcia and the Boulders Trail, in Monsanto, visited the Cargaleiro Museum and the Garden of the Episcopal Palace in Castelo Branco, visited the Oil Press complex in Proença-a-Velha and the Historical Village of Idanha-a-Velha, and crossed the waters of the Tejo River, on a boat trip through the Natural Monument of Portas de Ródão. These days they were accompanied by Paulo Barata as Guide of Miguel Blaise & Paula - Sports, Tourism and Leisure Activities, Lda.

# IMPACT OF GEOPARK IN MEDIA



## Newspapers & www

(Ensino Magazine) – Guarda and Idanha together

December (Raiano) – Native Forest celebrated in our village

December 3rd (Diário Digital Castelo Branco) - Art and Walking Festival in Naturtejo Geopark until December 8th

December 6th (Diário Digital de Castelo Branco) – Polytechnic Institute of Guarda colaborates with Idanha-a-Nova

December 6th (Diário Digital de Castelo Branco) – Idanha-a-Nova plants native trees in Tapada do Sobral

December 9th (MédioTejo.net) – Naturtejo Geopark attends the 40th birthday of Serra d'Aire and Candeeiros Natural Park

December 9th (Turisver) – Lusófona started the 3rd Tourism Innovation Journeys

December 12th (Reconquista) - Idanha-a-Nova and Guarda strengthen cooperation

December 12th (Reconquista) - For education and environment - Idanha-a-Nova celebrates the native forest

December 19th (reconquista) - Oleiros made traditional products known - Olive oil closes activity cycle

December 25th (Gazeta do Interior) – Municipality of Idanha-a-Nova deepens collaboration with the Polytechnic of Guarda

# PROMOTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC



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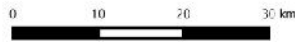
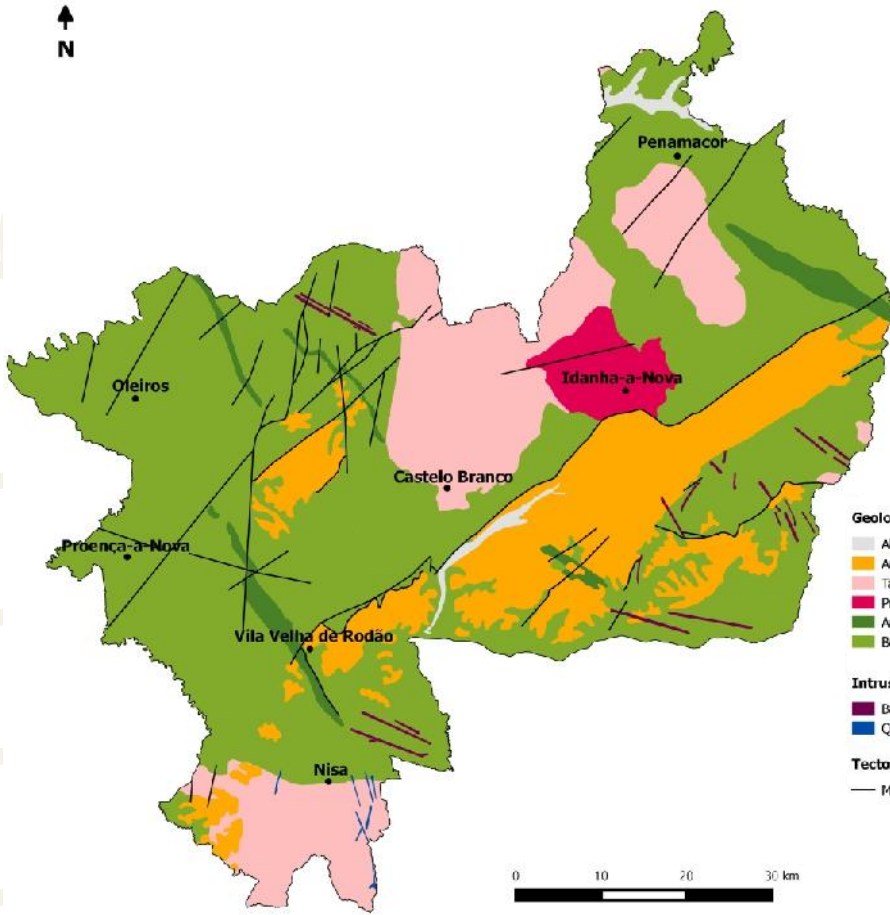


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## Geoparks: Geology with human face





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Coordination - **Carlos Neto de Carvalho**  
Texts - **Carlos Neto de Carvalho, Joana Rodrigues,  
Manuela Catana, Catarina Caria, Mariana  
Vilas Boas, Município de Idanha-a-Nova**  
Photos - **Joana Rodrigues, Carlos Neto de Carvalho,  
Manuela Catana, Município de Idanha-a-Nova,  
Jesus Salazar Cabrera**  
Clipping - **Carla Jacinto e Alice Marcelo**  
Design - **Layer [Design and Print Studio]**  
Translation - **Carla Jacinto**  
Editing - **Joana Rodrigues**



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