

## Disseminating Cretaceous palaeontology through a network of regional centres in Teruel (Spain)

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The Province of Teruel in Spain is a worldwide significant area because of its museographic initiatives, which aim their attention at research, protection and dissemination of the palaeontological heritage. Thus, the Palaeontological Park of Dinópolis (composed of some large headquarters in the city of Teruel plus seven smaller satellite centres distributed throughout the Province) offers a varied palaeontological menu and constitutes the so-called “3D Handbook of Palaeontology”. The exhibitions at the satellite centres introduce their local geological and palaeontological features as chapters of this “handbook”. Four of them, the centres in the localities of Peñarroya de Tastavins, Galve, Castellote and Ariño focus on Cretaceous ecosystems, highlighting those with dinosaurs (while other Cretaceous fossils are also displayed in the main facilities in Teruel and in a Dinópolis-associated local exhibition in Mas de las Matas).

The Peñarroya de Tastavins centre (opened March 2003) concentrates on a Lower Cretaceous dinosaur site (Upper Barremian) where a new sauropod, *Tastavinsaurus sanzi*, was found. This exhibition’s major theme is: *How is a dinosaur excavated?* And both the original fossils and a life-size replica of the skeleton are displayed in a spectacular bipedal posture.

In April 2003, the second satellite of Dinópolis was launched in Galve. Cretaceous fossils are represented by original fossils of *Iguanodon* (formerly identified as *Delapparentia*), ornithopod tracks, and by enlarged casts of Barremian mammalian teeth (such as *Galveodon*, *Lavocatia*, etc.). Also, the public can enjoy original bones, models and information about *Aragosaurus* – the first Spanish dinosaur described ever.

A centre in Castellote was opened in April, 2006 and it is mostly dedicated to palaeobotany. There, big fragments of trunks belonging to the species *Protaxodioxylon turoloensis*, which were found in nearby coal mines, represent the flora of the continental Early Cretaceous (Albian). Furthermore, the different historical reconstructions of *Iguanodon* are also on display.

The Ariño centre (opened March 2015) shows the findings from open-pit mining activity and palaeontological prospecting carried out in the most important Albian dinosaur site identified in Europe. Almost ten thousand bones have already been recovered there. The main topic of the satellite deals with *Coal cool dinosaurs* and highlights the relevance of the outcrop and of the palaeontological record of this huge bonebed. So you can find the most complete armoured dinosaur in Europe, *Europelta carbonensis* (represented at the museum by its main anatomical characteristics and a life-size replica of this nodosaur), as well as the iguanodontian *Proa valdearinoensis* (while a full original skeleton is showcased in Dinópolis-Teruel).

This network of facilities introduces “Cretaceous life” to the general public, and clarifies some ideas on vertebrate palaeontology to visitors, especially to all those who previously thought that dinosaurs are just protagonists of Jurassic parks!

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