

FOSSIL VERTEBRATES IN THE PALEONTOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS OF THE SCIENCE MUSEUM (UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA, PORTUGAL)

C. Ribeiro^{1,2,3,*}, P. Callapez^{1,4,5} and O. Mateus^{2,3}

¹Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia da Universidade de Coimbra (FCTUC), Coimbra, Portugal

²Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia da Universidade Nova de Lisboa (FCT-UNL), Lisboa, Portugal

³Museu da Lourinhã, Portugal

⁴CITEUC – Centro de Investigação da Terra e do Espaço da Universidade de Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal

⁵Science Museum of The University of Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal

*cf.ribeiro@campus.fct.unl.pt

Keywords: *Science Museum, University of Coimbra, paleontological collections, fossil vertebrates, taxonomical revision*

The fossil vertebrate collection in the Science Museum (University of Coimbra) is a valuable miscellany of specimens. It was acquired during the late XIX and XX centuries, from several European *comptoirs*, together with donations of private collectors, and the fieldwork materials assembled by teachers, researchers and students. The objective of this study was the taxonomical revise and inventorying these vertebrate fossils. The methodology included collecting data from the original labels, compiling the taxonomy, age, collecting site, stratigraphic context, and three-dimensional measurements, and updating this information, into a database.

For several years, chosen specimens of this collection also have been used for practical classes of Natural Sciences. Due to this, some of the original specimens have already been destroyed, worn out or lost. The taxonomic diversity of the collection spans all the main macrofossil vertebrate groups, comprising 74 specimens, with approximately 30 different taxa, ranging from the Triassic to the Quaternary. Their geographical distribution extends from Europe (Portugal, Germany, Italy, Belgium and France) to North America (E.U.A.), Africa (Morocco, Lebanon and Angola), and Asia (Japan). We highlight two specimens: a carapace and plastron of the bothremydid turtle, *Rosasia soutoi*, from the Maastrichtian of Aveiro (Portugal) and an unstudied nearly complete Actinopterygii from the Albian of Porto Amboim (Angola).

Most specimens are presently conserved in galleries and storage rooms, and not accessible to the general public, awaiting a redefinition of the present day museological strategies. However, they are fully available to members of the scientific community.