

225-Million-Year-Old Dinosaur Puts Brazil on the Limelight

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The Brazilian National Museum, in the city of Rio de Janeiro, received yesterday, December 2, a new species of herbivore dinosaur, a biped found between the cities of São Martinho da Serra and Santa Maria, in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, in 1998.

Belonging to the prosauropods group, of the *Unaysaurus tolentinoi* species, which lived in the end of the Triassic Period, about 225 million years ago, the fossil is a primitive relative of the group that originated the sauropods (long necked herbivores), the largest land animals that ever lived on earth, according to what was published today on the daily Folha de S. Paulo.

In an interview, the director of the National Museum, Sérgio Alex Azevedo stated that there have been a series of fossil discoveries, but only a few have placed Brazil in the palaeontology research scenario as this one.

According to researchers from New Zealand, the central area of Rio Grande do Sul is known worldwide for its dinosaur fossils. Two of the oldest dinosaurs in the world were found in the Santa Maria region.

The fossil found in Brazil has the most complete skull ever found in the country.

Animals in this group had already been found in many countries, mainly in Europe, Asia and Argentina.

The dinosaur was baptized as 'Água Negra' (meaning 'black water' in Portuguese) since "unai", in *Unaysaurus tolentinoi*, means black water in the tupi, an indigenous language. This is the 11th dinosaur ever found in Brazil.

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