On some titanosaurid caudal vertebrae (Dinosauria:Sauropoda) from the Continental Upper Cretaceous of Minas Gerais, Brazil

TROTTA, M.[1], CAMPOS, D.A.[2], and KELLNER, A.W.A.
[1]Museu Nacional (Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro), Rio de Janeiro,Brasil; [2] Departamento Nacional de Produção Mineral, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil.

A series of eight caudal vertebrae (DGM 497-R) collected at the Mombuca site (Peirópolis, Bauru Group) are being described. These vertebrae are distal caudals and were found associated. Some of them articulate well, resulting in an incomplete sequence. The first one is amphicoelous, followed immediately by a biconvex one. This feature is rarely observed in titanosaurid tails. However, the remaining vertebrae are procoelic, which allows their allocation in the Titanosauria.

Although the distal caudals rarely show diagnostic features at a generic level, preliminary comparisons show that DGM 497-R is neither referable to *Saltasaurus* (since the anterior margin of the neural canal does not reach the anterior rim of the vertebral centrum), nor to *Pellegrinisaurus* (since it lacks the anterior end of the neural spine placed at a higher position than the posterior end). They differ also from *Gondwanatitan*, by being more elongated.

Among the most interesting features of this material is the preservation. Contrary to all other vertebrates found in the Bauru layers (mainly sauropod dinosaurs, turtles and crocodilians) those vertebrae are unusually light indicating that they were poorly mineralized. This kind of preservation was never recorded in any mesozoic fossil of Brazil and is therefore worth mentioning here.