

MARINE MIOCENE MOLLUSCS FROM SOUTHERN SOUTH AMERICA: A BIOGEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

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Cluster analysis of the Miocene, Quaternary and Recent shallow-water molluscs from the eastern littoral of Uruguay and Argentina allowed the recognition of two Late Miocene Molluscan Provinces characterized by paratropical, warm-water faunas. From south to north, these are the Valdesian and the Paranaian Provinces. The Valdesian includes the assemblage recovered from the Puerto Madryn Formation, and its southern boundary is placed in the Valdés Península's area (lat 43° S) (Argentina). Boundary between both provinces is situated at the southernmost tip of the Buenos Aires Province (approximately at lat 39° S). The Paranaian Province includes assemblages contained in the Paraná and the Camacho Formations, it extended to the north along Uruguayan and southern Brazilian littorals and its northern limit remains still unknown because the lack of coeval faunas to the north of Río Grande do Sul (Brazil). A total of 156 species and 92 genera were considered and 10% of species and 14% of genera are common between both provinces; only 8% of species and 14% of genera live today in the counterpart Argentinien Province. At the end of Miocene times, both Provinces lost their identity and 27% of tropical genera withdrew from high latitudes to the north, being their latitudinal occurrences restricted to the Modern Caribbean and/or Panamian Provinces since then.