

Late Pleistocene and Holocene Nearshore Molluscs From The Coastal Area Of Central Patagonia (Argentina): Palaeoenvironmental Inferences

AGUIRRE, M.L. Depto. Paleontol. Invertebrados, Museo de Cs. Naturales, Paseo del Bosque S/Nº, 1900 La Plata, Argentina.

There is a scarce knowledge of the late Quaternary nearshore molluscs from central Patagonia after Feruglio's geological description of this area. The macrofaunistic content of the deposits (Bahía Solano, Rada Tilly and Caleta Olivia: Holocene, +8-12m a m.s.l., 2-6 Ka, *Marine Terrace VI*; Bahía Lángara and Caleta Olivia: late Pleistocene, +15-30m a m.s.l., minimum 30-45 Ka, ? *Marine Terrace V*) varies in composition (less diverse), preservation (greater abrasion and fragmentation) and major height a m.s.l. in comparison with approximately synchronous shelly concentrations from northern Argentina (Buenos Aires Province littoral) and Uruguay. This is probably a consequence of different palaeoenvironmental conditions: substrate type, temperature of the shallow water masses and palaeoceanografic circulation, and neotectonic uplift.

In general, a similar original environment to the modern nearshore is inferred: shallow high energy waters with hard substrates of the Magellanean Province. A lower faunal diversity is acknowledged both during the late Pleistocene and Holocene in comparison to the living molluscan fauna, the lowest curiously in the late Pleistocene deposits from Caleta Olivia area which were previously correlated to the Last Interglacial (IS5e). This and the absence of typically warm water elements (*Noetia*, *Mactra* spp, *Crassostrea*, *Anomalocardia*), preserved in the late Pleistocene of Buenos Aires Province, need to be explained if the deposits originated during a global maximum sea-level stand of higher temperature than present.