

PALYNOMORPHS OF THE "DINOSAURIAN BEDS" IN WEST CENTRAL ARGENTINA

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The Riográndico sedimentary Cycle in the Neuquén Basin, Septentrional Patagonia, begins with the continental deposits of the "*Dinosaurian Beds*". These post-orogenic sediments, which follow the Patagonidic Orogeny or Intercretaceous movements, overlay unconformably the main sequence of the Andico Cycle. In spite of previous long research, the age of this unconformity, as well as the age of the different overlain units ("*Dinosaurian Beds*"), are up to now not well known, due to the scarcity of significant paleontological evidences. In this sense, the search of palynomorphs seems of interest in order to clarify the chronology of the strata and the involved tectonical events.

The lower top-limit of the Patagonidic Orogeny (and the overlying "*Dinosaurian Beds*") is settled by the information provided by the microflora of the Ranquiles Formation which indicates an Aptian age. This assemblage includes for the first time primitive angiosperm pollen grains (*Clavatipollenites*, *Retimonocolpites*, *Asteropollis*, *Afropollis*).

Recently, a rich microflora was recovered from the lower levels of the "*Dinosaurian beds*" at the El Zampal locality, south of Mendoza Province. This assemblage is characterized by the dominance of angiosperm pollen grains of a quite primitive type. Monosulcate, tricolpate, tricolporoidate and tricolporate grains are present, while triporate grains that made their appearance in the Middle-Upper Cenomanian were not observed. Characteristic elements of this Albian?-Cenomanian microflora are the taxa: *Triporoletes reticulatus*, *Fraxinopollenites fragilis*, *Tricolporoidites* sp., *Tricolpites* spp. The present microflora shares several taxa with coeval Australian assemblages.