



Recent discovery of an argyrolagid (*Mammalia, Metatheria*) for the Marplatan stage (middle Pliocene-early Pleistocene) of northwestern Argentina

M. J. BABOT^{1,2}, D. A. GARCÍA LÓPEZ^{1,3} and P. E. ORTIZ^{1,4}

We present the first remains of an argyrolagid from the Uquía Formation (middle Pliocene-early Pleistocene; Marplatan) recovered at San Roque, Humahuaca, Jujuy Province, Argentina. The material is part of a microvertebrate fossil assemblage generated by trophic activity of predator birds that also includes amphibians, lizards, birds, rodents and didelphids. The remains represent three individuals and include fragments of maxilla and dentaries, and postcranial fragmentary bones (humeri, astragali, calcanei, and ungual phalanges). The upper teeth show a simplified occlusal morphology, typical of this family. The most conspicuous features of lower teeth are: the presence of procumbent incisors, a mesiolabial expansion defining a shallow groove on m1, deep lingual groove absent on m1 and m2 but present on m3 and m4, m4 reduced with a deep labial groove and a shallow distal concavity. The morphology of lower molars (particularly, on m4 the deep labial groove and the distal shallow concavity) allows us to refer the material to *Microtragulus bolivianus* Hoffstetter and Villarroel. This species differs from other species of *Microtragulus* by: the absence of lingual groove on m1, labial groove of mesial lobe on m2, and lingual groove on m2, and the presence of larger m4 with a labial groove (*M. reigi* Simpson); its larger size, the deepest labial groove, and the presence of lingual groove on m3 and labial groove on m4 (*M. catamarcensis* [Kraglievich]); and by the absence of lingual groove on m1 and the presence of deeper labial grooves (*M. rusconii* Goin, Montalvo and Visconti). Rodents recorded in this assemblage (*Microcavia*, octodontids) are nowadays typical dwellers of dry and open areas, suggesting similar paleoenvironmental conditions for these levels of the Uquía Formation. The presence of *Microtragulus bolivianus* in western Bolivia and northwestern Argentina suggests that a continuous area of xeric conditions was already established in this region by the end of the Pliocene.

1 Facultad de Ciencias Naturales, Universidad Nacional de Tucumán. Miguel Lillo 205, (4000) San Miguel de Tucumán, Tucumán, Argentina. jubabot@gmail.com, dagl19@yahoo.com.ar, peotiz@uolsinetis.com.ar

2 Fundación Miguel Lillo, Miguel Lillo 251, Tucumán, Argentina

3 Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET).

4 Instituto Superior de Correlación Geológica (INSUGEO), Universidad Nacional de Tucumán-CONICET. Miguel Lillo 205, (4000) San Miguel de Tucumán, Argentina.