

***Napaeus lajaensis* sp. nov. (Gastropoda: Pulmonata: Enidae) from a Quaternary Aeolian Deposit of Northeast Tenerife, Canary Islands**

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Abstract

Napaeus lajaensis **sp. nov.** is the oldest *Napaeus* species found in the Canary Islands, with more than 130 ka. It is described from a Pleistocene aeolian deposit intercalated between two basaltic lava flows located at Mancha de La Laja (Tenerife Island). The new species is characterized mainly by the presence of two very prominent, spiral, semicylindrical ribs on the body whorl shell. The stratigraphic setting and taphonomic features of the land snail association to which *N. lajaensis* belongs, were also shown.

Key words: Gastropoda, *Napaeus*, taxonomy, Pleistocene, Canary Islands

Introduction

Island archipelagos continue to be a focal point for studies in evolutionary biology, with many research programs being directed towards understanding the origins of diversity (Emerson 2002; Emerson & Kolm 2005). Island populations may diverge from their parental mainland populations to become endemic species. Therefore, land snails are one of the groups that often show high percentages of endemic forms. The Hawaiian Islands and the Galapagos Islands have both, for a long time, served as paradigmatic systems for conducting this type of research (Wagner & Funk 1995; Grant 1998), but recent years have seen an emerging interest in the Canary Islands as a further natural laboratory for the study of evolution owing to their discrete geographical nature and the diversity of species and habitats (Juan *et al.* 2000).

The Canary archipelago forms an island chain of seven main islands, approximately 500 km in length, in the Atlantic off the North West African coast at the western fringe of the Palearctic, about 500 km north from the Tropic of Cancer, the easternmost island only 110 km from Morocco. The archipelago is clearly of volcanic origin, with geological