

On the date of publication of Pliocénica 6-7

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The description of the extremely rich Pliocene assemblages around Estepona have been the subject of revision for two separate teams for the last twenty odd years. The present authors and specialist co-workers, and Jose Luís Vera-Peláez and his team based in Estepona, Spain. Competition and diversity of ideas are always beneficial in science. However, it must be done in a professional manner, and this has not always been the case.

Herein we would like to address the date of publication of Pliocénica (6-7). As some of the papers in that volume (Vera-Peláez, 2023a, b, c) cover the same taxonomic groups published by our team (Landau & Harzhauser 2022a, b), an issue arises over priority.

Pliocénica is a journal published occasionally by the Laboratorio de Malacología Evolutiva (Málaga). The previous issue of Pliocénica (5) was published in 2006. Jose Luis Vera-Peláez is coordinating editor, and member of the editorial board of the magazine. Pliocénica 6-7, published concurrently in one volume contains 13 papers, of which Vera-Peláez is first author to 11, and co-author of the other two. All papers, except for one, deal with the Estepona assemblages.

The date of publication for both issues (6 and 7) is the same and dated on the index page as 20th of May 2022. However, the first mention of this volume was the 18th of December 2022 with papers registered and ‘uploaded’ onto ResearchGate between the 18th and 20th December. The website states that full texts are available for each individual paper, but when downloaded, only the front cover, list of contents and abstracts are available.

If the date of Pliocénica 6-7 is taken as stated, all the papers published in 2022 by our team are later than any of those published in Pliocénica. However, we can find no mention of that publication before the 18th December 2022 based on:

1. First mention of the volume on internet was ResearchGate 18th December 2022.
2. No physical presence of this publication in any museum library consulted on the 3rd January 2023: Naturalis Biodiversity Center library (Leiden, The Netherlands) (holds Pliocénica 1-5); Muséum National d’Histoire Naturelle library (Paris, France) (holds Pliocénica 1-5); Biblioteca Nacional de España library (Madrid, Spain) (holds Pliocénica 1-4); Universitat de Valencia library (Valencia, Spain) (holds Pliocénica 2); Universidad Complutense de Madrid library (Madrid, Spain) (holds Pliocénica 1-5).
3. Volume was only made available for purchase directly from the editor on the 22nd of December when it became advertised by Jose Luís Vera-Peláez personally and available from him by email or on messenger (Facebook). A copy was purchased directly from the author which arrived on the 7th of January, 2023.
4. One of the two papers published in the volume on tusk shells from Algeria was submitted to the journal Historical Biology. According to the information given on page 110 of Pliocénica the article was received on the 12th of October 2021 and accepted on the 7th of February 2022. However, the manuscript was sent to a reviewer (who asks to remain anonymous) of Historical Biology, who rejected the paper on the 24th of April 2022. It is therefore likely that submission to Pliocénica was after the 24th of April 2022.

We contacted Dra María Esther Martín González from the Museo de la Naturaleza y Arqueología, Santa Cruz de Tenerife (Islas Canarias) who is listed as being member of the editorial and scientific committee of Pliocénica asking for proof of publication in May (BL email 3rd January 2023, 15:27). Dra Martín González replied that she was aware of

the publication, Vera-Peláez had asked her to be on the editorial committee, but she had not agreed as she had not seen any of the papers included in the volume. She confirmed that the issue had not been published in May, without further specifying the date (BL email 3rd of January, 2023; 21:12).

Professor Jordi Martinell Callicò from the University of Barcelona who is listed as honorary president of the committee was also contacted. His reply was “*En respuesta a su solicitud de información relativa a la revista Pliocénica, le recomiendo se ponga en contacto con el editor. Yo estoy totalmente desvinculado de ella desde hace tiempo* [in reply to your request for information about the journal *Pliocénica*, I recommend you contact the editor. I am completely unlinked from her [the journal] for some time now]” (BL email 5th January 2023; 11:53).

Therefore, we conclude that the date of publication for *Pliocénica* 6-7 of May 2022 is incorrect. Date of upload onto website ResearchGate is not a proof of publication, as it does not meet the requirements of ICZN for electronic publications. Only the paper/printed copy matters. *Cainozoic Research* 22 (1, 2) have a Naturalis library stamp dated 29th June and 27th December 2022 respectively. There is no major public library that holds *Pliocénica* (6-7) as of 3rd January 2023. Therefore, *Cainozoic Research* 22 (1, 2) were both published before *Pliocénica* (6-7). It is likely that *Pliocénica* 6-7 was not available before January 2023. Date of publication 31st of December 2022 for that volume has been accepted by WoRMS (Philippe Bouchet, personal communication BL 26/01/2023).

Acknowledgements

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References

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- Vera-Peláez, J.L. 2022a. Las familias Pseudomalatomidae [*sic*] y Pseudotomidae Bellardi, 1847 (Pseudomelatomioidea, Caenogastropoda) en el Plioceno de Málaga (España). *Pliocénica* 6-7: 139-158 [publication date 31st December 2022 not 20th May 2022].
- Vera-Peláez, J.L. 2022b. Síntesis y revisión de Clavatulidae (Neogastropoda, Conoidea) en el Neógeno de España con la propuesta de diecinueve nuevas especies y dos nuevos géneros. *Pliocénica* 6-7: 195-248 [publication date 31st December 2022 not 20th May 2022].
- Vera-Peláez, J.L. 2022c. La familia Borsoniidae (Conoidea, Gastropoda) en el Neógeno del sur de la Península Ibérica con la propuesta de seis nuevas especies. *Pliocénica* 6-7: 249-278 [publication date 31st December 2022 not 20th May 2022].