

## From European Perissodactyla to Argentinean Notoungulata

### *De los Perissodactyla europeos a los Notoungulata argentinos*

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It is a pleasure for me to contribute to this Memorial Volume to honour Léonard Ginsburg's contribution to Paleontology. I always considered him a friendly person, and I keep good memories on him. This is why I am delighted to write these few paragraphs dedicated to him, apart from the more scientific chapter included later in this issue.

I met Léonard when I took my first steps in paleontology, first in Spain, during a field season in Cetina de Aragón (Zaragoza; 1983), and later in Paris, doing some studies under his supervision, and collaborating with him in some papers. But now, I would like to remember a few anecdotes.

The first one has to do with the so-called "vuvulé" (from French "vous voulez"), a term used by the paleontologists of the Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales of Madrid to refer to the French "oyster opener" that Léonard had taken to the field season in Los Valles de Fuentidueña in 1981, which became an excellent tool for digging. Even though I did not meet him at that time, the "vuvulé" was institutionalized among us thanks to some acquisitions by Maite Alberdi in Paris. Thanks to her, I got my own "vuvulé" soon after, and I am proud not only of keeping it at present, but also of promoting its use and denomination to everyone who accompanies me to the field. Consequently, the "vuvulé" has crossed over not only the French but also the European frontiers since I moved to Argentina.

Another particular memory of Léonard is his business card, which I still keep, written in French on one side and in Thai language on the other. It is also pleasant to recall the postcards he sent to the "chicas del museo" (girls from the museum), alluding both to our names and the revolutionary names

of the months on the occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the French Revolution.

Léonard Ginsburg was the first foreign researcher I met thanks to the scholarships for studying the fossil rhinoceroses stored at the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle (Paris, 1984, 1986). I had the occasion to discuss with him about these perissodactyls that were the subject of my Ph.D. (Cerdeño, 1989) and further research for many years. I collaborated with him in the study of some rhino remains (Azanza *et al.*, 1993) as well as the Oligo-Miocene tapirs, trying to clarify their systematics (Cerdeño & Ginsburg, 1988). This work on perissodactyls stopped (but never completely) when I moved to Argentina (1995). Rhinos never reached South America and this is why I had to change the subject of my research, turning to the ungulates from the south, that is the notoungulates and in a lesser degree other South American endemic ungulates.

From the South to this unforgettable colleague, Léonard.

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