



Article

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A new oryzomyine (Rodentia: Sigmodontinae) from the Quaternary of Curaçao (West Indies)

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Abstract

A collection of 17 isolated rodent molars from a cave in the eastern part of Duivelsklip, Curaçao, Dutch West Indies, is described as *Dushimys larsi*, new genus and species. The new species is characterized by relatively large size, broad molars, absence of mesolophid and presence of anterolophid and anterolabial cingulum on m3, absence of metaloph on M3, and m2 with three roots. Phylogenetic analysis could not conclusively resolve the position of the new species, and it is provisionally regarded as a representative of an otherwise unknown oryzomyine genus. The material is likely middle Pleistocene in age.

Key words: Curaçao, new species, Oryzomyini, taxonomy

Introduction

Oryzomyine rodents (family Cricetidae, tribe Oryzomyini) are common members of Quaternary faunas in the West Indies (Haynes, 2009; Turvey et al., 2010). Although a few species have been formally named and diagnosed (Hopwood, 1926; Hooijer, 1959; Turvey et al., 2010), many have not been formally named or described and their position within the oryzomyine radiation remains unresolved (Steadman et al., 1984; Turvey et al., 2010).

Wagenaar Hummelinck (1940) was the first to report oryzomyines from the island of Curaçao (part of the Dutch West Indies, located at the northwestern coast of Venezuela). Subsequent excavations produced additional remains from cave faunas on Curaçao and also from the nearby islands of Aruba and Bonaire (De Buissonjé, 1974). The Curaçao fossil rodents were referred to the Curaçao giant rat *Megalomys curazensis* Hooijer and to several unspecified species of the genus *Oryzomys* (Hooijer, 1959; De Buissonjé, 1974). McFarlane and Debrot (2001) recently described *Oryzomys curasoeae* as a new species of *Oryzomys* from Curaçao, but did not compare it in detail to other oryzomyines. Although they referred it to the (sub)genus *Oecomys*, their species is in fact referable to *Oryzomys sensu stricto* (Musser and Carleton, 2005; Weksler et al., 2006) and undistinguishable from mainland *Oryzomys gorgasi* Hershkovitz (Voss and Weksler, 2009). This species is known only from the Holocene of Curaçao and mainland Venezuela and Colombia and is the only species in the Dutch West Indies that can be unambiguously referred to *Oryzomys sensu Weksler et al., 2006*. Other material previously ascribed to *Oryzomys* is referable to *Oligoryzomys* and several new genera (Zijlstra et al., 2010; in prep.). In this paper, I describe the material from a cave filling in the eastern part of Duivelsklip, Curaçao, identified as *Oryzomys* by De Buissonjé (1974), and revise its identification.

Materials and methods

Nomenclature for molar occlusal features follows Reig (1977). Upper and lower molars are referred to as M1, M2, and M3 and m1, m2, and m3, respectively. All molars were measured using a Leica Ortholux measuring microscope. Measurements are in millimeters. The material studied is in the paleontological collections of the