



• 评述论文 •

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## 海龙的起源和演化\*

孙媛媛<sup>1</sup> 崔杰<sup>2</sup> 刘俊<sup>2,3\*\*</sup>

1 中国地质调查局成都地质调查中心, 自然资源部沉积盆地与油气资源重点实验室, 成都 610081;

2 合肥工业大学资源与环境工程学院, 合肥 230009;

3 现代古生物学与地层学国家重点实验室, 南京 210008

**提要** 海龙是三叠纪起源不明的一类海生爬行动物, 与鳍龙和鱼龙共同构成了当时海洋生态系统的三大主要捕食者类群。海龙的研究对从高级捕食者的角度理解二叠-三叠生物大绝灭之后生态系统的复苏重建具有重要意义。海龙的研究已有 100 余年的历史, 近些年来由于分支系统学等新方法的应用而得到了新的认识。本文从海龙的起源, 物种多样性, 谱系发育重建, 生物地理分布四个方面概述了学界的研究进展。在目前的研究基础上指出, 在时代更早的地层中进行更深入的野外工作, 对华南海龙属种的系统厘定, 以及海龙骨组织学研究的开展, 是未来海龙研究的主要方向。

**关键词** 三叠纪 海生爬行动物 骨组织学 古生态 生物复苏

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## The origin and evolution of thalattosaurs

SUN Yuan-yuan<sup>1</sup>, CUI Jie<sup>2</sup> and LIU Jun<sup>2,3</sup>

1 Chengdu Center, China Geological Survey; Key Laboratory of Sedimentary Basin and Oil and Gas Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources; Chengdu 610081, China;

2 School of Resources and Environmental Engineering, Hefei University of Technology, Hefei 230009, China;

3 State Key Laboratory of Palaeobiology and Stratigraphy, Nanjing 210008, China

**Abstract** Thalattosaurs are one of the three major groups of top reptilian predators in the Triassic marine ecosystems, the study of which is a key to our understanding of biotic recovery from the Permo-Triassic mass extinction. Significant advancement has been achieved in the last decades in studying biodiversity and phylogeny of thalattosaurs. However, the origin of thalattosaurs and the process forming the biogeographical pattern of thalattosaurs largely remains an enigma. We review here the recent progress in the study of thalattosaurs in terms of its origin, species diversity, phylogeny and biogeography. Our review shows that large gap exists in the research of thalattosaurs. Future research

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\*\* 通讯作者: 刘俊, 教授; e-mail: junliu@hfut.edu.cn

should be focused on field work in the early part of the Triassic strata to search for more primitive thalattosaurs. This is necessary to elucidate its origin. A first-hand systematic review of thalattosaurs from SW China should be performed to clarify the true biodiversity of thalattosaurs, which is also a basis for a comprehensive phylogenetic analysis of thalattosaurian relationships. Finally, the study of the physiology and paleoecology of thalattosaurs via the investigation of long bone histology and microanatomy is of great significance in establishing the process forming the biogeographical pattern of thalattosaurs.

**Key words** Triassic, marine reptiles, bone histology, paleoecology, biotic recovery

## 1 引 言

二叠纪–三叠纪生物大绝灭之后海洋生态系统的复苏重建是近年来学术界研究的热点。其中,爬行动物重新入侵海洋是这一时期最具深远意义的事件之一(Chen and Benton, 2012)。三叠纪的海生爬行动物包括海龙、鱼龙和鳍龙这三大捕食者类群,以及其他一些小的分支譬如湖北鳄类、Saurosphargidae 以及属于原龙类的长颈龙科等(Kelley et al., 2014)。对现代海洋生态系统的研究显示,在一个食物网里高级捕食者对环境的变化最为敏感,它们对一个健康生态系统的稳定运行起到了至关重要的作用(Casini et al., 2012; Steeneck, 2012)。换一个角度来说,高级捕食者的辐射演化在大绝灭之后生态系统的复苏过程中扮演了至关重要的角色(Scheyer et al., 2014)。这一重要性在三叠纪海洋生态系统复苏的研究中得到了充分展示(Chen and Benton, 2012; Benton et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2014; Scheyer et al., 2014; Liu, 2015; Stubbs and Benton, 2016; Liu and Sander, 2019; Li and Liu, 2020; Qiao et al., 2020)。因此,作为三叠纪海洋生态系统的三大高级捕食者类群之一的海龙类,其起源和辐射演化研究构成了解决大绝灭之后三叠纪海洋生态系统复苏速率、模式与机制这一重大科学问题的关键一环。

## 2 海龙的起源

海龙类是三叠纪起源不明的一类海生爬行动物(Müller, 2005; Motani et al., 2015)。它们广泛分布于包括华南(东特提斯生物区系)、欧洲中部(西特提斯生物区系)以及北美(东太平洋生物区系)在内的特提斯和古太平洋沿岸的陆表海和碳酸盐台地

之中(Bardet et al., 2014)。海龙最早发现于美国西海岸的加州(Merriam, 1904),其研究历史已达一百多年。但是有关海龙的起源仍有很多未解之谜。

首先,海龙的起源时间未明。目前确认已知最早的海龙来源于意大利和瑞士交界的圣乔治山动物群,时代为中三叠世安尼期末期(Rieppel, 2019; Druckenmiller et al., 2020)。另外可能更早的海龙化石来自加拿大不列颠哥伦比亚的 *Agkistrognathus* 以及 *Paralonectes*,但是其时代难以确定(Bardet et al., 2014; Druckenmiller et al., 2020)。Bardet 等(2014)的综述中还提到了来自美国内华达中三叠世安尼期的海龙,但需要对此进行研究确认。

除了其起源时间,海龙的亲缘关系也是未解之谜。当 Merriam (1904, 1905, 1908)首先描述 *Thalattosaurus* 以及 *Nectosaurus* 时,把它们置于双孔亚纲的 Diaptosauria 超目,认为其和有鳞类可能有亲缘关系。这一观点得到了 Peyer (1936a, b) 的支持。而 Kuhn-Schnyder (1952)甚至认为海龙属于有鳞类的蜥蜴目,虽然他在后期改变了观点,认为海龙属于双孔亚纲之外的某个类群(Kuhn-Schnyder, 1988)。总而言之,这些早期的研究大都认为海龙属于有鳞型动物。

随着分支系统学的兴起,关于海龙亲缘关系的观点逐渐改变(图 1)。Evans (1988)的分析结果显示海龙属于双孔亚纲主龙型动物(图 1-A)。Rieppel (1998)以及 Neenan 等(2013)的分支分析结果显示鳍龙构成了海龙的姐妹群,但 Rieppel (1998)的结果显示海龙属于有鳞型动物的一类(图 1-B),而 Neenan 等(2013)的结果显示海龙位于 Sauria (主龙类和有鳞类的共同祖先及其所有后代组成的一个自然类群)之外(图 1-C)。Müller (2004)的研究结果则显示整个 Sauria 构成了海龙的姐妹群(图 1-D)。

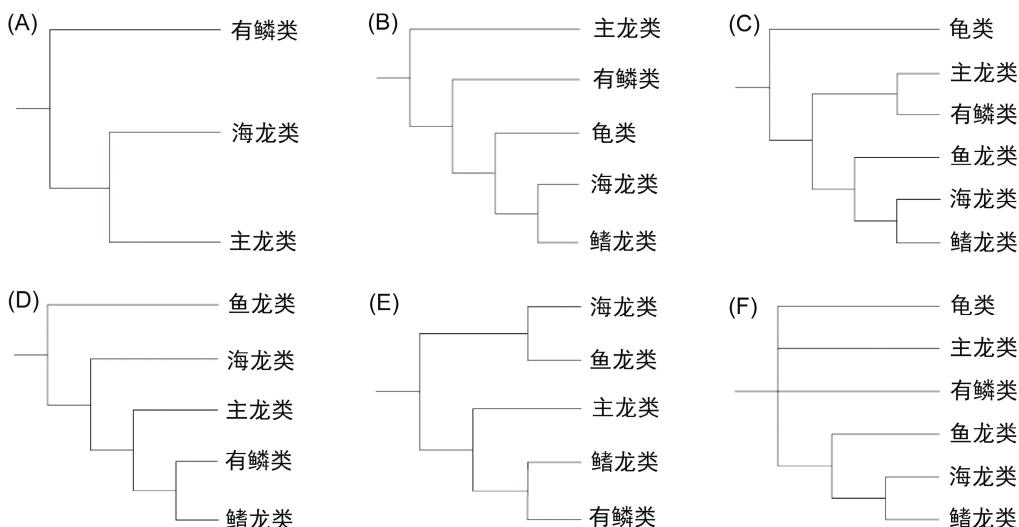


图 1 海龙亲缘关系略图

Fig. 1 Simplified diagrams showing the phylogenetic relationships of Thalattosaura and other reptiles

本略图示意了目前关于海龙亲缘关系的主要观点: (A) 改自 Evans (1988); (B) 改自 Rieppel (1998); (C) 改自 Neenan 等(2013); (D) 改自 Müller (2004); (E) 改自 Motani 等(2015); (F) 改自 Scheyer 等(2017)。

This simplified diagram shows the current main views on the relationships of Thalattosaura among reptiles: (A) Modified from Evans (1988); (B) Modified from Rieppel (1998); (C) Modified from Neenan et al. (2013); (D) Modified from Müller (2004); (E) Modified from Motani et al. (2015); (F) Modified from Scheyer et al. (2017).

最新的有关海龙在双孔类爬行动物中的系统位置的研究仍存在着很大的不确定性(Motani et al., 2015; Scheyer et al., 2017)。Motani 等(2015)的研究显示如果排除掉对水生生活适应性状的影响, 鱼龙型动物的祖先构成了海龙的姐妹群, 并且他们的系统位置处于双孔类爬行比较基干的位置, 位于 Sauria 之外(图 1-E)。而 Scheyer 等(2017)偏向的结果与 Rieppel (1998)以及 Neenan 等(2013)的观点一致, 认为鳍龙构成了海龙的姐妹群, 但包括海龙在内的中生代海生爬行动物与其他爬行动物类群的关系充满不确定性(图 1-F)。

目前所有已知的海龙, 其形态特征都已非常特化, 这也是造成海龙亲缘关系不定的一个主要原因(Druckenmiller et al., 2020)。因而我们需要寻找更为原始的海龙化石。譬如最近发现于早三叠世晚期巢湖动物群的最原始的鱼龙 *Cartorhynchus lenticarpus* 就能够为这一类群的起源提供更多的信息(Motani et al., 2015)。同样, 要想了解海龙的起源, 未来需要在更早的地层中去寻找比较原始的海龙类。

### 3 海龙的物种多样性

海龙在三叠纪东、西特提斯以及东太平洋这三大生物区系都有分布。在西特提斯生物区系, 自(Nopsca, 1925)首次报道海龙类 *Askeptosaurus italicus* 以来, 对这一生物区系海龙的研究历史已近一百年。近年来, 随着 Müller (2005, 2007)系统性的研究工作, 其物种多样性已基本调查清楚, 包括已命名描述的 3 属 3 种以及已详细描述但限于标本完整程度未正式命名的 1 新种。在东太平洋生物区系, 海龙最早发现并报道于加州北部上三叠统卡尼阶的地层中(Merriam, 1904)。Nicholls (1999)以及 Nicholls and Brinkman (1993)对这一生物区系的海龙类物种多样性进行了系统研究和总结, 共确认了 4 属 5 种的有效性。最近在北美更进一步的野外和研究工作又发现了海龙一新属种(Druckenmiller et al., 2020), 显示这一地区还具有更进一步工作的潜力。

东特提斯生物区系海龙类的研究始于晚三叠世关岭生物群 *Anshunsaurus huanguoshuensis* Liu,

1999 的研究报道(Rieppel *et al.*, 2000)。目前为止, 得到广泛承认的有效属种有 4 属 6 种, 分别为: *Anshunsaurus huanguoshuensis* (Liu, 1999; Rieppel *et al.*, 2000; Liu and Rieppel, 2005; Maisch 2015), *Anshunsaurus wushaensis* (Rieppel *et al.*, 2006; Liu, 2007), *Xinpusaurus suni* (尹恭正等, 2000; Liu, 2001; Liu and Rieppel, 2001; 罗永明、喻艺, 2002; Rieppel and Liu, 2006; 翟清明等, 2008), *Miodentosaurus brevis* (Cheng *et al.*, 2007; Wu *et al.*, 2009; Zhao *et al.*, 2010), *Concavispina biseridens* (Liu *et al.*, 2013b; 赵丽君等, 2013) 以及 *Xinpusaurus xingyiensis* (Li *et al.*, 2016)。

但下面一些属种的有效性还存在很大争议: 首先, 在报道 *Xinpusaurus* 的文章中, 尹恭正等(2000)报道了同样来自关岭生物群的另外两个可能属于海龙的属, 分别是 *Sinasaurus* 以及 *Wayaosaurus*。因为 *Sinasaurus* 为晚出名, 随后被更名为 *Neosinasaurus* (尹恭正、周修高, 2000)。*Neosinasaurus* 以及 *Wayaosaurus* 在最初被报道时都被尹恭正等(2000)误认为肿肋龙。Wu 等(2009)在初步观察标本后指出这两个属可能属于海龙, 但是更进一步的确认需要科学的标本修理和详细的对比研究。其次, 程龙(2003)以及 Jiang 等(2004)分别命名描述了来自晚三叠世卡尼期关岭生物群的 *Xinpusaurus bamaolinensis* 以及 *X. kohi*。在观察了 *Xinpusaurus* 已发表的所有不同种的模式标本之后, Liu (2013)得出结论认为 *X. bamaolinensis* 以及 *X. kohi* 都可能为 *X. suni* 的同物异出名, 所观察到的形态结构上的差异更可能是由于个体发育所导致, 尽管(Maisch, 2014)对此持有保留意见。最后, 程龙等(2007)以及 Cheng 等(2011)命名并详细描述了来自中三叠世拉丁期兴义动物群的海龙类分子 *Anshunsaurus huangnihensis*, 但是赵丽君等(2008)以及 Benton 等(2013)都质疑了这一名称的有效性。

综上所述, 欧洲的海龙类物种多样性已基本调查清楚, 但是北美地区还有尚未命名描述的海龙类新物种。近年来, 华南的海龙类也还不断有新属种的发现(赵丽君等, 2013; Li *et al.*, 2016), 并且华南地区已经命名的类型还存在着很多同物异出名的问题, 需要更进一步的修订工作。这些

研究工作的深入开展有助于完善我们对海龙类物种多样性的了解。

#### 4 海龙的谱系发育重建

虽然分支系统学的方法在古脊椎动物的研究中运用的十分广泛, 但利用分支系统学原理对海龙的谱系研究开始的很晚。Nicholls (1999)是首位运用分支系统学的原理来研究海龙谱系发育的学者。随后的学者基于华南海龙类不同类群的陆续发现(Rieppel *et al.*, 2000; Liu and Rieppel, 2001; Jiang *et al.*, 2004; Wu *et al.*, 2009; Cheng *et al.*, 2011)以及欧洲海龙类形态学的再研究(Müller, 2005, 2007), 对海龙的谱系发育进行了更深入的研究工作。对海龙最新的谱系发育重建来自 Liu 等(2013b)的研究。这项研究综合并扩充了前人的数据矩阵, 包括了所有有效性无争议的海龙类属种, 但结果显示海龙的谱系拓扑结构非常不稳定, 只有长颈型的 *Askeptosauroidae* 以及短颈型的 *Thalattosauroidae* 这两个支系节点有比较稳定的统计学数据支持。这一结论也为 Li 等(2016)所证实(图 2)。

前人实证研究显示, 稳定的谱系结构依赖于更多的关键性的分类单元以及有效形态学信息的发现(Hill, 2005), 这也得到了模拟研究的支持(Kearney and Clark, 2003; Wiens, 2003)。因而, 未来的研究有赖于更多关键性的物种和性状的发掘。

#### 5 海龙的生物地理分布

在三叠纪时期, 全球的构造古地理格局主要由一大陆两大洋组成, 分别为泛大陆、泛大陆环绕的特提斯洋以及宽广的古太平洋。目前已知的化石记录显示(图 3), 海龙在早三叠世时出现在古太平洋的东海岸, 然后在安尼-拉丁交界的时候首次出现在特提斯海域(Bardet *et al.*, 2014)。特提斯洋内部的基梅里陆块群周缘浅海为海龙在特提斯东西两岸之间的自由迁徙提供了可能的便捷通道(Liu *et al.*, 2013)。但是, 海龙通过什么途径从古太平洋东缘海域迁徙到特提斯洋仍然是三叠纪生物地理研究中的一个不解之谜(Bardet *et al.*, 2014; Müller, 2005)。

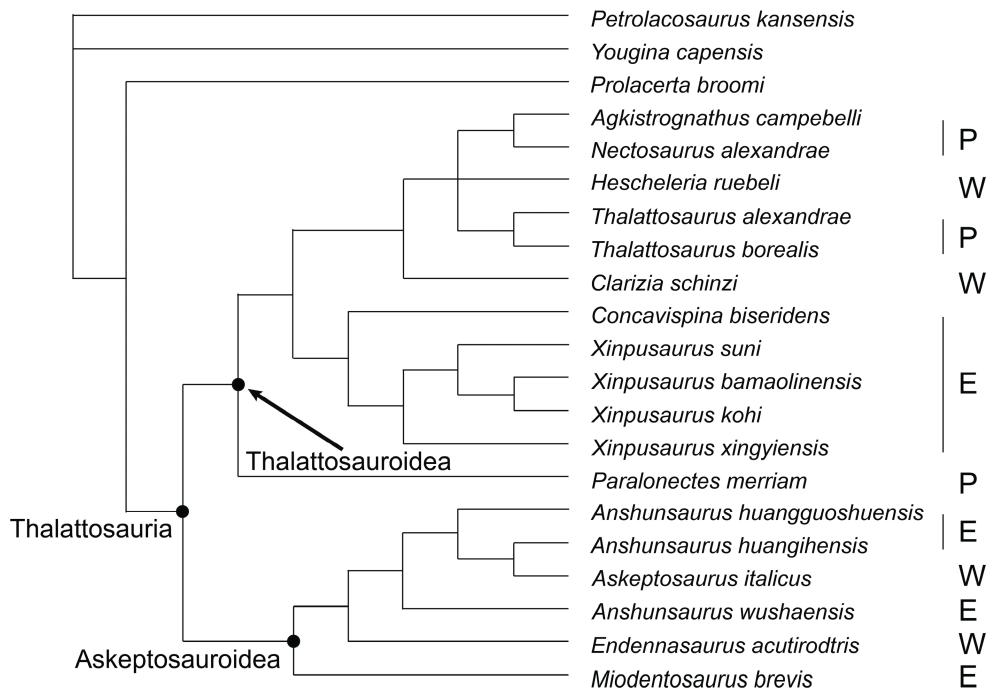


图2 海龙的谱系发育图

Fig. 2 Phylogeny of Thalattosauria

改自 Li 等(2016)。缩写: E = 东特提斯生物区系; P = 东太平洋生物区系; W = 西特提斯生物区系。

Modified from Li et al., 2016. Abbreviations: E = Eastern Tethys Province; P = Eastern Pacific Province; W = Western Tethys Province

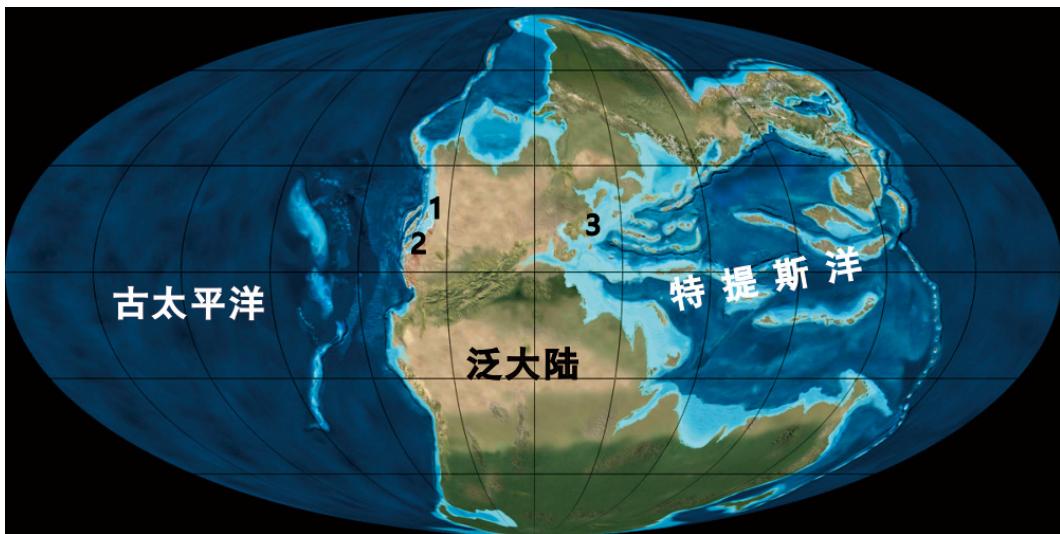


图3 早三叠世和中三叠世安尼期海龙的全球古地理分布图(改自 Bardet et al., 2014)

Figs. 3 Global paleogeographic distribution of Early Triassic and Anisian thalattosaurs (modified from Bardet et al., 2014)

产地信息和时代: 1. 加拿大不列颠哥伦比亚地区(早—中三叠世); 2. 美国内华达(安尼期); 3. 瑞士—意大利交界处圣乔治山地区(安尼—拉丁界限)。  
 Thalattosaur occurrences: 1. British Columbia, Canada (Early–Middle Triassic); 2. Nevada, United States (Anisian); 3. Monte San Giorgio, Swiss–Italian border (Anisian–Ladinian boundary).

目前的地质证据显示, 早三叠世和中三叠世早期的泛大陆中低纬度地区并没有横贯泛大陆可供海生爬行动物迁徙的海上通道(Golonka, 2007;

Blakey, 2008; McCann, 2008), 而海龙并不具有通过陆路横穿整个泛大陆的能力(Müller, 2005; Bardet et al., 2014)。所以, 海龙要么能直接横穿古

太平洋形成沿古太平洋东西两岸分布的生物地理格局, 或者穿越北方极地寒冷的浅水海域形成沿泛大陆东西两侧分布的生物地理格局(Bardet *et al.*, 2014)。

从海龙的形态来看, 和一般认为的营远洋生活的中生代海生爬行类还有很大的差别, 似乎不大可能具有远洋游泳能力(Kelley *et al.*, 2014)。但有时候骨组织学结构所指示的生活环境会和形态学特征有一定差异。譬如说, 时代最早最原始的早三叠世鱼龙之一 *Utatsusaurus hataii* 以前仅仅从形态学看来似乎不具有远洋游泳能力(McGowan and Motani, 2003; Kelley *et al.*, 2014), 但是最新的骨组织学研究显示 *Utatsusaurus hataii* 可能已经很好的适应了远洋的游泳生活(Nakajima *et al.*, 2014), 因而可能具有了跨越大洋的能力。这一研究结果也和鱼龙早在早三叠世就已经真正形成全球性分布的生物地理格局一致(Sander, 2000; McGowan and Motani, 2003)。

骨组织结构之所以能指示生活环境, 是因为在水生四足动物中, 依据游泳方式以及生活环境的不同, 其骨组织结构一般有两种趋势: 骨骼质量增加或者网状化(de Ricqlès and de Buffrénil, 2001; Houssaye *et al.*, 2016)。骨骼质量增加可以通过骨硬化(Osteosclerosis)实现。骨硬化并不必然对应骨骼表面形态上的变化, 但是也可以和骨表面增生所导致的骨肥厚化(Pachyostosis)同时出现, 这样就会导致形态上的骨骼增厚(Houssaye, 2009)。骨骼质量增加一般出现于生活在浅海环境中的四足动物, 譬如说海牛或者绝灭的肿肋龙(de Ricqlès and de Buffrénil, 2001; Houssaye *et al.*, 2016), 它们能导致生物个体密度的增加, 这样使身体更为稳定, 从而可以克服浮力带来的不利影响。而网状结构的出现对应着骨质疏松(Osteoporotic), 这样可以减少个体的密度, 从而增加机动性(de Ricqlès and de Buffrénil, 2001; Houssaye *et al.*, 2016)。骨质疏松主要出现在远洋积极觅食的游泳生物譬如说鱼龙或者现生的鲸类中(de Ricqlès and de Buffrénil, 2001; Houssaye *et al.*, 2016)。

骨组织学的研究除了能指示海生爬行动物的生活环境之外, 一定程度上还能推测其相对新陈

代谢率、体温以及可能的生理特征。这是因为四足动物骨骼表面的骨膜从组织上可以分为两种主要的结构: 一种是层状圈层结构, 主要见于生长速度较慢的现生陆生爬行类(Houssaye *et al.*, 2010); 另外一种是纤维层状结构, 主要见于快速生长的现生哺乳类和鸟类以及绝灭的下孔类、恐龙和翼龙(Enlow, 1969; Padian *et al.*, 2004; Ray *et al.*, 2004)。骨骼生长速率被认为和新陈代谢率有一定关系(Montes *et al.*, 2007; Cubo *et al.*, 2008; Legendre *et al.*, 2016)。所以, 骨膜的骨组织学结构经常被用来推测已经绝灭类群的相对新陈代谢率、体温以及可能的生理特征(de Buffrénil and Mazin, 1990; Padian *et al.*, 2001)。

在三叠纪海生爬行动物中, 鱼龙和纯信龙类长骨骨膜具纤维层状结构, 意味着在这些类群中骨骼的生长速率较快, 新陈代谢率较高, 从而能维持一个相对比较高的体温, 适应较寒冷水域的生活(Houssaye, 2013)。这也和同位素的研究(Bernard *et al.*, 2010; Motani, 2010)以及三叠纪鱼龙和纯信龙类的生物地理分布(Cox and Smith, 1973; Rieppel, 1999; Sander, 2000; Kear and Maxwell, 2013; Maxwell and Kear, 2013)相符合。

上述的介绍显示骨组织学的研究能够帮助我们更好的了解海龙的游泳能力以及其相对新陈代谢率, 而这对推测海龙是否能直接横穿古太平洋或者穿越北方极地寒冷的浅水海域形成沿古太平洋东西两岸分布的生物地理格局至关重要。

## 6 研究展望总结

综上所述, 海龙的起源时间和亲缘关系未明, 物种多样性还有待进一步探讨和研究, 其谱系结构还非常不稳定, 其生物地理分布形成机制更属于研究的薄弱环节。对海龙物种多样性的调查首先需要详细研究北美和我国西南地区已采集新标本, 同时对我国西南地区海龙类公开发表的属种进行系统的厘定。物种多样性的调查预期能够为谱系发育研究提供更多关键性的分类单元。另外, 骨组织学的研究可以为海龙的谱系发育重建提供更多关键性的形态学信息, 而关键性的分类单元和形态学信息的获取有助于重建稳定的海龙谱

系。骨组织学的研究也是了解海龙生理特征和生活环境必不可少的手段。生理特征和生活环境等信息的获取以及稳定的谱系发育关系则是探讨海龙生物地理分布形成过程必不可少的前提。对这些相互关联领域的详细研究将有助于我们从高级捕食者的角度更进一步理解二叠-三叠生物大绝灭之后生物圈的复苏。

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