

中国遗迹化石研究创新阶段成就与展望



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内容提要: 遗迹化石是生物成因的沉积构造, 在古生物学研究中有着十分重要的意义。中国遗迹学发展历经了零星(1929~1978)、系统(1978~2004)与创新(2004~现在)研究3个阶段。在创新阶段, 我国遗迹学家在①地质转折时期生物与环境协同演化; ②特殊遗迹化石; ③新技术与方法的应用; ④现代遗迹学研究这4方面取得了显著成就。笔者等在系统回顾总结我国近年来遗迹学研究重要成果的基础上, 展望了未来遗迹学发展的5个方向: 实验遗迹学、遗迹化石的地球生物学、遗迹学新理论、陆相遗迹化石研究及大数据和人工智能的应用。随着遗迹化石研究的不断深入, 遗迹学这门古老学科一定会受到更多关注, 未来必将会在古生物学、地层学、沉积学和古地理学研究中发挥更大作用。

关键词: 遗迹化石; 中国; 成就; 展望

遗迹化石(ichnofossil)是地质历史时期生物在沉积物或其他底质中进行各类生命活动(如运动、觅食、停息等)留下的记录, 包括潜穴、足迹、移迹等(杨式溥等, 2004)。与实体化石不同, 遗迹化石并非由生物遗体直接形成, 如果说实体化石是生物形貌结构的瞬间凝固, 那遗迹化石就是生物动态行为的快照。遗迹化石多为原地保存, 形成之后难以被搬运改造, 是特定环境中生物行为习性的直接证据。因此, 遗迹化石也可以称作生物成因的沉积构造, 具有生物学与沉积学双重属性, 在古环境与古生态重建、早期生命起源、生物行为习性演化等研究中都有着不可替代的重要意义(罗茂等, 2021)。

作为古生物学和沉积学交叉形成的学科分支, 遗迹化石研究历史悠久, 最早的文字记录可追溯至文艺复兴时期(范若颖和龚一鸣, 2014), 但直到19世纪初, 遗迹化石才被当作重要化石门类开始研究。Osgood(1975)将遗迹学发展历史分为3个阶段(图1a), 包括: ①疑似藻类阶段(1823~1881), 此阶段为遗迹学研究最初阶段, 由于形态近似, 遗迹化石起初常被误认为“藻类”; ②反思争议阶段(1881~1925), 随着研究深入, 部分学者提出这些“藻类”可能是生物遗迹, 此观点一直存在争议, 直至20世纪

初, 学界才普遍接受这些形似海藻的化石实为生物遗迹; ③现代遗迹学研究初创阶段或黎明阶段(1925~1953), 遗迹学家对生物造迹过程有了深入认识, 遗迹学研究迈入崭新时代。1953年之后, 遗迹相、遗迹组构等理论体系先后建立, 将遗迹学研究推向高潮, 遗迹学发展欣欣向荣, Pemberton等(2007)将该时间段称为“现代遗迹学研究阶段”。

我国遗迹学研究起步较晚, 直到1929年, 杨钟健对中生代脊椎动物足迹进行报导, 正式开启我国遗迹学研究的序幕(Chardin and Young Chungchien, 1929)。笔者等依照龚一鸣等(2009a)对中国遗迹学研究的划分, 将我国遗迹学研究分为3个阶段(图1b): 零星研究阶段(1929~1978), 该阶段我国遗迹学研究方兴未艾, 仅对遗迹化石有零星报导(Yin Tsanhsun, 1932); 系统研究阶段(1978~2004), 该阶段是我国遗迹学研究飞速发展时期, 发表论文数百篇、出版专著教材十余部(Zhu Maoyan, 1997); 创新研究阶段(2004~), 该阶段, 传统研究方法继续发展, 同时新的理论体系与技术手段被广泛应用于遗迹学研究, 我国学者取得了众多卓越成果, 主要成就聚焦在以下4个方面: ①地质转折时期生物与环境协同演化; ②特殊遗迹化石; ③新技术与方法的

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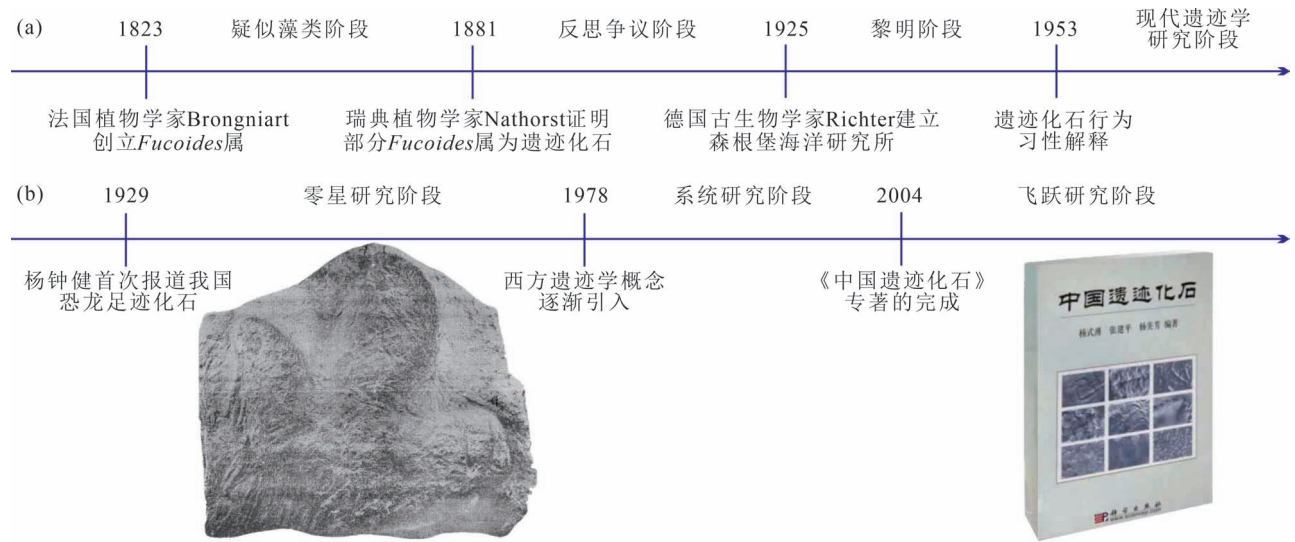


图 1 遗迹学研究发展历史:(a)遗迹学研究历史略图;(b)中国遗迹学研究历史略图(修改自范若颖和龚一鸣,2014)

Fig. 1 History of the development of ichnology: (a) historical scheme of the development of ichnology; (b) historical scheme of the development of ichnology in China (modified from Fan Ruoying and Gong Yiming, 2014&)

应用;④现代遗迹学研究。

1 中国遗迹化石研究创新阶段成就

1.1 地质转折时期生物与环境协同演化的遗迹学研究

遗迹化石记录了特定环境条件下生物生命活动的重要信息,对诠释重大地质历史转折时期生物群落演替与环境变化具有重要意义(张立军等,2015)。在创新阶段,我国遗迹学家除对地质转折时期遗迹化石进行形态描述外,越来越关注遗迹化石所蕴含的生物学与沉积学信息,在生物大灭绝、生命演化早期的生物遗迹研究和和大辐射事件的研究中取得了重要进展。

1.1.1 生物大灭绝事件的遗迹学研究

生物大灭绝能够破坏全球原有生态系统,彻底改变生物群落面貌与地理分区,对生命演化有着重要意义。由于很多生物难以形成实体化石,但生物遗迹却可以很好保存,这些遗迹为生物大灭绝期间古生态及古环境重建提供了宝贵证据。20世纪末,遗迹化石就已被应用于奥陶纪末及白垩纪末生物大灭绝事件的研究(McCann,1990;Sheehan et al.,1996),我国生物大灭绝事件的遗迹学研究虽起步较晚,但后来居上,在晚泥盆世弗拉期—法门期之交的生物大灭绝事件(F—F大灭绝)及二叠纪末生物大灭绝事件研究中取得了众多前瞻性成果。

F—F大灭绝造成了海洋中约70%的物种绝灭,

地质历史时期最大规模的后生动物礁生态系统彻底崩溃(Yao Le et al.,2020)。Wang Yue等(2006)系统研究了贵州独山上泥盆统法门阶尧梭组至汤耙沟组的连续遗迹化石序列,发现F—F大灭绝事件之后遗迹化石复苏早于实体化石,并通过遗迹化石分异度、潜穴直径、复杂度的变化,识别出独山地区F—F灭绝事件之后新的生态系统重建的4个阶段(图2)。

二叠纪末生物大灭绝是地史时期最大的生物灭绝事件,造成了海洋中约81%的物种灭绝(Stanley,2016;Fan Junxuan et al.,2020)。在创新阶段,我国遗迹学家进行了大量工作,为揭示此次生物大灭绝和复苏过程补充了重要遗迹学证据。Zhao Xiaoming和Tong Jinnan(2010)对浙江煤山剖面二叠系—三叠系界线附近地层的岩芯进行了系统研究,识别出遗迹化石6属,并通过分析遗迹化石丰度、分异度、生物扰动指数、垂向扰动深度等参数,发现二叠纪—三叠纪之交生物大灭绝事件中遗迹学参数呈两幕式变化。Zhang Lijun等(2018)在华南上寺与东攀剖面大隆组顶部与飞仙关组底部地层中识别遗迹化石7属,并通过统计遗迹化石分异度、丰度及生物扰动强度等遗迹学参数,也识别出遗迹学参数的两幕式变化,可对应于煤山剖面的24e层与28层,与实体化石的灭绝模式相类似(Song Haijun et al.,2013)。

除对二叠纪末生物大灭绝模式进行研究外,灭绝事件期间海洋环境的重建亦是遗迹学研究的热

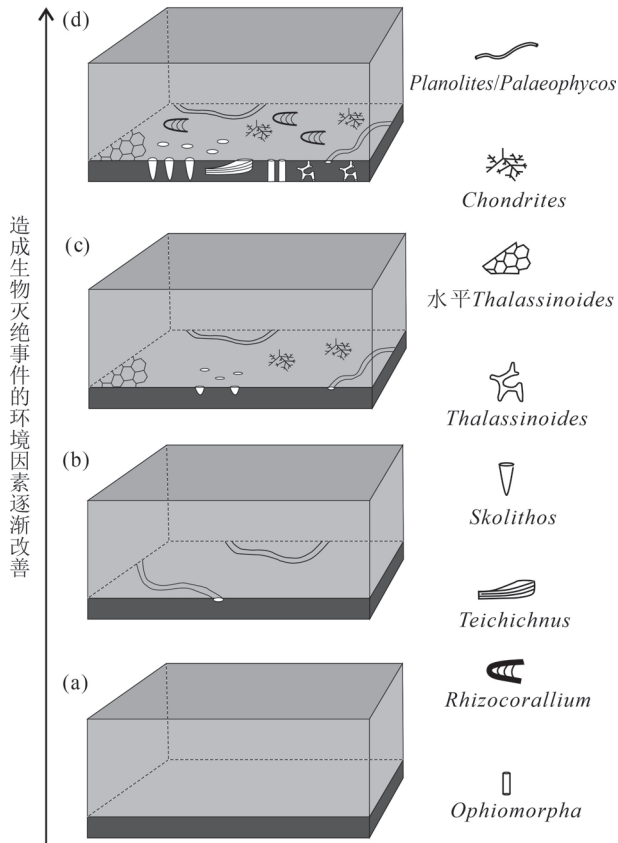


图2 晚泥盆世 F—F 生物大灭绝事件后新生态系统的建立示意图: (a) 灭绝事件后的“生态裸区”; (b) 灭绝事件后的“雏形生态系统”; (c) 灭绝事件后的“基础生态系统”; (d) 生态系统完全恢复正常(修改自 Wang Yue et al., 2006)

Fig. 2 Schematic diagram of the establishment of the new ecosystem after the Late Devonian F—F mass extinction: (a) the “blank space of ecosystem” after the mass extinction; (b) the “early form of ecosystem” after the mass extinction; (c) the “basic ecosystem” after the mass extinction; (d) the full-recovery of ecosystem (modified from Wang Yue et al., 2006)

点。二叠纪末海洋缺氧被认为是生物灭绝的主要原因之一(Huang Yuangeng et al., 2019),利用遗迹化石指示沉积环境的氧化还原条件,正是遗迹学的重要研究领域,遗迹化石分异度、生物扰动强度、潜穴直径、特征遗迹化石组合等参数,都可以作为识别水体氧含量的可靠标志(Savrda and Bottjer, 1986, 1989; 丁奕和张立军, 2023)。目前,遗迹化石已成为海水氧含量的重要指示标志,被广泛应用于中生代、新生代大洋缺氧事件研究中(Rodríguez-Tovar, 2021)。我国遗迹学研究者先后对华南地区来宾蓬

莱滩、广元上寺等经典剖面乐平统遗迹化石进行了系统研究,利用遗迹分异度、生物扰动强度等遗迹学参数,重建出二叠纪末海洋水体氧化还原条件,发现吴家坪期及长兴期海洋水体氧含量存在明显波动,既有氧含量正常时期,也存在缺氧时期(Ding Yi et al., 2016, 2021; Zhang Lijun et al., 2020; Zheng Quanfeng et al., 2022)。由此可知,华南地区二叠纪晚期海洋水体并非一直处于缺氧或贫氧状态,因此,长期缺氧或许并非造成二叠纪末生物大灭绝的主要原因。

早三叠世生物复苏事件同样是我国遗迹学家长期关注的热点,成果丰硕,对不同环境下生物复苏的时限及模式都有了深入认识(马慧珍等, 2008; Zhao Xiaoming et al., 2015; Feng Xueqian et al., 2022)。Chen Zhongqiang 等(2011)在下扬子地区下三叠统识别出 14 属遗迹化石及 1 属尚不能明确分类的遗迹,并对各项遗迹学参数进行了系统分析,发现研究区遗迹群落呈现阶梯性复苏特征,直到 Spathian 亚期晚期才完全复苏。Zhang Lijun 等(2019)选取半咸水环境的四川龙门洞剖面下三叠统东川组、飞仙关组与嘉陵江组中的遗迹化石作为研究对象,探讨了遗迹化石分布模式与沉积环境之间的联系,首次从遗迹学角度对华南地区半咸水环境早三叠世生态系统的复苏进行了研究。Luo Mao 等(2020, 2021)全面统计了全球范围晚二叠世至中三叠世遗迹化石数据,对遗迹化石分异度、生物扰动指数、遗迹组构指数、层面生物扰动指数、潜穴直径、遗迹复杂度、阶层、特征遗迹化石和遗迹歧异度等遗迹学参数进行了详尽分析,认为甲壳类生物建造的 *Rhizocorallium* 和 *Thalassinoides* 可作为环境稳定与生物复苏的准确标志,同时发现在整个早三叠世时期遗迹化石歧异度与分异度都处于较低水平,直到中三叠世才恢复到灭绝前水平(图 3)。Feng Xueqian 等(2022)通过定量分析遗迹多样性、差异度和生态空间利用等参数,评价了内生物生态系统在二叠纪末生物大灭绝后的抗灾恢复能力。基于以上研究,遗迹学参数显示华南地区早三叠世造迹生物长期处于高应力环境之中,在早三叠世 Smithian 亚期,软躯体生物出现复苏,但直到中三叠世,海洋生态系统才全面复苏。

1.1.2 生命演化早期的生物遗迹研究

后动物的起源与早期演化一直是古生物学研究的前沿与热点,由于早期后动物缺少硬体,难以保存实体化石,因此,在研究中遗迹化石往往具有不可替代的重要作用。系统研究阶段,我国遗迹学工

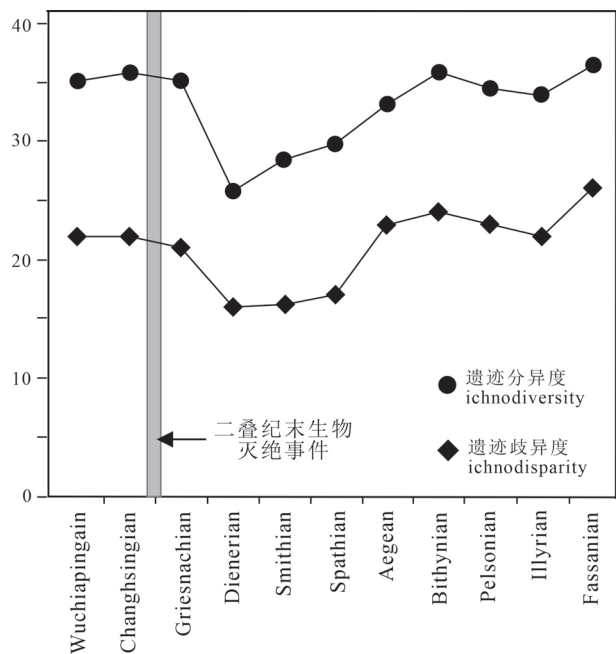


图 3 二叠纪—三叠纪之交遗迹分异度与遗迹歧异度变化(改自 Luo Mao et al., 2021)

Fig. 3 Line chart diagram summarizing variation in global ichnodiversity and ichnodisparity during the Permian—Triassic interval (modified from Luo Mao et al., 2021)

作者先后在华北克拉通的豫西(胡健民等, 1991)、燕山(刘鹏举等, 2003)、贺兰山(华洪等, 1993)、洛南(华洪等, 1995)等地中元古代早期地层中发现了疑似后生动物形成的遗迹化石。在创新阶段, 这些前寒武纪遗迹化石持续受到关注(齐永安, 2005; 孙淑芬等, 2005)。同时, 更多研究者开始对这些遗迹化石进行重新审视, 史晓颖等(2008)、梅冥相(2011)认为, 这些遗迹化石实为微生物成因的沉积构造(Microbially Induced Sedimentary Structures, MISS)。郑元等(2009)在太行山黎城中元古代地层中发现了大量遗迹, 且识别出多种遗迹间具有过渡性, 结合前人结论, 推测这些遗迹主要是微生物与蠕虫等共同作用产生。虽然, 实体化石及地球化学证据显示最早的后生动物可能起源于新元古代(Slater and Bohlin, 2022), 但华北地区中元古代早期发现的丰富遗迹化石或许可为早期后生动物起源提供不同解释。但尤其值得注意的是, 某些单细胞真核生物也能形成简单的二维线型遗迹(Matze et al., 2008; 罗翠和朱茂炎, 2010), 因此在研究中一定要对遗迹化石、实体化石及微生物成因的沉积构造进行准确区分。

1.1.3 生物大辐射事件的遗迹学研究

前寒武纪—寒武纪之交是地球生命演化史上一个加速演化阶段, 后生动物门类大量涌现, 生态类型快速分化, 在各生态环境内迅速扩张, 形成以后生生物为主导的海洋生态系统(张兴亮, 2021), 这一史无前例的生物辐射演化事件称为“寒武纪大爆发(Cambrian Explosion)” (Cloud, 1948)。我国关于寒武纪大爆发及早期生物辐射的研究已取得了举世瞩目的成果, 但寒武纪大爆发的研究远不止于此, 前人的工作主要集中在保存精美的特异埋藏实体化石(Zeng Han et al., 2020; Liu Yunhuan et al., 2022), 对遗迹化石缺乏深入研究。

身体两侧对称与足的出现是极为重要的生物演化事件, 大量具足的两侧对称动物在寒武纪早期突然出现, 古生物学家推测这些生物的祖先可能在埃迪卡拉纪就已存在, 但一直缺乏可靠的化石证据支撑。而我国三峡地区埃迪卡拉系灯影组石板滩段发育的遗迹化石, 为前寒武纪两侧对称动物的存在提供了关键性证据。石板滩段灰岩层面上保存了一系列 V 字形叠覆状移迹, 末端还保存有共生的造迹生物, 该造迹生物呈两侧对称的三叶形, 具明显身体分节, 被命名为夷陵虫(*Yilingia*), 该发现证实了在距今约 550 Ma 的埃迪卡拉纪, 身体分节的两侧对称动物已经出现, 并为探索该时期遗迹化石的造迹生物提供了重要参考(Chen Zhe et al., 2013, 2018, 2019)。

我国滇东地区寒武系发育了大量精美的遗迹化石, 在创新阶段, 我国遗迹学家对滇东地区寒武纪早期遗迹化石进行了系统研究, 为寒武纪早期生命的起源与辐射补充了关键的遗迹学证据。Ou Qiang 等(2009)和 Huang Diying 等(2014)先后在云南澄江生物群中发现了与三叶虫及蠕虫伴生的遗迹化石, 为理解寒武纪生命大爆发时期造迹生物的生活方式与行为习性提供了关键证据。Ding Yi 等(2020a, b)对滇东地区寒武系红井哨组与乌龙箐组中的遗迹化石进行了系统研究, 通过遗迹化石组合及沉积构造的综合分析, 推断滇东地区红井哨组与乌龙箐组属于潮坪沉积, 证明当时底栖生物已能够很好地适应潮坪环境。除华南外, 华北寒武系也发育了大量遗迹化石。Zhang Lijun 等(2017a)对河南登封朱砂洞组中 *Thalassinoides* 及生物扰动构造进行了深入的定量研究, 沉积学与遗迹学证据综合指示深阶层的 *Thalassinoides* 发育于近岸浅水环境, 且岩层中生物扰动作用强烈, 沉积物发生了混合作用, 沉积物的混

合能够促进沉积物—水界面附近营养物质的交流,为寒武纪早期生物的辐射提供了重要支持。华北寒武系馒头组中也发育了众多遗迹化石,Zhang Lijun等(2017b)对豫西滹池剖面馒头组中的*Diplocraterion*进行了系统研究,基于SEM—EDS分析,认为*Diplocraterion*受到相控的制约与海水地球化学循环的影响,因此,在华北地区出现的较晚,为研究寒武纪生命大爆发尾声阶段底栖生物的殖居,补充了重要的遗迹学证据。

刘梦瑶和张立军(2018)以及许晴暘等(2023)对全球寒武纪遗迹化石分异度和歧异度进行了综合统计,发现在寒武纪早期遗迹化石多样性增长迅速,其最具代表性的生物行为变化是出现了具有垂下分量的潜穴(如*Treptichnus*、*Arenicolites*)。

奥陶纪生物大幅射事件(Great Ordovician Biodiversification Event,GOBE)是寒武纪生命大爆发事件后,再次上演的又一重大生物辐射事件,几乎贯穿整个奥陶纪,全球海洋属级生物增量超过3倍,自此古生代演化生物群完成了基本框架的构建,海洋生态系统首次变得高度复杂(Servais and Harper, 2018)。遗迹化石能很好的反映造迹生物身体构造与行为复杂性,Fan Ruoying等(2021a, 2021b)对我国内蒙奥陶纪晚期深海遗迹群落进行了系统研究,发现了众多高度复杂的遗迹类型,这些遗迹不仅具有明显的行为复杂性,更展示了当时造迹生物已具备极强的运动控制能力,为奥陶纪生物大幅射研究提供了崭新的思路。许晴暘等(2023)通过统计发现,相较寒武纪时期,奥陶纪遗迹化石多样性总量高达142种,歧异度也增至54类,并且海洋遗迹化石分布也逐渐从滨浅海环境扩展至半深海、深海,反应了造迹生物群落栖息地的扩张。

1.2 对特殊遗迹化石的研究

除常见的潜穴、移迹外,遗迹化石还包括根迹、足迹、粪化石等较为特殊的种类,这些遗迹成因少见、形态奇特,很多尚不能进行明确的属种分类,但这些特殊遗迹化石同样具有重要的研究意义。

1.2.1 粪化石研究

粪化石是石化的动物的消化物、排泄物或排出物,能为造迹生物饮食习性、食物链(网)、排泄方式、肠道结构功能等研究提供重要证据(Shillito et al., 2020; 殷亚飞等, 2022)。系统研究阶段,我国粪化石研究屈指可数(胡益成, 1985)。进入创新阶段,粪化石受到越来越多关注,逐渐成为遗迹学研究的热点之一(表1)。

Hu Yazhou等(2021)在云南武定石将军剖面乌龙箐组中,发现了由粪球粒聚集而成的蠕虫类粪化石,根据粪球粒形态不同,推测寒武纪早期蠕虫的消化能力存在差异,并可能已具有利用粪化石培育微生物的牧食行为。龚一鸣等(2009b)在河北秦皇岛石门寨剖面石炭系本溪组内发现了似正弦曲线的带状粪粒集合体,并在其中发现了未消化的动植物残渣,结合粪化石大小,推断造迹生物可能为杂食性鱼类。Luo Mao等(2017, 2018)和Chen Yuxuan等(2023)在云南中三叠世罗平生物群中发现了大量特异保存的粪化石,这些粪化石中不仅发现了迄今为止最年轻的异质体拖曳迹(ambient inclusion trails, AITs),及甲壳类形成的微粪球粒,并且与早三叠世粪化石相比,罗平生物群粪化石展现出了更加复杂的食物链,进一步证明该时期海洋生态系统已从二叠纪末生物大灭绝事件中完全恢复。

除海相粪化石研究外,陆相粪化石研究同样取得了众多突破。Zhao Xiangdong等(2020)在鄂尔多斯盆地南缘中三叠统铜川组油页岩中发现了丰富的鱼粪化石,其中,最大的鱼粪化石呈螺旋状,直径可达77 mm,内含双翅目昆虫残体,这一发现表明当时湖泊中已出现体型较大的捕食性鱼类,存在复杂的多层营养级关系,揭示经过10 Ma,陆地生态系统已完全从二叠纪末生物大灭绝事件中恢复。You Jiyuan等(2021)和Yao Mingtao等(2022)分别对鄂尔多斯盆地三叠系延长组长7段鱼粪化石进行了系统研究,并以此恢复了当时湖泊生态系统。Zhang Yu'nan等(2021)对黄河中游、长江下游两地,新石器时期遗存中狗粪化石中的脂类化合物及孢粉进行了系统研究,发现两地狗类食物来源存在明显不同,反应了两地农业类型及狗类驯化程度的差异。以上研究,展现了粪化石在古环境重建与动物食性研究中的巨大研究潜力,相信粪化石研究必将在未来成为遗迹学与考古学研究的重要分枝,发挥出更大作用。

1.2.2 爬行类足迹研究

中生代是爬行动物的时代,爬行动物统治了当时地球的陆地、海洋与天空。作为爬行类动态行为的缩影,爬行类足迹蕴含了丰富的生物学信息,能有效判断造迹生物的属种,恢复爬行类生物群落构成,弥补骨骼化石记录的不完整性。创新阶段,我国遗迹学工作者对各类爬行动物足迹展开了深入研究,不仅利用足迹化石恢复了造迹生物的种类、体型与运动模式(吕洪波等, 2004),还为古生态、古环境与古地理研究补充了重要的遗迹学证据(Yuan

表 1 创新阶段我国粪化石相关研究文献

Table 1 References of coprolites during the innovating stage in China

序号	文献	篇名
1	郝瑞辉等(2008)	南京汤山骠子洞鬣狗粪化石的孢粉分析
2	龚一鸣等(2009b)	秦皇岛石炭纪粪化石
3	王文娟等(2013)	灵井许昌人遗址鬣狗粪化石的孢粉和真菌孢子研究
4	王文娟等(2015)	河南灵井许昌人遗址鬣狗粪化石的初步研究
5	郝天琪等(2015)	安徽巢湖地区早三叠世粪化石内的牙形石
6	周小梅等(2021)	鱼粪化石特征对早侏罗世托阿尔期湖泊生态系统的启示:以川东大安寨段为例
7	殷亚飞等(2022)	粪化石在古生态研究中的应用综述
8	常曦元等(2022)	贵州兴义中三叠世拉丁期兴义动物群粪化石
9	尤继元等(2024)	鱼粪化石特征对晚三叠世湖泊生态系统的启示—以鄂尔多斯盆地南部长 7 段为例
10	Hu Shixue 等(2010)	Fossil coprolites from the Middle Triassic Luoping Biota and ecological implication
11	Shen Cen 等(2014)	Phosphatized coprolites from the middle Cambrian (Stage 5) Duyun fauna of China
12	Luo Mao 等(2017)	Taphonomy and palaeobiology of early Middle Triassic coprolites from the Luoping biota, southwest China: Implications for reconstruction of fossil food webs
13	Luo Mao 等(2018)	Youngest ambient inclusion trails from Middle Triassic phosphatized coprolites, southwestern China: New insights into an old intriguing phenomenon
14	Zhang Yu'nan 等(2019)	Local vegetation patterns of a Neolithic environment at the site of Tianluoshan, China, based on coprolite analysis
15	Zhao Xiangdong 等(2020)	Recovery of lacustrine ecosystems after the end-Permian mass extinction
16	Zhang Yu'nan 等(2020)	Pollen and lipid analysis of coprolites from Yuhuicun and Houtieying, China: Implications for human habitats and diets
17	Hu Yazhou 等(2021)	Burrows filled with faecal pellets from the Cambrian (Stage 4) Guanshan biota of South China and their palaeoecological implications
18	You Jiyuan 等(2021)	Establishment and significance of ancient lake ecosystems in the Mesozoic—evidence from coprolite from the Chang 7 section of the Upper Triassic in the Ordos Basin, China
19	Zhang Yu'nan 等(2021)	Different human-dog interactions in early agricultural societies of China, revealed by coprolite
20	Yao Mingtao 等(2022)	Vertebrate coprolites from Middle Triassic Chang 7 Member in Ordos Basin, China: Palaeobiological and palaeoecological implications
21	Dong Chong 等(2022)	Termite coprolites (Blattodea: Isoptera) from the Early Cretaceous of eastern Inner Mongolia, Northeast China
22	Yang Liu 等(2022)	The Technological Advance and Application of Coprolite Analysis
23	Chen Yuxuan 等(2023)	Crustacean microcoprolites from the Middle Triassic Luoping Biota, China: Evidence for primary producers in the first Modern-type marine ecosystems

Tingyuan et al., 2024)。在这些爬行类足迹中,恐龙足迹的研究最受关注,并获得了众多显著成果。

我国恐龙足迹研究可追溯至 20 世纪 20 年代,陕西神木侏罗系中发现的禽龙类足迹,揭开了我国恐龙足迹研究的序幕(Chardin and Young Chungchien, 1929)。在创新研究阶段,随着新技术的推广引进,及民众对恐龙兴趣的日益浓厚,恐龙足迹学研究发展迅速,大量恐龙足迹在我国被发现研究。山东、江苏、陕西等二十余个省份地区都有恐龙足迹的记录(图 4)。Xing Lida 等(2019)报导了一枚产自江西赣州的巨大三趾型恐龙足迹化石,长 58 cm,宽 48 cm,推断这枚足迹的造迹生物可能为暴龙类,该化石不仅是我国现存的最大肉食性恐龙足迹,也是我国乃至亚洲地区首次发现暴龙类足迹,该足迹的发现对于研究我国南方白垩纪恐龙生物群落具有重大意义。截止 2019 年,我国已发现恐龙足迹 43 属 60 种(王原等,2019)。

1.2.3 其他特殊遗迹

除粪化石与足迹外,还有一些非常特殊的遗迹化石,这些遗迹虽保存较少,但同样记录了非常重要的生物学与沉积学信息,在创新阶段,这些特殊遗迹得到了越来越多关注,取得了许多重要成果。泥盆纪陆地植物开始繁盛,对地球生态系统产生深远影响,除保存可观的实体化石外,泥盆纪植物也在地层中形成了许多植物根迹,但其丰富的科学信息并未引起足够重视。Xue Jinzhuang 等(2016)对云南下泥盆统徐家冲组镰蕨(*Drepanophycus*)的根迹展开了系统研究,发现镰蕨可通过地下根状茎克隆生长,形成庞大的克隆体,并进行重复多次的 K-或 H-型分枝,形成复杂的网状结构,能够增进河流沉积物的抗侵蚀能力,促进成土作用,从而增强河流地貌的稳定性,提高早期土壤的固碳能力,是原始维管植物作用于地球系统的一种重要机制。

鱼类的捕食迹也是一类特殊遗迹,能为探索鱼

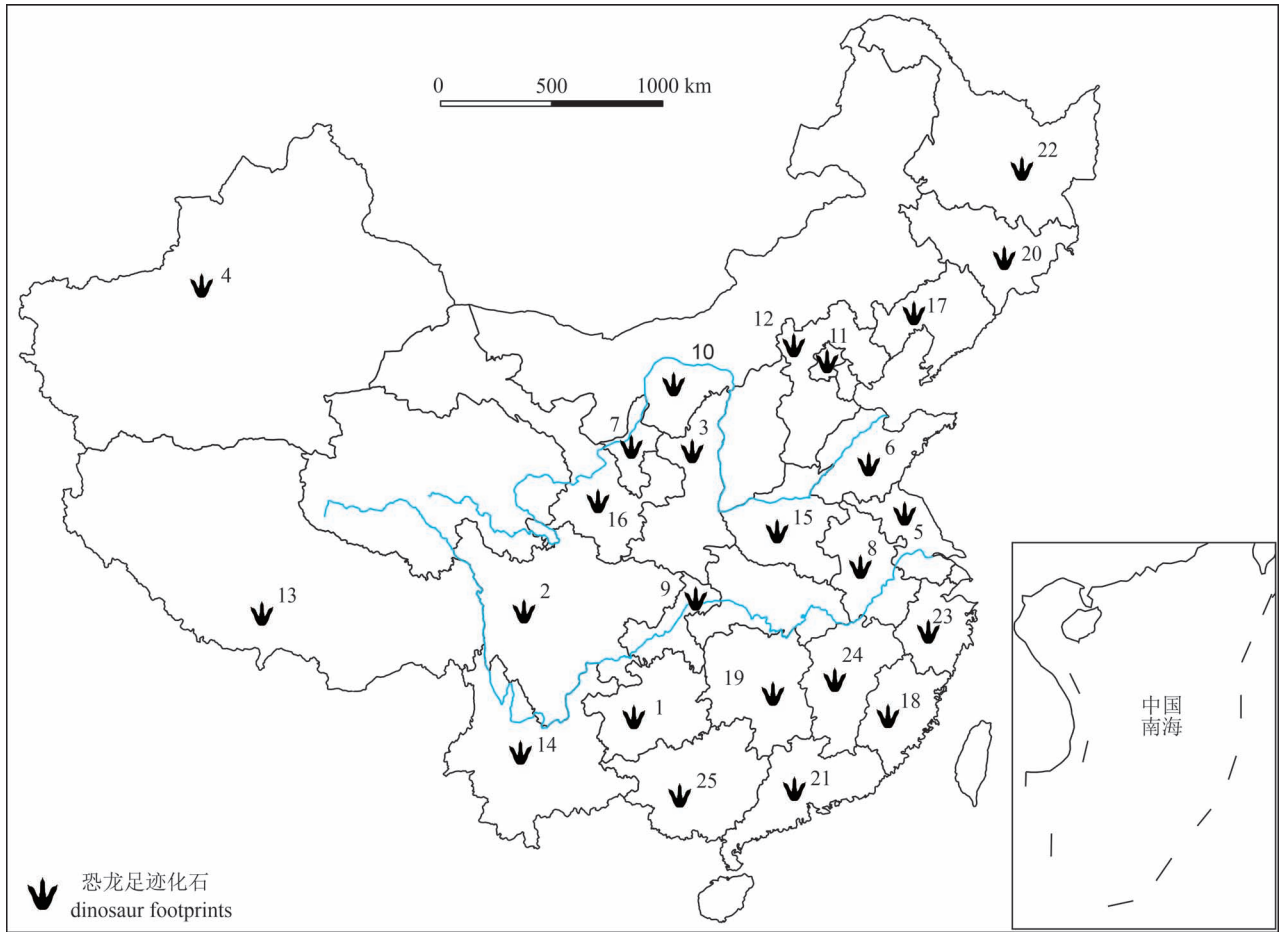


图 4 中国恐龙足迹化石分布(修改自王原等,2019)

Fig. 4 The distribution of dinosaur footprint fossils in China (modified from Wang Yuan et al. , 2019 #)

- 1— Qin Yanjiao and Xing Lida, 2021; 2—Jiang Shan et al. , 2022; 3—Xing Lida et al. , 2021a; 4—Xing Lida et al. , 2011; 5—邢立达等, 2019; 6—Xu Huan et al. , 2021; 7—宗立一等,2013; 8—Xing Lida et al. , 2014; 9—Dai Hui et al. , 2015; 10—Lockley et al. , 2017; 11—Xing Lida et al. , 2015; 12—Xing Lida et al. , 2018; 13—Xing Lida et al. , 2021b; 14—Li Hongqing et al. , 2021; 15—Xing Lida et al. , 2017a; 16—Zhang Jianping et al. , 2006; 17—Xing Lida et al. , 2022; 18. 叶清,2021; 19—Xing Lida et al. , 2016; 20—Xing Lida et al. , 2017b; 21—Xing Lida et al. , 2017c; 22—Xing Lida et al. , 2019a; 23—Xing Lida et al. , 2021c; 24—Xing Lida et al. , 2019b; 25. 潘正伟等,2021
- 1— Qin Yanjiao and Xing Lida, 2021; 2—Jiang Shan et al. , 2022; 3—Xing Lida et al. , 2021a; 4—Xing Lida et al. , 2011; 5—Xing Lida et al. , 2019#; 6—Xu Huan et al. , 2021; 7—Zong Liyi et al. , 2013#; 8—Xing Lida et al. , 2014; 9—Dai Hui et al. , 2015; 10—Lockley et al. , 2017; 11—Xing Lida et al. , 2015; 12—Xing Lida et al. , 2018; 13—Xing Lida et al. , 2021b; 14—Li Hongqing et al. , 2021; 15—Xing Lida et al. , 2017a; 16—Zhang Jianping et al. , 2006; 17—Xing Lida et al. , 2022; 18—Ye Qing, 2021#; 19—Xing Lida et al. , 2016; 20—Xing Lida et al. , 2017b; 21—Xing Lida et al. , 2017c; 22—Xing Lida et al. , 2019a; 23—Xing Lida et al. , 2021c; 24—Xing Lida et al. , 2019b; 25—Pan Zhengwei et al. , 2021#

类捕食习性与重建水中食物营养网络提供有力证据。Fan Ruoying 等(2019)首次在湖北武汉上泥盆统五通组石英砂岩底面发现了具二裂片凸起构造的有颌鱼类捕食迹 *Osculichnus*, 并依据其形态特征推断 *Osculichnus* 可能为肺鱼冲入沉积物中捕食小型鱼类或底栖无脊椎动物所形成, 揭示了晚泥盆世淡水—半咸水鱼类的捕食习性。

相较于传统常见的遗迹化石, 特殊遗迹在创新阶段受到了越来越多的关注, 这些特殊遗迹为深入

了解造迹生物习性、重建造迹生物生活环境提供了不可多得的宝贵证据, 已成为我国遗迹学研究的又一前沿热点。

1.3 新技术与方法在遗迹学研究中的应用

随着现代科学技术的日新月异, 新技术、新手段的不断涌现, 为遗迹学这门古老学科注入了新的活力。在创新阶段, 我国遗迹学家利用新技术手段在遗迹化石三维形态结构、微观成分、定量分析等研究中都取得了突破。

1.3.1 遗迹化石三维形态恢复

遗迹化石形态是遗迹学研究的基础,早期通常采用连续切片法重建遗迹化石的三维形态,随着科技不断进步,遗迹化石三维无损重建逐渐成为遗迹化石研究的新方向。牛永斌等(2008)通过观察 *Chondrites* 在岩石中的三维展布,利用 3D Max 与 Cosmoworlds 等建模软件模拟出 *Chondrites* 的三维形态,至此,我国遗迹学家开始广泛使用计算机技术对遗迹化石开展三维重建工作。但该研究仍需基于连续切片来观察遗迹的三维形态,并非真正意义上的遗迹化石无损三维重建。

丁奕等(2016)利用 X 射线计算机断层成像技术(Computed Tomography, CT)对湖南二叠系大隆组石灰岩中的 *Chondrites* 进行了三维扫描,利用 Mimics 重建出 *Chondrites* 的三维形态(图 5)。该研究为后续遗迹化石的无损三维重建,提供了行之有效的思路。Wang Yuanyuan 等(2019a, b)也采用了 X 射线计算机断层成像技术,对现代潮坪螃蟹与沙蚕形成的潜穴进行了扫描,并通过 VG Studio 对 *Psilonichnus*、*Polykladichnus* 与 *Archaeonassa* 进行了三维重建,识别出 I 型、J 型、U 型和 Y 型潜穴,为遗迹化石三维形态研究提供了可靠的现实依据,也展现出 CT 技术在遗迹学研究中具有巨大潜力。

1.3.2 遗迹学定量研究

目前,我国遗迹化石仍以定性研究为主,随着数学量化手段的逐步引入,越来越多遗迹学工作者开始涉足定量研究。在遗迹学系统研究阶段,我国遗迹学家便运用拓扑学方法,尝试对遗迹化石与现代生物的遗迹进行量化研究(龚一鸣和司远兰, 1991; Gong and Si, 2002),拓扑遗迹分析也正式拉开了我国遗迹学定量研究的序幕。在创新阶段,我国遗迹学工作者在此基础上,对遗迹化石开展了更加深入的定量分析工作。Fan Ruoying 等(2018)基于已发表文献中的深海相雕画迹的拓扑结构分析,提出了适用于所有遗迹化石的拓扑结构分类方案,将雕画迹划分为线形、树形与网形 3 大拓扑结构类型,并进一步分为 13 个拓扑小类和 19 个拓扑原型,形态丰富的深海雕画迹拓扑分类为其他深海大型底栖生物的个体与集体行为研究提供了新的方向。除拓扑研究外, Fan Ruoying 等(2017)还报导了晚白垩世—中新世常见的深水相遗迹化石 *Helminthorhapse*, 并对其蛇曲状形态进行了定量形态学研究,建立了基于欧式几何、分形形态的行为参数,为识别该遗迹提供了重要的定量依据,同时基于

人工智能模型对蛇曲状遗迹化石进行了形态发生模拟。网络分析作为一种新近出现的定量分析与数据可视化方法,近年来被广泛应用于化石的定量研究。党志英和张立军(2020)及许欣等(2023)均利用网络分析对研究区域遗迹化石群落进行了定量分析,重建了研究剖面遗迹群落结构系统,并利用遗迹网络揭示了沉积环境的演变,为遗迹化石的定量研究打开了新的思路。张立军等(2021)基于实际工作及发表文献,建立了二叠纪—三叠纪深水海洋环境遗迹化石及生物扰动数据库,通过定量分析,构建出二叠纪—三叠纪转折时期深水海洋环境生态空间利用与生态系统工程的三维空间模型,揭示该时期深水海洋环境中,生态空间利用与生态系统工程未存在明显下降,而处于相对稳定的状态。Zhang Lijun 等(2022)首次对全球范围类各时期遗迹化石分异度进行了定量统计与分析,以评估生物与底质相互作用如何反映在遗迹化石属种层面的改变上,该研究对如何利用遗迹学定量统计方法反演生物与环境的相互作用具有极为重要的指示意义。

综上,我国遗迹学定量研究目前正处于高速发展阶段,越来越多定量研究方法(如几何形态测量、分形拓扑、网络分析)被广泛应用,遗迹学研究也必将定性阶段向着定量阶段发展。

1.4 现代遗迹学研究

遗迹化石在形成过程中会受到成岩作用影响,且造迹生物和遗迹化石难以共存,因此,对于遗迹化石的形态功能分析及造迹生物的推断往往具有不确定性。现代遗迹学(Neoichnology)是遗迹学重要分枝,主要研究现代造迹生物行为特征与沉积环境之间的关系(Dashtgard and Gingras, 2012),可在野外对现代生物的造迹行为进行直接观测,为遗迹学研究补充了“将今论古”的重要证据(Davis, 2007)。我国现代遗迹学研究相对较少,可喜的是,在创新阶段,现代遗迹学越来越受到重视,成果显著。王海邻(2018)选择青岛日照沿岸、杭州湾庵东滨岸与渤海湾滦河入海口三地潮间带作为研究区域,深入研究了潮间带环境中现代生物遗迹的种类、形态、组合与分布特征,并将现代遗迹与遗迹化石进行对比,识别出 8 种滨岸潮间带不同沉积环境下的现代生物遗迹组合。王学芹(2019)系统描述了山东东营黄河三角洲平原、前缘地区现代生物遗迹形态与造迹过程,发现造迹生物 18 大类,并总结了研究地区现代遗迹群落类型与分布特征,为恢复遗迹化石的造迹过程与沉积环境提供了可靠的现实依据。现代遗迹学研

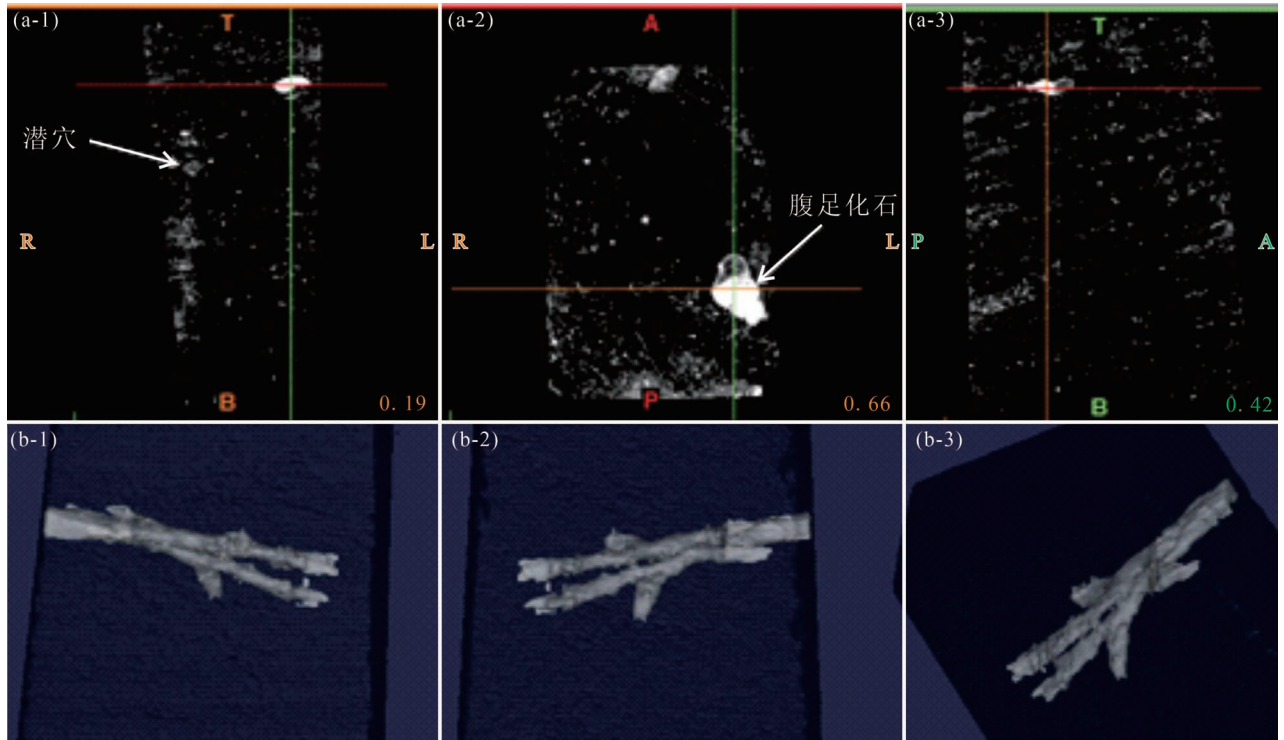


图5 湖南二叠系 *Chondrites* 潜穴三视图及三维复原模型: (a) *Chondrites* 的XCT三视图;

(b) *Chondrites* 的XCT三维重建模型(修改自丁奕等,2016)

Fig. 5 XCT three-view drawing and 3D model of Permian *Chondrites* from Hunan Province: (a) Three-view drawing of *Chondrites* via XCT; (b) 3D model of *Chondrites* via XCT (modified from Ding Yi et al., 2016&)

究不仅能帮助遗迹学工作者更好的理解复杂遗迹化石的形态功能,同时也为利用遗迹学参数进行古环境与古生态恢复提供了强有力的现实依据,使得遗迹学研究结果更具说服力。

2 中国遗迹化石研究展望

我国遗迹化石研究在创新阶段取得了瞩目成就,无论研究团队人数、论文数量,还是研究深度与广度都有了显著提升,在未来遗迹学研究中,仍有许多方向值得加大投入,深入探索,有望取得更加令人振奋的成果。

2.1 实验遗迹学研究

我国现代遗迹学研究大多限于在野外对造迹生物进行直接观察,缺少对环境参数的定量控制,也无法观测极端环境下生物的造迹行为。实验古生物学通过在实验室模拟地质历史时期各类环境,从而观察生物埋藏过程,目前已成为古生物学研究的前沿(Zhang Jian and Hua Hong, 2014)。近年来,越来越多遗迹学家将实验学手段应用于现代生物造迹行为的研究中,Counts和Hasiotis(2009)在实验室中观察

现代陆生甲虫 *Cyclocephala* 的造迹行为,并对其形成的潜穴形态进行系统分析,发现陆生甲虫所建造的星月形回填构造与海相生物潜穴中的回填构造在成因与结构方面存在很大差别。目前,我国实验遗迹学研究相对薄弱,随着科技发展,在未来实验学研究中通过控制氧含量、水体温度、底质特征等外在环境因素,从而观察生物造迹行为的变化,有助于了解遗迹化石对不同环境的响应,更清晰的理解各项遗迹学参数所指示的古环境意义。

2.2 遗迹化石的地球生物学研究

造迹生物的行为习性不仅受生存环境的制约,同时与微生物群落也存在密切联系(Konhauser and Gingras, 2007)。地球微生物不仅能够参与造迹过程,且本身也可以作为古环境与古生态的指示标志(Teske, 2005)。因此,遗迹化石的地球生物学研究对准确揭示遗迹化石的古环境与古生态意义,正确阐明复杂遗迹化石的形态功能具有重要意义(龚一鸣等, 2009a)。袁文芳等(2007)在东营凹陷古近系沙河街组中发现了遗迹化石 *Palaeodictyon*, 并对其围岩进行生标测试后分析出甲藻甾烷分子的存在,

遗迹化石与生物标志化合物证据都显示研究区域当时发生过海侵事件。华南和澳大利亚悉尼盆地二叠系发育了大量 *Zoophycos*, 研究者在其蹼层中发现了丰富的分子及微生物化石, 据此提出了 *Zoophycos* 的“花园模式”(Gong Yiming et al., 2007, 2008; Zhang Lijun et al., 2015)。四川与河南泥盆系地层中的 *Rhizocorallium*, 其蹼层中发现了大量不同形态的黄铁矿, 显示造迹生物与硫还原细菌互利共生, 在每个蹼层中营造出不同的氧化还原环境, 这样的形态结构反映出 *Rhizocorallium* 有着与 *Zoophycos* 相似的造迹模式(Zhang Lijun et al., 2016; 赵墨和张立军, 2017)。这些工作展示出地球生物学在遗迹学研究中的蓬勃生命力, 相信在未来工作中, 遗迹化石的地球生物学研究一定会发挥至关重要的作用。

2.3 遗迹学新理论的发展

自 20 世纪 50 年代起, 遗迹学研究取得了飞速发展, 遗迹相 (ichnofacies) 模式的建立; 遗迹组构 (ichnofabric) 概念的提出; 生物扰动指数 (bioturbation index) 及遗迹组构指数 (ichnofabric index) 的推广等里程碑式的工作不断将遗迹学理论和应用研究向前推进, 取得了巨大成功。Buatois 和 Mángano (2013) 率先提出遗迹歧异度 (ichnodisparity) 这一概念, 用来衡量遗迹化石所包含的形态结构设计种类, 反映因造迹生物身体结构、运动系统和行为习性差异而造成的遗迹化石之间形态的明显不同(Mángano and Buatois, 2014)。这一新理论的出现, 能够更好揭示造迹生物个体轮廓、运动系统和行为过程的重要创新, 为遗迹学研究带来了突破(Buatois et al., 2017)。刘梦瑶和张立军(2018)首次采用遗迹歧异度这一理论, 基于已发表数据, 在前寒武纪—寒武纪之交共识别出 40 个形态结构设计类型, 为寒武纪生命大爆发研究补充了有力的遗迹学证据。遗迹歧异度这一理论的发现与应用, 使得遗迹化石能够在演化古生物学研究中扮演更重要的角色, 为研究者提供了更多研究视角。在未来研究中, 新遗迹学理论的优化、提出与应用必将为遗迹学研究带来突破, 因此, 这方面研究亦将成为我国遗迹学研究的重点, 期待能在遗迹学理论研究历史中留下属于我国学者浓墨重彩的一笔。

2.4 陆相遗迹化石研究

相较于我国海相遗迹化石研究的如火如荼, 陆相遗迹化石研究稍显平淡。虽然, 陆相遗迹化石出现较晚, 但由于节肢动物殖居陆地、昆虫内部社会行为的出现、被子植物大发展等重要演化事件, 导致陆

相遗迹化石更具多样性(Buatois and Mángano, 1993)。我国陆相遗迹化石主要分布于中生代与新生代地层中, 据不完全统计, 目前, 已在渤海湾盆地、苏北盆地、四川盆地等研究区域发现陆相无脊椎动物的遗迹化石 44 属 107 种, 大多发育于湖泊、冲积扇、河流等沉积环境(胡斌等, 2021)。近年来, 陆相遗迹学研究蓬勃发展, 越来越受到重视, 如 Guo Wenwei 等(2019)和 Xing Zhifeng 等(2021)对华北三叠系陆相遗迹化石进行了深入研究, 系统分析了遗迹化石丰度、分异度、扰动强度、潜穴直径、营养类型等遗迹学参数, 探讨了研究区域在生物灭绝事件后古环境及古生态的恢复过程。陆相遗迹学研究极具潜力, 前期的门类学研究已为后续深入研究打下了良好基础, 相信只需进一步深挖陆相遗迹化石研究意义, 引入新的手段与方法, 一定能取得更大突破。

2.5 大数据和人工智能的应用

随着计算机信息技术的不断发展, 大数据为科学研究带来了全新的方法论, 地学领域的研究工作也随之迎来了革命性的创新(Guo Huadong, 2017)。化石数据无疑是了解地球历史与生命演化的重要途径, 近年来, 利用计算机技术对化石数据进行深入挖掘与分析, 已成为古生物学研究的前沿与热点(邓怡颖等, 2020), 目前, 化石数据库正处于快速发展阶段, 大数据驱动下衍生的多种古生物学分析方法也在不断完善, 取得了一系列重大突破(Fan Junxuan et al., 2020)。全球范围类古生物数据库多达上百个, 许多国际大型数据库如 PBDB 古生物学数据库和 GBDB 地质历史时期生物多样性数据库都有遗迹化石数据, 为遗迹学大数据研究提供了良好的基础。除大数据外, 人工智能技术也在众多科研领域得到了广泛应用, 尤其在图像识别方向具有得天独厚的优势, 不少古生物学家将人工智能技术应用于化石的识别与鉴定, 取得了突破性的进展(Hou Yemao et al., 2021)。遗迹化石形态特征明显, 且数量众多, 完全满足机器学习的基本要求。虽然, 我国遗迹化石的大数据与人工智能研究目前尚处于起步阶段, 但未来这两项技术必将在遗迹学研究中发挥重大作用, 带来新的突破。

3 结语

遗迹学在我国已有近百年的研究历史。自 2004 年以来, 在遗迹化石研究创新阶段, 我国遗迹学工作者在前人基础上砥砺前行, 取得了一系列重要成果, 尤其在①地质转折时期生物与环境协同演

化;②特殊遗迹化石;③新技术与方法的应用;④现代遗迹学研究4方面尤为显著。在未来遗迹学研究中,有望在实验遗迹学、遗迹化石的地球生物学、遗迹学新理论、陆相遗迹化石研究及大数据和人工智能的应用等方面取得新突破。遗迹化石作为生物成因的沉积构造,具有生物学与沉积学双重属性,记录了地质历史时期生物与环境协同演化的重要证据,相信随着研究的不断深入,遗迹学这门古老的学科一定会受到更多的关注,必将在古生物与古环境研究中发挥更大作用。

遗迹学创新研究阶段,我国遗迹学蓬勃发展,涉及遗迹学研究的论文数目较多,信息量巨大,在文中难以全面完整地介绍所有成果,疏漏之处,敬请谅解。

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Achievements and frontiers of ichnological study during the innovating stage in China

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Objectives: Trace fossils play a very important role in palaeontological study, and attract great attention from many researchers. Ichnological study went through three stages of abecedarian (1929~1978), systematic (1978~2004), and innovating (2004~now) stages in China. In this paper, we summarize the main achievements and progresses of ichnological study in China during the innovating stage and provides an outlook on the future development of ichnology.

Results: During the innovating stage, four aspects of achievements and progresses of ichnological research are summarized as follows: ① the coevolution between environment and organism; ② special trace fossils; ③ the application of new techniques and methods; ④ neoichnology. Moreover, based on the systematical regression and summary of the recent ichnological study in China, we propose that the future frontiers in ichnology may include: experimental ichnology, geobiological study of trace fossils, new theory of ichnology, terrestrial ichnology, and applications of big data and artificial intelligence.

Conclusions: With the further research of trace fossils, ichnology can get more attention, and will certainly play a more significant role in palaeontology and palaeoenvironment.

Keywords: trace fossils; China; achievements; frontiers

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