

怀念伯奇·步林 (1898—1990)

瑞典著名古生物学家步林博士 1990 年在瑞典乌普萨拉病逝。他是本世纪二三十年代开创中国地质古生物学事业的一批杰出学者中最后离开我们的一位, 这批学者还包括安特生、魏曼和斯丹斯基。

1927 年, 在魏曼的指导下, 二十九岁的步林完成了研究中国长颈鹿化石的博士论文。同年, 经安特生推荐, 步林到中国主持周口店发掘直至 1928 年底。1929—1933 年, 步林作为首席古生物学家参加了瑞典探险家斯文赫定组织的中瑞西北考察团, 在内蒙古、甘肃和新疆寻找脊椎动物化石。在考察团的五十四卷考察报告中步林写了十三卷, 其中两大卷描述了甘肃西部塔崩布鲁克的晚渐新世哺乳动物群, 白垩纪爬行类和石炭纪植物化石也各占一卷。另外, 《中国古生物志》也收录了步林有关中国脊椎动物化石的许多文章。

1933 年后, 步林一直在乌普萨拉大学教书, 同时研究早年采自中国的化石, 晚年转而研究古植物。他是乌普萨拉古生物学界的领袖人物。

步林博士对古生物学, 特别是对中国的古脊椎动物学作出了杰出贡献, 值得后人永远怀念。

IN MEMORIAL TO BIRGER BOHLIN

Born in 1898 in Uppsala, Sweden, the recent death in 1990 there of (Anders) Birger Bohlin brought to its close the life of one of the great students of the fossil vertebrates of China. Indeed, Bohlin was the last of a group of scientists, including the Swedes Johann Gunnar Andersson (1874—1960) and Carl Wiman (1867—1944) and the Austrian Otto Zdansky (1894—1988), who pioneered the study of the vertebrate paleontology and geology of China during the 1920s and 1930s.

Educated in Uppsala, as a student of Wiman's, Bohlin completed a doctoral thesis in 1927 on the fossil giraffids of China, having studied specimens collected by Andersson and Zdansky. That year, Zdansky announced the discovery of two hominid teeth at the Zhoukoudian cave site near Beijing. Davidson Black (1884—1934), a Canadian anatomist teaching in Beijing, used this discovery to secure funding from the Rockefeller Foundation to carry out a large excavation at Zhoukoudian with the hope of discovering additional hominid fossils. Black needed a trained paleontologist to head this excavation, and after Zdansky's refusal, Bohlin was chosen, largely on the recommendation of Andersson.

Thus, in 1927 a 29-year-old Birger Bohlin arrived in China to spend the next two years supervising the Zhoukoudian excavation. This work continued until the Rockefeller Foundation funds were exhausted at the end of 1928. Fortunately, at that time, the renowned Swedish explorer and geographer Sven Hedin (1865—1952) was commissioned by the Chinese Railroad Authority to organize an expedition to Nei Mongol, Gansu and Xinjiang in order

to improve communications with these farflung provinces. Bohlin signed on the expedition as its paleontologist. He literally spent the years 1929—1933 travelling, mostly on foot, through much of Nei Mongol, Gansu and Tsaidam collecting fossil vertebrates. Certainly the most famous of Bohlin's many discoveries were the late Oligocene mammal faunas at Taben Buluk in western Gansu. However, Bohlin also made significant collections of Cretaceous reptiles and Carboniferous plants. Of the monumental 54 quarto monographs published as the *Reports of the Scientific Expeditions to the Northwestern Provinces of China under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin*, Bohlin wrote 13 parts, including two massive monographs on the Taben Buluk faunas, one on Cretaceous reptiles and one on Carboniferous plants. He also published several monographs on Chinese fossil vertebrates in the series *Palaeontologia Sinica*, including a 1926 volume based on his doctoral thesis, as well as a number of shorter articles on Chinese vertebrate fossils.

Bohlin returned to Sweden in 1933, never to return to China. First, he held the post of Lecturer in Paleontology at Uppsala University, but subsequently he taught biology at a high school in Uppsala until his retirement. Most of his scientific research in Uppsala focused on his collections from China, and in his later years Bohlin left behind the world of fossil vertebrates to devote himself to the study of fossil plants.

I met Birger Bohlin in Uppsala in 1982 with Niall Mateer as we researched the Swedish collections of vertebrate fossils from China. In a basement in the Geology Department of Uppsala University, surrounded by and engrossed in the study of late Paleozoic plant fossils, Bohlin was a sprightly and humorous man. He quickly produced a scrapbook of photographs of his work in China, and charmed us with anecdotes about his experiences there. Near the end of our visit, Bohlin asserted that he may hold the distinction of having walked more miles in Central Asia than any living westerner. Certainly, not many westerners ever collected as many vertebrate fossils in China as did Bohlin, the last of a great group of pioneers in the study of Chinese vertebrate fossils. Much more about the life and writings of Birger Bohlin can be found in volume 11 of the *Bulletin of the Geological Institutions of the University of Uppsala*, published in 1985.

(Spencer G. Lucas)