



## Quasimodo dino leaves experts grappling for a hunch 古生物家發現具駝峰的恐龍

Palaeontologists in Spain have discovered the remains of a strange dinosaur with a **hump** that they believe is the forerunner of flesh-eating giants which once ruled the planet.

The fossil was uncovered in the Las Hoyas formation in central Spain's Cuenca province, a treasure trove of finds that date to the Lower Cretaceous period of between 120 and 150 million years ago.

The nearly-complete skeleton is exquisite, and the dinosaur is "bizarre," Fernando Escaso of the Autonomous University of Madrid, told AFP by phone.

"This dinosaur is very remarkable," Escaso said.

"It is a unique **specimen**. It is the most complete dinosaur ever found in the Iberian peninsula and is a new species of theropod," a carnivore that moved on two rear limbs.

Measuring 6m long from **snout** to tail, the dinosaur is the earliest member ever found of a branch of Carnarodontosauria, the largest predatory dinosaurs that ever lived and which until now were thought to be confined to southern continents.

The new find has jaws and small, clawed forelimbs that bear a resemblance to the Tyrannosaurus rex which belongs to a different dinosaur family.

But all similarities end with the spine, which is astonishingly curved and has a small hump, Escaso said.

"It is the first time we have ever seen a structure like this on the spine of a dinosaur, although it is common on some animals today, such as cows," Escaso said.

"At the moment, the function of this structure is unclear. We believe that the animal was not diseased because the spine shows no sign of being cracked or broken, we think it is a feature of this species. One hypothesis is that it was a reservoir of fat."

(AFP)

西班牙的古生物學家最近發現一具奇怪的恐龍遺骸，該遺骸上有個駝峰。科學家們相信這就是曾經主宰地球，大型肉食性恐龍的始祖。

這具化石於西班牙中部，昆卡省的拉斯奧亞斯山脈上被發現。出土的這些寶藏源自於早白堊紀，大約一億兩千萬年到一億五千萬年之間。

馬德里自治大學的費南多·艾斯卡索接受法新社電話採訪時表示，這一具幾乎完整的骨骼相當精緻，而這頭恐龍很「奇怪」。

艾斯卡索說，「這頭恐龍非常可觀。」  
「這是個獨特的樣本。這是在伊比利半島上所發現最完整的恐龍骨骼，是個獸腳類的新品種。」獸腳類是種以一隻後腿站立的肉食性動物。

食性動物。

從口鼻部到尾巴，這頭恐龍身長達六公尺。這是鯊齒龍家族中未曾發現過的早期種類。鯊齒龍是獵食性恐龍中，所存在過最大的一種。直到目前，人們相信這種恐龍只在南半球才找得到。

這項新發現有著齒顎，以及又小又捲曲的前爪，模樣看起來類似暴龍。暴龍屬於另一個恐龍類別。

艾斯卡索說，但到了脊椎骨就找不到相似之處了。脊椎骨的彎度令人驚奇，並且有個小駝峰。

艾斯卡索表示，「這是我們首次在恐龍的脊椎骨看到這種結構，即便這種現象目前在一些動物身上很常見，像牛就是。」

「這個駝峰的功能目前還不清楚。我們相信這隻恐龍並沒有生病，因為脊椎骨並沒有破裂或斷掉。我們認為這就是這品種的特徵。有種假設說這是儲存脂肪用的。」

(法新社 / 翻譯：吳世傑)

A handout photo released on Sept. 8, 2010 by *Nature* magazine and the Universidad Nacional de Educacion a distancia shows an artists impression of a new species of dinosaur, *Concavenator corcovatus*.

PHOTO: AFP/UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE EDUCACION A DISTANCIA/NATURE/RAUL MARTIN

這張由「自然」雜誌與國家遠距教育大學於九月八日聯合發表的照片，所示的是繪畫者對於新發現駝背龍的想像。 照片：法新社 / 國家遠距教育大學 / 拉伍·馬丁

### TODAY'S WORDS 今日單字

1. **hump** /hʌmp/ n.

駝峰 (tuo2 feng1)

例：Some species of camel have two humps.

(有些種類的駱駝有兩個駝峰。)

2. **specimen** /ˈspesəmən/ n.

樣本 (yang4 ben3)

例：The scientists uncovered a very unusual specimen.

(科學家發現了一個很不尋常的樣本。)

3. **snout** /snaʊt/ n.

口鼻部 (kou3 bi2 bu4)

例：The vet examined the snout for an infection.

(獸醫檢查口鼻部感染的情形。)