



Federico Bonet Marco

1906 - 1980

Federico Bonet Marco was born on October 18, 1906, in Madrid, Spain. He received his Doctor of Science degree from the Universidad Central in Madrid in 1931, becoming Professor of Zoology at the Escuela Veterinaria, Universidad de Madrid in 1932. He remained in this position until he emigrated to México in 1939. In 1940 he became head of the Department of Zoology of the Escuela Nacional de Ciencias Biológicas, Instituto Politécnico Nacional in México City. During the latter part of his career, he held a position as a stratigraphic geologist for Petróleos Mexicanos. He died in México City on June 10, 1980.

Dr. Bonet, like other biospeleologists from Spain (including Dr. Cándido Bolívar y Pieltain), brought to México an expertise and enthusiasm for cave biology not known there at that time. Already having published several papers on the Collembola (springtails) of Spain, he immediately began an active program of collection and study of the then virtually unknown cave and endogean fauna of México. His collecting forays, frequently in company with Bolívar y Pieltain, took him throughout much of the country. Until the work of the Association for Mexican Cave Studies in the early 1960's, virtually everything known about the cave fauna of México was the direct result of the work of Dr. Bonet and his colleagues. Although he published several major papers on the Collembola of México, which included many troglotic and troglophilic species, his major contribution to Mexican cave biology was certainly his pioneering collections.

Bonet's studies on Mexican caves were not restricted to biology, however, and he published three important reports on the caves of different regions in México. A deep knowledge of stratigraphic geology assisted him greatly in his speleological work. The first of his reports on Mexican cave areas was published in 1953 and covered the caves of the Sierra de El Abra. In the same year he published a volume on the caves of the Xilitla region, which included maps, careful descriptions, and meteorological and biological data. It remains an outstanding report and was certainly as good as anything being done in North America at the time. His final major contribution to physical speleology was a detailed study of the caves of the Cacahuamilpa region in Guerrero and adjacent México. This study, richly provided with maps and photographs, is an outstanding contribution to our knowledge of the caves of México.

A final word should be said about his other work of great value to the study of Mexican speleology. In addition to many highly technical reports on the geology of the Sierra Madre Oriental and other areas, he published several papers on the general stratigraphy of the Sierra Madre Oriental. In particular, his guides to the geology of the Inter-American Highway between Ciudad Victoria and Tamazunchale, prepared for the 20th International Congress of Geology in México in 1956, are of great value for an understanding of

the geology and karst hydrology of this area. In 1963 a paper with Dr. Jacques Butterlin defined the major geologic formations of the Yucatan Peninsula; also included was a geologic map which remains the best available map for the Peninsula.

The death of Dr. Bonet marks the end of the first era of the study of Mexican speleology. His contributions, both geological and biological, to the study of México and its caves will remain for many years models to follow.

James Reddell

Photo by: Robert Mitchell

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El Dr. Federico Bonet M. murió en la Ciudad de México el 10 de Junio, 1980. El Dr. Bonet fué un pionero en la recolección de fauna de las cavernas de México. Sus contribuciones geológicas y biológicas al estudio de México y sus cuevas permanecerán como ejemplos admirables.