

The Oldest Ordovician *Platystrophia* (Brachiopoda, Orthida) and their Biogeographic Significance

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Brachiopod genus *Platystrophia* is one of the most distinctive components of the late Ordovician (Caradoc to Ashgill) brachiopod faunas of the Benthic Assemblage Zone 2-3 inhabited shallow water pericratonic basins of Baltica and Laurentia. The benthic faunal assemblages inhabited these two plates otherwise are markedly different and belong to different palaeogeographic provinces. The earliest known occurrence of *Platystrophia* is from the Volkhov Stage (*Paroistodus originalis* Biozone) of Baltoscandia. As well as plectorthides are absent in the early Volkhovian and Billengenian brachiopod faunas, a sudden appearance of *Platystrophia* may suggest immigration. These brachiopods remain the most morphologically diverse and abundant in the Baltoscandian basin during the Llanvirn and Llandeilo time. Outside Baltica *Platystrophia* is known as a rare component of the brachiopod assemblages, which were characteristic mainly of peri-Gondwanan island arcs and microplates of the Celtic Province. The only other occurrence is reported from Heilongjiang Province of North China. The associated brachiopod fauna has a mixed Baltic and Celtic affinities. It is remarkable that the younger faunas characteristic of West and East Gondwana completely lacking *Platystrophia*. The observed pattern of palaeogeographic distribution of *Platystrophia* in the early Ordovician suggest, that it has originally evolved in on some unknown peri-Gondwanan sets in the middle latitudes and then immigrated into Baltica.