

BOOK REVIEWS

SARGIS, E. J. & DAGOSTO, M. (eds) 2008. *Mammalian Evolutionary Morphology. A Tribute to Frederick S. Szalay*. Vertebrate Paleobiology and Paleoanthropology Series. xxviii + 439 pp. Berlin, Heidelberg, New York: Springer-Verlag. Price Euros 94.95, SFr 158.00, US \$139.00, £75.00 (hard covers). ISBN 9781 4020 6996 3. doi:10.1017/S0016756809990860

In a career spanning five decades, Frederick Szalay has remained at the forefront of palaeomammalogy. His work has mostly focused on primate origins, the phylogenetic relationships among primates, and metatherian phylogeny and functional morphology. The impact of this huge body of work has by no means been limited to palaeontology. Indeed, Szalay's work can, in part, be regarded as similar in theme and genre to Walter Bock's, the central tenet of which is that detailed examination of function and adaptation allows evolutionary history to be reconstructed. Szalay's attention to detail, his inspirational approach to the documentation of postcranial skeletal anatomy, and his views on the phylogeny and evolutionary history of mammals have inspired a generation of mammalogy students and colleagues. As the editors (Eric J. Sargis and Marian Dagosto) of this new tribute volume note in their preface, some idea of the esteem in which Szalay is held by his colleagues is indicated by the number of taxa named in his honour: there are at least ten, two of which are named in the book.

Eighteen contributions on Szalay's favourite research topics are included. Half of the articles focus on primates, but there are also contributions on ground sloths, tenrecoids, pinnipeds, equids and others. Metatherians are not as well represented as I expected, with only two dedicated papers: one by Brian David and colleagues on new deltatheroidan material from the USA, and a second by Benjamin Kear and colleagues on hindlimb proportions in kangaroos. Bruce Shockey and Federico Anaya discuss the postcranial osteology of the Oligocene mammals from Salla in Bolivia: while not dedicated to metatherians, this article includes some discussion of borhyaenids and paucituberculatans.

As expected, several of the papers concentrate on areas that have been of special controversy or interest within the field of primate origins. In several articles published during the late 1980s and 1990s, K. Christopher Beard proposed that at least some Eocene plesiadapiform primates (particularly paromomyids and micromomyids) were colugo-like 'mitten-gliders'. This appealing and well argued idea led some workers to re-classify various plesiadapiforms as dermopterans. While the hypothesis that some plesiadapiforms might be 'mitten-gliders' has been contested in the technical literature before, Boyer & Bloch provide a highly detailed test of the claim, and show it to be unsupported. In fact, paromomyids and micromomyids appear to have been more similar to extant marmosets than to colugos in manual proportions. Eocene primate diversity also forms the focus of Godinot & Couette's contribution on adapine adapiforms, and of Dagosto *et al.*'s article on the tibiae from the Chinese Shanghuang fissure-fillings. In addition to adapids and an early tarsier, the Shanghuang assemblage includes various mystery forms that appear to be stem-anthropoids or non-anthropoid haplorhines. Closure of the primate postorbital bar and anthropoid origins form the focus of Rosenberger *et al.*'s article.

A detailed preface and bibliography provides an interesting review of Szalay's contributions to the field, and of his philosophical approaches to the subject. The many papers on early primates make this volume essential reading for students of this group. However, the work will also be of interest to those involved in the broader issues of mammalian functional morphology, descriptive anatomy, and phylogeny. It is an impressive volume, and a fitting tribute.

Darren Naish

LEWIS, C. L. E. & KNELL, S. J. (eds) 2009. *The Making of the Geological Society of London*. Geological Society Special Publication no. 317. xii + 471 pp. London, Bath: Geological Society of London. Price £120.00, US \$240.00; GSL members' price £60.00, US \$120.00; AAPG/SEPM/GSA/RAS/EFM/PESGB members' price £72.00, US \$144.00 (hard covers). ISBN 978 1 86239 277 9. doi:10.1017/S0016756810000117

Founded at the Freemason's Tavern in Lincoln Inn's Fields, London, on November 13th 1807, the Geological Society (of London) has recently celebrated its bicentenary. The Society has a lot to be proud of, not least of which is its status as the world's oldest learned society devoted solely to earth sciences. *The Making of the Geological Society of London* marks this bicentenary with a collection of some 24 essays on a variety of appropriate topics and is ably edited by Cherry Lewis and Simon Knell of the History of Geology Group, which is affiliated to the Society. The editors have usefully organized the contributions, which range from papers on the role of specific individuals, such as George Bellas Greenough; the role played by other science-related groups and disciplines, such as chemists, the military and medical men; contemporary developments in the wider world, such as France, Germany, America and Australia and geology's social context, such as its official recognition and how it was perceived by the wider public. These are all gathered into broader themes such as 'The Founders', 'The Status of Geology' and 'The Nature of Geology' at the time when the Society was formed.

The foundation of the Society, its relationship to other scientific societies, its membership, their researches, debates and publications have been integral to the development of modern geology in Britain and beyond, especially in the first few decades of the 19th century, when geological discoveries and arguments were widely broadcast in the print media. Consequently, the history of that foundation is not just of interest to historians of science but should also be of interest and concern to the whole earth science community.

As Cherry Lewis writes in her Preface, the aim of the volume is to draw '... readers away from the conventional narrative about how the Society was inaugurated and to challenge some of the myths that have grown up in the past 200 years'. That received narrative was supplied mainly by the first president George Bellas Greenough, who cobbled it together some 25 years after the event. Greenough's somewhat unreliable version then formed the basis for most subsequent accounts until the 1960s when Martin Rudwick led the ongoing reassessment of the story. Altogether, it is