Editorial

On taking over the editorship of Folia primatologica from my predecessor Professor Josef Biegert in May 1987, I preferred to wait until I had accumulated a certain amount of experience before making an editorial statement. The journal was founded as the first international periodical specifically devoted to primatology in 1963, and the 25th anniversary marked by the 1988 issues offered a particularly suitable occasion to review editorial policy. In discussions with Dr. T. Karger, it was decided that volume 50 should be specially devoted to the celebration of this landmark in the development of the journal. One new feature introduced with this expanded double issue is a complimentary wall-chart for subscribers. The theme is a chromosomal phylogeny prepared by Dr. Bernard Dutrillaux and his colleagues in Paris. This wall-chart should be useful both for individual research workers and as a teaching aid. (Additional copies may be ordered directly from the publishers.) Further wall-charts will hopefully be produced at appropriate intervals in the future, and suggestions from subscribers for appropriate themes are warmly welcomed. An additional novelty with this 25th anniversary volume is the cover. The intention is to change the illustration regularly, taking previously unpublished drawings submitted by primatologists. The present drawing was provided by Thomas Geissmann of the Anthropological Institute in Zurich. All suggestions for future illustrations will be gratefully received. I now turn to the heart of the journal – the scientific papers. It should be emphasized at once that the journal will continue to publish papers from a wide range of different disciplines in the general field of primatology. Papers will be accepted from such diverse disciplines as behaviour, conservation, cytogenetics, ecology, evolutionary biology, genetics, morphology, palaeontology, physiology and reproductive biology. The comparative approach should figure prominently in most papers accepted and all papers should place their findings in a comparative context, at least in the discussion. As in the past, a general emphasis on studies with a phylogenetic interest will be favoured. Detailed papers on single primate species that are lacking any explicit comparative elements or phylogenetic considerations will not normally be accepted. Further, to avoid overlap with other journals, papers dealing specifically with human biology, hominid evolution or hominoid paleontology in relation to human evolution will not normally be accepted. Apart from this limitation, papers on fossil primates will be readily accepted, as in the past. This is borne out by the present issue, which contains a review of small-bodied Miocene apes by Terry Harrison and a review of locomotor features of Eocene lemuroids by Daniel Gebo. (These two papers are both relatively long and it has only been possible to find space for them because of the extra space provided by this special issue.) Folia primatologica is an international journal and papers will be accepted from authors of any nationality. However, it seems appropriate for the journal to play a special part in the coordination of primatological contributions from Europe. A particular effort is hence being made to attract outstanding papers on primatological research from European contributors. As part of this strategy, it has already been agreed that Folia primatologica will publish news

items from the newly-founded French and German primatological societies. In short, *Folia primatologica* is an international journal with a European flavour. A further point is that it may occasionally be possible to devote an issue to the proceedings of scientific meetings held to discuss specific topics. For instance, a special issue on capuchin monkeys (*Cebus SPP.*) – jointly edited by Dorothy Fragaszy, John Robinson and Elisabetta Visalberghi – will be based on papers from a special symposium of the International Primatological Congress in Brasilia in July 1988.

All standard papers for *Folia primatologica* (normal maximum: 6,000 words) are sent to external

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reviewers. In addition, to permit rapid publication of new findings, a new category, 'Brief Reports' (usual length: 500-1,000 words), has been introduced. Brief Reports are not reviewed. Only in this way is it possible to achieve a drastic reduction in the interval between submission and publication; delays in the processing of papers arise primarily during reviewing. Decisions regarding publication of Brief Reports therefore rest exclusively with the Editor (a heavy responsibility) and it is vital that such reports should be straightforward and uncontroversial as well as of general interest. The new double system of reviewed papers and non-reviewed reports was introduced in volume 48 (3/4), at which point routine publication of dates of submission and acceptance of each manuscript was also introduced. Under the new system, 24 papers have been published (including 4 in this issue), with an average interval of 14 months from submission to publication and an average of 7 months from acceptance to publication. 19 Brief Reports have been published (including 5 in this issue), with an average of 7 months from submission to publication and an average of 5 months from acceptance to publication. The system is still being refined and it is hoped that it will be possible to reduce the average interval from submission to publication to about 10 months for papers and to about 5 months for Brief Reports. Authors can help us to meet these targets by keeping manuscripts as short as possible. This will speed up reviewing and reduce delays involved in balancing the contents of individual issues. It should also be noted that *Folia primatologica* – along with other Karger journals – now uses a numbering scheme for references, following the format used in *Index medicus*.

It is particularly rewarding that the new Brief Reports have so far included two separate announcements of new primate species in Madagascar. In volume 48 (p. 211), Meier et al. announced the discovery of the golden bamboo lemur (*Hapalemur aureus*) and in this issue Simons announces recognition of Tatter-sall's sifaka (*Propithecus tattersalli*). These two papers are also noteworthy in so far as they introduced colour illustrations to *Folia primatologica* (the additional costs being covered by the authors). In both cases, because of the particular significance attached to the naming of new species, external reviews were in fact requested, but it still proved possible to process them rapidly to permit prompt publication.

The 25th anniversary of *Folia primatologica* also seemed to be a suitable occasion to reconstitute the

editorial board, especially to ensure coverage of relatively new areas of primatology. The revised membership of the editorial board is given at the front of this issue. I would like to thank the outgoing members of the board for their sterling service in the past and welcome

the new members to the fold. I would also like to pay a particular tribute to the founding Editor of the journal, Josef Biegert, who rendered a major contribution to primatology by editing the journal for the first 23 years of its existence. The journal began as a quarterly publication with one volume per year and then, following rapid initial success, was expanded by 1967 to settle on a regular pattern of two volumes per year. Thanks to Josef Biegert's long-term commitment to the journal from its very foundation in 1963 until his retirement in 1986, *Folia primatologica* has established and maintained a prominent position among the journals dealing with primatology and biological anthropology. I hope that the new developments announced in this editorial will strengthen the journal and widen its appeal. Acknowledgment is also due to several persons who assisted Professor Biegert with the administration of the journal over the years. At various times, the following people provided valuable assistance in the editorial office: Dr. Trudi Leimbundgut, Dr. Regula Imhof, Dr. Marianne Wirz, Dr. Hansueli Etter, Dr. Hans-Konrad Schmutz, Dr. Peter Schmid, Dr. Anita Christen. They all deserve warm thanks for their contributions. Peter Schmid rendered a valuable service to users of the journal by producing a topical guide to all papers published in the 15-year period from 1963 to 1978 (vol. 30/4). I am particularly grateful to Anita Christen, who introduced me to the editing process during the changeover. The editorial office is now in the capable hands of Dr. Zdenka Nechvatálová, who has worked closely with me to introduce and consolidate the new editorial system. As a final note, it should be mentioned that a special agreement now enables members of any recognised national or international primate society to qualify for a 50 % reduction in the personal subscription rates for copies of *Folia primatologica*. Furthermore, for new subscribers wishing to purchase back issues, it is possible to negotiate a specially reduced price. We hope that our established subscribers will be pleased with the innovations that have been made and that new subscribers will swell their ranks to carry the journal to a new level of success in the future.

Bob Martin, Zurich, December 1988