Book Review

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S.M. Lehman, U. Radespiel, E. Zimmermann (eds.)

The Dwarf and Mouse Lemurs of Madagascar

Biology, Behavior and Conservation Biogeography of the Cheirogaleidae
Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2016
570 pp.; GBP 84.99
ISBN 978–1–107–07559–7

Although publication in edited volumes is frowned on in UK academia at least and is, perhaps, not very desirable since peer review is usually less strict, it still seems an attractive option to many. As such volumes go, this substantial collection of papers on the mouse and dwarf lemurs is, as usual, expensive but, for a change, it offers very good value for money, with 27 papers (5 on systematics, 6 on field methods, 6 on behaviour and ecology, 5 rather loosely grouped into sensory ecology, communication and cognition, and 5 on conservation biology), colour illustrations, and good production standards. Ute Radespiel's delightful cover photo of *Microcebus ravelobensis* at Ankarafansika took me back to my first field trip to Ankarafansika, where watching them bounce around the undergrowth was a pleasant distraction from listening to *Lepilemur edwardsi* shout at each other in between bouts of chewing and digesting old leaves. The juxtaposition of these 2 species is apposite, as Génin and Masters [in Chapter 16] note that *Lepilemur* is probably a member of the cheirogaleid clade, the smaller cheirogaleids being the result of dwarfing from an ancestor of at least the size of *Lepilemur*. Indeed, one of the most refreshing aspects of the volume for someone of my generation, brought up on Charles-Dominique and Martin's [1970] mouse lemur-bushbaby model of primate ancestry, is how much things have changed: cheirogaleids now being very solidly rooted in the lemuri-formes and dwarfing being regarded as responsible for cheirogaleid body size. (One wonders whether it might also be responsible for apparent parallels with lorises?) Of course (and I could wish this had been better reflected in some of the papers in this book), much of this revolution in thought is down to Soligo and Martin [2007] as well as the ground-breaking 1991 review of primate origins in relation to angiosperm evolution by Robert Sussman, who wrote the foreword to this book, and who, alas, is one of the string of stars – all very decent, unassuming people – who have been lost to us in the last 12 months or so, including, of course, Neill Alexander and Françoise Jouffroy. The drivers of dwarfing within the cheirogaleids (as in tarsiers, which I myself have argued for) are still undecided, but environmental instability may certainly contribute.

But I should not overstress the evolutionary papers in this volume, as the editors have clearly gone to great effort to balance the book between ecology, behaviour, conservation biology, field study methods, and even parasitology. Oddly, for a book co-edited by Radespiel and Zimmermann, vocalization does not get extensive attention, but most of us will find something of interest. I would however suggest that review papers could have had a larger role than they had here, per-

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haps perspectives/retrospectives from some senior figures in lemur biology, and some greater indication of interaction between the authors by sharing of papers in advance, and why so little discussion of the primate fossil record?

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