All about a continent

Stephen Moorbath

Journal of South American Earth Sciences. Executive editors Carlos E. Macellari and Norman J. Snelling. Pergamon. 4/yr. DM190.

ON principle, I have been sceptical about the recent proliferation of regional Earth-sciences journals. It seemed rather old-fashioned to break the Earth sciences up into separate regions rather than separate disciplines, as most conventional journals do. Yet, faced with *Journal of South American Earth Sciences*, I have had second thoughts. Why should one not apply the full panoply of modern Earth-sciences techniques and disciplines to a major geographical sector of the Earth's crust in which most known geological environments are so splendidly represented? It might provide an orderly,

manageable approach, both from scientific and editorial viewpoints.

Inspection of the four issues of Vol. 1 (1988) of this well-produced large-format journal dispelled the notion that it was simply a decent burial ground for descriptive papers on regional geology in the old style. It genuinely deals with all branches of modern Earth sciences as applied to South America (as well as Central America, the Caribbean and the Antarctic Peninsula). It covers the entire range of igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary environments from Archaean to the present, as exemplified by Precambrian cratons, mobile belts, sedimentary basins, young arcs and Quaternary rocks, all of which abound in South America. In addition, economic geology is represented by papers on ores and hydrocarbons — there have not been many such contributions in Vol. 1, but no doubt there will be more in the future.

The authorship of the 32 papers in

the first volume is truly international, including well-known researchers from economically developed countries working in close collaboration with members of some of the principal university departments and geological survey organizations of South America, where the Earth sciences are taken very seriously indeed.

As well as full-scale scientific papers, the journal publishes short notes, discussions and book reviews, as well as relevant conference and workshop reports. Summaries of new developments in already established regional projects, as well as new initiatives dealing with the geology of the continent, will be summarized and presented on a regular basis. The main language used is English; papers in Spanish are acceptable, although there

have been none in the first four issues. Abstracts appear in English and Spanish.

Altogether, then, the overall quality is high and the journal will be an important reference for all workers interested and engaged in, or embarking upon, geological research of any kind in South America and surrounding regions. Shrinking library resources may threaten its existence, which will also depend on maintaining and improving the already promising quality and range shown by papers in the first volume. But it deserves to succeed, and I hope that it and other regional Earth-sciences journals can establish a viable foothold. □

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Them and us

Juliet Clutton-Brock

Anthrozoös: A Multidisciplinary Journal on the Interactions of People, Animals, and Environment. Editor Andrew N. Rowan. University Press of New England. 4/yr. US\$50, elsewhere \$60 (institutional); US \$40, elsewhere \$50 (personal).

THE aims of *Anthrozoös*, which was launched in 1987 by the Delta Society, are to promote multidisciplinary studies on the interactions of people, animals and the environment. Articles in the journal cover subjects as diverse as ethology, psychology, veterinary medicine, archaeozoology, anthropology, and linguistics.

Although one of the most anciently observed characteristics of human beings is their ability to interact with other species, the study of these affiliations is still generally perceived as a peripheral subject for scientific research. The need for people to have animals as companions, particularly in large cities, may be passively accepted by those in authority but there is little realization of the integral role played by pets in society. For example, it is still considered 'neurotic' for a lonely person to grieve over the loss or death of an animal. Similarly, the health benefits that accompany the keeping of pets are largely ignored by the medical profession and those who look after the elderly and disabled.

The intention of *Anthrozoös* is to draw together the scattered publications in this field and to provide scholarly and informed articles on all aspects of animals and human society. The first paper, by R. Lockwood and K. Rindy, in Vol. 1 No. 1, was an analysis of the controversy on the breeding of pit bull terriers, the aggressive natures of which are becoming an increasing danger. Many other socially important articles have been published in the

succeeding issues, dealing with topics as varied as equine behaviour problems (K. A. Houpt), zoos today and tomorrow (M. H. Robinson), and an evaluation of a pet programme in prison (A. Katcher, A. M. Beck and D. Levine).

It perhaps requires less intellectual courage to launch a journal such as this in the United States than it would in many other countries where there is still a certain inhibition about studies that can be labelled 'sentimental' or 'anthropomorphic'. But the time is right for a new, scientifically rigorous approach to understanding the many facets of human associations with animals and this new journal provides a professional focus for publication of the results. Such a wide-ranging journal would be improved, however, by a greater international input, and the European editor and members of the editorial board from countries outside the United States should work to achieve this.

Anthrozoös contains a balanced combination of refereed papers, comments, reviews, letters and reports of meetings. The journal is expertly produced, and the contributions have evidently been carefully edited to be readable and free of jargon. If a wide readership can be established, the journal should lead to a greater understanding of the interactive behaviour of humans and animals and should become a powerful influence in the cause for animal welfare. □

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Autumn books

The next review supplement to be published in *Nature* will be Autumn books (16 November).

Among the books to be reviewed are *Dangerous Diagnostics: The Social Power of Biological Information* (by Dorothy Nelkin and Laurence Tancredi), *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History* (Stephen Jay Gould), *The Making of Andrei Sakharov* (George Bailey) and *The Mind Has No Sex?* (Londa Schiebinger).