

A Survey of Tropical Earthworms: Taxonomy, Biogeography and Environmental Plasticity

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Summary

A worldwide survey of earthworms in the humid tropics revealed that 51 exotics and 151 native species are commonly found in tropical agroecosystems. On the basis of frequency records and climatic and edaphic ranges, 21 exotics and 27 native species have been selected as possible candidates for manipulation. A multivariate analysis separated these species into four groups: (i) native species with wide edaphic and medium climatic tolerances; (ii) exotic species with wide climatic and edaphic tolerances; (iii) native and exotic species with narrow edaphic tolerances but more resistant to climatic variations; and (iv) native species with limited tolerance for climatic and edaphic variations.

Regarding management, species of group (ii) seem to be the most adaptable, both at regional and local levels (multipurpose species); group (i) can be managed for specific climatic conditions whereas group (iii) should be managed in specific soil environments. Species of group (iv) may only be managed at a very local scale.

Introduction

Earthworms are confined to the soil and, for the majority of tropical farmers and agronomists, their diversity, activities and effects on soils are totally unknown. Even in the field of tropical soil science, the situation is not very different. For example, just a few years ago, there was little concern about earthworm diversity and the possible role of this diversity in the fertility of agroecosystems. During the last 10 years, however, there has been an increasing interest in diversity mainly due to the biodiversity crisis, which could be defined as the dramatic loss of species, habitats and ecological interactions (Wilson, 1985; Wilson and Peter, 1988; McNelly *et al.*, 1990). Although the most diverse tropical biota are insects that spend part of their life cycles in the soil, this environment has been, from a biodiversity viewpoint, one of the least studied.

Earthworms are not very diverse, and our current estimations of the number of existing species are far from complete. The most recent account of earthworm diversity (Reynolds, 1994) comprises 3627 earthworm species described worldwide, with an average annual addition of 68 species. The overall richness is expected to be at least twice this value, with the majority of still unknown species living in the tropics. For most species, the original description is the only information available, and nothing is known about their distribution, ecology, demography, physiology and resistance to disturbance. For example, on the basis of the number of native species found in two moderately well sampled regions, the state of Veracruz, Mexico, 33 species (Fragoso, in press), and Puerto Rico, 18 species (Borges, 1988; Borges and Moreno, 1989, 1990a,b, 1991, 1992), it is possible to predict the possible number of native species to be found in six scarcely sampled countries: three Central American continental countries (Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala) and three larger Caribbean islands (Cuba, Hispaniola and Jamaica). In the first group, nearly 50 species per country should be found in the future, whereas in the second group the number of species expected to be discovered is approximately ten (Jamaica), 130 (Hispaniola) and 200 (Cuba). This means that if sampling in these two regions is made with an effort similar to that in Veracruz and Puerto Rico, we should expect to find nearly 500 new native species in the future. Similar conclusions have been reached for Tasmania and Australia, where 150 and 600 species, respectively, are expected to be found once inventories are completed (Kingston and Dyne, 1995).

This chapter is the result of a 6-year project focused on characterizing the identity of earthworms in natural and managed ecosystems of the tropics (outlined in Fragoso *et al.*, 1995). The main objective was to select a group of earthworm species with potential for management in tropical agroecosystems, according to the following criteria: (i) a wide distribution; (ii) with adaptations to a wide range of environmental and edaphic conditions; and (iii) resistance to disturbances induced by agriculture.

Storage and Analysis of Data

The survey was conducted in selected regions of the tropics, and included field sampling and literature data. Most field data were obtained from the experimental sites related to this project (the MACROFAUNA network, see Chapters 4 and 5). Although it was not the principal objective, this survey allowed the discovery and description of approximately 50 new species.

EWDBASE: a database of tropical earthworms

All the information was stored in a database (EWDBASE) that includes information on the taxonomy and distribution of earthworm species, earthworm and other macroinvertebrate communities, climate of localities, edaphic and land-use variables, and socioeconomic aspects of agricultural lands where available.

Inputs to EWDBASE (climatic, edaphic and species distribution data) were taken from the following published literature: Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean islands (Eisen, 1895, 1896, 1900; Michaelsen, 1900, 1908, 1911, 1912, 1923, 1935, 1936; Cognetti, 1904a,b, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908; Pickford, 1938; Gates, 1954, 1962a,b, 1970a,b, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1977a,b, 1979, 1982; Graff, 1957; Righi, 1972; Righi and Fraile, 1987; Sims, 1987; Borges, 1988, 1994; Borges and Moreno, 1989, 1990a,b, 1991, 1992; Fraile, 1989; James, 1990, 1991, 1993; Csuzdi and Zicsi, 1991; Zicsi and Csuzdi, 1991; Fragoso, 1993, in press; Rodríguez, 1993; Fragoso and Rojas, 1994; Reynolds and Guerra, 1994; Reynolds and Righi, 1994; Fragoso *et al.*, 1995; Reynolds *et al.*, 1995; Rodríguez and Fragoso, 1995), Bolivia (Rombke and Hanagarth, 1994), Ivory Coast (Omodeo, 1958; Lavelle, 1978, 1983; Tondoh, 1994), Congo (Zicsi and Csuzdi, 1986), Ghana (Sims, 1965), Gambia (Sims, 1967), Peru (Yurimaguas; Lavelle and Pashanasi, 1988) and several regions from India (Senapati, 1980; Chaudry and Mitra, 1983; Julka, 1986, 1988; Julka and Paliwal, 1986; Julka and Senapati, 1987; Bhadauria and Ramakrishnan, 1989; Julka *et al.*, 1989; Bano and Kale, 1991; Blanchart and Julka, 1997). EWDBASE was also fed with data obtained from field sampling carried out in Mexico, Panama, Colombia, Ivory Coast, India, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Rwanda, Peru, Congo and Cuba by members of the macrofauna network.

EWDBASE included data relating to 457 species, 745 localities and 836 sites from 28 countries. Distribution and environmental plasticity were analysed by relating species distribution to climate (1310 records), soils (818 records) and types of land use (1755 records).

Data analysis

Data were analysed at three geographic levels, i.e. local, regional and worldwide. At the local level, we intended to characterize the persistence of native earthworm species in different land-use systems (e.g. conversion of tropical deciduous forests to maize or pastures in Panuco, Mexico; maize plantations in native savannas of Lamto, Ivory Coast or the eastern llanos of Colombia; tea plantations in cloud forests of India, etc.). At the regional level, the analysis was extended to geographic areas such as southern Mexico, northern Rwanda or the Baoule region around Lamto (Ivory Coast), with the aim of identifying widespread native species. The worldwide analysis evaluated the distribution of exotic species in different natural and managed tropical ecosystems. The integration of these data in a global analysis produced three main outputs: (i) a list of tropical species of worldwide distribution that can be manipulated in any agroecosystem; (ii) regional lists of species by countries and/or kinds of agroecosystems; and (iii) an evaluation of the environmental and edaphic plasticity of these selected species.

Earthworm species of EWDBASE were classified along three different axes:

1. Biogeography, to divide species depending on this origin into natives and exotics. Native earthworms are those species that evolved in the site or region under study. Exotic species are earthworms that did not originate in the site under study and that were, generally, introduced by human activities; these species have also been called peregrine (Lee, 1987) and anthropochorous (Gates, 1970c).
2. Distribution among land-use systems, to separate species on the basis of their capabilities to adapt to natural (e.g. primary forests or savannas) or managed (e.g. annual crops or pastures) systems.
3. Ecological plasticity, to rank earthworms according to their ecological tolerance to edaphic and environmental variables from stenoecic (narrow range) to euryoecic (wide range) species.

These three axes were combined with the three geographic scales of analysis (local, regional and global) in order to propose the most appropriate earthworm species for manipulation in a given region and/or country in a specific agricultural situation.

Earthworm Species of Tropical Agroecosystems

The exotic earthworms of the tropics

Since the early studies of Eisen (1900) and Michaelsen (1903, 1935), it has been observed that peregrine worms were very common in tropical disturbed ecosystems. In a paper that analysed the distribution and dispersal of this

Table 1.1. The exotic earthworms of the tropics. Continental, country and altitudinal distribution.

Species	Family	Origin	Distribution		Altitude (m) (average)
			Continents	Countries	
<i>Allolobophora chlorotica</i>	Lumbricidae	Europe	3	34	3000
<i>Amyntas corticis</i>	Megascolecidae	Asia	5	40	0–2500 (1243)
<i>Amyntas gracilis</i>	Megascolecidae	Asia	5	31	0–2000 (962)
<i>Amyntas morrissi</i>	Megascolecidae	Asia	4	23	610
<i>Amyntas rodericensis</i>	Megascolecidae	Asia	3	26	0–1200 (420)
<i>Aporrectodea caliginosa</i>	Lumbricidae	Europe	4	15	1150–3850 (3168)
<i>Aporrectodea longa</i>	Lumbricidae	Europe	5	27	2240–2400
<i>Aporrectodea rosea</i>	Lumbricidae	Europe	5	52	500–4650 (2972)
<i>Aporrectodea trapezoides</i>	Lumbricidae	Europe	5	19	1200–3300 (2650)
<i>Aporrectodea turgida</i>	Lumbricidae	Europe	5	20	1300–3400 (2570)
<i>Bimastos parvus</i>	Lumbricidae	N. America	5	32	12–1500 (756)
<i>Bimastos tumidus</i>	Lumbricidae	N. America	1	1	1000–1270 (1135)
<i>Dendrobaena octaedra</i>	Lumbricidae	Europe	4	32	1200–4650 (2423)
<i>Dendrodrilus rubidus</i>	Lumbricidae	Europe	5	46	950–4650 (2442)
<i>Diachaeta thomasi</i>	Glossoscolecidae	S. America	1	2	Sea level
<i>Dichogaster affinis</i>	Dichogastrini*	W. Africa	4	24	0–1400 (391)
<i>Dichogaster annae</i>	Dichogastrini*	W. Africa	2	5	60–1940 (1438)
<i>Dichogaster bolau</i>	Dichogastrini*	W. Africa	5	43	0–1360 (259)
<i>Dichogaster gracilis</i>	Dichogastrini*	W. Africa	2	2	Under 500
<i>Dichogaster modigliani</i>	Dichogastrini*	W. Africa	4	20	0–1100 (339)
<i>Dichogaster saliens</i>	Dichogastrini*	W. Africa	4	17	0–1100 (307)
<i>Drawida barwelli</i>	Moniligastridae	India	2	11	0–1000 (347)
<i>Eisenia fetida</i>	Lumbricidae	Europe	5	45	1300–1500 (1394)
<i>Eiseniella tetraedra</i>	Lumbricidae	Europe	5	45	1300–3820 (3109)

<i>Eudrilus eugeniae</i>	Eudrilidae	W. Africa	4	31	0–60 (15)
<i>Eukerria kukenthalii</i>	Ocnerodrilidae	S. America	2	8	n.d.
<i>Eukerria mcdonaldii</i>	Ocnerodrilidae	S. America	1	1	300
<i>Eukerria peguana</i>	Ocnerodrilidae	S. America	1	1	n.d.
<i>Eukerria saltensis</i>	Ocnerodrilidae	S. America	4	10	550–3875 (1911)
<i>Eukerria zonalis</i>	Ocnerodrilidae	C. America	1	1	300
<i>Gordiodrilus peguanus</i>	Ocnerodrilidae	S. Africa	4	7	n.d.
<i>Hyperiodrilus africanus</i>	Eudrilidae	W. Africa	1	6	n.d.
<i>Lumbricus rubellus</i>	Lumbricidae	Europe	5	34	1500–3750 (2739)
<i>Lumbricus castaneus</i>	Lumbricidae	Europe	3	23	n.d.
<i>Lumbricus terrestris</i>	Lumbricidae	Europe	5	36	n.d.
<i>Metapheretima taprobanae</i>	Megascolecidae	Asia	4	7	10–40 (30)
<i>Metaphire californica</i>	Megascolecidae	Asia	5	21	0–2000 (982)
<i>Metaphire houlleti</i>	Megascolecidae	Asia	5	20	10–853 (408)
<i>Metaphire posthuma</i>	Megascolecidae	Asia	2	12	12–22 (17)
<i>Microscolex dubius</i>	Acanthodrilinae*	S. America	5	16	n.d.
<i>Microscolex phosphoreus</i>	Acanthodrilinae*	S. America	5	28	1500–3600 (1506)
<i>Nematogenia panamaensis</i>	Ocnerodrilidae	C. America	3	12	n.d.
<i>Ocnerodrilus occidentalis</i>	Ocnerodrilidae	C. America	5	22	0–1520 (470)
<i>Octolasion cyaneum</i>	Lumbricidae	Europe	5	30	1050–2430 (1576)
<i>Octolasion tyrtaeum</i>	Lumbricidae	Europe	5	35	1180–4654 (2313)
<i>Perisocolex brachycystis</i>	Glossoscolecidae	C. America	1	4	0–500 (192)
<i>Peryonix excavatus</i>	Megascolecidae	Asia	4	19	300–1050 (1077)
<i>Pheretima bicincta</i>	Megascolecidae	Asia	3	12	30–1100 (577)
<i>Polypheretima elongata</i>	Megascolecidae	Asia	4	27	0–1300 (185)
<i>Polypheretima taprobanae</i>	Megascolecidae	Asia	4	7	1360
<i>Pontoscolex corethrurus</i>	Glossoscolecidae	S. America	4	56	0–2000 (463)

*Tribe or subfamily of Megascolecidae; n.d. = not determined.

Table 1.2. Distribution of common exotic earthworms in different tropical land-use systems. No. of records from Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, Colombia, Rwanda, Congo, Ivory Coast and India.

Species	Natural ecosystems	Crops	Pastures	Tree plantations	Fallows	Organic wastes
<i>Pontoscolex corethrurus</i>	94	31	44	41	6	4
<i>Polypheretima elongata</i>	30	10	39	19	4	5
<i>Dichogaster bolau</i>	11	7	15	11	3	5
<i>Ocnerodrilus occidentalis</i>	3	6	15	7	2	1
<i>Amyntas gracilis</i>	7	4	6	9	2	2
<i>Amyntas corticis</i>	22	6	7	4	2	2
<i>Hyperiodrilus africanus</i>	2	4	8	5	1	2
<i>Dichogaster affinis</i>	9	5	5	7	1	0
<i>Dichogaster saliens</i>	5	1	9	4	1	0
<i>Drawida barwelli</i>	3	1	9	3	0	0
<i>Eudrilus eugeniae</i>	2	0	3	3	0	4
<i>Dichogaster annae</i>	0	2	2	4	0	1
<i>Amyntas rodericensis</i>	24	1	5	3	0	0
<i>Peryonix excavatus</i>	1	0	1	1	0	5
<i>Metaphire californica</i>	0	0	4	0	0	1
<i>Dichogaster modigliani</i>	1	0	4	1	0	0
<i>Metaphire houlleti</i>	0	0	4	0	0	0
<i>Metapheretima taprobanae</i>	2	0	2	1	0	0
<i>Periscolex brachycystis</i>	6	1	2	1	0	0
<i>Pheretima bicincta</i>	5	0	0	1	0	0
<i>Metaphire posthuma</i>	1	0	0	1	0	0

Table 1.3. Range of environmental conditions tolerated by the most common exotic species.

Species	T (°C)	Rainfall (mm)	pH	OM (%)	N (%× 0.1)	Ca (mEq 100 g ⁻¹)	Mg (mEq 100 g ⁻¹)	S (%)	C (%)
<i>Pontoscolex corethrurus</i>	14–28	268–5000	3.8–8.2	0.9–12.6	0.1–9	0.8–16.5	0.1–11.2	3–91	6–87
<i>Polypheretima elongata</i>	21–30	800–4000	5–7.8	1.8–7.6	0.8–3.8	4.4–53	1–2.7	5–93	4–54
<i>Dichogaster bolau</i>	18–30	800–4725	5–8.2	1–10.2	0.2–8.8	1.7–44	0.06–9	5–93	4–53
<i>Ocnerodrilus occidentalis</i>	16–30	146–4725	5.6–8.9	0.9–7.8	0.7–8.9	0.8–53	0.06–4.5	18–98	2–74
<i>Amyntas gracilis</i>	15–26	670–3500	4.8–8.9	1.7–14.4	0.7–5.9	1.3–3.4	0.7–.46	11–61	9–53
<i>Amyntas corticis</i>	13–26	865–4521	3.9–7.5	2–12.6	2–4.2	1.9–5.8	1.5–3.5	36–61	17–33
<i>Dichogaster affinis</i>	17–28	440–2240	4.5–8.2	1–13.7	0.7–8.8	0.82–53	0.06–4.9	9–98	2–74
<i>Dichogaster saliens</i>	22–28	916–4725	5–8.9	0.6–6.2	0.2–8.9	0.9–12.5	0.06–4.5	18–91	6–47
<i>Drawida barwelli</i>	21–26	1500–4000	5–7.9	3.6–5.4	2–2.5	3.5–5.8	1.1–3.5	3–42	24–87
<i>Eudrilus eugeniae</i>	25–28	1352–1880	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
<i>Dichogaster annae</i>	28	1880	3.7–6.3	1.6–4.9	1–2.6	n.d.	n.d.	32–85	11–54
<i>Amyntas rodericensis</i>	20–26	1200–5000	4.7–8	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
<i>Peryonix excavatus</i>	15–24	865–2173	7.1–7.5	3	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	50	33
<i>Metaphire californica</i>	21	2631	5.2–5.6	4.3–5.4	2.2–2.5	3.5–5.8	1.5–3.5	36–42	24–28
<i>Metaphire houlleti</i>	22–26	1314–1996	6.8	2	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
<i>Metapheretima taprobanae</i>	26	1450–2000	6.4–8	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
<i>Dichogaster modigliani</i>	25	1396	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
<i>Periscolex brachycystis</i>	24–28	1880–4725	5–6.5	2.2–7.6	1.1–4.2	4.1–44	1.1–3.6	5–62	9–50
<i>Pheretima bicincta</i>	21–26	2500–3500	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
<i>Metaphire posthuma</i>	24	916–1079	8.1	1.2	1	6.6	0.86	46	18

T = temperature, OM = organic matter, N = nitrogen, Ca = calcium, Mg = magnesium, S = sand, C = clay; all values from the upper 10 cm of soil.

Table 1.4. Native earthworm species of tropical agroecosystems.

Species	C	P	T	F	W
Belize					
<i>Diploptrema jenniferae</i>		1			
Bolivia					
<i>Andiorrhinus bolivianus</i>	1				
<i>Enantiodrillus borelli</i>		1			
<i>Eukerria asuncionis</i>	1				
<i>Eukerria eiseniana</i>		1			
<i>Eukerria garmani</i>		1			
<i>Eukerria tuberculatus</i>			1		
<i>Goiascolex vanzolinii</i>			1		
Colombia					
<i>Andiodrilus yoparensis</i>	1	1			
<i>Andiorrhinus</i> sp.nov1		1			
<i>Glossodrilus sikuani</i>	1	1			
<i>Glossodrilus</i> sp1	1	2	2	3	
<i>Martiodrilus agricola</i>	1			2	
<i>Martiodrilus carimaguensis</i>	1	1			
<i>Martiodrilus savanicola</i>	1			1	
<i>Martiodrilus</i> sp1	1			3	
<i>Thamnodrilus</i> sp1				2	
Congo					
<i>Dichogaster graffi</i>			1		
<i>Gordiodrilus</i> sp1			1		
<i>Nematogenia lacuum</i>			1		
Costa Rica					
<i>Glossodrilus dorasque</i>			1		
<i>Glossodrilus nemoralis</i>		4			
<i>Glossodrilus orosi</i>		1			
Cuba					
<i>Diploptrema ulrici</i>	1				
<i>Onychochaeta elegans</i>	1	4	4		
<i>Onychochaeta windlei</i>	2	2	3		
<i>Pontoscolex cynthiae</i>	1		3		
<i>Zapatadrillus morenoae</i>	1	1			
<i>Zapatadrillus siboney</i>			1		
<i>Zapatadrillus taina</i>			1		
El Salvador					
<i>Eutrigaster sporadonephra</i>			1		
Guadeloupe					
<i>Pontoscolex spiralis</i>	1	2	1		

Table 1.4. Continued.

Species	C	P	T	F	W
India					
<i>Curgiona narayani</i>	3				
<i>Drawida ampullacea</i>	1	3	1	2	
<i>Drawida assamensis</i>				1	
<i>Drawida calebi</i>	1	1	2		
<i>Drawida fakira</i>	1				
<i>Drawida ferina</i>	2		1		
<i>Drawida ghatensis</i>			1		
<i>Drawida japonica</i>	1	1	1		
<i>Drawida kanarensis</i>	1		1		
<i>Drawida lennora</i>	1			1	
<i>Drawida modesta</i>	1			1	
<i>Drawida nepalensis</i>	1	2			
<i>Drawida paradoxa</i>	1	10	1	1	
<i>Drawida pellucida</i>	2		1	1	
<i>Drawida</i> sp1	1				
<i>Drawida</i> sp2		1			
<i>Drawida scandens</i>		1	1		
<i>Drawida</i> sp3		4	1		
<i>Drawida sulcata</i>	1		1	1	
<i>Drawida thurstoni</i>		4		1	
<i>Drawida willsi</i>	1	3	1		
<i>Eutyphoeus festivus</i>				2	
<i>Eutyphoeus incommodus</i>	2	3			
<i>Eutyphoeus orientalis</i>		1			
<i>Eutyphoeus</i> sp1	1				
<i>Eutyphoeus waltoni</i>	1				
Gen.nov1 sp.nov1		8	1		
Gen.nov1 sp.nov2		2			
Gen.nov2 sp.nov1		1		1	
Gen.nov3 sp.nov1		3			
<i>Glyphidrilus tuberosus</i>		2			
<i>Glyphidrilus annandalei</i>	1			2	
<i>Hoplochaetella kempii</i>	1		1	1	
<i>H. sanvordemensis</i>		1			
<i>Hoplochaetella suctoria</i>			1		
<i>Hoplochaetella</i> sp1		1			
<i>Hoplochaetella</i> sp2		2			
<i>Karmiella karnatakensis</i>		6	1		
<i>Karmiella</i> sp1		1			
<i>Konkadrilus</i> sp1		6	1	1	
<i>Konkadrilus</i> sp2		8	2		
<i>Konkadrilus tirthahalliensis</i>			6		
<i>Lampito mauritii</i>	3	2	5	1	
<i>Lenogaster chittagongensis</i>		1			

Continued

Table 1.4. *Continued.*

Species	C	P	T	F	W
<i>Lenzogaster pusillus</i>	3	3			
<i>Lenzogaster</i> sp1			1		
<i>Lennocolex</i> sp1			1		
<i>Lenzogaster dashi</i>			2		
<i>Mallehulla indica</i>		1	1	1	
<i>Megascolex felicisetae</i>	1				
<i>Megascolex</i> sp1	3				
<i>Megascolex insignis</i>	1		1	1	
<i>Megascolex konkanensis</i>		2	2	3	
<i>Megascolex lawsoni</i>	1		2		
<i>Nelloscoclex strigosus</i>				1	
<i>Notoscolex</i> sp1	1				
<i>Octochaetona beatrix</i>	1	1	1		
<i>Octochaetona rosea</i>	1		1	1	
<i>Octochaetona surensis</i>		1	1		
<i>Pellogaster bengalensis</i>	1		1		
<i>Perionyx</i> sp1		1			
<i>Plutellus tumidus</i>	1		1		
<i>Ramiella bishambari</i>	1				
<i>Tonoscolex horai</i>				2	
<i>Travoscolides duodecimalis</i>	1				
<i>Wahoscolex</i> sp1		4			
Ivory Coast					
<i>Agastrodrilus opisthogynus</i>			1		
<i>Chuniodrilus palustris</i>	10	1	1	3	
<i>Chuniodrilus zielae</i>	10	1	1	3	
<i>Dichogaster agilis</i>	9	1	2	2	
<i>Millsonia anomala</i>	9	1	1	3	
<i>Millsonia lamtoiana</i>	1		1	1	
<i>Millsonia schlegeli</i>		2			
Jamaica					
<i>Eutrigaster grandis</i>	1				
Martinique					
<i>Pontoscolex cuasi</i>		1			
<i>Pontoscolex spiralis</i>	1	2	2		
Mexico					
<i>Balanteodrilus pearsei</i>	4	10	1	2	2
<i>Diplocardia eiseni</i>		1			
<i>Diplocardia</i> sp.nov1		6			
<i>Diplocardia</i> sp.	1				
<i>Diplocardia</i> sp.nov2	3		6	1	
<i>Diplorema</i> sp.nov1		1			
<i>Diplorema murchiei</i>	1	11		3	

Table 1.4. Continued.

Species	C	P	T	F	W
<i>Diploptrema papillata</i>		4			
Gen.nov4 sp.nov1		3			
Gen.nov5 sp.nov1		1			
<i>Larsonidrilus microscolecinus</i>		2	1		
<i>Larsonidrilus orbiculatus</i>		3			
<i>Lavellodrilus maya</i>		3			1
<i>Lavellodrilus parvus</i>	5	5	1	1	
<i>Lavellodrilus riparius</i>		1			
<i>Mayadrilus rombki</i>	1				
<i>Phoenicodrilus</i> sp.nov1		1		1	
<i>Phoenicodrilus taste</i>	1	16	2		
<i>Protozapotecia australis</i>	1	6	1	1	
<i>Ramiellona</i> sp.nov1			1		
<i>Ramiellona</i> sp.nov2		1		1	
<i>Ramiellona</i> sp.nov3		1			
<i>Ramiellona</i> sp.nov4		1			
<i>Ramiellona</i> sp.nov5				1	
<i>Ramiellona</i> sp.nov6				1	
<i>Ramiellona</i> sp.nov7		1			
<i>Ramiellona strigosa</i>		1	2		
<i>Ramiellona wilsoni</i>		1			
<i>Zapatadrilus</i> sp.nov1	3	3	9	3	
<i>Zapotecia amecameca</i>				1	
<i>Zapotecia nova</i>		4		3	
<i>Zapotecia</i> sp1		3		1	
Peru					
<i>Diachaeta xepe</i>	1	2	1	1	
<i>Rhinodrilus lavellei</i>	1		1		
<i>Rhinodrilus pashanasi</i>	1	1	1		
Rwanda					
<i>Dichogaster itoliensis</i>	2	1	1		
<i>Dichogaster</i> sp1	1	1	2		1
<i>Eminoscolex lavellei</i>	3	1	5		
<i>Gordiodrilus</i> sp1	4	1	15		
<i>Stuhlmannia variabilis</i>	1		2		1

No. of records from EWDBASE. C=crops, P=pastures, T=tree plantations, F=fallows, W=organic wastes.

Table 1.5. Environmental tolerance ranges (climatic and edaphic) of selected tropical native earthworms (data from EWDBASE).

Species	T (°C)	Rainfall (mm)	pH	OM (%)	N (% (× 0.1))	Ca (mEq 100 g ⁻¹)	Mg (mEq 100 g ⁻¹)	S (%)	C (%)
Cuba									
<i>O. elegans</i>	28	1880	n.d.	7.6	n.d.	44	9	5	50
India									
<i>D. ampullacea</i>	22	5000	4.6–5.8	4.3–11	0.17–0.48	2.5–14	1–3.7	15–43	18–53
<i>D. paradoxa</i>	22	5000	4.4–5.1	3.6–9.3	0.19–0.33	2.4	0.93	23	40
<i>D. willsii</i>	30–31	1150–2363	5.9–6.8	0.9–2.4	0.08–0.38	n.d.	n.d.	83–95	2–7
<i>E. incommodus</i>	16–30	1014–1600	5.9–6.8	1–3	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
<i>D. nepalensis</i>	16–26	1014–1600	6.7–6.8	1–2	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
<i>K. karnatakensis</i>	22	5000	4.7–5.5	4.2–7.5	0.17–0.33	5.04	1.71	28	18–40
<i>L. mauritii</i>	24–31	865–2166	6–6.7	1–3.2	0.08–0.19	n.d.	n.d.	83–91	4–7
<i>L. pusillus</i>	16–30	1014–1700	5.9–6.8	1–5	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	47	34
<i>O. beatrix</i>	16–24	865–1314	6.8–7.1	2	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
<i>K. sp1</i>	22	5000	4.4–5.8	4.2–11	0.17–0.48	14.8	3.74	n.d.	18–53
<i>K. sp2</i>	22	5000	4.4–5.8	3.6–10.8	0.17–0.48	2.4–15	0.9–3.7	15–43	18–53
Mexico									
<i>B. pearsei</i>	24–27	916–2963	5.5–8.2	1–14.4	0.09–0.59	0.9–23	0.06–5	9–82	10–86
<i>D. murchiei</i>	24–27	916–2160	7.5–8.9	0.2–2.6	0.06–0.88	1.3–21	0.06–3	22–98	2–74
<i>D. papillata</i>	25–27	814–2130	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
<i>L. parvus</i>	24–27	1156–4725	5.3–8.1	0.9–10.1	0.07–0.42	4.5–17	0.65–11	19–63	13–74
<i>P. taste</i>	19–27	600–2963	5–8	1–14.4	0.08–0.42	4.1–23	0.06–6	9–78	9–86
<i>P. australis</i>	14–25	600–2522	5.3–7.9	1.4–11.8	0.07–0.42	5.6–14	1–6.1	11–63	12–73
<i>R. strigosa</i>	24–27	1000–2963	5–6.5	2.2–6.5	0.11–0.42	4.1–13	1.7–3.6	32–62	9–50
<i>Z. sp.nov 1</i>	24–25	916–1349	7.7–8.3	1.1–7.3	0.02–0.48	0.87–24	0.18–3	9–46	26–62

however, are common in tropical agroecosystems (Table 1.4, 31 species in bold). This group includes species widely distributed at the regional level (e.g. *Onychochaeta elegans* in Cuba, *Balanteodrilus pearsei* in southeastern Mexico or *Lampito mauritii* in India) or locally abundant (*Ramiellona strigosa*, *Zapatadrilus* sp.nov1 in Mexico and *Millsonia anomala* in Ivory Coast). Table 1.5 shows the environmental (precipitation, temperature) and edaphic (pH, organic matter, nitrogen, sand and clay) tolerance ranges of some of these species, according to the country in which they occur. Species listed in this table are those for which these data were available.

Comparisons between exotic and widely distributed native earthworm species

So far, we have identified 20 exotic and 27 native species that commonly occur in tropical agroecosystems of Asia, Africa and America (Tables 1.2 and 1.5). Data from Tables 1.3 and 1.5 suggest that these species apparently have wide ranges of climatic and edaphic tolerances. Figure 1.1 shows that the degree of tolerance (i.e. the environmental plasticity) is larger in the group of exotics, both at the regional (range of annual precipitation) and local level (range of pH). In this figure, however, environmental plasticity is analysed with range values (difference between maximum and minimum) of only two variables. In order to determine whether this pattern is maintained with more variables, two multivariate analyses were performed using the climatic (two) and edaphic (seven) variables of Tables 1.3 and 1.5. The input matrix consisted of 47 rows (native and exotic species) and nine columns (environmental variables), data being standardized in both cases. The first analysis was a principal component analysis (PCA), that ordinated species along two components which together explained 76% of the total variance (C1 = 62%, C2 = 14%). C1 and C2 correlated, respectively, with edaphic and climatic ranges. The second analysis was a cluster analysis, performed using unweighted pair-groups method analysis (UPGMA) as an average-linkage clustering method. PCA and UPGMA were made respectively, with STATGRAPHIC and PATN (Belbin, 1976) software.

Figure 1.2 shows the result of these analyses that ordinated and grouped the native and exotic species listed in Tables 1.3 and 1.5, into four main groups:

1. G1 includes those native species with wide edaphic and medium climatic tolerances (high local plasticity but low regional plasticity), which correspond to the majority of native widespread Mexican species.
2. G2 are the common exotic species of the tropics that exhibit wide climatic and edaphic tolerances (high regional and local plasticity).
3. G3 includes species (natives and exotics) with narrow edaphic tolerances that are resistant to climatic variations (low local but high regional plasticity).

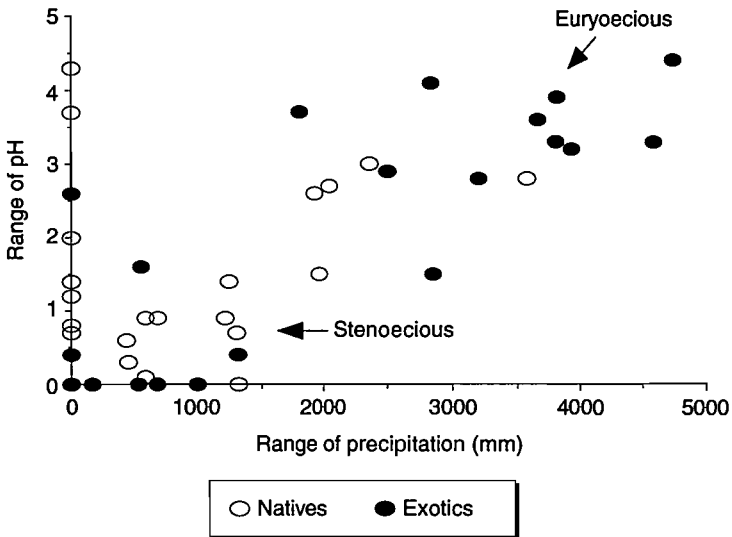


Fig. 1.1. Example of climatic (annual precipitation) and edaphic (pH) plasticity of exotic and native widespread tropical earthworm species. Each point represents a species. Those situated in the upper right corner indicate euryoecious species, whereas those situated in the lower left corner indicate stenoecious species. Both precipitation and pH are range values.

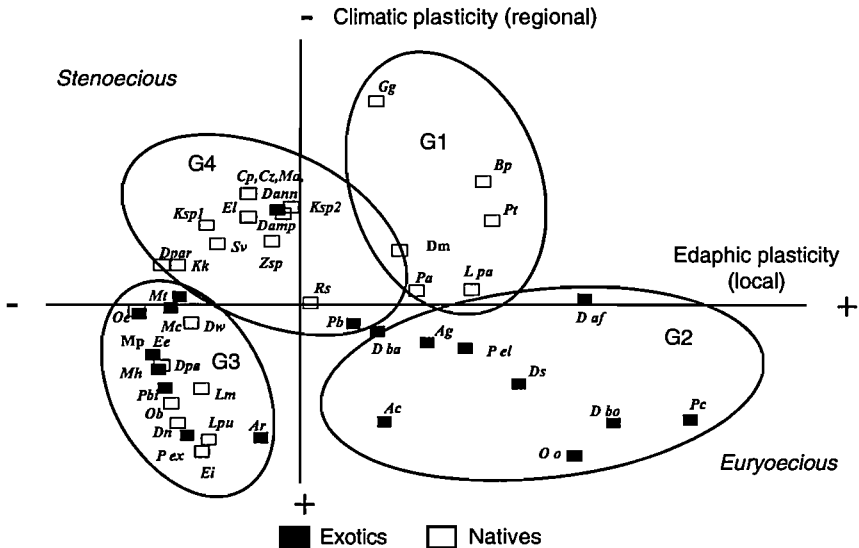


Fig. 1.2. Ordination (PCA) and clustering (UPGMA) of widespread native and exotic species on the basis of climatic and edaphic range values. For initials see Table 1.6.

1. Parthenogenetic reproduction: almost all exotic species in Table 1.2 are considered to be facultatively parthenogenetic, meaning that they may produce viable unfertilized cocoons. Native species in Table 1.4, on the other hand, only produce viable cocoons after fertilization (with a few exceptions such as *P. taste* and *O. elegans*). Parthenogenesis, therefore, appears to be an essential determinant of the wide geographic distribution of exotics, as was originally proposed by Reynolds (1974) and Lee (1987). If mating is not obligatory, one single individual (even a cocoon) may establish a new population.
2. Historical dispersal by man: the distribution of exotics has been greatly favoured by the spread of plants worldwide and such practices as the use of soil as ballast, in the days of long sea voyages. Gates (1972, 1982) intercepted, over several years, the worms that were introduced to the United States in pots containing imported plants. He found all the exotic species of Table 1.2 and many native species from several tropical and temperate countries; these species, of course, did not have any chance to establish in North American soils, but we can infer that, in the past, this situation occurred repeatedly, being the main cause for the presence of exotic species.

In some cases, it is possible to relate the distribution of some exotics to the origin of introduced plants. The African exotic species *Gordiodrilus peguanus* and *Eudrilus eugeniae*, for example, are present mainly in former European colonies (e.g. Greater Antilles; Gates, 1972) that were, in the past, dominated by an African slave population; they are not present, for example, in Mexico, Peru and other countries where this population was practically non-existent. In a number of cases, the absence of euryoecious native species in a given tropical country may, therefore, better be explained by human activities than by factors related to ecological plasticity.

Conclusions

The list of most common earthworm species of tropical agroecosystems includes a set of euryoecious exotic species, common in the majority of tropical countries, and native species that are common for a given country at local or regional levels. Table 1.6 lists these species, their ecological categories and the geographic level at which management of their populations should be considered.

Most species with potential for manipulation are large species, mainly mesohumic endogeics and epi-endogeics that live in the soil and ingest a mixture of soil and surface litter. These species can be considered as ecosystem engineers because they transform the edaphic profile through the production of casts and burrows; in this regard they are keystone species in the agroecosystem. Small polyhumic species may play a role in the system (e.g. as 'decompacting' species; see Chapter 5) but may not be crucial in the short term as their activities do not dramatically affect soil profile and other subordinated

Table 1.6. List of tropical earthworm species with potential for manipulation in annual cropping systems.

Species	Ecological category	Region	Management
<i>Dichogaster bolau</i> (Dbo)	Epigeic	Humid tropics	Worldwide
<i>Dichogaster saliens</i> (Ds)	End. polyhumic	Humid tropics	Worldwide
<i>Dichogaster affinis</i> (Daf)	End. polyhumic	Humid tropics	Worldwide
<i>Dichogaster annae</i> (Dann)	End. polyhumic	Humid tropics	Worldwide
<i>Drawida barwelli</i> (Dba)	End. polyhumic	Humid tropics	Worldwide
<i>Eudrilus eugeniae</i> (Ee)	Epigeic	Humid tropics	Worldwide
<i>Metapheretima taprobanae</i> (Mt)	End. mesohumic	Humid tropics	Worldwide
<i>Metaphire californica</i> (Mc)	Epi-endogeic	Humid tropics	Worldwide
<i>Metaphire houlleti</i> (Mh)	Epi-aneic	Humid tropics	Worldwide
<i>Metaphire posthuma</i> (Mp)	End. mesohumic	Humid tropics	Worldwide
<i>Ocnerodrilus occidentalis</i> (Oo)	End. polyhumic	Humid tropics	Worldwide
<i>Periscolex brachycystis</i> (Pb)	End. polyhumic	Humid tropics	Worldwide
<i>Peryonix excavatus</i> (Pex)	Epigeic	Humid tropics	Worldwide
<i>Pheretima bicincta</i> (Pbi)	Epi-endogeic	Humid tropics	Worldwide
<i>Polypheretima elongata</i> (Pel)	End. mesohumic	Humid tropics	Worldwide
<i>Pontoscolex corethrus</i> (Pc)	End. mesohumic	Humid tropics	Worldwide
<i>Balanteodrilus pearsei</i> (Bp)	End. Poly-mes.	SE Mexico	Regional
<i>Diplorema murchiei</i> (Dm)	End. Poly-mes.	SE Mexico	Regional
<i>Phoenicodrilus taste</i> (Pt)	End. polyhumic	SE Mexico	Regional
<i>Lavellodrilus parvus</i> (Lpa)	End. polyhumic	SE Mexico	Regional
<i>Protozapotecia australis</i> (Pa)	End. polyhumic	SE Mexico	Regional
<i>Eminoscolex lavellei</i> (El)	End. polyhumic	Rwanda	Regional
<i>Stuhlmannia variabilis</i> (Sv)	End. mesohumic	Rwanda	Regional
<i>Gordiodrilus</i> sp1 (Gg)	End. polyhumic	Rwanda	Regional
<i>Dichogaster itoliensis</i> (Di)	Anecic	Rwanda	Regional
<i>Onychochaeta elegans</i> (Oe)	End. mesohumic	Cuba, Caribbean	Regional

<i>Onychochaeta windelei</i> (Ow)	End. mesohumic	Cuba, Caribbean	Regional
<i>Pontoscolex spiralis</i> (Ps)	End. mesohumic	Lower Antilles	Regional
<i>Chuniodrilus zielae</i> (Cz)	End. polyhumic	Lamto, Ivory Coast	Regional
<i>Chuniodrilus palustris</i> (Cp)	End. polyhumic	Lamto, Ivory Coast	Regional
<i>Hyperiodrilus africanus</i> (Ha)	Epiendogeic	Tropical Africa	Regional
<i>Lampito mauritii</i> (Lm)	Anecic	India, SE Asia	Regional
<i>Drawida paradoxa</i> (Dpa)	End. mesohumic	Karnataka, India	Regional
<i>Drawida ampullacea</i> (Damp)	Endogeic	Karnataka, India	Regional
<i>Drawida willsii</i> (Dw)	Epianecic	Karnataka, India	Regional
<i>Drawida nepalensis</i> (Dn)	End. mesohumic	Karnataka, India	Regional
<i>Karmiella karnatakensis</i> (Kk)	End. poly-mes.	Karnataka, India	Regional
<i>Megascolex konkanensis</i> (Mk)	Endogeic	Karnataka, India	Regional
<i>Eutyphoeus incommodus</i> (Ei)	Anecic	Northern India	Regional
<i>Ramiellona strigosa</i> (Rs)	End. mesohumic	Chiapas, Mexico	Local
<i>Zapatadrilus</i> sp.nov (Zsp)	Endoanecic	Veracruz, Mexico	Local
<i>Rhinodrilus pashanasi</i> (Rp)	End. mesohumic	Peru, Yurimaguas	Local
<i>Millsonia anomala</i> (Ma)	End. mesohumic	Lamto, Ivory Coast	Local
<i>Millsonia lamtoiana</i> (Ml)	Anecic	Lamto, Ivory Coast	Local

soil organisms. This aspect, linked to the issue of the functional value of biodiversity, is considered in Chapters 4 and 5.

The main conclusion of this survey is that native species are found frequently in tropical agroecosystems, particularly in some countries (e.g. India) where apparently low-input agricultural techniques prevail (see Chapter 2 for more on this point), or in localities with low annual precipitations that do not permit the invasion of exotics (such as Mexican localities with annual precipitations below 1300 mm, where the native endoanecic *Zapataadrilus* sp.nov1 dominates and no mesohumic exotics have been able to establish). Taking into account the fact that several native species survive in agroecosystems at a very local level (Table 1.4), the number of species to be manipulated in tropical farming systems turns out to be considerably greater than the 10–15 major exotic species identified in Table 1.1. In this regard, and at least for tropical regions, it is no longer possible to maintain Lee's (1987) statement that only exotic species are important in agricultural lands. In addition, it is highly probable that the number of native species with potential for management in agroecosystems will increase as a function of the intensity of sampling effort.

So far, we have presented the list of earthworms with potential for manipulation in tropical soils. In agricultural lands, however, manipulation practices should be considered at the community level, because mixtures of species are generally more common than single species. In the next chapter, we will analyse these species assemblages in relation to their ecological and agricultural determinants and potential for manipulation.

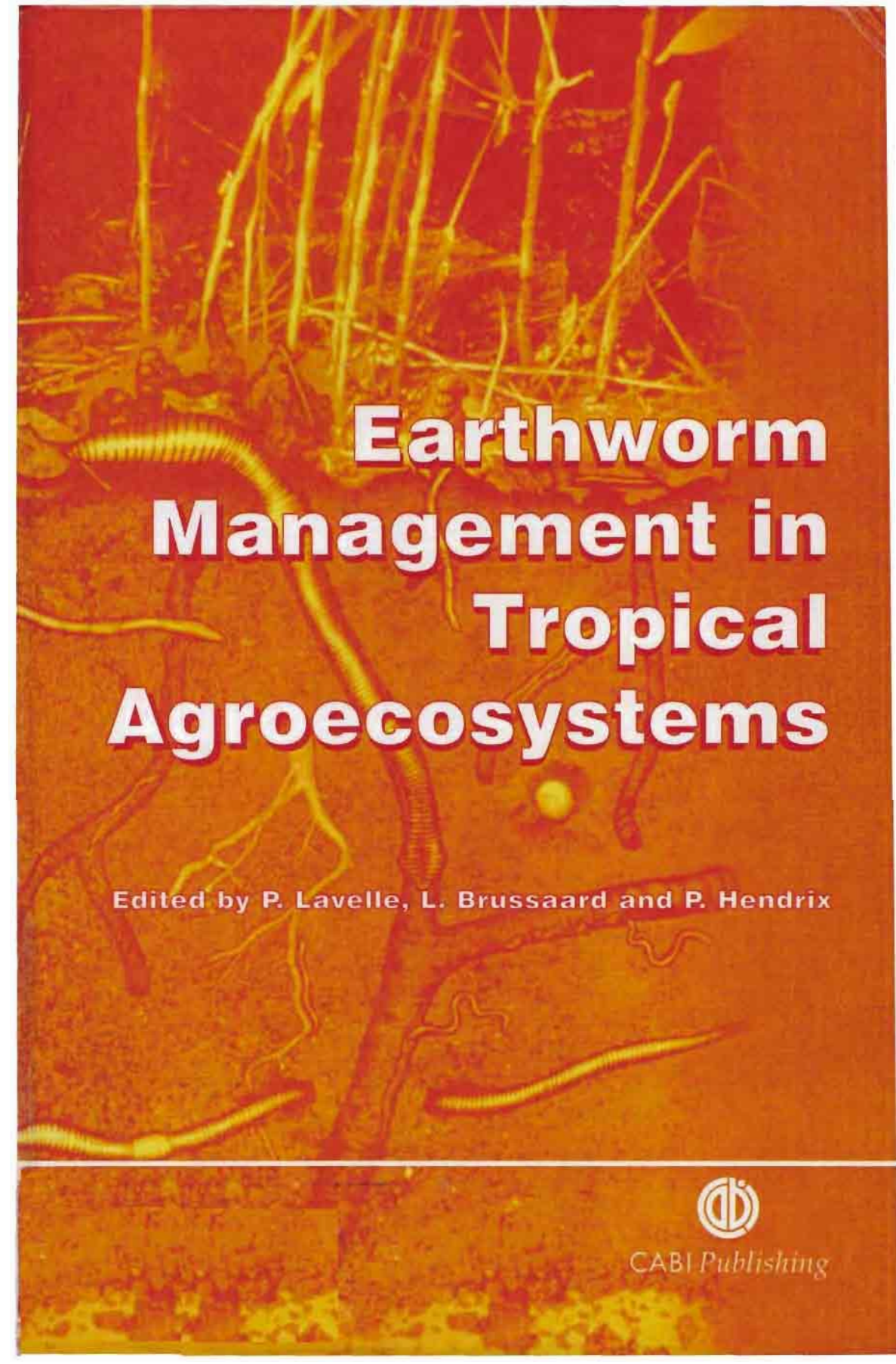
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The cover features a detailed illustration of a soil profile. At the top, there are plant roots and stems. Below the surface, several earthworms of various sizes are shown in different stages of movement through the soil. The background is a textured, brownish-orange color representing the soil.

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