

Digitization of the types of Cestode species in the collection of the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle de Genève

Isabel BLASCO-COSTA

Department of Invertebrates, Natural History Museum of Geneva, SWITZERLAND

Making Museum collections accessible in times of biodiversity crisis is more important than ever. The Parasitic Helminths Collection at the Natural History Museum of Geneva is the richest in Switzerland, and for some taxa, like proteocephalideans or strigeids, is one of the most unique in Europe. The backbone of the collection stems from the contributions of several influential Swiss parasitologists during the 19th and 20th century, such as Otto Fuhmann (1871-1945), Jean-George Baer (1902-1975), George Dubois (1902-1993). I present our strategy for digitizing the type specimens of species described by the latter authors and more recent ones to promote information exchange and availability of fragile and precious specimens to scientists in a world of restrictions, and to facilitate curatorial practice. The collection comprises 1269 records of

whole-mounted type specimens described by Swiss parasitologists belonging to 609 species from all over the world. We set standardised protocols for different orders of platyhelminths to capture their main anatomical features with microphotograph. In addition, short videos were recorded under the microscope to capture the 3D position of organs, and speed up to reduce their size while preserving quality. This project set the foundations for microscopy digitization and will be continued for all newly submitted types in the Helminth Collection. The images will become accessible through the online portal of Swiss Virtual Natural History Collections. We hope these high standards of curation and accessibility will foster taxonomic research in a group with species discoveries still in constant expansion.