



BIOLOGY CENTRE, Czech Academy of Sciences  
**Institute of Parasitology**

Branišovská 31, 370 05 České Budějovice, Czech Republic  
Phone: 00420-38-777 5403; Fax 00420-38-53 10 388

---

## Supervisor's Report on Carlos A. MENDOZA-PALMERO

Since 1993, when I first arrived to Mexico, I have served as supervisor of several undergraduate students, but Carlos is my first PhD student from this country, which has influenced so much my scientific career and personal life. One of the most important achievements of almost three years spent in this amazing country during ten stays was the ability to communicate in Spanish. Knowledge of this important and nice language enabled me to visit other Latin American countries, including Peru, where I collected, together with my previous student and currently co-worker, Roman Kuchta, extensive material of gill monogeneans during three field trips to Iquitos in 2004–2006.

Even though monogeneans were 'by-product' of our sampling effort focused on proteocephalidean cestodes and other intestinal helminths, the number of specimens collected as well as hosts examined seemed me to be sufficient for a deep-level taxonomic and phylogenetic study. However, monogeneans were not studied in our Institute since retirement of famous Radim Ergens in the early 1990's and previous relocation of his successor, Milan Gelnar to Brno. The latter has established there a strong research group focused on monogeneans, but nobody of his research team dealt with species from the Neotropical Region. What to do in such a situation?

It was in June 2007, when I met Carlos incidentally at the Institute of Biology of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). He was finishing his MSc thesis focused on the taxonomy of monogeneans parasitising endemic fish from Central Mexico. After some hesitation as a non-specialist in Monogenea, I offered him the possibility to work on the material we collected in Amazonia. The original idea was to use this material for a taxonomic and phylogenetic study of gill monogeneans and their coevolution with fish hosts, catfish of the family Pimelodidae. As written in the thesis, this idea appeared soon to be unrealistic and Carlos had to spend much more time than originally expected just by morphological and taxonomic evaluation of unexpectedly rich material of largely unknown species or even genera of dactylogyrid monogeneans. Methodological problems with species identification also led to the necessity to change sampling strategy during two additional collecting trip to Peru, which has much delayed Carlos' PhD studies.

Finally, Carlos succeeded in reaching the objectives of his PhD project and presents here a thesis composed of two good-quality taxonomic papers, a detailed survey of monogeneans of South America (checklist) and, in particular, a robust molecular phylogenetic study of gill monogeneans of siluriforms in the Neotropical Region. During more than six years, he has overcome many obstacles and methodological problems, starting from the necessity to adapt to a different intellectual ambient and mentality of people in a small Central European country to the need to learn methods of molecular

taxonomy and phylogenetics. Compared to his colleagues, Carlos' situation was apparently worse in several aspects, among others because I am not a specialist in monogeneans and could not help him always as much as he would need, and also due to my heavy administrative load when I served as Director of the Institute (until June 2012). In addition, Carlos sometimes preferred to fight with problems alone instead of asking somebody else for help or advice. This is an admirable personal feature but it may cause unnecessary delay in some situations, such as faster preparation of manuscripts.

To conclude, I am glad that I invited Carlos to carry out his PhD study on monogeneans from Peru. He has done a good job, has learned very much and has achieved a good level in his scientific work. I hope he will be able to get funds/positions to continue in his research on monogeneans and I wish him very much success in his career of researcher. Last but not least, I would like to thank Isabel Blasco-Costa, who guided Carlos in his molecular-phylogenetic part of PhD studies.



Tomáš Scholz

25 November 2014