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SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM & BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Università degli Studi di Genova
Dipartimento di Scienze della Terra dell'Ambiente e della Vita
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Room 401, 4° floor

The Proturologist's hard work

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Protura is a small Class of entognathous hexapods described in 1907 by the Italian entomologist Filippo Silvestri. Even though the greatest progress in proturan research since then has been made in the field of taxonomy, “the road of taxonomy was bumpy and the proturans proved to be awkward travel companions” (Pass & Szucsich, 2011). Species identification is rather difficult and all over the world there are currently no more than ten scientists that are able to identify specimens at the species level. Morphological and morphometric characters traditionally used in Protura systematics (e.g. chaetotaxy, porotaxy, shape and size of foretarsal sensilla) are difficult to be checked, and not always unambiguous. Moreover, the contribution from genetic analysis (e.g. DNA barcoding) suffers from a delay of some years compared to other taxa, due to methodological problems and to the general lack of interest in this group.