

MINISTERIE VAN ONDERWIJS, KUNSTEN EN WETENSCHAPPEN

# ZOOLOGISCHE MEDEDELINGEN

UITGEGEVEN DOOR HET

RIJKSMUSEUM VAN NATUURLIJKE HISTORIE TE LEIDEN

DEEL XXX, No. 16

19 Januari 1950

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## GUSTAV ALBERT STIASNY

December 10, 1877-June 12, 1946

by

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Gustav Albert Stiasny was born in Vienna (Austria) on December 10th, 1877. After he had attended the elementary and grammar schools there and having finished a one year course of lectures in commercial enterprise, Stiasny enlisted as a volunteer with the Austro-Hungarian army. A year later he left the army after he had obtained his commission, to take up an appointment with his father's commercial business. Young Stiasny, who was much interested in Natural History, soon left his father's affairs to give himself completely to the study of Zoology, Botany and Geology. For that purpose he attended lectures at the universities of Vienna and Jena. As about that time such celebrities as Hatschek, Grobben, Haeckel, et al., were lecturing there it is no wonder that Stiasny soon developed a strong preference for Zoology. In 1903 Stiasny took his Philosophical Doctor's degree at the University of Vienna, using his first three publications as his thesis.

Stiasny then went to Norway to join an international course in Oceanography and to make a trip on board the research vessel "Michael Sars". Here he had the opportunity to make the acquaintance of a number of oceanographers and marine biologists of international reputation, viz. Appellöf, Helland-Hansen, Hjort and Gran. In 1906 Stiasny took part in an expedition of the University of Vienna to the West coast of Greenland. From his return until 1912 he worked at the former Austro-Hungarian marine Station at Trieste, where he became the personal assistant of Prof. Dr. C. J. Cori. During his stay in Trieste Stiasny travelled extensively in the Mediterranean, visited the Açores and the Canaries and in 1910 visited the Argentine Republic, Uruguay and Brazil. In 1912 he

was appointed a teacher at a grammar school at Vienna, but the next year he joined the staff of the well known Zoological Station at Naples, where he was put in charge of the department for plankton and fishery research.

The outbreak of the war in 1914 forced Stiasny to follow his commission with the Austro-Hungarian army and for four years he performed military duties in the smouldering and rebellious Balkan countries of Albania, Serbia and Macedonia.

In 1915 Stiasny married Gerarda Wijnhoff, a Dutch zoologist, who about that time began to earn a reputation for her researches on Nemer-teans, and at the end of the war and with the breakdown of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy they went to the Netherlands, where Stiasny in 1919 was appointed a curator of the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie at Leiden. Here he was put in charge of a large part of the collections of marine invertebrates and with great zeal began the systematical revision of the groups now under his care.

In the summer of 1929 Stiasny, who had become a Dutch subject in 1925, for some time acted as deputy Director of the Zoologisch Station der Nederlandsche Dierkundige Vereeniging (Zoological Station of the Dutch Zoological Society) at Den Helder. Shortly afterwards he became university lecturer at the University of Leiden.

In 1940, when the German heel crushed our country and anti-semitic laws and measures were forced upon its population, Stiasny, who should reach pensionable age in December 1942, was compelled to wear the notorious yellow star and had to leave the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke History. Even under very dark and difficult conditions he carried on his systematical and biogeographical studies, assisted as much as possible by his wife, his colleagues and his friends. Stiasny, who had been removed from his functions in November 1940 and who had been discharged in March 1941, was rehabilitated with the return of normal conditions in the Netherlands after the collapse of the axis forces. For a short time only he has been able to have the benefit of rest; he died suddenly on June 12th, 1946.

Stiasny has been a well known personality among the marine biologists of the first half of the twentieth century. His long stay at Trieste and his sojourns at Naples—he afterwards visited the Zoological Station there repeatedly—had made him familiar with the Mediterranean fauna, especially with the Medusae and the Tornaria larvae of the Enteropneusta. As a curator of the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie Stiasny revised many groups of marine Invertebrates, but he made reputation with his researches on Scyphozoa. He studied the type material of Medusae of that group in many foreign collections and developed a new and highly important

method for the study of the gastric cavity by means of injections. His worldwide connections were strengthened by visits to congresses, stations and institutions and provided him with material from many parts of the globe. Besides his investigations on Medusae Stiasny, together with his wife, studied Tornariae, and during the later part of his life he concentrated on the study of Gorgonarians, of which he saw an enormous material. The results of all his studies are laid down in many small or voluminous papers. At his death he left a number of unpublished manuscripts, which prove that his energy was not greatly reduced by the deplorable conditions which the war forced upon our community.

Stiasny, besides his extensive work on taxonomy of marine animals and his wide interest in the great field of Natural History, intensively studied arts, literature, and passionately loved music. Anybody who began to know him more intimately soon became impressed by the extent of his reading. He had, however, not an easy temper. This sometimes brought him into violent clash with his surroundings, but also made it possible for him to use all his enthusiasm and energy to pursue a certain object or to carry on with some investigation, which fanatically he brought to an end. For Stiasny taxonomy was the most important expedient for his chief aim: the promotion of oceanographical science.

#### LIST OF DR. STIASNY'S SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

The following list contains all Stiasny's scientific publications, printed before April 1949. As far as possible all publications are chronologically arranged; new genera, species and varieties described in these papers are placed in brackets. An asterisk means that type material of that species is present in the collections of the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie at Leiden. Stiasny repeatedly refers to publications in press; all papers of that kind mentioned in his lists of references and not recorded in the present bibliography still have to be published. Material of some species to be described in these papers is present in the collections of the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie and has not been recorded here.

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- , 1904. Beitrag zur Kenntnis des Exkretionsapparates der Entoprocta. *Arb. zool. Inst. Univ. Wien*, vol. 15, pp. 183-196, pl. 13.
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- , 1908. Eine atlantische Tima im Golfe von Triest. *Arb. zool. Inst. Univ. Wien*, vol. 17, pp. 221-223, pl. 16.
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- MOROFF, T. & G. STIASNY, 1908. Über den Bau und die Fortpflanzung von *Acanthometra*. *Zentralbl. Physiol.*, Wien, vol. 22, pp. 598-601, 4 textfigs.

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- , 1911. Über die Entstehung der Kristalloide in den Kernen der Sphaerozoen. Zool. Anz., vol. 37, pp. 487-490, 1 textfig.
- , 1911. Beobachtungen über die marine Fauna des Triester Golfes während des Jahres 1910. Zool. Anz., vol. 37, pp. 517-522.
- , 1911. Radiolarien aus der *Adria*. S.B. Akad. Wiss. Wien, Math.-naturw. Kl., vol. 120, sect. 1, pp. 487-503, 1 textfig. (*Acanthosphaera tenera* n. sp., *Aulactinium Burckhardti* n. sp.).
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1) In this paper a number of new species is mentioned; the full descriptions have not yet been published. Nearly all new species are based on specimens previously described by other authors, especially by Nutting in his Siboga monographs. The validity of some new trivial names given by Stiasny seems questionable as long as his revision of the Muriceidae of the Siboga Expedition has not been fully published.

2) In this paper a number of new species is mentioned which are more fully described in Stiasny's 1947 paper. Apparently all new species are based on specimens previously described by other authors.