



120th Volume of Periodicum Biologorum and 21st FIFA World Cup – what do they have in common?

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It is always good to start from the beginning. In case of Periodicum Biologorum (PB), that would be 1886, the year when the first issue of this journal was published (1). With respect to football, 1886 is the year in which „Laws of the Game“ were adopted (2). Both PB and FIFA World Cup (FWC) have suffered from unfortunate events in human history, such as the Second World War, which resulted in discontinuity of both their activities. Due to that, after 132 years, PB is counting only its 120th Volume and 21st FWC took place instead of 23rd. Both PB and FWC are open for participants from all over the World. However, similarities from here on start to fade away. Qualification procedures are different, and results reach audiences of significantly (read: enormously) different sizes. Money turnover is incomparable. As well as popularity of participants involved. Yet, both can benefit tremendously when participants are passionate, dedicated, honourable and hard working. As one can nowadays surmise from his many achievements, Spiridion Brusina, the founder of the Croatian Society of Natural Sciences and the first Editor of PB, possessed of all these virtues. Born and raised in Zadar (Croatia), which was throughout three millennia of its existence an important settlement and port on the shores of the Adriatic Sea, he must have been aware of the importance of relating to the rest of the world. Starting from the very first issues of PB, he established review procedures and acceptance to publish in languages other than Croatian. Another important policy he established was to distribute the journal to as many institutions as possible. Today's Open Access policy is something he would have promoted and supported relentlessly. Some other contemporary occurrences in scientific publishing, such as the predatory journals, plagiarism or publishing for a fee would certainly make him raise an eyebrow.

Many things have changed over the last 132 years and the 119 volumes published so far. Numbers of publishers, journals and articles, as well as the money involved, have skyrocketed in recent decades. In its entire history, PB had 18 Editors-in-chief (including Sabina Rabatić and myself since 2015), averaging at 7.3 years per Editor (almost two FWC cycles). This ensured a stability required for persistence of journal policy. Although different Editors-in-chief had different visions of desired journal content (see (3)), a common ambition was to ensure continuity and independence of the publishing process. Our ability to keep up these standards depends crucially on the donations we receive from the Croatian Ministry of Science and Education. There is no doubt that the current code of conduct and the standard of publishing at PB would not be viable without their generous financial support, for which we are deeply grateful. We can only hope that this support will continue in the future.

As of late, we tend to publish around 40 papers per year. Since the number of articles published worldwide is constantly and dramatically increasing, our share is set to go from its current micro- to nano-scale. We could ask ourselves about the purpose of having such a journal. I am convinced that the purpose is pretty much the same as it was 3.5 centuries ago, when scientific publishing began. To share obtained results and conclusions with colleagues, and to contribute to human knowledge and well-being of our civilization. If Croatia, being the second smallest country in terms of human population that reached the FWC final, succeeded in making a significant impact, why shouldn't PB be able to contribute significantly in its own domain? Actually, we are succeeding. We also have stars in our team, well known to the scientific community, e.g. Ivan Đikić (4), Enrico Schleiff (5), Zoran Radić (6) and William F. Martin (7, 8) to mention just some of them (all laureates of the Spiridion Brusina medal from recent years).

Despite globalisation and Internet-based easy access to information, there are still people on Earth who do not know about Leo Messi or Cristiano Ronaldo. A majority of scientists still do not know about PB, but nevertheless, we are receiving manuscripts from all over the world. Therefore, as some endemic species survive in their narrow niche and contribute to the overall diversity and richness, there is certainly a place and a role to play for journals such as PB. Not just because of its tradition and to honour Spiridion Brusina (whose monument in his hometown can be seen on the cover of this issue), but to provide a "playground" for established stars as well as for some newcomers, who yet have to reach stellar recognition and success. When it comes to stellar recognition, it is hard to

resist the temptation to mention Luka Modrić – the 2018 FWC Golden Ball winner, who was also born and started his career in Zadar, just like Spiridion Brusina. Many of the well-known football players, participants of the 21st FWC, begun their rise to the stars at some modest playgrounds. Being an Editor of PB is a lot like being a caretaker of such a playground. One just must be dedicated and patient, and enjoy the beauty of the game.

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