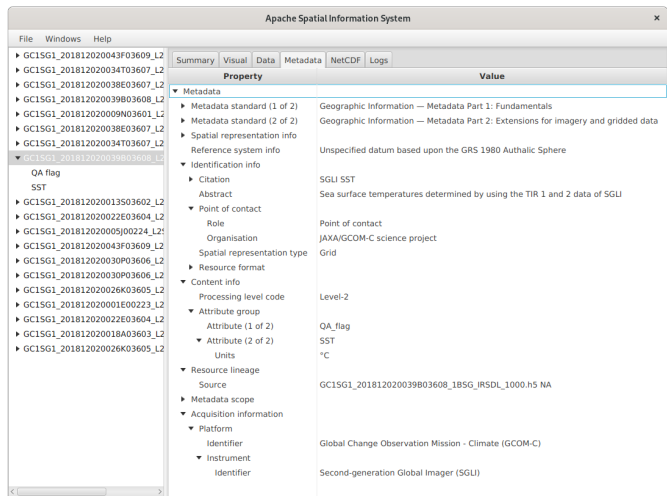# View metadata

The metadata provide information necessary for understanding the data. Metadata answer questions such as "what", "where", "when" and "how". However each file format and each data provider tend to structure metadata in their own ways, which make difficult to write code working on arbitrary data. For resolving this interoperability problem, Apache SIS translates and reorganizes each format-specific metadata into another structure that we use as an universal metadata format. The structure adopted by SIS is the one defined by *ISO 19115 — Geographic information — Metadata* international standard. All Apache SIS operations are based on those restructured metadata; the native metadata are rarely used directly. The restructured metadata can be viewed in the JavaFX application by clicking on the "Metadata" tab, as shown in the screenshot below. Browsing those metadata may help to become familiar with new data. Contextual menu allows to export selected nodes and its children to various formats, including ISO 19115-3 (a XML format) and Geographic Markup Language (GML).

A "Netcdf" tab is also provided for viewing native metadata. It may be useful for viewing information lost in the translation to ISO 19115 metadata, or if the user suspects that metadata have not been translated correctly.