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"Extention of the Exploration of the Maja Arapit Cave, Shkodra district, North Albania"

Period : 24 July – 09 August 2009

Project Introduction and Mission

We are a team of European cavers . The team is conducted by Bulgarian Federation of Speleology ! It is consisted by 19 cavers from Albania (2), Bulgaria (10), Greece (1), Poland (2) ,Romania (4) with expedition leader and coordinator Alexander Yanvev (Bulgaria).

Albania

Gezim Uruçi
Ahmet Asja

Bulgaria

Alexander Yanvev– expeditional leader and coordinator

Alexander Kirilov
Zlatinka Borisova
Konstantin Stoilov
Ognjan Stojanov
Snejana Alexandrova
Tanyo Tanev
Teodor Kisimov
Tzvetan Blagoev

Greece

Lambros Makrostergios

Poland

Ditta Kicinska
Krzystof Najdek

Romania

Lascu Viorel
Rus Tudor
Tulucan Tiberiu
Radu Valentin

Hungaria

Gabor Losonci

France

Marcel&Shristine



Our main aim is with joint efforts to extent the exploration and mapping of MayaArapitCave - most scandent cave in Albania (+232 m, 1200 m long). Our dream is to prolongate the cave and to make its depth adequate to the geological potential of the area +1000 !
General data of Albanian Alps

The Albanian Alps are a part of the DinaricMountains. They are largest Mt in Albania, which covers an area of 2020 sq.km TALANI (1990).

The climate is humid with annual precipitation of 2000-2800 mm concentrated during the period October-May. The annual average temperature is 10.2 C. The Alps is built of folded and fissured Mesozoic and Paleolgene limestone with max. elevation of 2694 m. a.s.l. at peak Ezerca. Dislocations with dominant directions NE -SW and NW-SE divide the Mt. in a lot of single fault blocks. The mean coefficient of efficient infiltration is about 0.6 - 0.7 (Hyd.Geol.Map, 1981). The aquifer is drained by many karst springs mostly of which situated at the foot of mountain. The largest of them is Siri i Sheganit near ShkodrasLake with max. capacity 6.9 m³/sec. in May and min. 0.300 m³/sec. in August HOTI (1990).

This vast area constitutes a typical karst region in Europe due to its geographical position, its climatic and geological conditions.

Geology

The MajaArapitCave is situated in the Albanian Alps zone, composed mainly of carbonate and carbonate-terrigenous sequences. The cave is located at the easternmost part of the Malesia e Madhe sub zone, (Kelmendi Microblok), close to its tectonic boundary with the Valbona one. ONUZI (2006)

The cave system is developed in over than 1500 m thick succession of different types of limestone – biomicritic, oolitic, biosparitic, algae, oncolitic, fossiliferous, reef-like etc, covering the time span from Middle Jurassic to Upper Cretaceous. The limestone sequence represents (and reflects) different events, specific for each epoch, but all along the time in carbonate platform palaeo-environment.

The effect of syndimentary karstification processes can be observed, but the prolonged carbonate sedimentation fixed it to some levels, e.g. the sort time lasting hiatuses, prevented the cave system development.

The Late Alpine tectonics, especially the fault Lepushe-Qafes se Thores-Nderlyses, which general spreading is NE-SW, and secondary processes of karstification, are the main factors that control the cave system development. The micrite limestone and marl levels and packages handicap the karst evolution. At the same time, the combination of strike-slip and normal fault tectonics provides opportunities for different ways of cave system development, which sounds optimistic.

Brief history of exploration and preliminary plan for 2009

The first exploration of the cave takes place during the 1970-es and is made by the Albanian cavers from Shkodra - G. Uruçi, Q. Gjilbegu and al. The first map is made by A. Zhalov, V. Mustakov and Gezim Uruçi, during the first Bulgarian–Albanian expedition in 1992. At that time are surveyed 512 m of cave passages. During the next joint expedition in 1994, are further explored 127 m of new passages. In the sump (length 70 m; depth 3.5 m), situated at the right cave branch dived K. Petkov, but being alone, he could not continue the further exploration. In 2005 a new Bulgarian expedition, led by A. Zhalov, makes an unsuccessful attempt to pump out the water from the sump in order to make it passable for cavers without using diving equipment. The next Bulgarian expedition was carried out in 2006. At that time O. Kolov passed the sump and climbed up + 22 m from the level of the sump. Two new expeditions took place in 2007. The cavers worked behind the sump and enlarged the narrow passages in the right branch of the cave. Some terrain observations were also carried out in order to explore the area of the summit of Maya Arapit. At 2100 m a. s. l. the cavers found approx. 50 vertical caves. The deepest one is – 152 and continued. Encouraged by the results of the first expedition of 2007, a new one was organized in September. In 2008 the team 16 Bulgarian cavers continued the exploration of the cave. The mapped length of the cave is 1.224 m and its actual depth grow + 232 m. The cave continued in two directions.



The valley of Theth village the red arrow point the cave entrance

The 2009 project will continue to explore the climbing up in the cave and surveying of the new found passages having in mind that the geological and hydro geological conditions suppose that there could be a cave system of serious length and positive denivelation of about + 1000 m. Whether the cave will reach its theoretical potentials, only a further exploration could show.

FINAL REPORT OF THE Project "Extention of the Exploration of the Maja Arapit Cave, Shkodra district, North Albania" ESPE 2009-03 Period : 24 July – 09 August 2009

24.07.2009

The Bulgarian team depart at 22.30 pm from Sofia.

25.07.2009

In Shkoder arrived at noon. Meet Gezim, we found that servant, which issues permits for encampment in the park is on vacation. Gezim said us that it is no problem to pay the fee later and give us a written letter from him to the authorities of the park. In the evening we reach the Theth village where Lambro and Athena from Greece came at 23 pm .

The camp is located in front of the cave on the foot of the wall of Maja Arapit Summit – at 1040 m a. s. l. Its geographical coordinates are: 42° 26' 24.1" north latitude and 19° 45' 39.5" east longitude (datum Pulkovo). The place is ~4 km from the village Theth – mountain road. The place of the camp is reachable after 1 hour of walking from the cars.

26.07.2009

Repacking bags and made two courses with the jeeps to the beginning of the path. The drivers and Ahmet went into the village to find the yard where the cars to leave. At last the owner of one store responded that there is no problem to leave the cars without to pay. After leaving the car, we made a course with luggage to the cave entrance and found it overwhelm by stone scree. There was already formed for digging brigade who uncover it. The team made 2 - nd course for transportation the baggage from the cars to the cave entrance, but were unable to get all, despite the help of Snezha who made 3 courses.

27.7.2009

A. Yanev, K. Stoilov , T. Kisimov A. Kirilov rerigging the main way in the new branch of the cave and building the underground camp (it is 4 hours of penetration from the entrance).The others made the outside camp comfortable and lift up equipment . The Rumanian team led by V.Lasku come. They are accompanied by our Hungarian friend Gabor Losinci from the United Caving club of Budapest.

28.07.2009

K. Stoilov, A. Kirilov, R. Terziev ,Tz. Blagoev – went to underground camp (UC).

Valy and Tudor Rus help them to transport the luggage to the UC and to reel out the telephone cable to the camp.

A. Yanev & Viorel Lasku rigged the meander - equipped are 2 pitches of 10 and 30 m. Meander continues. Z.

Borisova , O. Stoyanov and Gabor started the mapping of meander and stopped in the edge of 30 m pit.

29.07.2009

T. Kisimov and Gabor rig 100 m of rope in the meander 100 m rope. Z.Borissova A. Stoyanov& S. Tanev – remapping the old parts of the cave starting from the entrance . Lambros and Athina remaping of old parts - to siphon on the right. A. Yanev and Ahmet Osia – went to buy some necessary thing from Koplik.

UC

K.Stoilov, R.Terziev, A.Kirilov and Tz.Blagoev start the climbing of the end of the cave, for the pity the petrol perforator crashed in the third hole. R.Terziev, A.Kirilov get back to the entrance with the broken perforator.

30.07.2009

Z. Borissova & O. Stoyanov reels out the additional phone cable to the UC. Lambro remapped old parts of the caves.Viorel and Valy - check upward the newfound part of the meander . T. Kisimov, A. Kirilov,Tudor , Gabor make trekking to the last year's camp Hungarian cavers in the Prozmit massif. Z. Borisova, S. Tanev - remapping old parts ;A. Yanev , S. Alexandrova, R. Terziev – enlarge the narrow passages in the cave.

UC

31.07.2009

Lambro change on W. Blagoev. A.Kirilov and W. Blagoev and check the room with the traverse.

UC

01.08.2009

A. Stoyanov , H. Borissova mapping the branch Boulevard Bulgaria that goes in the room with the lake ;S. Alexandrova, S. Tanev, R. Terziev remapping in the old parts.

UC

02.08.2009

A. Yanev , A. Kirilov check in the initial part of the meander and rigging of some steps.

A. Stoyanov , W. Blagoev, T. Kisimov , R. Terziev – checking in of the chimney above first siphon and others.

UC

K.Stoilov and Lambro dropped 3 more little pits and reached sump. The traversing of the sump will show the place from where the water comes. Lambro teared up his combi and can't work more.

UC

03.08.2009

Lambro and O.Stojanov leave the exploration of the meander and remain the UC.

A. Yanev , T. Kisimov.K. Stoilov continued the exploration of the meander.

R. Terziev and S.Tanev – mapped the chimney above the 1st sump and after worked in the passage in the right part of the gallery leading to the 2nd sump.

K.Stoilov, T.Kisimov, A.Yanev finished the mapping of the meader to the sump. Teodor traversed the sump and reached second little sump. Getting back the team found the "Transilvanian way" . Reriging of the passage.

A. Kirilov,H. Borissova, Tz. Blagoev made a trip up to the massive of Maja Arapit Summit and find two little caves.

04.08.2009

R. Terziev, Tz. Blagoev, A. Kirilov worked on the enlarging of the narrow passage in the old parts ot the cave. In the same time Lambro, H. Borissova , S. Alexandrova

surveyed the passage to 2nd sump. K. Stoilov, T. Kisimov, A. Yanev climb 5 meters up from the last point reached in the cave but because of technical problems stopped and leaved the underground camp.

05 .08.2009

A. Kirilov, H. Borissova, Tz. Blagoev surveying the muddy meander and reached a pit of 20 metres. Marcel and Christine (French colleagues who joint us) transport a kit with equipment to the beginning of the muddy meander. A. Yanev ,S. Alexandrova ,S. Tanev work under the enralging of the narrow place to the direction of the 2 nd sump.

06.08.2009

A. Yanev, T. Kisimov, R. Terziev continued the exploration and surveying of the muddy meander. In the same time S.

Tanev, O. Stoyanov, Christine and Marcel dig the narrow place leading to the 2nd sump and entered in a new 6 m long passage named "The passage of friendship"

07.08.2009

Some equipment and food was stored at the entrance of the cave for the coming expedition of our colleagues from SC" Sofia"-Sofia. Start the transportation of all luggages to the cars. The team sleep in the yard of the shop in the village (1 euros per person) , there is an option to sleep in a room, but it does not verify). Afternoon walk to the beautiful waterfall, where a mud wash ourselves with very cold water.

08.08.2009

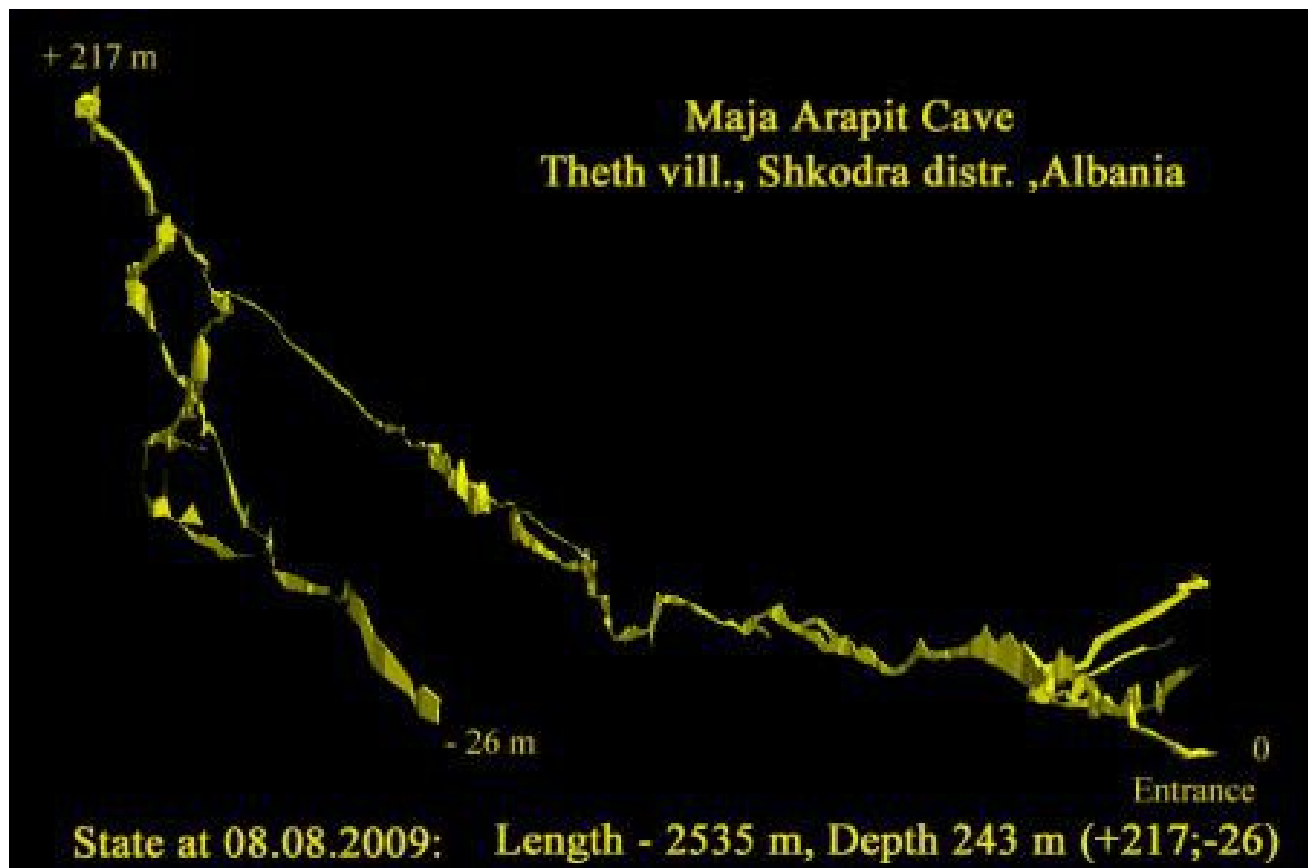
Get up early and go to Shkoder. By the way jeep stops to bind its pot. The procedure is repeated several times, because the "pig tails" is shrinking. In Boga vill . we find wire and fixed the problem. Arrive at noon in Shkoder. Gezim Uruci gives us permission to encampment, explaining that employees in the park were his friends and instead of 50 euros we paid 20. On top of the time limit for residence in the National Park Theth was recorded on 09.09.2009 . After about 2 hours and talk of food shopping we went to Bulgaria.

09.08.2009

Early in the morning at 3.30 am arriving in Sofia without any problems on the road. In the Lukoil Vladaiska Petrol Station we proclaim the end of the expedition.

Conclusion

During the expedition was surveyed 1313 m. of new passages. Over 0,5 km of old passage was remapped. The actual length of the cave Maja Arapit (after this expedition) grow from 1224 m to 2537 m. The depth is 243 m where the highest point is + 217 and the lowest one is - 26 m. Because of the remapping of the old part of the cave, minimal correction of the positive depth were made. The exploration will continued in high during the second Bulgarian expedition which is carrying out now (9-20 August 2009).





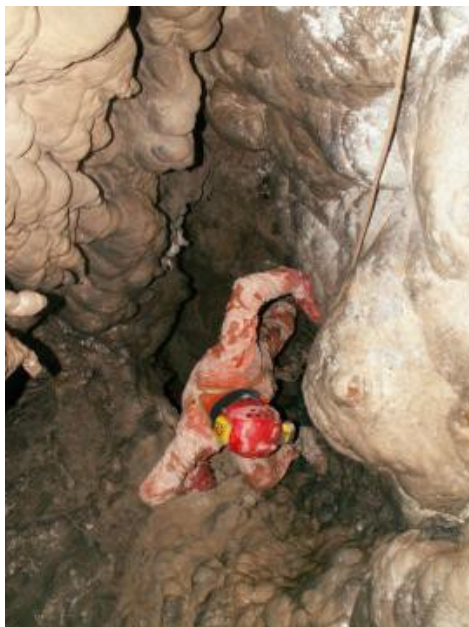
The underground camp





In the old parts - the way to the sump





You can find more pictures here: <http://www.album.bg/prilep1962/albums/100505/>