

**REPORT FOR THE 2-nd STAGE
OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROJECT
“THE CAVES of HOLLY MOUNTAIN ATHOS”- GREECE”**

ISSUE - 2012

**“Τα σπήλαια της Άγιο Όρος-Άθως”
“Пещерите на Света гора – Атон”
“Пещеры Святой горы – Афон”
”Peșterile din Muntele Athos ”
„Пећинама Света планина – Атон ”**

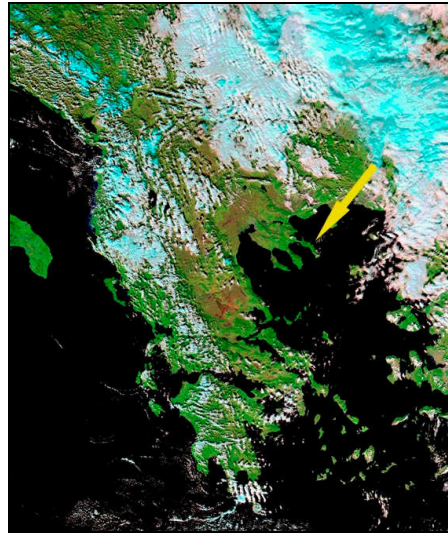
ESP – 2012-13



SOFIA OCTOBER 2012

Mount Athos – Greece Halkidiki is a great palm leaf shaped expanse of 2,886 square kilometres in the Northern Greece close to Thessaloniki. With its three peninsulas Cassandra, Sithonia and Athos projecting into the sea, it forms the longest coastline in mainland Greece.

COUNTRY Greece
NAME Mount Athos (Άghion Óros)



GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The site is on Akti, the easternmost of the three peninsulas of Khalkidike in the Macedonian Region, about 150 km southeast of Thessaloniki: 40° 15'N by 24° 10'E.

AREA : 33,024.3 ha (UNESCO WHC,2008).

ALTITUDE : Sea level to 2,033m (Mt.Athos)

Mount Athos (Fig.1) consists of a range which stretches southeast for thirty miles. A rugged, sea battered peninsula 56 kilometres long. Two kilometres wide at it's narrowest point, it broadens to eight. The landscape is rugged and wild, scored by deep gorges and small valleys. Two-thirds is forest and woodland, one third scrubby garrigue and rocks. The coastline is rocky and steep.

The area presents a variform terrain. There is a mildly wavy row of hills in the central part peninsula with a gradually increasing altitude that varies between 450 and 990m before climbing to an altitude of 2,033 m (the summit of Mount Athos) to the Southeast. The relief consists of deep, steep traverse gullies alternating with steeper folds.

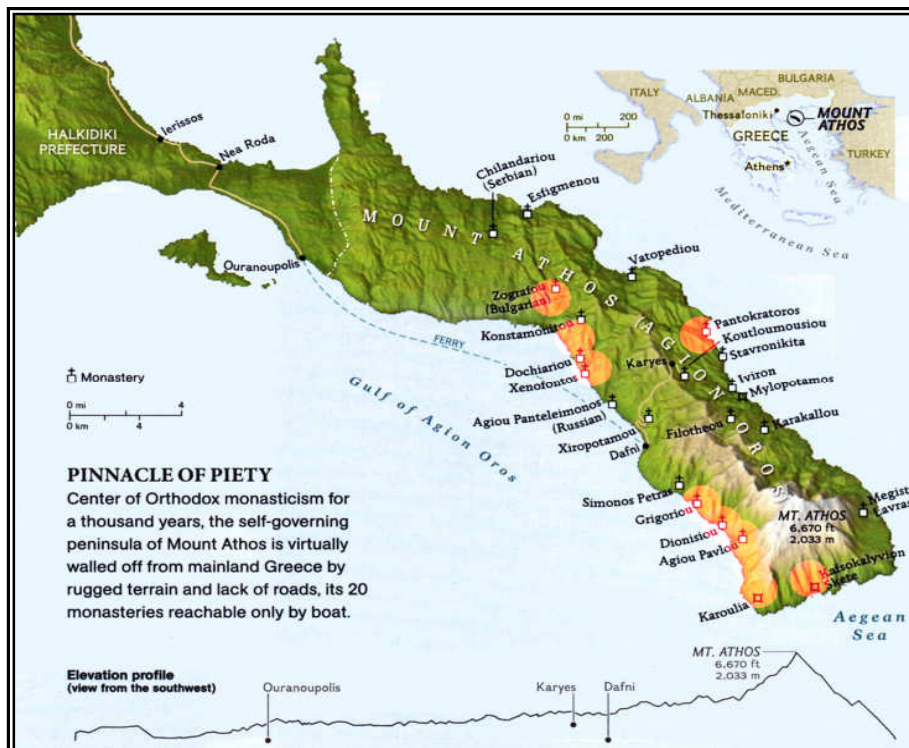


Fig.1 Athos Peninsula

General view with the points of the explored areas

The broader study area belongs to the Serbo-Macedonian Massif (SMM), a large basement massif within the Internal Hellenides. (Fig.2) The south-eastern part of the Mount Athos peninsula is built by fine-grained banded biotite gneisses and migmatites forming a domal structure. The southern tip of the peninsula, which also comprises Mount Athos itself, is built by limestone, marble and low-grade metamorphic rocks of the Chortiatis Unit. The northern part and the majority of the western shore of the Mount Athos peninsula are composed of highly deformed rocks belonging to a tectonic mélangé termed the Athos-Volvi-Suture Zone (AVZ), which separates two major basement units: the Vertiskos Terrane in the west and the Kerdillion Unit in the east. The rock-types in this mélangé range from metasediments, marbles and gneisses to amphibolites, eclogites and peridotites. (Himmerkus et. all., 2009)

This is a land dedicated to monasticism, to austere asketism and deep contemplation. Among the greenery and the impassable gorges, perched in the most unexpected positions are the monumental walls of twenty monasteries and numerous huts where hermits spend their days in solitude and contemplation. Mount Athos or Agion Oros, "The Holly Mountain" as it is locally known, is the oldest surviving monastic community in the world.

It is a place of great historical and religious interest, where only Monasteries for men were built.

Mount Athos has been a principal spiritual centre of the Eastern Orthodox church and maintained an autonomous status since Byzantine times. The Holy Mountain has been classified by the Orthodox Church as an ecumenically sacred place where the unique truths of Christ's Gospel and His Church have been experienced. The mountain has been a site of spiritual creation for the last 14 centuries. The exceptional beauty of the area's natural environment enhances its spirituality. The mountain republic of 20 monasteries (Fig.1) and some 1,400 monks preserves the agricultural and craft traditions of a medieval Mediterranean agrarian culture and a treasury of vernacular architecture, art and manuscripts.

This vast area constitutes a interesting karst region in Europe due to its geographical position, its climatic and geological conditions and cultural-historical importance.

The caves of the Athos Mt. had not been object of systematic exploration from native or foreign cave explorers and speleologists. There are not any publication (maps, descriptions etc.) under the caves of Mt. Athos except this for the some hermits used for religious purposes! The caves of Athos are not checked as a natural habitats!

That is why the international team of cave explorers decides to organise a long term project under the patronage of ESP of European Speleological Federation for the complex speleological and karstological exploration of Mount Athos named "Exploration of the caves of Mount Athos as an integral part of the natural, cultural and historical heritage of Mount Athos"

THE TEAM for 2nd Stage (2012)

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The General Aims of the project are:

Complex speleological and karstological exploration of Mount Athos

- Discovering of new and unexplored caves and potholes ;
- Exploration and surveying (mapping) of the discovered karst objects (eventually with cave diving methods) ;
- Compose the written description and topographic map of each explored cave ;
- Marking the explored objects and take the data of their location using GPS receiver ;
- Carrying out of geomorphological and climatological cave study ;
- On the field we would like to accomplish the next goals:

- Register the caves and potholes into the Greek map of Natural Resources;
- Check the possibilities of the already explored caves and potholes;
- Register the found and known caves and potholes;
- Register the geological stratigraphy of rocks in the unstudied area;
- Survey and compilation of descriptions of all registered caves and potholes

The explorations of Athos Mt. – Greece during the 2-nd stage – 2012

The second stage of the international project "Study of the caves of Mount Athos (Mount Athos) - Greece." ended. The same was initiated by the Bulgarian side and held under the patronage and with financial and material support of the European Federation of Speleology. The project team is composed Zhalov A. - Head, V. Gyorev, Zh.Vlaykov (Bulgaria), L. Makrostergios, J. Oykonomidis, T. Komaditis and M.Karidas (Greece), I. Agapov, S. Kaminski (Russia), A.Yamac (Turkey). The group works on an area from 1 st to 11 September. In this period were surveyed the areas of the monasteries, Dohiar, Xenophon and heritages "Kafrosoklivion," "Little St. Anna", " St. Anna" and "Nea Skiti". The distances between these holy places were mostly overcome with walking tours lasting from 1 to 4 hours, the movement by sea is carried by ferries.

During the event were identified and mapped (according to preliminary data, information obtained on site and as a result of the search) about 42 underground sites. Table 1.

The discovered caves can be divided into three main categories - caves associated with the lives of Saints, caves cells, usual and sea caves and artificial caves (catchments and reservoirs). Along with it was collected many oral and photo information to other cave objects, which will be the subject of future studies. Preliminary data show that the team were surveyed 36 sites with a total length more than 370 meters. Other 9 objects was only visited and sketched among which is probably the longest cave in Athos for the moment. There were localized but not explored 2 more caves, one of which probably is so called "The Big Cave of Athos". According the existing data (<http://www.isihazm.ru/?id=1592>) the cave over 150 m long. Its entrance is 50 m wide and around 80 m in high. The total number of the explored underground cavities under the project up to date is around 100. The information for the results for the first stage and later for the expedition in 2012 is available at : <https://sites.google.com/site/athosmystery/home>

The discovered caves can be divided into three main categories - caves associated with the lives of Saints (The Cave of St. Myrovlytou the Nile) (Fig.4) ; cave chapels - Shapell St.Dionisius & Mitrofan, (Fig.5) caves cells, usual and sea caves (Fig.6) and artificial caves (catchments and reservoirs).

Along with it was collected many oral and photo information to other cave objects, which will be the subject of future studies.

The longest sea cave is near the harbor of the Nea Skiti Hermitage (34.40 meters). The final results of the first stage of the study will be available in late fall of this year.

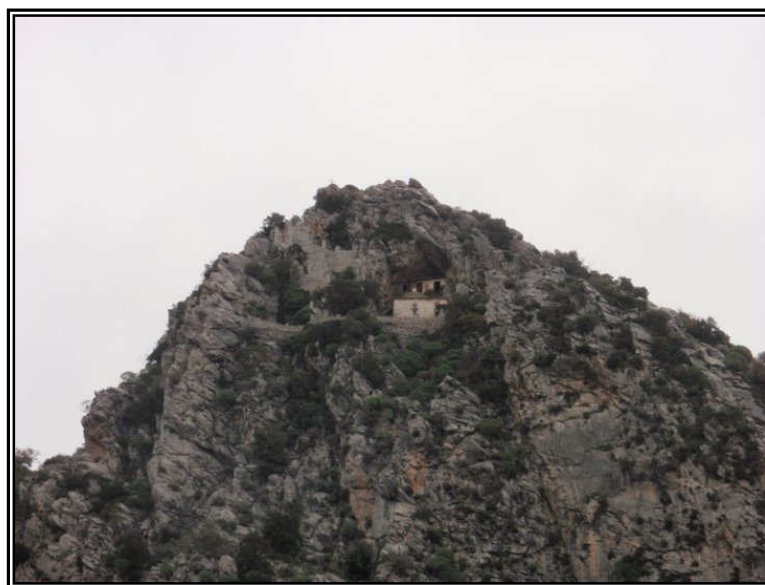


Fig.4 The Cave of St. Myrovlytou the Nile



Fig.5 Cave Shapell St.Dionisius & Mitrofan



Fig.6 The entrance of the biggest sea cave near Nea Skity Heritage



Fig.7 The team move every day from place to place

N	Name	Locality/Monastery	Length (m)
1.	Water Catchment gallery	Agia Anna Hermitage	2.6
2.	Cave	Agia Anna Hermitage	6.2
3.	Cistern	Agia Anna Hermitage	3.2x1.7
4.	Cave with the cell	Agia Anna Hermitage	-
5.	Cell with the rock niche	Agia Anna Micro Hermitage	-
6.	Cave	Agia Anna Micro Hermitage	7
7.	Shapell St.Dionisius & Mitrofan	Agia Anna Micro Hermitage	18.5
8.	Cave of Ilarion the Georgian	Ipatievski Cells	11
9.	Arhondrick Cave	Ipatievski Cells)	4.7
10.	Cave	Up to the cells of Danilo Hermitage	-
11.	Cave under the ladder	Karauli	-
12.	Пещера с часовней	Karauli	-
13.	Niche with the wall	Karauli	-
14.	Cave with the cistern	Karauli	-
15.	Christmas Church Cave	Karauli	-
16.	Great Cave	Karauli	
17.	Sea Cave 1	Nea Skiti Hermitage	3.9
18.	Sea Cave 2	Nea Skiti Hermitage	3.5
19.	Cave with the well	Agia Anna Micro Hermitage	17.1
20.	Cave behind the hose	Agia Anna Micro and Danilo Hermitage	9.85
21.	Dauids ' Cave	Agia Anna Micro Hermitage	9.36
22.	Cave of the lost glasses	Between Stavros and Agia Anna Hermitage	8.22
23.	Cave of the 26-th monks	The first Cross before Stavros	1.2
24.	cave close the Hermitage	The first Cross before Stavros	6.7
25.	Niche	The first Cross before Stavros	1.0
26.	Tectonic Cave	The first Cross before Stavros	6.70
27.	Great See Cave	Nea Skiti Hermitage	34.00
28.	Seal Cave	Nea Skiti Hermitage	7.40
29.	Cave close the tower	Nea Skiti Hermitage	11.56
30.	Cristal Cave	Duhear Monastery	18.50
31.	The Cave with the 4 entrances	Duhear Monastery	25.26
32.	Great Cave	Nea Skiti Hermitage	20.12
33.	Cave Lukum	Between Duhear and Kostamonity Monasteries	10.57
34.	Cave of St. Myrovlytou the Nile.	Hermitage " Kafrosokalivion"	worked out
35.	Cave of Elder Ephraim	Agia Anna Micro Hermitage	worked out
36.	Unnamed Cave 1	Agia Anna Micro Hermitage	worked out
37.	Unnamed Cave 2	Agia Anna Micro Hermitage	worked out
38.	Unnamed Cave 3	Agia Anna Micro Hermitage	worked out
39.	Unnamed Cave	Hermitage " Kafrosokalivion"	worked out
40.	Unnamed Cave	Hermitage " Kafrosokalivion"	worked out
41.	Unnamed Cave	Hermitage " Kafrosokalivion"	worked out
42.	Unnamed Cave	Hermitage " Kafrosokalivion"	worked out
		IN TOTAL:	249.38+ ~ 120

List of the discovered and surveyed caves during the expedition (the surveyed caves are in red)



The team. From left to right: Theodoros Komaditis, Sergey Kaminskyi, Alexey Zhalov, Vanyo Gyorev, Iliya Agapov, Lambros Makrostergios, Georgios Oykonomidis, Zhorzh Vlaykov . Photo: Ali



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FINANCIAL REPORT

FINANCIAL REPORT

	Incomes	Expenditures
Enterprises / individual involvements	2000,00	
Cave equipment		200.00
Cave surveying equipments (compasses,lazer tips, etc)		600.00
Food supply		400.00
Transportation expenditures, travel expenses to Athos and at place.		1 200,00
	2000,00	2 400,00
Founding to be received		
Founding FSE	400,00	
	Receipts	Expenditures
FINAL RESULT	2400.00	2.400.00
Founding FSE	400,00	

Reported by Alexey Zhalov – project leader