

# **1. International Conference Report: Karst Studies and Problems: 2000 and Beyond. Cluj, Romania- 14-22 July 2000**

By Bogdan P. Onac, Gheorghe Racovita

Dept. of Mineralogy, University of Cluj, Kogalniceanu 1, 3400 Cluj, ROMANIA

Integrated in the series of events related to the celebration of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Romanian "Emil Racovitza" Speleological Institute - the world's first speleological institute - the "Karst Studies and Problems" conference consisted of two traditional symposia: the 17<sup>th</sup> edition of the annual colloquium "Theoretical and Applied Karstology" and the reunion of the Friends of Karst, together with the International Program of Geological Correlations (IGCP), initiated by the International Union of Geological Sciences. Due to the joint efforts of the three institutions involved in the organization, the Faculty of Biology and Geology of the University of Cluj, the "E. Racovitza" Speleological Institute, and the Romanian Speleological Federation, the conference had important international participation, reuniting at Cluj 127 scientists from 20 countries.

Preceded by a solemn opening, the presentations were given in two large sections: Geospeleology, with 45 presentations, and Biospeleology, with 17 presentations.

The presentations of the first section covered a large thematic spectrum. Most of them concerned results obtained from studies of applied or theoretical hydrogeology (V. Feurdean<sup>1</sup>, M. Hauns, I. Jemcov, I. Povara, J.-H. Ross, D.J. Vesper, W.B. White) and paleoclimatic information from speleothem analysis (C. Lascu, B.P. Onac, V. Polyak, Y.Y. Onac and Racovita Shopov). There were also works concerning regional speleogenesis problems, several of which proposed models that can possibly be generalized (P. Datum, L. Florea, A. Frumkin, P. Häuselmann, J. Mylroie, P. Robledo Ardila, T. Tamas), as well as on the mineralogy and morphology of speleothems (H. R. DuChene, B.P. Onac, T. Tamas, I. Viehmann). In addition to these were several very interesting paleontological studies (A. Petculescu, M. Venczel, M. Vremir).

The Biospeleology section opened with presentations concerning the behavior of cave vertebrates (J. Parzefall), psychological aspects of cave protection (R. TERCAFS), and the ecology of hypogean fish (E. Trajano). Other communications concerned, among other things, the phylogeography of cave beetles from the Apuseni Mountains (Romania) as established by genetic studies (R. Buzila), the metanotrophic bacteria from the well-known Movile Cave (E. Manolache), the role of cuticular hydrocarbons in the sexual behavior of troglobitic Coleopteres (O. Moldovan), the sexual selection of a species of hypogean fish (A. Garz), the ecologic categories of Coleopteres from Movile karst area (E. Nitzu), the phylogeny of terrestrial isopods (I. Tabacaru), and the modeling of the diversity of communities of subterranean arthropods (R. Tercafs). At the end of presentations, the members of the Society of Biospeleology were reunited in their annual assembly.

The conference was followed by a six-day excursion, showing the participants Romania's the most representative karst regions: the Apuseni Mountains, the Padis Plateau, and Cetatile Ponorului, a complex of three giant dolines similar to those of

Skocjan in Slovenia. The program also included visits to some caves of great scientific value: Scarisoara Glacier Cave, which hosts the greatest perennial ice deposit of Romania, and which, owing to this fact, is the most studied; Bears Cave, the main speleotouristic cave, which hosts several cave bear skeletons; Vantului (Wind) Cave, the longest in the country (over 47 km) and a veritable laboratory of endokarst morphology; and the Humpleu Cave System, known for its very large chambers (over 300 m long, 100 m high and 50-90 m large) and by the exceptional mineralogical diversity of speleothems.

The 54 participants on the trip, of 43 were foreigners, were accommodated in speleological huts and agro-touristic hostels to enjoy Romanian hospitality and cuisine.

Abstracts of the presentations from the conference were published in English (some in French) in a volume of 196 pages. The volume can be ordered at the price of 20 USD (expedition tax included), from the "Emil Racovitza" Speleological Institute, Str. Clinicilor nr. 5, CP 58, 3400 Cluj-Napoca, Romania.