History of Speleology in Republic of Macedonia

Marjan TEMOVSKI
Macedonian Speleological Federation
www.speleomacedonia.org.mk;
temovski_m@yahoo.com

Abstract
The history of Speleology in Macedonia begins later comparing the other parts of the Balkan Peninsula. First speleological scientific information is about the cave fauna in Meckina Dupka Cave (Jeannel, 1924). However, the publishing of the results about Dona Duka Cave by P.S. Jovanovic (1925) is regarded as beginning of the speleological research in Macedonia. In the after war period, the foundations of the Macedonian Speleology are set, lead by their most significant representative, Dusan Manakovik. In 1958 the Speleological Society of Macedonia (SSM) is founded. Later, the Speleological Society “Peoni” is founded, and also the Commission of Speleology at the Mountaineering Association (CSMA). After the disintegration of SFRJ, the activities of SSM fade out, and the only carrier of the organized speleological activity is the CSMA, which outgrows into Macedonian Speleological Association, and today Macedonian Speleological Federation (MSF). Main carrier of the speleological research in the last 20 years is SS “Peoni”, and also actively is functioning ID “Ursus Spelaeus”, and lately PSK “Zlatovrv”. Besides them with speleological activity inside the MSF are also PD “Orle” and DPS “Lisec”. Until today, by various subjects, nearly 500 caves and pits are explored, and in the last years MSF is working on summarizing the gathered data into one unified speleological register.

Keywords: Speleology, Macedonia

Résumé

Mots-clés : Spéléologie, La Macédoine

1. Introduction
Carbonate rocks in Republic of Macedonia, as basis for karst development, occupy 10.6% (2,724 km²) of its territory, and they are not equally dispersed. Most of the carbonate rocks occupy the western part of Macedonia, there are small areas in the middle part, and very few in the eastern part, so we can speak about more or less karst relief of a oasis character.

Social and historical conditions in Macedonia, combined with the extension of carbonate rocks, and Macedonia’s geographical position on the Balkan Peninsula (outside of the vas Dinarie Karst) contributed speleological activity to occur much later regarding the other parts of the Balkans.

Fig. 1: Extension of karst in Republic of Macedonia, according to Kolcakovski (2001)
The beginning of the speleological research on Macedonian soil is located between the two World Wars, when solid knowledge is acquired in some karst areas in Macedonia (Porece, Kozuf, and Skopje Basin). First speleological scientific information is about the cave fauna in Meckina Dupka Cave, near Ohrid (Jeannel, 1924). However, as a beginning of the speleological research in Macedonia, is regarded the publishing of the results about Dona Duka Cave by Petar S. Jovanovic (1925).

2. Materials and methods

As a base for this article I have used two previously published articles regarding the history of Macedonian Speleology (Kolcakovski, 1989, 2005). Both of these articles were one sided, meaning refer only to the speleological activity done mainly on the Institute of Geography (scientific activity). This is not objective view of the Macedonian Speleology because the biggest discoveries (the deepest pits, the longest caves, and most of the discoveries) were made by the “sport” speleologists, or the speleological work of SD “Peoni” and the other speleological clubs and sections at the mountaineering societies and clubs in Macedonia.

So for maintaining objectivity of the speleological activities in Macedonia, I’ve also consulted the archive of the Macedonian Speleological Federation, the clubs and societies that participated in creating our Speleological History, and many popular and scientific articles regarding Speleology in Macedonia.

3. Results

The Macedonian speleological history can be divided in two major parts: 1. before and 2. after II World War.

1. Caves ant pits in Macedonia have been known to the local population from long time ago, for which we can find proof in the songs and stories present in Macedonian folklore. People have used caves for shelter, hiding, cattle storage, as water sources, for religious needs etc. They have been using the caves during the revolutionary fights against the Ottoman Empire also. However, scientific interest for the caves and pits in Macedonia first occurs in the thirties of the 20th century when solid knowledge is acquired in some karst areas in Macedonia (Porece, Kozuf, and Skopje Basin) by Jovan Cvijic and his apprentices.

The speleological activity in this period is associated with the arrival and scientific work in Macedonia by Petar S. Jovanovic, Stanko L. Karaman and Vojislav S. Radovanovic. The publishing of the results about Dona Duka Cave by Petar S. Jovanovic (1925) is regarded as the beginning of the speleological research in Macedonia; also karst relief forms have drawn scientific attention some time before: First published photography is about the entrance of a pit near Veles (Radovanovic, 1924), while R. Jeannel (1924) gives some information about the recent cave fauna in Meckina Dupka Cave, near Ohrid.

2. In the after war period, actually the foundations of Macedonian Speleology are set. The first speleological scientific article is published in 1954 (Kostovski) and it is about the caves in Pesti gorge. In 1955 a speleological section is founded by the Macedonian Geographic Society, and later (on 6.4.1958) it expands into Speleological Society of Macedonia, which is the beginning of the organized speleological activity in Macedonia. Carriers of this speleological activity have been Trajan Petkovski, Risto Garevski and the most significant figure in Macedonian Speleology, the father of speleological research in Macedonia – Dusan Manakovik.
scientists were educated (Stanko Stankoski, Tome Andonovski, Dragan Kolcakovski), continuing the scientific work, and on the other side through SD “Peoni” and the speleological sections at the mountaineering societies. In 1980, SD “Peoni” made the first Macedonian speleological expedition to mount. Jakupica (in the central part of Macedonia) when the deepest pit in Macedonia – Solunska 5 was discovered (~450m).

After the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the activities of the Speleological Society of Macedonia slowly fade away, and as the only carrier of the organized speleological activity remains the Commission of Speleology at the MA, which outgrows into Macedonian Speleological Association, and today Macedonian Speleological Federation (MSF). Main carrier of the speleological research in the last 20 years is SS “Peoni”, and also actively are functioning ID “Ursus Spelaeus”, and lately PSK “Zlatovrv”. Besides them with speleological activity inside the MSF are also PD “Orle” and DPS “Lisec”. On scientific side in the last 20 years on speleological research are dedicated Tome Andonovski and Dragan Kolcakovski, lately Ivica Milevski, Biljana Petreska and from most recent time Marjan Temovski.

**References**


Archive of the Macedonian Speleological Federation

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4. Conclusion

In the eighty years of speleological activity in Macedonia, there have been nearly 500 discovered caves and pits, most of them by SD “Peoni” and Dusan Manakovik. For around 200 of them there are published scientific papers in domestic or foreign publications, most of them are speleomorphological works.

Most significant speleolocical objects in Republic of Macedonia are:

- **SOLUNSKA 5**, pit (450m deep); researched by SD “Peoni” in 1980 and still the deepest pit in Macedonia
- **KRAPSKI PONOR**, ponor (by now 1km long and 150m deep); potentially the longest system in Macedonia.
- **SLATINSKI IZVOR**, cave (4km long); the longest cave in Macedonia;
- **POD VRELO** or **MATKA VRELO**, underwater cave (450m long and 100m deep),
- **PESHNA**, cave; biggest entrance (30m high, 45m wide)

Unfortunately, beside the solid knowledge of the speleological objects in Republic of Macedonia, gathered through eighty years of speleological activity, there is no unified speleological cadastre or data base as is recently called, neither on the Institute of Geography, were most of the scientific work is done, neither in the Macedonian Speleological Federation. Because of this situation, in 2007 Macedonian Speleological Federation began a project which includes creation of Speleological Data Base of Republic of Macedonia.