

## 10<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Pseudokarst in Gorizia (Italy)

29<sup>th</sup> April-2<sup>nd</sup> May 2008

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The 10<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Pseudokarst was held in Gorizia, Friuli Venezia Giulia, NE Italy in 29<sup>th</sup> April-2 May 2008. The main organizers of the Symposium were Pseudokarst Commission UIS, Centro Ricerche Carsiche "C. Seppenhofer" and Societa Speleologica Italiana. The Chairman of the Organizing Committee was Maurizio Tavagnutti, but he was efficiently supported by a group of pretty ladies, as well as Mauricio Comar, who guided the field session. In the Symposium 63 participants from 11 countries (Austria, Brazilia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Iran, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Russia and Slovakia) attended.

Gorizia is a picturesque, old town situated at the Italian-Slovenian boundary, on the foothills of the Pre-Alps. The town divided by boundary, is now – in European Union – the place of people and nations' encounters and exchange of ideas. This role it fulfilled also as a place of the Symposium on Pseudokarst.

The first session of the Symposium (30<sup>th</sup> April) was held in the medieval Castle of Gorizia (now museum), towering over the old city. The participants were welcomed by organizers, representatives of the Societa Speleologica Italiana and local authority, as well as President of the Pseudokarst Commission, I. Eszterhás and representative of UIS, J. P van der Pas. During the first day 10 lectures were presented. They concerned various aspects of the occurrence, genesis and development of non-karst caves and other pseudokarst landforms in many parts of the world, as: caves in sandstones in central Poland (J. Urban, A. Kasza), partly artificial cavities connected with the monasteries in Hungary (I. Eszterhás), lava tumulus caves in Iceland (P. Gadanyi), caves and cavities in unconsolidated rocks in Austria (R. Pavuza), pseudo-kamienitzas occurring in various rocks all over the world (F. Cucchi), caves in volcanic rock in the Matra Mts., Hungary (I. Eszterhás, G. Szentes), caves and other pseudokarst forms in Jordan (M. Comar), flysch rocks and landforms developed in them in east Italy (G. Calandri, D. Gobis), archaeological investigation in the Saxonian/Bohemian sandstone region, Germany, Czech Rep. (V. Peša) and primary caves in the Late Quaternary volcanics in Slovakia (L. Gaál, I. Balciar). After the scientific session the first part of the Pseudokarst Commission meeting took place in the castle.

The second-day session (1<sup>st</sup> May) was held in the Hotel Internazionale in Gorizia. The spectrum of problems, landforms and regions was not less than a day before. The lectures presented in this day, concerned: network of caves and deep passages Poseidon in the sandstone Teplicke Skaly rock town, Czech Rep. (R. Mlejnek, V. Ouhרבka, V. Růžička), measurements of micro-morphological changes of the rock surfaces in Italy (S. Furiani, F. Cucchi), pseudokarst caves in sandstone of the Leningrad province, Russia (Y. Lyakhnitsky, M. Vdovets), pseudokarst caves in the pyroclastic rocks of North Sardinia, Italy (J. de Waele, L. Sanna, A. Rossi), pseudokarst landforms in Sahara (G. Calandri, D. Gobis), features of karst aquifers in the Zagros Mts., Iran (A. Afrasiabian), caves in the quartzites of Amazon region, Brasil (S. Ayub), measurement of the lichen's impact on the rock surface in Italy (F. Cucchi, S. Furlani, L. Zini, M. Tretiach), pseudokarst forms in the syenite of Malawi (G. Calandri, D. Gobis). The last item of this session was a presentation of the area of the next Symposium – Saxony in Germany (H. Simmert).

After this session, the second part of the Pseudokarst Commission meeting was held. During both meetings the Commission members recapitulated activity of the Commission and events taking place during the last two years: 9<sup>th</sup> International Symposium, Bartkowa, Beskidy Mts, Poland (24-26<sup>th</sup> May, 2006) and proceedings of this Symposium, 12<sup>th</sup>

Symposium on Volcanospeleology in Topoztlán, Mexico (8-13<sup>th</sup> July, 2007), International Conference on Granite Caves, La Coruña, Spain (17-22<sup>th</sup> September 2007), International Working Meeting on Root Structures in Pseudokarst Caves, Teplice nad Metují, Czech Republic (21-23<sup>th</sup> September, 2007). The Commission members expressed their greetings to organizers of the past events and current Symposium. Then they discussed the future events: 13<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Volcanospeleology, Jeju, Korea (1-10<sup>th</sup> September 2008), and 15<sup>th</sup> Congress of UIS, Kerrville, Texas, USA (19-26<sup>th</sup> July 2009). The 11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Pseudokarst will be held in Saxony, Germany (May, 2010), whereas the next symposium (in 2012) is proposed in the Leningrad province, Russia or in Sweden, possibly Finland. Problem of the “Newsletter” and other ways of promotion of the Commission were discussed. The internet homepage of the Pseudokarst Commission will be made.

The last item of the assembly was an election of the Commission functionaries. I. Eszterhás announced, he was not available as a candidate for the presidential function. The following members were elected: Jiří Kopecký (honorary president), István Eszterhás (honorary president), Jan Urban (president), Rudolf Pavuza (vice-president), Ludovít Gaál (secretary), and members: Maurizio Tavagnutti, Marcos Vaqueiro, Hartmut Simmert, Ahmad Afrasibian, Marina Vdovets and Soraya Ayub. New president acknowledged for the confidence and thanked I. Eszterhás for his work as a president of the Pseudokarst Commission.

The next day of the Symposium (2<sup>nd</sup> May) its participants spent mainly out of Gorizia, in the Pre-Alps. The main item of the field session was Grotta di Villanova – several kilometers long, but poorly branched cave formed in the flysch rocks. The flysch sequence is composed of sandstone, conglomerate and limestone beds as well as thin-bedded marls and claystones. In such a sequence the destructive impact of infiltrating water differs in each type of rocks. The process of chemical corrosion of limestone and carbonate clastics produces the initial conduits, whereas in the second phase of destruction, the karstification is reduced for the benefit of the mechanical erosion of clastics, marls and claystones. The forms of this complex speleogenesis – as initial karst fissures and large conduits produced by fluvial processes – can be observed in the cave. Walking in the show cave and its part inaccessible for public, we observed also specific creamy-white stalactites, stalagmites and flowstones.

The second item of the field-trip was Taipana area, famous for its karst phenomena. We visited there the “C. Seppenhofer” Karst Research Center and the karst cave Campo di Bonis.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Symposium on Pseudokarst was concluded and closed during the ceremonial dinner (2<sup>nd</sup> May evening). This last official part of the Symposium started from the performance of the folk dance group “Danserini di Lucinico”. Then we were given the certifications of participation in the Symposium and the Symposium was closed with the ceremonial transmission of the “Symposium Stick” to the organizers of the next Symposium in Saxony. Maybe less official but not less warm are our greetings for the organizers of the Symposium in Gorizia.



Photo 1 Maurizio Tavagnutti, the Chairman of the Organising Committee, welcomes the participants of the Symposium during its first scientific session in Gorizia (Photo L. Gaál)



Photo 2 The participants of the Symposium in front of building of the Centro Ricerche Carsiche "C. Seppenhofer" in the Taipana village (Photo L. Gaál)



Photo 3 The landscape of the Pre-Alps in the Villanova village and several participants of the Symposium (left to right): I. Eszterház (Hungary), L. Gaál (Slovakia), M. Vdovets (Russia), J.P. van der Pas (Netherlands), J. Urban (Poland), A. Afrasiabian (Iran)  
(Photo W. Urban)

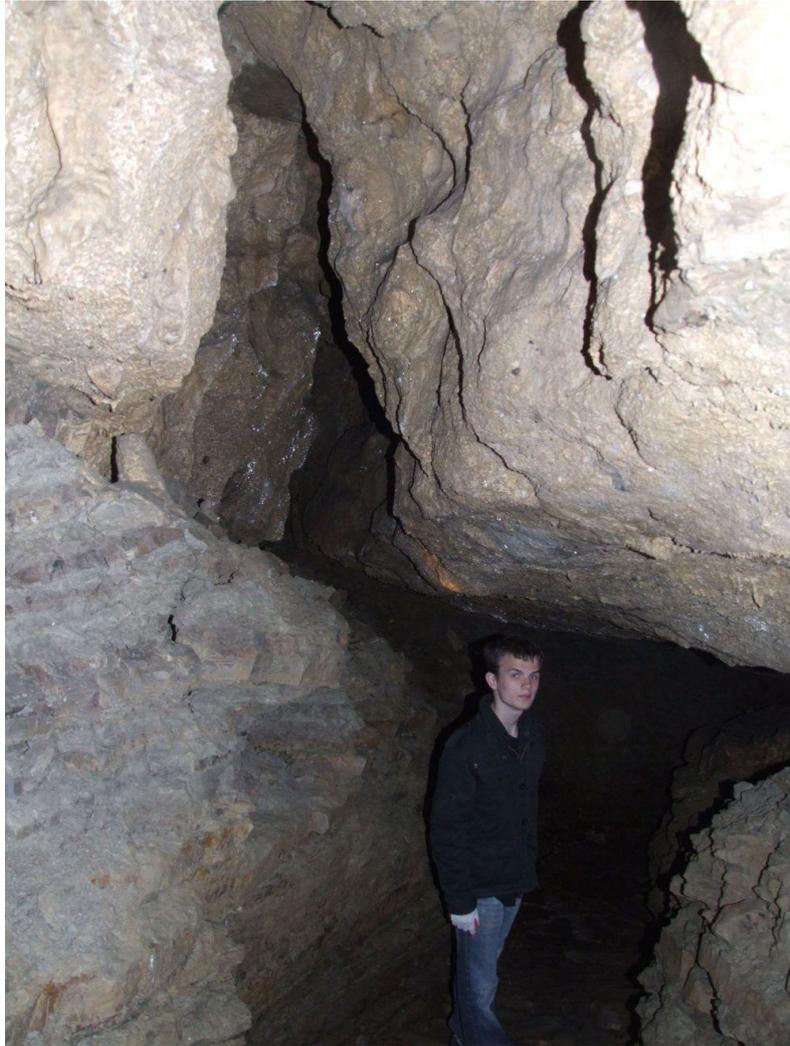


Photo 4 The main gallery of the cave Grotta di Villanova. The cross-section of the conduit reflects its genesis – the initial karst fissure, developed in the thick bed of limestone in the ceiling, subsequently were propagated down forming the wide channel eroded in the thin-bedded marls (Photo J. Urban)



Photo 5 The walls of Grotta di Villanova in many places are covered by picturesque calcite speleothems  
(Photo J. Urban)



Photo 6 Jan Paul van der Pas, the President of the Commission on Volcanic Caves UIS, among the speleothems of Grotta di Villanova (Photo J. Urban)