

ACADEMICIAN JOSIP ROGLIĆ AND HIS WORK
(INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING,
MAKARSKA 19th – 22nd APRIL 2006)

Josip Roglić is the most important Croatian geographer and geomorphologist and world renown karst geomorphologist, the greatest expert on Dinaric karst. His most important achievements are the explanation of the genesis of corrosional plains (“zaravan”), the process of border-corrosion and the fluviokarst, including the term itself. His most influential work in the field of karstology is “Zaravni na vapnencima” (Corrosional plains in limestones), at least the most cited in Slovene karstological literature. When still at Belgrade University he was intended to become Cvijić’s successor, which was never realized. After setting at Zagreb Roglić initiated Natural History and Mathematical Faculty, he was the founder of so-called Zagreb karstological school, and he edited Croatian Karst Terminology. Taking into account international relations he was the member of Karst Commission of International Geographical Union. He held close relations with Slovene karstologists and accordingly he has a great influence upon the karstology in Slovenia.

In 1906 Josip Roglić was born at a hamlet Rogliči, Župa Biokovska, on the continental side of the Biokovo Mountain, karst ridge directly above the Adriatic coast. This is the reason why Geographical Society of Croatia and Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Classis of Natural History Sciences, decided to organise this international meeting. The motor of the organisation was without doubt Prof. Mate Matas from Petrinja High School.

The charming small littoral town of Makarska, south of Split, still quiet as the tourist season did not yet started, was the place where 125 participants gathered for 4 days. They were from Croatia mostly and among them the most eminent teachers and researchers, numerous Roglić’s former students. The work of the symposium included presentation of papers and the field work. After the solemn opening of the conference two plenary papers

by M. Matas and D. Feletar presented the life of J. Roglić and particularly his role at establishment the Faculty of Natural History and Mathematics in Zagreb. During mornings 29 papers have been presented. Seven of them have J. Roglić and his work as the main topic while the others touched his work indirectly, taking into account topics and regions studied by Roglić (geomorphology, cartography, regional geography, littoralisation, globalisation). Four papers were dedicated to Roglić’s work on karst: on karst geomorphology, on speleology, on karst toponymy and on his influence upon karstology in Slovenia. But it does not mean that the topics were historically oriented, turned towards the time of Roglić. Far from this. There were papers talking about digital maps and computer informatics basis too. I found very interesting the paper about karst research in the frame of military sciences. Among the others the author has shown digital maps of dolines: they counted 350.000 of them on the karst of Croatia! The papers of Roglić’s younger colleagues and former students gave a special atmosphere to the conference.

According to the fact that the main field of interest of geography are space and landscape, half of the conference time was devoted to the field work. In his degree work on Biokovo region J. Roglić divided the region in three belts: “blue” – littoral, “green” – foot of the mountain, and “white” – limestone karst mountain belt. According to this the fieldwork was organised. During two afternoons and one full day the participants got opportunity to be acquainted with the littoral belt (between Split and the mouth of the Neretva river), with the foot of karst mountain (specially the contrast between the Eocene flysch and Mesozoic limestone) and the karst mountain ridges, including the highest belt of the Biokovo Mt. Visit to this mountain has also a special connection to J. Roglić: the excursion stopped at his humble native house at the



*Polje "Jezero"
behind the Biokovo
Mountain.*

hamlet of Rogliči, far behind the main ridge. The participants attended a ceremony: the unveiling of a memorial plate to Roglič and the opening of the Roglič's mountain trail in Biokovo. That the evenings are not too long, the organizer provided professional and cultural events too. Of the last one the excellent performance of opera singers and the theatre actor must be mentioned.

The organizer was specially successful regarding publishing activities. The Proceedings of the meeting was published at the beginning of the meeting already. Nice, hard back book of 566 pages, containing 34 papers which gives a well balanced view of Roglič's life and work as well as various geographical aspects of Croatia and its karst. A special attention deserves Matas' contribution on "Life and work of Academician Josip Roglič" (40 pages!), and regarding the karst, "Jezero – a contribution to understand the problems of the karstic poljes" by J. Markotić.

The Croatian geographers started the preparation of the celebration of Roglič's 100 anniversary quite early, early enough to achieve great publishing achievement: during the years 2005 – 2006 they published Roglič's

works in 5 volumes, which were presented at the meeting. I am glad to say that the first volume is just "Krš i njegovo značenje" (Karst and its significance), proving that Roglič is really the most important as a karstologist. The other 4 volumes contain Roglič's geomorphological works, works on Adriatic and works of regional geography, and the introduction to the cartography. Beside the first volume also other volumes contain some works on karst or are treating karst too.

Looking from the distant point of view, including Dinaric karst as a whole, where the term "karst" and karst science came from, we can state that there are republished complete works of two first and the most important geographers – karstologists. The first one is a Serbian geographer Jovan Cvijić, whose complete works were published 1994 – 2000 in 14 volumes, and now Roglič's work is completed too. Is it the turn of Slovene geographers to start to think about publishing the complete work of our greatest karstologist?

Andrej KRANJČ



*Solution flutes on the
Biokovo Mountain karst.*