

AN ACCOUNT OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM MAN ON KARST

At the time from September 23 to 25, 1993 at Postojna the International Symposium Man on Karst was held, organized within the International Geographical Union, Commission on Environmental Changes and Conservation in Karst Areas by the Karst Research Institute ZRC SAZU. The meeting was dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Academician Prof. Dr. Ivan Gams who was at that occasion honoured by the honorary membership of the Czech's Speleological Union.

The participants were greeted by the minister for Science and Technology, Dr. R. Bohinc, by the secretary general of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts Acad. Prof. Dr. M. Drovenik, by the maire of Postojna, Mr. I. Bratina, by the representative of the Association of the Geographic Societies of Slovenia, Prof. Dr. A. Černe, and by the representatives of the international organizations, Prof. Dr. P. Forti, the UIS president and Dr. P. Bosak, secretary of the UIS, by Prof. Dr. Ugo Sauro, the president of the Commission on the Environmental Changes and Conservation in Karst Areas at the International Geographical Union.

The Symposium was attended by 69 participants who delivered 50 papers. The introductory lecture of P. Habič presented the important part played by the man celebrating his jubilee for the progress of the karstology in this century and M. Panoš presented the karstology as a joint system of sciences on karst.

After the opening part and the plenary lectures the work was organized within two sections. In the section Karst as a Natural Process 24 communications were delivered.

The lectures dealt with the conditions of the sedimentation of some carbonate rocks, tectonics and its influence on formation of the karst aquifers. Several papers treated hydrogeological topics, development of particular hydrogeological areas and chemical and isotopic composition of the karst waters.

Some papers dealt with geomorphological formation of the surface on karst and development of the soil on karst. Several lecturers spoke about the development of the karst underground, distribution of caves and speleomorphology, about the cave minerals and speleoclimatology.

In the section Man and Karst 26 lectures were delivered. According to the subjects they may be divided into some groups.

The contributions about the agrarian use of the karst surface mostly presented the types of the land use from the lithological differences point of view and soil origin or hydrotechnical works on karst. The intensive and unsuitable land use in past provoked the degradation of the karst surface.

Similar themes were treated by the papers involved in the use of mountainous regions for touristic purposes, ski resorts in particular. The introduction of intensive activities may severely threaten the water supply functions of these, frequently the only scarcely inhabited, areas in Europe.

Several papers presented the work at the preparation of the professional bases for the legislation which should protect the vulnerable karst areas. They are protected within the

various landscape parks but the protection measures confront with the interests of the people living there, their traditional spatial use or with the interests of the touristic economy.

There were the papers delivered treating the polluted karst groundwater and its autopurification capacity, the determination of the protection zones of particular karst springs and the underground water tracing.

Several papers treated the use of caves and human impact on the underground. The last effect may be traced into the prehistory as the caves served as human dwellings thousands years ago and bones, the remains of the paleolithic hunters' preys, are found in them. The influence of the touristic visits on the changes of the cave climate were presented as well as the devastation of the caves due to ill-treatment. The use of caves for mass graves in our half past history was presented too.

During the symposium three excursions were organized. The first one to the Classical Karst from Vrhnika to Pivka, the second one to Karst between Pivka basin and the springs at Osp. The third excursion was in the Postojnska jama cave system.

During the Symposium the Commission for the Environmental Changes and Conservation in Karst Areas at the International Geographical Union and the Bureau of International Union of the Speleology have held two meetings.

Andrej Mihevc