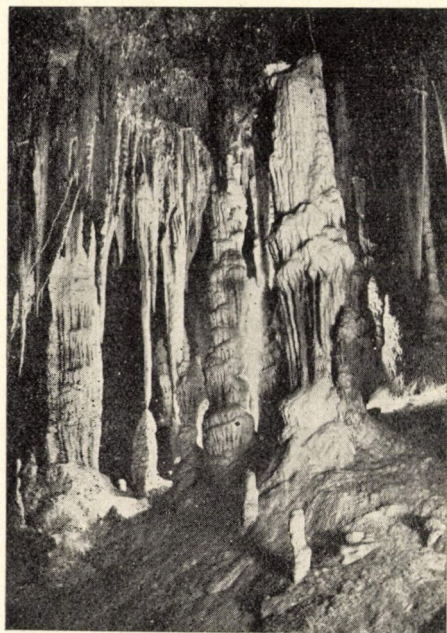


The stalactite cave Baradla at Aggtelek—Jósvalő in Hungary.

By Hubert Kessler.

The Gömör-Torna carst territory amongst the present north Trianon borders is one of the most interesting environments of Hungary from a geological point of view. There most classic examples of carst phenomena can be observed. Plateaus up to a height



of 600 m are formed of Dachstein limestone based mostly upon slate and numerous very deep vertical caves and gigantic dolinas are to be found in this limestone. Moreover, underground hiding rivulets break out of the foot of the plateau mounts in form of vaocluse-springs.

The most interesting carst phenomenon of this territory is without doubt the world reknown Stalactite Cave at Aggtelek or Baradla which — owing to the work of the latest years — is now opened in a length of more than 20 km being the largest naturally connected stalactite cave of Europe. Several rivulets flow through the cave the oldest known entrance of which is at village Aggtelek. The origin of these rivulets was until now unknown but newest examinations cleared the fact that all of them are of surface origin bringing the precipitate water of the environment of the villages Hosszúsózó, Pelsőc and Aggtelek, into the cave.

As the precipitate water has in this territory no surface flowing off the whole amount of this water is led off by the 20 km long cave forming thus a huge drain pipe. The water flowing through the cave breaks out to the surface once more at the deeper lying village Jósvalő. The cave takes its origin from these underground rivulets the water of which slowly excavated such large hollows. The action of the water was mostly affirmed by the quartz gravel brought of the surface Pliocenic gravel covers which had a mechanical excavating influence also.

The waters of the cave have also a populated fauna examined detailedly by Endre Dudich. His observations resulted in stating that the cave has 262 types of animals including perhaps the most interesting *Niphargus Aggtelekiensis* Dudich. This totally blind cave animal was until now found in Baradla only.

The cave has moreover another specialty. Here namely a quite unique amount of culture remains of primitive men of the Stone Age was found including the so-called „Bükki Culture“ clay pots of wonderfully nicety and of varied ornamentics which were only found in Hungary throughout the whole world. Also a primitive graveyard and neolithic wall pictures were found in the first section of the cave.

The most grandious sights of the cave are however furnished by the wonderfully beautiful stalactites and stalagmites playing in all colours and being sometimes as fine as a lace another times high as a tower. The 14 km long rivulet Styx is also a very interesting sight especially at inundation time when this longest rivulest flowing through the cavity forms large cataracts on some spots and near to the end of the cave breaks off to an unknown horizon through many water holes.

Also two Englishmen belong to the first visitors of the Cave who came and saw the cave in the later half of the 18-th century by

charge of the Royal Society. In 1793 another English traveler named R. Townson visited the cave.

The cave is located from 240 km of Budapest and can be visited by train or by car on a good high street.



Literature on foreign languages:

Townson, R. Travels in Hungary in the year 1793.

Dudich, E. Biologie der Aggteleker Tropfsteinhöhle in Ungarn.

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