

ON THE SPELEOLOGICAL
TERMINOLOGY

By J. Petrochilos

So far on one in Greece has attempted to give the proper terminology to the compact crystalline mater, wich deposits itself in caves in the form of stalactites, stalagmites and generally in the form of crusts on the walls and on other objects.

But since the Speleology, in order to progress as accurate terminology, we would like to state our views on this mater.

In the Greek geological terminology and in connection with materials deposited into others, the masses of materials of an irregular form, wich are to be found in the eruptive rocky strata and are composed of various materials belonging to the rocky strata wich contains them, are called "συγκρ(εσις)" (= "concretions"), while materials wich are deposited in caverns or in the cavities existing in the rocky strata by the running water, are called "ἀπεκκρ(εσις)" (apekrisis) (1)

The materials of stalactites and of other similar forms found in caves are the result of a deposition made from chemical sediments of the water, wich carries various solutions of rocky materials or of any other similar old material in the caves.

Consequently, if we have to conform with the above given Greek terminology, the crystalline material in question deposited in the caves, should be called "ἀπεκκρ(εσις)" (apekrisis). But the word "συγκρ(εσις)" refers to the previously existing matter and not to the newly formed matter itself.

The word "Speleothem", suggested by the Americans (2), made from the Greek words "Speleon" and "The-

ma», is not accurate, because the word «Thema» in Ancient Greek means something deposited somewhere for a certain purpose and not a sediment (3).

The international word «concretion» (in French (4) and in English (5)) and the German equivalent «Konkretion» (6), representing the condensation of the matter which becomes then a compact matter, refers to the building process and not to the result of it.

Also the word «Sinder», lately used by the Austrian speleologists (7), is used in our opinion also for depositions built on calcareous stalvegs in the form of ditches (8).

Consequently, the only word, which can be real term in this matter and which is derived from the Greek language, from which scientific terms are usually formed, is the word «λίθωμα» (lithoma) or «σπηλαιολίθωμα» (speleolithoma). It can perhaps be used in the international form of «Speleolith».

The word «Speleolith» proposed as above can be also easily used in giving various relative meanings, such as: «that the «σπαιχρήσεις» (concretions) in caves are building compact speleolith (or Speleolithoma) in the form of Stalactites etc., or coagulated speleolith, such as the «Speleogalan» (=Milk of caves=Mond-milch) etc.; further «σπηλαιολιθωματοποίηση» (Speleolith-formation), «σπηλαιολιθωματική ύλη» (Speleolith-matter) etc.

There is another word in Greek of a mining similar to the word «Concretion», namely the word «πέγμα» (pegma), or «σπηλαιόπηγμα» (speleopegma), but it cannot be used as a term for determining the crystalline matter deposited in caves, exactly for the same reason for which the word «concretion» is not accurate.

If our above proposal does not give a full answer

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to our problem, we will be glad to accept any other term more accurate than ours.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

- (1) Έγκυκλοπαιδικόν Λεξικόν 'Ελευθερουδάκη Τόμ.11 σελ.851 λέξεις σύγκρισις 'υπό Ι. Δοσάνιδου.
- (2) The NEWS of N.S.S. Vol.10 No6 pp.2
- (3) Έγκυκλοπαιδικόν Λεξικόν 'Ελευθερουδάκη Τόμ.6 σελ.460 λέξεις θέμα.
- (4) Dictionnaire de Géologie S.Meunier
- (5) A.Grenville and J.Cole Aids in practical Geology pp.207
- (6) Em.Kayser Lehrbuch der Geology B Band pp.732
- (7) Von H.W.Franke (Wien); Altersbestimmungen am Sinter etc. Die Hoehle 1951 Heft 4 pp.62
- (8) W.Behmann Die Erde Heft 3-4 p.238-266

Interpreted by D.Oeconomides

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΙΣ

ΣΠΗΛΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΗ ΟΡΟΛΟΓΙΑ

Ι.Πετροχέλλου

Επικριθή εν 'Ελλάδι ακόμη δέν υπάρχει όρος, ό όποιος νά προσδιορίζη τά χημικά είζήματα, ποδ συνιστούν τούς σταλακτίτας καί λοιπός αναλόγως μορφάς, αί όποίαι συναστώνται έντός τών σπηλαιών προτείνεται ή λέξις «σπλιθώμα» ή σπηλαιολθώμα, είς άντικατάστασιν καί τών ξένων τσιοθτων «Speleothem, Concretion, Sinder», τά όποία δέν άποδίδουν πλήρως τό πράγμα.

Αβτη δύναται ίσως νά άποδοθῆ διεθνώς με την λέξιν «Speleolith».

Μετεφράσθη υπό Δ.Οίκονομίδη