

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

---

The Cave Bear is one of the best known Pleistocene mammals, whose remains have been excavated by hundreds and thousands in the European bear caves. There have been considerable advances in the research concerning this animal during the last decades. The International Cave Bear Symposiums (ICBS) have contributed substantially to this development. For the first time, this Symposium was held in Greece, at Thessaloniki and Aridea - Almopia Speleopark (district of Pella, Macedonia).

The paleontological research in the area started in 1990 and the excavation of the cave site in 1992, while the cooperation with the Vienna University and Austrian Academy of Sciences has started since 1996. The results of this research among others include: many scientific publications, popularized publications, presentations given at international congresses, dissertation theses, Master of Science theses, a Doctoral Thesis (under preparation), training of students of Geology and Archaeology, two paleontological exhibitions in Loutrá and in Aridéa, presentations in the media, a monograph (under preparation) and the book entitled "A guide to the Speleopark of Almopia".

For our work mentioned above, we were assigned the organization of the 12<sup>th</sup> ICBS and we were in the most pleasant position to welcome many distinguished scientists from at least 12 different countries and 35 Universities and Institutes in Europe. The participants visited the Paleontological Museum of the Geology School of Aristotle University, Thessaloniki and had the chance to look at the most important primate finds of Macedonia: the famous Petralona hominid skull as well as many *Ouranopithecus macedoniensis* and *Mesopithecus* specimens. Also, they presented their contributions in Aridea during the Work of the Symposium, they visited the specially organized exhibition of the cave bear collection derived from 16 years of research and excavations in Almopia Speleopark in the Aridea Natural History Museum, and in the Physiographical Museum of Loutra. Additionally, they visited the caves of the Speleopark (the Bear Cave was especially prepared) and finally some of them visited the Grevena proboscidean site and some the Agios Georgios cave (hyaena den) in Kilkis regarding the post symposium excursions.

Our sincerest and warmest thanks go to every student and colaborator who greatly contributed to the highly successful outcome of the 12<sup>th</sup> International Cave Bear Symposium. We are grateful to the Geology School which contributed by all means at its disposal to the Symposium and accepted the responsibility for publishing the proceedings in its Scientific Annals. We are also grateful to the Municipality of Aridea and to the people of the Loutra area who helped us enormously towards accommodation of the participants to whom we would like to express once more our great pleasure for honoring us with their visit to Greece.

Evangelia TSOUKALA  
President of the Organizing Committee

### Acknowledgements

Special thanks should also be addressed to the following Organizers and Sponsors of the 12<sup>th</sup> Cave Bear Symposium:

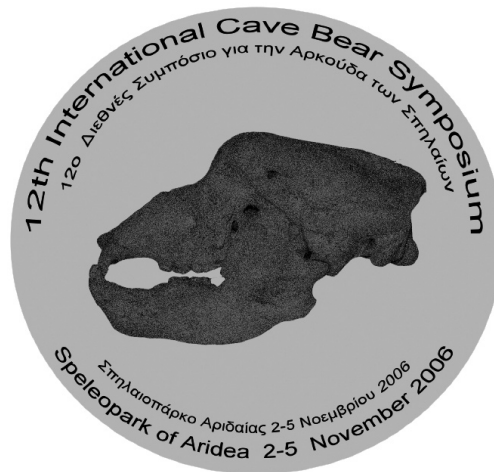
- The School of Geology
- The Institute for Palaeontology, University of Vienna
- The Commission for Quaternary Research of Austrian Academy of Science
- The Municipality of Aridea
- The Physiographical Museum of Almopia
- The Prefecture of Pella
- The Hellenic Speleological Society, Department of Northern Greece
- The Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace
- The Research Committee of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
- The Geotechnical Chamber of Greece



# 12<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL CAVE BEAR SYMPOSIUM

Thessaloniki, Aridea, Almopia Speleopark  
(Macedonia, Greece)  
2-5 November 2006

## PROCEEDINGS



### ORGANIZERS

The School of Geology of Aristotle University, Thessaloniki  
Institute for Palaeontology, University of Vienna

### CO-ORGANIZERS OF THE SYMPOSIUM

The Commission for Quaternary Research of Austrian Academy of Science  
The Municipality of Aridea  
The Physiographical Museum of Almopia  
The Hellenic Speleological Society, Department of Northern Greece

### SPONSORS OF THE VOLUME

The School of Geology of Aristotle University, Thessaloniki  
The Geotechnical Chamber of Greece

