



INSIDE THE VOLCANO: THE BOOK

The Caves of Etna

Centro Speleologico Etneo - Parco dell'Etna - Catania, 1999 - pp. 320 + XXI

Book review by Paolo Forti

The book «*The Caves of Etna*» was presented during the IX international Symposium on Vulcanospeleology (Catania, September 1999). It is a complete monography on the caves of the largest volcano in Europe, and was assembled and coordinated by Centro Speleologico Etneo, that took full care of its writing down and editing, and largely collaborated to its graphic fulfilment, whereas the publication was financed and performed by Parco dell'Etna.

The most skilled, both Italian and foreign, specialists contributed with specific related topics: the book therefore exhaustive deals with the local environment, though it also considers such general arguments, as the volcanic caves in the world and a sketch of the history of worldwide vulcanospeleological explorations. Useless to say that Etna caves are considered in detail, with papers dealing with their genesis, fauna, mineralisations, and hosted prehistoric and historical witnesses. Very interesting sections also deal with the flourishing of legends and with the

reports made by ancient travellers, who hazardously roved the volcano slopes for having a look not only at *hell's mouth*, yet even to some small volcanic caves. The main known caves of the volcano have been arranged per their relevant municipal distribution, and exhaustively described, and the actual cadastral files of the area are also reported.

A special emphasis must be focused on the excellent coloured iconography illustrating almost all sections of the volume. Masses of splendid pictures make this volume interesting even for people not concerned with Vulcanospeleology. In other words, this can be surely considered the best popular manual ever published worldwide on volcanic caves. The difficulty of tracing this volume in the usual circuits is its only deficiency, as we argue that the book will not be available via the regular distribution channels. Interested people should therefore apply the publisher Parco dell'Etna (Via Etna 107/a, I-95030 Nicolosi CT, Italy) for commercial copies, or the author Centro Speleologico Etneo (Via Cagliari 15, I-95127 CATANIA, Italy) for publication exchange. One copy of the book is also available, for consultation, at the library of Centro di Documentazione Speleologica (Speleological Documentation Centre) «Franco Anelli» of the Italian Speleological Society (Via Zamboni 67, 40100 BOLOGNA, Italy).

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(English translation by Giuseppe M. Licitra)

