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HALF A CENTURY OF “ATTI E MEMORIE”

SUMMARY

A brief history of the Società Alpina delle Giulie and the Commissione Grotte “E. Boegan” in Trieste comes first in the article. Their publications are summarized and followed by the titles and dates of the contemporary publications considered for comparison.

RIASSUNTO

MEZZO SECOLO DELLA RIVISTA “ATTI E MEMORIE” DELLA COMMISSIONE GROTTA “E. BOEGAN” DI TRIESTE.

L'autore espone una breve storia della Società Alpina delle Giulie e della sua Commissione Grotte “E. Boegan” di Trieste. Nell'articolo viene presentato un riepilogo delle principali pubblicazioni sociali con particolare riferimento alla rivista “Atti e Memorie” che viene rapportata alle principali Riviste speleologiche contemporanee.

INTRODUCTION

I have been asked to write something to celebrate the first half century of *Atti e Memorie della Commissione Grotte “Eugenio Boegan”*. Although published by a society in a particular region it is far more than just a regional publication. So this paper seeks to achieve two objectives. Its main purpose, of course, is to record the creation and development of *Atti e Memorie* ... over its first 50 years. But, by placing it in the context of its predecessors and of its contemporaries published by both by Società Alpina delle Giulie and by other societies in Europe, it may be regarded also as a partial study of 20th century regional karst journals.

With what sort of contemporaries should it be compared? National and international journals have a somewhat different aim. So do the publication of clubs whose members explore caves principally for enjoyment – sport cavers they are sometimes called – whose work is nevertheless of great value. To compare *Atti e Memorie* with its peers or equivalents I have to define what I mean by equivalents. It is best done, perhaps, by calling them (and it) high quality non-national publications. Of course the distinction is blurred, but in order to see *Atti e Memorie* in the context of its peers, I decided to analyse the contents of eight journals published in Austria, Germany, England and Croatia, as well as others in Italy.

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A personal note

Before going on to my approach to this study of *Atti e Memorie* itself, with its predecessors (parents and grandparents), supplements (children) and contemporaries (friends), I should declare how I first came to meet the Commissione Grotte, its publishers.

It was 11 years before *Atti e Memorie* was born, on 18 April 1950, that I visited Trieste in a British warship, HMS Phoebe. Seeking cave material in a bookshop, I met Alessandro Bongardi (1897-1981) who invited me to attend a meeting of the Commissione Grotte that evening. There I met Walter Maucci and Alfonso Mottola, both of whom later had dinner with me on board the ship. I was taken to Grotta Gigante and the then unnamed Grotta C. Doria, which had been discovered only a few weeks earlier. I was given a copy of the all-cave 1950 issue of *Alpi Giulie*, my first exposure to the publications of this great Society. My next visit was at the end of July 1954 when I was in HMS Bermuda, and it was then that I met Carlo Finocchiaro for the first time.

Approach to the subject

To provide a framework for their various publications, a brief history of the Società Alpina delle Giulie and the Commissione Grotte comes first. Then their publications are summarized, followed by the titles and dates of the contemporary publications that will be considered for comparison.

Each of the subsequent sections deals with an individual publication, examining its content and attempting to describe its character. The latter is the difficult bit.

The only way to get a basis for such an attempt is to analyse each issue of each journal in a standard way. Then, by glancing through these analyses in conjunction with any notes made when preparing them, it should be possible to detect changes over time and differences between journals. Data collected include total number of pages, pages on each of 17 subjects, presence of separate folding plans, indexes, abstracts and bibliographies; also whether emphasis is mainly scientific or descriptive and whether the scope is regional, national or international. An article may be classified under more than one subject. From this, the number of pages in each issue for three key aspects – cave descriptions, cave and karst sciences and non-karst subjects – were plotted on graph paper to indicate trends.

These plots and the information behind them are not used directly in this paper but they guide the author's comments. The manuscript data sheets and plots have been placed in the archives of the Commissione Grotte.

There is no question of assessing relative merit. Journals are no better and no worse than each other; only different, or perhaps not so different.

Società Alpina delle Giulie and its Commissione Grotte

The immediate predecessor of the Società Alpina delle Giulie was the Società degli Alpinisti Triestini. That earliest society was founded on 23 March 1883, and at its meeting on 4 May it was decided to buy equipment for cave exploration. Its statutes included the statement "The purpose of the Society is to visit, study and illustrate mountains in general, ours in particular, as well as to explore the caves of the Karst."^{1,2} One of its two committees was the Comitato alle Grotte.

Two and a half years later, on 6 September 1885, the Società degli Alpinisti Triestini combined with the Società Alpina Istriana to form the Società Alpina delle Giulie³. Its cave section had become Commissione alle Grotte. That title persisted until the end of 1896 but already by August of that year Boegan was signing his reports as "Il relatore della Commissione Grotte"⁴, and that shortened form of the name stuck.

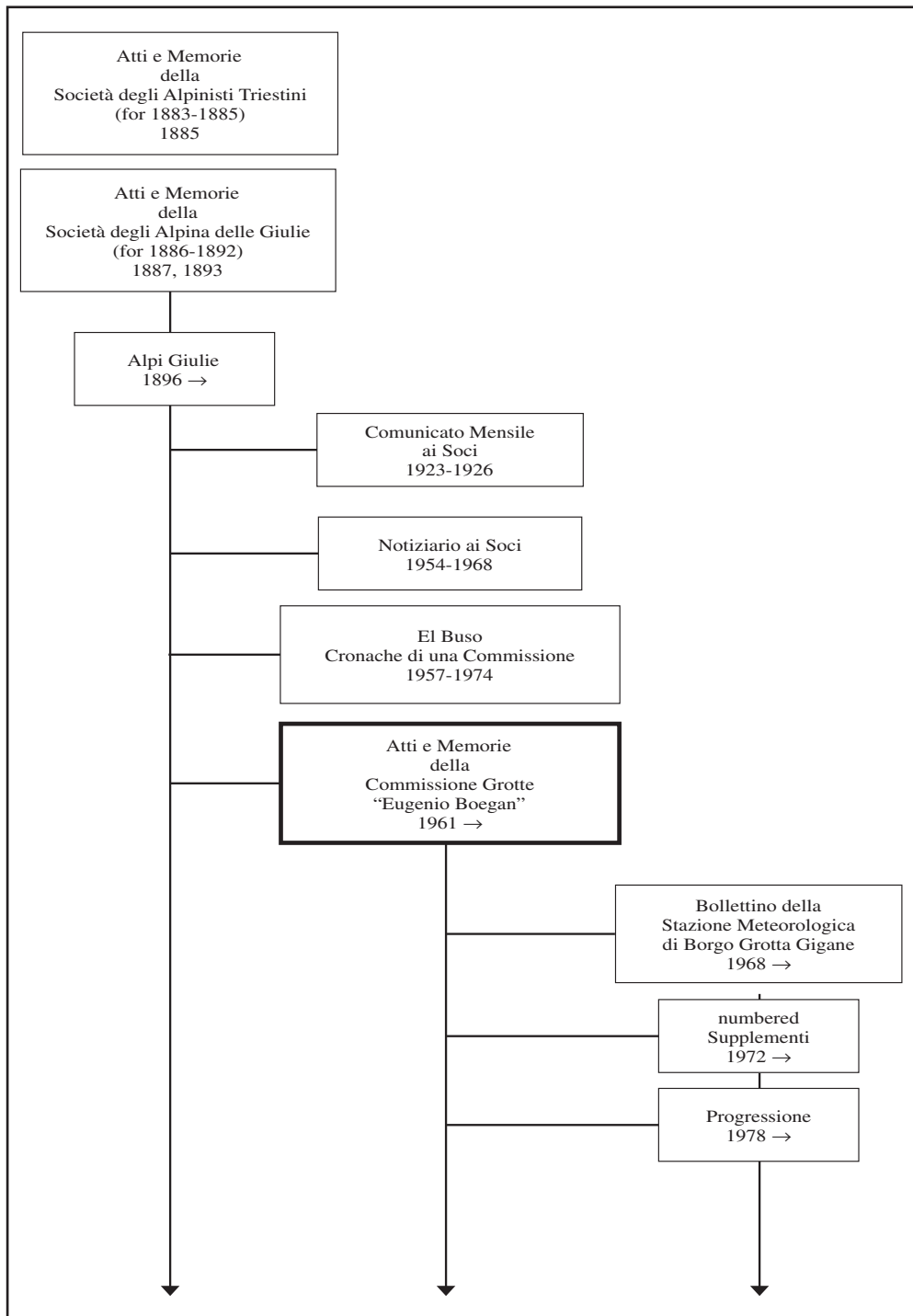


Fig. 1 – Detailed accounts of the stage of the Society's history were published.

As will be seen when their publications are considered, the group in the 1880s explored and surveyed Grotta di Padriciano and Grotta delle Torri (Lipiška jama) as well as studying the hydrology at Trebiciano and taking over the management of Grotta di Corgnale (Vilenica) as a show cave.

The cave register, the Catasto Grotte della Venezia Giulia, had its beginning in 1892 when the first 22 caves were listed, with a location map⁵. By 1907 it had recorded 347 caves⁶ and by 1914 there were 415⁷. In 1926 the famous book could be titled *Duemila Grotte*⁸.

In 1922 the Società Alpina delle Giulie, while retaining its own title, became also the Sezione di Trieste del Club Alpino Italiano.

Eugenio Boegan (1875-1939) had joined the Commissione Grotte in 1894 at the age of 19, and he became its president in 1904⁹. In 1948 it was decided that its full title should become Commissione Grotte “Eugenio Boegan” and so it did in 1949.

Both world wars caused massive disruption to the work of the Commissione Grotte. From 1945 to 1948 it mostly restricted itself to managing Grotta Gigante and recovering its records. Then normal exploration work resumed in the region and elsewhere in Italy. Underground research stations were set up in Grotta C. Doria (3975VG), Padriciano and Grotta Gigante. Work on the Canin plateau developed in the 1960s and expeditions went to the karst in Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela, Albania and Irian Jaja (in New Guinea). Close links were created with Slovenia.

In 1963, just after *Atti e Memorie* had started publication, there were 58 members of the Commissione Grotte¹⁰. Between 1971 and 1978 its membership was already in the 70s; it pass 100 in 1990 and 120 in 1993; for a period in the late 1990s it was more than 130. These increasing numbers allowed more work to be done which could never have been properly

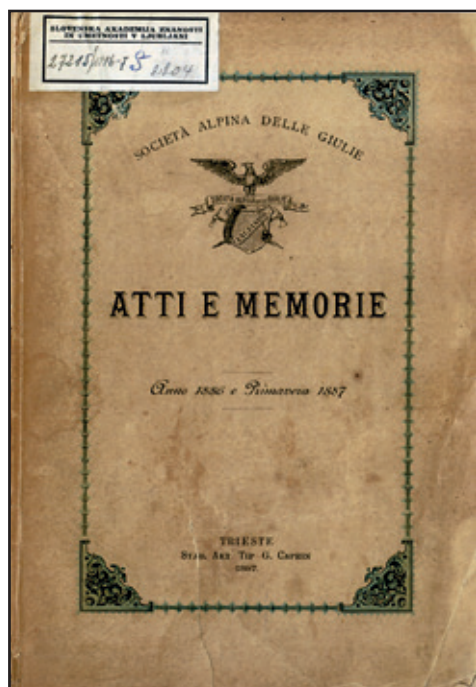


Fig. 2 – Title page of the journal “Società Alpina delle Giulie Atti e Memorie” 1887, 1893.



Fig. 3 – Title page of the journal “Alpi Giulie” 1896 →

published if *Atti e Memorie* had not been created. Perhaps too, its existence and the interest aroused by its content had an influence on the number of new members.

Detailed accounts of the various stages of the Society's history were published in *Alpi Giulie*^{2, 11, 12}.

The journals to be examined

The journals published by the Società Alpina delle Giulie and its Commissione Grotte, which will be studied in some detail further on, are interconnected and sometimes interdependent, so they are best presented in the form of a family tree – the ancestors, cousins and children of *Atti e Memorie*. Precise lists of every issue of all these, up to 1998, have been published by Pino Guidi³, together with other publications of the Society.

The publications of other societies of comparable status, considered here for comparison with the Trieste publications, are then treated in the order they first appeared:

The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal 1899-1992

Mondo Sotterraneo 1904-1923, 1965→

Proceedings University of Bristol Speleological Society, 1920→

Speleolog 1953→

Sottoterra 1961→

Studies in Speleology 1964→

Laichinger Höhlenfreund, 1966 →

Mitteilungen des Landesvereines für Höhlenkunde in der Steiermark 1972→

Società degli Alpinisti Triestini Atti e Memorie 1885

A single volume covers the period 1883-1885.

Published at Trieste, 1885. 125 pp, 22.5 x 14.5 cm.

Includes the “Regulations” for the Comitato alle Grotte (1 page),

7 pp. on the Grotte de Padriciano, with mention of Trebiciano and Škocjan; and
6 pp. on the hydrology of the Karst.

Most of the volume is on non-karst subjects.

Società Alpina delle Giulie Atti e Memorie 1887, 1893

Two volumes, 23.5 x 15.3 cm.

For the period 1886-1887, published 1887, 240 pp.

The Commissione alle Grotte has 15 members

18pp. on Trebiciano with fold-out survey and illustration

3 pp. on karst hydrology

200 pp. not on karst

For the period 1887-1892, published 1893, 255 pp.

9 pp. on karst hydrology

7 pp. and folding map on 22 caves with some brief descriptions –
the first 22 caves of the register, including Brischichi (Grotta/Gigante),
Gabrovizza and Grotta delle Torri (Lipiška jama).

230 pp. not on karst.

Alpi Giulie 1896→

During its first 117 years of existence, *Alpi Giulie* has appeared in two formats and three page sizes. Vols. 1 to 7 (1896-1902) measured 33 cm by 23 cm and the text was printed in two columns: vols. 8 to 22 (1903-1920) were similar to recent volumes but a little taller, with pages 25½ x 17 cm : from 1921 (vol. 23) to the present the pages have measured 24 x 17 cm.

The main title, *Alpi Giulie*, has remained the same throughout, but it has been elaborated by sub-titles that differ slightly.

Now for the interesting bit – the contents. The many subjects covered can be grouped under three main headings – cave description, cave and karst science and non-speleological subjects (mountains, etc.) – supplemented by historical articles, book reviews, etc.

The average number of pages per issue devoted to the three main groups is:

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| cave description | 14.5 |
| cave and karst science | 5.1 |
| non-speleo | 84 |

For comparison, the average number of pages per issue is 114.

Naturally the proportion of each group varies enormously in individual issues, but there is no overall trend over the last 95 years. Before 1918, however, the amount of cave material was distinctly lower. Interestingly, no significant change in the pattern occurs after the appearance of *Atti e Memorie* in 1961 or *Progressione* in 1978. This confirms that the two new journals



Fig. 4– Title page of the journal “Comunicato Mensile ai Soci” 1921-1926.



Fig. 5 – Title page of the journal “Notiziario ai Soci supplemento alla rivista Alpi Giulie” 1954-1968.

were necessary to report a vast increase in speleological work and not just to tidy up the differing interests of members. All praise is due to those who foresaw that future expansion and took steps to accommodate it.

A few general comments on the cave and karst content of *Alpi Giulie* follow, as for many years it was the natural place for people like Boegan to publish their work, supplemented in the 1920s and 1930s by *Grotte d'Italia*. Descriptions and surveys of newly explored caves were present but it is noticeable how relatively few foreign caves were reported, compared with the present day.

Classic cave reports in the early years, by Boegan, were on Grotta delle Torri (Lipiška jama) in 1896¹³, Vilenica in 1897¹⁴, Obrov in 1898¹⁵ and Trebiciano in 1909¹⁶. In 1905 and 1906 there was a major Boegan paper¹⁷ on the springs at Aurisina (reprinted as a 121 page monograph¹⁸). The proportion of cave work reported in *Alpi Giulie* increased in the 1920s, perhaps due to easier access to the former Austrian province of Krain (now in Slovenia).

In the 1890s there were many cave reports in register style by Boegan, but they were not in a numbered order as supplements to the first 22 of 1893. Occasional “Nuove cavità carsiche” and “Abissi e caverne del Carso” in the 20th century were similar, while those in the 1960s were more formal supplements (eg. 4394-4542 in vols. 61-64 of 1966 to 1969^{19, 20}).

The amount of scientific work was low, as has been seen. Of what there was, much of it was hydrological – no doubt because of the practical importance of water tracing. In the earlier years it was perhaps natural that discovery of new caves should attract more attention, especially in a club where the physical activity of climbing was prominent.

Reviews of books about caves and karst were common until 1920, perhaps because of the example set in the French journal *Spelunca* under Martel's influence (see also *Mondo Sotterraneo* below). They were very rare from 1910 until the 1980s and it was only in 2000 that they became regular again. Almost all were of Italian publications apart from some by Martel and others in the 1900s.

Comunicato Mensile al Soci 1921-1926

This and the two following publications had no relationship with *Atti e Memorie*, even those that were contemporary, but they are recorded here for completeness.

The *Comunicato Mensile* was a newsletter for members as its name implies. 49 issues were produced²¹. Each consists of 4 or 8 printed pages, sometimes more.

Each issue consists of announcements and reports of meetings, excursions and other activities, with occasional reviews of books (mainly of the region but including one by Martel). Occasional notes on the membership include some obituaries.

The Commissione Grotte, as only one of the many components of the Society, does not feature prominently.

Notizario al Soci supplemento alla rivista “Alpi Giulie” 1954-1968

A quarterly printed newsletter²¹ of 8 or sometimes 12 or even 24 pages. It is generally similar to its predecessor of the 1920s, but with the Commissione Grotte much more evident. There is a review of the second volume of *Atti e Memorie*. Some advertisements are included.

El Buso cronache di una commissione 1957, 1960, 1971-1974

Published by the Commissione Grotte, this is a light-hearted often humorous magazine, reproduced from typewriting. Its title, *El Buso*, is a dialect variant of Il Buco (a cave), and the decorated title block is associated in some way with a contemporary advertisement for Aspirin tablets, a reference that would have been readily recognized at the time. I thank Pino Guidi for explaining this. Some issues seem not to have survived²¹. More serious items include a report on exploration in Puglia caves in 1956-57 and one (probably by Mario Privileggi) on the 1970 expedition on Canin. Publication ceased after a “humorous” article in October 1974, which provoked the resentment of a group of rock climbers who considered themselves scorned, triggered a legal action²².

Atti e Memorie della Commissione Grotte “Eugenio Boegan” 1961[1962]→

So much of this paper is necessarily occupied by consideration of the predecessors and contemporaries of *Atti e Memorie* that it is good finally to reach that publication itself. While it is examined in more detail than the other journals, it is treated in a generally similar way for ease of comparison.

To explain why this separate publication was started in addition to the continuing *Alpi Giulie*, there can be no better way than to quote extracts freely translated from the introduction to the first issue²³, written by Carlo Finocchiaro its founder:

Our new publication has the objective of bringing together each year the more interesting results of our research in various fields so that it can point the way for future research.

There is no doubt that between the wars the [national] speleological journal *Grotta d'Italia*, first appearing in 1927, made known the great exploration done by the Commissione Grotte between 1920 and 1940. It also made a decisive contribution to the rise of scientific speleology by its publication of the work of Boegan.

The last 13 years of uninterrupted work [i.e. before 1961] has resulted in an explosion of the amount of results to be published. An underground meteorological research station was set up in the Grotta Sperimentale “C. Doria”, the only one in Italy and probably in the world. [Costantino Doria had been the author, in 1885, of the first speleological paper to be published in the *Atti e Memorie* of the *Società degli Alpinisti Triestini*]. Five years of data recorded in Grotta Gigante awaits publication also.

This was later²² summarized thus:

In 1961 the Commissione, realizing the considerable amount of its work that the Society’s journal, *Alpi Giulie*, was unable to publish (also the quantity of such work that therefore had to be published in other specialist journals), brought out a new title *Atti e Memorie* which ideally complements the Society’s first journal.

At its 40th issue, Pino Guidi was able to write²⁴:

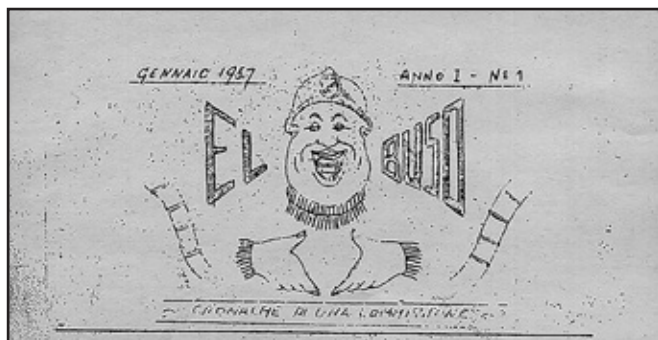


Fig. 6 – Title page of the journal “El Buso cronache di una commissione” 1957, 1960, 1971-1974.

Atti e Memorie, the journal of speleology and karst studies founded in 1961 at the initiative of Carlo Finocchiaro, is the oldest existing Italian publication devoted entirely to scientific speleology. In its first 40 volumes there have been almost 300 studies and monographs on karst world wide, with special attention to the geomorphology and karst of our own region. Contributing authors have been scientists from Italy and abroad (Austria, Cuba, France, USA, UK, Romania, Jugoslavia, Spain and Switzerland).

Physically, the issues of *Atti e Memorie* are similar to those of *Alpi Giulie* – the same format and the same height. From number 1, published in 1962 for 1961, to number 4 for 1964, the title page also read *Supplemento di “Alpi Giulie”*. These first four issues had the leaves stapled together, but since then they have all been sewn.

A definitive record of every issue of *Atti e Memorie* up to 1998 was published²⁵ by Pino Guidi. As that is not readily accessible, he has allowed me to reprint it as an appendix to this paper and has also updated it to the present..

Overall responsibility for the editing of *Atti e Memorie* has been that of the “Direttore responsabile”. From 1965 to 1982 this was its founder, Carlo Finocchiaro, and he had also edited the first four issues himself. Dario Marini took over for 1983 and 1984, and then from 1985 to the present Franco Cucchi has held the post. Much of the actual editing has been done by others including Fabio Forti, Pino Guidi and now Enrico Merlak. Foreign authorship already noticed above has increased in recent years, thus demonstrating its international links. Some English language papers were included in 1994 and since 2007.

The balance of subjects covered by *Atti e Memorie* has been analysed in the same way as for the other journals considered here (the original unpublished papers are now in the archives of the Commissione Grotte) but they are presented here in more detail than was done for the other. Arranged over the total number of pages devoted to each subject in all the issues, we get these mean figures:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| total pages per issue | 135 |
| cave description | 17 |
| (of which, foreign caves 5.1) | |
| Scientific studies | 67 |
| (of which, biology 15.5 | |
| physical sciences 36 | |
| hydrology 15.5) | |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| archaeology | 10 |
| history | 11 |
| (but for 1981-2011 30) | |
| bibliographies of publications by | 6.8 |
| members of Commissione Grotte | |
| equipment | 2.9 |

As indicated in this table, the history of karst studies (which was not present at all before 1979) made a remarkable advance in later years. Other trends include a decrease in cave description after 1990, while overall scientific studies, despite wide fluctuations between issues, remained steady on average. In the individual scientific descriptions, however, there has been change. Physical sciences reduced significantly after 1980, while biological work increased from about the same date. Archaeology (not included here in the total for scientific studies) was hardly present at all after 1980.

It is tempting to record many of the fascinating studies recorded in the 5799 pages published in the first half century. That is clearly impossible here but those who are interested can read these 5799 pages themselves. I shall just allow myself to list some of the diverse subjects covered:

- the new Grotta Sperimentale “C. Doria, with its instrumentation (in no. 1) and meteorological readings (later),
- a stream-piracy theory of cave formation (no.3),
- publications of Eugenio Boegan (no. 4),



Fig. 8 – Carlo Finocchiaro (1917-1983), Direttore responsabile for Atti e Memorie from 1965 to 1982. Photo: Grotte di Castel Lueghi (Slovenia) - 1973.



Fig. 9 – Franco Cucchi, Direttore responsabile for Atti e Memorie from 1985 to the present. Photo: Grotte di Pradis - 2013.

Fig. 7- Title page of the journal “Atti e Memorie della Commissione Grotte E. Boegan” 1961 [1962]→

the second Grotta Sperimentale, Grotta di Padriciano, for geophysical and meteorological measurement (no.6),
glacial and post-glacial vegetation and climate from cave deposits (no. 7),
geo-electric surveys in karst (no. 10),
manganese patina for dating (no. 16),
1976 and 1977 exploration of caves in Iran (no. 17),
geomorphology of Trebiciano (no. 18),
thermal caves (no.19),
Iranian cave folklore (no. 21),
90 caves surveyed in Mexico, 1984-85 (no. 24), also 1986 and 1988 explorations (no. 26 and 27),
proposed symbols for geomorphological mapping (no. 25),
gravimetric survey of Grotta Gigante area (no. 33),
rates of limestone surface solution (no. 34),
Schmidl's work on Trieste karst (no. 39),
atmospheric tides in cave air (nos. 40 & 41),
effect of lichen on limestone solution (no. 42).

Progressione 1978→

Progressione is important not only as being an offspring of *Atti e Memorie* but as continuing to run parallel with it and to complement it, each having its own emphasis and character. Throughout its life every issue has had the phrase “Supplemento ad Atti e Memorie...” after its title. Two numbers are produced each year.

In 1979, the year after *Progressione*'s first appearance, Finocchiaro wrote in *Atti e Memorie*²⁶:

In 1978 we have launched a new publication “Progressione” which is to be a journal of speleological information from the younger members. We expect to cover in this way the whole range of activities that Gruppo Grotte carries out: “Atti e Memorie” for scientific studies and the updating of cave register information; “Progressione” for exploration work.

That this balance was indeed obtained is confirmed by these figures. The average number of pages in each issue (74), contains the following numbers on average for the principal subjects:

| | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| cave description | 34.8 |
| (of which, foreign caves 11.7) | |
| scientific matters | 5.3 |
| non-speleo subjects | 1.1 |

There is wide variation between individual issues, with cave descriptions ranging from 25% to 87% (with foreign caves between 0 and 40%) and scientific matters from 0 to 33%. The average amount of scientific writing increased a little after the first 12 years. The average cave description content reduced gradually from about 60%. After the first 10 years there were extensive book reviews; *Atti e Memorie* carried none.

Some issues were devoted almost exclusively to particular subjects such as expeditions to Venezuela, Mexico and New Guinea. *Progressione Cento*, unnumbered but published in 1983, was on the history of Commissione Grotte. The 50th volume summarized the content of the previous 49. Vols 21 and 40 contain detailed indexes for the first 20 years of publication.

Supplementi

As already mentioned, each issue of *Progressione* is labelled as a supplement to a particular volume of *Atti e Memorie*. There are also other publications produced by the Commissione Grotte that can be regarded as supplements in that they publish special materials in the field covered by *Atti e Memorie*.

Some supplements on different subjects appear, each with its own title, as part of a series of numbered supplements. Others are in special series containing large amounts of material that would otherwise overwhelm the more general publications. They have little direct relationship with *Atti e Memorie*, nor are they at all similar in scope, so they cannot be compared as equals. They are mentioned here only as being part of the family in which *Atti e Memorie* lives.

Data from the meteorological station on the karst surface at Borgo Grotta Gigante have been published separately since 1968, as listed (to 1998) by Guidi²⁷. The latest volume²⁸ covers the period 2006 to 2010.

Supplements to the cave register for Venezia Giulia and Friuli, continuing from those published previously in *Alpi Giulie*, have appeared in the many supplements which are listed in the indexes to *Atti e Memorie* for 1961 to 1980 and 1992-2004, inside the covers of *Progressione* and in Guidi's publication list to 1998³ where the ones from 1991 are collected in the series *Quaderni del Catasto Regionale delle Grotte delle Friuli Venezia Giulia* which still continues.

Other supplements, some of them substantial volumes, cover many subjects and even include the 10-yearly indexes to *Atti e Memorie*. They are listed in the references given above.

And now we come to descriptions and analyses of other high quality non-national journals, for comparison.

The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal 1899-1992

Like the Società Alpina delle Giulie and the Società Alpina Friulana and at about the same time, the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club was started primarily as a climbing club with some interest in caves also. But unlike those Italian clubs, it never gave rise to a separate cave organization.

Founded in 1892, its members included several distinguished members of the Alpine Club, such as Slingsby, Whymper, Conway and Winthrop Young. Cave exploring was not formally named as one of the objectives of the Club²⁹ but, as its home territory included the classic cave country of the Yorkshire Dales, its members soon made several important explorations there, all reported in their Journal. Martel lectured at their headquarters and also published in the Journal³⁰.

The articles in *The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal* followed the mountaineering custom of the time in that they were often more literary essays than scientific reports, though they were usually as clear and informative as the best reports. In keeping, too, with the practice of climbers, the articles were almost entirely descriptive.

The balance of subject (cave and other) published is shown by the relative numbers of pages devoted to each in an average issue of 102 pages.

| | |
|--|------|
| cave description (including foreign caves 7) | 28 |
| cave & karst science | 0.37 |
| non-cave | 67 |

These average figures remained fairly constant over the years, but in individual issues the number of cave description pages ranged from 0 to 53.

As the Society's president recognized in 1985³¹: "The men who make up the YRC are no longer in the forefront of rock climbing and few are in the forefront of caving". More significantly, there were by then specialist journals of high repute in which such cave work could be published. Meanwhile printing costs continued to rise.

The final issue of *The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal* appeared in 1992.

Mondo Sotterraneo 1904→

Like *The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal*, *Mondo Sotterraneo* grew from a society that was previously one mainly for mountaineering. But here, as with *Atti e Memorie*, a new publication was created for the cave work.

The Circolo Speleologico & Idrologico Friulano was formed in 1897 under the auspices of the Società Alpina Friulana³². The parent society's publication, *In Alto*, did not have room to



Fig. 10 – Title page of the journal "Progressione" 1978 →



Fig. 11 – Title page of the journal "Mondo Sotterraneo" 1904 →

publish its reports so *Mondo Sotterraneo* was born at Udine in 1904. It was reviewed in *Alpi Giulie*³³ and mentioned by Martel in 1905 in the French journal *Spelunca*³⁴.

On page 1 of the first issue Prof. Francesco Musoni, the Society's chairman from 1902 to 1926, wrote³⁵:

This, however, aspires to be more than a solely local studies periodical. As a matter of fact, we have asked for, and obtained, the collaboration of eminent scientists from all over the country. If this journal does not become the core of the Italian speleology movement, it will at least strive and contribute – together with its peers, be they already established or to be established – to give it new and vigorous momentum.

The Circolo and its *Mondo Sotterraneo* still flourish today, nearly 110 years later, but there were great difficulties and almost extinction between 1926 and 1965³⁶. Some of its leading members had died in World War 1 and two more in 1926 while others emigrated for political reasons, rather like Toscanini leaving the Milano opera house.

Thus *Mondo Sotterraneo* was published from 1904 until 1923 and then again from 1965³⁷. Its character and content changed significantly after the long interval. The balance of subjects was different in each period too, especially with regard to the descriptive/scientific ratio. The proportions are shown here separated for each of four periods, as the number of pages devoted to each main subject in an average issue:

| | 1904-1916 | 1917-1923 | 1965-1972 (series 2) | 1977-2009 (series 3) |
|--|-----------|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| total number of pages | 135 | 58 | 100 | 90 |
| cave description | 35 | 11 | 20 | 31 |
| foreign cave description | 4 | 1 | 1.7 | 7 |
| cave and karst science | 65 | 30 | 22 | 14 |
| book reviews | 15 | - | - | 2 |
| non-cave subjects (including man-made caves) | 6 | 4 | - | 1.4 |

There is, of course, a wide variation in individual issues, with scientific subjects occupying more than 60% of some and less than 10% of others, with a similar range for cave descriptions.

The high number of scientific papers, especially before 1923, is notable – on hydrology, physical speleology, speleobiology and archaeology. The bacterial content of karst water was discussed in the 1900s.

Reviews and bibliographies of new publications in many languages form an important part of the first series, occupying 186 pages before 1917. Their international scope resembled those in *Spelunca* (Paris) which had been inspired and largely compiled by Martel since 1895. Martel himself had close links with the Circolo³⁸ and was made their first honorary member.

Short descriptions of caves were the beginning of the Friulian cave register. There were 153 by 1911³⁹ and a big 1915 monograph⁴⁰ listed many more but without numbering. Bibliographies

of writings on Friulian speleology appeared from 1973⁴¹ with 2904 entries by 1991⁴². English abstracts were normal from 1975 and a few separate folding plans were published with issues after 2001.

A major (190 page) index for the first 100 years (1904-2003) was compiled by Pino Guidi⁴³. It is interesting to see that discoveries on the Canin plateau were reported as early as 1914. For all this time *Mondo Sotterraneo* has been professionally printed to a high standard and, to the delight of all librarians, it has not changed its page size.

Mondo Sotterraneo is a major source of information on karst, especially in Venezia Giulia and Friuli – scientific, explorations and historical. It is too little known outside Italy. No copy exists in London, while Postojna has only a few issues although they will receive this author's complete set in due course.

Proceedings University of Bristol Spelaeological Society 1920→

This society was founded in 1919, its main characteristic being that it places equal emphasis on cave work and prehistoric archaeology. It is basically a student society and several of its members have since built up an international reputation in karst research. Its cave work is mainly done in its own region which includes the limestone hills of Mendip, but it has also had "expeditions" (a curious word in this context) to Ireland with much original exploration there and also to countries in Europe.

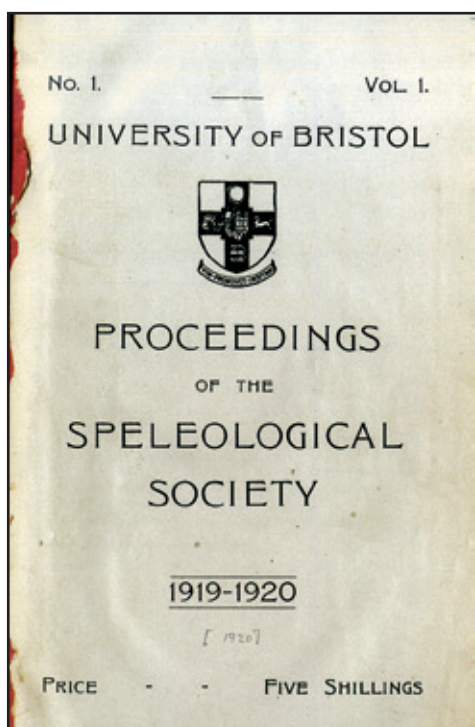


Fig. 12 – Title page of the journal “Proceedings University of Bristol Spelaeological Society” 1920 →



Fig. 13 – Title page of the journal “Speleolog” 1953 →

The *Proceedings* is known internationally and at one time attracted authors from Oxford and the British Museum. The high quality of printing has been made possible by grants from the University, the Geologists' Association and other sources.

The balance between the main subjects covered is shown below, arranged over the 74 numbers produced.

| | |
|--|-----|
| total number of pages per volume of 3 issues | 254 |
| cave descriptions (including 28 on foreign caves) | 84 |
| cave archaeology | 68 |
| non-speleo subjects (including surface archaeology) | 72 |

These proportions, while fluctuating greatly between individual issues, have remained more or less the same over the years. There has also been quite a large amount of historical studies, especially in 1969 to mark the Society's half century⁴⁴.

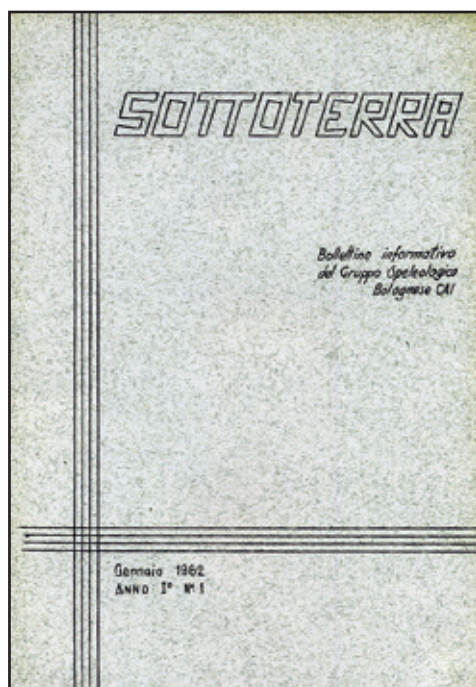


Fig. 14 – Title page of the journal “Sottoterra” 1961 →

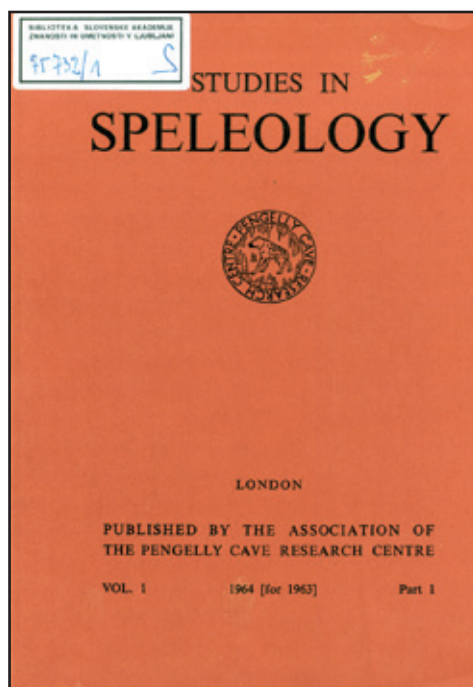


Fig. 15 – Title page of the journal “Studies in Speleology” 1964 →

Speleolog 1953→

The Croatian journal *Speleolog* has been published since 1953 in Zagreb by the Cave Section of the “Željezničar” [Railway] Mountaineering Club. Its declared purpose⁴⁵ is to report the results of cave exploration and also of scientific speleological research. The content has been of high standard since the very start. The text is in Croatian but most of the articles have summaries in English, German, French or (in the early days) Esperanto.

It has always been professionally printed, with the single exception of 1962-1963. In its earliest years the post-war paper quality was poor but this was rectified in the 1960s and the whole production is now very good. For most of the first 16 years each issue was quite small with between 12 and 32 pages. The size then steadily increased until it is now of about 150 pages, the average over the whole 42 issues being 63.

The balance of subjects, expressed as the average number of pages per issue on each, is this:

| | |
|---|-----|
| cave descriptions | 38 |
| (of which 4.5 are on foreign caves) | |
| cave and karst science and archaeology | 6 |
| technique and equipment | 3 |
| book reviews (many of foreign publications) | 3.5 |

The proportion of cave descriptions has increased over the years, while that of scientific work has reduced. Articles on equipment have been quite common throughout, reaching their peak in the 1960s and 1970s.

Sottoterra 1961→

Sottoterra of the Gruppo Speleologico Bolognese del Club Alpino Italiano first appeared in 1961 as little more than a newsletter printed on a duplicator. It continued to be reproduced from typewriting for ten years but its content improved and during that time it contained 402 articles with 245 surveys and tables⁴⁶. Since then it has continued to develop and is now one of the major publications in Italy. There are many separate folding plans.

The bulk of the content has always been reports on cave exploration with a much smaller proportion on scientific studies. Thus over its first 50 years or so its average page count has been:

| | |
|--|-----|
| total pages per issue | 45 |
| cave description | 23 |
| (of which only 3.1 pages on foreign caves) | |
| cave and karst science and archaeology | 4.8 |
| equipment | 1.5 |

As always, there has been enormous variation in content between individual issues but it can be said that cave description ranged between 20% and 50% of each issue from 1968 to 1988 and between 50% and 75% since then. Correspondingly, cave science varied between 0% (several) and 30% up to 1989 and rather less afterwards.

This does not mean that science was only a very minor interest. Issues in 1984 and 1985 were devoted to an International Symposium on Karst in Evaporites. Other special issues covered the caves of San Marino in 1983 and expeditions to Mexico in 1989 and 1991. 70% of a 1982 number marking the 50th anniversary of the Group's formation was on its history. There are no book reviews.

Studies in Speleology 1964→

Studies in Speleology is the journal of what is now known as the William Pengelly Cave studies Trust, founded in 1962 by Dr Antony Sutcliffe of what was then the British Museum (Natural History). The trust is concerned not only with research but also with conservation, teaching and interpretation. *Studies in Speleology* was created to publish “well-informed articles on all aspects of cave studies especially review articles on cave-studies and conservation and new methods and results of cave research, written for serious non-specialist readers”⁴⁷. It was not intended for research results written for other specialists. Authors of high standard responded and a favourable notice appeared in the international journal, *Nature*⁴⁸.

The balance of content in *Studies in Speleology* is best presented in the usual way – the number of pages on certain key aspects of the journal, averaged over all 27 of the issues published:

| | |
|--|------|
| total pages per issue | 67 |
| cave description | 16.5 |
| (includes 10.6 on foreign caves) | |
| scientific articles (except archaeology) | 17.5 |
| cave archaeology | 15 |

The high proportion of scientific articles (nearly half, if cave archaeology is included) is particularly noticeable. Book reviews form a small but important part of many issues and include books published about 40 km from Trieste.

Laichinger Höhlenfreund 1966→

Laichinger Höhlenfreund, published by the Höhlen- und Heimatvereins Laichingen in the German state of Württemberg, has been of good quality from the start, both for its content and its production. It is predominantly a regional journal but with some foreign input. From 1978 most articles have summaries in English as well as German.

For its first six years it was mainly concerned with factual descriptions of caves, but since then the emphasis has been more on scientific work. The content of pages on various aspects averaged over 45 years are:

| | |
|--|-----|
| total per issue | 92 |
| cave descriptions | 31 |
| (with only 0.8 pages on foreign caves) | |
| scientific studies including archaeology | 44 |
| book reviews | 1.3 |

The book reviews do record foreign material as well as German, especially after 1979. Obituaries and biographical information are useful.

The print run in 1990 was 650, of which 30% went to members, 65% to institutions in Germany and 5% to 21 countries abroad⁴⁹. This demonstrates its wide influence; it is a pity that such figures are not readily available for other journals.

Mitteilungen des Landesvereins für Höhlenkunde in der Steiermark 1972→

This journal, published in Graz, is of A4 format and until 1984 it was reproduced from typewriting. Only the issues from 1972 to 2002 have been examined but it continues to publish, reaching vol. 40 in 2011. Some issues have English abstracts.

Its main content is description of caves – an average of 76 pages in an average issue of 120 pages. Almost none of this is on foreign caves. The very little science (an average of 5 pages) is mostly biological. There is, however, much on history (an average of 16 pages). Book reviews, some for foreign books, average 3 pages per issue and notable are the annual bibliographies of Steiermark speleological literature of between 5 and 14 pages.

Mention should be made of the ancient predecessor of the publication, the *Mittheilungen der Gesellschaft für Höhlenforschung Steiermark*⁵⁰ of which the 40 page first number, published at Graz in 1896, was the only one to appear.



Fig. 16 – Title page of the journal “Laichinger Höhlenfreund” 1966 →



Fig. 17 – Title page of the journal “Mitteilungen des Landesvereins für Höhlenkunde in der Steiermark” 1972 →

CONCLUSION

The journals considered here have many similarities but also many differences. Some have developed, some have stayed the same, and one has ceased publication.

All important are the essentials – the aim of the journal and the objective of the society that published it. Practical factors that affect success are the size of the group, the extent of their activity, and its financial resources. There needs also to be an adequate area of karst round about to attract and occupy the members.

It is also preferable that members should include both explorers and researchers. They inspire each other and those who joined as explorers often become researchers as they grow older. That in itself provides continuity and with that comes loyalty and awareness of the society's past record. Such societies have their own character and are respected for it. In our increasingly international world, that aspect, as well as the society's journal, maintains its success. And this gives more material to that hard-working and influential person – the Editor.

I salute the Editors, past and present, of all the journals.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Like almost all papers, this one has benefited from the assistance willingly given by several people. Outstanding has been the information and other help provided by Pino Guidi, historian and archivist of the Commissione Grotte. I am most grateful also to Umberto Sello, Vice-President of the Circolo Speleologico e Idrologico Friulano, Prof. Paolo Forti of Bologna and Dr Janez Mulec, librarian of the Karst Research Institute in Postojna.

APPENDIX ISSUES OF ATTI E MEMORIE 1961 TO DATE

by Pino Guidi

Vol. 1 (1961), Trieste 1962: 1-56; vol. 2 (1962), Trieste 1963: 1-138; vol. 3 (1963), Trieste 1964: 1-116; vol. 4 (1964), Trieste 1965: 1-124; vol. 5 (1965), Trieste 1966: 1-142; vol. 6 (1966), Trieste 1967: 1-174; vol. 7 (1967), Trieste 1968: 1-132; vol. 8 (1968), Trieste 1969: 1-178; vol. 9 (1969), Trieste 1970: 1-162; vol. 10 (1970), Trieste 1971: 1-118; vol. 11 (1971), Trieste 1972: 1-130; vol. 12 (1972), Trieste 1973: 1-120; vol. 13 (1973), Trieste 1974: 1-134; vol. 14 (1974), Trieste 1975: 1-112; vol. 15 (1975), Trieste 1976: 1-156; vol. 16 (1976), Trieste 1977: 1-158; vol. 17 (1977), Trieste 1978: 1-98; vol. 18 (1978), Trieste 1979: 1-128; vol. 19 (1979), Trieste 1980: 1-136; vol. 20 (1980), Trieste 1981: 1-104; vol. 21 (1981), Trieste 1982: 1-104; vol. 22 (1983), Trieste 1983: 1-288 (monograph devoted to 100 years of scientific research by the Commissione Grotte); vol. 23 (1984), Trieste 1985: 1-92; vol. 24 (1985), Trieste 1985: 1-126; vol. 25 (1986), Trieste 1986: 1-124; vol. 26 (1987), Trieste 1987: 1-124; vol. 27 (1988), Trieste 1988: 1-114; vol. 28 (1989), Trieste 1989: 1-110; vol. 29 (1990), Trieste 1991: 1-128; vol. 30 (1991), Trieste 1992: 1-120; vol. 31 (1992-1993), Trieste 1994: 1-160; vol. 32 (1994), Trieste 1995: 1-128 vol. 33 (1995), Trieste 1996: 1-128; vol. 34 (1996), Trieste 1997: 1-126; vol. 35 (1997), Trieste 1998: I-XVI, 1-158 (monograph devoted to Grotta Gigante on the 90th anniversary of its being opened to the public; the main text of this issue, without the "Atti", was also published separately under

the title “1908-1998: novant’anni fra turismo e ricerca”); vol. 36 (1998), Trieste 1999: 1-134; vol. 37 (1999), Trieste 2000: 1-168; vol. 38 (2000), Trieste 2001: 1-86; vol. 39 (2001 – 2002 – 2003), Trieste 2004: 1-168; vol. 40 (2004), Trieste 2005: 1-176; vol. 41, Trieste 2007: 1-144; vol. 42, Trieste 2009: 1-120; vol. 43 (50th anniversary number 1961-2011), Trieste 2011: 1-192.

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