

CC "HELICTIT" AND SCC "AKADEMIK" SOFIA

# EXPEDITION "BANSKI SUHODOL" (PIRIN MOUNTAIN, BULGARIA)

I. Petrov, K. Stoichkov, P. Bakalov



The view of Banski suhodol cirque to the north

Photo: I. Petrov

The expedition usually takes place at the end of August and the beginning of September in cirque “Banski suhodol” (North Pirin mountain), within the territory of Pirin national park, which has been protected as UNESCO Natural heritage site, since 1983. Banski suhodol cirque is with average altitude of around 2300 m. The cirque is 3 km long and 1 km wide and is developed mostly in neoproterozoic marbles. The marbles are with depth of near 2000 m.

The investigations in the cirque started during the 60-ies of the 20th century. The most of the early investigations were made by SCC “Akademik” Sofia.

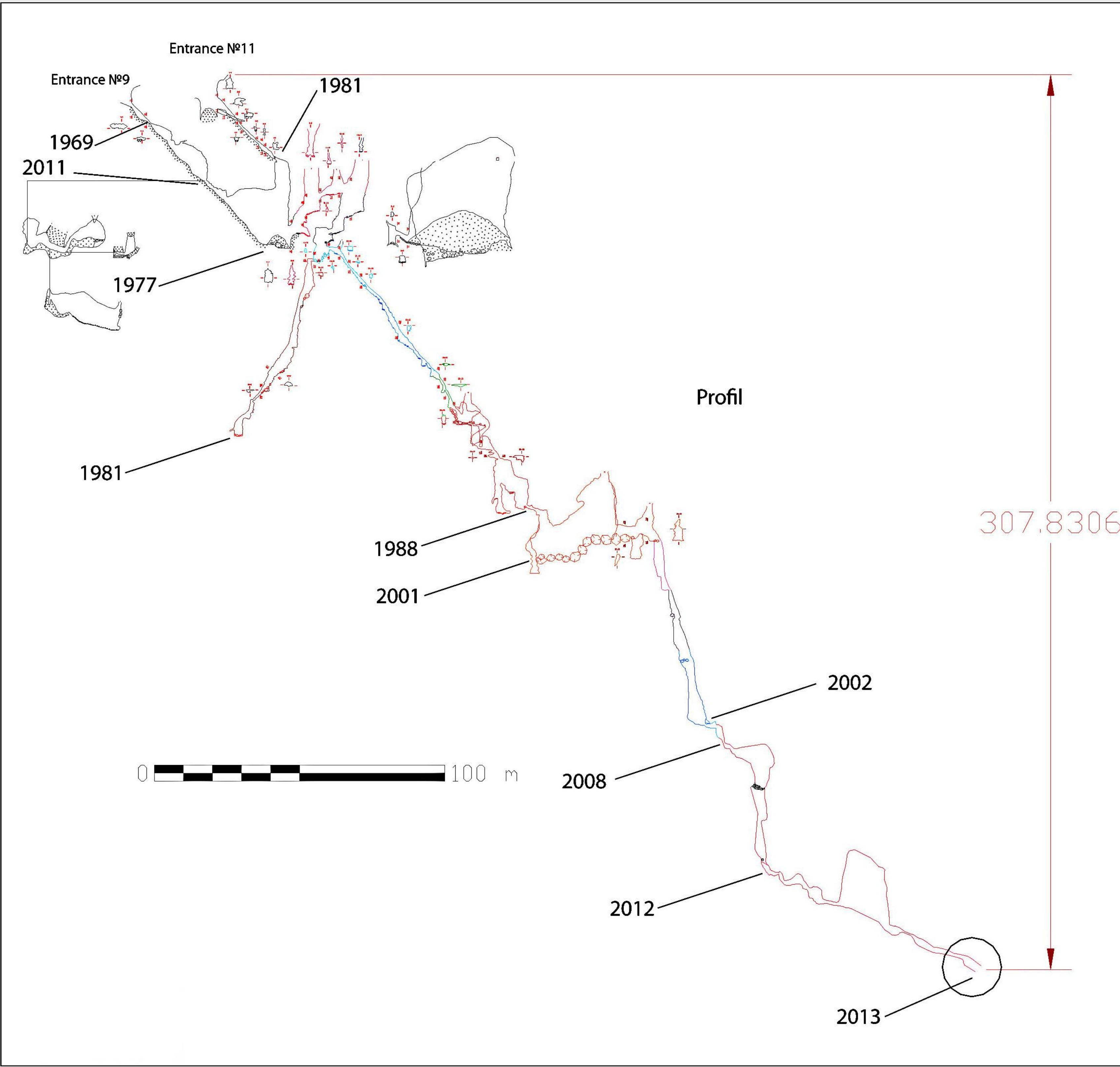
In 2000 started the second part of the investigation in this region. Between 2000 and 2013 a number of expeditions were conducted. They were organized by members of the Helictit, Akademik and Vitosha caving clubs from Sofia.

Within these expeditions more than 70 mainly vertical caves and potential objects were found. Most of these caves have been surveyed during this time. In recent years there have been also number of climatic, geomorphological and geological surveys.

Now exploration is focused primarily on the BS 9-11 system, which is situated at over 2500 m a.s.l. During the years many new areas in the cave were surveyed. In 2013 we increase the cave’s denivelation to - 307 m, wich making it the fifth deepest cave in the country and the deepest one in Pirin and South Bulgaria.

This year expedition will attend an international team including cavers from Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Poland. We all know that this cave system has potential to become the deepest in Bulgaria and to reach a depth of over 1000 m.

We also welcome those who wants to experience the Pirin mountain and to participate in the study of this perspective cave in the next year.



This is the vertical section of cave system BS 9-11 surveyed in 2002 and updated afterwards. The different years is the level to which has reached different investigation teams. At the bottom of the cave are shown the new parts found in 2013 which increase the cave deep to - 307 m.



The entrance of the cave BS 9



Photo: N. Orlov



N	NAME OF THE CAVE	LENGTH	DEPTH
1	BS 9-11	>400 m	-307 m
2	BS 30	120 m	-118 m
3	BS 13	41 m	-70 m
4	BS 34	111 m	-60 m
5	BS 25	49 m	-45 m
6	BS 06	8 m	-41 m
7	BS 08	4 m	-40 m