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**ABSTRACTS**

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## **The Gauerblick Cave A new high alpine bear cave in the Raetikon mountains (Vorarlberg, Austria)**

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The Sulzfluh (2,818m) is a limestone mountain situated on the border of Vorarlberg and Graubünden (Switzerland) and is a highly developed karst range.

Especially the southeastern side of the Swiss territory has a great abundance of caves, of which in two locations “Obere Seehöhli” and in the “Apollöhöhle” cave bear remains were found and they have been unearthed during a multiannual excavation (Rabeder 1994, 1995, 2004, Döppes & Rabeder 1997).

The cave bears of the Apollöhöhle were assigned to the subspecies *Ursus (spelaeus) iadonicus* Rabeder & al. 2004. The radiometric dating of one of the cave bear bones gave an age result of approximately 55,000 before present (Rabeder 2004)

In 2006, the members of the karst and speleological committee discovered a fossil site during one of their investigations in the deep shafts of the Gauerblickhöhle (2,260m).

Rainer Bösch from Lauterach was the first one who had abseiled into the narrow shaft, and forced his way through one narrow place and found a large amount of bones and teeth on the ground of the last shaft.

According to the regulations the discovery was reported to the local administration, an assessment from the district commission of Bludenz stated that the fossils should be excavated by specialists.

Many years have passed unused because the excavation campaigns that were planned for the fall have been prevented, either through bad weather conditions like snow even in the lower parts, or the working duties of the participants.

In July 2013 it could have been finally realized. Thanks to the initiative of Dr. Georg Friebe (Inatura, Dornbirn) the campaign was brought out, through paleontologists from Vienna, the speleologists of Vorarlberg and the financing and permission of the landowners was secured. The excavation campaign will be described with numerous photographs. First results are going to be presented.

With the discovery of the fossil site in the Gauerblickhöhle there is a new high alpine bear cave known, that lies nowadays in a plantless environment and is partially filled with ice.

If the geological age between 50,000 and 60,000 years can be confirmed, we are going to have a remarkable evidence of the mild climate also for the country of Vorarlberg in the so called “Middle Wurmian” period.

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