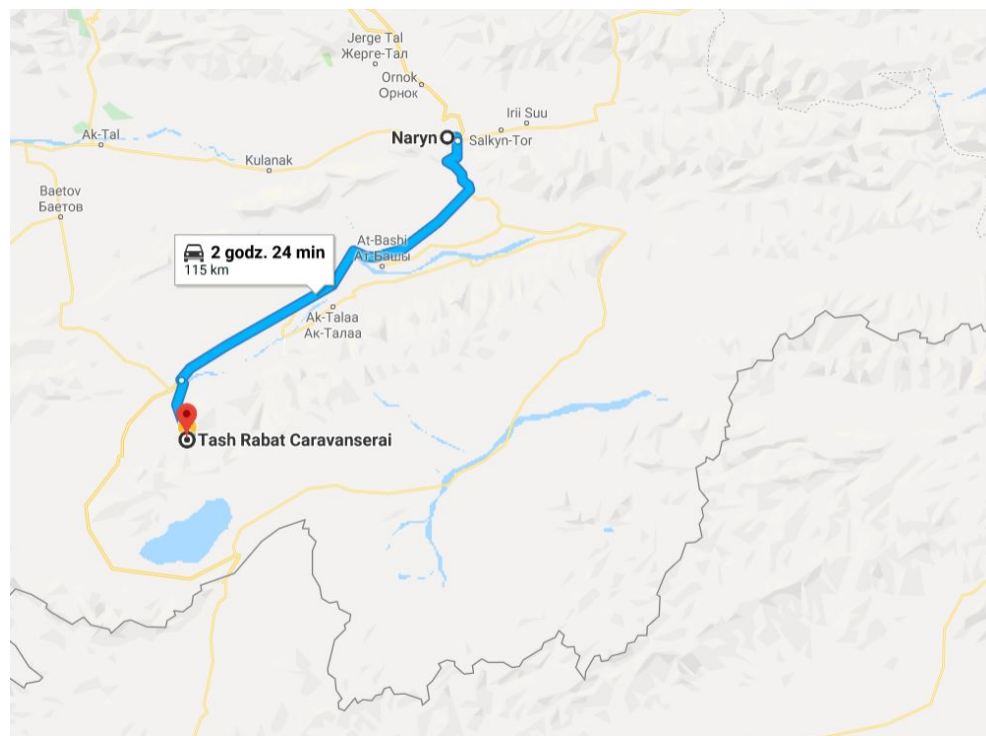


At-Bashy, Kyrgyzstan 2018 - Polish Reconnaissance Expedition

Sekcja Grotolazów Wrocław and Wielkopolski Klub Taternictwa Jaskiniowego, two caving clubs associated with the **Polish** Mountaineering Association, organized a preliminary, joint reconnaissance expedition to Kyrgyzstan from 10th to 25th of August 2018.

For the main goal of the expedition, we set out to explore the western part of the At-Bashy massif in the Tien-Shan mountains, an area between the well-known tourist locations called Tash-Rabat and Lake Chatyr-Kol. Our maps indicated the existence of limestone and three caves had already been discovered in this area. We set the location for base camp in the area of Tash-Rabat Pass at an altitude of approx. 3700 m above sea level.

Flying from Warsaw to Almaty in Kazakhstan proved to be the most economical connection. Therefore, we had to reach the Kazakh-Kyrgyz border (Korday) and from there move straight south to Tash-Rabat in the At-Bashy massif.

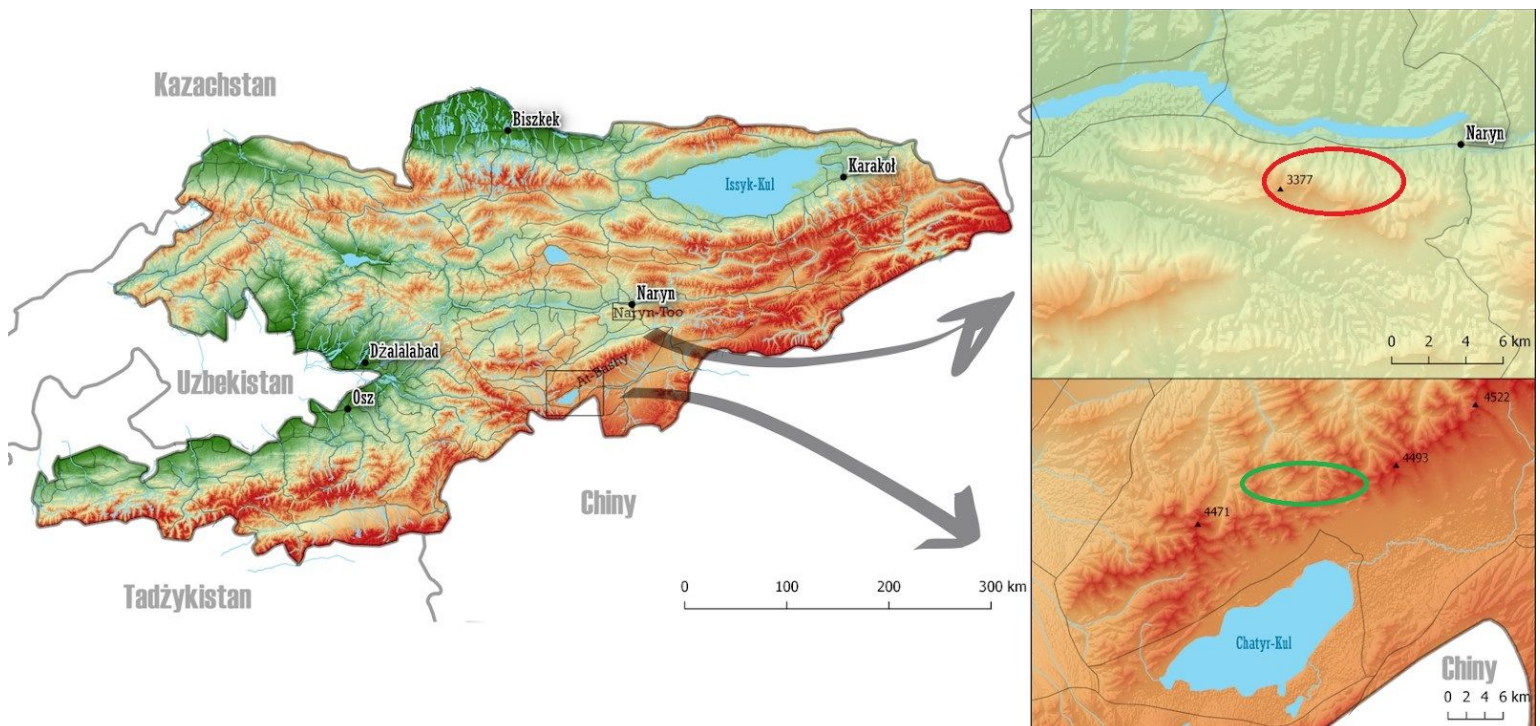


Tash Rabat is a well-preserved 15th century stone caravanserai. It is the largest stone building in Central Asia, originating from this period. In the near distance there are several yurt sites that profit from the growing number of foreign guests. We were one of them; we could not resist renting a 6-person yurt for one night.

Finally, we went to the mountains with all of our 350 kg of luggage, but we were not alone ... our equipment was loaded onto 4 horses plus two guides and we had an additional 6 horses for us

with one guide. After about 3 hours of walking through the mountains we found a place for our base camp. From this point (about 3700 m above sea level) it was only about 40 minutes on foot to the Tash-Rabat Pass, from where there was a view of the Chatyr-Kol lake and mountains lying on the other side of the border - in China. The guides dropped our luggage from the horses and they would come back to us on the appointed day and time.

We did not want to waste time, so the next day we went to explore through the massif. We divided into three teams of two. On any given day, one rests at base camp, and two explore the area. By operating this way, we had full gear. We were able to climb over steep terrain, up and down, up and down, at an altitude of about 3500 up to 4100 m above sea level. Unfortunately, disappointment soon came. We did not find caves, all the "windows" visible from below turned out to be just niches. **The rock also did not indicate the occurrence of limestone as we knew it - there were no karst forms like lapiaz or karst funnels. Around us we saw marble and dolomite, mixed with crystalline rocks, and even volcanic rocks - a complete mish-mash.** Finally, after a few days we made a joint decision. We needed to change to another massif. For our next reconnaissance location, the Naryn-Too massif was chosen right next to Naryn, where we found out that no exploration had taken place so far. Eventually, we reached the western part of this massif.



We felt a surge of hope, because the mountains were built of the same alpine limestone known to us. Here and there, you could also see (maybe not as effectively as in the Alps) karst

elements: lapiaz and other karstic forms. We divided as before into three groups, each of which, every day until departure, worked in a slightly different part of this massif (between 2500m to about 3100m above sea level). We searched these mountains, covering kilometers of terrain every day at elevations of around 3000 m. It was arduous and difficult surface exploration, especially since the vegetation there was protected by all imaginable kinds of thorns.

We have found many new cave entrances. A lot of them were huge (up to about 20m high). Some were in the walls, to which we had to simply rappel. Unfortunately, the vast majority of the entrances we found ended in fill or collapse. We do not know the geological history of this part of the massif, but we suspect that a "geological apocalypse" happened here, which largely destroyed the caves.

In total, we managed to find 22 caves with a total length of 254 meters.

Perhaps we have not yet found what we are looking for, but we know that one without the other is not right. That is why we do not give up hope and exploration.

Special thanks to Michał Amborski, Gosi Borowiecka, Marcin Gala, Andrzej Ciszewski, Jarek Surmacz and Piotr Mazur, who selflessly lent us their equipment, knowledge or experience. Without you, it would be much, much harder for us. Thank you very much!

We also thank GAT International for providing us with their rope Gleistein GeoSafe GeoTwin 9 mm (for testing purposes in the field).

The expedition was attended by:

Ewelina Raczyńska - SGW
Michał Macioszczyk - WKTJ
Piotr Bąkowski - WKTJ
Jan Barabach - WKTJ
Bartosz Haremza - WKTJ
Bogdan Guzik - WKTJ

Please find more details below.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to write us:

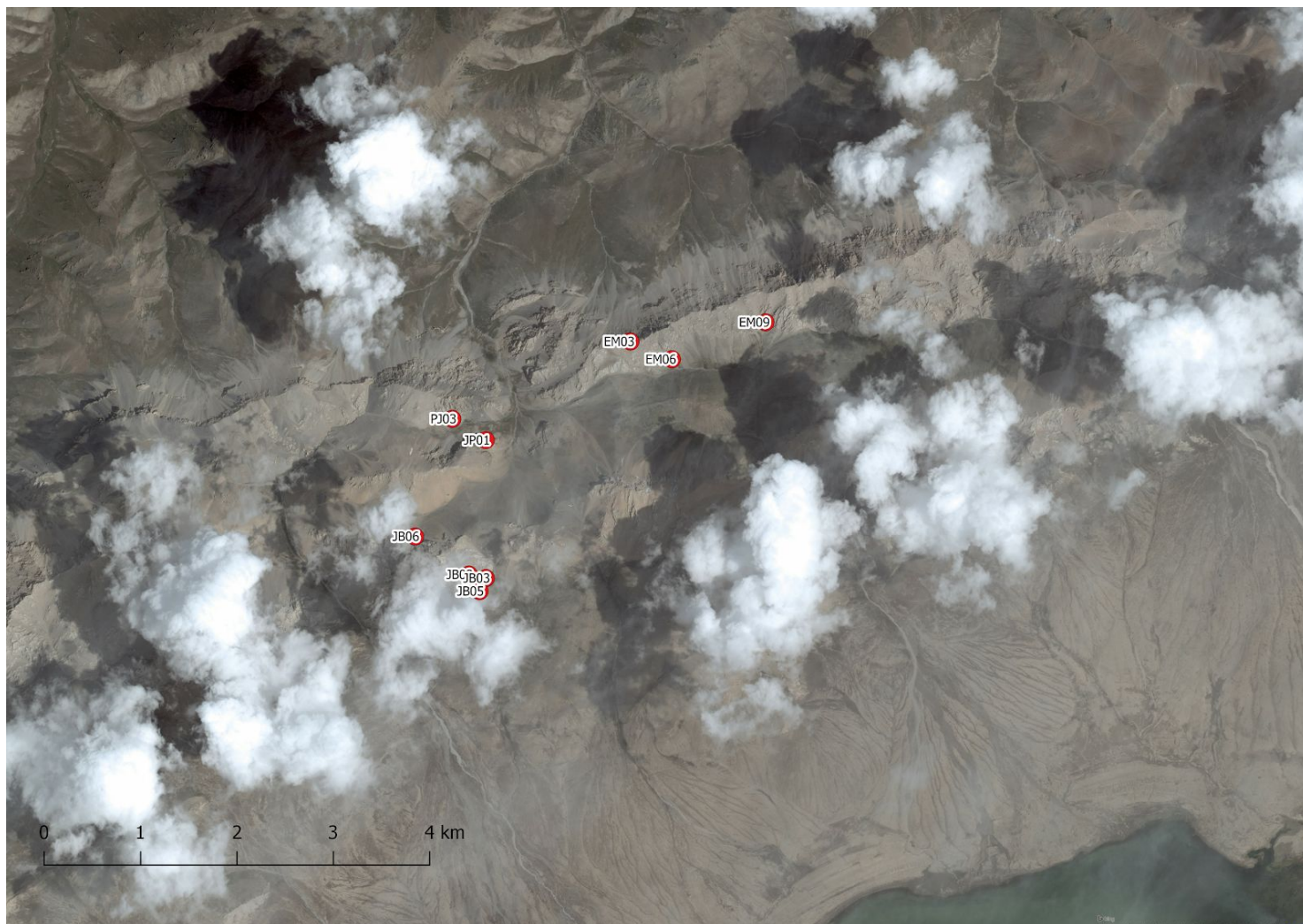
spameoer@gmail.com.

Photos: <http://pza.org.pl/news/news-jaskinie/at-bashy-kirgistan-2018>

Results:

The list of found caves:

Name	Longitude	Latitude	Length of the cave /m/
PJ03	75.28897385	40.74723959	2
N-JP04	75.85194474	41.42130634	11
N-JP06	75.85048491	41.4249609	5
JP01	75.29309717	40.74525673	7
JB02	75.29101729	40.73274383	N/A
JB03	75.29310118	40.73241017	8
JB05	75.29233458	40.73119458	N/A
JB06	75.28440835	40.73628826	30
N-JP05	75.85003538	41.42631097	8
N-JP08	75.85002346	41.42559799	20
N-JP07	75.85040042	41.42531044	5
N-JPB0 1	75.83096084	41.43151513	6
N-JPB0 2	75.84134644	41.42667447	5
N-JPB0 3	75.8416590799999994 5	41.4264552899999998 2	34
EM03	75.3108421	40.7544333	N/A
EM06	75.3159514	40.7527876	6
EM09	75.3274398	40.7562235	15
N-EM01	75.8586014	41.42237	10
N-EM07	75.824438	41.4285487	5
N-BB01	76.00996575	41.38178064	7
N-BB03	75.8464174943856	41.428438564689	10
N-BB04	75.84304813	41.42660762	60
SUM			254



At-Bashy area



Naryn-Too area

