

Travesía Acebo – Rubicera/Mortero

Access to LA SIMA DEL ACEBO

There are several routes to the Sima del Acebo, depending upon where you leave your cars. The quickest and easiest route is the route of Entremazos, from an altitude of 950m it rises 300m and takes about 75 minutes until the level of the entrance at 1,250m. The route is about 2950 meters long.

RUTA DE ENTREMAZOS

The cars are parked at an area known as Entremazos, near the junction of tracks at an altitude of 950m co-ordinates (454706, 4785799, 950). We go up the trail to the left towards two cabins that are on top of the hill, pass in front of them and turn North West along a narrow path between the gorse bushes that populate the field.

The path crosses a fence along a rocky spur (marked C on the e-map) and rises to the northeast across several shallow valleys in the "campa de árgomas." You need to search for the path and not lose the trail in these meadows, not to lose the way here. The route climbs the first hill to the west at an elevation of 1038m and turns north again to return to the northwest and then north again. References are scarce and trails unclear, so use the GPS it becomes very desirable.

A spring is reached at an altitude of 1093m, which flows between rocks beneath beech trees. we cross this and ascend a marked path overcoming an escarpment, to gain a second flat area with various dolines. We continue northwest to reach some soft lapiaz rising up from south to north. We enter this and follow a faint path and continue north along a valley with large beech trees, some of which have fallen.

The valley and forest end and we are in the area known as "La Rasa" altitude 1180m, with a lapiaz with small cracks through which the trail passes in a straight line always to the north.

There now appears a 30m high cliff that we leave to our left and a great deep doline to our right, we pass this on its western side to get to the lapiaz at the southern edge of the entrance to Acebo.

The entrance is in the shape of a Z, with a grassy ramp on its west side¹ which allows you to reach the base of the first drop without using a rope. We are at an altitude of 1250m and the coordinates of this point are: 453,024, 4,787,116, 1250m

(1:- There is a cairn marking the start of the ramp)

Descend the grassy ramp and a rocky climb next to a hollow to arrive at the bottom where large blocks turn first to the right and then to the left to arrive at the head of the first pitch.

RUTA DEL MORTERO

If there is only one car, and it is intended to exit by the Mortero de Astrana the most advisable route is to start from by the Mortero de Astrana. Ascend first by the track, up to the first sharp right hand bend and a flat area, where a track leaves on the left that we should follow. the track heads north parallel to the streambed, then joins and crosses it, zigzags in three hairpin bends and then continues in a straight line the northeast, and passes a barn and turns to the north , then again northwest, on the meadows of gorse to reach the "C" point on the Entremazos route, shortly after passing the fence, after about two miles.

RUTA RUBICERA

This route leaves the road just before the Mirador at the top of the Ason valley and ascends normal approach path to the cave of Rubicera. After reaching the col where the path descends to down to the Rubicera, continue along a path that rises, towards the Rasa, northward, following the cairn of the different paths that ascend to the Mortillano. We take the path that passes La Rasa and when we reach an altitude of 1250m we go to the east side of a rocky outcrop that is on the east spur of la Rasa. As already indicated in the other routes the entrance is located northeast of the rocky outcrop. We have travelled about 4300 meters.

Description of the Traverse.

A steeply sloping grassy ramp takes us get to the bottom of the first drop of the cave, in between blocks and on the left wall is rigging for the first pitch of 12m. A second rappel of 11m lands us on a stone floor which leads to a handrail fitted with two ropes, a first horizontal section and then a vertical section, followed again by another horizontal, allow to reach the next rappel installation, installed with a chain. This drop is one of the biggest on the traverse and has a deviation 10m down which keeps us out of the narrowest section of the pitch. The final section is on a ramp which takes us to the next rebelay in a much smaller passage. This is a rappel of 13m and leads to a funnel of loose stones that fall into a small crawl fitted with a thick traverse rope that ensures their integrity

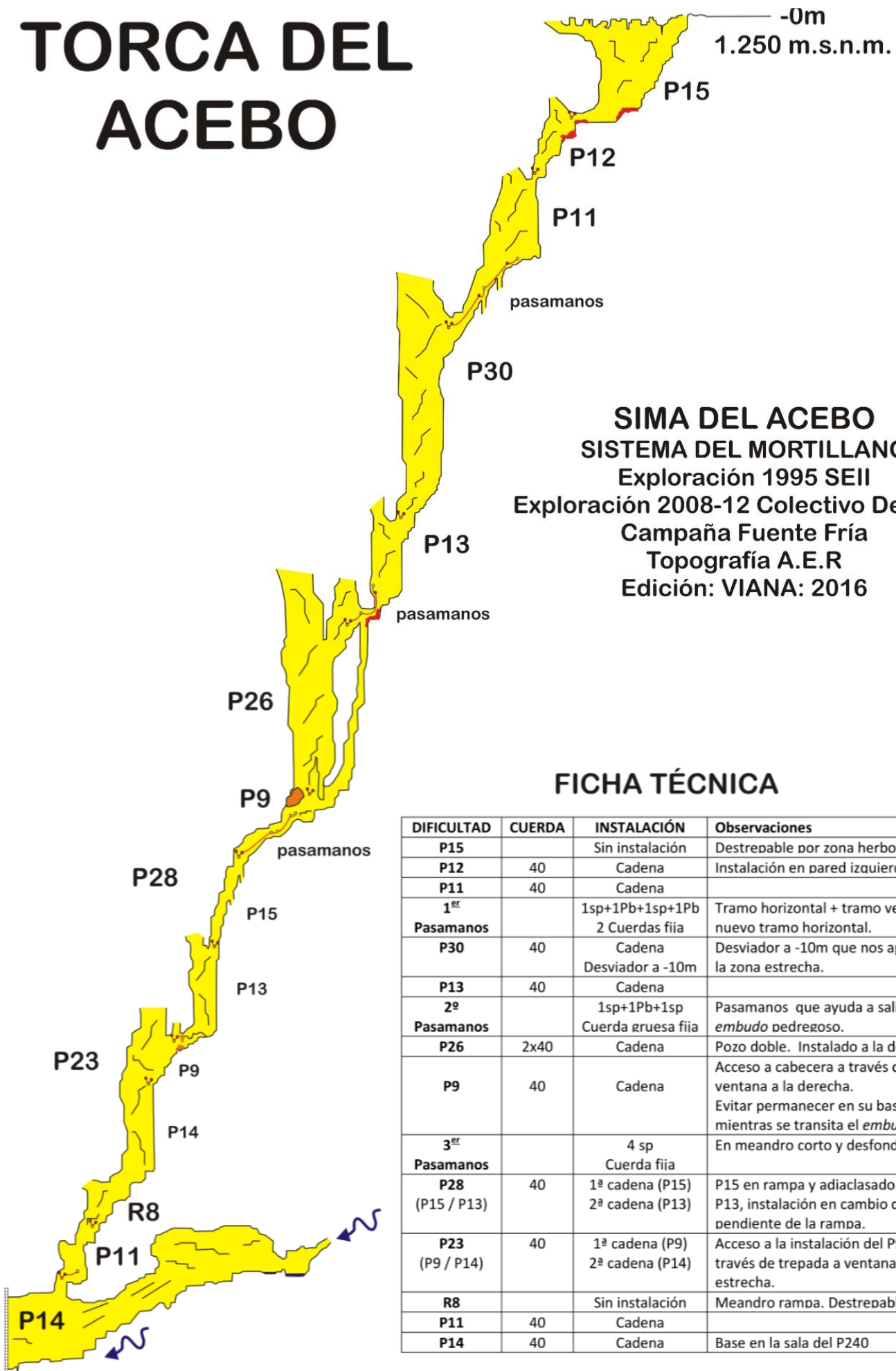
To pass this obstacle it is necessary to synchronize with the cavers around us, as we drag the stones through the crawl they fall down a double pitch below. While the stones fall down the pitch nobody should descend the pitch, in essence we must come together and ensure that nobody is below when somebody comes through the funnel/crawl.

As indicated after the handline/funnel comes a double pitch, installed on the right side with a chain. It is a long rappel 26 meters. At the bottom a ramp of stones leads to another short drop, but we do not descend it, but we go through a window on the right, rather than directly. Here is a 9m rappel, taking us to a junction of **(this is where we should not be when someone crosses the funnel)** the two wells.

We then enter a short and bottomless meander, rigged with a traverse line and after a ramp we arrive at the next pitch head. It is a pitch down a ramp in a rift 15m long. Where the slope of the ramp changes we find the next belay for another drop of 13m with a rocky floor and we climb through a narrow window to reach the head of the next obstacle. Pass this tight window with difficulty, to gain a big pitch of 23m, but is descended by two drops of 9m and 14m to avoid possible problems with recovering the rope.

At the base of this pitch is a meander down a ramp which we can descend without problems to the next pitch head a drop of 11m starting as a ramp but becoming vertical. Now we are in a clear meander, it twists and then the floor disappears over the darkness... We use ropes to get to the next re-belay which allows us to descent the final pitch in this series. Descending 14m it lands us in the middle of a huge room 100m long by 40m wide.

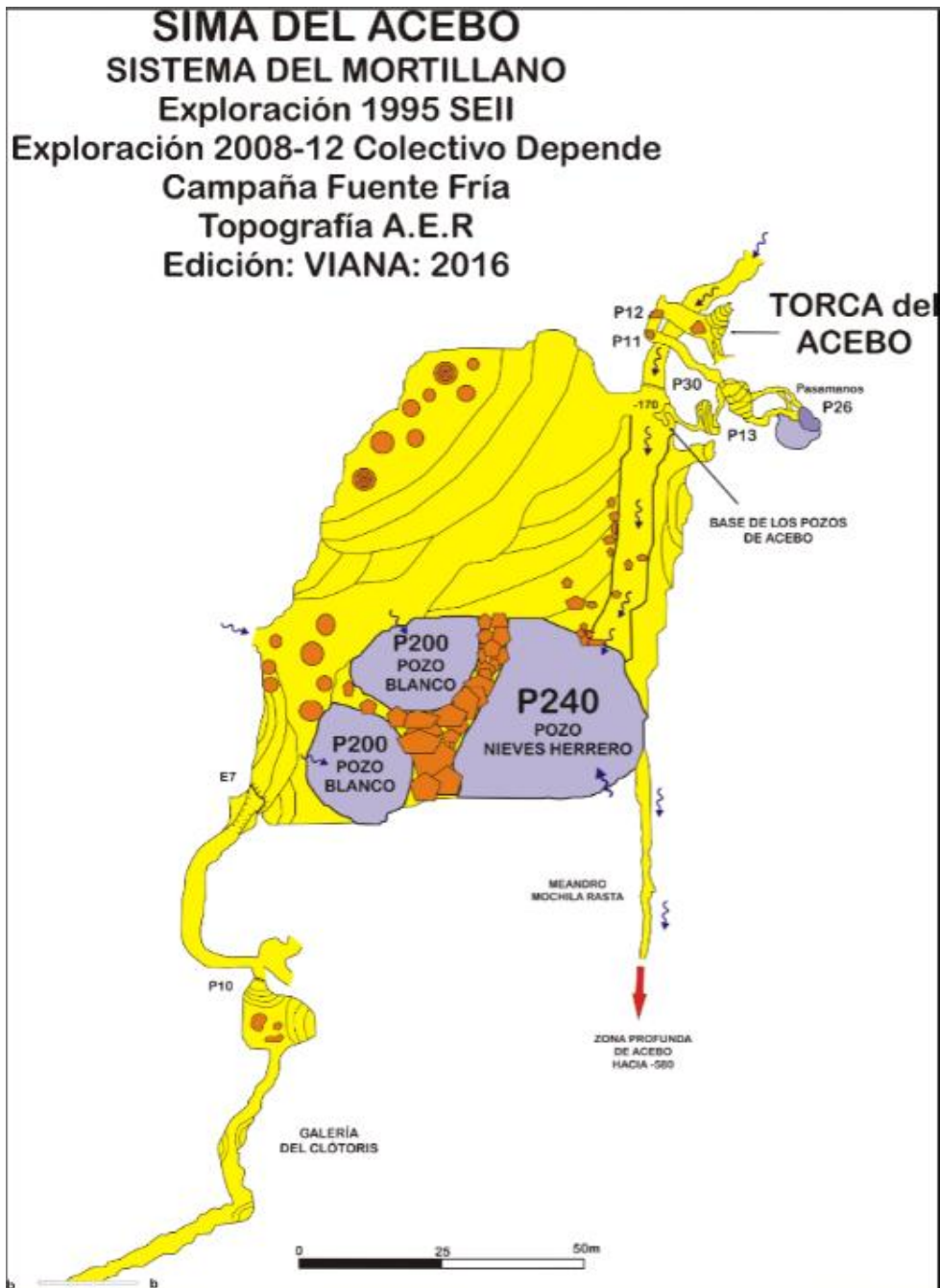
TORCA DEL ACEBO



SIMA DEL ACEBO
SISTEMA DEL MORTILLANO
 Exploración 1995 SEII
 Exploración 2008-12 Colectivo Dependiente
 Campaña Fuente Fría
 Topografía A.E.R
 Edición: VIANA: 2016

FICHA TÉCNICA

DIFICULTAD	CUERDA	INSTALACIÓN	Observaciones
P15		Sin instalación	Destrepable por zona herbosa. Hito.
P12	40	Cadena	Instalación en pared izquierda.
P11	40	Cadena	
1 ^{er} Pasamanos		1sp+1Pb+1sp+1Pb 2 Cuerdas fija	Tramo horizontal + tramo vertical + nuevo tramo horizontal.
P30	40	Cadena Desviador a -10m	Desviador a -10m que nos aparta de la zona estrecha.
P13	40	Cadena	
2 ^o Pasamanos		1sp+1Pb+1sp Cuerda gruesa fija	Pasamanos que ayuda a salir del embudo pedregoso.
P26	2x40	Cadena	Pozo doble. Instalado a la derecha.
P9	40	Cadena	Acceso a cabecera a través de ventana a la derecha. Evitar permanecer en su base mientras se transita el embudo.
3 ^{er} Pasamanos		4 sp Cuerda fija	En meandro corto y desfondado.
P28 (P15 / P13)	40	1 ^a cadena (P15) 2 ^a cadena (P13)	P15 en rampa y adiacelado. P13, instalación en cambio de pendiente de la rampa.
P23 (P9 / P14)	40	1 ^a cadena (P9) 2 ^a cadena (P14)	Acceso a la instalación del P9 a través de trepada a ventana estrecha.
R8		Sin instalación	Meandro rampa. Destrepable.
P11	40	Cadena	
P14	40	Cadena	Base en la sala del P240



Here at a depth of 180m, the sound of a stream that comes along with the rope and is lost in the base this room. Continue towards the back (or bottom) of the room leaving the stream to the left and continuing towards a set of tall stalagmites. We go around the side of a huge pit of more than 60 meters in diameter which includes two large pitches of 250m and 200m. Passing between large formations a rope allows us to pass over a slippery flowstone and leads to an upward rope of 7 m., which allows us to reach a meander hanging from the ceiling of the room. We are in the gallery Fuente Fría, with the dimensions of a mine gallery and sandy soil; this ends soon and has at ground level a window equipped with a traverse line.

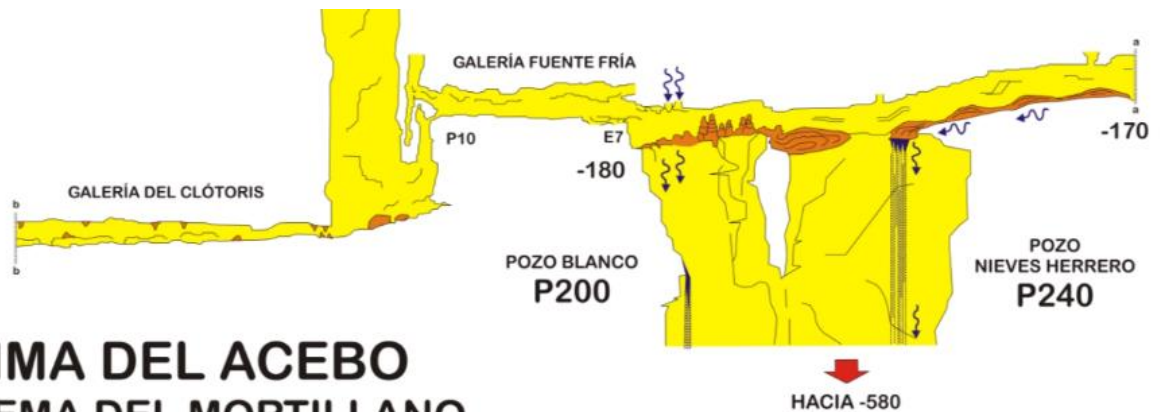
Traverse the window and we gain a large chimney pitch 10m in diameter with many concretions and well ventilated. the bottom is encountered after 10m and facing the rope is a medium sized gallery with concretions and sandy leads by a few corners to a flowstone almost blocking the gallery, but a narrow crawl is la Galería del Clotoris.

The crawl is 2m horizontal and then it falls 1.5m vertically² and then along horizontally for 3m, this the **Paso del Clótoris**, and although it is not very tight, yes it is uncomfortable to pass if you are tall. The exit between flowstones opens into a hollow where you can hear the sound of water. there we go down 15m. Pozo del Espeleoliron lands between large formations in the shape of a door³ which once crossed brings us into a nice room, with a floor with puddles and with water strongly dripping from the ceiling and some inlets from tight meanders.

2:- It is not a pure vertical, but a step down and then right

3:- A passage marked with reflectors

The continuation is again by a mine like gallery, with water circulating at the base of the white flowstone - very very slippery At a left turn with a 3m down climb equipped with a fixed rope leads to a larger gallery with areas 15m wide and 6m high, covered in the middle with an area of white flowstone and with circulating water forming curtains. There formations in the bends and much debris material on which this area has been excavated.



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Gallery AER

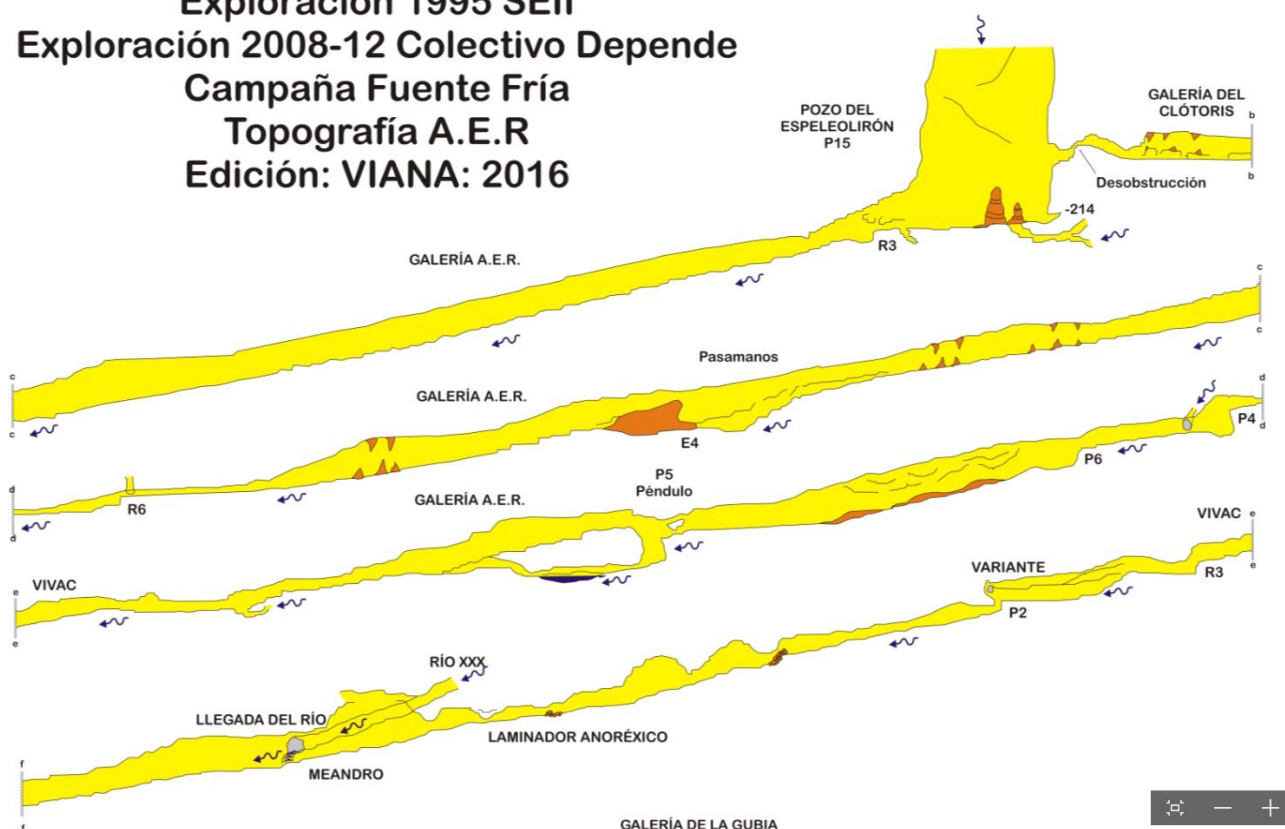
Getting here from the base of the pitches can take 50 minutes, but now the progress is fast and convenient, be careful of the slippery floor and the brittle fill, but the beauty of the gallery and its active course make it very interesting. A rope helps us down a ramp and soon after another allows us to overcome a climb on the debris. We reach a point where the gallery is nearly blocked by flowstone and formations, and we are forced to crawl a few meters along the water that falls down a climb 6 meters (this can be down climbed on the right). At the bottom a beautiful gour 4m in diameter receives water from the river, which continues again from the room and then enters another low crawl and again leads to a drop of 4 meters, this time equipped with a rope and a deviation. This jump, can be wet if the river is high, also lands on similar gour to the ones, with white flowstone ledges that highlight and give beauty to the place ..

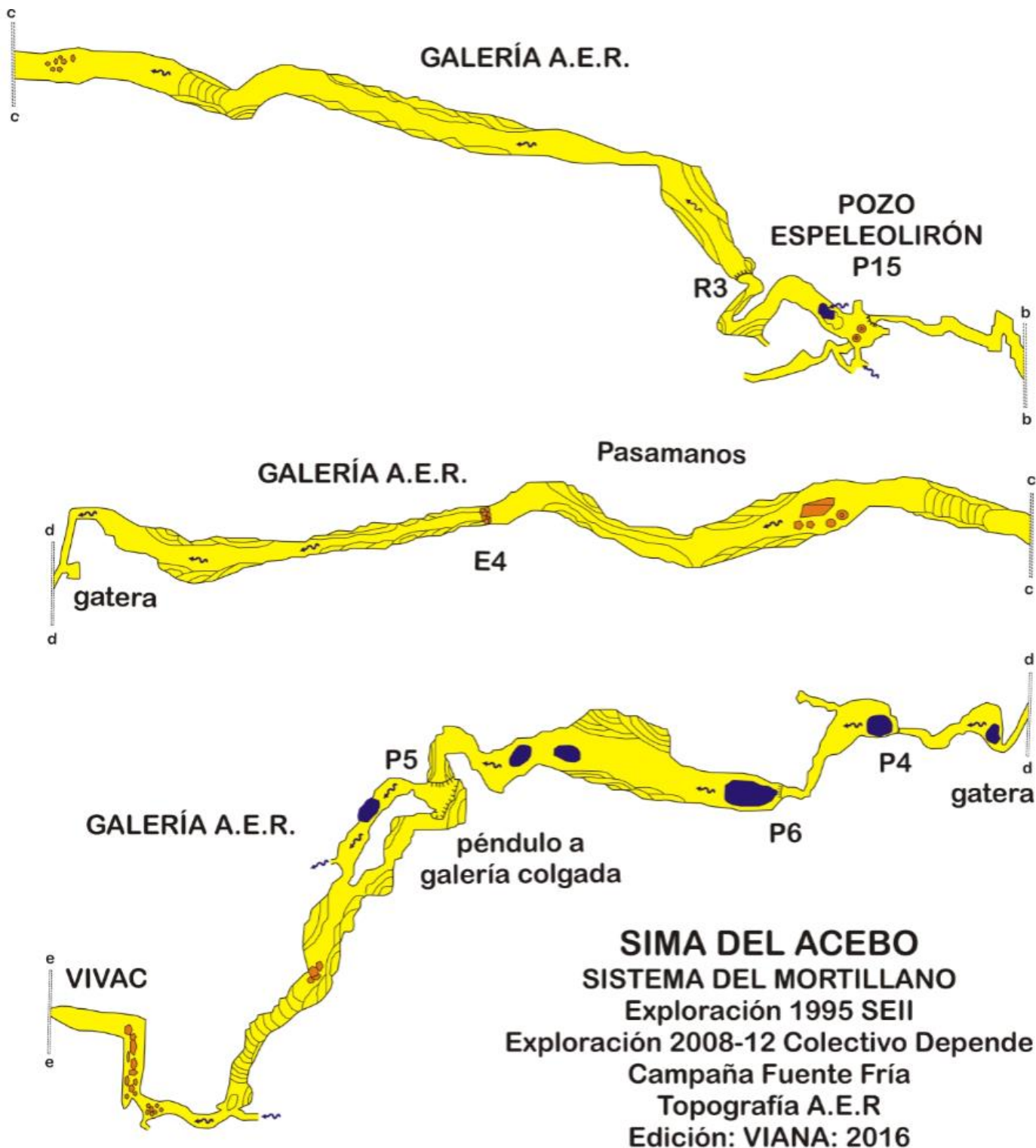
After a bend we arrive at a deep gour and a ramp of 6m equipped with a rope, we continue to descend by a large gallery with the standard white flowstone floor after a bend and passing through a porch we encounter a pitch of 5m. But here the active course is abandoned for the moment, as the water drops to a siphon. The precise route make a pendulum installed on a fixed rope, to reach a fossil gallery across the pit; follow this large gallery with many formations and drips (we will take another 50 minutes to get here). A slippery ramp is descended to an inlet arriving from the left from a meander and is lost beneath block forming the floor of the gallery, always descending either ramps or climbs down blocks. We come to a small room with a flat floor where a bivouac was installed during the exploration. To continue, we take a climb down between debris and continue along a gallery of smaller dimensions to another down climb.

This sector is generally a size mine gallery with usual sandstone strata finely cut by water and some delicate passage between blocks. Gallery of the "drunken Miners"/Galería de los "Mineros borrachos".

Suddenly the gallery seems closed, but you can continue crawling through a laminator 5m quite low but wide, it is necessary to go first to the right and then down, looking for the highest parts which allow us to pass this "Laminator Anorexic".

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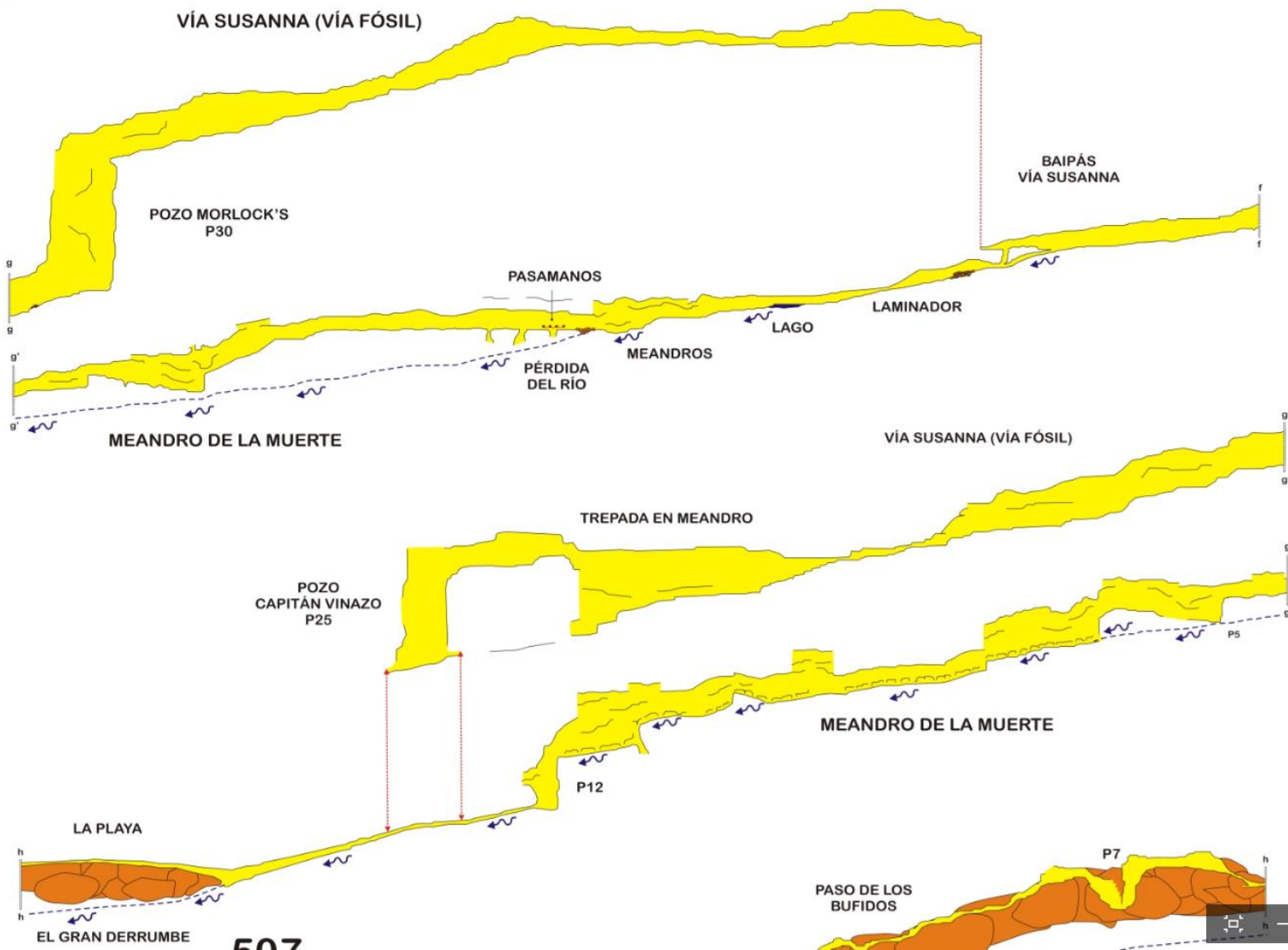


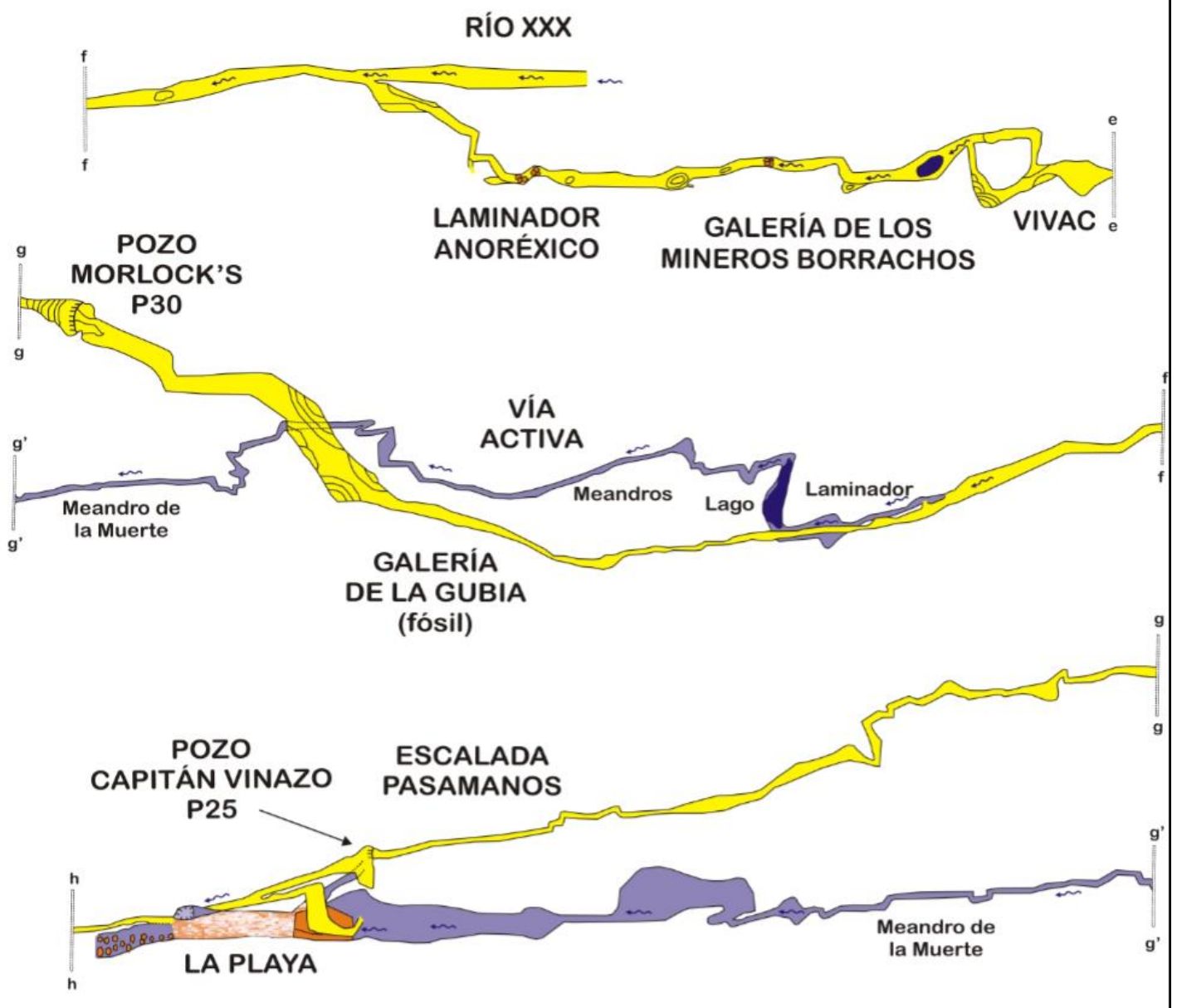


Then we come to a crossroads where to the right we return to find the river and continue with it, dodging deep gours with narrow and fragile cornices. The river turns to leave us, disappearing into a hole and following an active route which was explored by the original explorers through beddings and meanders in a very pure limestone. Here the route leaves the river and continues straight ahead to a sandy crawl and a meander of pitches carved by the water that confers beauty and uniqueness to this sector, which we call "Galería de la Gubia" Later it opens to reach staggered layers of sandstones .

This gallery is cut short by a big hole of more than 20 meters in diameter and 30 meters deep that is passed by a handline/traverse, to a tube carved into the limestone.

This Pitch of the "Morlokcs" is of singular beauty, though under the sandstone layer at the head of the pitch are some loose stones so it is advisable that people who are in at the base of the pitch move away from the bottom to avoid being hit. You need about 3 hours to get here from the base of la Sima del Acebo. At the base of the pitch a ramp of flowstone leads to a meander where the floor is often covered with flowstone and with a bend that can often mislead. Small gours and formations lend charm, but little by little the meander becomes narrower and there comes a time that we cannot continue at this level. it is necessary to climb up a rope for 10m, a little narrow and take care of loose slabs on the walls of the meander. A traverse line protects the final stretch of the meander and we continue along this to the head of a P25 with a deviation 5m down, which reduces friction of the double ropes. When going down this "Pozo del Capitán Vinazo"⁴ do not descent to the bottom, stay on a ledge 3m above the bottom, this make retrieving the ropes easier, and continue along a bottomless meander that takes us into a room with a sandy floor and a flat roof "La playa"⁵





We now hear the river from the active route flowing down drops and it is lost beneath the room.

To continue we crawl around the room first over sand then on stones, hugging the right wall and after skirting a small pitch, you should make a short climb⁶ leaving by the right of the bedding plane and passing a short narrow meander, especially in its final stretch, leads to the head of a P7 equipped with a fixed rope.

4:- This pitch had a deviation a few meters down on the opposite wall.

5:- The exit from the base of "Pozo del Capitán Vinazo" is at the lowest part of the room, and "la playa" opens on our left.

6:- It is immediately after skirting the small pitch, and marked with a reflective arrow.

Down the pitch, again we enter a steepening bedding plane and tilted to the right.

It's actually a great rock fracture which appears very flakey. This stretch is about 50m long and it is best to go down the right on the lower side of the crack, even if some cairns they go more to the center. At the bottom of this bedding, blocks close off the way and we need to find a crawl on the left (Paso de los "Bufidos")⁷. This crawl is one of the most complicated and selective parts of the traverse despite being short. First we advance 1m horizontally and then squeeze through a narrow vertical hole of 1m, to again creep 2 meters horizontally in a tight section with loose stones.

After we have passed this section, we reach a traverse line and a P15 installed with a fixed rope and with a re-belay. At bottom we hear the river again and we reach a layer of sandstone.

We are in la galería de Cardín, that as we say is a stratum of sandstone tilted to the left, through which water flows and which by its low height requires us to crawl. The first 100m are quite low, and some point force us to pass in the water and we get completely wet, and in general

require us to look, below the bedding plane for the widest areas to pass.⁸ The final 200m of the 300m of this gallery is kinder, and generally crawl or walk, with many beautiful gours that we skirt.⁹

To leave this gallery we must search the ceiling for a fossil meander marked with a reflector¹⁰ and after a short section of crawling¹¹ we leave by a window to take a high gallery that we descend towards the right. This sector requires about 50 minutes to complete.¹²

7:- Failure to identify this step, as the continuation of the voyage, was responsible for a controversial rescue of the GREIM in August 2013. If we go down the right side of the fissure us it is easier to find the route. We recommend removing all SRT kit and go with feet first and face down in the downstream section, this step has several points that allow us to rotate.

8:- Always look for a route over to the right to stay as dry as possible. (you can do some stretches crawling if you search on this side).

9:- The Gallery Cardin is considerably longer than it looks, our impression is that it has more than 300 m. mentioned herein, and you end up soaking wet (do not know, but it could reach 1,000m)

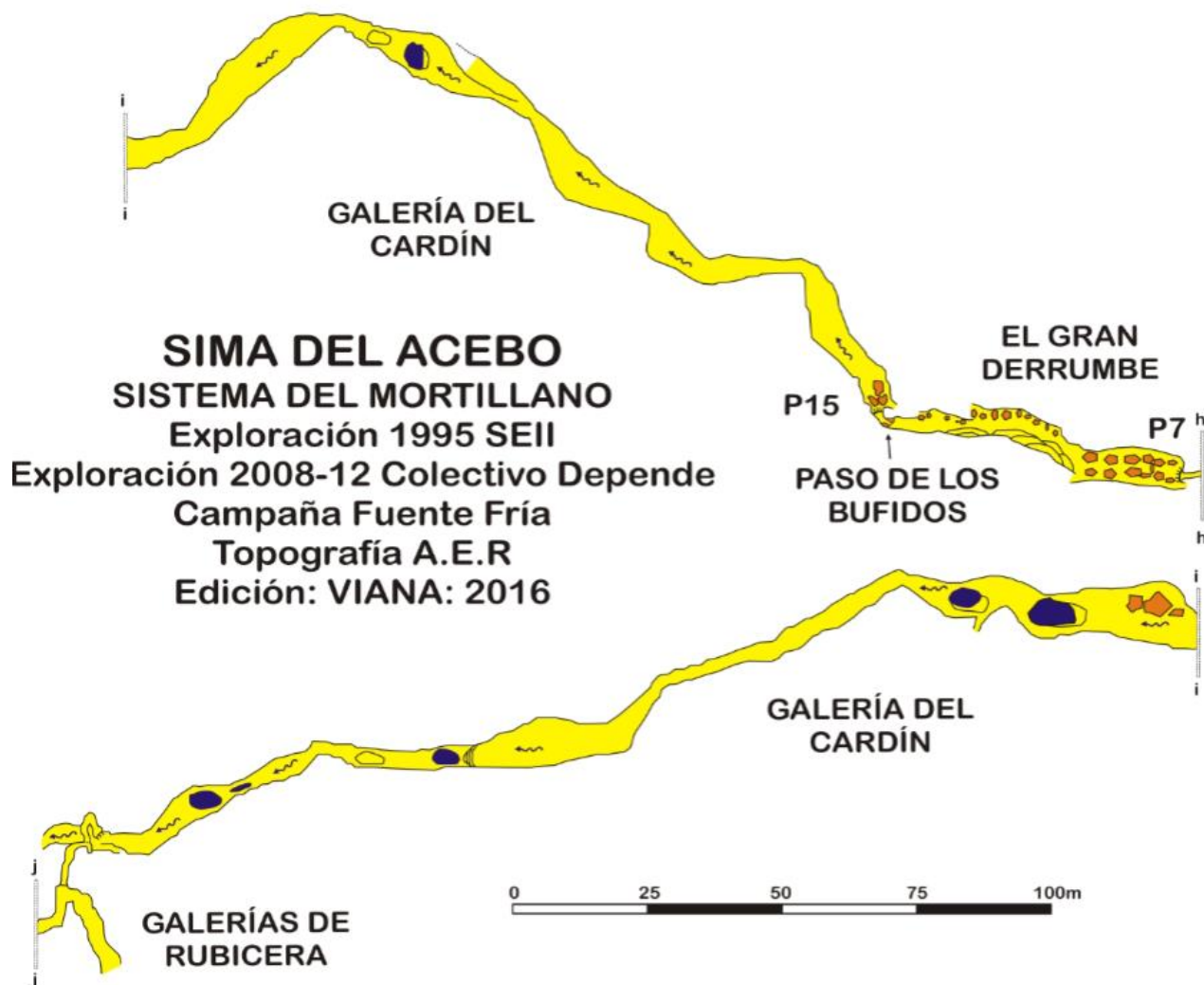
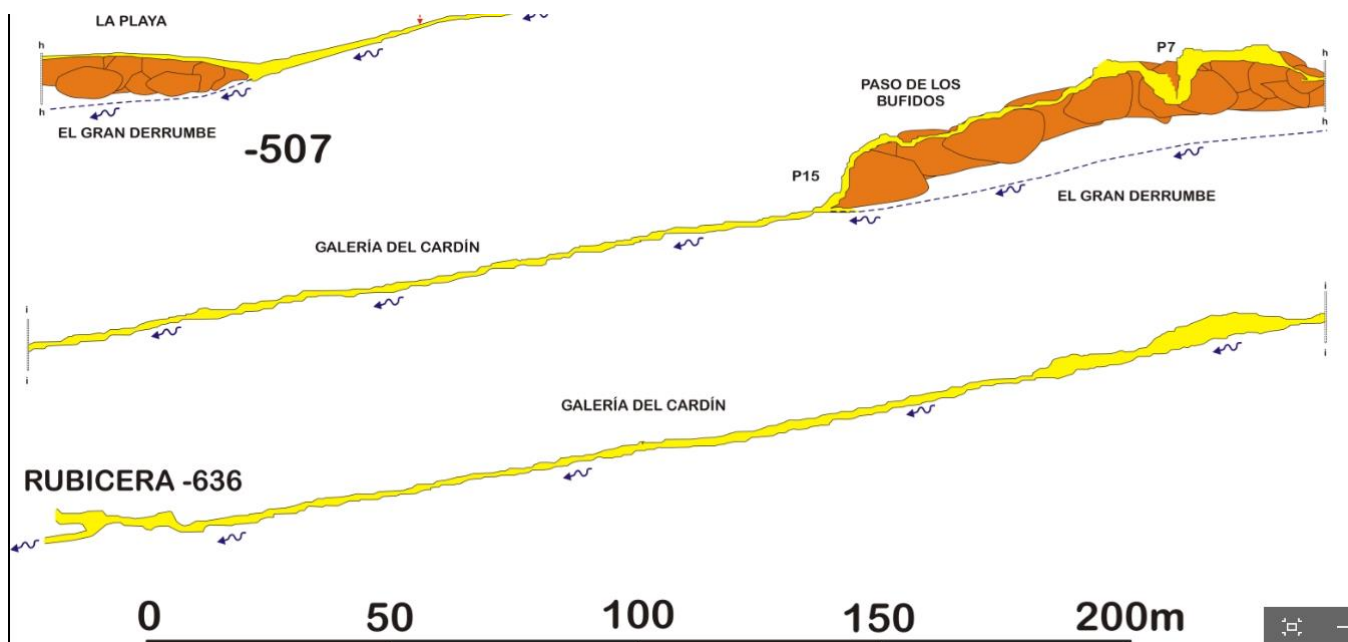
10:- Find the meander when the bedding plane increases in height enough to you to adopt a comfortable sitting posture. There is a reflective marker, but a white paper (an energy bar wrapper eye is the only beacon in whole gallery after the entry into gallery Cardín).

11:- First we move through this meander walking (we pass above Cardín gallery, and after several twists reach a point requiring crawl. When we have passed the crawl we enter galleries of the Rubicera.

12:- It took almost two hours to pass this gallery, (from the base of the P15 until entering the Rubicera)

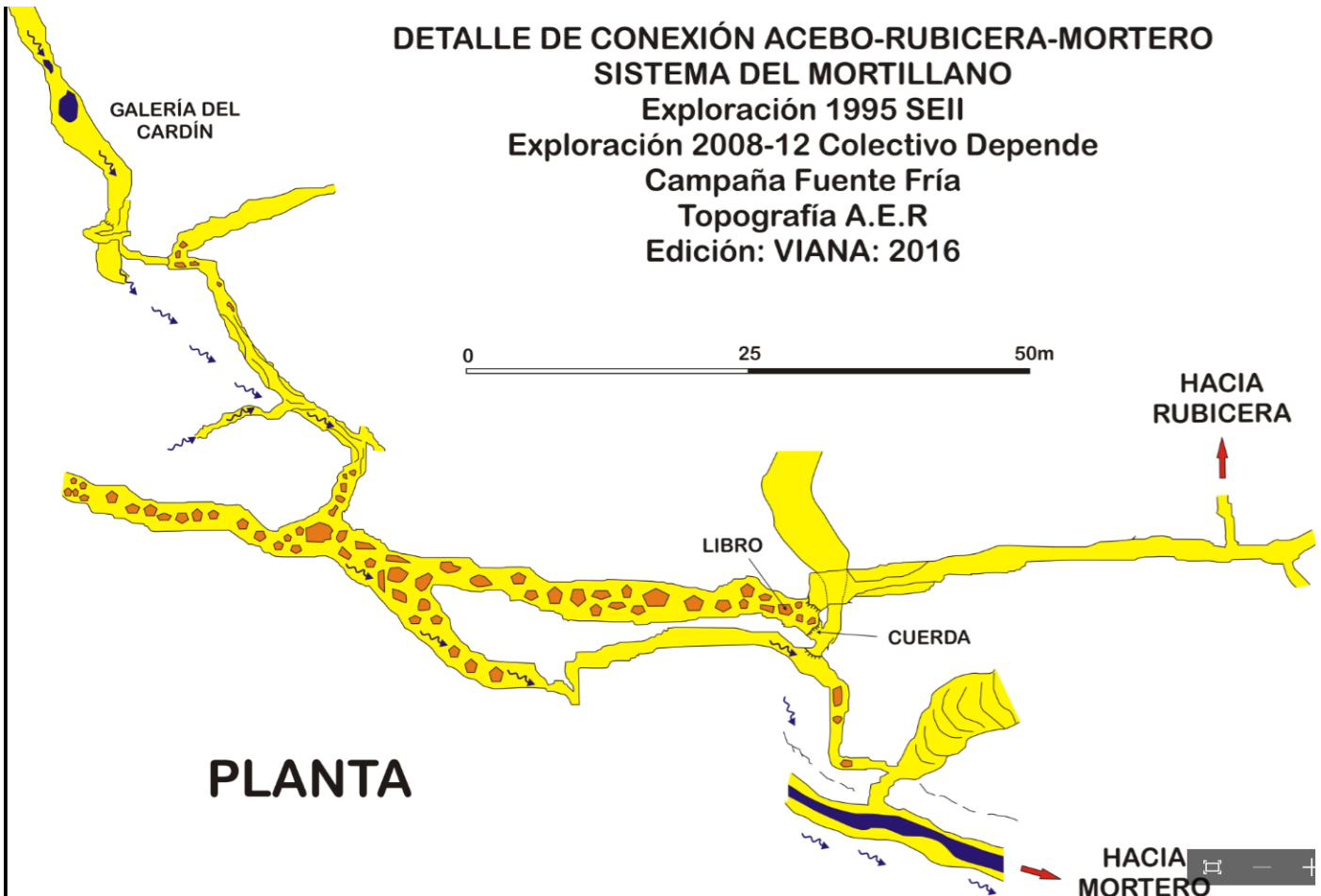
We are now in the galleries of the Rubicera¹³ and progress is delicate on block edges and short easy climbs. The river you hear in the background and at this point are together the río del Acebo with el río de la Teta camino del Mortero. Soon we reach a junction with a wider gallery of large blocks, where we head to the left with delicate balancing on the edges of the blocks. The river is heard falling below the blocks and we stay on the left side of the gallery, which widens and then divides in two. An area to the right descends towards the river and it is possible to follow this towards the Mortero, but it is better for us to continue to the left to a crossroads signposted with a Tupperware box and a visitor's book. Please record the visit, at least as an aid to potential rescue teams, who must locate missing groups.

13:- When we leave the crawl we must follow the gallery to our right in the forward direction.



DETALLE DE CONEXIÓN ACEBO-RUBICERA-MORTERO SISTEMA DEL MORTILLANO

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At this point, to the left, a gallery hanging by 3m would take us to the Rubuicera Entrance But continuing straight ahead it takes us to a descending rope and the route to the Mortero de Astrana. from the base of the rope we advance by taking the route to the right and rapidly arrive at a down climb of 2m and we approach the river and the route mentioned above. Taking a climb towards the left and following the sound of water we look for a descent to the river of the traverse of the Rubicera, marked with a rope. From here it is 5 to 6 hours to exit the Mortero.

If instead we intend to exit by the Rubicera, follow the route as indicated up to the visitors book, climb into a hanging gallery 3mx4m and advance a few tens of metres to a crossroads, here we take the route to the left ¹⁴ (Galeria del Chocolate) by which we ascend to the base of the Pozo del Chocolate. From the visitors book it is 3-4 hours to exit by the Rubicera. But it is essential that the Pozo del Chocolate is rigged and in good condition, therefore it is advisable to speak to other groups that have visited the pitch recently for establish its condition.

14:- Marked with a tape. Shortly after a bend to the left, we take la Galería de la plancha, and we take a climb marked with a red reflective marker. (if we miss the climb we reach a low gallery that compels us to crawl we should NOT take !!). At the top of the climb we soon arrive at the base of the Pozo del Chocolate.

- it is about four hours from here to the street.

- We took 20 hours to make the journey, including the three stops we made that would add approximately 2 hours.

The time taken for the traverse may vary greatly depending on the number of people and speed on the ropes and in the galleries, but to give an idea can estimate the following average times:

Approach to Acebo from Entremazos: 1,15h
Descent of the Pozos del Acebo to la sala: 2h
Galerías de Acebo to the junction with Rubicera: 5h
Exit by Rubicera: 2h
Return from Rubicera to the car: 1h
Exit by the Mortero: 3 or 4 h.

Therefore, estimated timetables without rests can be:

Acebo-Rubicera¹⁶: 9 hours plus two hours for the approach and return; Altogether, about 11hrs.

Acebo-Mortero: 10 to 12 hours plus one hour for the approach to Acebo. Altogether about 13hrs.

Characteristics of the traverse

As already mentioned, the longest rappel is 30 meters, and taking into account knots; the minimum rope length is 2 x 35 meters. Since some of the re-belays are hanging, but never more than two in a row, the recommended technique is to rig two rappels and take third rope to recover. In Pozos del Acebo, we must take into account how to synchronise our movements to avoid falling stones at the base of the double pitch.

Regarding orientation, there are no notable problems on the traverse; some points are marked with beacons or landmarks to facilitate route finding.¹⁷

Regarding the tight sections, the traverse does not have long narrow areas, but about 5 specific steps, where the narrowness may limit the passage of very big people. Cavers of 1.80m and 90 Kg have performed without problems, and dressed in their caving suits.

the five narrow points are

Ventana del 9 rappel.
Paso del Clotoris
Laminador anoréxico
Paso de los Bufidos
Laminadores de la Galería Cardín

The traverse has no passages that sump, and almost all the way no water problems, but for in the final stretch, of the gallery Cardin, as indicated, forces us at some points, especially if we are large, to crawl along the river bed. Therefore, it is advisable to make the traverse during dry conditions.

If you are very sensitive to the cold, you can carry a neoprene vest¹⁸ or the like, but our experience advisable to bring a dry thermal shirt and after the damp section do not stand for long, so you do not feel cold and this avoids us having to carry wetsuits.

Agrupación Espeleológica Ramaliega 2012 (AER)

- Caution, do not miss the exit from the gallery Cardin, and study well the routes from the visitor book to the exit of the Rubicera (it is a very labyrinthine cave, with multiple beacons indicating both routes to the rubicera exit and the Mortero exit).

- A good choice would bring a Shorty wetsuit, which are used for surfing and will the required freedom of movement to progress efficiently.

Observations by the club VIANA 2013

To our knowledge, this is a physically tough journey and its duration cause slow groups to need a bivouac, but the only suitable area for it is precisely that name, the VIVAC, and is too close to the entrance. The other galleries of the Acebo, are draughty, wet, with landslides or with blocky floors. In the Rubicera it is not worth stopping as we are now wet.

It is advisable to bring all the equipment in watertight bags, since in gallery Cardín we all get wet . . .

Another point to consider is that if we go out of the Rubicera have to pass a whole labyrinth zone, in which we find reflective and varied markers!, Be careful these markers also mark the Rubicera-Mortero traverse, and if we do not follow the Rubicera survey carefully, can deviate toward the Morteror. If we have never been in Rubicera, it would be advisable to enter and reccy the route to the Pozo del Chocolate and check the status of the rope.