

# Pozo del Oso. Sistema de La Gándara (lower Gandara)

## INTRODUCTION

Given the bad weather forecast for the weekend, a simple alternative plan was chosen: an underground excursion. The chosen cave was La Gándara, specifically the "Bear's Pitt" (named for the bones of an old cave bear found on a ledge), located in its eastern section near the entrance. The intention was to reach the La Gándara collector, where the river of the same name originates, and explore its surroundings. Although the area was explored by the French caving club EC Dijon years ago, it lies off the usual route to the Angel's Hall and is a lesser-known area.

## PARKING

Intersection of CA-256 and CA-665  
(43.191972, -3.584111). Grass parking area with a slight incline (be careful with low-clearance cars), easily accommodating 4-5 vehicles. If full, further up on a bend in the CA-665 there is another convenient space that can fit 3 vehicles  
(43.189811, -3.584980).

## ACCESS

Access will take no more than 15 minutes, from either of the two parking lots mentioned, going up a steep slope that in case of rain, is very muddy and slippery (hiking poles are more than welcome).

## MATERIALS

As the installation stands in January 2025, a minimum of 70 meters of rope and 9-10 Carabiners and at least 2-3 M8 spit bolts or M8 plates for parabolts with their nuts to reach the base of the Bear Pit.

The rest of the cave, with the exception of the handrail accessing the meander located at the source of the waterfall in the chamber adjacent to the base of the pit, does not have fixed anchors or particularly delicate sections that would require re-belaying with a natural anchor and an auxiliary rope. Therefore, to lighten the load, if desired, you can choose to leave the progression equipment at the base of the pit for a more comfortable climb.

## TECHNICAL DATA SHEET

There is no official installation sheet for the shaft. The data provided, although it doesn't specify an elevation, will serve as a guide. The installation is relatively simple, but you must be careful of friction on the ascent, always moving to the left to avoid it:

**Head of pitch:** 2 carabiners on the "Vira del Oso" handrail. There are several options to choose from, including eye bolts, pitons, Para bolts, tamper-proof anchors, etc. Try to obstruct as little as possible those who will be using the handrail for visits to the usual route.

**1st Intersection:** 2 carabiners on 2 Pb8 anchors with a plate installed. It is advisable to place a rope bag or anti-friction device to avoid an edge that, although blunt and manageable, could cause unnecessary and easily preventable friction on the ascent.

**2nd Interchange:** 2 carabiners on 2 Pb8 bolts with plate installed or 1 bolt without plate. Move to the right, swinging slightly, and change to the other wall. There is a fixed rope in questionable condition that leads to the ledge where the bear's bones are located.

**3rd Interchange:** 1 carabiner on 1 Pb8 bolt with plate installed. Another change of wall. This interchange is essential to avoid rope drag, although there is also another one. A somewhat hidden and questionable-condition bolt on the wall from which the route starts, which, if broken down, might also serve to prevent rope drag. It remains to be seen whether this Pb8 with a sling for mounting a deviator will also serve to prevent rope drag.

**4th Break:** 2 carabiners on 2 Pb8 bolts without plates installed, or 2 bolts without plates. New wall change. Choose the anchor you prefer between a bolt or a Pb to reach the base comfortably. Pay attention on the ascent from this point towards the 3rd anchor. Move by swinging slightly to the left to avoid rope drag.

## **DESCRIPTION**

This is an easy and enjoyable route, although it has a few exposed sections that require caution, and a narrow passage that was quite daunting for those suffering from claustrophobia.

Once we descend the shaft, at its base we can enjoy a magnificent high-ceilinged chamber that ends in its easternmost section in a jumble of sloping blocks. In its western section, where the route to the collector begins, we can see a series of curious fossilized stalactites—which give the Gallery of the Tentacles its name—to which the wind has given such a twisted shape.

Continuing westward, we reach the next chamber, where the sound of a magnificent waterfall (E5) alerts us to the presence of water. The Waterfall Chamber, with its large central drop and tiny lake, can be skirted on both sides, although the right side is perhaps the most comfortable. The stones, although large, are somewhat loose, so it's advisable to tread carefully to avoid surprises. From the base of the waterfall, you can see a fixed rope serving as a handrail to access an upper meander, which we leave behind to continue our route. In the distance, continuing west, you can glimpse a catadioptric reflector which, together with the numerous cairns along the route, guides us to the next step, which couldn't be more comfortable, consisting of a smooth, sandy floor in a large tunnel where we take the opportunity to take some photos.

The exit from the Great Tunnel splits into two branches and both being valid, the left one, close to the wall, is more direct and comfortable. From there we will reach a room whose fractures in the ceiling have given rise to beautiful white stalactites (Image 3) and which is well worth the Worth visiting.



Sala de la Cascada



El GranTúnel



Estalagmitas (Imagen3)



El Paso (Imagen 4)

While searching for the next step, we took the opportunity to explore a gallery that ends abruptly but features abundant formations (see -309m on the topography), as well as to admire some whitish eccentric formations located in the northwesternmost part of the chamber (where two narrow, parallel galleries are visible on the topography). With the passage located, somewhat hidden (Image 4) as it is a barely visible step that must be overcome to continue, among stalactites with a low ceiling, we entered the next chamber where a beautiful flowstone and some rimstone pools greeted us. The route continues along a sandy ramp, which leads to a hole located on the left wall as we entered. There is also an arrow placed as a clue and a metal rod as a marker.

This hole is where the narrow passage, about 15-20 meters long, is located. It will force us to crawl and curse if we forget our knee pads (a large caver weighing 80-90 kg can pass through without problems with a bit of contortion). Upon exiting the narrow passage, we can walk upright again, much to the relief of our backs. Continuing along the left side of the chamber (heading east), we will reach the next passage. This chamber is striking because of blocks that have detached from the ceiling, perfectly straight and resembling railway sleepers, and because of the presence of

yellow and red rock and curious shapes abundant in the veins of the walls and on the floor. At the end of this room, a step that we will descend will give us a room that is apparently dead-end, but which we must leave by climbing through a passage located on its right wall.

In this new gallery, perhaps not very well represented in the topography, we make an abrupt zigzagging change of direction, while gaining a little elevation, until we find some reflectors that indicate the next step. Here we need to be a little careful, since, after overcoming some opposing obstacles, there is a pit to our right that is deep enough that we don't want to fall into it, and it forces us, in a decisive step, to jump from flowstone to flowstone to continue, and they are somewhat slippery. Having overcome these obstacles, we will reach a large, high-ceilinged, and very chaotic chamber, where a series of landmarks will guide us to continue. It is important to look back and take note of reference points so as not to get lost, which is easy to do at this point. After zigzagging between the rocks and continuing straight ahead southeast, we began to take a descending path between boulders that eventually led us to El Colector.

Once at El Colector, the absence of any footprints on the riverbanks and the softness of the mud we walked on led us to believe that either no one had been there for a long time, or that the water level had risen several meters at some point, erasing all traces of the last visitors. Be that as it may, following the river's current south and then east, we reached the end of the path we could traverse without getting wet. It would have been necessary to take a waist-deep dip if we wanted to reach the end of the collector or visit the chimney marked on the map. Since we could avoid it, we sacrificed visiting the chimney to stay dry.



El Colector

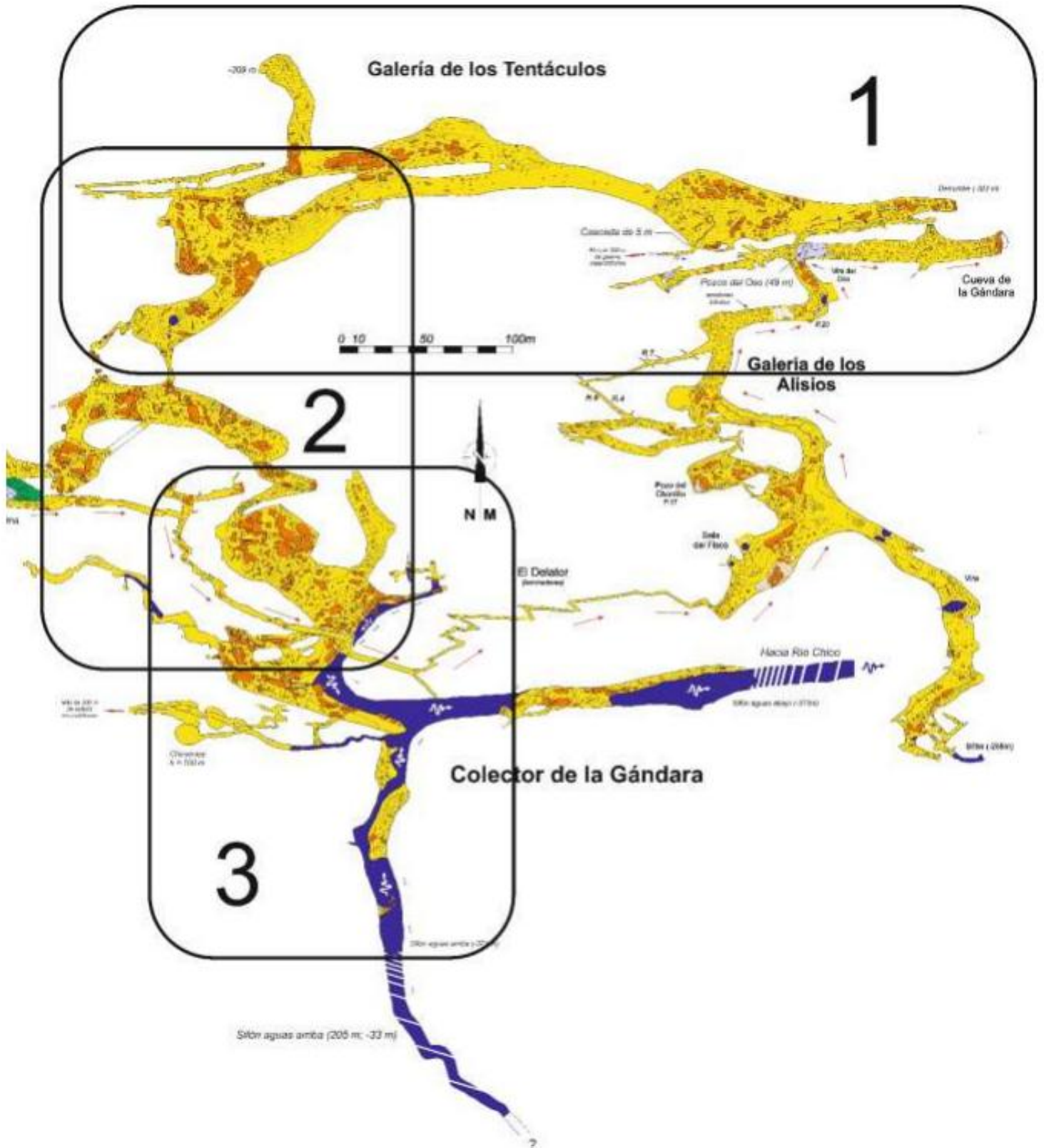


*Cantabrodesmus Lorioli*, reliquia endémica del Alto Asón

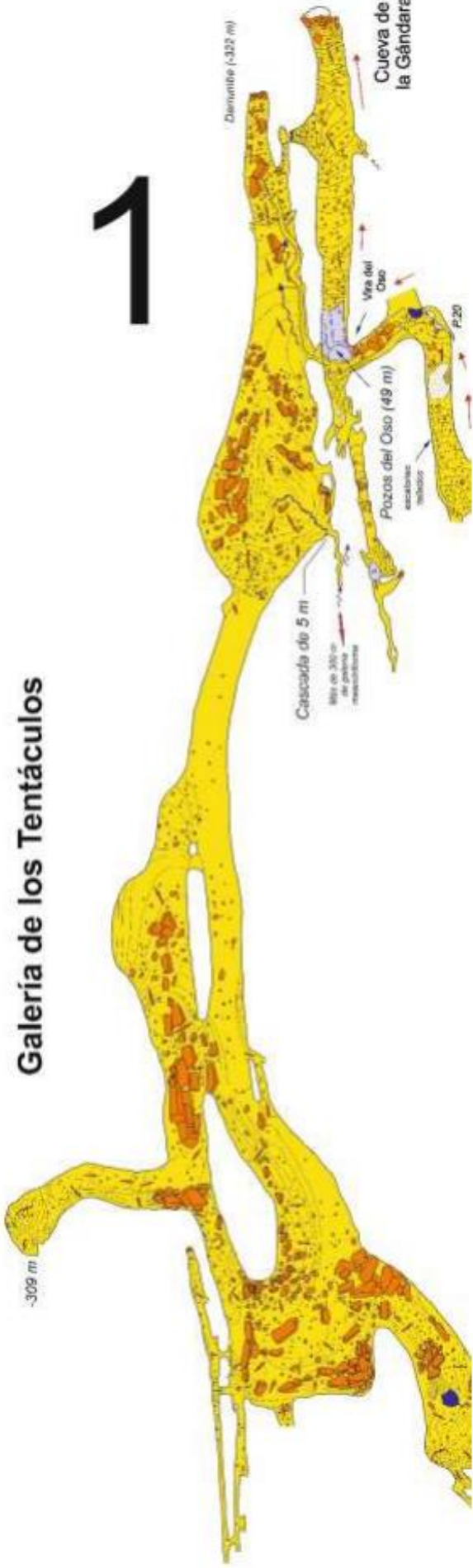
At this point, as we decided to turn back, it's worth noting the unusual presence of several troglobitic creatures living at -371m (and in an area prone to flooding). These are

Cantabrodesmus Lorioli annelids, a relict species endemic to the Alto Asón. Quite curious, to say the least.

With the areas we've explored and those we've already visited, we can tick off another section of this gigantic and fascinating cave. All that remained was to climb back to the surface and enjoy a well-deserved beer in good company.



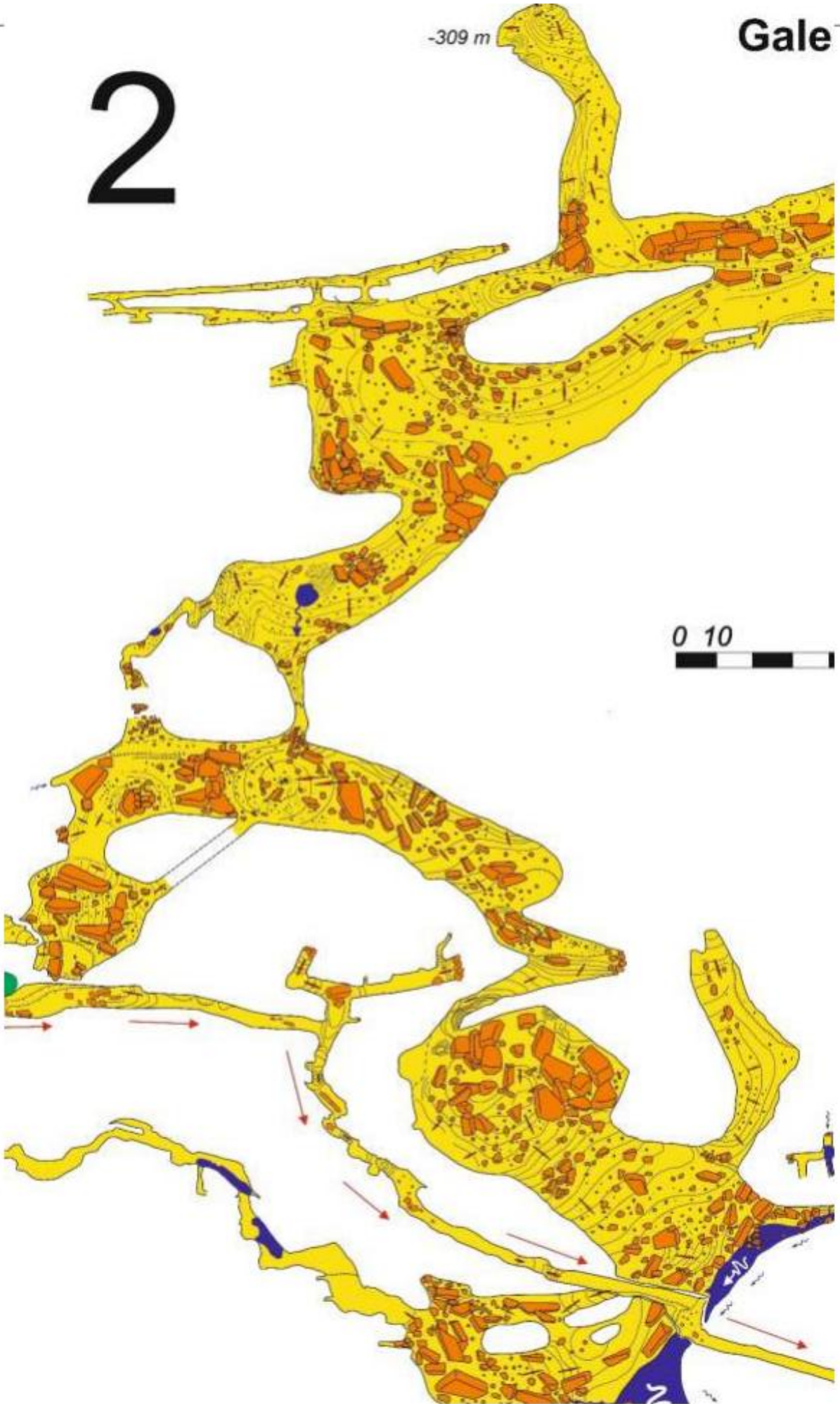
# Galería de los Tentáculos

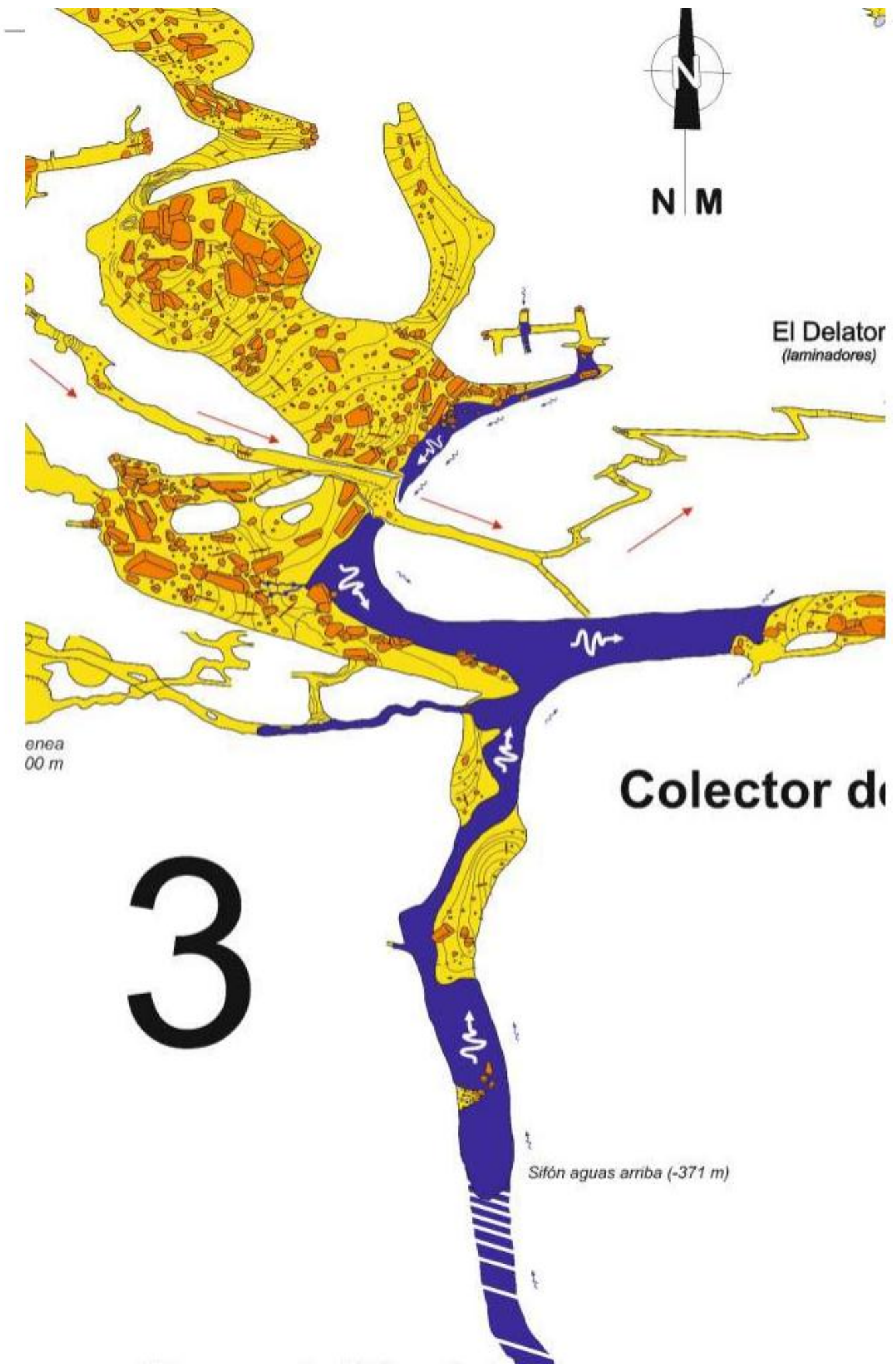


2

-309 m

Gale





El Delator  
(laminadores)

enea  
00 m

3

Colector de

Sifón aguas arriba (-371 m)