Kilimanjaro Caving 2011

Expedition Report

Prepared by:

Sjoerd van der Schuit (NL)
Bert Tindemans (NL)
Arjan van Waardenburg (NL)

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Further copies of this report can be downloaded from our website: http://www.speleo.nl/kilimanjaro/
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Participants

The participants on this expedition who actually did research on the mountain are:

From 19 September 2011 – 6 October 2011:

Sjoerd van der Schuit NL (Expedition leader)
Arjan van Waardenburg NL (Logistics and equipment)
Bert Tindemans NL (Transport and training)

During this expedition and several trips of Clive Ward:
Gadiel Majevu TZ (Professional mountain guide)

During several visits in the period from 1996 -2011:
Clive Ward UK (Advice)

In the past three years there was a substantial list of people from around the world willing to join this expedition. But mainly due to high costs to participate most of them had to withdraw. We made contact with Professor Sospeter Muhongo from the department of geology of the University of Dar es Salaam and asked him to participate in our expedition. Some of his colleagues tried to join us but unfortunately due to the high costs and short notice this also didn’t work out. So finding participants was not easy at all. Doubts about physical condition in this exciting but hazardous and strenuous environment might also be a reason.
Introduction
This report describes the result of the first official speleological expedition on Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania ever. The expedition’s main goal is surveying and mapping lava tubes on the slopes of Kilimanjaro. Clive Ward has performed several short explorations from 1996 up until 2011 at Mawenzi and found 9 lava tubes that were presented on several occasions in past years\(^1\).

These explorations gave us the confidence that there should also be lava tubes on the biggest volcano, Kibo. However besides some short reports about shelter like caves we didn’t find any documented discoveries of lava tubes at Kibo.

Many non-speleologists have asked us: “why is it important to find those tubes or caves? “ The answer is simple. Lava caves are special. Often the biological, geological and even cultural features are very rare and at the same time very vulnerable. These places need protection! But you can only protect if you are aware of their presence. Thus the awareness of these features forms the core of this research.

Research questions
The main purpose of this expedition is to locate, explore and map lava tubes on Kibo, the main volcano on Mount Kilimanjaro.

Furthermore we wanted to locate and explore other volcanic caves on Kibo and survey them if they are relevant from an environmental or ecological point of view.

Kilimanjaro
Situated in North Eastern Tanzania, Kilimanjaro is situated about 3 degrees south of the equator on the border of Tanzania and Kenya. The mountain is the highest landmark in Africa and the highest free standing mountain in the world. The mountain actually consists of three volcanoes: Kibo (the youngest and highest), Mawenzi and the eldest Shira.

About one million years ago molten lava burst through the fractured surface of the Rift Valley at the location of Kilimanjaro. The Rift Valley is a giant fault in the earth’s crust that runs through East Africa, where the African continent is literally pulling itself apart.

Initially, fast flowing (low viscosity) lavas emerged. This lava formed a very gentle sloping base for Kilimanjaro. As the volcano matured, different, cooler and more viscous lavas emerged. The huge pressures behind this eruption pushed part of the Earth’s crust upwards, creating the Shira volcano, the oldest of the volcanoes forming the Kilimanjaro massif. Shira eventually ceased erupting around 500,000 years ago, collapsed and subsequently formed a huge caldera many times the size of its original crater.

Soon after Shira’s extinction, Mawenzi started to form following a further eruption within the Shira caldera. Though much eroded, Mawenzi has at least kept some of its volcanic shape to this day. Then, 460,000 years ago, an enormous eruption just west of Mawenzi caused the formation of Kibo.

Continuous subterranean pressure forced Kibo to erupt several times more, forcing the summit ever higher until it reached a maximum height of 5,895m. 100,000 years later another huge eruption from Kibo led to the formation of Kilimanjaro’s characteristic shiny black stone, which in reality is just solidified black lava, or obsidian. This spilled over from Kibo’s crater into the Shira caldera and around the base of the Mawenzi peak, forming the so-called Saddle. Later eruptions created a series of distinctive mini-cones, or parasitic craters, that run in a chain south-east and north-west across the mountain, as well as the smaller Reusch Crater inside the main Kibo caldera. The last important volcanic activity, just over 200 years ago, left a symmetrical inverted cone of ash in the Reusch Crater, known as the Ash Pit, still visible today.

During the progress of time glaciers, advancing and retreating across the summit, created a series of concentric rings like terraces near the top of Kibo on the western side. The Kibo peak has also subsided slightly over time, and about 100,000 years ago a landslide removed part of the external crater, creating the Barranco Valley. The glaciers also caused the formation of the valleys and canyons, eroding and smoothing the earth into gentle undulations around the mountain, though less so on the northern side where the glaciers never grew to the same extent, leaving the valleys sharper and more defined.

**Lava tubes**

Lava flows are streams of molten rock that erupt from a volcano and move slowly downhill. The distance traveled by a lava flow depends on variables such as the erupted volume, steepness of the slope, obstructions in the path of the flow, and the viscosity of the lava.

Lava streams that flow steadily through a confined channel for many hours to days may develop a solid crust or roof and thus change gradually into streams within lava tubes. Because the walls and roofs of such tubes are good thermal insulators, lava flowing through them can remain hot and fluid much longer than surface flows.

Not all basaltic lava flows can form tubes. Mainly there are two types of basalt flows: aa (pronounced “ah-ah”) and pahoehoe (pronounced “pah-hoy-hoy”). Aa means in Hawaiian stony rough lava. This type of lava is characterized by a rough or rubbly surface composed of broken lava blocks. The loose, broken, and sharp, spiny surface makes hiking difficult and slow. Lava tubes are seldom found in aa. Aa is usually of higher viscosity than pahoehoe.

Pahoehoe means smooth, unbroken lava in Hawaiian. This type of lava has a smooth, undulating, or roping surface. These features are due to the movement of very fluid lava under a congealing surface crust. A pahoehoe flow typically advances as a series of small lobes that continually break out from a cooled crust. It also forms lava tubes where the minimal heat loss maintains low viscosity. Most tubes are found in Pahoehoe lava.

Within lava tubes one can find various speleothems some of which also can be found in limestone caves: stalactites and stalagmites. The only difference is that these formations are mostly made of lava instead of limestone. Lava stalactites are formed by dripping; stalagmites are similar in shape and are formed on the floor of the tube by the accumulation of drips from the ceiling. Lava tubes may also contain mineral deposits that most commonly take the form of crusts or small crystals, and less commonly, as stalactites and stalagmites. Lava tubes generally have pahoehoe floors, although this may often be covered in rubble from the ceiling.
Research methods

Where to look

Mount Kilimanjaro covers an area of about 60 by 80 square kilometres. The lava from Kibo covers about 2000 square kilometres Figure 1 gives an overview of the geology of Kilimanjaro and the size of the area.

Figure 1 Geological map of Kilimanjaro

Almost all routes to the summit of Kilimanjaro approach from the south or east side of Kibo. Because there weren’t any reports of tubes seen on this side our main focus was on the northern side of Kibo. Our second consideration was at what altitude to perform our research. At the lower parts of the slopes you find rainforest and the vegetation diminishes the higher you get. At approximately 3,000 meters you will hardly find any trees and above 4,000 meters most vegetation has disappeared. Struggling our way through forest or dense vegetation is very difficult and therefore we aimed at higher altitudes. But with higher altitudes other problems arise. The air pressure is lower, which means less oxygen, so you will need a good physical condition and time to acclimatize. Mainly due to the presence of a good camp site with water we decided to choose Moir Camp on the Northwest side of Kibo as our base camp and to start our research from there. A research area of about 40 square kilometres was defined at the border of the lava flow around Lent Group and Lava Tower.

Our group was small and we decided to split up in three groups assisted by one of the porters or by our guide. Mainly armed with binoculars we searched this area for about 10 days.

During our stay we heard of caves at the east side of Kilimanjaro near Kibo hut at about 4700 m. Therefore we decided to extend our research for some days to locate and map those caves too.

**General principles**

We follow the caving and speleological guidelines of the UIS (International Union of Speleology)\(^3\) in particular the **UIS Mapping Grades** Version 1: 13 Aug 2010 and the **UIS Code of Ethics for Cave Exploration and Science in Foreign Countries** version 2001\(^4\).

**Infra-red photography**

As a small scale side experiment was investigated: the use of IR photography as an instrument for detecting cave entrances. Relatively warm (or cold) air frequently flows out of an entrance. Being able to detect such airflow at a distance, say several hundreds of meters, would be a great help in systematically prospecting large areas. As our planned research site lies above the tree-line, giving an unobstructed view, it seems a good venue for a quick try-out.

However, there are also a few problems to overcome. First of all air will not show up on the picture because it radiates a very low amount of energy that will be lost in the background radiation. Therefore an indirect measurement is necessary: the airflow will heat or cool the surrounding rock, which makes a much better radiator.

Another problem is that the radiation measured consists of four components: reflection, radiation, absorption and emission. All objects will reflect part of the IR radiation from other objects, most notably the sun, which will give false readings. This was avoided by experimenting at night. On its way from the rock to the camera, part of the IR-radiation will be absorbed by the air it travels trough; also that air will emit some radiation itself. These absorption and emission effects are stronger if the air is moist, and act like fog in visible light. As the photo of Mount Kilimanjaro, taken from a distance of 7.1 km, shows, these effects are negligible on clear nights. By the way: this is presumably the first IR-picture of Kilimanjaro ever.

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\(^3\) [http://www.uis-speleo.org/guides.html](http://www.uis-speleo.org/guides.html)

\(^4\) UIS Mapping grades version 1: 13 August 2010
As can also be seen, resolution of the IR photos is much less than of the visible light photos. In fact it is insufficient to do analysis on IR photos taken from a useful distance. Thermal resolution of the camera used (100mK) is quite sufficient to obtain a useful image, spatial resolution (3.7mrad) should be two orders of magnitude better. Also a method to distinguish between rock heated or cooled by other sources than air would be very useful.

As we did not find (by conventional prospection) any cave that breathed, those where not experimented on and no final conclusions can be drawn. Furthermore the caves we saw on the IR pictures could also easily been seen at daylight (see figure 3 of Moir Cave). So for us the use of IR pictures proved to be of less importance.
Results

General
During the first two days we examined the northern parts of our research area Northwest of the Lent group. This area is mainly covered with porphyry lava and proved to be of less importance at this altitude. We found some remains of lava tubes and at the riffs of the mountain the erosion has formed many shelter like caves in the weaker layers. Furthermore we could see that great parts of this area have been covered with glaciers. Moir camp itself for instance lies in between two moraines. The slowly descending ice mass eroded many of the tubes in the higher parts of Kibo, and many caves are clearly eroded by ice and weather. We therefore decided to extend our research area a bit more to the south to the area mostly covered by the lava from Lava Tower (see figure 1).

Figure 4 Moraine at Moir Camp

The caves are often used by animals for shelter and due to the more stable temperature in the caves you can find vegetation near the entrance that wouldn’t survive in the hard and rough climate outside these caves.
Techniques
For this expedition we used professional equipment:

- Suunto Clinometer PM-5/ 360PC
- Suunto Compas KB-14/360R
- Measuring tape synthetic 30 meter

And to calibrate the compasses we made a compass base at Moir Camp. The angle between magnetic north (mN) and geographic north (gN) we found is +2°. The declination is positive when the magnetic north is east of geographic north. This gives our maps the maximum expected accuracy of 2% or grade 5 in accordance with the UIS mapping grades.

To calculate the length and depth of the cave we used the result given us by the program On Station 3.0a. This software application is designed and distributed as shareware by Taco van Ieperen\(^5\).

For the infrared pictures we used a FLIR i7.

\(^5\) Freeware mapping program by Taco van Ieperen (Canada) that isn’t supported anymore.
Secondary caves: shelters
At 4.200 meter the temperature varies between -5°C and 20°C almost daily. The influence of freezing and melting ice can clearly be seen at the many faults and ridges at the mountain. At those places we found many secondary caves, merely shelters that differ in size from less than a meter to sometimes 60 meters or more. We only took the coordinates of the ones larger than 10 meters.

We found 19 shelters that comply with these figures and listed them in supplement A.

Most people don’t know that some of these shelters are used by buffalos to eat the soda salt (sodium bicarbonate) in the rock. The soda salt helps to prevent stomach problems and is mainly used for this purpose by farmers as food supplement for their cattle.

It is often the case that buffalo tracks on mount Kilimanjaro indicate the trail to one of these buffalo caves. These caves can be found at altitudes of up till 4.500 meters. One of the shelters (KS 015) at 4.086 meter we named Buffalo cave for this reason.

Furthermore we made a topographical map of the shelter at the northern moraine near Moir Camp. We called this cave Moir Cave (KS 010).
Moir Cave (KS 010)

UISv1 3-3-BC
Length: 88 m
Altitude: 4184 m
S 03° 62.322' E 037° 17.931'
Discovered: 25 Sept 2011
By: Sjoerd van der Schuit
   Bert Tindemans
   Arjan van Waardenburg

Buffalo Cave (KS 015)

UISv1 3-3-A
Length: 50 m
Altitude: 4086 m
S 03° 00.858' E 037° 17.546'
Discovered: 27 Sept 2011
By: Sjoerd van der Schuit
   Bert Tindemans
   Arjan van Waardenburg
Primary Caves: blisters

Our main goals are the caves. One type of primary lava cave is the blister. This is a surface swelling of a lava flow crust in response to the puffing up of gas or vapour from beneath the flow. Blisters may also form through hydrostatic or artesian forces within the lava. They are usually 1–150 meters in diameter, with a maximum height of 30 m.

At Kibo we found many blisters some very small and some as big as 11 meters wide and 2.5 meters high (KB 019). We also found many blisters that have been eroded over the years. We decided to skip those narrower than 5 meters and the ones with less than 50% roof cover. We recorded 19 lava blisters and listed them in supplement A. Interesting to mention is that the Shira cave that is on many touristic maps and has been used for overnight stay by many climbers during the last decades, actually is a lava blister in Kibo lava.

![Figure 7 Blisters: Clockwise KB 008, KB 001, KB 019, KB 009](image)
Primary Caves: Lava tubes

Back to the main purpose of our expedition: lava tubes. Harter has defined tubes on their stratification patterns. Although some scientists don’t agree on the process that Harter describes how these tubes have been formed; the classification is useful and adequate for our purpose. ⁶

Harter defines:

A: Surface Tube
There are two strata: a flat floor stratum which extends well to both sides of the tube, and a roof stratum that forms an arch.

B: True Trench Tube
The walls join the floor at right angles and curve to overhang the passage. The roof is a separate stratum and there is a single wall stratum.

C: Semitrench Tube
The wall consists of the edges of lamina. The roof is separate stratum.

D: Rift Cave Tube
Rift caves form in volcanic rifts. The structural walls are the side of the fracture.

E: Interior Tube
The theoretical interior tube would lie entirely within a single stratum of lava.

And to complete these classification Harter writes that “since the classification system is derived from theory, examples of the pure types are relatively rare.”

Figure 8 Classification of lava tubes by Harter

⁶ Morphological Classification of lava tubes, J.W.Harter; International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology; Washington, August 1972
The thickness of the roof stratum of surface tubes varies from a few centimetres up to half a meter. Trench roofs and rift roofs tend to be thicker than those of surface tubes.

The tubes that Clive Ward found on Mawenzi are of the type “surface tube” and most of the tubes we found on Kibo are of the same type. Without any exception they are formed in pahoehoe lava and the structure of the terrain with many basalt lobes support this classification.

We have found three more complex caves near Kibo Hut that puzzle us. The roof consists of many lamina and big pieces of strata have broken and fallen down. The entrance of KT 016 for instance is pretty unstable due to this phenomena. But no doubt these are primary caves. We classified them as Trench Tubes most likely of the Semitrench type. The main reason for this classification are the many lamina and the internal shape of the cave. A plausible assumption is that these three caves were formed in a later development stage of Kibo. Near Moir Camp the tubes were most likely formed at the initial stage of the forming of Kibo and the lobes where we found the tubes are of pahoehoe lava. The fact that many tubes are eroded due to the rough conditions and the moraine during the last 500,000 years leads to this assumption. Near Kibo hut the lava higher on the mountain is of a different composition, more porphyry like, and possible formed at a later stage. This assumption is supported by the more instable formation of the tubes at this side of the volcano.

Except for the more or less completely eroded tubes we made topographical maps you can find in this report.

**Kibo Tube 001**

This is an exit of a surface tube at 3,955 meter. It lies in the valley where a glacier has destroyed many tubes on the higher parts. But this nice tube survived the elements. Its length is 5,5 meters and at the end even some mosses survive. Outside you can see some remains of the original length of the tube.

![Figure 9 KT 001](image)
**Kibo Tube 002, 003, 004, 005 and 009**

These are remains of former surface tubes. They are almost completely eroded or destroyed by the glacier and the tough environmental conditions. Only 1 to 2 meter is left with a roof on top. Outside you can sometimes see a nice track of the original tube. KT 002 for instance has a track of almost 19 meters where you can see both side of the original tube. We merely added these tubes to be complete in our inventory.

**Kibo Tube 006**

KT 006 lies at 4.313 meter. The tube makes a right angle to the left after 3 meter. Its floor is covered with mosses, sand and mud. At the end the roof meets the floor.

![KT 006](image)

**Kibo Tube 007**

This tube at 4.320 meter actually consists of two tubes close together. Outside you can follow the track along the wall for more than 18 meters. The inside length of the tubes is about 4 meters but the left tube with its height of approximately 30 cm is only accessible for the small ones.
Kobo Tube 008
KT 008 is a nice surface exit situated at the side of a big lava lobe at 4.489 meter. At the end the tube is closed by a boulder choke. Outside you can see a track of about 4 meters.

Kobo Tube 010
Kibo Tube 010 has a man’s height exit quite close to the Shira trail at 4.381 meters. The floor of KT 010 is flat with some rocks. Its shape is not as symmetrical as most surface tubes we found so far, but the top stratum is an evident clue for its classification.
**Kibo Tube 011**

KT 011 at 4.598 meters is the highest known surface tube in the world and with its length of 17 meters it is the longest one we have found. At the end of the tube we found some siliceous stalactites of about 4 cm. Halfway there is a step of 25 cm.
**Kibo Tube 012**
Most tubes we found are exits but KT 012 is man’s height entrance of a surface tube at 4.222 meters. Almost until the end it keeps its height. It has a flat stony floor, and lies in a basalt lobe where we also found KT 013 and KT 014.

![Gadiel in KT 012](image)

**Kibo Tube 013**
This surface tube is one of the bigger ones we found. After 7 meters the tube is blocked with a sand dune up to the roof and needs further exploration. The tube is situated quite near the Shira trail and had some litter in the entrance, which we removed.

![The expedition team inside KT 013](image)
Kilimanjaro Caving

KT 001
Length: 5.5 m
Altitude: 3959 m
S 03° 02.581 E 037° 16.830

KT 006
Length: 6.9 m
Altitude: 4313 m
S 03° 02.559 E 037° 18.504

KT 007
Length: 7.9 m
Altitude: 4320 m
S 03° 02.450 E 037° 18.475

KT 008
Length: 5.1 m
Altitude: 4489 m
S 03° 03.427 E 037° 19.028

KT 010
Length: 8 m
Altitude: 4381 m
S 03° 02.209 E 037° 18.306

U.S.V.A 4-9-A
Discovered: 23 - 27 Sept 2011
By: Sjoerd van der Schuit
Bert Timmers
Arjen van Waardenburg
**Kibo Tube 014**
KT 014 at 4.232 meters has two parallel tubes filled with sand. After about 5 meters the tube was not accessible without digging. Altogether the three tubes we found here makes this basalt lobe flow very interesting and asks for closer exploration.

![Figure 17 The parallel tubes of KT 014](image)

**Kibo Tube 015**
This tube at 4.480 meters is special in some ways. First of all, it’s positioned in the middle and not at the side or top of the lava flow where most surface tubes where found. Secondly, it is formed almost entirely out of one stratum and therefore we classified it as an internal tube. After 4 meters it makes a 45° angle to the left. The floor is flat and stony.

![Figure 18 Gadiel in the entrance of KT 015](image)
**Kibo Tube 016**
Kibo Tubes 016, 017 and 018 are found at the eastern side of Kibo near Kibo hut and are the highest tubes known so far. KT 016 is the highest tube and lies at an altitude of 4,763 meters. The total length is about 50 meters. The entrance is a little unstable due to loosely stratum at the ceiling of the cave. Inside, many rocks that have fallen from the ceiling of the cave. Some silver mould is found at the roofs and walls of this cave. The unstable construction of this cave prevented us from further exploration. No doubt these are primary tubes but to classify them by Harter was difficult. Due to the many stratum and shape of the cave we classified these tubes as trench tubes.

![Figure 19 Bert at the entrance of KT 016](image)

**Kibo Tube 017**
KT 017 at 4,686 meters is another trench tube. Unlike KT 016 this tube is more stable and the entrance is filled with sand. The total length is about 40 meters. Inside we removed some sand to enter a side tube that didn’t continued. The left tube is quite big and you can easily stand upright.

![Figure 20 Gadiel digging his way to a side tube in KT 017](image)
Kilimanjaro Caving

KT 011
Length: 17 m
Altitude: 4598 m
S 03° 02.992 E 037° 19.193

KT 012
Length: 5 m
Altitude: 4222 m
S 03° 03.864 E 037° 17.979

KT 013
Length: 7 m
Altitude: 4231 m
S 03° 03.892 E 037° 17.965

KT 014
Length: 5 m
Altitude: 3232 m
S 03° 03.849 E 037° 17.962

KT 015
Length: 6 m
Altitude: 4480 m
S 03° 03.405 E 037° 19.002

Ubosut 4-2-A
Discovered: 22 - 27 Sept 2011
By: Sjoerd van der Schuit
Bart Tindermans
Arjan van Waardenburg
**Kibo Tube 018**
This trench tube has an entrance and mainly consists of a chamber of 15 by 8 meters with a partly ice-covered floor, which even has a nice ice stalagmite in the middle of it.

![Figure 21 Samuel pointing at the ice stalagmite in KT 018](image-url)
Kilimanjaro Caving

KT 016
UISv1 3-3-A
Length: 50 m
Altitude: 4763 m
S 03° 05.156 E 037° 22.290
Discovered: 3 Oct 2011
By: Spiro van der Schuit
Bert Tindemans
Arjan van Waardenburg

KT 017
UISv1 5-3-8C
Length: 49 m
Altitude: 4685 m
S 03° 05.600 E 037° 23.347
Discovered: 4 Oct 2011
By: Spiro van der Schuit
Bert Tindemans
Arjan van Waardenburg

KT 018
UISv1 2-3-A
Length: 30 m
Altitude: 4728 m
S 03° 05.444 E 037° 22.298
Discovered: 4 Oct 2011
By: Spiro van der Schuit
Bert Tindemans
Arjan van Waardenburg
On our way down the slopes of Mawenzi we visited two tubes that Clive Ward had pointed out. We continued the numbering of tubes that Clive had started. We found the entrance and exit of Tube M at 4.378 meters but weren’t able to go through all the way. At the top the tube is more than a meter wide but after 19 meters the tube is too small to pass. However, outside we found the exit in line with this tube, so we have no doubt that both sections are part of the same tube.

Mawenzi Tube M

The last tube we found on the slopes of Mawenzi is Tube N at 4.391 meters. This tube has a length of 50 meters and is relatively big compared to the other tubes we found. The roof is decorated with many primary stalactites.

Figure 22 Arjan at the top entrance of Tube M and GPS at the exit downhill.

Mawenzi Tube N

Figure 23 Arjan measuring in Tube N
Volcanic cave features

Sometimes you can also find small secondary translucent stalactites in the blisters and tubes; we found some white rose samples. These stalactites are formed by a mineral which dissolves in water and are very fragile. In limestone caves these stalactites are very common and formed by calcium carbonate, but in this volcanic environment these stalactites are most likely siliceous.

Rheotites can also be found in many places. These are lava drips that remain from the initial separation of the roof crust from liquid lava below. As such drips can be expected any time that solid lava (above) separates from the liquid lava, they are conceptually the commonest form of rheotites.

Unfortunately Clive Ward noticed that at Mawenzi some of the features in the recently discovered caves have been destroyed by visiting tourists or locals. This very special and fragile environment deserves protection. We estimate that there are more than 100 tubes at Kilimanjaro that deserve protection.

Guided tours are sometimes possible if the guide is trained for this fragile environment and if the most crucial parts of the cave are well protected.

Figure 24 Rheotites and stalactites in KT 011

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7 Morphological Classification of lava tubes, J.W. Harter; International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology; Washington, August 1972
Figure 25 Caves found on Kilimanjaro
Conclusions

The conclusions of our research questions are as follows:

The first, and maybe, most important question was: “Are there any tubes or caves in Kibo lava?” We can definitely answer this question affirmative (see figure 25). We have covered roughly about 5% of the higher slopes of Kibo, the major volcano of Kilimanjaro, and found 20 tubes of different types, 19 lava blisters with a width of more than 5 meters and more than 50% covered with roof and 19 shelters with a width of more than 10 meters and a depth of more than 5 meters. This convinced us that there are many more lava caves to be found on the slopes of Kibo.

The tubes we found on the western side of the volcano differ from the three caves near Kibo Hut at east site of Kibo. The lava is different: where near Moir Camp the tubes are found in pahoehoe lobes, the trench tubes near Kibo Hut are formed in lava of a different composition, more porphyry like. This feeds the assumption that the tubes at the east side might be younger.

Unfortunately at Mawenzi some of the features in the discovered caves have been destroyed by visiting tourists or locals. This very special and fragile environment deserves protection. Guided visits are possible at some caves but at the same time the regulation to enter caves should be changed. When entering the park you can read that “sleeping in caves has been abolished ...”. We strongly advise to change this rule in “Entering caves is strictly forbidden”.

Caves can only be protected if one is aware of their presence. We therefore advise the management of TANAPA (Tanzanian National Park ), TAWIRI (Tanzanian Wildlife Research Institute) and COSTECH (Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology) to allow a follow up to this first expedition.

Postface

For three years I have prepared this expedition. The biggest struggle was to find our way in the sometimes unpredictable Tanzanian bureaucracy. Over 40,000 people visit Mount Kilimanjaro every year and I absolutely understand the dependence of the local and national economy on this very special mountain. However official requests to support this expedition and wave the fees were not rewarded. I truly hope that further speleological research on mount Kilimanjaro gets priority so that our research will be continued.

Sjoerd van der Schuit

Expedition leader
## Kibo Shelters

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Sponsors

This expedition was only possible with the help of these sponsors

*Speleo Nederland*

*EuroSpeleo Projects FSE*

*Gevaco valbeveiliging*

*Scurion*

*Aventure verticale*

*Varta*

*Bosgroep Zuid Nederland*

*Fysiopraktijk Balijelaan*

*Parate Computer borduur service*