

Cave survey and speleothem hunting in the limestone caves of Buniayu, West Java, Indonesia.

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Many caves are in the Buniayu limestone area, south of Skabumi, West Java, Indonesia, as buniayu means 'hidden or underground (=buni) beauty (=ayu)' in West Javanese. The Buniayu limestone is Miocene coral reef that is interfingering to the lagoonal siltstone. These Miocene deposits unconformably overlay the Oligocene volcanic breccia, and are unconformably overlain by the Pliocene volcanic breccia. We carried out geological surveys of the limestone caves in Buniayu on March and June 2006. Three caves, Cipitung, Antik and Ciawitali caves, were targeted. We did geographical and geological surveys of the Karst-cave system, and sampled the speleothems and the drip water in order to understand the condition of precipitation of the speleothems. Among these three caves, the Ciawitali Cave is the only possibility to get scientifically good samples. We made the cave map of Ciawitali. As the result, we found that Ciawitali is possibly a fault-origin cave, as the cave has: NE-SW general direction, 'jigsaw puzzle'-like side walls, continuous and in horizontal 'eaves', and the huge limestone blocks stacking in the halls. One of the stalagmite sample (numbered CIAW15a) picked in Ciawitali is an excellent one clearly mineralized, in contrast to the other speleothem samples that are white colored porous ones. We are trying to count the lamination, and subsequently the lamina and sub-lamina characters of oxygen isotope will be analyzed.