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Portland Block Stone (photograph courtesy of Portland Stone Firms Limited, UK www.stonefirms.com)

Heritage Building Stone – as a new aspect of Geological Heritage

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Australia is well known as being both the Earth's largest island and its smallest continent. However, while Australia is unique from this geographical perspective, it also is unique in that it has its own story to tell both geologically, i.e., Australia's geoheritage, and culturally. From a cultural perspective, since 1788, Australia's founding forefathers, prior to the mineral boom, established colonies where there was drinking water, soils suitable for agriculture, and building materials. The focus of the article is the formal recognition of Heritage Building Stone – as a new aspect of Geological Heritage. The text is also published in "The Australian Geologist" TAG.

During the recent International Geological Congress in Brisbane, Australia, the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) recognised a new aspect of geoheritage with the formal establishment of a "Heritage Stone Task Group" or HSTG. The Heritage Stone Task Group comprises the first international grouping of geologists under the auspices of IUGS to consider building stone and ornamental rocks, otherwise known as "dimension stone".

The initial purpose of the Group is to provide a working framework that facilitates international designation of those natural stone products that have achieved widespread use over a significant historical period with due recognition in human culture, and hence its geoheritage aspect.

From an Australian context, designated stones could include the "Sydney Sandstone" or "Victorian Bluestone". Internationally amongst many examples, there is the famous "Carrara Marble" in Italy and the widely known "Portland Limestone" from southern England the latter having been utilised for St Pauls Cathedral in London and the UN building in New York City. Following formal approval of published research citations, designated dimension stone materials of international significance will be accorded status as a "Global Heritage Stone Resource" (GHSR). The term "World Heritage Stone Resource" was first suggested but later rejected.

As part of the GHSR designation process, provision is made for associated formal recognition of specified features characterising natural stone resources such as:

- recognising a formal name for the designated stone,
- defining the natural source of the stone, and
- tabulating the technical characteristics of the material.

Potential applications of this new designation has excited significant interest especially amongst European geologists where it has been suggested that the GHSR designation will assist safeguarding of in-ground heritage stone resources and will facilitate prevention of inferior stone substitutes being utilised in the restoration of heritage constructions.

The HSTG Board of Management has the role of:

- establishing a standing list of potential GHSR candidates,
- soliciting draft citations for GHSR status and facilitating research papers discussing these citations, and
- approving citations for designated GHSR status or designating, as an alternative to GHSR status, a heritage stone that has national or regional significance.

Given that all rocks that are quarried as dimension stone have potential heritage status, a long-term objective of HSTG will likely to be the preparation of an "International Guide to Heritage Stone Designation". In the Heritage Stone Task Group Terms of Reference, there has been advice that a Global Heritage Stone Resource may be recognised if the natural stone under consideration has most of the following attributes:

- historic use for a period of at least 50 years,
- wide-ranging geographic application,
- utilisation in significant public or industrial projects,
- common recognition as a cultural icon, potentially including association with national identity or a significant individual contribution to architecture,
- ongoing availability of material for quarrying, and
- potential benefits (cultural, scientific, architectural, environmental and/or commercial) arising from GHSR designation.

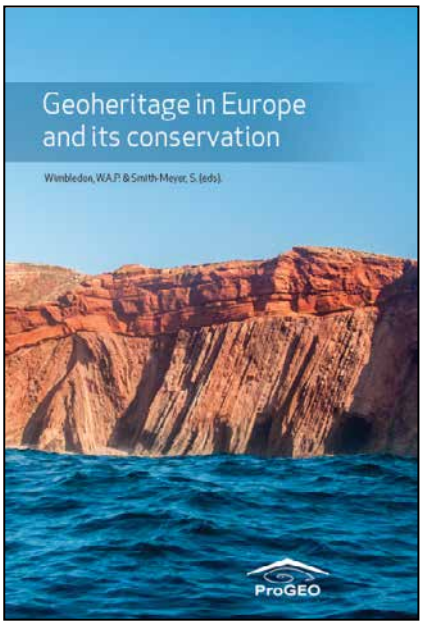
A Global Heritage Stone Resource may include natural stones that are currently being quarried, natural stone that is primarily of heritage significance, or natural stones of archaeological importance. Currently, the Heritage Stone Task Group is still at a formative stage, however, a HSTG Board of Management has been established at the 34th IGC held in Brisbane and plans are being made to hold a second meeting in Vienna in April 2013 as part of the annual European Geological Union conference. A conference in 2014 is envisaged as a session of the XII IAEG conference to be held in Turin, Italy, 15-18 September 2014. A session entitled: "Building stones & Ornamental rocks: resource evaluation, technical assessment, heritage designation" has been proposed.

A 2015 conference is being planned for North America (USA or Canada) by Joe Hannibal, Brian Pratt and Nelson Shaffer, and a 2016 conference will likely be linked with the 35th International Geological Congress to be held in Cape Town, South Africa, 27 August – 4 September 2016.

As of September 2012, HSTG also has 154 Correspondents from 40 countries. Correspondents are advised of HSTG activities by the Global Stone Circular that is distributed by email approximately every 9 months. It is expected that Correspondents will assist greatly in the nomination and approval of Global Heritage Stone Resources. More details about HSTG work is provided at www.globalheritagestone.org .

Anyone who is interested in heritage stone research and who wishes to be added to the list of HSTG Correspondents should email Barry Cooper at barry.cooper@unisa.edu.au . I would like to acknowledge and thank Barry for providing this informative account of the establishment of the Heritage Stone Task Group.

ProGEO Book on sale at our website www. progeo.se



ProGEO-Kosovo activities

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As a part of ProGEO-Kosovo activities for inventory of geo monuments in Kosovo, a field visit to the Topilles gorge was held in February this year. The field visit was concentrated on the geosite Black Vrella and Cave"

Balck Vrella and Cave is located in the eastern part of Topille, in the place called (Devitak 1035 m), about 40 m above the river bed, 762 m.a.s.l. near the Shtime - Petrov road. The source is called “Black Vrella” by local people. It is a carstic source which flows under a rock about 20 m height and 200 m width. Approximately 10 m over the source the cave entrance is located in a vertical slope of limestone with a width of 5.5 m and a height of 4 m. Five meters from the main entrance are two "windos" entrances that have the form of eggs, after these entrances the cave branches into two corridors one short in the direction from northwest and one corridor in southwest direction. The sound of water is heard in the cave, which is supposed to be a large underground river.

The cave is not explored and it is thought that it may be a large and interesting one. The limestones in this locality have a large extent and all forms of surface and underground karsts relief are present. The cave and the source "black vrella" has scientific, geomorphological, geological, hydro, educative and touristic values, the Source "Black Vrella" and the Cave is proposed for legal protection by ProGEO-Kosovo.

The cave entrances and the spring Black Vrella

Regional Natural Park of Volcano Etna, an active stratovolcano with a variety of historical eruptions and patterns (Eastern Sicily). Photo F. Geremia.

Sicily geoheritage week 2013: from West to East coast of Sicily linking Geological and Cultural heritage. 24-30 June 2013

Francesco Geremia, ProGEO Italia, geremiafrancesco@gmail.com

The "Sicily Geoheritage Week 2013" is a proposal of field group experience on the relationship between geological and cultural heritage and the complexity of geological processes in Sicily.

The main idea is to link a trial of "Geointerpretation" (the art or science of determining and then communicating the meaning or significance of a geological or geomorphological phenomenon, event, or location) with the history of an island, rich in archaeological sites.

Many small and large Sicilian "geosites" (key localities or areas showing geological features of intrinsic scientific interest) are fundamental to our understanding of the Earth evolution, especially of the Mediterranean area, besides, the island of Sicily includes a large variety of sedimentary, metamorphic and volcanic environments, where geological and cultural sites converge and interact carrying out to original links.

Therefore, the idea of a Tour starts from a panoramic viewpoint in the "Stagnone Lagoon" - Marsala area - to continue with a guided travel from the East to West coast, overcoming the common idea of a static landscape, and giving to those interested, a chance to reach easily the most interesting geological and cultural sites. Several stops will be made on the way, some of these will be in Geoparks, Regional Parks, Nature Reserves, Marine Protected areas, Nature 2000 network while others will be in rural or urban areas.

All participants are invited to contribute to the briefings post-excursions through informal exchanges that focus

Marble quarries in Custonaci (Western Sicily). Photo F. Geremia.

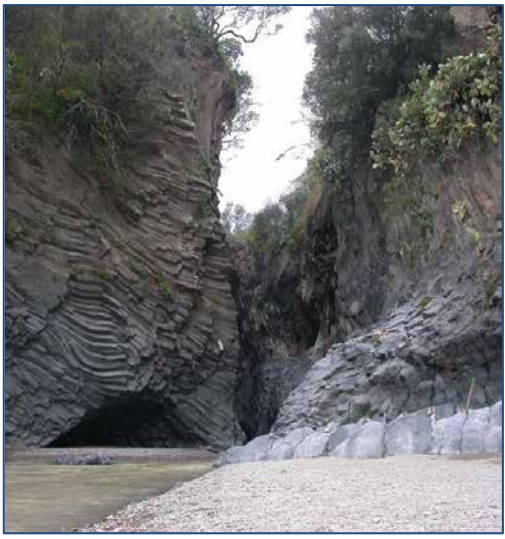
on activities and practical experiences and provide reflections on visited sites and ideas on the promotion of new "cultural bridges" between the island of Sicily and other areas of relevant geological and cultural interest.

An illustrated guide (with geographically referred sites, thematic maps and annexed literature cited) will be sent to all participants by email before the tour in Sicily.The Tour is conceived and promoted by I.C.S.A. (Istituto di Cultura Sicilia-Australia) in collaboration with ProGEO and SIGEA (Italian Society of Environmental Geology).

Program, details and costs by visiting:
http://www.ICSAsicilia.org

For more information, please contact: Francesco Geremia, email: geremiafrancesco@gmail.com

Marine Protected Area "Isole Ciclopi" with presence of columnar basalts (Eastern Sicily). Photo F. Geremia.



Regional Natural Park of Alcantara valley, a canyon with vertical basalt cliffs (North-Eastern Sicily). Photo F. Geremia.

Earth Heritage magazine Number 39, the Spring 2013 available

Colin MacFadyen (Scottish Natural Heritage)
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Earth Heritage magazine is the UK geological and landscape conservation magazine, produced by the nature conservation agencies –Natural England (NE), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), in partnership with the Geologists' Association. Published online twice a year, the magazine is an eclectic mix of articles on geodiversity conservation initiatives and interpretation, often with international input.

Number 39, the Spring 2013 issue of Earth Heritage, is now available. To download this and previous issues, and to subscribe free, visit www.earthheritage.org.uk.

The National Park "Lugina e Valbonës"

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The National park "Lugina e Valbones" is located in the Northern Mountainous Region of Albania, 25-30 km northwest Bajram Curri city. The park is traversed by the road from Bajram Curri to Dragobi, Valbonë and Çerem. It has a variation of high and sharp mountains and complex valley forms. There are large scientific, touristic, social and recreative values represented in the Park with a high geo-bio- and landscape diversity.

The high mountain tops with its sides covered with forests, the streams and the Valbona river create a landscape of high natural beauty. The Valbona river come from the Jezërca mountain, the highest peak of the park and of the Albanian Alps (2693.5 m). The Valbona River is one of the biggest rivers of the Albanian Alps and a tributary to the Drin river. Its flow is very torrential until it reach the Valbona village where it calms.

The solemnity of these mountains with its eternal snow has a high touristic attraction enhanced by marvellous waterfalls in the summer period. Inside the park there are a lot of caves, almost unknown by the residents. In one of them (Dragobia) a very popular leader of this region, Bajram Curri used to live.

The rocks are composed of limestone, clay stone and mixed stones, while in low lands there are also aluvium depositions. The park soils are brown forest soils and mountainous meadows soils. It is part of the Mediterranean mountainous climatic area and the northern mountainous sub-area. It is the coldest area in the country, with a long and hard winter. The medium annual air temperatures is between 7 - 10ºC, and in high lands 4 – 6ºC. In the coldest period of time is December –February the temperatures can drop to -10 and even down to -20ºC. There are 70 – 100 icy days a year. The snow can reach up to 1.5 – 5 m high and lasts from 60 to 160 days. Summer is fresh; the hottest months are July and August with temperatures between 18 – 22ºC. The average annual precipitation is about 2000 – 2500 mm (in special areas even over 3000 mm).

Lugina e Valbones is considered the only area in Albania with a lot of spruce (Picea abies),
starting from 850 m, at the Valbona village up to 1200 m, at Ragami village, mainly on the left side of the Valbona river. The spruce forests here combined with the beautiful landscape are considered a national value in Albania. The fauna has an alpine character.

TheValbona valley has a beautiful and clean nature. Its landscape, geology, geomorphology, hydrology, forests, pastures, flower variety, grazing, characteristic houses, and the residents welcoming, create conditions for the development of a tourism. It exist only a management plan for the forest and some other relevant studies on this territory. In the future this territory needs a conservation and management plan according to the great diversity of natural and cultural values where these are recognised in managing categories. The Valbona valley, together with its neighbour, the Thethi Park and Gashi river, should be a part of the "Peace Park". This park will have a development plan, in the framework of the "Inter-Balkans" cooperation and development of this region.

International conference: Unique geosites of Russia: conservation and recreation potential:

June 27–29, 2013, St. Petersburg, Russia

The Organizing Committee invites you to attend the conference to be held on June 27-29, 2013, in St. Petersburg (Russia). The conference is aimed at the development of strategies for the conservation and efficient use of Russia's unique geosites, elaboration of recommendations on the use of the unique geosites (UGS) in regional geological studies of the Russian Federation, preparing proposals for the use of UGS for geo-tourism and elaboration of the grounds as concerns the recreational potential of areas.

After the conference, a 3-day fieldtrip to unique geosites of the Karelian Isthmus (with visiting the island of Valaam on Lake Ladoga.) is scheduled, as well as a 1-day fieldstrip to Sablinskie caves.

The conference organizers are the Federal Agency of Mineral Resources and A.P. Karpinsky Russian geological research Institute (FGUP VSEGEI).

For more information including Visa rules contact: Sergey Semiletkin, Sergey_Semiletkin@vsegei.ru or Olga Reneva, Olga_Reneva@vsegei.ru or find the circulars on the ProGEO Website: www.progeo.se.

A significant move towards geo-conservation in the United States of America

José Brilha, ProGEO President, jbrilha@dct.uminho.pt

Several partners within the geological, education, and museum communities, along with several federal lands agencies have joined together to create opportunities in 2013 to explore the topic of America's Geological Heritage

(www.nature.nps.gov/geology/americas_geologic_heritage).

One of the initiatives was the workshop "America's Geologic Heritage" hosted during 18 and 19 March 2013 in Denver, Colorado by the U.S. National Committee for the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) and sponsored by the Geological Society of America (GSA), the American Geosciences Institute (AGI), the Colorado Geological Survey (CGS), the U.S. National Park Service (NPS), and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

The goals and objectives of the workshop were the following: to begin a dialogue of key principles and concepts of America's geological heritage; to promote collaboration relative to geological heritage and conservation in the United States; to share experiences and best practices; to increase awareness and relevancy of global geological heritage concepts; and to improve the flow of information between organizations and stakeholders interested and invested in U.S. geological heritage.

The workshop included two invited keynotes: "The Global Geoheritage Movement, The Big Picture of Conservation" by Tim Badman (IUCN, Director of World Heritage) and "Principles of a National Geoheritage Programme" by José Brilha (ProGEO and University of Minho, Portugal). During the two days, five thematic sessions were organised: i) Values & Relevance; ii) Inventory & Assessment; iii) Sustainability & Stewardship; iv) Museums & Collections; and v) Education & Outreach.

About 50 participants were present in this workshop representing the following American institutions: American Geosciences Institute; American Museum of Natural History; Arizona State University; Bureau of Land Management, Lakewood; California State University; Colorado Scenic Byways; Cripple Creek & Victor Gold Mining Co.; Denver Museum of Nature and Science;

Friends of Dinosaur Ridge; Geological Society of America; Montana State University; National Academy of Sciences; National Science Foundation; Science Education Resource Center, Carleton College; U.S. Forest Service; U.S. Geological Survey; U.S. National Park Service; University of Colorado; University of Nevada; USDA Forest Service.

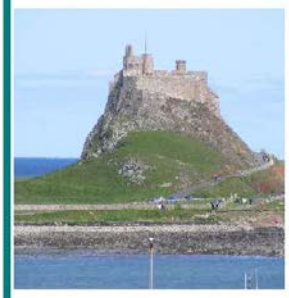
Tom Casadevall (USGS) and Wesley Hill (GSA) were the two mentors of this first formal initiative about the American geoheritage. This was an excellent opportunity for the representatives of the participating institutions to present their geoheritage activities and to share their views about this subject.

The organizing committee of this workshop will now work on the main topics discussed during the event in order to present a document expressing the main aims and possible strategies to promote geoconservation in the USA. ProGEO is totally available to collaborate with American colleagues and to share European principles, methodologies, and strategies on geoconservation.

ProGEO regional working group No 3,
Northern Europe 2013 Meeting

ProGEO
The European Association for the Conservation of the Geological Heritage

Geological heritage and geoconservation at the north western edge of Europe



The Whin Sill at Lindisfarne Castle (top), Hadrian's Wall (bottom)

2013 Meeting Newcastle upon Tyne, UK
16 – 20 September 2013

Outline Programme
Monday 16 September 2013
Field excursion to the Northumberland Coast – how geology, landscape history and tourism interlink. Proposed Itinerary – Woodhorn Colliery – a former coal mine area now a cultural centre, Lindisfarne (Holy Island), Bamburgh Castle and the Farne Islands (weather permitting) or if not then other nearby localities.

Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 September 2013
Scientific sessions at Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne
Conference dinner on the evening of Wednesday 18 September.

Thursday 19 and Friday 20 September 2013
Post symposium field excursion
Thursday – West of Newcastle to Hadrian's Wall and Whin Sill and North Pennine Orefield localities (19th century mining area in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Geopark)
Friday – County Durham– including the classic Magnesian Limestone localities of the Permian (linked to Limestone Landscape project) and Durham Cathedral – geological setting and building stones

To register interest and receive the second circular please email:

lesley.dunlop@northumbria.ac.uk

The cave at Black Vrella. Kosovo

Deadline next issue of ProGEO NEWS: June 15th 2013

Please do not forget to send contributions to ProGEO NEWS. Members are interested in things that happen all over the world, your experiences, geosites, everyday geotopes and landscapes, geoconservation and geotourism efforts! ProGEO news is published on the internet

www.progeo.se

Please send your contributions 500 – 2000 words with photographs, maps and figures clearly marked as a ProGEO NEWS contribution to:

lars.erikstad@nina.no

If longer texts are needed, please contact the editor

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