



Geodiversity “Engraved” in Cultural Heritage – The Case of Monasteries at Fruška Gora Mountain, North Serbia

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Geoheritage is not merely a part of Earth's history; rather that it is also important part of the history of mankind. Geological features and landscape, as components of human surroundings, have strongly influenced our society from its beginnings - first cave-dwellers to modern-day civilization. It has also had great influence on human tradition, culture and religion. This paper will discuss the role of geodiversity as construction material for cultural and historical heritage with the case of possible connection of these natural and anthropogenic resources through successful and sustainable geotourism planning. Case study of Fruška Gora Mountain, as potential destination with significant anthropogenic and natural values, will demonstrate the main idea of this research.

Fruška Gora Mountain is situated at the confluence of the Danube and Sava Rivers, in northern Serbia. It was proclaimed a National Park in 1960 with 25,525 ha of protected area due to its rich, rare and endangered biodiversity. Additionally, within the Park and wider area of Fruška Gora, there are numerous historical and cultural monuments with almost 20 orthodox monasteries, built in 15th and 16th century and hidden in the woods, which earned this destination the epithet “the Holy Mountain” apropos Serbian Atos. Besides biodiversity, Fruška Gora Mountain has rich geomorphologic significance, geological and pedological diversity with relatively small region that reflects very complicated geological evolution which formed a unique tectonic, lithological and stratigraphic mosaic. Numerous valuable and rare geosites makes this mountain a future geopark destination. As geotourism is relatively new trend and still unrecognised in Serbia, thus it is evidently urgent to inform visitors of other (cultural, historical, natural) sites about the existence of attractive geosites.

Authors conducted research in order to identify construction material of certain monasteries and established that the most of it is exploited from quarries and pits in vicinity. For example, some of them were extracted from Rakovac limestone quarry or brickyards with significant loess and loess like sediments. All these localities are planned to be included in geo-trails of future geopark. The idea is to, beside interpretative panels, place information on cultural and historical heritage that was constructed from this geo-material. The likewise process would be provided through all human-made sites where panels would explain and promote geosites from where the material was brought. This would certainly bring mutual benefits and promotion that is in core of the initial geopark philosophy.