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Villamayor stone (Golden Stone) as a Global Heritage Stone Resource from Salamanca (NW of Spain)

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Villamayor stone is an arkosic stone of Middle Eocene age and belongs to the Cabrerizos Sandstone Formation that comprising braided fluvial systems and paleosoils at the top of each stratigraphic sequence. The sandstone is known by several names: i) the Villamayor Stone because the quarries are located in Villamayor de Armuña village that are situated at 7 km to the North from Salamanca city; ii) the Golden Stone due to its patina that produced a ochreous/golden color on the façades of monuments of Salamanca (World Heritage City,1988) built in this Natural stone (one of the silicated rocks utilised). We present in this work, the Villamayor Stone to be candidate as Global Heritage Stone Resource.

The Villamayor Stone were quarrying for the construction and ornamentation of Romanesque religious monuments as the Old Cathedral and San Julian church; Gothic (Spanish plateresc style) as the New Cathedral, San Esteban church and the sculpted façade of the Salamanca University, one of the oldest University in Europe (it had established in 1250); and this stone was one of the type of one of the most sumptuous Baroque monuments is the Main Square of the its galleries and arcades (1729). Also, this stone was used in building palaces, walls and reconstruction of Roman bridge. Currently, Villamayor Stone is being quarried by small and family companies, without a modernized processing, for cladding of the façades of the new buildings until that the construction sector was burst (in 2008 the international economic crisis). However, Villamayor Stone is the main stone material used in the city of Salamanca for the restoration of monuments and, even in small quantities when compared with just before the economic crisis, it would be of great importance for future generations protect their quarries and the craft of masonry.

Villamayor Stone has several varieties from channels facies to floodplains facies, in this work the selected varieties are: i) the fine-grained stone, microporous, is partially cemented by dolomite, 27% (bulk porosity), ii) the ochre and fine-grained stone, microporous, with smectite, 30% (bulk porosity), iii) the medium-grained stone, 38% (bulk porosity). Main components for all three varieties: Quartz (up to 60%), feldspars, 2:1 layered silicates (smectites), palygorskite-type fibrous silicates, and small amounts of micaceous minerals (illite/mica).