



Traces of the heritage arising from the Macelj sandstone

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The landscape of Southeast Slovenia and its stone heritage principally reveal itself through various Miocene sandstones. The most frequently found type on the borderline between Slovenia and Croatia, i.e. east of Rogatec, is the micaceous-quartz Macelj sandstone. This rock ranges in colour from greenish grey to bluish grey and yellowish, depending on the content of glauconite, which colours it green. In its composition, the rock is a heterogeneous mixture of grains of quartz, dolomite, muscovite, microcline, anorthite and glauconite. The average size of grains is $300\mu\text{m}$. In cross-section, they are oblong, semi-rounded or round. The mechanical-physical and durability properties of the Macelj sandstone, which have been characterised pursuant to the applicable standards for natural stone, reveal that the rock exhibits poor resistance to active substances from the atmosphere, particularly in the presence of salt.

In the surroundings of Rogatec, there are around 45 abandoned quarries of the Macelj sandstone, which are the result of the exploitation of this mineral resource from the 17th century on. The local quarrymen earned their bread until 1957, when the Kambrus quarry industry closed down. From the original use of this mineral resource as construction and decorative material, the useful value of the Macelj sandstone expanded during the development of the metals industry to the manufacture of large and small grindstones for the needs of the domestic and international market. Therefore, traces of quarrying can not only be seen in the disused quarries, but also in the rich architectural heritage of Rogatec and its surroundings, the stone furniture – from portals, window frames, wells, various troughs, pavements to stone walls – and other.

The living quarrying heritage slowly passed into oblivion after World War II, although the analysis of the social image of the people residing in Rogatec and its surroundings revealed that there was an average of one stonemason in every house in the period between both World Wars. Only few masters succeeded in transferring their know-how to their descendants, which is why the local community has been making efforts to include the quarrying and working of the Macelj sandstone in educational workshops that are being carried out at the Open-Air Museum in Rogatec.