



## **Extremadura (Spain): a case to be considered as Global Heritage Stone Province**

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Extremadura is geologically located in the Iberian Massif, belonging part of the Central Iberian Zone, in the north of the region, and the Ossa Morena zone, in the south of it. The Central Iberian Zone is characterized by the abundance of clastic metasedimentary rocks and greywacke, sandstones, shales, conglomerates, quartzites and lesser amounts of carbonate materials such as limestone and dolomite (600-300 Ma). Also featured are Hercynian granitic intrusions. The rocks from the Ossa-Morena zone are metamorphic, intrusive igneous and volcanic (650-300 Ma).

Extremadura, given its strategic geographical position, has been the site of human settlement since ancient times, and this civilisation has left its influence on the building materials used in buildings and monuments. The rocks used in building, are directly related to the geology of the immediate area, since rock outcrops, near the construction are mostly granites, slates and marbles. The historic and artistic heritage from Extremadura includes Roman treasures (like the bridges located in the Via de la Plata, dams, walls and milestones), Islamic and Christian treasures as well as medieval and Renaissance Jewish treasures.

Extremadura has three World Heritage Sites declared by UNESCO: the old town of Cáceres, the archaeological site at Merida and the monastery of Guadalupe. The latter is built mainly of bricks and masonry.

In Merida, granites and diorites of various facies of the batholiths located north of the city are used together with Sierra Carija's marble and quartzite alluvial gravels from the river Guadiana. Among the constructions in Merida, granite utilisation in the theater and amphitheater, aqueduct of Miracles and the Proserpina dam, are remarkable. The old town of Cáceres is characterised by the presence of narrow streets and monuments, medieval churches and Renaissance palaces, built with granite and flanked by a wall constructed during the Muslim period. This granite comes from the quarries within the Araya batholith.

Stones from Extremadura deserve to be considered within the Global Heritage Stone Province nomination.