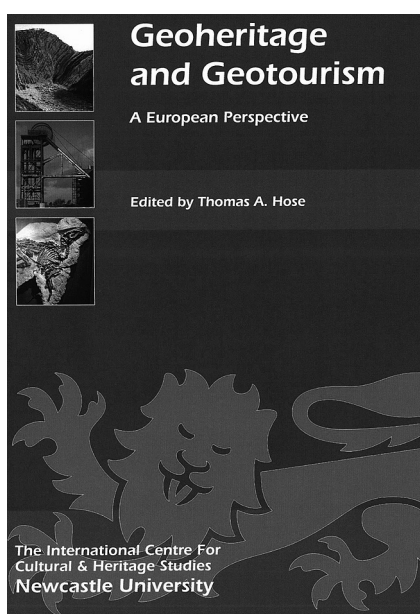


Geoheritage and geotourism. A European perspective, by T.A. Hose (Ed.). The Heritage Matters Series, volume 19. Boydell Press, Woodbridge. 336 pages. Hardback: price £60.00, ISBN 978-1-78327-147-4.



During the last few years, several monographs on geoheritage, geotourism and geoconservation have been published; the present volume is a valuable addition to the growing list of reference books within this subject. It has been edited by Thomas A. Hose, a UK-based geologist and leading specialist in geotourism, who actually defined this notion in 1995. Although, nominally, the book is an edited collection of papers, Hose himself features prominently in the list of authors, contributing, alone or with co-authors, nine out of eighteen chapters which make up the entire volume.

The tome comprises two parts, although this is not a formal division. The first eight chapters (written mainly by the editor himself) are thematic presentations that explore various interesting aspects in geoheritage and geotourism within a historical context. The second part offers nine case studies, drawn from various European countries, although with a distinctive input from the United Kingdom (four chapters). A summary chapter concludes the volume.

Thus, the first part is composed of chapters that somehow set the stage. The opening chapter dis-

cusses the two key terms that appear in the title of the volume (*Introduction: Geoheritage and geotourism* by T.A. Hose), and is followed by a general introduction to the rich geological heritage of Europe (*Britain and Europe's geoheritage* by T.A. Hose) and a summary of the history of research in this field (*Geological inquiry in Britain and Europe: a brief history* by T.A. Hose). More specific themes are presented in the next few chapters: the role of museums to preserve and showcase geoheritage, the history of trade of geological objects and that of field-based interest in sites of special geoscientific significance (*Museum and geoheritage in Britain and Europe; Geoheritage for sale: collectors, dealers and auction houses and Geoheritage in the field*; all three chapters by T.A. Hose). These are followed by an overview of past and ongoing geoconservation efforts across Europe (*Geoconservation: an introduction to European principles and practices* by J.G. Larwood) and reflections on some developments of geotourism in various places across Europe (*Geotourism in Britain and Europe: historical and modern perspectives* by T.A. Hose). All these chapters contain a wealth of information, especially on the early history of respective activities, traced back to the eighteenth century or even earlier, but all suffer from the one clear weakness that makes me feel modestly critical of the volume's title. The emphasis on the 'European perspective' is misleading. This is a distinctly British perspective, with very few (to none) similar activities in other European countries. For example, more than two-thirds of the chapter *Geotourism in Britain and Europe: historical and modern perspectives* are on the Lake District in England, the history of interest in its scenic landscape and mining heritage. Apart from a few brief references to geological site protection in Germany and rather outdated information on the European Geoparks Network, nothing from anywhere else in Europe is discussed. Another case is *Britain and Europe's geoheritage*, which starts with a three-page summary of the geological history of Europe (all of Europe, from the Precambrian onwards!) and is followed by six pages on Britain. Finally, nothing

really on the development of geological thought in Germany and France can be learnt from the chapter entitled *Geological inquiry in Britain and Europe: a brief history*. Thus, acknowledging the fundamental role of British (mainly English) scholars in developing modern geology, the reader should be warned that the view he/she obtains is highly unbalanced, with an overly British slant. The reviewer is fully aware of the fact that achieving this kind of balance would be almost impossible, given parallel developments in geosciences in various parts of Europe and language barriers, but even titles that would more appropriately reflect the content would have done part of the job.

The 'European perspective' is better represented in the informal second part of the volume, although again the choice of chapter titles remains problematic. Thus, the one entitled *Protecting and promoting the geoheritage of south-eastern Europe* by T.A. Hose and D. Vasijlević focuses on three countries: Italy (it is debatable if this really belongs to the south-eastern part of Europe), Albania and Turkey, ignoring others. The lengthy treatment of Albania is most welcome, as this is a country that is generally poorly known to an international audience, but the inadequacy of the title becomes clear if one looks at the map of the region contained in this chapter. Each of the remaining countries of the region has outstanding geoheritage (e.g., classic karst of Slovenia and extremely high geodiversity of Bulgaria, Greece or Romania) which is not mentioned, not even briefly. Other case studies are more focused in nature. Individual chapters concern the Isle of Wight in southern England (by M.C. Munt), GeoMôn in Wales (by J. Conway and M. Wood), geoparks in Scotland (by J. Gordon), the Ruhrgebiet National Geopark in Germany (by V. Wrede), Andalusia in Spain (by T.A. Hose), Canton Valais in Switzerland (by E. Reynard) and the Danube region

in Serbia (by D. Vasijlević et al.). Somehow different in scope is the contribution by K.R. Crawford on the Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland, which presents the results of a study on visitors' appraisal of interpretative facilities available at this iconic geoheritage site rather than of the geoheritage of the site itself. Thus, each chapter is very useful on its own, but there is the matter of the selection of case studies and the principles behind this. Was it an open call answered by a few? Or the outcome of a conference? This is not explained in the *Preface*; the reader may be left wondering, 'Why these, and not others?'

Summing up, the volume is a useful collection of chapters on specific subjects, both thematically and geographically. It performs less successfully as a structured book and offers a severely UK-biased presentation, meaning that it will be more difficult to use as supplementary teaching material outside the United Kingdom. Readers from countries with a similarly long tradition of geological inquiry, geoconservation and tourism to scenic landscapes and, later, geosites, such as France and Germany, may be particularly disappointed. I admire the huge work done by the editor and his contributions as an author are most impressive. It is even more unfortunate that the titles of several chapters do not quite match the contents and suggest more than the chapters actually offer. Likewise, it is a pity that not more case studies were commissioned so that the picture of contemporary European geotourism would have been more complete. Nevertheless, the volume is certainly a welcome contribution to the subject and indeed an essential reference book for issues of geoheritage and geotourism.

Piotr Migoń
University of Wrocław
e-mail: piotr.migon@uwr.edu.pl