Geoconservation Research (GCR) Journal

Volcanic Geological Sites in UGGp European Geoparks:

Special Issue Volume 6, Issue 1 - Serial Number 9, June 2023

Volcanism & Geoconservation

Edited by João Carlos C. Nunes & Michael J. Benton

Number of Articles: 14

https://gcr.isfahan.iau.ir/issue_1138542_1138543.html

Geoconservation Research
Volcanism & Geoconservation
2023, Volume 6 / Issue 1 / pages(I-X)

Preface

Volcanic Geological Sites in UGGp European Geoparks: Special Issue

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Abstract

In this Special Issue, we present 11 of the 15 geoparks that show key aspects of the past and current volcanic development of Europe. The sites include currently active locations along the mid-Atlantic ridge, from the Canary Islands and the Azores in the south to Iceland in the north. Other sites in continental Europe, from Portugal and Spain in the west to Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic in the east, document the volcanic history of the continent over the past 500 million years. The Special Issue aims to show how geological and geoconservation research have contributed to a better understanding of the respective geoparks and broadened their significance for education and geotourism.

Keywords: Volcanology; Mid-Atlantic Ridge; Geoeducation; Geoconservation

Article information

First Publish Date:2023-07-04

DOI:10.30486/gcr.2023.1990600.1143

How to cite: Nunes JC & Benton MJ(2023). Volcanic geological sites in UGGp European Geoparks: Special issue. Geoconservation Research. 6(1):I-X.

Geoconservation Research e-ISSN: 2588-7343 p-ISSN: 2645-4661

Introduction

Europe is home to a diverse range of volcanic geological sites that provide valuable insights into our planet's dynamic history. From towering volcanic peaks to unique rock formations and geothermal wonders, these sites are not only geological marvels and often iconic places for tourists, but also significant in terms of scientific research and cultural heritage. Recognizing their importance, geoconservation efforts have been undertaken to protect and preserve these volcanic landscapes, ensuring their longevity for future generations. Our aim here is to make a permanent record of key UNESCO Global Geoparks around Europe that document volcanoes and volcanological phenomena, and with a special focus on their scientific importance, geoconservation strategies and ongoing conservation, education, and geotourism aspects.

Volcanic episodes

Europe has a rich geological history marked by three main episodes of volcanic and tectonic activity, as well as ongoing volcanic activity associated with active movements of tectonic plates:

- The Caledonian Orogeny (500–400 million years ago), named after the Caledonian Mountains in Scotland, occurred during the Late Ordovician to Early Devonian. (Fig.1). It involved the collision of the Laurentian and Baltica tectonic plates, leading to the formation of the Caledonian mountain chain, which stretches from Scandinavia to Ireland and Britain, and on the other side of the Atlantic, forming the Appalachian Mountain Chain. The collision resulted in the uplift of ancient volcanic rocks, metamorphism, and the creation of vast mountain ranges.

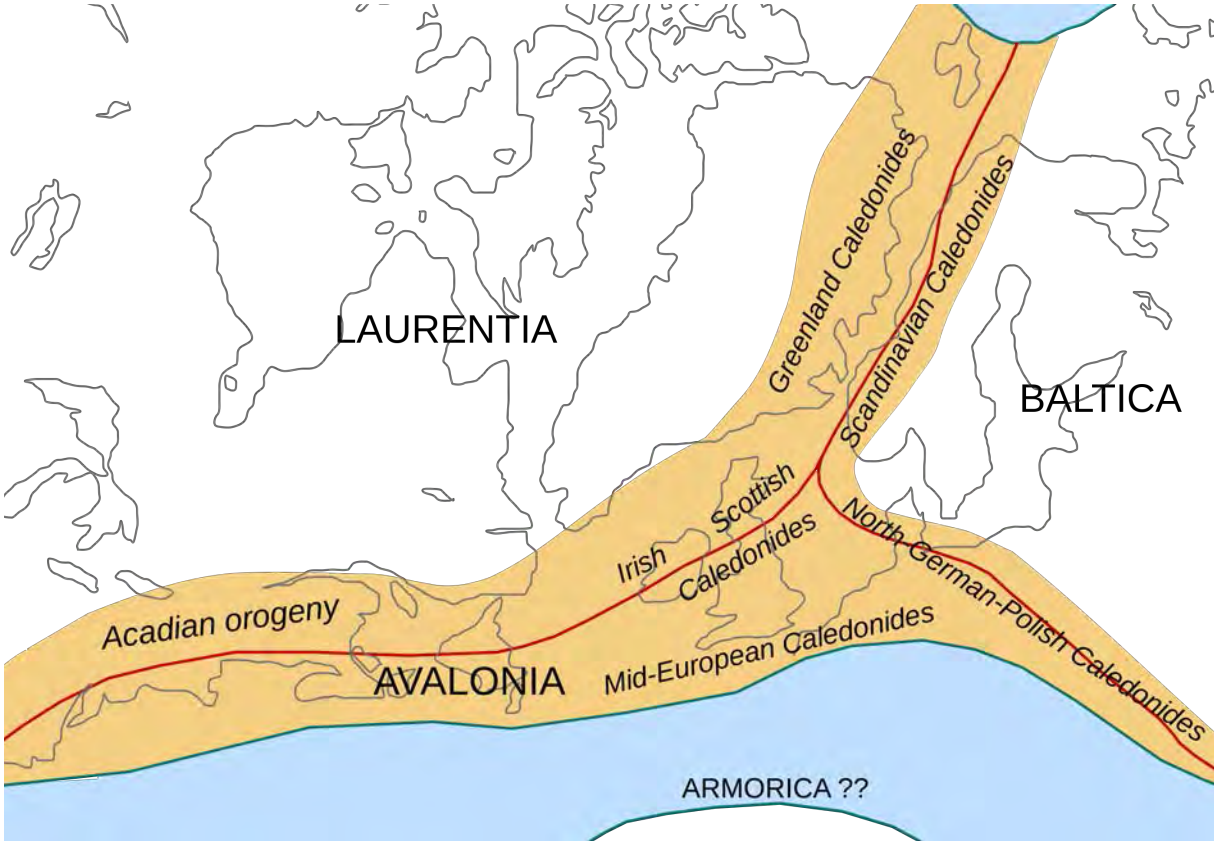

Figure 1. Location of the different branches of the Caledonian/Acadian belts at the end of the Caledonian orogeny (Early Devonian). Present-day coastlines are indicated in gray for reference. Later in geological history, the Atlantic Ocean opened. and the different parts of the orogenic belt moved apart. Map by Woudloper, Wikimedia.

- The Variscan Orogeny (380–280 million years ago), also known as the Hercynian orogeny, occurred during the Carboniferous and Permian periods. (Fig. 2) It involved the collision

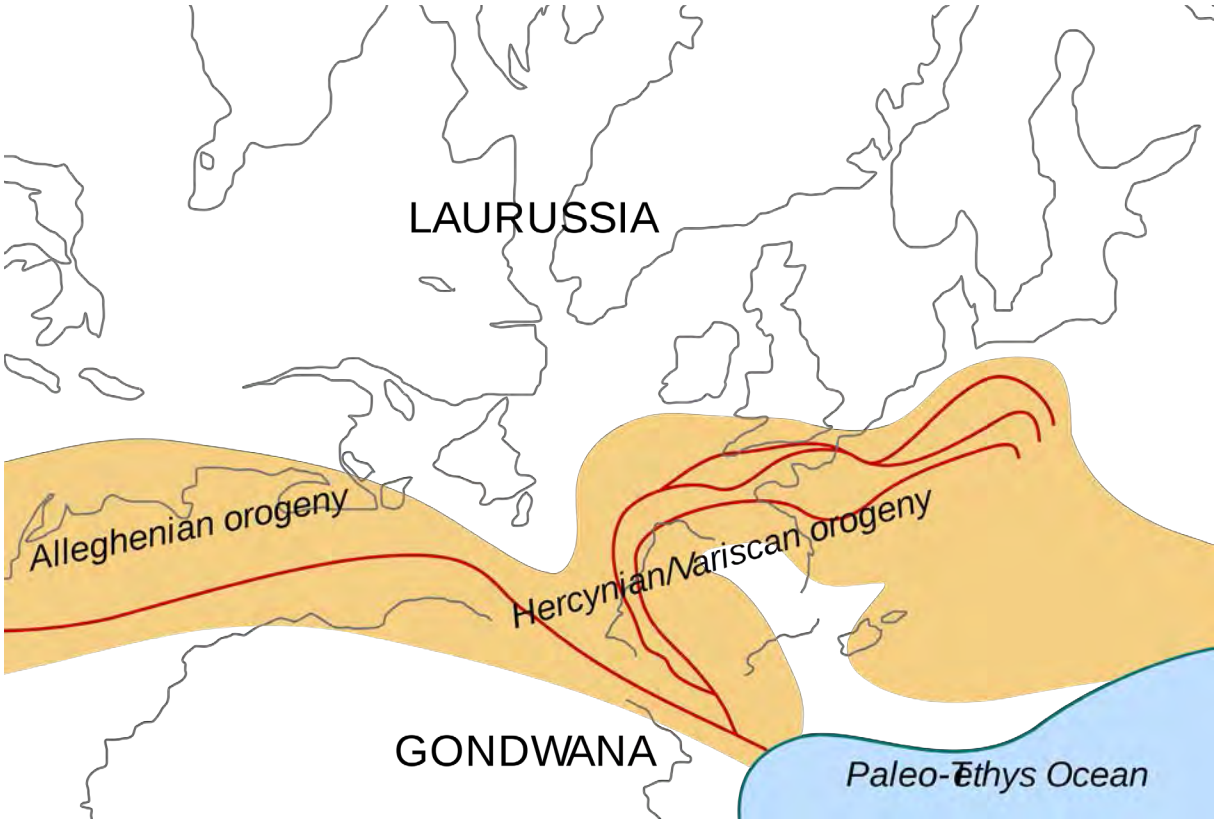

Figure 2. Location of the Hercynian-Alleghenian mountain belts in the middle of the Carboniferous period. Present day coastlines are indicated in grey for reference. Map by Woudloper, Wikimedia.

of the Laurussian and Gondwanan tectonic plates, leading to the formation of the Variscan mountain chain. This mountain chain spans across various regions of Europe, including the Ural Mountains in Russia, the Massif Central in France, the Armorican Massif in western France, and the Bohemian Massif in central Europe. The collision resulted in the formation of large mountain ranges, volcanic activity, and the development of mineral-rich deposits.

- The Alpine Orogeny (70 million years ago–present) began during the Late Cretaceous and continues to the present day. (Fig. 3) It involves the convergence of the African and Eurasian tectonic plates, resulting in the formation of the Alps. The Alpine orogeny also extends to other regions, including the Pyrenees, Carpathians, Dinarides, and Apennines. This ongoing collision has led to significant volcanic activity, such as the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in Italy and several eruptive episodes on Greek islands.

Volcanic activity in Europe continues today as part of the Alpine Orogeny, with crustal tensions across the Mediterranean, as the African-Arabian plate moves north, and major east-west faulting systems retain their activity from Turkey to Gibraltar. Thus, continental Europe has experienced several notable volcanic eruptions in recent history. One of the most famous eruptions occurred in 79 AD when Mount Vesuvius near Naples, Italy, erupted, burying the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum under layers of fall-out tephra and pyroclastic flows.

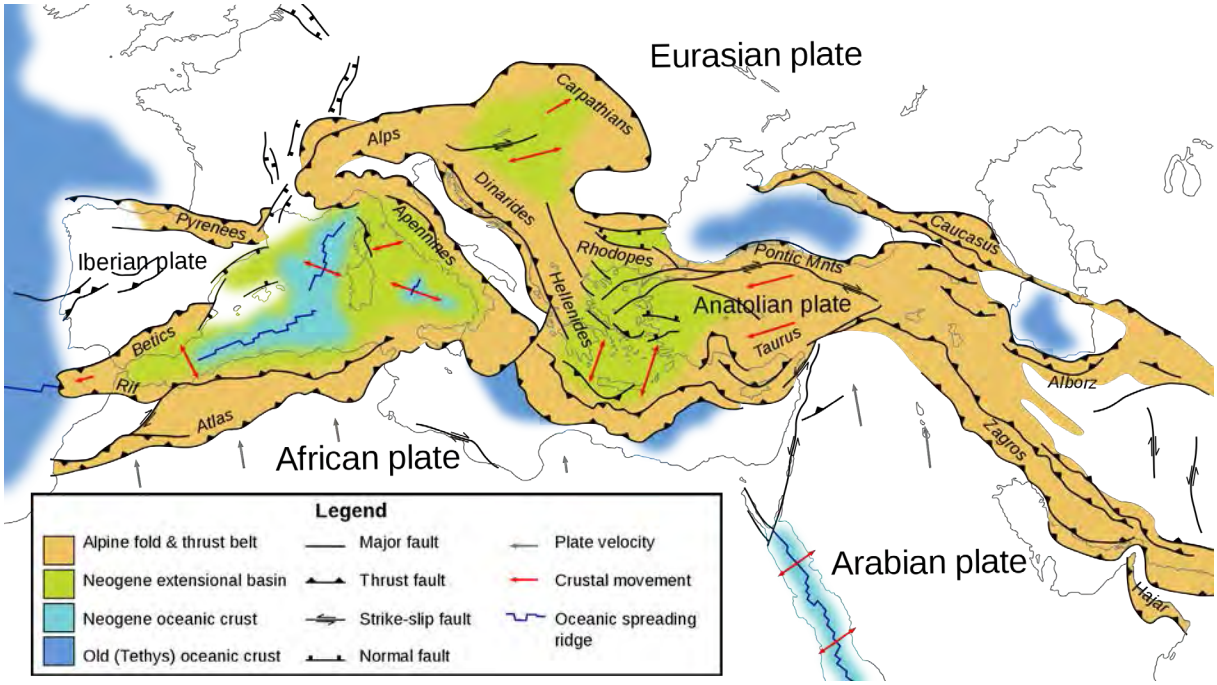

Figure 3. Tectonic map of southern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, showing tectonic structures of the western Alpide mountain belt. Only Alpine (Tertiary) structures are shown. Map by Woudloper, Wikimedia.

The other cause of continuing volcanic activity in Europe is the North Atlantic mid-ocean ridge system that extends through Iceland and the Azores archipelago, (Fig. 4) where active volcanism continues, as well as in other Atlantic oceanic islands, like the Canaries and Cape Verde islands. In Iceland, notable eruptions include Laki in 1783 (with the extrusion of some 14 km3 of lava and vast agriculture devastation) and the Eyjafjallajökull eruption in 2010, which caused significant disruptions to air travel all over Europe. In Azores, the 1957–58 Capelinhos volcano and the Serreta 1998–2001 eruptions are important milestones for worldwide volcanology, the first elected as one of the "100 IUGS Geological Heritage Sites", and the later as the first "lava balloons"-type hydrovolcanic eruption scientifically documented (e.g., "serretian-type" eruption).

Importance of Volcanic Geological Sites

Volcanism is undoubtedly the most spectacular and fundamental geological process on Earth: it is responsible for the formation of our planet "Gaia", oceans and atmosphere. In addition, volcanic geological sites in Europe hold immense scientific, educational, cultural and economic value. They offer a window into past volcanic activities and contribute to our understanding of Earth's geological processes. These sites often harbor unique features and ecosystems that have adapted to extreme conditions, making them invaluable for biodiversity research and conservation. Furthermore, they sustain important links with cultural tangible and intangible heritage, and often serve as popular tourist destinations, generating economic benefits for local communities.

Geoconservation of volcanic geological sites in Europe involves a range of strategies aimed at preserving their natural and cultural heritage. These strategies encompass legislation, education, research, and sustainable tourism practices, all embraced under the geoparks umbrella. Countries across Europe have designated many volcanic sites as protected areas, integrating them into national park systems, establishing nature reserves or making them relevant geosites of geoparks. These legal frameworks ensure the conservation of these sites,

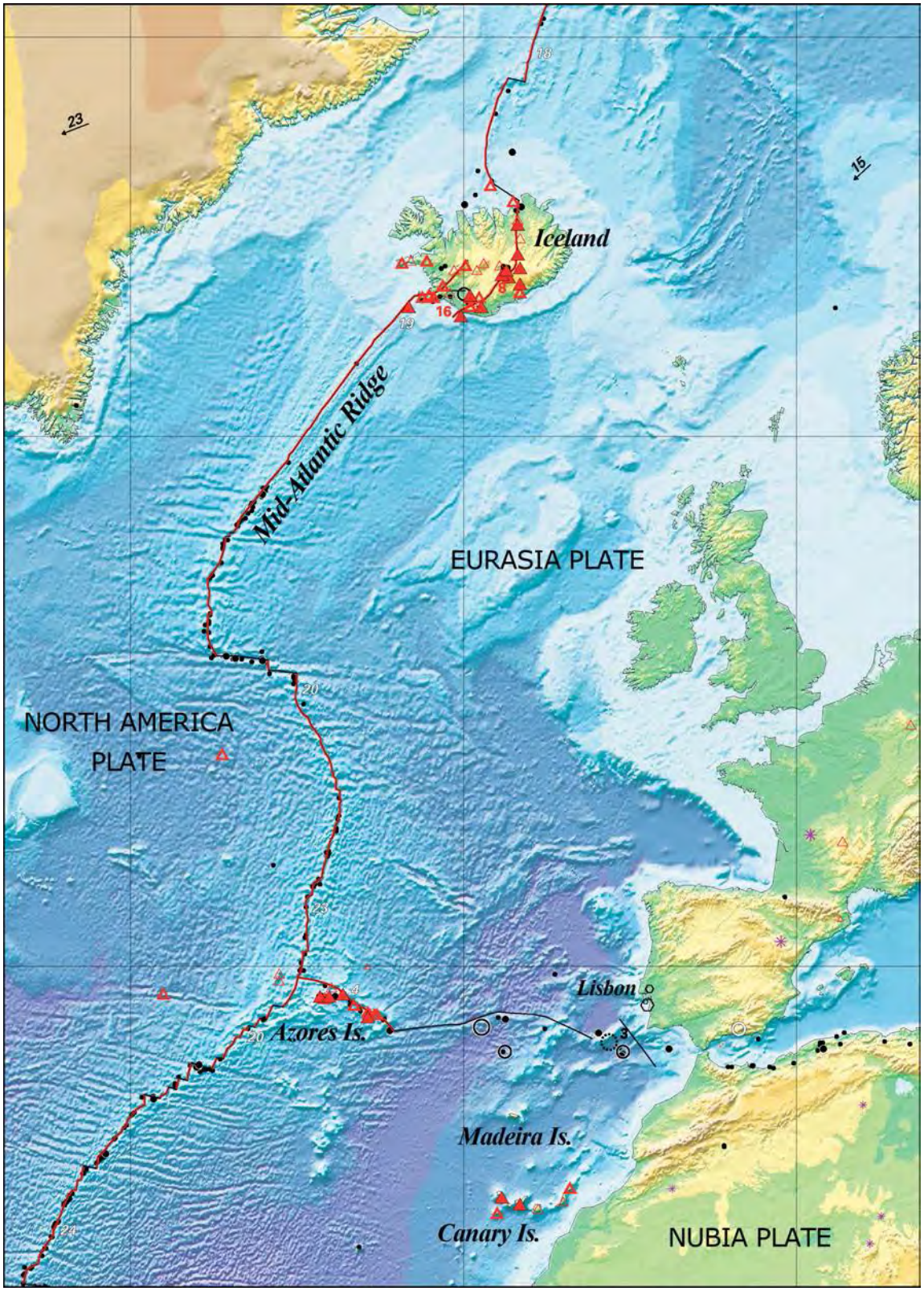

Figure 4. Location of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge in the North Atlantic Ocean. Adapted from "This Dynamic Planet - World Map of Volcanoes, Earthquakes, Impact Craters, and Plate Tectonics", by Tom Simkin, Robert I. Tilling, Peter R. Vogt, Stephen H. Kirby, Paul Kimberly & David B. Stewart (2006). Geologic Investigations Map I-2800. U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey. https://pubs.usgs.gov/imap/2800/

restrict harmful activities, and promote sustainable land management practices.

Raising public awareness about the significance of volcanic geological sites is crucial for their preservation. Educational programs, interpretation centers, and guided tours provide visitors with a deeper understanding of the geological processes and importance of these sites, fostering a sense of appreciation and stewardship. Scientific research plays a pivotal role in geoconservation efforts. Geological surveys, monitoring networks, and interdisciplinary studies help monitor volcanic activity, assess potential hazards, and contribute to ongoing conservation plans. By deepening our knowledge, these efforts aid in effective management and sustainable development of these sites.

Balancing tourism with environmental protection is a key challenge in geoconservation. Sustainable tourism practices, such as visitor guidelines, infrastructure development, and visitor capacity management, ensure that tourism activities do not negatively impact the fragile volcanic sites, formations and features. Engaging local communities in tourism planning and development fosters a sense of ownership and benefits the economic well-being of the region.

UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGp)

Geoparks are perfect tools for geoconservation of volcanic geological sites, as special territories designated by UNESCO where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. In addition to using the geological heritage in connection with all other aspects of the territory's natural and cultural heritage, the geoparks can help the well-being and socio-economic development of local communities. UGGp can promote awareness and understanding of key issues facing society, such as earth's resources sustainably, mitigation of climate change effects and reduction of natural disasters-related risks.

Europe has witnessed notable successes in geoconservation of volcanic geological sites. Examples include:

a. The Azores Islands, Portugal:

Located at the triple junction between the North American, Eurasian and Nubian tectonic plates, the Azores Islands offer diverse and unique volcanic landscapes and features, ranging from the 3,500 m high Pico Mountain basaltic stratovolcano, to hundreds of siliceous domes and coulée-type monogenetic volcanoes, from volcanic caves to impressive deep-sea hydrothermal fields, such as the Lucky Strike, Menez Gwen or Rainbow hydrothermal vent fields on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. During the last decades, the geodiversity and geological heritage of the Azores Islands is being "geologically recognized, politically considered and legally protected", with about 95 geosites classified as protected areas.

b. The Canary Islands, Spain:

The volcanic landscapes of the Canary Islands, like the Timanfaya National Park in Lanzarote Island or Tenerife's Mount Teide, have been widely recognized and the latter designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The implementation of strict protection measures and sustainable tourism practices has ensured the preservation of these and other remarkable volcanic environments in the archipelago.

c. Iceland:

Iceland's volcanic sites, such as the geothermal wonders of the Reykjanes Peninsula, the Thingvellir rift zone, and the dramatic landscapes of the Vatnajökull National Park, have been effectively managed through a combination of legislation, research, and sustainable tourism initiatives. These efforts have contributed to the country's growing popularity as a geo-tourism destination.

Special Issue

In this special issue, we include articles from two

main European geological settings: North Atlantic volcanic islands and continental European geoparks, illustrating a range of geological interests and geoconservation issues, from geosites, volcanic geoheritage, geoeducation and geotourism. Crucial in all cases is that the rationale for identification of a site or area for conservation is the scientific argument: a site must show unique and high-relevance geological features that are recognized as significant at an international or national level. This requirement provides a benchmark worldwide so that all designated geosites are important scientifically at a high level, wherever they may be located, and this then provides a marker that can be used locally to explain why such a geological resource is important and so engender local pride and value for the sites.

We group the papers under three main themes (Table 1), Volcanism in the North Atlantic Ocean

Table 1. Summary of the main geoparks in Europe that show volcanological phenomena, grouped by geographic .region and by the dates of volcanism, and whether still volcanically active

	Geopark Name	**Country**	**Maximum expected age of volcanic rocks**	**Younger age of volcanic rocks**	**Active volcanism**
North Atlantic Ocean	Reykjanes UGGp	ICELAND	200 ka	2022 A.D.	YES
	El Hierro UGGp	SPAIN	1.2 Ma	2011 A.D.	YES
	Katla UGGp	ICELAND	2.5 Ma	2011 A.D.	YES
	Azores UGGp	PORTUGAL	6 Ma	2001 A.D.	YES
	Lanzarote y Archipiélago Chinijo UGGp	SPAIN	15 Ma	1824 A.D.	YES
Continental Europe (younger)	Vulkaneifel UGGp	GERMANY	45 Ma	10.9 ka	NO
	Lesvos Island UGGp	GREECE	21.5 Ma	16 Ma	NO
	Kula - Salihli UGGp	TURKEY	1 Ma	15 ka	NO
	Monts d'Ardèche UGGp	FRANCE	12-6 Ma	166 - 30 ka	NO
Continental Europe (older)	Bakony-Balaton UGGp	HUNGARY	8 Ma	2.6 Ma	NO
	Cabo de Gata-Nijar UGGp	SPAIN	14 Ma	8 Ma	NO
	Novohrad-Nógrád UGGp	HUNGARY *and* SLOVAKIA	20 Ma	0.4 Ma	NO
	Naturpark Bergstrasse Odenwald UGGp	GERMANY	280 Ma	21 Ma	NO
	Papuk UGGp	CROATIA	400 Ma	16 Ma	NO
	Bohemian Paradise UGGp	CZECH REPUBLIC	540 Ma	4.5 Ma	NO

UGGp – UNESCO Global Geopark

Ma – millions of years

ka – thousands of years

(15 Ma to present day), Continental Europe (younger erupting volcanics, 166–10.9 ka), and Continental Europe (older erupting volcanics, 540–0.4 Ma). There are 15 relevant volcanic geoparks in Europe, and we present papers here for 11 of them, and refer to previous papers for the others.

Among the North Atlantic Ocean sites, first is Reykjanes Geopark in Iceland, with volcanic activity dating from 200 ka to the present day, and it has been described earlier (Rybar *et al.* 2014). Second is El Hierro Geopark in the Canary Islands (Casillas Ruiz *et al.* 2023), which shows mega-landslides and extensive fields of pahoehoe lava-flows associated with historical and prehistoric fissure eruptions. The Katla Geopark in Iceland (Jóhannesson *et al.* 2023) is also located in a currently active volcanic area. Volcanic features include evidence of large fissure eruptions that formed vast lava fields, as well as the active volcanoes, craters, and hyaloclastite ridges. Next is the Azores Geopark (Lima and Meneses 2023), showing 27 volcanic systems with polygenetic central volcanoes and volcanic ridges, most of them active but dormant. The Azores Geopark incorporates 121 geosites distributed across the nine islands and the surrounding underwater marine area. Fifth in this category is the Lanzarote y Archipiélago Chinijo Geopark (Guillén Martin and Mateo Mederos 2023), which shows geological evidence of the historic basaltic eruption of Timanfaya, as well as landforms and materials derived from the interaction of volcanic and erosive-sedimentary processes through the last 15 Myr.

Of the four younger Continental European volcanic geoparks, we cannot present reports on two. These are Lesvos Island Geopark in Greece, where volcanic activity lasted from 21.5–16 Ma, but the petrified forest there was described by Zouros (2021), and the Vulkaneifel Geopark in Germany, which has been described in terms of its palaeontological interest earlier in this journal (Koziol and Wappler 2021). Here, we present new accounts of the Kula-Salihli Geopark in Turkey (Aytaç and Demir 2023), which shows evidence of Pleistocene and Holocene basaltic lava eruptions through scoria cones, as well as much earlier volcanism shown by lavas that overlie mesa-style uplands. Further, the Monts d'Ardèche Geopark in France (Raynal *et al.* 2023) shows volcanic features dating from the Miocene to the late Pleistocene, showing evidence of the styles of magmatic processes, eruptive dynamics, morphological evolution of landscapes, chronology of eruptions, and relationships between humans and volcanoes during the Pleistocene.

The final papers describe five of the six geoparks that show evidence of older volcanic eruptions in continental Europe. First is Bakony-Balaton Geopark in Hungary (Harangi and Korbély 2023), which shows evidence of the long-term volcanism of the Carpathian–Pannonian Region, a basaltic monogenetic volcanic field erupted from 8–2.3 Ma. The Geopark encompasses more than 50 volcanic centers and shows evidence of explosive hydrovolcanic eruptions with proximal and distal pyroclastic deposits, clastogenetic lava, valley-channeled lava flow, lava lake and vent-filling basalts. Second is the Cabo de Gata-Nijar Geopark in Spain (García del Hoyo and Donaire Romero 2023), with evidence of submarine effusive volcanism and subaerial pyroclastic deposits from eruptions that occurred 14 Ma. Next comes the Novohrad-Nógrád Geopark straddling the Hungary-Slovakia border (Harangi *et al.* 2023), which shows a broad range of eruption products from basaltic through andesitic to rhyolitic, reflecting the wide-ranging volcanism of the Pannonian Basin over the last 20 Myr. It includes the Ipolytarnóc Site, which documents when a devastating eruption buried a subtropical-forested area with thick pyroclastic deposits and preserved vertebrate footprints. Then, younger eruptions of basaltic and andesitic magmas produced lavas with columnar jointing. The fourth site, in order of the geological

age of the eruptions, is Bergstrasse Odenwald in Germany, where eruptions took place from 280–21 Ma, in several phases; geoconservation aspects of the famous Messel Pit, a key fossil site within the geopark was described by Frey *et al.* (2021). The fifth site in this category, the Papuk Geopark in Croatia, shows even older rocks (Balen *et al.* 2023). Especially important is the variety of igneous (sub) volcanic rocks. Albite rhyolite erupted in the Late Cretaceous (~81 Ma), recording events associated with the closure of the Neotethys Ocean when acidic silicate melt rose fast from the deep crustal levels to the near surface, where cooling caused regular cracking and the development of columnar jointing. Finally, the Bohemian Paradise Geopark in the Czech Republic shows the oldest volcanic evidence from among these 15 geoparks (Mencl *et al.* 2023), having been affected by global tectonic events over the last 500 Myr. These include a number of volcanic eruptions associated with the Variscan Orogeny, as well as further volcanic activity in the Neogene triggered at a distance by Alpine Orogenic processes.

The authors of these articles, all of them working in their Geoparks and providing first-hand knowledge, highlight details of how their Geoparks received initial protection at the national level and then the steps to international recognition by UNESCO. Also, importantly, the authors draw out in each case the special volcanological features of their geoparks, stressing the recent and current research and how that contributes to deeper understanding, and links their sites to others in the network. Finally, the authors discuss political and economic aspects of their geoparks, and how the development of the geoparks can stimulate investment and local tourism-related economic activity. There are also great examples of educational programs, geotrails, guided walks, exhibitions, and special events to attract and inform the local people about the wealth of importance of their local geological features, as well as to inform and excite the visitors, both adults and children.

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Geoconservation

Volcanic Geological Sites in UGGp European Geoparks: Special Issue – Preface

João Carlos Nunes; Michael Benton

Volume 6, Issue 1 , June 2023, Pages I-X

https://doi.org/10.30486/gcr.2023.1990600.1143

Abstract

In this Special Issue, we present 11 of the 15 geoparks that show key aspects of the past and current volcanic development of Europe. The sites include currently active locations along the mid-Atlantic ridge, from the Canary Islands and the Azores in the south to Iceland in the north. Other sites in continental Europe, from Portugal and Spain in the west to Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic in the east, document the volcanic history of the continent over the past 500 million years.

Geoheritage

Cretaceous Volcanic Rock Geosites of the Papuk UNESCO Global Geopark (Croatia): Scientific Aspect of Geoheritage in Geoeducation, Geotourism and Geoconservation

Dražen Balen; Petra Schneider; Zorica Petrinec; Goran Radonić; Goran Pavić

Volume 6, Issue 1 , June 2023, Pages 1-17

https://doi.org/10.30486/gcr.2023.1979814.1122

Abstract

Research over decades confirms the geological values of the Papuk UNESCO Global Geopark (Croatia) as a unique place in the regional frame where several orogenic events left their traces through the formation of diverse lithologies. The important part of the geological mosaic, at least in the western part of the Geopark, is the variety of igneous (sub)volcanic rocks. Albite rhyolite at Rupnica and Trešnjevica geosites formed in the Late Cretaceous (~81 Ma), recording the geological event(s) associated with the closure of the Neotethys Ocean. At that time, acidic silicate melt rose fast from the deep crustal levels to the near surface, where cooling caused regular cracking and the development of columnar jointing. Today, these geosites attract the attention of visitors and therefore they are important landmarks that contribute to local (geo)tourism. They are also used as educational sites for both higher education and schoolchildren with Rupko's Geological School, in which the development of columnar jointing is explained popularly, further enhancing public awareness of the geodiversity and geoheritage of the Mt. Papuk area. The recently opened Geo-info Center in Voćin significantly enhances the geoheritage presentation at the Geopark.

Geoconservation

The Cabo de Gata-Níjar UNESCO Global Geopark (Almería, Spain). A Volcanism Between Land and Sea

Gloria García del Hoyo; Teodosio Donaire Romero

Volume 6, Issue 1 , June 2023, Pages 18-28

https://doi.org/10.30486/gcr.2023.1982390.1129

Abstract

Cabo de Gata-Níjar geopark is an exceptional volcanic zone in the western Mediterranean because of the submarine effusive volcanism and the large volume of subaerial pyroclastic deposits; volcanism developed between land and sea. Its extensive outcrops attract students and researchers from all over Europe to have a better and more precise understanding of the processes behind this volcanism. The compositional range of the outcrops and climatic conditions have generated amazingly well exposed areas, where a wide range of volcanic deposits can be observed and studied. Its current position makes the whole complex an outstanding area for research and education in geology and volcanology. All this led to the designation of the area as a UNESCO Global Geopark in 2015 and the development of a strategy to highlight the value of the geological heritage of the area, developing diverse tools in the form of brochures, maps, a geosite inventory and a legal framework to make conservation and research main objectives of the management team.

Geoconservation

The Vanishing Volcanic Geoheritage of a Key Scoria Cone and its Significance in Volcanic Hazard Resilience of the Active Monogenetic Volcanic Field near Al Madinah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Karoly Nemeth; Mohammed Rashad Moufti; Mahmoud S Ashor; Abdulrahman G Sowaigh; Turki Y Hablil; Khalid H Abdulhafez; Turki A Sehli

Volume 6, Issue 1 , June 2023, Pages 29-52

https://doi.org/10.30486/gcr.2023.1982893.1135

Abstract

Four small scoria cones in the western outskirts of Al Madinah City, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, form a distinct young volcanic landmark. These volcanoes, despite their very small size, provide one of the most fundamental sources of information about the early eruption mechanism of rising mafic magma in the context of an active volcanic field located next to a city with over one million people. An initial study of the area in 2012–2013 confirmed that these sites had a significant phreatomagmatic phase in their opening stage, leaving behind characteristic pyroclastic successions likely to be covered by subsequent eruptive products. The fact that in this location, unequivocal evidence emerged to show that explosive magma-water interaction driven eruptions occurred in the largely magmatic (“dry”) explosive style, and volcanic field evolution confirmed that this site has high geoheritage value. Since the first research was 20 years ago, a restudy of the present-day condition of the scoria cone was conducted. Applying satellite imagery, remote sensing and direct site visit, we find that about a third of the cone surface area has been modified and at least a quarter of its volume has vanished. Further excavation for cone material however opened the entire western side of the cone, exposing a nearly 5-m-thick succession of accidental lithic pyroclast-dominated lapilli tuff and tuff breccia, confirming that this location had a significant phreatomagmatic phase in its opening eruptions. This location shows graphically the need for geoconservation to preserve such sites that are potentially the only, or best locations to show the potential eruptive styles and scenarios of future eruptions if they occur in similar environments.

Geosite

Volcanic features within Katla UNESCO Global Geopark

Johannes Marteinn Johannesson; Berglind Sigmundsdóttir; Sigurdur Sigursveinsson

Volume 6, Issue 1 , June 2023, Pages 53-69

https://doi.org/10.30486/gcr.2023.1982324.1130

Abstract

Katla UNESCO Global Geopark is one of the most active volcanic areas in Iceland where the Eastern Volcanic Zone and the Iceland Mantle Plume control the activity. The interaction of ice and fire has dominated the eruption styles and formations from the central volcanoes while large fissure eruptions have occurred on the fissure swarms of the systems, often forming vast lava fields that stretch from the highlands to the ocean. Eruptions have formed and molded the landscape of the geopark, and among the most remarkable features are the central volcano of Katla, Eldgjá fissure eruption and the rootless cone fields of Álftaver and Landbrot, Eyjafjallajökull central volcano, Lakagígar crater row and Eldhraun lava field, and the hyaloclastite ridges of Kattarhryggir, Grænifjallgarður and Fögrufjöll. Each of these sites is a geosite in the geopark and represents different volcanic geoforms and specific geological features characteristic of specific volcanic processes. One of the fundamental roles of the geopark has been to inform people about the geology and formation history of these sites so they can better understand and appreciate these sites. The geosites have become popular tourist sites which are protected due to their uniqueness and value for research and preservation.

Geoheritage

The Basaltic Monogenetic Volcanic Field of the Bakony-Balaton UNESCO Global Geopark, Hungary: From Science to Geoeducation and Geotourism

Szabolcs Harangi; Barnabás Korbély

Volume 6, Issue 1 , June 2023, Pages 70-97

https://doi.org/10.30486/gcr.2023.1981579.1125

Abstract

As a part of the long-standing volcanism of the Carpathian–Pannonian Region, a basaltic monogenetic volcanic field developed here from 8–2.3 Ma. This is a specific type of volcanism, when mostly a small volume of magma erupts intermittently and always in a new place. The Bakony–Balaton Uplands area is an excellent natural laboratory, where several unique volcanological features can be observed and which provides an insight into how such volcanism is taking place. This volcanic field consists of more than 50 volcanic centers and almost all volcanic eruption types characterizing basalt volcanism can be recognized here, such as hydrovolcanic (phreatic to phreatomagmatic) eruptions and magmatic (Strombolian and Hawaiian) explosive eruptions with proximal and distal pyroclastic deposits, clastogenetic lava, valley-channeled lava flow, lava lake and vent-filling basalts. Since significant uplift and erosion occurred after the volcanism, the original volcanic edifices have been variously eroded, enabling the unique exposure even of the vent and conduit sections. The lava lake and valley-filled basalts were resistant to erosion that resulted in an inverted morphology landscape. Building on scientific results gained from petrological and volcanological studies for more than a century, the Bakony–Balaton UNESCO Global Geopark makes a great effort to transfer this knowledge to geoeducation and geotourism development. This includes volcanological nature trails over 40 km in length and visitor centers with exhibitions designed not only to unravel the nature of volcanic processes, but also to serve as entertainment and recreation. This is accomplished by regular guided outdoor activities led by certified local partners, who successfully passed the geopark geotour-guide training courses.

Geoparks

The Volcanic History of the UNESCO Global Geopark Bohemian Paradise

Vaclav Mencl; Jan Bubal; Marcela Starkova

Volume 6, Issue 1 , June 2023, Pages 98-113

https://doi.org/10.30486/gcr.2023.1979804.1121

Abstract

Central Europe and the area of the UNESCO Global Geopark Bohemian Paradise have been affected by global tectonic events, especially during the last 500 million years. Volcanic phenomena are the most striking traces today of such past tectonic events. At the end of the Paleozoic, there were a number of volcanic eruptions connected to the waxing and waning of the Variscan Orogeny. Further volcanic activity came in the Neogene as a distal reaction to Alpine Orogenic processes. All volcanic phases show the variability of volcanic processes and have been studied intensively. In addition, these volcanic events and the production of various volcanic products enabled the emergence of local world-famous mineral deposits. The extraordinarily varied geology and the large number of volcanic features is a great tourist attraction and an excellent opportunity for a vivid interpretation of the geoheritage of Central Europe.

Geoparks

Azores UNESCO Global Geopark: Where Volcanoes Tell us their Stories

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Volume 6, Issue 1 , June 2023, Pages 114-127

https://doi.org/10.30486/gcr.2023.1982489.1131

Abstract

The Azores UNESCO Global Geopark, located in the North Atlantic Ocean is a volcanic archipelago with several non-inhabited islets and nine inhabited islands. The 27 volcanic systems with polygenetic central volcanoes and volcanic ridges, most of them active but dormant, represent an exuberant geological heritage, most of which (77% of geosites) is protected. The quantity and quality of the Azorean geosites, their international relevance, and high range of geodiversity, together with the rich biodiversity and the notable cultural heritage of the archipelago sustain the Azores UNESCO Global Geopark through the motto “Nine Islands - One Geopark”. The Azores Geopark, the first archipelagic geopark in the world, is established on the basis of 121 geosites distributed across the nine islands and surrounding marine area. The unique geological and geographical setting of the archipelago allowed the development of outstanding landscapes and a culture that is deeply linked to volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. One of the priorities of the geopark is to provide the tools and knowledge for sustainable use of this heritage e through geotourism. Here, we review the Geopark, and introduce a new geosite, the Ponta da Ajuda, the largest and best outcrop of columnar jointing on São Miguel island.

Geoheritage

El Hierro UNESCO Geopark: Geological Heritage, Geoconservation and Geoturism

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Volume 6, Issue 1 , June 2023, Pages 128-138

https://doi.org/10.30486/gcr.2023.1980922.1123

Abstract

El Hierro UNESCO Global Geopark, the first declared in the Canary Islands, treasures an impressive geological heritage, represented by its Geological Interesting Places (GIPs or geosites) has as foremost exponents those related to the formation of mega-landslides and the formation of extensive fields of pahoehoe lava-flows associated with the historical or prehistoric fissure vulcanism that occurred concerning the activity of its three ridges. This interesting geological heritage has been made available to the island's human community, embodied in an incipient geological tourism as a complement and continuity to the sustainable growth policy initiated by the local authorities decades ago.

Geoheritage

Volcanic Monument of Western Anatolia: Kula-Salihli UNESCO Global Geopark

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Volume 6, Issue 1 , June 2023, Pages 139-160

https://doi.org/10.30486/gcr.2023.1982314.1128

Abstract

The Kula-Salihli UNESCO Global Geopark includes evidence of geological history spanning 600 million years, from Palaeozoic metamorphic rocks to late prehistoric volcanic eruptions. It can function as a field laboratory for geosciences, demonstrating a variety of graben and fault structures and fluvial, volcanic, and karstic landscapes, in addition to rocks from various geological eras, evidence of fluvial processes, and topographic inversions caused by differential erosion. The topography and landscape elements also exhibit the qualities of a natural monument. The majority of the most recent basaltic lava eruptions, linked to the development of scoria cones, took place in the western Anatolian Kula-Salihli UNESCO Geopark during the Pleistocene and Holocene epochs. In this unique volcanic province, there is also much earlier volcanism, such as a few older lavas that overlie mesa-style uplands, conserving underneath them sediments that are loosely bound but otherwise would have been lost to erosion. Because of its rich and diverse geoheritage value, the geopark is emerging as a location for academic studies, teaching, and investigation of natural events. This study aims to introduce the volcanism-related geosites of the Kula Salihli UNESCO Global Geopark. In this context, we present the results of geomorphological research that we have been conducting in the region with an international team for many years, as well as field observations and relevant literature.

Geoparks

Geoconservation and Responsible Use of the Territory: Experiences from the Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands UNESCO Global Geopark

Cayetano Guillén Martín; Elena Mateo Mederos

Volume 6, Issue 1 , June 2023, Pages 161-177

https://doi.org/10.30486/gcr.2023.1982041.1127

Abstract

The island of Lanzarote represents a fragile insular space of high environmental value, where coexistence between conservation and the controlled and responsible use of local heritage has been achieved. Since April 2015, Lanzarote and the set of islands and islets of the Chinijo Islands, have been part of the UNESCO Global Geopark Network. Among its unique features is a global geosite of international relevance, the historic basaltic eruption of Timanfaya, as well as the forms and materials derived from the interaction of volcanic and erosive-sedimentary processes over more than 15 million years. The Geopark preserves key geological heritage for the islands that has been respectfully used to contribute to sustanible socioeconomic development. The recognition of Lanzarote, the Chinijo Archipelago as a Geopark, has been a fundamental tool to strengthen local strategies and value the local geological and geomorphological heritage. In addition, it has also been key in continuing to contribute to the traditional and sustainable use of these fragile insular spaces, favoring lasting models of coexistence. Here, we explore the different lines of work that the Geopark is currently developing to achieve its objectives in terms of geoconservation, responsible use of the territory, and sustainability.The recognition of Lanzarote, the Chinijo Archipelago as a Geopark, has been a fundamental tool to strengthen local strategies and value the local geological and geomorphological heritage. In addition, it has also been key in continuing to contribute to the traditional and sustainable use of these fragile insular spaces, favoring lasting models of coexistence.This document tries to expose the different lines of work that the Geopark is currently developing to achieve its essential objectives in terms of geoconservation, responsible use of the territory and sustainability.

Geoheritage

Wide-ranging and Violent Volcanic History of a Quiet Transborder Area: Volcanic Geoheritage of the Novohrad-Nógrád UNESCO Global Geopark

Szabolcs Harangi; Imre Szarvas; Réka Lukács

Volume 6, Issue 1 , June 2023, Pages 178-206

https://doi.org/10.30486/gcr.2023.1982587.1133

Abstract

The Novohrad–Nógrád UNESCO Global Geopark is the first cross-border geopark located between Slovakia and Hungary, Eastern–Central Europe. “Ancient world without borders” – its motto reflects both the remarkable geodiversity and the strong link between people living on either side of the state border. In this relatively small area, almost all types of eruption products can be found from basaltic through andesitic to rhyolitic, reflecting the wide-ranging volcanism of the Pannonian Basin over the last 20 million years, which were the largest eruptions in Europe at the time. The Ipolytarnóc Site, the gateway of the geopark and possessor of a European- Diploma for Protected Areas, documents when one of these devastating eruption events buried a subtropical-forested area with thick pyroclastic deposits and preserved vertebrate footprints. On the other hand, relatively young eruptions of basaltic magmas occurred in this area that give another specific atmosphere to the geopark. Columnar jointing with concave and convex curvilinear shapes shown both by basalts and andesites is another peculiar natural value. Due to the regional uplift and the associated erosion, most of the volcanic edifices were removed and the root zones of the volcanoes were revealed, giving a special character. The volcanic heritage meets specific cultural and historical heritage, which makes this geopark a particular tourist destination. There are four visitor centers and several nature trails with explanation panels showing concise summaries of the volcanological features in three languages (Hungarian, Slovakian and English). Among the rich indoor and outdoor activities, the annual Volcano Day program in Ipolytarnóc with an interactive volcano show attracts many people. This is an evolving geopark, where continuously renewing attractions serve the geoeducation and geotourism purposes in parallel with geoheritage conservation management.

Geoparks

A Tale of Old and Young Volcanoes in Monts d'Ardèche UNESCO Global Geopark (South-Eastern France)

Jean-Paul Raynal; Emmanuelle DEFIVE; Nicolas Klee; Roxane Buso; Didier Laporte

Volume 6, Issue 1 , June 2023, Pages 207-232

https://doi.org/10.30486/gcr.2023.1983724.1136

Abstract

The Regional Natural Park of the Monts d'Ardèche, located in south-eastern France, became the Monts d’Ardèche UNESCO Global Geopark in September 2014. This territory possesses significant volcanic features dating from the Miocene to the late Pleistocene. The UNESCO Global Geopark label helped to formalize a long-standing partnership with the University of Clermont Auvergne which includes support for scientific research, establishing conservation and protection priorities, establishing geosites for the public and involvement of local people and communities in geotouristic initiatives. Here we focus on some peculiar geosites that allow us to question magmatic processes, eruptive dynamics, morphological evolution of landscapes, the chronology of eruptions, relationships between humans and volcanoes during the Pleistocene, and highlight the delicate alliance between economic pressures, heritage conservation, and scientific tourism.

Geoparks

Dóniz-Páez, J. & Pérez, N.M. (Editors), 2023. El Hierro Island Global Geopark: Diversity of Volcanic Heritage for Geotourism. Springer, Cham. vii+123 pp. ISBN 978-3-031-07288-8. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-031-07289-5

Dmitry A. Ruban

Volume 6, Issue 1 , June 2023, Pages 233-235

https://doi.org/10.30486/gcr.2023.1986575.1139

Abstract

The new book edited by Dóniz-Páez & Pérez presents the experience and the findings of the multi-aspect research undertaken in the El Hierro UNESCO Global Geopark (UGGp) established in the Canary Islands of Spain for about a decade. Taking into account the general importance and the diversity of the topics considered in this book, the latter deserves the attention of the international research community. It should be highlighted that this geopark represents chiefly volcanic geoheritage, and, thus, the volume bears a lot of information about volcanism.

Geoconservation Research (GCR) Journal

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Geoconservation Research has been indexed in Emerging Sources Citation Index

Print ISSN: 2645-4661

Online ISSN: 2588-7343