

Traveling Marble: Agents, Networks, Technologies (18th-20th centuries)

Thorvaldsen's Museum (room 33), Copenhagen.

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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Kent Alstrup (The Agency for Culture and Palaces, Denmark)

18th Century Norwegian Marble in Copenhagen.

The construction of Christiansborg Palace in Copenhagen 1730-45 was a gigantic building project. Unfortunately, the main building burnt in 1794. Luckily, the stable wings and the official entrance via The Marble Bridge was saved, and are to this day the best places to study the Norwegian marble, quarried in the 18th century. The bridge's pavement is laid with an overwhelming variety of this marble, and the same goes for the columns, walls and mangers in the royal stables. The quarries were to be found southwest of Oslo and south of Bergen. The latter place consisted of several quarries on six different isles. In 1740 a local civil servant, Jesper Heiberg, was sent to inspect the quarries. In his report to the King, the different types of marble are accounted for as well as the dimensions of stones that it was possible to quarry and not least the difficulties of bringing them to Copenhagen.

In his report, Heiberg claimed that the white marble at the island of Hopesholmen, was of "as great virtue and quality as the Italian white Carrara marble". To prove his point, he sent a portrait of the King himself carved in this fine stone. The historical accounts tell a story about the marble from the extraction in the quarries, the transport to Copenhagen and to the considerations concerning the use of the various types of marble.

Cristiana Barandoni (independent archaeologist) and **Luca Borghini** (independent social historian)

The "Archivi del Marmo Project (AMP)"

This project is dedicated to the systematic census and cataloging of corporate and institutional archives within the marble stone industry in Carrara, Tuscany. The primary objective is to establish a comprehensive database encompassing industries with historical legacies spanning several centuries, which have not been adequately documented, preserved, or protected concerning significant historical records. These documents possess local, national, and often international significance; however, many remain unrecognized and are at risk of deterioration. To date, the project has successfully inventoried and cataloged numerous documents, including the recovery of a notable manuscript housed at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Carrara: "L'ORGANIZZAZIONE TECNICA DELL'INDUSTRIA MARMIFERA APUANA DALL'ETÀ DI AUGUSTO AL 1870" by Carlo Andrea Fabbriotti. This document has been published in its entirety for the first time in 2020, accompanied by annotations and supplementary insights that expand its contextual relevance beyond private collections. It substantially aids in reconstructing the economic, historical, and social dynamics of the period.

The project AMP initiates its focus on the historical families of Carrara, a region renowned for its marble production. Some of these families continue their activities today, while others faced bankruptcy during World War II due to pressures from the Regime restrictions. By concentrating on these enterprises, the project aims to preserve the intricate historical

narrative of the stone industry, ensuring that valuable insights into its evolution are not lost. Through rigorous research and collaboration with industry stakeholders, the project enhances the understanding of the stone industry's heritage and promotes awareness of its cultural significance. The resulting database will serve as an essential resource for historians, researchers, and the public, fostering appreciation for the narratives embedded within these archives.

This paper emphasizes the critical role of historical research in safeguarding collective memory. By documenting and preserving these records, we honor the legacies of those who preceded us and ensure that future generations have access to the rich history of the stone industry. Ultimately, this project aspires to safeguard the legacy of the stone industry in Italy and to illuminate its enduring impact on local communities and the broader historical landscape.

Sandra Beresford (Leonardo Bistolfi archive)

The Workshop of Antonio Caniparoli & Figli in Carrara 1850 to 1930 c.

For many years now, resident in the region of the Apuan marble quarries, I have delved into the history of the Art and craft marble trade (1860-1930 ca.). While my own studies have concentrated on the relations between Carrara, Britain and her Empire, I have collaborated with many experts in examining the phenomenon throughout Europe and the Americas. Closer to home, it is surprising how little is left, both in terms of works (plasters) and documents of the over 150 workshops, big and small, that once flourished here. One exception is that of the marble workshop of the Caniparoli family, founded by Antonio in Carrara in 1850 and active until the early 1930s, which, thanks to the heirs, I have been privileged to study in some depth. While only a few plasters have survived and the workshop and showroom are long gone, the grand family home still stands in the heart of Carrara and houses exceptional documentation: photographs and plates of works for the company "catalogues", used by agents and customers; partial financial and sales records; partial records of supplies from their own quarries and documents regarding their participation in the "Marmifera" railway; address books from which it is possible to reconstruct their complex international trading network. We have, at least in part, been able to reconstruct the common practice of subcontracting. Through their collaboration with the American sculptors Alexander Doyle and Robert Cushing we have been given an insight into the relations between the Caniparoli and American markets, such as that of New Orleans.

Jonathan Foote (Aarhus School of Architecture)

Reading into Greenland Marble: "A noble Danish material".

White marble from the west coast of Greenland was quarried for only a few years, from 1933-1939, but its short history is nonetheless a notable representation of how white marble activated perceptions of monumentality and classicism within the context of Danish colonialism and welfare state architecture. Originally quarried in Uummannaq Fjord along a white rocky outcrop called Qaqortuatsiaq - Greenlandic for "white place" – it played a critical role in then-prime minister Thorvald Stauning's program for establishing Greenland and Denmark as partners in modernization. White marble from Greenland, seen as a "Danish" replacement for Italian *blanc clair*, boosted the cultural and economic policy between the two nations: for Greenland, toward a modern, industrialized society under social democratic

values; for Denmark, in the establishment of a “noble (*forneemt*)” welfare architecture fitting of a strong, centralised state. Several important, public buildings utilized Greenland marble – the Family Guardianship Building (Overformynderiet, 1935-1937); the State Broadcasting Headquarters (Radiohuset, 1938), and Lyngby Town Hall (1939-1941) – all strongly advocated by Stauning himself, both as a support for Greenland’s industrialization as well as a symbol of importance of these buildings in the public realm. The mountains of Greenland and their people could be literally translocated directly to the centre of Copenhagen – an ideal representation of egalitarian ideals rooted in a monumental modernism. Whiteness, in this case, conjured associations not only with classicism but also the ice and snow of the arctic. Curiously, the use of Greenland marble was generally against the wishes of architects, who saw such associations as anachronistic and were driven by a competing vision of modernity that relied on unadorned building surfaces, such as stucco and poured-in-place concrete.

Rebecca Levitan (King’s College London)

Ancient Naxian Marble Quarries and Dedications: Documentation and Study from the 18th century to today.

Naxos is the largest island in the Cycladic archipelago, with an exceptionally resource-rich landscape. The island’s geological and mineral landscape was as important an economic factor in the story of the island’s economy, and remains so today. Exploitation of Naxian geological resources began as early as the Lower Paleolithic period, but the island is perhaps better known for its rich sources of a large-grained, exceptionally vibrant marble that allowed for the regular extraction of significantly larger blocks than other contemporary Aegean sources. Systematic and extensive exploitation of Naxian marble began in the 7th century BCE, bringing a level of prosperity to the island that was symbolized through rich dedications at home and throughout the Greek world. These include notable Archaic dedications at Delphi and Delos, excavated by French teams in the 19th century and instrumental in forming a new canon of Greek art. At the same time, the Naxian quarries, transformed into agricultural landscapes, were visited and documented by Danish artist Niels Kristian Skovgaard. This paper will focus the quarries of Naxos and their outputs from antiquity to today, as well as current efforts to map ancient “quarryscapes” by the international Naxos Quarry Project.

Alessandro Poggio (Scuola IMT Alti Studi Lucca)

Materials that connect. The circulation of white marble in the ancient Mediterranean.

White marble is a natural resource that has shaped the image of the ancient Mediterranean: it was used for prestigious works of art and architecture thanks to its workability and aesthetic properties. The significant demand for this material triggered its wide circulation: whereas white marble is generally associated with Greek and Roman contexts, it was actually used in other areas such as Phoenicia. For instance, Parian marble was the favorite material for the anthropoid sarcophagi, a Phoenician funerary typology from the 5th-4th centuries BC. It is therefore clear that tracing the movement of marble means reflecting on a wide range of aspects, including the connectivity between different areas of the Mediterranean: who and what circulated alongside this material? Which were the privileged routes for such a movement? What was the impact of these phenomena in terms of intercultural contacts? This paper intends to present some cases of circulation of white marble across the ancient

Mediterranean that can foster methodological reflections. The aim is to investigate whether this material could be considered as an active agent of historical and cultural processes.

Amalie Skovmøller (University of Copenhagen)

A World in Marble.

White marble has been studied by archaeologists and art historians since the 18th c. Over the past 40 years, scholars have gradually reframed white marble from being regarded as a classical material and medium for European/Western, to a material situated in different and changing artistic and cultural contexts. Archaeometric analysis of the stones used for ancient Roman sculpture show that the most sought-after marbles for sculpture in central Italy during the 1st, 2nd and 3rd c were the fine-grained stones quarried at Göktepe (western Turkey) and the sparkling, large-grained stones quarried at Paros (Greece), while the soft, luminous stones quarried closer to home in Carrara (northern Italy), which became the most sought after stones during the 19th c, were used in lesser quantities. Such results show that some stones were targeted above others replacing each other over time, but scholars lack a model for analyzing how such patterns of distribution was organized. Today, companies promote the use of marble stones to a global market through conventions and international collaborations, which formalizes the structures supporting marble circulation. Drawing on art historical research into infrastructure my paper introduces a model for analyzing such structures through time by tracing often-overlooked relational networks administering supply chains, trade shows and partnerships through time. In doing so, the paper proposes that the infrastructure upholding the circulation of stones is built around an installed base developing slowly and gradually over time.

Ariane Varela Braga (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid)

Marble for the Duce. The network of agents, merchants and marble workers at the Foro Mussolini.

Officially inaugurated on November 4, 1932, the Foro Mussolini, now known as the Foro Italico, is a landmark of white Carrara marble in the architectural landscape of Rome, and one of the most iconic symbols of the Fascist-era in the capital. The choice of the material has been related to the central figure of Renato Ricci, president of the Opera Nazionale Balilla (OnB) and promotor of the project, as well as to architect Enrico Del Debbio, both originally from Carrara. The worksite has been seen as a great initiative to help relaunch the marble industry at a time of great crisis. The story of the sixty colossal statues of the Marble Stadium (*Stadio dei Marmi*), with the material offered for free by the quarrymen of Carrara, and the selection of artists that would give a uniform image to the official art of the state has been told many time, as has the great epic of the quarrying and transport of the monolithic block of marble for the Mussolini Obelisk. Instead, this contribution would like to focus on the network of agents, merchants and marble workers who made possible the construction of Del Debbio's Accademia di Educazione Fisica and the other works of the Foro. The paper will be based on the study of the archival documentation preserved in the Fondo Del Debbio at the MAXXI (Rome) and will present some reflections related to an upcoming exhibition the architect's work at the Foro Italico, opening in May 2025.