



Preliminary notes about Heritage Stone Resources from Apulia region South Italy

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Apulia region in south Italy is characterized by a calcareous basement of cretaceous limestone outcropping in the large Murgia highland in central Apulia and by the presence of Miocenic and Pleistocenic calcareous sandstone that historically they have been used for many buildings and architectural purpose and can be considered as part of heritage stone resources that still today are used for several building purpose.

Here is presented a preliminary overview of the main kind of stone that can be properly included in the global stone resources.

The main limestone stones are the Bari cretaceous limestone that have been used to build up many Apulia Romanic cathedrals as Trani Cathedral, and also many mediaeval castle as the famous Castel del Monte built by Fredric II. The most famous variety is Trani stone dug in large open quarry in the area at north of Bari.

A second important stone resource is the Lecce sandstone. It is a quite homogeneous and compact Miocenic sandstone, made up by fragments of limestone and fossil carbonate with calcites cement and the presence of other substances included dispersion of clay minerals. It has a light-colored or pale yellow with tiny pink veins. It is dug in large quarries throughout the Salento peninsula in southern Apulia. It is a rock relatively soft and easily workable also due to the presence of small quantities of clay. Improves its characteristics of resistance as a result of drying. Even if it was largely used for architecture and decorative purpose it is easily degradable for effect of weathering effects. It was the base of famous monuments and decoration of Lecce Baroque in the XVIII century, including the palace of Celestine and the adjacent Santa Croce Church, the Church of Santa Chiara and the Cathedral.

A third relevant heritage stone is the Gravina calcareous sandstone (Upper Pleistocene) largely outcropping along the border of Murge calcareous horst. It has been used for several historical ancient building (XVII-XIX Century) in the Matera, but also in several other places in Apulia. It is the geological formation where have been dug the grottoes of the ancient part of Matera town (south Italy): Sassi that is part of UNESCO Human Heritage and also the main rupestrian settlement of Apulia.