



Lecce Stone (Italy): proposed as a candidate for “Global Heritage Stone Resource”

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Lecce stone is a Miocenian white to pale yellow colored bio-calcareous from Italy's Salento area (Apulia region), occurring near the city of Lecce, hence the name “Lecce stone”.

Widely used as a construction material in historical buildings in South Italy, sought-after and appreciated by architects, sculptors and artists for its malleability and easy processing, it has reached international fame thanks to the multitude of historical uses and to the echo of local artisans who, over the centuries, have given life to the complex Lecce Baroque architecture.

It has successively known an increasing diffusion also out of Italy, as a decorative dimension stone.

Available in many different varieties, it is mined in huge, open cast quarries, up to 50 m deep, distributed in the territory of the municipalities of Lecce, Corigliano d'Otranto, Melpignano, Cursi and Maglie (Southeastern portion of Apulia region).

It is characterized by an unusual versatility, making possible its application almost in any field: traditional building, sculpture, architectural works, modern 3D realizations, fine crafts objects, up to challenging structural uses.

Given the wide spectrum of activities and projects carried on for its conservation and restoration in the Baroque buildings and monuments of Lecce city, this stone may also be regarded as a suitable reference for the study and management of monumental heritage in terms of its preservation.

The note intends to provide a synthetic overview of Lecce Stone, and, in the light of its enormous impact on the history, traditions, culture and environment of the Salento area, to propose it as a potential candidate to GHSR designation.