

HISTORY OF NATURAL STONES AND INDUSTRY OF TURKEY

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Sunday 1 August 2010 by [Libadmin2009](#)

9th International Multidisciplinary Scientific GeoConference - SGEM2009, www.sgem.org, SGEM2009 Conference Proceedings/ ISBN 10: 954-91818-1-2, June 14-19, 2009, Vol. 1, 427-432 pp

ABSTRACT

Anatolia was one of the centers of marble production and trade especially in antique ages. Quarries that provided the marble used in the majestic structures in huge proportions of the antique era were located mostly in Western Anatolia. Marmara Island is in the Northwest Anatolia, Marmara Sea took its name from "Marmaro", meaning marble in Greek; it contains the most important white marble quarries and was the most important export center especially during Roman period. Quarries where the bluish Marmara Marble was mined were expanded by Romans and turned into big enterprises. Marble was transported to Mediterranean and Black Sea as well, with Roman's Ships that could carry big blocks. Marble was not only exported as blocks from there, they were sold first as semi-processed (decorations would be made on arrival) pillars, sarcophagus and similar products, then fully processed in late antique age. Most of the white marble used in İstanbul in Byzantium and Ottoman periods were shipped from Marmara Island.

Other important quarries in the antique period were in Işcehisar (Dokimeion) near Afyon and in Suhut (Synnada). Large block marbles with no cracks quarried there were transported to Ephesus Harbor via side roads and waterways and then shipped to faraway places. A "gangsav" discovered in Ephesus from the 2nd century B.C. and sarcophagus cut with wire found on Marmara Island are vital clues demonstrating the advanced marble technology at that time.

One of the most important marble quarries of the time is Baba Mountain, near Geyre Village in Aydın's Karacasu town. Marble building structures, statues and portraits, sarcophagus, relief and decorations, known as Afrodisias style, produced in the antique city of Afrodisias on the plains at the skirt of the mountain were shipped to many parts of Roman Empire. Afrodisias was a city built with the blue-grey "Kayra Marble" blocks, which got whiter as it got deeper.