



The Swedish Bohus granite - a stone with a fascinating history

Björn Schouenborg (1) and Thomas Eliasson (2)

(1) SGU, Uppsala, Sweden (bjorn.schouenborg@sgu.se), (2) SGU, Gothenburg, Sweden (thomas.eliasson@sgu.se)

One of the most well-known and well spread Swedish stone types used as building stones is the Bonus granite. It outcrops in an area north of Gothenburgh (SW Sweden), along the coastline, approximately 35 km wide and 85 km long. The granite continues into Norway as the Iddefjord granite.

The Bohus granite is one of Sweden's youngest granites. Isotopic dating shows that the magma cooled at about 920 M years ago and thus marking the end of the Sveconorwegian orogony. It is a composite granite massif area with several granitic intrusions but with rather homogeneous mineralogy. However, colour and texture varies quite a lot and the colour ranges from red to reddish grey although some pure grey varieties occur sparsely. The grain size ranges from medium grained to coarse grained and even with some porphyric parts.

Quarrying in an industrial scale started 1842. The merchant A C Kullgren opened the first quarry and produced stones for the construction of the 86 km long Trollhättan channel connecting lake Vänern and the Atlantic ocean in the SW Sweden. The stone was used for constructing harbors and wharves along the channel.

Several quarries opened in the late 1800 around 1870 – 1890 and the export increased steadily with deliveries to Germany, Denmark, Holland, England and even to South America. The stone industries in Bohuslän (Bohus county), at its peak in 1929, engaged around 7 000 employees. During the depression in 1930 almost all of them became unemployed. However, as a curiosity, production and export continued to Germany for construction of Germania, the future World capital city ("Welthauptstadt Germania"), planned by Adolf Hitler and Albert Speer. About 500 stone workers were kept employed for this project during the late thirties.

Today several varieties are still produced: Evja/Ävja, Tossene, Brastad, Näsinge, Broberg, Nolby, Allemarken and Skarstad. However, the number of stone workers is far from that of the early 1900. The Swedish production is mainly blocks but also paving products like sets, slabs and kerb stones are still manufactured in Sweden. Blocks are generally further processed in other countries like Italy and China to reach the European market as semi-finished products like slabs or finished products for any kind of application. The granite is very durable and suitable for all types of natural stone products.