



Sardinian basalt. An ancient georesource still en vogue

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Commercially quarried Sardinian basalt was the result of extensive volcanic activity during the Pliocene and Pleistocene ages, following the opening of the Campidano plain and Tyrrhenian sea rift. Extensive areas of Sardinia have been modelled by large volumes of basalt and andesite rock. An example is provided by the 'Giare' tablelands and other large plateaus located in central Sardinia. Other basalt-rich areas exist in the Island. Sardinia is featured by a vast array of basalt monuments, dating back to the II-I millennium BC, bearing witness to the great workability, durability and resistance to weathering of the rock. The complex of circular defensive towers, known as "Su Nuraxi di Barumini" was included in the World Heritage List by Unesco in 1997. Basalt is currently produced locally to be used for architectural and ornamental purposes. It is obtained by quarrying stone deposits or mining huge boulders which are moved and sawn by means of mechanical machinery. Stone-working is carried out in plants located in various sites of the Island. The paper begins with an historical introduction and then focusses on the current state of the art of Sardinian basalt quarrying, processing and using. An analysis of the basalt market has been carried out.