

## Foreword

This volume is the result of a long exchange, developed during two EAA (European Association of Archaeologists) conference sessions, respectively organized by the editors in 2018 and 2019, titled: “Archaeology of rock-hewn sites and quarries: people, stones and landscapes” and “Rock-cut architecture: communities, landscapes and economy”. They were both aimed at turning the attention of the international scientific community towards the relevance of the archaeological study of rock-cut sites and quarries and promote the creation of a European network of researchers working on the subject.

The idea behind this initiative was that of investigating the archaeology of rock-cut sites and quarries as an archaeology of co-occurring agencies of humans and stones, the archaeology of the void left by daily activities and production, the shape of living and lived spaces. In short: seeing the human behind the tool. The chapters in this volume represent an overview of different case studies, approached as knots in the network of people-stone interactions. Features that are carved in stone are examined as doorways between humans and the mineral world, as places of exchange and symbiotic relationships.

The study of marks left by humans on stone outcrops is an interdisciplinary endeavour that entails metrology and history of techniques from a socio-economic perspective. Moreover, the geological characterization of outcrops as well as the investigation of carved landscapes contributes to the understanding of the complex relationship between human groups and their environments.

The chapters in this volume are carefully organized according to three main research axes:

- The art of carving: creation and management of rock-cut sites.
- Living in the stone: structure and organization of rock-cut settlements.
- Working with the stone: quarries and stone supply networks.

Contributors to this volume are international scholars dealing with the study of rock-cut sites and quarries from different perspectives, all bringing their personal input to the general debate on the matter.

The first chapter written by Bessac et al. aims at framing the study of carved sites in the wider development of archaeology during the last decades. It constitutes the historiographic introduction to the volume and helps to highlight theoretical and methodological issues that

are fundamental to a better understanding of current developments within the subject.

The following four chapters are case studies in which particular attention is given to the study of carving techniques and their socio-economic implications: Porqueddu et al. approach the complicated study of toolmarks on the walls of prehistoric hypogea in France and Sardinia through the combined use of photogrammetry and the design of experimental sessions; Stevens presents a detailed catalogue of more than a thousand “*souterrains*”, dug between the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> century in France, focusing on the planning of different digging phases and the excavation techniques; Canavas brings us to China to examine the complex architecture of *yáodòng* in the loess plateau, examining the acts of digging and shaping holes and pits as social actions themselves; Robin and Adams provide a comprehensive report for the ethnoarchaeological study of the digging of a traditional rock-cut tomb in Tana Toraja (Sulawesi, Indonesia), highlighting how economic, technical and ritual agents are intertwined throughout the process.

Three chapters are then dedicated to the investigation of larger rock-cut sites in which the distribution and organization of carved spaces responds to specific needs: Marangou analyses the development of the complex landscape of Myrina Kastro (Lemnos Island, North Aegean Sea, Greece), between prehistory and antiquity, pinpointing how carved features are linked to sea traffic; Yamaç unravels the intricate system of hundreds of rock-cut features in Koramaz valley of Kayseri, Turkey, as the heritage of a centuries-long carving tradition; Miño interrogates the function and organization of rock-cut cellars used for storing wine in the town of Krupina (Slovak Republic) during the renaissance, at the border between the Hungarian kingdom and the Ottoman empire.

The last four chapters are dedicated to the study of quarries as linked to the procurement and usage of stone: Berhe reports on a survey done in Addi Behaylay, in the Tigray region, Ethiopia, that has delivered evidence of a possible quarry in an area now ravaged by the civil war<sup>1</sup>; Morleghem presents a comprehensive study of several underground or semi-underground quarries for early medieval sarcophagi in France, by applying a multi-scalar

<sup>1</sup> The editors consider that Berhe’s work is an important part of this collection, and we value his contribution. Nevertheless, we have been unable to reach the author since May 2021, due to the war in Tigray. For this reason, the chapter underwent only a partial review process. We regret that Berhe has not had the opportunity to be more closely involved in the production process and hope for the very best for him and his colleagues.

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approach to better understand exploitation strategies and the organization of labour; Lafarge draws up an extensive analysis of the diachronic use and exploitation of gypsum in Île-de-France, by linking quarrying sites and gypsum usage; finally, Gely exposes a thorough study of the use of building stone in Paris through the centuries, looking at how different quarrying centres have been supplying building materials to the growing city.

For us, this volume represents the first joint communication of an international dialogue that has been ongoing for years, with the creation of a research network and the organization of a series of conferences and workshops dedicated to the subject of rock-carved features.

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