

## Fact sheet 2

### Stone commodities

For what purpose was a specific rock quarried at a specific time? At present time, as in the past, the exploitation of stone resources can originate from different needs; of available building material, of particularly valuable stone for decoration, of high quality rocks suitable for specialised tools. The view of stone resources as commodities may be helpful in getting closer to why they were exploited and the past.

*Building stone* includes stone resources that were basically quarried to obtain construction materials for roads (paving) and buildings, i.e. the stone forms an integral part of the construction, and not primarily for decoration. “Masonry stone” is a term that is also used, but in a somewhat more narrow context (excluding for instance rubble for local housing) and “monumental building stone” even more restricted, to prestige buildings. The “ideal” building stone resource is found near the place of use, easy to quarry and work and

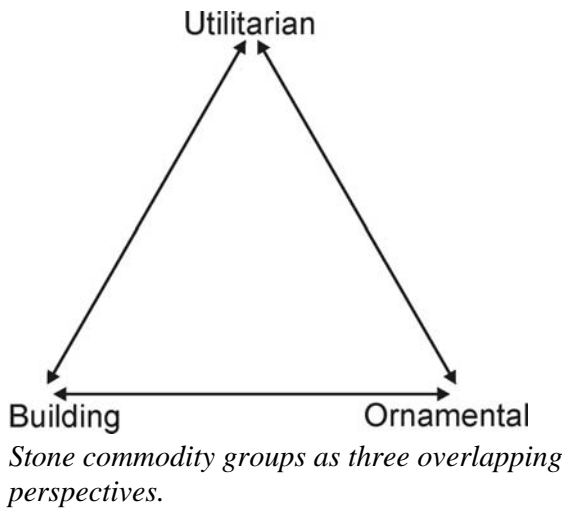
sufficiently durable. Typical quarry landscapes of building stone are found in and around cities.

*Ornamental* (or decorative) stone includes stone resources of particular value due to rare colour/structure, symbolic value or other particular aspects. Such quarry landscapes are often disconnected in space with their consumption, and that much effort was often put into the exploitation of such important resources.

*Utilitarian* stone may be applied as the collective term for stone resources exploited for making domestic utensils, such as tools, weapons, grinding stones, millstones and whetstones. Such rocks were sought after basically because of their physical properties – e.g. their quality in production and use. Such quarry landscapes may have a wide variability; from local sources near settlements to huge “industrial” landscapes made from the exploitation of particularly important resources.

#### Main commodity groups of stone resources

	Commodity	Uses	Common rocks	Important aspects
Stone resources	Building stone (masonry stone)	Rubble walls Ashlar walls Architectural elements Roof Floor Paving (funerary)	Sandstone Limestone Granite Gneiss Marble Schist Slate	Availability Workability
	Ornamental stone (decorative stone)	Sculpture Cladding Floor Columns Funerary	Marble Granite Div igneous rocks Porphyry Gneiss Quartzite	Aesthetic appearance Symbolic value Rarity Carving properties
	Utilitarian stone	Tools Weapons Grinding stone Millstone Whetstone Cooking vessels (funerary)	Chert Volcanic rocks Quartzite Sandstone Schist Soapstone	Physical properties



Building stones, Ankara, Turkey. Ashlars of volcanic rocks and marble.



Ornamental stones in the St. Marc's Cathedral, Venice, chosen for their aesthetic appearance.



Stone for funerary monuments – Roman sarcophagi in travertine, Hierapolis, Turkey



Utilitarian stone – exemplified by a millstone, Norway