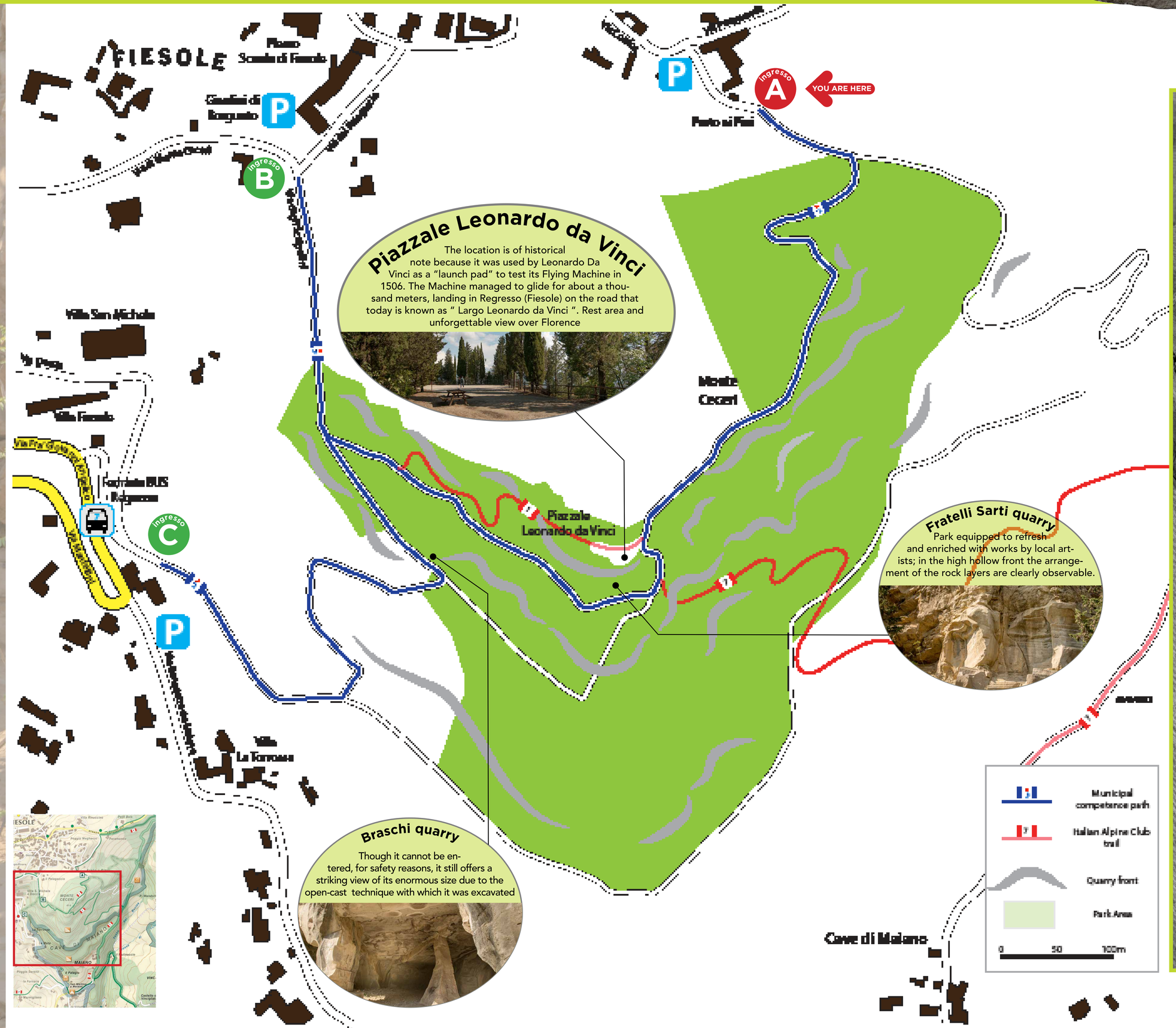
REGIONE TOSCANA

CITTA' DI FIESOLE

# MonteCeceri

## On the way along the itineraries of the Park




### Piazzale Leonardo da Vinci

The location is of historical note because it was used by Leonardo Da Vinci as a "launch pad" to test its Flying Machine in 1506. The Machine managed to glide for about a thousand meters, landing in Regresso (Fiesole) on the road that today is known as " Largo Leonardo da Vinci ". Rest area and unforgettable view over Florence



### Fratelli Sarti quarry

Park equipped to refresh and enriched with works by local artists; in the high hollow front the arrangement of the rock layers are clearly observable.



### Braschi quarry

Though it cannot be entered, for safety reasons, it still offers a striking view of its enormous size due to the open-cast technique with which it was excavated






## Useful information

The Monte Ceceri Park is large, the well-marked communal trails are the safest and provide better accessibility, they are marked by signs giving information on the local environment and historic quarries.

### Sites worth the visit:

**Piazzale Leonardo** and **Sarti quarry**: 25 min. (500 mt and 50 mt uphill climb) are easily reached from entrances **A** and **B**;

**Braschi quarry** 20 min (650 mt and 100 mt uphill climb) from entrance **C**; 15 min. from entrance **B** (300 mt and 10 mt difference in altitude); 20 mins (400mt and 50m downhill) from Sarti quarry - Piazzale Leonardo

### Entrances to trails:

Ⓐ Piazzale Don Alvaro Ferri, already Prato al Pini
Ⓑ Via degli Scalpellini;
Ⓒ Via Doccia (Regresso curve) Bus no. 7;

We recommend: entering the park from entrance A or B and exiting from entrance B or C.

Poetry quotations about stone

*Of that stone that is said to be serene*
*(it originates from Monte Céceri in large quantities)*
*A plain stone, tending toward slightly blue,*
*as the rain water where the glastro leaf is cooked.*

Gabriele D'Annunzio
Alcyone
The works and the days, vv. 20-24

---

*But that ungrateful malicious people,*
*who descended from Fiesole in ancient times,*
*and still holds the mountain and the boulder.*

Dante, Inferno XV 61-63

Description of Fiesole, from which according to Dante descend the Florentines, still preserving the roughness of the mountaineers and these places of exertion.

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Grafica Arts & Altro PROJECT di Fabrizio Darmanin

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## The Park of Monte Ceceri in Pills

Grafica e fotografie: Arts & Altro PROJECT di Fabrizio Darmanin

### How old is this mountain?

The first scientists studying the sedimentary sequences of the Northern Apennines in the 1950s recognised in these outcrops the results of ancient underwater currents. The sedimentary properties of these formations and a study of the microfossils present dates them from the lower myocene, or Aquitaine age (about 20 million years ago).

### When did they start to extract the stone?

By the Etruscan era there was already a dry stone wall, some funerary slabs carved with scenes of daily life, and the majestic Roman theatre act as a permanent reminder of the excavation of the hill.

### How was the stone extracted

Vitruvio in "De Architectura" details the professional technique in a kind of manual; Leon Battista Alberti, in his treatise "De Re Architectura", illustrates techniques, machines for lifting and fixing blocks, measurements, and procedures. In the Renaissance the most famous artists Brunelleschi, Michelangelo and Vasari commissioned quarries of Serene stone, characteristic of the new Florentine architectural style.

### The craft of the stonecutter

It is ancient technique and, in the Florentine Renaissance, nobody thought to document the techniques of scavengers, sculptors and stonecutters because they now belonged to Florentine culture. The techniques were passed on via the yard and the workshop, their products clearly visible to all: the streets, the churches, the grand mansions. The sophistication and ornate quality of the work reached new heights not seen before... The craft developed through: quarrymen, masons, refiners, stonecutters, sculptors and artists.

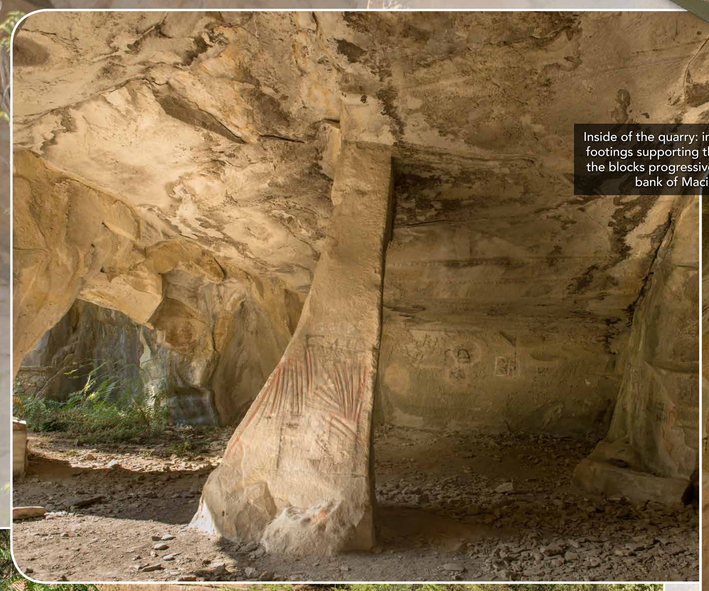
tratto da "La pietra color del cielo" - 2001 testi di Carlo Salvianti e Mauro Latini.

### The stonecutter family

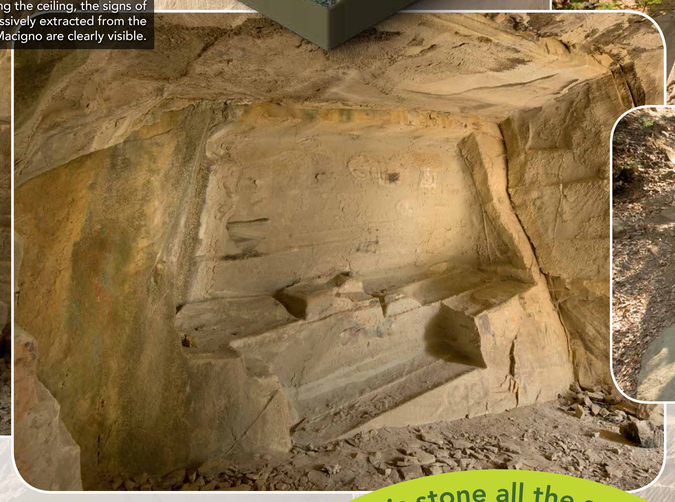
The women left mid-morning with the lunch parcel to take to the men in the quarry. Most of them were from Borgunto, the medieval centre attached to the Etruscan walls, where people still live traditionally. On the way were the Pelaghi, public baths, protected by canopies, built on a spring where the women would always meet.
In the accounts of stonecutter life, there were always the quarry boys: employed to carry out small services and jobs and so begin their apprenticeship. Work was distributed solely within family networks, which is why even today the quarries are referred to by family names.

tratto da "La pietra color del cielo" - 2001 testi di Carlo Salvianti e Mauro Latini.


Tagliata: an open-cast quarry. The geological shape of the mountain and the quality and quantity of the stone layers remain visible in vertical cross-section. (eg cave Fratelli Sarti)



Inside of the quarry: in the ceiling and in the footings supporting the ceiling, the signs of the blocks progressively extracted from the bank of Macigno are clearly visible.



Construction used above all as a deposit for tools.

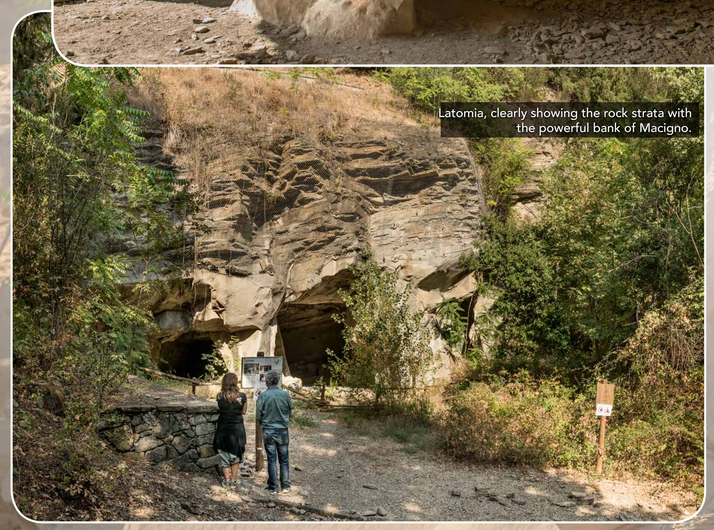
### The profession and health

Giovanni Targioni Tozzetti, a natural historian and scholarly physician of the seventeenth century, whose work will be intimately linked to the scientific and economic development of Tuscany, states: *"When the stonecutters need to break the boulders using chisels and the wedges, they warn to always pour water in the fissure where they force the wedges: some believe that this helps the operation; but others say it's necessary to use this precaution because otherwise they would create a very fine dust that would irritate their lungs".*
Hundreds of stone workers died of silicosis (a form of occupational lung disease).

### An interesting anecdote about Resistance

The stone-masters (many of whom became Communists) were opposed to Fascism and expressed this in many ways, one more original form of protest was their almost complete withdrawal from society to live in the quarry throughout the day avoiding any direct contact with the center of the village, filled with black shirts.

tratto da "La pietra color del cielo" - 2001 testi di Carlo Salvianti e Mauro Latini.



Latomia, clearly showing the rock strata with the powerful bank of Macigno.

### Is this stone all the same?

Durable Stone, Sereno ordinario, Sereno gentile, Moatstone or Column Stone, Bigia Stone, Bandite Stone, Dead Stone, Granite, Cicerchina, Tramezzuolo, Mortar, Verga, Cerro Stone and Sassocorno; these are the common names of the various types of stone. They were used for different things depending on their specific characteristics: building and architecture (monoliths, columns architraves, capitals - column heads, jambs, trabeations), civil and sacred furnishings (fonts, pulpits, parapets, altars, frames , friezes, coats-of-arms), urban furnishings (slabs, culverts, benches, cornice tops, fountains), embellished frames, window ledges, capitals and various compositions.

### The tools of the stonecutters

The required knowledge involved both the types of tools used and how to treat them in the forge and as elementary geological notions expressed in the traditional language of the trade: chocks, lifts, bush hammers, rollers, thread, straw, grooved chisels, sledge hammer, Bigia stone, Dead stone Serena stone, piles, punches, mallets, chisels, lathe chisels, ulivella (a type of container), rasps and files.

In Florentine culture, essentially closed and conservative, the craft was passed on through the generations even past the advent of advanced industrialism, not for extraction but at least in terms of processing (a rare case a technology surviving industrialisation)

tratto da "La pietra color del cielo" - 2001 testi di Carlo Salvianti e Mauro Latini.

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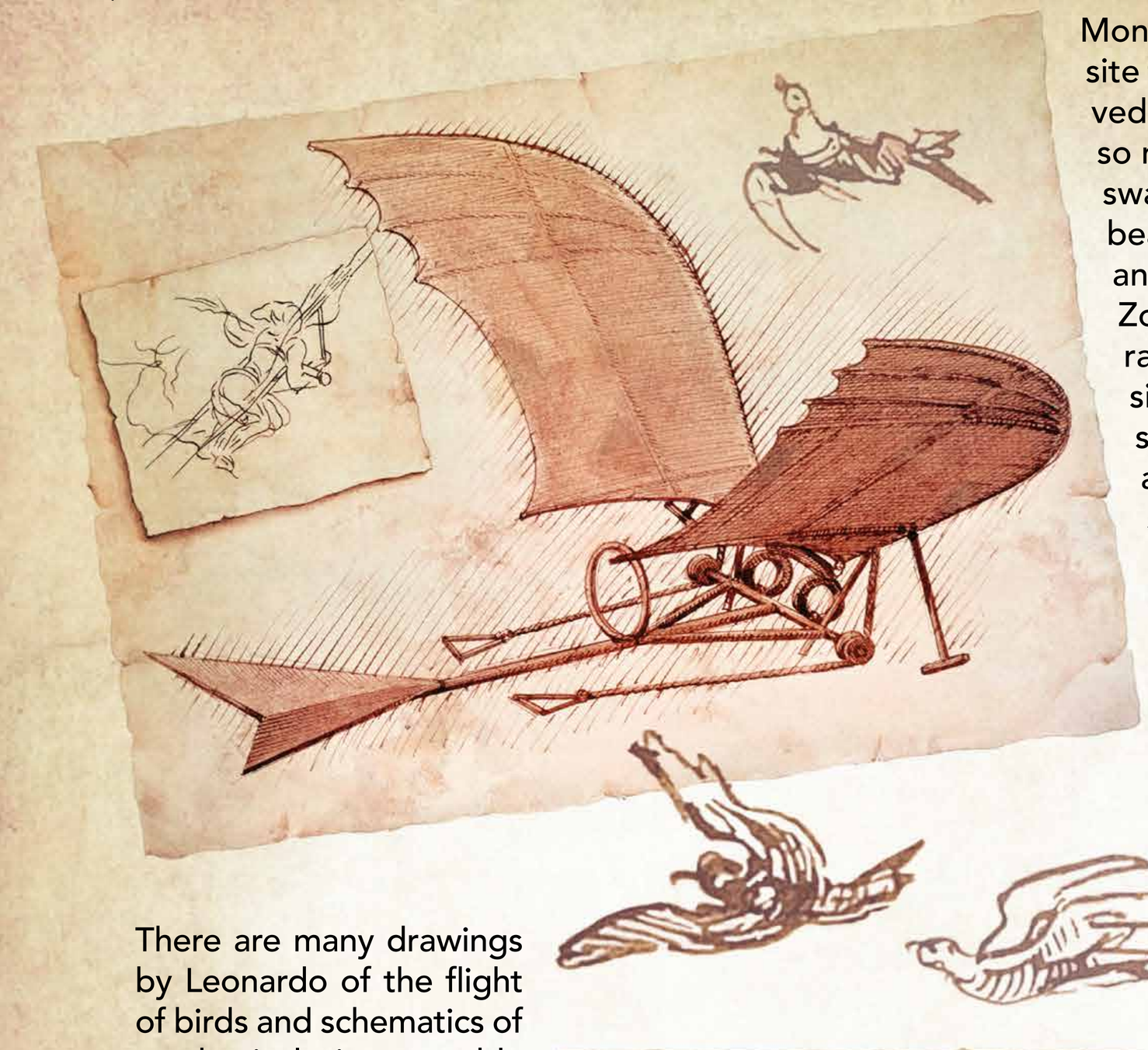
# MonteCeceri

## Piazzale Leonardo da Vinci

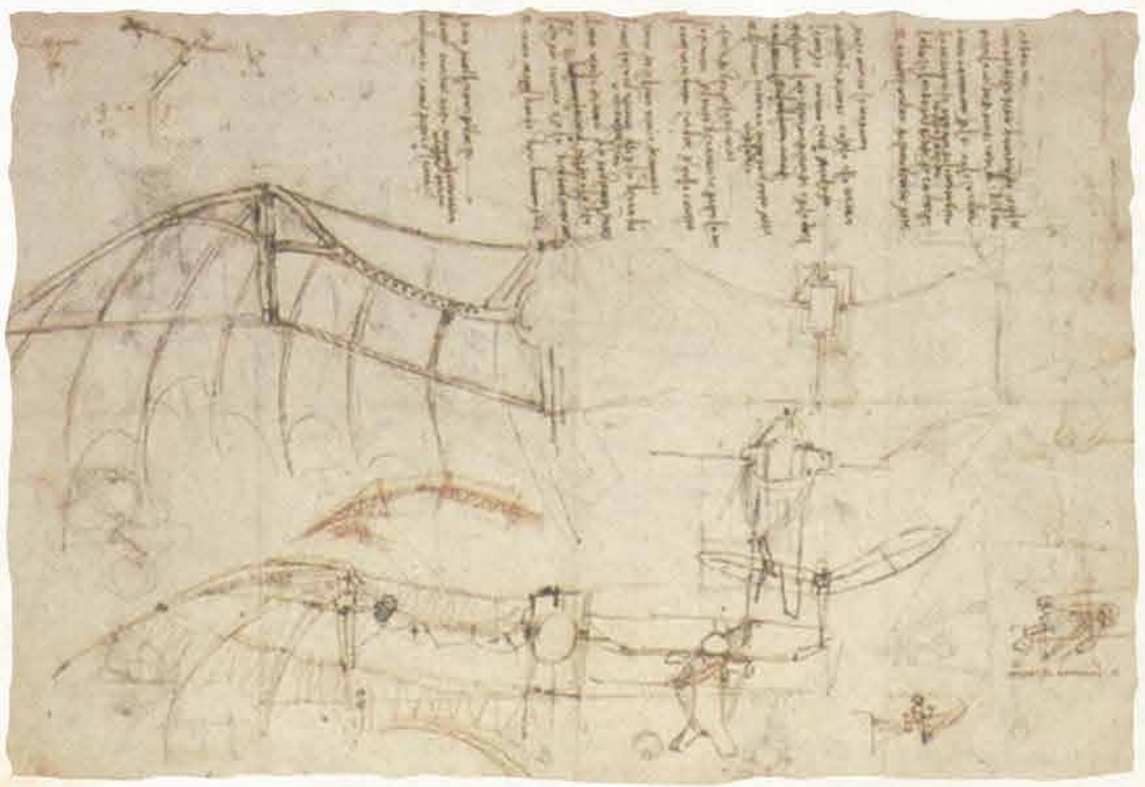
# With a beating of wings, Leonardo's greatest dream

Graphics by Arts & Altro PROJECT - Fabrizio Darmanin



Monte Ceceri has gone down in legend as the launch site for the "testing" of the "flying machine" conceived by Leonardo. More of a hill than a mountain, it so named because in the past it was frequented by swans; which, thanks to the protuberance on their beaks, Florentines called "ceceri" (from cece - meaning chickpeas). Tommaso Masini, also known as Zorastro da Peretola, was the courageous collaborator who, in 1505 agreed to pilot the device designed by his friend. Leonardo's fundamental insight was that air is compressible and thus exerts a resistance that can support a weight: *"for these reasons man with his great, mechanical wings will be able to press against the resistance of the air and winning he will be able to subjugate and rise above her."*

There are many drawings by Leonardo of the flight of birds and schematics of mechanical wings capable of supporting a man's weight. Among the texts and drawings of his Codex "hides" the design of Leonardo's most advanced flying machine, consisting of two large skin-covered wings to be operated with pedals and levers named after the bird which he describes having observed: the "Red Kite":*"a bird of prey I saw on my way to Fiesole"*.

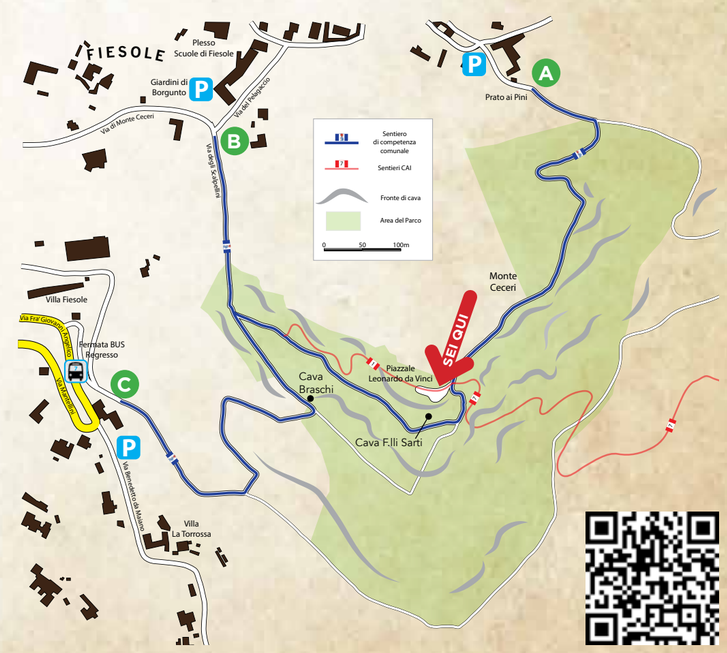


The machine, according to legend, seemed to glide for 1000 meters before landing abruptly in the area today called Largo Leonardo da Vinci near the curve of the Regresso. It was the first flight experiment to have been documented (by Leonardo himself) in the "Codex of Flight", a manuscript that can be considered as the sum of Leonardo's thoughts, not only on flight.

*"For once you have tasted flight, you will walk the earth with your eyes turned skywards, for there you have been and there you will long to return."*

*"The human bird shall take his first flight, filling the world with amazement, all writings with his fame, and bringing eternal glory to the nest whence he sprang."*

These are the two most famous quotes from Leonardo Da Vinci, on his greatest dream: flight.

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## The quarries, the history, the landscape

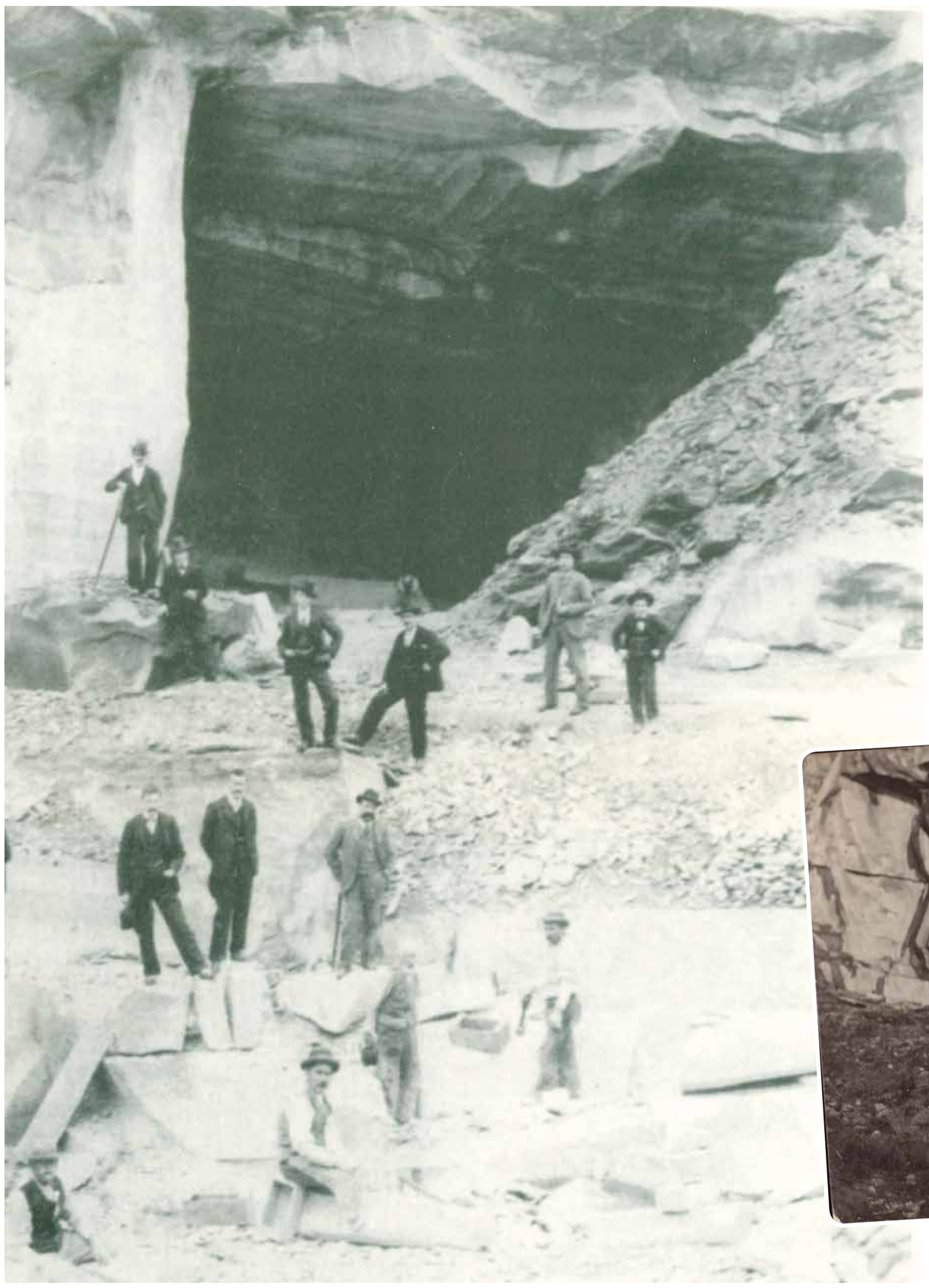
Graphics by Arts & Altro PROJECT - Fabrizio Darmanin

On a timescale calculated by geologists in millions of years, a length of time inconceivable from a human perspective, a marine environment was the raw material for distant civilisations to come. Form, density, composition, colour, sedimentary layers interlaced, then fractured, bent, almost coiled, sometimes inclined, tell in their own, precise way a history before history. For those who know how to read the signs they speak of the fascinating motions of earth and water, almost myths of the creation of the world.

Excerpt from "Il verde è di tutti " text by Carlo Salvianti and Andrea Poggesi

The quarries in Monte Ceceri are of two types:

- **Latomia**, a cave-like quarry (for example, Braschi and Canara).
- **Tagliata**: an open-cast quarry. The geological shape of the mountain and the quality and quantity of the stone layers remain visible in vertical cross-section (eg cave Fratelli Sarti).



Latomia 1890 – Settignano Library

Municipal Archives of Fiesole, Ranfagni Fund

## Landscape transformations

The landscape is the result of the natural evolution of human activity on the environment, the case of secular historical mining activity is a good example of this, with over 40 quarries active at one time. In the picture from 1929, the hill appears visibly bare; reforestation has taken place since 1970 and was only suspended during times of war.

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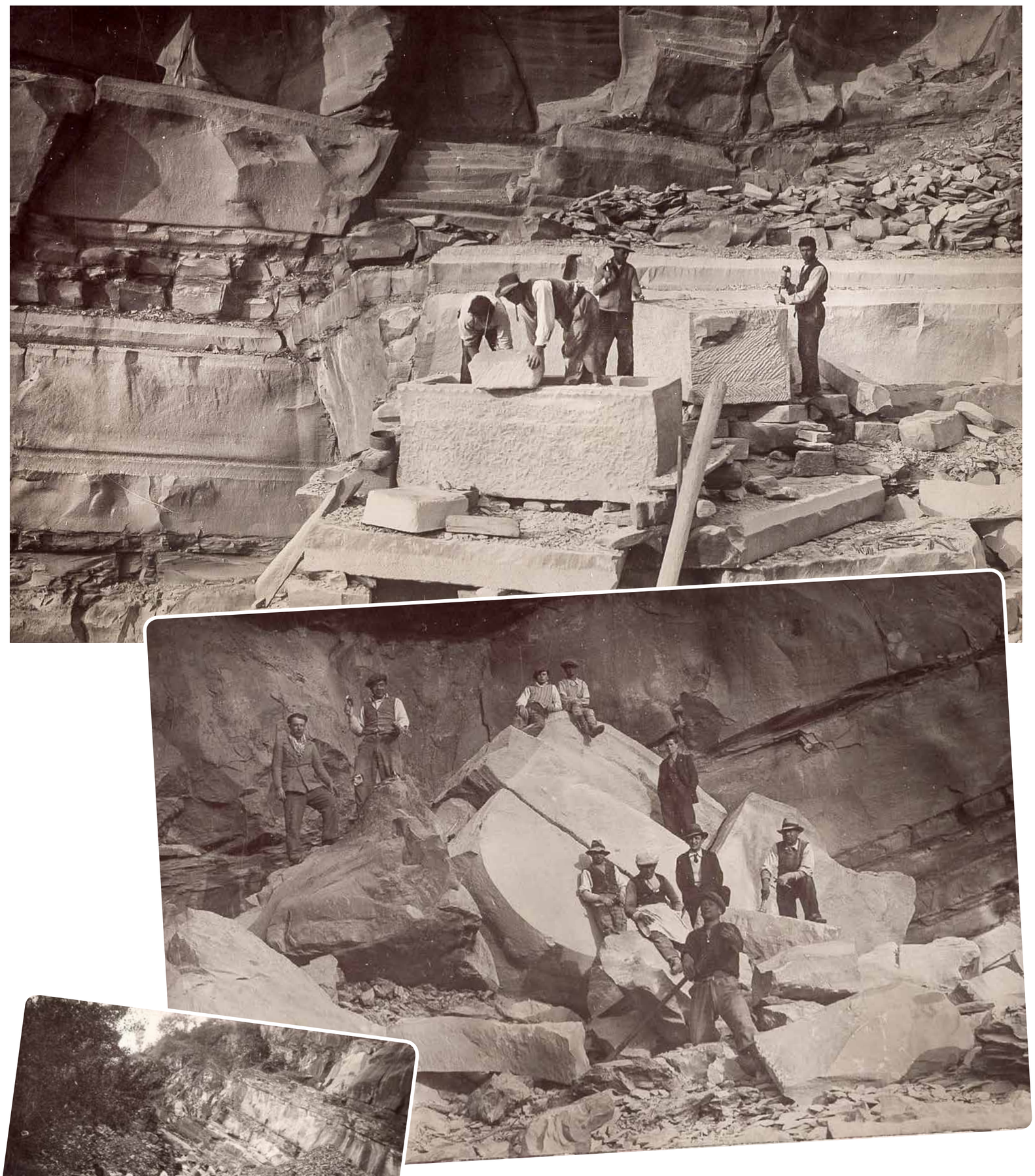
## How did a quarry work?

Graphics by Arts & Altro PROJECT - Fabrizio Darmanin

The opening of a quarry began with the removal, using shovels and pickaxes, of the surface material that had accumulated on the layers of good, workable stone... The stones that were suitable for use in construction (of a good size and strong enough) were recovered and refined to give them roughly the required characteristics ... The dead stone, a yellowish floury sandstone that crumbles with a slight tap, was commonly used as a refractory material (for use at high temperatures)... Another type of stone used for slabs was the liscioni, that were pieces of stone strung with a layer of galestro (a shale-like rock)... The rest of the material had to be removed from the worksite ... away from the rock face, taking care to leave enough space for the carts to transport it away. The layout consisted of: the large square, the loading floor, the heaps, the stores, the cut or the dense, the well and the forge.

Excerpt from "La pietra color del cielo " – 2001
text by Carlo Salvianti and Mauro Latini

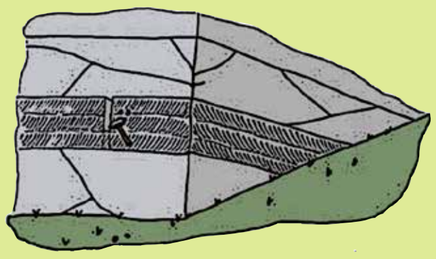




Historical Images
Municipal Archive of Fiesole, Ranfagni Fund.

## How a block was extracted

Serena stone is found in veins of sedimentary of rock.



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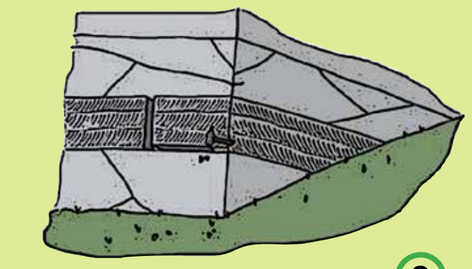
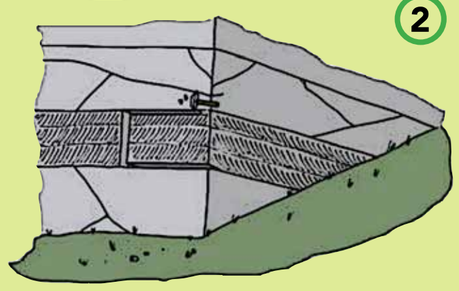
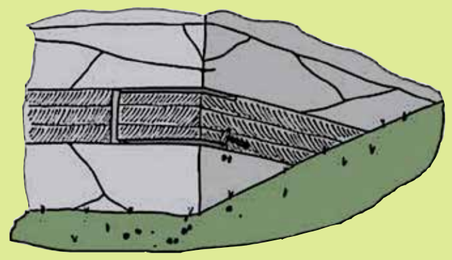


2

The cut is one of the three fundamental lines of stone; the direction is perpendicular to the surface on the SO side with respect to the alignment of the run.



To pull out a block, a "cut" was made in the mountain using a hammer and a special type of chisel. Using increasingly long chisels, it was possible to get into the stone.



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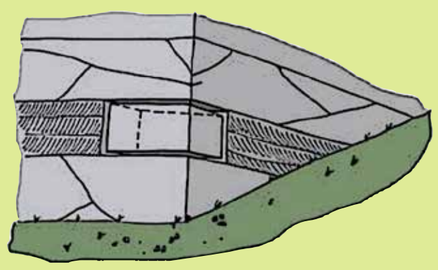
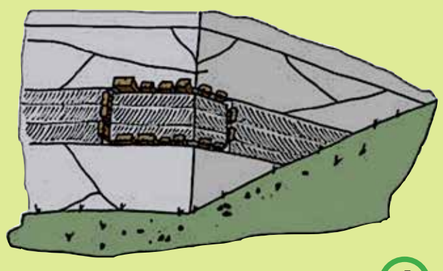
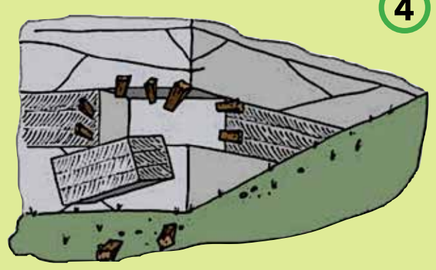




The block, held at the base, was detached by means of wood wedges that were forced around the block. These wedges were then drenched in water, causing them to expand and allowing the block to be extracted.

4



From "Convenzione con Università degli studi di Firenze, Dipartimento di scienze della Terra, responsabile Prof. Geol. Massimo Coli. Anno 2001.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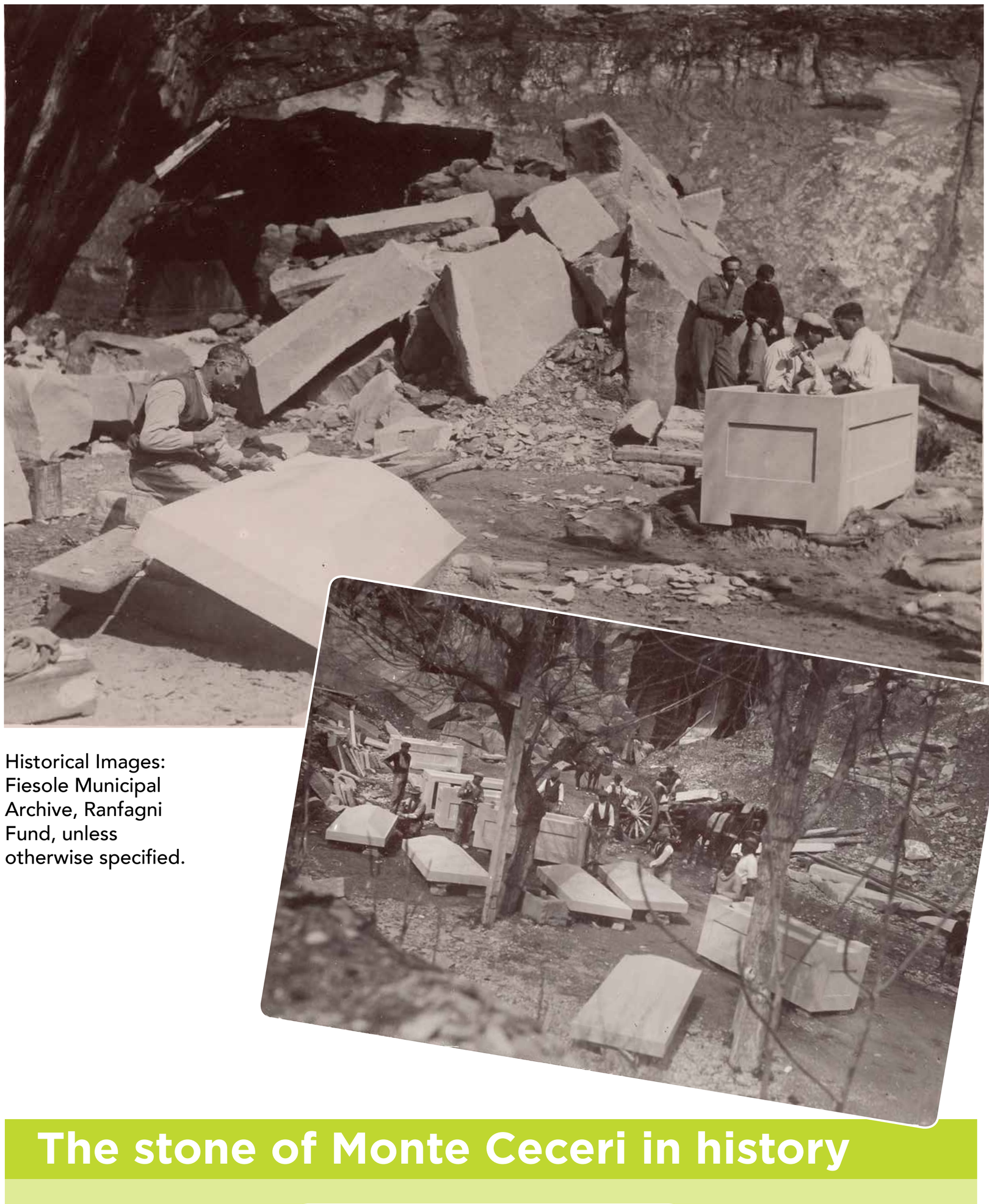
## Life in the quarry

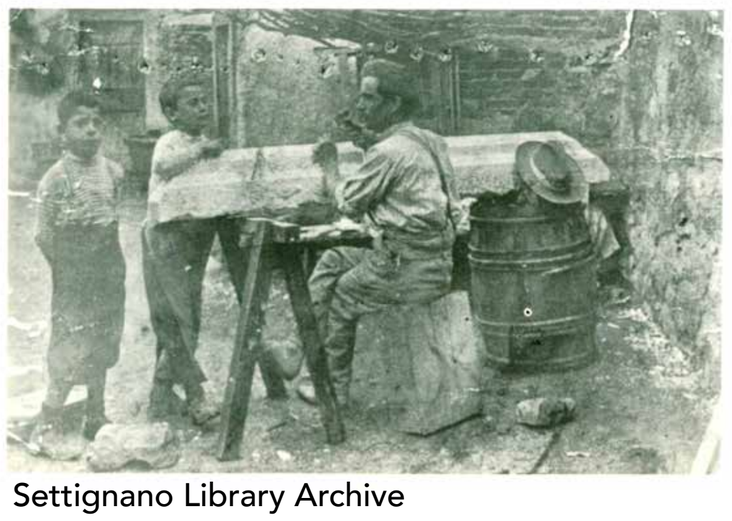
Graphics by Arts & Altro PROJECT - Fabrizio Darmanin



Historical Images: Fiesole Municipal Archive, Ranfagni Fund, unless otherwise specified.

A stonecutter worked from dawn to dusk and in the summer slept in the store house. Their water was provided by the well, dug into the quarry to recover the water held within the rock formation: a fine water that is often found in this type of environment. The water also served to wash and temper the irons. This is why the "pila" was used, a rectangular basin carved from a single block of stone that was also common in small blacksmiths shops and even in shoemakers. It is said that at the end of work, in winter, the stonecutters used the water, hot from tempering, to wash their feet. Also a tree was usually grown near a quarry to give shade during the heat of the of summer.

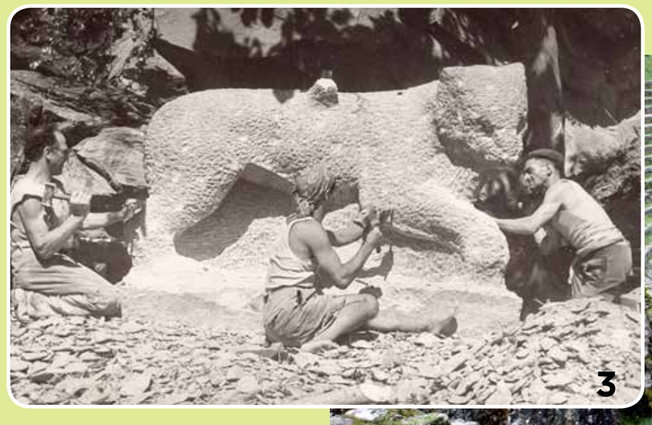
Excerpt from " Il verde è di tutti "
text by Carlo Salvianti and Andrea Poggesi



Settignano Library Archive

## The stone of Monte Ceceri in history

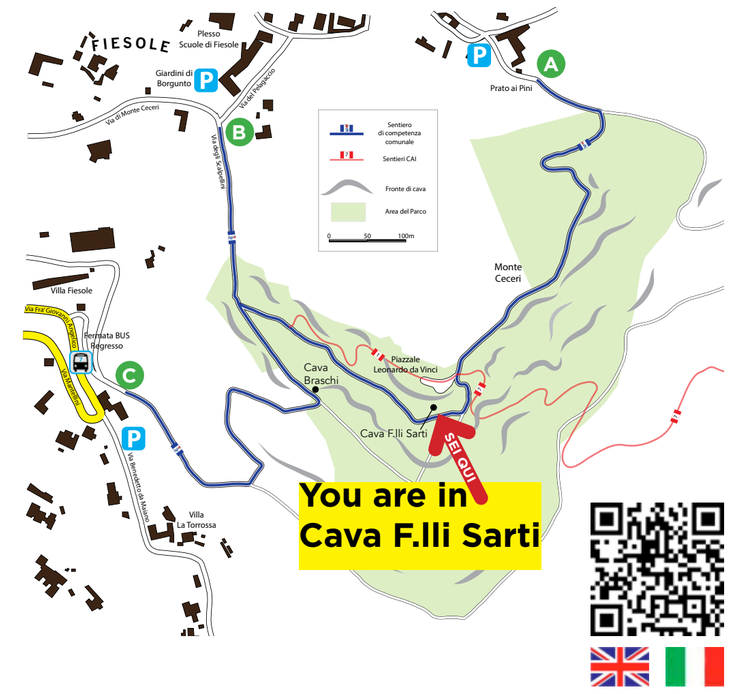
From the Etruscans to the Romans, in the "De Architectura" of Vitruvio, Brunelleschi in San Lorenzo and Santo Spirito, Michelangelo in the Biblioteca Medicea di San Lorenzo, there are innumerable descriptions and works made with Pietra Serena extracted from Mount Ceceri.







The Etruscan Walls (1 - ACF fund old postcards) and the Roman Theater, in Fiesole (2); in Florence: the National Library (4), the Lionesse at the entrance to the Cascine Park (3).

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## Cava Braschi

# Cava Fratelli Braschi, a Latomia.

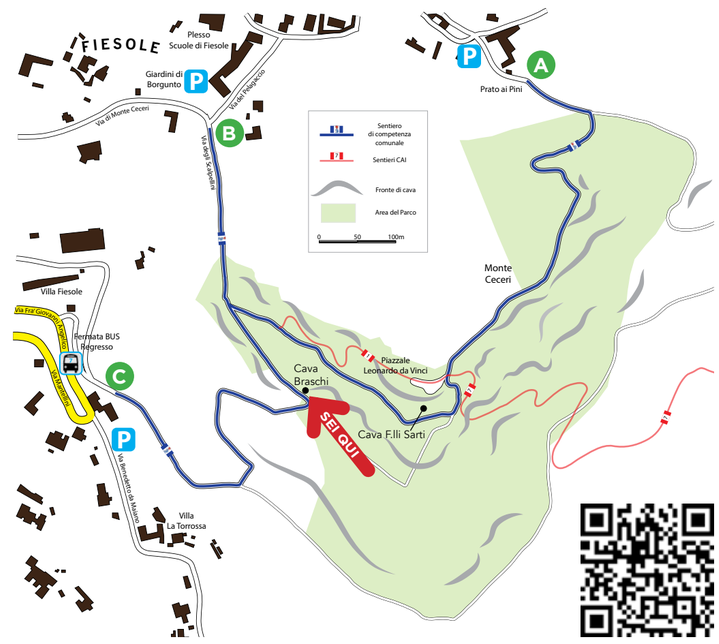
Graphics by Arts & Altro PROJECT - Fabrizio Darmanin

On the walls and in the vaults of the numerous and beautiful Latomie of Monte Ceceri it is easy to read the history and methods of cultivation, executed by thick and progressive cuts that opened up the vault of the quarry and then successively produced slabs according to the rock strata. In the presence of the main fractures, called “fine”, a pillar was left to support the vault, both on one side and the other on the fracture; once the work was completed, these supports were the cornerstones of the vault. The vault was made strong and stable, taking care not to take upper part of the Serena stone, a layer of about 60 cm was always left to form a sealed roof at the base of the galestro and scrap marl levels. In some quarries, over time, this supporting slab dropped, causing either partial collapse of the vault or a total collapse of the entire underground quarry, resulting in cave-ins and landslides.

Text taken from “Convenzione con Università degli studi di Firenze, Dipartimento di scienze della Terra, responsabile Prof. Geol. Massimo Coli. Anno 2001.

Latomia, clearly showing the rock strata with the powerful bank of Macigno

Inside of the quarry: in the ceiling and in the footings supporting the ceiling, the signs of the blocks progressively extracted from the bank of Macigno are clearly visible.




Photos by Fabrizio Darmanin