

The island of Chios was famous from the earliest times for its marble, which Theophrastus¹ was the first to describe, and which was mentioned later by both Strabo² and Pliny.

The quarries on this island were worked as early as 660 B.C., and in all probability even before that date. Melas and his family, who were supposed to have been the inventors of the art of sculpture in marble, assuredly employed local material.³

For many years the Marmor Chium of the ancients has been supposed to be the so-called 'Africano'⁴ of the Roman stone-cutter, but recent light thrown upon the subject has shown it to be the marble called Porta Santa.

We owe this discovery to Mr. Brindley, who himself has visited the island of Chios and seen the Porta Santa *in situ*. Until recent years Porta Santa has been thought a product of the island of Jasus, off the coast of Caria. This idea originated from the fact that Paulus Silentarius described a marble coming from this island or from Caria as 'streaked with blood-red and livid white';⁵ but as many variegated marbles might answer this rather vague description it is a mistake to try to fit it to any of the endless varieties of coloured marble found in Roman excavations.

The varieties of the ancient Porta Santa differ considerably in colour and stain; almost monochrome pinks and meaty-looking reds are common; there are also grey varieties both light and dark with reticular networks of yellow or red. A breccia with

¹ Theophrastus, *History of Stones* (trans. Sir John Hill).

² Strabo, *op. cit.*, Book xiv, chap. 1. 35.

³ L. Mitchell, *A History of Ancient Sculpture*, pp. 172 and 195.

⁴ So called on account of its dark tints.

⁵ P. Silentarius, *op. cit.*