WALLS AS QUARRIES:
RETHINKING SPOLIA

"The strongest burnt brick walls are those which are constructed out of old roofing,"[1] Vitruvius noted, highlighting the benefits of reusing building materials—and activating the long history of *spolia* in architecture. *Spolia*, from the Latin word for "spoils" and with strong ties to Roman architecture, denotes "materials or artifacts in reuse."[2] It is at once "metaphorical and anachronistic,"[3] collapsing multiple temporalities, spaces, materials, ideologies.

Long implicated in the history of both art and architecture, *spolia* only recently returned to disciplinary discourse. As the art historian Dale Kinney aptly observes, the study of *spolia* reemerged in the 1950s and "coincided" with postmodernism with its main operations of "fragmentation, historicism, memory, authenticity, authorship, and appropriation, to name only a few."[4] *Spolia* was often a response to material scarcity—hardly a popular topic in our consumer-oriented society that favors the new, the shiny, the abundant.[5] **Yet as we are slowly realizing that our resources are limited and the impact of our craving for the new is not sustainable, maybe we can learn from past practices of spoliation as a case study for building today.**

This proposal looks back to the origins of *spolia* to activate its contemporary potential. Returning to the architectural artifacts that exemplify its conception, it proposes to revisit the remains of Roman architecture that use *spolia* as a memory device, a structural component, a cheap and readily available resource, or a political statement. I treat architectural *spolia* as apparatuses that connect building technology, material resources, stereotomy, and aesthetics as a spatio-temporal cross-section. **To trace the use of this apparatus, I would like to document, catalog, and create a typology of different deployments of *spolia* across Italy—a material library of how "walls became quarries"[6]— and conduct a parallel study of their underlying material infrastructure.** This parallel study implies visiting past and current sites of production/extraction—marble quarries in Carrara, limestone in Tivoli, brick production in Vicenza—to find ways of linking contemporary excess and waste (offcuts) to past examples of creative, spontaneous, and efficient reuse.

The travel will thus cut a second cross-section of Italy to seek out past examples and contemporary sites of extraction/production. I would like to begin in Rome to explore the techniques of spoliation in the reused reliefs of the Arch of Constantine, Colosseum portico, Porticus Octaviae, the Pantheon's roof tiles, the archbasilica of St. John Lateran, the facade of the Villa Medici, and more. This will serve as the foundation for the vocabulary of my analysis, as well as the first case study given a visit to the stone quarry in Tivoli. I will continue towards Tuscany, visiting the quarries in Carrara and the cities most implicated by the marble extracted from here: Massa, Genoa, Modena. I will conclude the trip by visiting Venice, a quintessential example of material reuse from within Italy and outside.

1 Vitruvius De arch. 2.8.19 (trans. M. H. Morgan, 57; trans. F. Granger, 129, with a different sense). E. J. Phillips, "The Roman Law on the Demolition of Buildings," Latomus 32 (1973) 93.
2 Dale Kinney. "The Concept of Spolia." *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe* (2006), 233.
3 Ibid., 233.

4 Dale Kinney. *Reuse Value: Spolia and Appropriation In Art and Architecture From Constantine to Sherrie Levine.* Farnham, Surrey, UK, England: Ashgate, 2011., 1.
5 Ibid., 3.
6 Ibid., 234.
See also Michael Greenhalgh, *Marble Past, Monumental Present*; Lex Bosman, *The Power of Tradition*.

ITINERARY

1	Day 1-5	Rome
2	Day 6	Tivoli
1*	Day 7-8	Vatican City
3	Day 9	Sarsina
4	Day 10-11	Pisa
5	Day 12-13	Ravenna
6	Day 14-18	Carrara & Massa
7	Day 19-20	Genoa
8	Day 21-22	Modena
9	Day 23-26	Florence
10	Day 27	Vicenza
11	Day 28-30	Venice

Total: 30 days

ESTIMATED BUDGET

Airfare	$1400
Accommodation ($120/day)	$3600
Food ($30/day)	$900
Ground transportation	$1500
Public transportation	$500
Guide fees	$500
Exhibition tickets	$200
Contingency & misc.	$1000
Total:	$9600

Extraction
Spolia

Casa dei Crescenzi, Rome (Ralph Lieberman Archive)

Carrara (Luca Locatelli/Institute, for The New York Times)

Casa dei Crescenzi, Rome (Ralph Lieberman Archive)

The Arch of Constantinople (Canyonlights)