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Saint Anne quarry, close to Dinant in Wallonia, Belgium. The walls have been cut with a longwall mining.



Detail of a Belgium Black marble firplace from the 19th century. Exceptionnal craftsmanship in the sculpting work of the lion head and the fox cubs that emerge



Mazy : Belgium Black marble quarry. Merbes-Sprimont Society Postcard.



Belgium Black marble three shell design from the 19th century.



TAHAN: Malachite and Belgium Black marble Inkwell.

Black marbles grouped under the name *Belgium Black marbles* refers to several types of black marbles, such as the *Black Mazy*, the *Black Dinant*, *Black Theux* marble or the *Black Golzinne*.

These names comes from their minings : Mazy, Dinant, and Golzinne Theux, they are cities in the province of **Namur**, in **Wallonia**. The concentration of these mines is due to the presence of the *Namur syncline*. This geological specificity came back to the time of Paleozoic era, Devonian period and Frasnian stage, which occured more than **380 million years** ago. At that time, the first terrestrial vertebrates were crawling on earth and the first seed plants and trees were growing. Thanks to this composition of organic matter, the Belgian Black has a deep black, free from any veins or patterns.

This quarries are open-pit or underground tunnels. This marble is made of microcrystalline limestone which are mainly **calcite**. This very fine crystallization provides an incomparable **shine**. When the marble is polished, the depth of the black is enhanced, this is the reason why it is often used for small indoor statuary and furnitures.

The success of this marble is related to the qualities of its physical composition. However, even if it was discovered and extracted since the **antiquity**, but Walloon quarries will know their heyday in the late 17th century. At that time **Dinant** is attached to the Kingdom of France, and quarries provided the marble for the construction of *Versailles*, especially for floor pavements. This is a good opportunity for **Colbert** and **Louis XIV** who wanted to promote the exploitation of the natural resources of the Kingdom. The new royal residence had to be built with French raw materials.
In the **19th century**, these fine and deep black marbles, were used in the production of fireplaces and clocks. In this category, the Mazy Black and Dinant Black marbles were most commonly used. Unfortunatly it is very difficult, without the help of a scientific analysis, to know from which quarries this marbles cames. Generally, the *Dinant Black* used for the production of **clocks** or manufacture of fine sculptures. Meanwhile, *Mazy Black* was used for fireplaces tiles, baseboards, shelves, vertical coverings, steps, fine sculptures and **mantels**.

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