



Minerals in Afghanistan

Marbles of Afghanistan

There are at least 21 factories producing marble in Afghanistan, but the total output is not known. The marble is exported as rough hewn blocks to Pakistan where it is processed and then transported back to Afghanistan. This imported marble dominates the market as local producers are unable to compete with the low prices and high quality. The Afghanistan marble industry suffers from a lack of adequate equipment, has little

technical knowledge, and uses poor extraction methods that often significantly reduce the value of the marble. Extraction is by blasting using 'black powder', typically imported from Pakistan. This causes micro-fracturing throughout the entire quarry and results in up to 50% of wastage at the quarrying stage. Further wastage occurs at the marble factory where blocks often break up during the cutting and polishing stages of production.



Figure 1. Map of Afghanistan showing provinces that are known to be producing marble.



The result is a relatively poor quality polished marble with a comparatively high unit cost of production.

There is a wide variety of marble in Afghanistan currently extracted from quarries in Badakhshan, Balkh, Bamyan, Helmand, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, Logar, Faryab, Wardak, Nangarhar, Paktia, Parwan and Samangan provinces. Marbles developed in rocks of Proterozoic age are considered to be the highest quality for use as dimension stone. Marble deposits include the following:

- Kabul Province. Proterozoic marble is quarried in Ghazak, Hazare Baghal, Kariz-Amir, Pul-e-Charkhy, Qalamkar, and Tara Kheel. The Proterozoic Kariz-Amir marble occurs approximately 40 km north of Kabul and consists of granular white, rarely grey-yellow marble. The Ghazak marble (known as 'Ghazak Black') is a popular fine-grained, black marble that occurs 32 km east of Kabul.
- Logar Province. Proterozoic marble is quarried in Awbazak, Dehnow and Mohammad Agha. Awbazak marble is bioclastic and brown in colour; Dehnow marble is brecciated and brown in colour; Mohammad Agha marble is black and white in colour.
- Wardak Province. The Proterozoic Maydan marble occurs near Maydan Shar and consists of grey and dark grey marble 'beds' up to 450 m thick, interbedded with schist. The 'Maydan Marble Mines' are well known, with five

working areas in a 10–12 km outcrop that has been worked for 40 years.

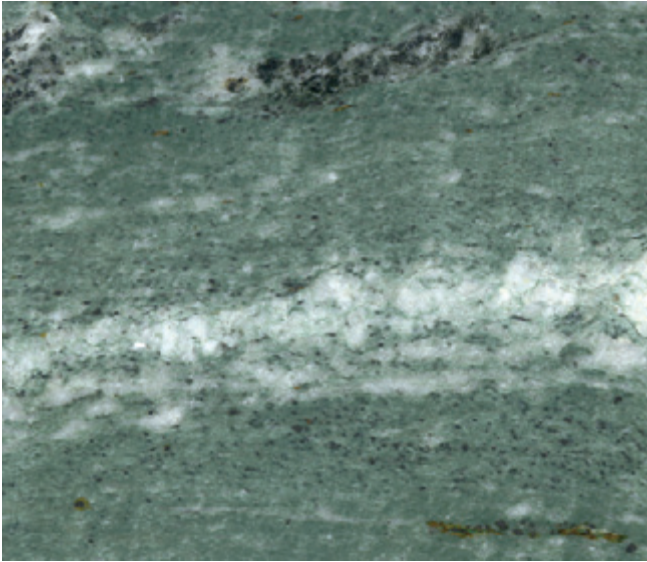
- Badakhshan Province. The Silurian-Devonian Bini-Kama marble consists of medium and coarsely crystalline marble; the resource is estimated as 1300 million tonnes.
- Herat Province. The Proterozoic Chesht-i-Sharif marble occurs 120 km east of Herat city and consists of a finely crystalline marble ranging in colour from pure white to a subtle light green.
- Nangarhar Province. The Proterozoic Khogiani marble occurs 35 km south-west of Jalalabad and consists of a white marble known as 'Afghan White'.

Onyx marble. Onyx is a banded variety of chalcedony, a cryptocrystalline form of quartz. Onyx is highly valued as a high quality marble and the colour of its bands range from white to almost every other colour. Afghan onyx is quarried from several provinces including Bamyan, Helmand and Faryab, with colours including shades of yellow, green or brown. Some of these may in fact be a variety of aragonite (calcium carbonate) called travertine, however the traditional name of onyx has remained in place and is still used to this day.

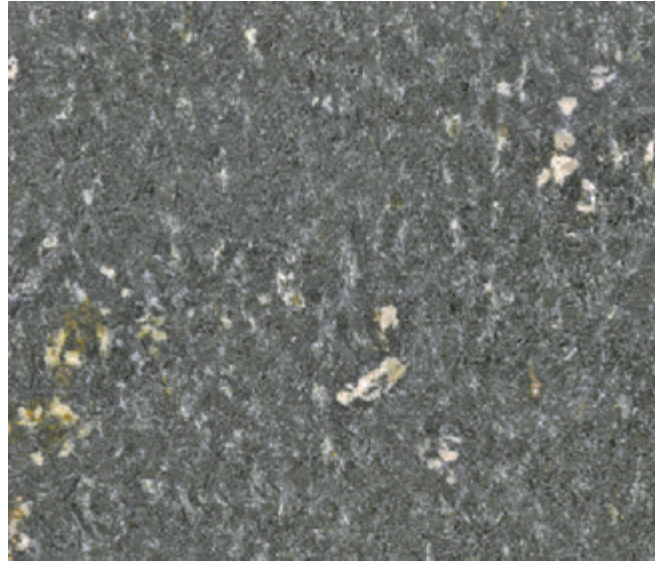
The Chesht and Khogiani marbles are currently worked for dimension stone and have been favourably compared to Carrara marble, an Italian marble recognised to be one of the finest in the world.



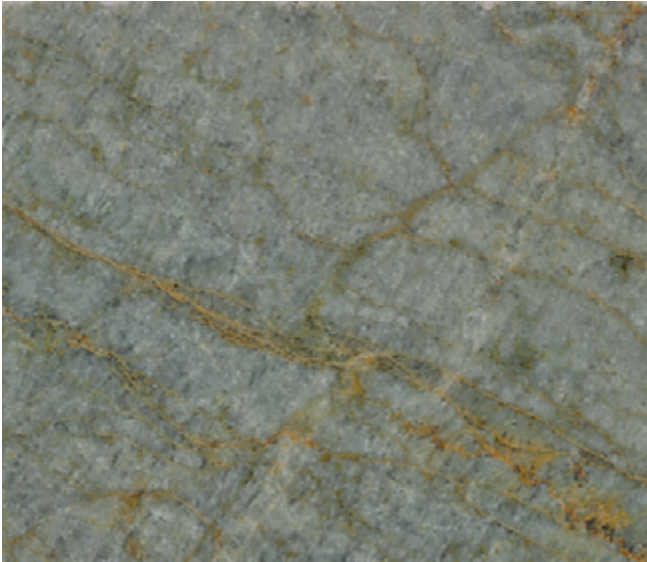
Ornamental marble working in Kabul.



Karizmeer marble, Kabul.



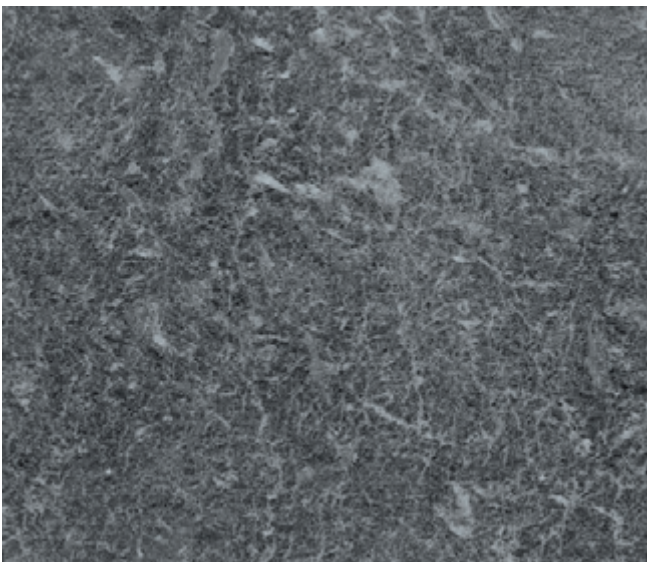
Pul-e-charkhy, Kabul.



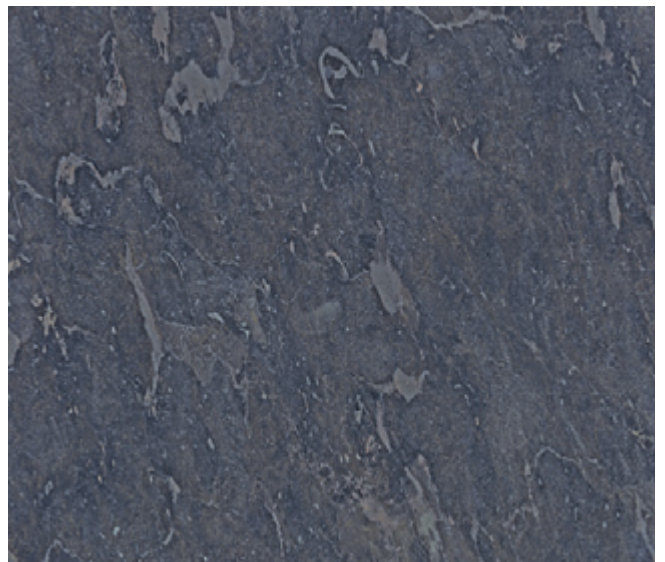
Kabul Grey, Kabul.



Qalamkar marble, Kabul.



Ghazak Marble, Kabul.



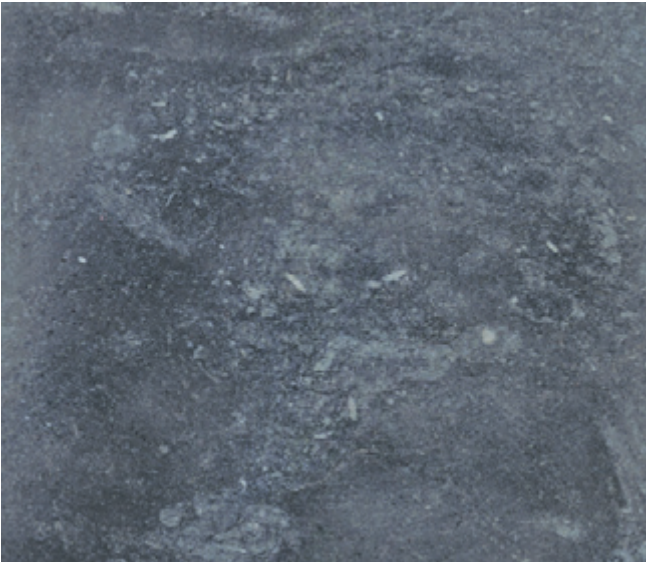
Ghazak Black, Kabul.



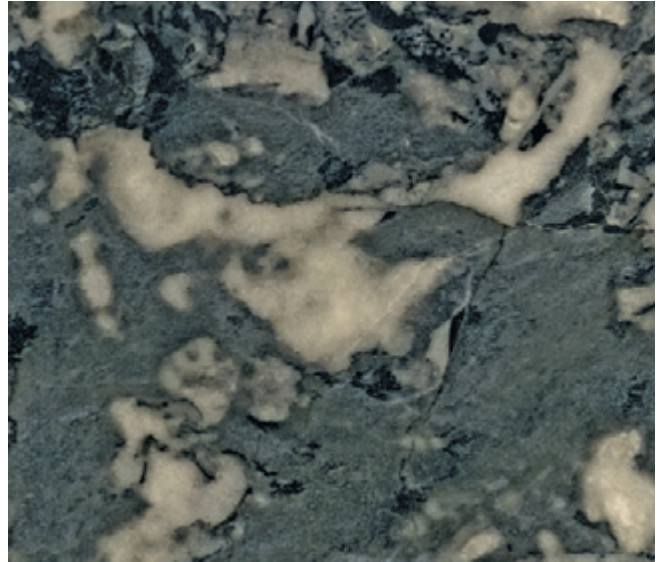
Hazare Baghal, Kabul.



Chesht-i-Sharif marble, Herat.



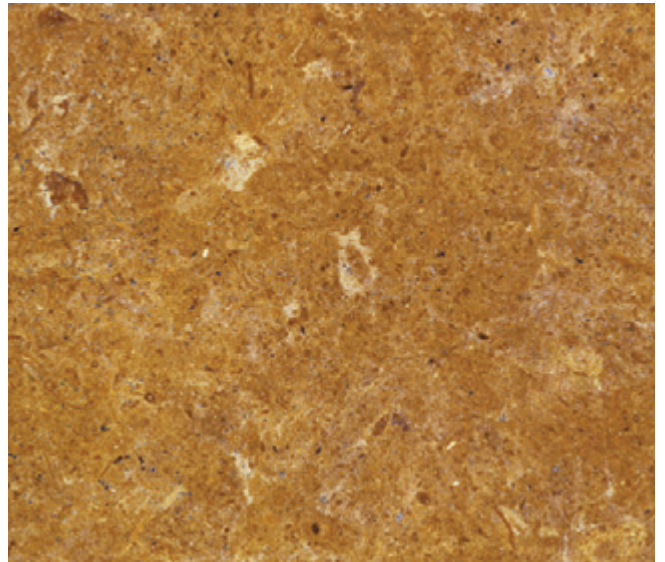
Zurmat marble, Khost.



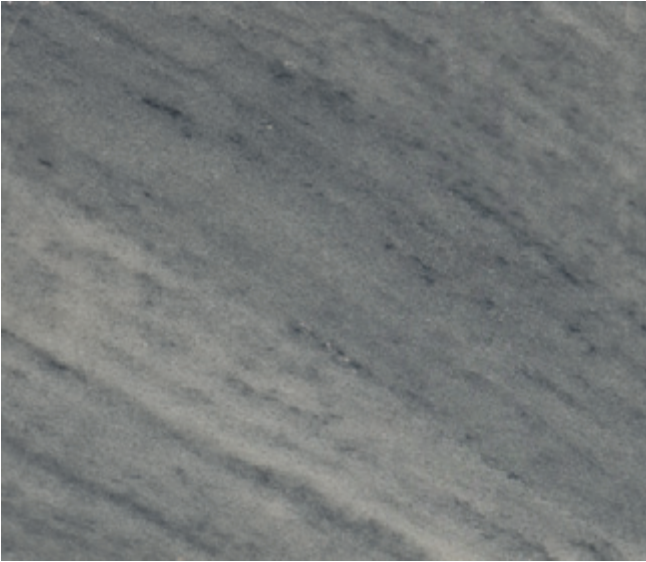
Mohammad Agha, Logar.



Dehnow marble, Logar.



Awbazak marble, Logar.



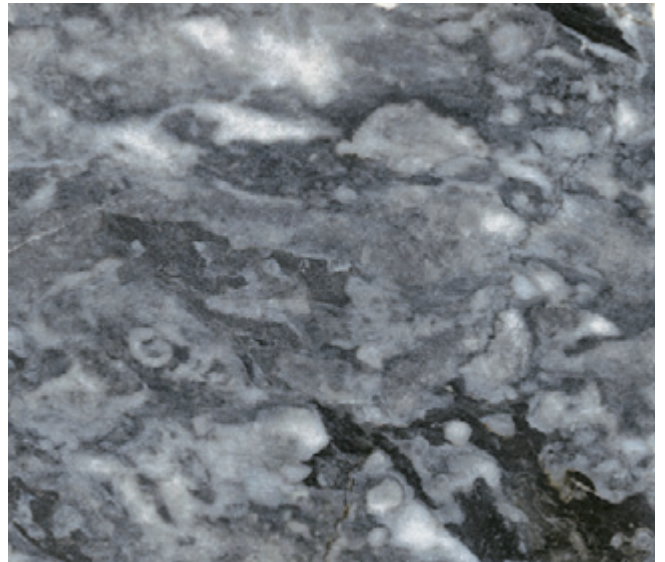
Wardak Grey, Wardak.



Wardak White, Wardak.



Wardak White, Wardak.



Wardak Grey, Wardak.



Samangan Brown, Samangan.



Samangan marble, Samangan.



Samangan marble, Samangan.



Kafiar Khana, Parwan.



Salang marble, Parwan.



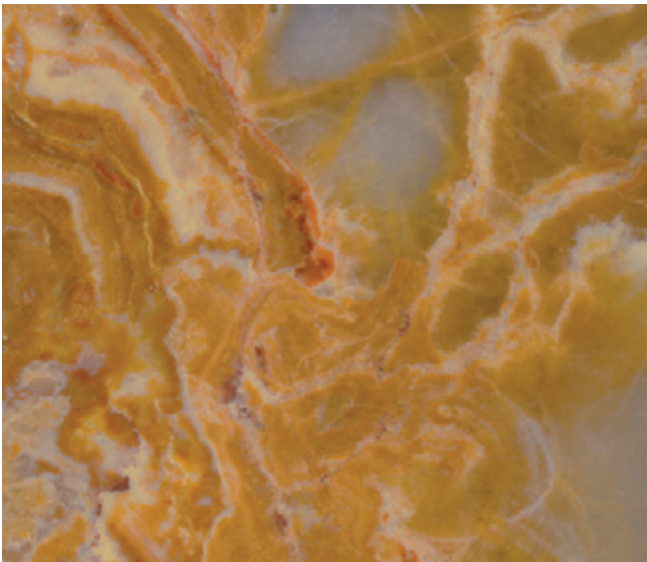
Qalatak marble, Parwan (Panjshir).



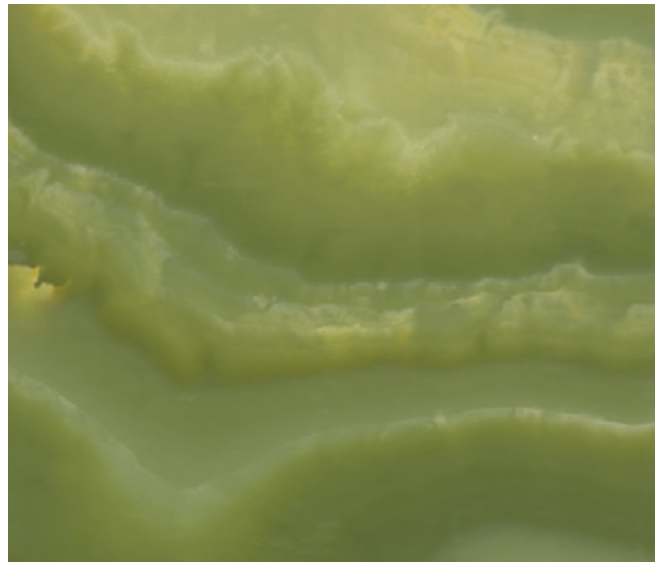
Helmand Brown and White Onyx, Helmand.



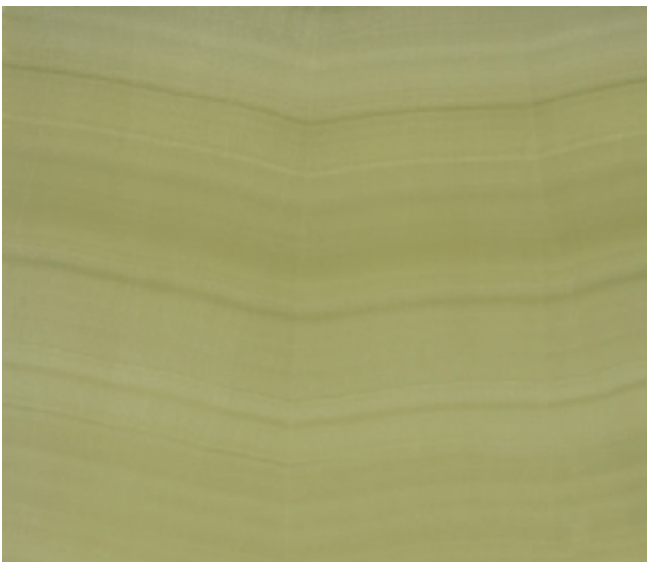
Helmand Brown and White Onyx, Helmand.



Helmand Brown Onyx, Helmand.



Helmand Green Onyx, Helmand.



Yakawlang Onyx, Bamyab.



Khogiani marble (Afghan White), Nangarhar.



Almar White Onyx, Faryab.



Almar Green Onyx, Faryab.



Finished marble products at a factory shop in Kabul.

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