



# Minerals in Afghanistan



## Marbles of Afghanistan

## Marbles of Afghanistan



Figure 1. Ornamental marble working in Kabul.

The marble industry is one of the fastest growing sectors of Afghan's economy (USAID, 2008; Rassin, 2012). Currently 40 marbles are being quarried, and over a hundred more have been identified and catalogued, and therefore supply is not a major constraint on growth. Current growth is two-pronged; the industry is gaining increased share of the domestic market for low-cost marbles, while expanding exports of high-value marbles that are in demand worldwide.

A wide range of marble is currently being extracted from quarries in Kabul, Logar, Wardak, Badakhshan, Bamyan, Helmand, Herat, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Faryab, Paktia, Parwan, Ghazni and Samangan provinces:

- ✓ **Kabul:** Proterozoic marble is quarried in Ghazak, Hazare Baghal, Kariz-Amir, Pul-e-Charkhy, Qalamkar, and Tara Kheel. The Proterozoic *Kariz-Amir Marble* occurs about 40 km north of Kabul and is a granular white, rarely grey-yellow marble. *Ghazak Black* is a popular fine-grained, black marble that occurs 32 km east of Kabul. *Anjirak White Marble* comes from a quarry on Hazare Baghal Mountain and contains small light gray siliceous nodules.
- ✓ **Logar:** Proterozoic marble is quarried in Awbazak, Dehnow and Mohammad Agha. *Awbazak Marble* is bioclastic and brown; *Dehnow Marble* is brecciated and brown; *Mohammad Agha Marble* is black and white.
- ✓ **Wardak:** 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 worked for 40 years.
- ✓ **Badakhshan:** Siluro-Devonian *Bini-Kama Marble* is a medium and coarsely crystalline marble with a resource of about 1,300 million tonnes. Carboniferous *Faizabad Granodiorite* is mined and processed in a new facility.
- ✓ **Bamiyan:** *Shibartu Granite* is a large untapped dimension stone on the main road between Bamyan city and Yakawlang. This stone is coarse-grained and porphyritic. Large pink orthoclase crystals give it a special appeal.

✓ **Herat:** 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. The *Chesht 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.

✓ **Nangarhar:** Proterozoic *Khogiani Marble* occurs 35 km south-west of Jalalabad and consists of a white marble known as 'Afghan White'.

✓ **Ghazni:** The province recently began producing tan coloured *Ghazni Travertine* and *Ghazni White Marble*.

✓ **Samangan:** Cretaceous to Paleocene *Samangan Marbles* include tan, yellow, and pink colours. Some samples have visible fossils.

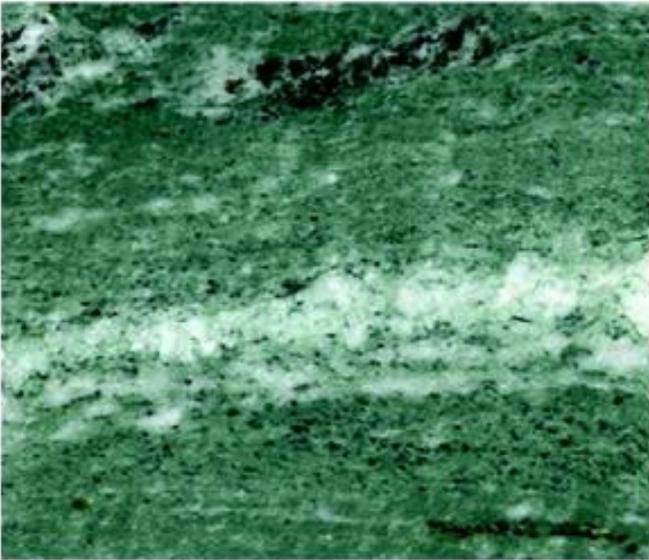
## Onyx

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.

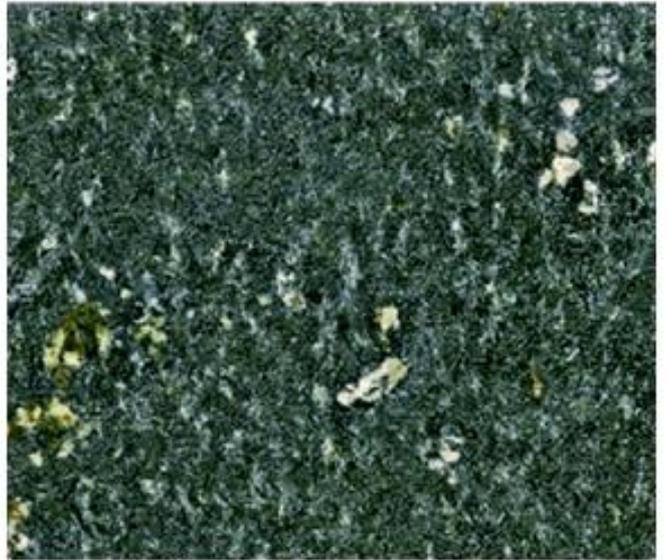
## Honeycomb Onyx



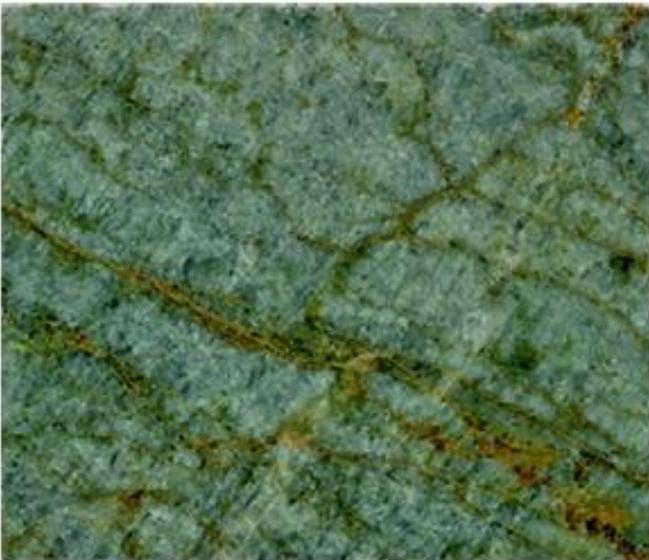
A new quarry in Chesti-Sharif district of Herat Province produces a honeycomb patterned onyx. Pseudomorphs of gypsum crystals that were replaced by chalcedony are the apparent cause of the honeycomb pattern (Figure 2).



Karizmeer Marble, Kabul.



Pul-e-charkhy, Kabul.



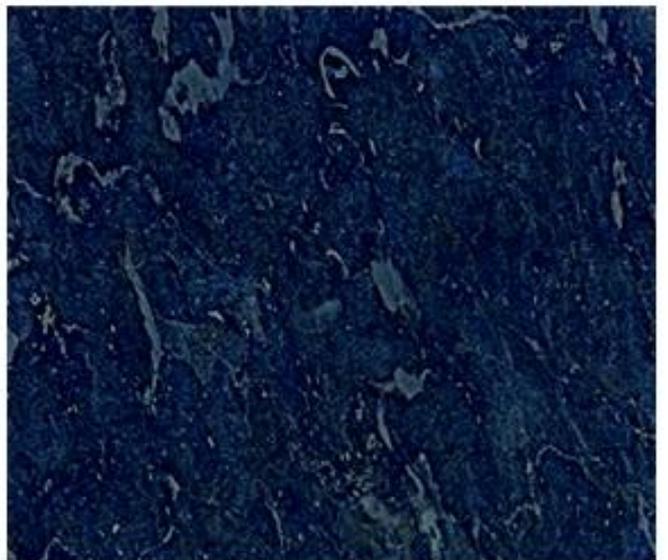
Kabul Grey, Kabul.



Qalamkar Marble, Kabul.



Ghazak Marble, Kabul.



Ghazak Black, Kabul.



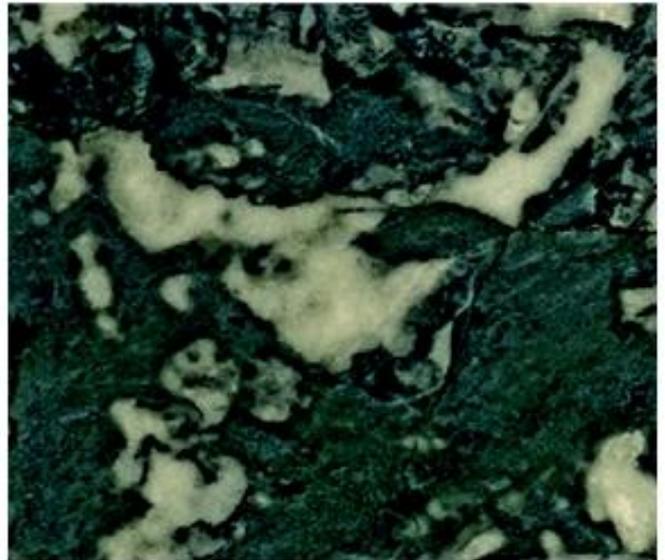
Hazare Baghal, Kabul.



Chesht-i-Sharif Marble, Herat.



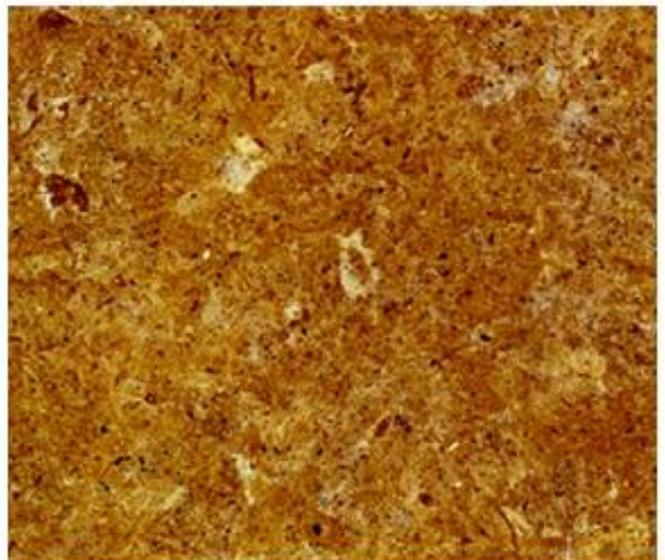
Zurmat Marble, Khost.



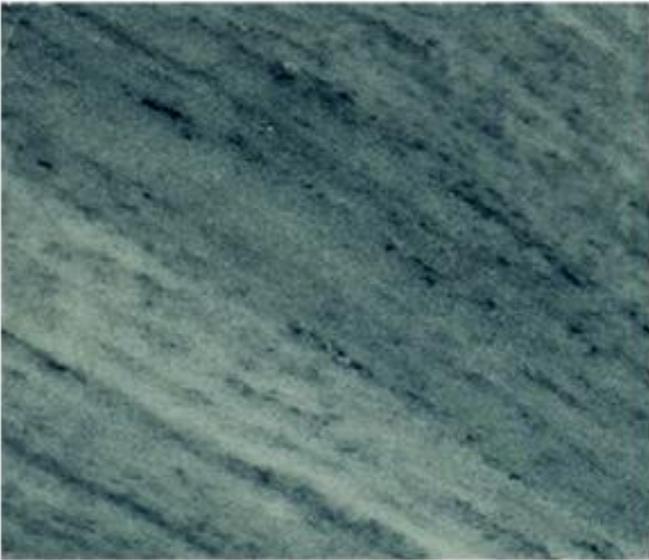
Mohammad Agha, Logar.



Dehnow Marble, Logar.



Awbazak Marble, Logar.



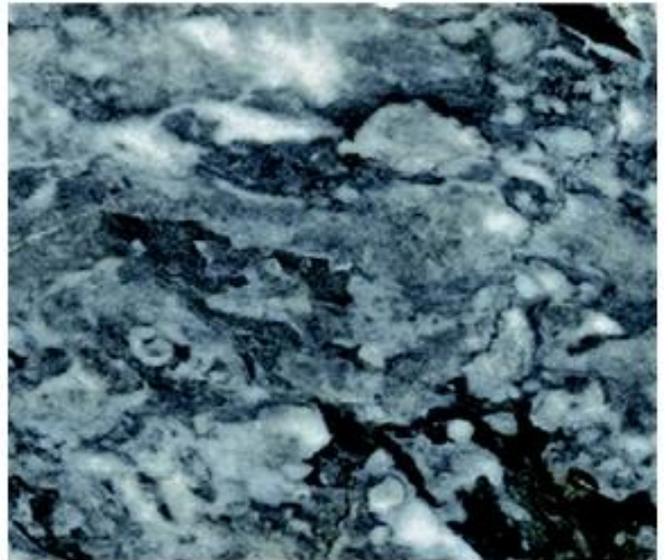
Wardak Grey, Wardak.



Wardak White, Wardak.



Wardak White, Wardak.



Wardak Grey, Wardak.



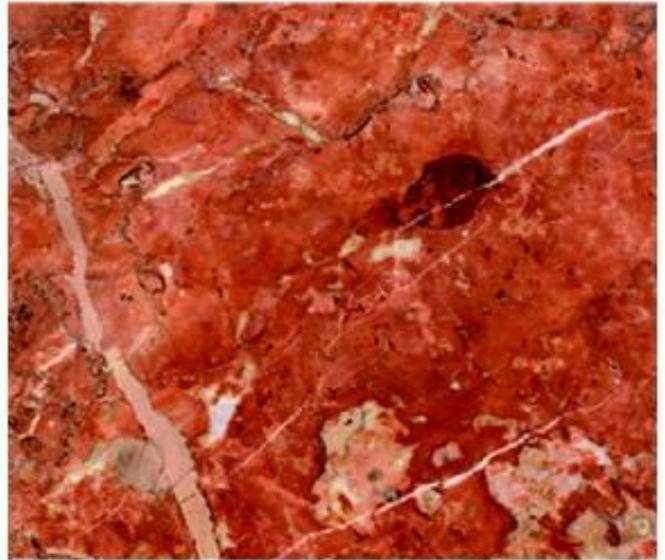
Samangan Brown, Samangan.



Samangan Marble, Samangan.



Samangan Marble, Samangan.



Kaftar Khana, Parwan.



Salang Marble, Parwan.



Qalatak Marble, Panjshir.



Helmand Brown and White Onyx, Helmand.



Helmand Brown and White Onyx, Helmand.



Helmand Brown Onyx, Helmand.



Helmand Green Onyx, Helmand.



Yakawlang Onyx, Bamyan.



Khogiani Marble (Afghan White), Nangarhar.



Almar White Onyx, Faryab.



Almar Green Onyx, Faryab.



Figure no. 3 Finished marble products at a factory shop in Kabul.

## Sources of Information

Afghanistan Marble and Granite Producers Association (2014). Contact details from Afghan Chamber of Commerce. <http://www.acci.org.af/membership.html>

ASMED (2010): Afghanistan Marble Industry Directory. Accessible at: [www.asmed.af/marble](http://www.asmed.af/marble)

Lamoureux, Paul (2008): Afghanistan Marble and Granite. USAID Report, 15 pages. Download: [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PNADY169.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADY169.pdf)

Marmaristan (2014): Afghanistan Marble Center of Excellence. Supported by US Department of Commerce. Further information:

[www.flaginternational.com/#!/coe-read-more/c1tgr](http://www.flaginternational.com/#!/coe-read-more/c1tgr)

Rassin, A.G. (2012): A comprehensive study of Marble Industry in Afghanistan. Research and Statistics Department, Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA), 62 pages. Download:

[www.aisa.org.af/study/Marble-industry-AFG-AISA-2012.pdf](http://www.aisa.org.af/study/Marble-industry-AFG-AISA-2012.pdf)

## Government Strategy on Mineral Resource Development

The GoA has recognized the country's mineral resources as valuable assets that can be developed to create employment and promote economic independence. Under this goal, the GoA has recently made significant policy changes following its transition from state operator to regulator and

is driving infrastructural development with a view to enhancing and promoting Mineral resource development. The GoA is constantly seeking investment from the private and foreign investors to develop the huge and very diverse mineral resource potential of Afghanistan.

## Further Information:

For further information on technical and investment matters, please contact the following offices within the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum:

Mineral Sector Development Directorate  
Ministry of Mines and Petroleum  
Kabul, Afghanistan  
Telephone: +93 (0) 752 076 483  
E-Mail: [miningenquiries@mom.gov.af](mailto:miningenquiries@mom.gov.af)  
Website: <http://www.mom.gov.af>

Afghanistan Geological Survey  
Kabul, Afghanistan  
Tel: +93 (0) 75 200 1714  
E-mail: [ags@mom.gov.af](mailto:ags@mom.gov.af)  
©Afghanistan Geological Survey

