



CHROMITE

CHROMITE, FeCr_2O_4 , a dark-brown or black mineral from which chromium is refined. It may be found in conjunction with deposits of nickel, gold, and platinum. There is no available documentary evidence that chromite was extracted or exploited in ancient Persia; it was probably not used in metalworking because of its high melting point (2,300-2,600° F.), compared with those of [copper](#) and lead. In the Middle Ages, however, Abu'l-Qāsem 'Abd-Allāh Kāšānī (d. 738/1337-38; pp. 340, 345; tr. Allan, p. 112, 114-15, 116, 119) mentioned, in his treatise on ceramics, a very dark ore called *mozarrad*, which was mined in the mountains of Jājarm in Khorasan, ground, and used for painting designs in black on tiles, which were then coated with a clear or turquoise glaze. He seems to have been describing chromite (Zāvoš, II, p. 166).

The mineral was rediscovered in modern Persia in 1319-21 Š./1940-42, at Faryūmad near Jājarm and shortly afterward in a number of other villages in the region. Major chromite deposits are also found at Fāryāb (northeast of [Bandar-e 'Abbās](#)); Esfandaqa (southeast of Sīrjān); over a large part of Khorasan (extending from the area northeast of Šāhrūd to south of Mašhad); around Shiraz, Zāhedān and Kermānšāhān; in Azarbaijan (e.g., at Zanjān, K̄voy, and Mākū); and in Sīstān and Baluchistan (e.g., at Bašāgerd and Rāmešk). Total chromite deposits in Persia have been estimated at between 3 and 50 million tons (Lefond, p. 511).

The ore is extracted by means of both opencut and pit mining and, being of



low quality (less than 46 percent chromite, Cr_2O_3), is first concentrated before being exported. In 1357 Š./1978 annual chromite production in Persia was 100,000 tons, 2.5 percent of world production (Sully and Brandes, p. 9). Since 1358 Š./1979 annual production has dropped to about 50,000 tons, of which 2,000 tons are used in the manufacture of firebricks for domestic consumption and the remainder exported (personal observation).

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