

Mining Interests in Asia Minor 1920-21

This brief article lists four US Department of State documents showing the importance of the Arghana copper mine in Asia Minor.¹ Other mining areas mentioned were Tireboli on the Black Sea, Fatza and Ordou. These documents highlight French interests seeking economic concessions in their sphere of influence in South East Anatolia.

The last document dated December 6, 1921 mentions the Franco-Turkish Agreement of October 20, 1921 with the Harchit Valley having iron, chrome and silver mines located far away from the French sphere influence in Cilicia. The Harchit Valley is located in the Pontic Alps close to the town of Tireboli.² It shows that the French were prepared to go to any lengths to increase its economic influence in Asia Minor.

Furthermore the last document states “what is especially needed in Turkey, along economic lines, is a geological survey locating and describing the mineral wealth of the land.” A geological survey of Asia Minor would make it easier to attract foreign investment in Turkey. From an American standpoint, it would provide important information for its businessmen to become more pro-active and to try to counteract French economic activity in Asia Minor.³

Finally this document lists the production output of important minerals in Asia Minor. However these figures raise some questions that require a brief explanation. There is no comparison of production figures covering different years and doesn't take into account the Greek-Turkish conflict which impacted greatly on economic activity in Asia Minor.

Through these official documents, US diplomats provided information to the State Department of mining activities and resources in Asia Minor.

Stavros T.Stavridis (Doctoral Candidate)

Portland, Oregon

¹ Arghana mine is located in the Diyarbekir province of Turkey.

² For details on the Franco-Turkish Agreement of October 20, 1921 , see *Turkey, No.1 (1922) Cmd1570, Correspondence between His Majesty Government and French Government respecting the Angora Agreement of October 21, 1921*, HMSO, London, 1921

³ Readers should refer to my article *The Gillespie Mission to Angora* for further details on the potential of American economic concessions in Asia Minor

CLASSIFICATION CANCELED AUTHORITY LETTER
OF 1-8-58 FROM W. H. ANDERSON, STATE DEPT
BY *James J. Doyle* DATE *5 May 61*

INDEX BUREAU
AUG 12 1920
DEPT OF STATE

INDEX BUREAU
JUN 22 1920
DEPT OF STATE

A1
Copies to Col. LeMay
Marshall & Co. (see
Robertson). *R.O.H.* *TA* *ES*

JUN 25 1920

11207

No. *1694*

AMERICAN CONSULATE-GENERAL,

Paris, France, June 5, 1920.

SUBJECT: Mining Properties in Asia-Minor.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington D.C.

File
MS
Trade Advisor
JUN 22 1920
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Sir:

I have the honor to enclose herewith copy of a letter concerning certain mining properties in Asia-Minor, with special reference to the Argana Mine.

This information was furnished Colonel Robert Marsh who is temporarily residing at the Hotel Maurice, Paris, by Mr. H. W. Adams, the Acting Commercial Attaché, at my request.

It is thought that the information contained in this letter may be of interest to the Department.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

M. Maclean

Consul-General

Enclosure:
Copy of letter to Col. Robt. Marsh.
File No. 863
I/D

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AUG 3 1920

CLASSIFICATION CANCELED AUTHORITY LETTER
OF 1-8-58 FROM W. H. ANDERSON, STATE DEP'T

BY *J. J. [Signature]* DATE *5 May 61*

COPY

7, Place des Etats Unis

April 21, 1920

Colonel Robert Marsh,
Hotel Maurice,
Rue de Rivoli, Paris.

My dear Colonel Marsh:

I write you in regard to your inquiry for information concerning certain mining properties in Asia Minor with special reference to the Arghana Mine.

Upon receipt of your inquiry, I immediately started an investigation of this matter through several different sources. I have completed the first phase of this investigation and desire to furnish you a report of same herewith. Let me say that I still have a number of lines out both in Constantinople and in Asia Minor and as soon as I receive advices from those sources I will render you further report.

Among the channels through which I have worked in our search for this information, is Mr. Eliot Mears, American Trade Commissioner, representing the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, Department of Commerce at Constantinople and attached to the American Commission in that city. Mr. Mears has given this matter his earnest attention and has supplied us with information which I trust may be useful to you.

In the report which Mr. Mears rendered our office, he states that it is impossible for him to answer our inquiries definitely because virtually war conditions still exist in Anatolia and particularly the South Eastern part of Asiatic Turkey. As you perhaps know, the French are in occupation in Cilicia and Northern Syria and their forces extend Eastward to Marden situated in the vilayet (province) of Diarbekir, a few miles north of Mesopotamia.

As Mr. Mears states the Arghana Mine which is considered the richest mining property in Asiatic Turkey has been worked for over eight hundred years. This property is owned and operated by the Turkish Government and is entirely without modern equipment. The ore is transported to the sea where it is smelted. It appears that no scientific attempt has ever been made to install up-to-date mining methods of any description and competent observers state that only the surface has been scratched. The annual output in normal times, according to American standards is insignificant, not exceeding, according to most optimistic statements more than 4000 tons annually.

Mr. Mears had the opportunity of interviewing Djemal Bey, Director General of Mines, and discuss with him these mining properties. Djemal Bey expressed to Mr. Mears his opinion that the annual output of this mine was somewhat less than the indicated figure of 4000 tons annually. In this interview this official claimed to have no knowledge of the present situation with respect to this property, except that the French are reported to be in general control of the territory where same is located.

We are unable to advise you regarding the terms of the Turkish Treaty upon which the present Ottoman Empire naturally depends. A study of French colonial policy indicates clearly the interest taken in all industrial and commercial enterprises. It is fair to assume

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OF 1-8-58 FROM W. H. ANDERSON, STATE DEP'T

BY *J. J. Boyle* DATE *5 May 61*

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assume that, if France were awarded South Eastern Anatolia, the French Government, or private French interests, would assume the management and operation of this and similar properties. It is not at all clear, however, that even if France, under actual ownership or mandate, were given considerable territory bordering on the Mediterranean, her rights would extend as far in the interior as Marden.

Your inquiry regarding the future political situation along the Black Sea and the Trans-Caucasus is hardly susceptible of being answered at this time. In the vilayet of Trebizond, there are over five hundred mines listed, but it appears that very few of them will ever become good commercial propositions. The Trans-Caucasus, formerly a part of Russia, is now divided into four parts, namely, the de facto republics of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and the Batum Province, the last named being at present under the control of the British. The mineral possibilities in the Caucasus seem to be very good indeed. Mr. Mears informs us that, since the allied occupation of Constantinople, on March 16, there has been no commercial telegraphic communication with any part of Asia-Minor. He says that conditions are such that American mining interests should hardly expect any too early returns from efforts made to further investigate this matter.

Very truly yours,

H. W. Adams,

Acting Commercial Attaché

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OF 1-8-58 FROM W. H. ANDERSON, STATE DEPT
BY *J. J. [unclear]* DATE *5 May 61*

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Copy to Sec.
Sunday, R.O.H.
Refer to [unclear]
Com. [unclear]
grad. [unclear]
[unclear]

67.63
INDEX BUREAU
JUN 28 1920
DEPT OF STATE
CONSULAR BUREAU
SEP 11 1920
DEPT OF STATE

AMERICAN CONSULATE-GENERAL,

Paris, France, June 14, 1920.

INDO-ASSISTANT SECRETARY
JUL 10 1920
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SUBJECT: Additional Information concerning
Mining Properties in Asia-Minor.

Office of Foreign Trade Advisor
JUN 30 1920
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,
Washington D.C.

Department of State
SEP 17 1920
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my despatch No. 1694
dated June 5, 1920, and to enclose herewith copy of a letter
containing additional information concerning certain mining
properties in Asia Minor.

The information was furnished at my request to
Colonel Robert Marsh, temporarily residing at the Hotel
Maurice, Paris, by Mr. W. C. Huntington, Commercial Attaché
at Paris.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

M. H. [unclear]
Consul-General

Enclosure:
Copy of letter to Col. Marsh.
File No. 863
1/D

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SEP 17 1920

CLASSIFICATION CANCELED AUTHORITY LETTER
OF 1-8-58 FROM W. H. ANDERSON, STATE DEP'T

By *James J. Doyle* DATE *5 May 61*

COPY

June 9, 1920

Colonel Robert Marsh,
Hotel Maurice,
Rue de Rivoli,
Paris.

My dear Colonel Marsh:

I write you in further reference to your inquiry for information concerning certain mining properties in Asia Minor, with special reference to the Arghana mine.

It develops that this concession is in the hands of the Crédit National Ottoman of Constantinople, and that plans are being considered for the formation of a company to operate same. The Crédit National Ottoman is an institution formed during the late war by the Young Turk party, has a capital of four million pounds Turkish, and a charter allowing it to engage in all sorts of enterprises. The formation of this bank was engendered by the Nationalists' desire to escape from the financial tutelage of foreign interests, and to keep some of the benefits accruing from big financial transactions and development undertakings at home. To this end it was forbidden for any other than Ottoman subjects to own stock in the institution. Had Turkey come out of the war intact, the undertaking would have had a good future, for the government being interested, all sorts of concessions and advantages had already been accorded to these Turkish interests for the asking. However, it appears that difficulties are now being encountered, and it is doubtless only a question of time before European interests will acquire anything of value which this institution may own. It would appear from the foregoing that the Arghana mine has not yet come into foreign hands, and that the Turks still have the disposition of it.

This information comes from reliable sources. We still have other lines out, and are endeavoring to obtain further data for you concerning this matter. We will continue to transmit to you such information as we may receive.

In the course of our investigation, we have come across some interesting data concerning the copper mines in Turkish Asia Minor. This information is doubtless already in your possession; we will, however, send it along to you for such use as you may care to make thereof.

It appears that the chief and practically sole copper mineral which is to be found in Turkey is the "chalcocopyrite" (sulphuret of copper) which contains, almost in the same proportions, copper and pyrite of iron, in their impure states. There are two copper areas, one of which is located in the northeast, and the other in the west, the latter being less valuable than the former.

The chief deposit, belonging to the first of the above mentioned areas, is that of Arghana-Maden. This mine is located between Diarbekir and Kharput, at a six hours' walk coming from the western source of the Tigris. This layer is very large, and is in the shape of a flattened ellipsoid. Its horizontal section may be said to be an ellipsis, the longer axis of which would be about 200 metres long, and the shorter axis about 100 metres long. It offers several branches, veins, or clefts, the horizontal length of which is not known. According to mining engineers who have investigated this mine

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mine, the layer has been worked as far as 25 meters in length. No data is given in regard to its depth, and no one can say whether the mine ends up in the shape of the hold of a boat, or if it branches off into veins when reaching a certain depth. It is located at the points of contact between the layers of red limestone at the top and the serpentinite rock on the sides, and consists of a close mixture of pyrite of copper and pyrite of iron, very closely united, so to speak, without any veinstone, and containing an average of about 13% to 16% of copper.

This is undoubtedly one of the most valuable mines in the world, and its exploitation would have afforded larger profits if it had had at its disposition a larger quantity of coal or other fuel for smelting the mineral. It is reported that fifteen years ago, wood for burning purposes was available at a distance of fifteen kilometres from Arghana, but to-day it has to be brought over to the mine from a distance of fifty kilometres. Moreover, it might have been operated with better success if transportation conditions had been better, and if the long distance which separates the mine from the sea could have been reduced.

Up to the present time, this mine has been operated in the most rudimentary fashion. The miners, about 600 in number, are for the greater part Greeks, Armenians and Kurdes. They break up the mineral and carry it on their backs as far as the smelting furnaces, over very difficult paths.

Formerly, it was the practice to forward the copper to Losik for final treatment, after it had been roasted at the pit's head. Then the product was sold under the name of "Losik" copper. At the present time, all operations are effected at Arghana itself. The mineral, containing 80% of copper, from which are extracted 1,400 tons of a value of 71,000 lts. (before the war), is carried on camels' backs to Alexandretta. Most of that mineral is shipped to Liverpool.

Another deposit of copper is found at Tépékhan, near Malatia, and is of the same nature as that of Arghana.

The Falu mine is located at a distance of seventeen kilometres from the town of that name. It belongs to the government which has operated it on a basis of 5% of the gross profits. Another mine of copper is said to be located at Tokat. This is reported to contain 50% of copper. At the Turkish frontier at Hopa, there exists an important deposit of copper and manganese.

Available statistics show that the vilayet of Diarbékir, in 1899, extracted 6,200,500 kilos of copper having a value of Frs. 6,469,328. Copper has also been located in the various places in the hinterland of Trébizonde and Kerassunde (Cumich-hané, Matschka, Karahissar, etc.)

The region of Trebéli on the Black Sea is said to be very rich in minerals and copper, containing complex sulphurous minerals, such as blends, galine, chalcocopyrite, etc. with veinstone. According to mining engineers, these layers are found in the diorites, trachytes, and calcereous grounds.

Mention may be made of the mines in the region of Esseli, such as Deré Maden, Föl Maden, Esseli Maden, Djodjen Maden, Gilak Maden,

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OF 1-8-58 FROM W. H. ANDERSON, STATE DEPT

BY *James J. Ray* DATE *5 May 61*

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Karilar Maden, Algalik Maden, etc. In Patza and Ordon there are
a large number of deposits which have been operated by the ancients.

It appears that a large part of the copper extracted from
these latter mentioned mines is worked by the famous bakirdjis
(coppersmiths) of Trebizonde and Matsokk, who employ it in the
manufacture of copper utensils, which are in use all over Turkey.
The bazaar of Trebizonde is the center and warehouse of this
industry. From there these products are shipped to Constantinople.

Very truly yours,

W. C. Hmtington
Commercial Attaché

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OF 1-8-58 FROM W. H. ANDERSON, STATE DEP'T

BY *J. J. [unclear]* DATE *5 May 61*

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[unclear]) [unclear]
[unclear] [unclear]*

21142
DEC 18 1920
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INDEX BUREAU
DEC 27 1920
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MINISTRY OF STATE
CONCESSIONS
DEC 18 1920
DIVISION
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Office of Foreign Trade Advisor
JAN 7 1921
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

copy of [unclear]
[Signature]

Constantinople, November 23rd

INDEX BUREAU
Rec'd

MAR 20 1921

Dept. of State

Following is a translation of an article

appearing in the issue of November 19 of the "Journal
d'Orient", the original clipping being transmitted
herewith also:

"Satvet Lutfi Bey, private secretary
of His Highness Prince Sabaheddin
(Note: crown prince), accompanied
by two French capitalists, conferred
yesterday with His Excellency, the
Minister of Commerce and Agriculture,
Hussein Kiazim Bey. The interview is
said to have dealt with new mining
concessions."

MAR 26 1921

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An effort has been made to learn just what
concessions these French capitalists have in view but
it has been unsuccessful as the persons on the inside
refuse to talk.

The item is interesting however in connection
with article 239 of the Treaty of Sevres which reads
as follows:

"No new concession shall be granted by
the Turkish Government either to a
Turkish subject or otherwise without
the consent of the Financial Commission."

The Financial Commission has not as yet begun
to function.

CEA/IE.

OFFICE OF STATE
JAN 13 1921
ACKNOWLEDGED

CLASSIFICATION CANCELED AUTHORITY LETTER
OF 1-8-58 FROM W. H. ANDERSON, STATE DEPT.
BY *James J. Payne* DATE *5 May 61*

Office of Foreign Trade Advisor
JAN 23 1922
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JAN 21 1922
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
D. C. 2
JAN 6 1922
DIRECTOR OF THE CONSULAR SERVICE

Consul General,
Constantinople.

December 6th, 1921.

FORWARDED
DISSEMINATION ONLY

In the Franco-Turkish Agreement of October 20,

1921, a concession is granted the French for 99 years
of the "iron, chrome and silver mines in the Harchit
Valley".

Considerable speculation has been rife regarding
this valley and the mines in it. If the concession
had covered the Arghana copper mine on the upper Tigris
or the Bulgar Dagh gold mine in the Taurus less sur-
prise would have been felt. But the Harchit Valley!
Nobody seemed to comprehend.

As a matter of fact, the mines in question appear
to be located far from Cilicia and the French sphere
of influence in South-Eastern Anatolia. They are
vaguely known under different names: Arghys, Karsiotis,
(Greek), Harsheet (Turkish), and situated not far from
Tireboli on the Black Sea, in a valley formed by the
Harshid or Karshud river as the latter through wild
gorges descends from the Pontic Alps into the Euxine.
Tireboli is a seaport of some 12,000 inhabitants, 20%
of whom are Greeks, and situated in the central section
of the province of Trebizond. While well known in the
ancient times, the town was left for centuries in a
state of innocuous desuétude until once more put on the
map by the Commission named by President Wilson for the

purpose

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JAN 6 1922
ACKNOWLEDGED

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JAN 23 1922

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BY *Jamene J. Payne* DATE *5 May 61*

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purpose of determining the boundaries of new Armenia. The valley back of this port, formed by the turbulent waters of the Harahid or Karshud river, which rises in the Vayuk mountain fastnesses, some 70 miles inland, has been known since antiquity for its mining activities; the principal metals extracted being silver and copper.

Asia Minor, in general, and the Trebizond district in particular, is supposed to be rich in minerals. The geological formation of this latter region resembles that of the Caucasus where great mineral wealth is already demonstrated. In early days, the Chalybe settlers worked many mines in a primitive way along this coast. Especially noted were the silver mines on the western bank of the Karshud river, and the copper and manganese mines of the same vicinity. More recently the silver mines, higher up in the valley of the Karshud, in the sandjak of Gumush Kaneh, acquired a certain fame. Silver dedicatory offerings preserved in some of the local churches, attest their importance. Since 1850, the smelting furnaces have fallen into disrepair. Landslips and flood largely obliterated the industry, and the miners gradually left for Russia. Nevertheless, prospecting has been going on, and consular reports, from time to time, have mentioned vein outcrops of copper pyrite, silver, lead, manganese and zinc. It is, therefore, conceivable that the French may have been well advised in obtaining the concession alluded to in the opening paragraph of the present report although mining engineers

in Constantinople

in Constantinople appear rather sceptical. Modern methods and development work have not yet been carried far enough to prove what the mineral resources of this district really are.

What is especially needed in Turkey, along economic lines, is a geological survey locating and describing the mineral wealth of the land.

The following table reveals the approximate yearly production of the more important ores mined in Asia Minor:

KIND OF ORE.	PRODUCTION.
Antimony ore.....	1,500 met. tons
Asphalt.....	3,000 " "
Bituminous coal.....	730,000 " "
Boracite.....	16,000 " "
Chrome ore.....	15,000 " "
Copper.....	1,500 " "
Emery ore.....	15,000 " "
Gold.....	45 kgs.
Iron pyrite.....	20,000 met. tons
Lead.....	13,000 " "
Lignite.....	30,000 " "
Manganese ore.....	12,000 " "
Meerschaum.....	250 " "
Mercury.....	4,500 flasks
Silver.....	250 kgs.
Zinc ore.....	2,000 met. tons