

EXHIBITION "WONDERS IN THE STONE" – 2011

Elena N. Sokolova, Elena N. Matvienko, Alexander A. Evseev
IRAS Fersman Mineralogical museum, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, mineral@fmm.ru

Exhibitions «Wonders in the stone» which are already carried out almost 50 years are one of the most appreciable initiatives of the Society of amateurs attached to the Moscow Society of Naturalists (MOIP). In 2011 the 45-th exhibition «Wonders in the stone» having a subtitle «Remarkable minerals of the Russia» has been organized in the Fersman Mineralogical museum belonging to the Russian Academy of Sciences.

6 figures, 3 references.

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The history of annual exhibitions «Wonders in the stone» totals almost 50 years. These exhibitions are one of the most appreciable initiatives of the Society of amateurs attached to the Moscow Society of Naturalists (MOIP) founded in 1805 within the Moscow imperial university that become one of the first naturalist scientific public organization in the Russia.

We should consider 1964 as a date of foundation of the Society of amateurs (a hobby group in its beginning). In the same year under A.E. Fersman's recommendation this hobby group has been admitted in the petrographic section of the Moscow Society of Naturalists (MOIP). The first mineral exhibition of amateurs has taken place in 1965 in the Laboratory of mineralogy of USSR Academy of Sciences located on the Leninsky prospect in Moscow. The list of participants consisted of only 17 person – representatives of different professions connected by love and interest to the mineral world. The first exhibition has passed with great success, and amateurs have decided to organize it annual.

Since 1969 within almost 40 years the exhibition which has received the name «Wonders in the stone» was carried out in the Timiryazev Biology museum. The senior generation remembers about its improbable popularity in 1960-1980 years. The turn consisting of people wishing to get to the exhibition stretched along all Malaya Gruzinskaya street, and quite often the turn was accompanied by a horse militia (police). During 2–3 spring weeks of the exhibition it was visited by more than 30 thousand people. Such amount of visitors for some, even a large museum, it was a result of the whole year of work. Visiting of the exhibition «Wonders in the stone» for many people was the first acquaintance with the world of minerals; the example of collectors wakened interest to mineral collecting. Ranks of the Society members were replenished with new members. During the golden age of its activity at the end of 1980-th the number of its members came nearer to three hundred. Many amateurs travelling for mineral collecting all over the country gathered local minerals quite often containing specimens of a museum

quality. The geography of the exhibition also extended: amateurs from Kiev, L'vov, Alma-Ata, Sverdlovsk, Baku, Sevastopol and other cities brought their specimens to Moscow, and the number of the exhibition participants reached up to 100 persons. Exhibits were accepted by a severe jury, however, the exhibitions' subjects always are wide: specimens of minerals and paleontologic findings, ornaments and statuettes made from decorative stone, meteorites and hand-made goods made from cockle-shells or pebble could be placed in showcases. Three big halls were busy with show-cases of the exhibition. Number of samples in some years reached one and a half thousand. And the main thing: the exhibitions «Wonders in the stone» always was accompanied by the creative and lively atmosphere of people incorporated by common interest to wonderful natural formations – minerals.

Success of the activity of the Society during those years is connected in many respects with its members, unselfish enthusiasts, people belonging to different professions. The first head the amateurs group was Alexander Mihaylovich Orlov, head of the Laboratory of stone belonging to the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, the group's secretary was Olga Konstantinovna Mamurovskaya. For long years Anatoly Nikolaevich Korobkov was the permanent head of the Society. He was a professional aircraft designer and a pilot many years ago carried away in mineral collecting and processing of stone (Fig. 1). Successful work of the Society in 1970–1990 years was much promoted by the MOIP president academician A.L. Yanshin. This list of the amateurs Society promoters is possible and necessary to be continued; chronicles of the Society still wait for their author.

1990-th years were difficult for our country and have also affected the life of the amateurs Society. On the one hand, fans had an opportunity to communicate on a regular basis with the foreign colleagues, attend international exhibitions-and-fair. On the other hand, swift increase of commercial spirit affected the practice of amateurishness. But the exhibition «Wonders in the stone» still annually pleased their admirers. To



Fig. 1. The emblem of the exhibition. In the center a logotype of the Society of amateurs attached to the Moscow State University of Naturalists (MOIP) is placed. Author A.N. Korobkov.



Fig. 2. Remarkable findings of minerals of the former USSR, presented at the exhibition «Wonders in the stone» – 2011. Author A.A. Evseev.

the middle of the 2000-th the Society has undergone severe ordeal: Timiryazevskiy museum has refused to give exhibition areas to the amateurs because of the change of its management. Next, 43-d exhibition «Wonders in the stone» (2008) was placed on two small exhibition areas in the Zoological museum of the Moscow State University and Fersman Mineralogical museum of the Russian Academy of Sciences in rather reduced form. In winter 2009 – 2010 the exhibition was again sheltered by the Zoological museum. Fortunately, it did not become the end of a history of this remarkable initiative. In spring 2011 the 45-th exhibition «Wonders in the stone» was again opened for visitors, having placed in eight small show-cases within the entrance hall of the Fersman Mineralogical museum of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

And again, as once in 1960-th, a small group of enthusiasts – amateurs has brought on the exhibition specimens and wares from their domestic collections. It is wonderful, that among the participants of the exhibition there were veterans of the Society of amateurs: A.H. and V.V. Korobkov, Yu.I. Dubrovskiy, M.L. Feodor, G.P. Apekina, T.S. Shkrob, V.A. Klokov, N.M. Kunitsyna, N.G. Tabashkov, and M.E. Berezovskiy. Their own specimens have been exhibited also by M.Yu. Bahin, M.A. Kuzmin, Yu.V. Gladkov, V.E. Lashneva, E.Ya. Rofin, M.Yu. Povarennykh, L.A. Pastukhov. Fine photos of minerals were exposed by M.A. Bogomolov, several specimens were presented by the Geological museum of Mining university (Moscow).

Theme of the exhibition- 2011 has been suggested by the express inquiry «Ten remarkable minerals of the Russia» which has been started by one of the authors in the Mineralogical museum of the Rossiysky Governmental Geological

Research University RGGRU (10-th of October, 2010) and proceeded till May, 2011. Authoritative amateurs have also taken part in it (as A.N. Korobkov, B.Z. Kantor, Yu.I. Dubrovskiy, V.E. Lashnyova, N.M. Kunitsyna, M.Yu. Bahin). Serious mineralogists, such as A.P. Khomyakov, I.V. Pekov, and E.N. Zavyalov, members of museums with collections of minerals, and also students were participants of the initiative. More than 110 persons in all took part in it. It was offered to name in a short period of time 10 remarkable Russian minerals. Results of the inquiry are published in Internet (<http://geo.web.ru/druza/1-Ru-10min.htm> in Russian). It is easy to find it in Internet using, for example, Google search .

More than 200 minerals and color stones were named in total. The most popular on a poll (are specified in brackets) became quartz (50), malachite (43), charoite (38), emerald (35), topaz (35), astrophyllite (34), eudialyte (30), calcite (29), apatite (28), alexandrite (26), and amethyst (26). Except alexandrite all of them have been presented at the exhibition.

Despite of rather small scale of the exhibition and time of its preparation, it has turned out rather indicative and multifaceted reflecting the theme «Remarkable minerals of the Russia» (and the former USSR). First of all, at the exhibition were presented new minerals discovered in Russia, including crocoite and perovskite and rheniite (shown at the M.A. Bogomolov's remarkable photo) and charoite. Second, minerals of well-known Russian occurrences and deposits belonging to the so called classical ones: Dalnegorsk, Khibiny massif (Kola peninsula), Slyudyanka, Neroyka and others are exhibited. Third, at the exhibition there were placed novelties becoming recent mineralogical sensation: cuprite and azurite crystals from the

Rubtsovskoye deposit on the Altai. At last, traditionally favorite color stones were shown: agate, flint, jasper, amethyst, citrine, topaz, amazonite, malachite, lazurite, charoite and others.

Among various specimens of quartz that became most popular, according to the inquiry, mineral of Russia, its crystals with inclusions from the most significant Russian occurrences have been presented. It was the specimens of quartz with ingrowths of rutile from the Subpolar Urals (Korobkov's couple, Yu.I. Dubrovskiy), pyrite inclusions from the Astafyevskoye deposit, Southern Urals (Yu.I. Dubrovskiy), and actinolite inclusions from the Sinerechenskoye deposit, Russian Far East (N.G. Tabashkov).

Geography of exhibits – Remarkable Minerals from the Former USSR is shown on the map (Fig. 2).

The central show-case of the exhibition was occupied by the the Korobkov's couple (A.N. and V.V. Korobkov) samples: fine wares made by Anatoly Nikolaevich – landscape agate and jaspers in unique frameworks (Painting in the stone, 2009) and high quality wonderful speci-

mens of remarkable Russian minerals: quartz, agate, eudialyte (Fig. 3), astrophyllite, belomorite, almandine, amethyst, calcite, malachite, rhodonite, pyrite, apatite, lazurite, and also jasper.

A lot of participants, in their turn, have added the exposition by the stone processed with their own hands. Thus, M.E. Berezovskiy has presented a series of works in which the stone (mainly polished agate) was shown in combination with various kinds of wood.

Young participants of the exhibition – members of the geological hobby group under the direction of geography teacher M.A. Kuzmin (Central Okrug, school N 170) have presented specimens of high museum quality (grey and pink natrolite from the Khibiny and barite with a pyrite powder from the Belorechenskoye deposit were especially wonderful).

There was a highlight in each presented collection, in other words specimens which have involved attention of amateurs as well as of experts. It should be noticed, except for the mentioned, crystals of beryl from pegmatites from

Fig. 3. Eudialyte. 25 cm in size. Khibiny, Kola peninsula. Specimen: A.N. Korobkov.





Fig. 4. Agate. 8 cm. Northern Timan, Russia.
Specimen: Yu.I. Dubrovskiy.



Fig. 5. Blue topaz. 4 cm. Orlovskoye deposit, Eastern Transbaikalia. Specimen: of M.Yu. Povarennykh.



Fig. 6. Agate. 8 cm. Pstan, Central. Kazakhstan.
Specimen: E.Ya. Rofin. Photo: A.A. Evseev.

the gulf Biruli, Taymyr peninsula. This point as mineral occurrence has been not presented in collections of the leading mineralogical museums (Yu.I. Dubrovskiy). Fine agates from the river Shanda (Southern Urals) and Timan were given by the same author (Fig. 4). Druse of gypsum crystals from the cave in the Kugigitangtau ridge (Turkmenistan) and almandine crystal of the record size from the Shueretskoye deposit, Karelia have been presented by V.A. Klovov. Transparent blue crystal of topaz from the Orlovskoye deposit, Eastern Transbaikalia (Fig. 5) has been shown by M.Yu. Povarennykh. Druse of unusual isometric crystals of quartz from the Dalnegorsk has been presented by V.E. Lashnyova. The following wonderful specimens were also shown at the exhibition: collected and polished by the author crystals of grey corundum with asterism effect in albite from the Potaninsky mountains (Southern Urals) and landscape agate from the Pstan (Kazakhstan) (Fig. 6) (E.Ya. Rofin); pink apophyllite from the Akhaltsikhe region, Georgia (T.S. Shkrob); unusual black calcite crystal with antimonite inclusions from Khaydarkan, Kyrgyzstan (M.L. Fyodorov); fine specimen of the Uzbek turquoise (L.A. Pastukhov); amethyst geode with calcite from recent gathering in the Rusavkino occurrence, Moscow suburb (N.M. Kunitsyna); magnificent polished flints from the Middle Russia and jasper from the Sibaysky deposit (Southern Urals) (M.Yu. Bahin).

More detailed photoinformation on the exhibition one may receive from the following Internet address: <http://geo.web.ru/druza/m-UVK-2011.htm>.

The exhibition has worked for two months with big success. It was offered "to register it" in the Fersman Mineralogical museum forever.

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