

THE DUKE LEUCHTENBERG COLLECTION IN THE MINERALOGICAL STATE COLLECTION, MUNICH

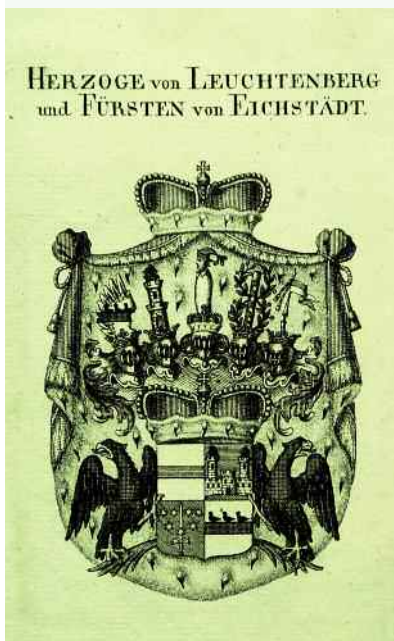
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Duke Maximilian of Leuchtenberg.
Painted portrait.

The Leuchtenberg Family Emblem.



MThe Mineralogical State Collection (Mineralogische Staatssammlung München) is a research institution that forms part of the Bavarian Natural History Collections. Its scientific tasks include the collection, storage and study of the minerals forming our planet earth and the other planets of our solar system. One focus is, of course, on Bavarian minerals. Other main research topics are meteorites (especially those of martian origin), CSH phases, phosphate minerals, archeometry and biomineralisation. The Mineralogical State Collection is also engaged in public education. This is done through the Museum "*Kingdom of Crystals*" (Museum Reich der Kristalle), located in Munich.

It presents a didactically structured exhibition and gives a highly aesthetic insight into the world of minerals, crystals and gemstones.

Special exhibitions show additional themes such as diamonds, stones from Mars, and jewels. Numerous lectures and guided tours through the museum, as well as the advanced training opportunities for teachers, pupils and students, are designed to make the visitors aware of the mineralogical treasures of our planet.

The Mineralogical State Collection contains many special collections. One of the most famous is the collection of Maximilian von Leuchtenberg.

Maximilian von Leuchtenberg was a descendant of the famous French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte.

Napoleon Bonaparte married Josephine de Beauharnais on 9 March 1796.

Josephine was the widow of Alexandre de Beauharnais who had been guillotined on 23 July 1794 during the French Reign of Terror. She already had two children, Eugène and Hortense, who later married Napoleon's brother Louis Bonaparte. Eugène became the stepson and, on 12 January 1806, adopted child (but not the heir to the imperial throne) of Napoleon. His stepfather made him Viceroy of Italy, Prince of Venice and Hereditary Grand Duke of Frankfurt.

In 1806, Eugène married Princess Augusta Amalia Ludovika Georgia of Bavaria (1788–1851), eldest daughter of Maximilian I, King of Bavaria.

During Napoleon's Russian campaign, Eugène commanded the Army of Italy with which he fought in the Battle of Borodino and the Battle of Maloyaroslavets. After Napoleon and then Joachim Murat had left the retreating army, Eugène took command of the remnants and led them back to Germany in 1813.

After the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1814 Eugène retired to Munich and from that time did not get involved with Napoleon and France any more. On 14 November 1817 his royal father-in-law made him Duke of Leuchtenberg (Leuchtenberg is a ruined Upper Palatinate castle in ruins, and the Leuchtenberg lineage had then ceased long ago) and gave him the administration of the Principality of Eichstätt on 14 November 1817. He did not move to Eichstätt himself but lived with his family in the Palais Leuchtenberg in Munich, which today houses the Bavarian State Ministry of Finance.

Though Eugène died young on 21 February 1921 the couple had seven children, of whom Prince Maximilian Joseph Eugène Auguste Napoléon de Beauharnais (1817–1852) was the youngest. After the untimely death of the elder son Prince Auguste Charles Eugène Napoléon de Beauharnais, 2nd Duke of Leuchtenberg, (1810–1835), Maximilian became the 3rd Duke of Leuchtenberg.



From the Duke Leuchtenberg's library:
Zapiski Mineralogicheskogo Obshchestva, 1842
(in German): backs of books, title page, one of
drawings.



All specimens and documents:
Museum Reich der Kristalle, Munich,
Germany – MRdK.

Photo: Michael Leybov.

Allanite ("Bagrationite"), 1.5 x 2.5 cm.
Original described by Koksharov.
Akhmatovskaya pit, Zlatoust, Ural, Russia.
MRdK No 6948.



On 2 July 1839 he married Grand Duchess Maria Nikolayevna of Russia in the chapel of the Winter Palace. She was the eldest daughter of Nicholas I of Russia and Charlotte of Prussia. His father-in-law Nicholas I granted to him the title "Imperial Highness" on 14 July 1839, and 1852 he received the title of "Prince Romanovsky"¹.

Being part of the family of the Russian Czar, Maximilian had to settle in St. Petersburg and much to his mother's regret never came back to Bavaria.

Maximilian was very interested in natural sciences and especially in geosciences. He was a very knowledgeable collector of fossils and minerals and he published several highly acknowledged articles, for instance on the fossils of the vicinity of Zarskoe Selo. He had a large collection of minerals and fossils, which was greatly enlarged by specimens presented to "His Imperial Highness". Additionally, he spent a lot of money on buying the best minerals found in Russia. That went so far that Russian mineralogists complained that Maximilian bulled the market by paying exorbitant prices so that the "poor" Russian scientists would not get new minerals for investigation.

Though Maximilian was not a studied scientist his work was highly praised and he was elected honorary member of the Russian Academy of Sciences². A nearly iron-free clinoclhor from the Shishimskie Mountains was named leuchtenbergite in honour of Maximilian von Leuchtenberg.

Maximilian sent back many of his minerals and fossils to the so-called "Eichstätter Naturalienkabinett" which had been founded by his father Eugène de Beauharnais. There is not much known of the contributions of Eugène, but the Naturalienkabinett benefited a lot from the collections of Maximilian's elder brother August, 2nd Duke of Leuchtenberg, who had accompanied his sister Amélie to Brazil to celebrate her marriage with the Brazilian Emperor Dom Pedro I. From there he brought many animals and plants, which he added to the collections. The Russian minerals in Eichstätt, all provided by Maximilian, at that time were said to be the largest and best collection of Russian minerals outside of Russia.

There is a proverb in Bavaria that says: "*The Leuchtenbergs die young*". Unfortunately Maximilian did not break ranks and in 1852 he died in the age of 35. After his death

¹ Another version states that, title of "Prince Romanovsky was received by Maximilian's children after Maximilian death – Editor notes.

² More information on scientific works of Maximilian von Leuchtenberg see on http://www.biografija.ru/show_bio.aspx?id=76055 - Editor notes



↑ **Alexandrite**, 4.5 x 5.0 cm. Ural Emerald Mines, Urals, Russia. MRdK No 7117.

↖ **Amethyst**, 10 x 21 cm. Yuzhakova pit, Alabashka pegmatite field, Urals, Russia. MRdK No 13208.

← **Topaz with morion**, 10 x 17 cm. Mursinka, Alabashka, Ural, Russia. MRdK No 17445.



↑ **Perovskite**, 4.5 x 6.0 cm. Zlatoust, Urals, Russia. MRdK No 17286.

↖ **Emerald cluster**, 15 x 47 cm. Ural Emerald Mines, Urals, Russia. MRdK No 18205.



← **Osmiridium** (IMA Discredited), 57.8 gram. Kyshtym, Urals, Russia. MRdK No 18322.



↑ **Silver**, 12 x 14 cm. Kongsberg, Norway. MRdK No 18245, present of Oscar I, King of Sweden.

↖ **Topaz with morion and albite**, 8 x 12 cm. Murzinka, Alabashka, Ural, Russia. MRdK No 3161.

← **Platinum** nugget, 4.5 x 6.5 cm, 624 g. Nizhnii Tagil, Ural, Russia. MRdK No 18241.

↙ **Amethyst** (fragment of crystal), 10.5 x 11.5 cm. Lipovka Mines, Ural, Russia. MRdK No 13223.

↓ **Topaz with morion and amazonite**, 7 x 10 cm. Ilmeny Mts, Miass, Ural, Russia. MRdK No 3160.

