



RUSSIAN MINERALS IN THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM, VIENNA

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Show case with **malachite** specimens of different deposits near Yekaterinburg in the Middle Urals. Some of them are in the collection before 1806.

Below: three original labels.

Photo: A. Schumacher



Natural History Museum, Vienna.

Photo: Natural History Museum, Vienna (NHMV)

The Natural History Museum in Vienna was designed by the architects Gottfried Semper and Carl Hasenauer and is among the most representative buildings of historicism in Austria. After ten years of construction the building was opened for the public in 1889.

Some objects of the Viennese mineral collection can ultimately be traced back to the art and curiosity chambers of the Renaissance time. They originate from the famous "Ambrasian Collection" of Archduke of Tyrol, Ferdinand II (1529–1595), parts of it were transferred to Vienna in the 19th century. Among others his collection included the best samples of stephanite and argentite from Joachimsthal in Bohemia, excellent cassiterite twins from Schlaggenwald in Bohemia, a large smoky quartz crystal from the Tyrolean Zillertal and a large rock crystal from the Italian Ahrntal, as well as several gold nuggets and large native silver specimens („feather-ore“) from Potosi in Bolivia. Best known of all is the famous „Emerald-Handstein“, an assemblage of emerald crystals from different Colombian occurrences. They are represents of the earliest collecting of curious natural objects in Middle Europe.

Further naturals were already kept in the miscellany of the Court Library of Vienna, a collection of rarities. Among them was the "Vienna Imperial Opal", an precious opal found in 1672 in Dubnik (former Czerwenitz) in Slovakia, with 594 grams, till now the biggest from an European occurrence.

