

SCOTLAND AND RUSSIA – HISTORICAL AND MINERALOGICAL CONNECTIONS

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Figure 1. Flags of Scotland and Russia.

Specimens:
National Museums Scotland (NMS.).

Photo: Peter Davidson.

While many countries measure their exports in terms of motor cars, electronic equipment or oil, Scotland's most precious gift to the World was people. It is impossible to say just how many Scots left the homeland to go overseas, but it is estimated that between 35 and 40 million people around the World claim to be descended from Scots. We might expect a strong link between Scotland and countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, but European Countries have had their share of Scots immigrants, moving across Europe for centuries as merchants, doctors, engineers and soldiers. Many went to France, Poland, Italy, Germany, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands. But a strong historical bond also exists between Scotland and Russia.

The first record of Scottish soldiers fighting in the area of modern day Russia date back to 1356 when the brothers Norman and Walter Leslie fought with the Teutonic Knights in ancient Prussia and Lithuania. The first Scot to travel to Muscovy was an ambassador sent by King of Denmark to Tsar Ivan III (1462–1505). During the reign of Tsar Ivan IV (the Terrible) contacts between Scotland and Russia continue to grow (Dukes, 1987). General Patrick Gordon became principal advisor to Peter I (the Great). At that time, no fewer than fifteen Russian generals could claim to be of Scottish origin. Two of them became Field Marshals. In the Napoleonic era Prince Mikhail Barclay de Tolly was commander-in-chief of all Russian forces.

Scots also became prominent in the Imperial Navy. Perhaps the most famous was Samuel Grieg, an officer in the Royal Navy, he was invited to Russia along with other naval officers to try and improve the standard of operations in the Russian Navy of Catherine the Second. He quickly distinguished himself and became an admiral. He commanded the Russian fleet in a successful campaign against Sweden. His son and grandson both became distinguished admirals in the Imperial Navy (Gross, 1987).

Figure 2. Russia's first steamship "Elizaveta".

Figure 3. Baltic Shipyards, St. Petersburg.



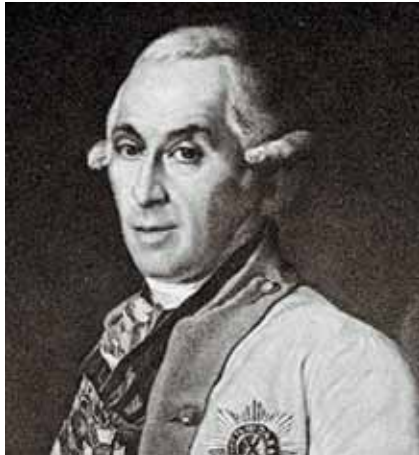


Figure 4. Admiral Samuel Greig.



Figure 5. Sir James Wylie.



Figure 6. Robert Burns.

Scottish entrepreneurs and engineers, with their strong technological traditions, also had ample chances to shine. Charles Gascoigne and Charles Baird established munitions factories at Petrozavodsk in Karelia and at Kronstadt near St. Petersburg, and later in St.-Petersburg where Russia's first steamship, the *Elizaveta* was developed in 1815. In 1856 Murdoch Macpherson founded the giant Baltic Works and Shipyard, still operating today under the name Baltiysky Zavod at the mouth of the Neva River at St Petersburg (Duncan, Online).

In the area of academia and science, there were also many contacts between Scotland and Russia. From the early eighteenth century, men like James Daniel Bruce and Robert Erskine, who came to Russia during the reign of Peter the Great, bequeathed their libraries and collections to the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences. Bruce, who was known as the “most enlightened man in Russia”, was a scholar and soldier of good reputation who also established the first observatory in Russia in about 1699. Erskine, a doctor by training, improved a system of health care and medical research. He is also sometimes known as the “Pioneer of Russian Natural History” (Appleby, 2001). Scots doctors made an extraordinary contribution, directing Russian medical bodies, publishing essays and practising modern methods of treatment. Probably the most eminent of them was James Wylie, who became president of the Medico-Chirurgical Academy (Novik *et al.*, 1996) and left his fortune to the people of Russia to build a hospital, the Mikhailovskii Clinical Hospital, in St Petersburg which still exists. In the field of geology, the Scottish geologist Roderick Murchison travelled extensively in Russia and named the geological period the Permian after the city of Perm in the Ural Mountains (Novik *et al.*, 1996). In

Figure 7. **Crocoite**. 5.5 x 10 cm. Berezovskiy Mine, Ekaterinburg, Ural. NMS.G.1970.5.90.

Figure 8. **Malachite**. 6 x 6 cm. Nizhnii Tagil, Ural. NMS.G.2011.28.4.



Figure 9. **Malachite**. 17 x 17.4 cm.
Urals (in original label mentioned Siberia).
Purchased in 1865 r. NMS.G.1865.67.1.



the arts, the greatest connection is that of the poet Robert Burns. Scotland's national "Bard" was widely revered in Russia, especially during the Soviet era. The great Russian romantic poet and writer, Mikhail Lermontov, was descended from Scottish settlers originally from the county of Fife.

Russian Minerals in the Collections of the National Museums Scotland

The database of mineralogical collection of the National Museums Scotland contains 500 known samples of Russian minerals. There are possibly about 250–300 other specimens which are not yet recorded. The oldest recorded acquisition of Russian minerals is dated to 1818–19 when a number of Beryl specimens were purchased from a Mr. Sanderson. The oldest material which can be identified in the collection is malachite which was purchased from a Mr. George Peterson (or Paterson) of St.-Petersburg in 1865.

In 1867, the Exposition Universelle or World Fair was held in Paris. Russia was given a special status as guest of honour and they had one of the largest contributions at the show. After the show, as happened at the Great Exhibition in London, much of the material was sold by the Russian Commission to museums and we benefited by obtaining three specimens; a jadeite tray, an obsidian egg and another piece of obsidian both from Georgia. Another very famous name to appear in the register of the muse-



Figure 10. **Platinum** nugget. 6.5 x 5 cm.
Urals (in original label mentioned Siberia).
NMS.G.1921.5.10.



Figure 11. **Andradite** (specimens up to 2 x 3 cm). Urals (in original label mentioned Siberia). NMS.G.1882.25.9.



Figure 12. **Vesuvianite**. 3 x 4.5 cm. Akhmatovskaya Pit, Zlatoust, Ural. NMS.G.1882.46.13.

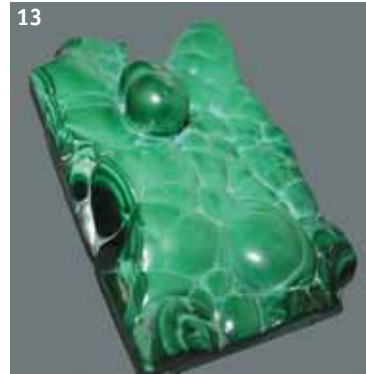


Figure 13. **Malachite**. 9 x 14 cm. Unknown locality. NMS.G.2011.28.12.

Figure 14. **Topaz**. 5 x 15 cm. Adun-Cholon, Transbaikalia. NMS.G.1917.5.245.



um is that of the famous St.-Petersburg art dealers Hoessrich and Woerffel. In 1878, they supplied a number of specimens, mostly carved objects from the Ural Mountains. Among these were a jasper dish, a dish made from aventurine and a labradorite table top. During the later years of the 19th Century, collections of minerals and gems continued to be purchased from famous mineral dealers such as S. Henson of London, James R. Gregory also of London and AA Krantz of Berlin and Bonn.

As we move into the Twentieth Century, a number of old museum specimens were uncovered and registered. Among these are four platinum specimens of interest: one nugget weighing 350 g, two coins with the head of Czar Nicolas I and an ingot weighing 96 g. There is no record of where these were obtained, but they were probably pre-1854. As the Twentieth Century progressed, the museum continued to add to its collections by purchasing from mineral dealers, mainly from the United States, but also after 1991 from Russian dealers as well.

In 2011, the museum made a contribution to the Denver International Mineral Show by providing two cases of Russian Minerals from our collection. With the kind help of Dr. Maria Alferova of the Fersman Museum in Moscow a selection of 38 specimens were made which show something of the history and extent of the collection.

Conclusion

This article is only a very brief look at the long history of Russian-Scottish relations and at the collection of Russian minerals in the collections of the National Museums Scotland. I would like to thank my colleague here in Scotland, Mr. Brian Jackson for his unstinting support. I would also like to thank Dr. Maria Alferova of the Fersman Museum in Moscow for her vital contribution to the exhibition in Denver and also Ludmila Cheshko who helped to keep me focussed on this task with good nature and a winning smile.

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