

All the specimens are from the Dashkesan deposit, Azerbaijan.

Specimens and photos
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1. My Favorite Mineral Specimens from Dashkesan

There likely has never been any mineral collector in Russia in the 1960-80ties who never visited the Dashkesan iron ore deposit in Azerbaijan. Geological students also had their training courses there every year. The deposit was easy to access: only a two or three hour flight from Moscow to Kirovabad (formerly and now again Gyandzha), one hour more by bus to Dashkesan, and here you are. You debus and start ascending to the hotel. Someone shouts out to you: Where are you going? This makes you to bristle mentally — but only if you are here for the first time. In reality, the bypasser's question is no more than the local version of "can I help you?" — show you the way, carry your knapsack. The local people are amiable but their Russian is far from perfect. You were even able, this very day, to drop into the mine office and ask permission to visit the quarries. The local administration regarded the likes of us with a great deal of tolerance and understanding, which was expected, of course, given our good behavior anyway.

I used to visit this remarkable locality every year during the period from 1975 to 1986, usually after Lukhumi or Madneouli (both in Georgia), coming to Gyandzha with a night train from Tbilissi. As usual each trip to Dashkesan provided good finds. At the very first visit, when the mine geologists started showing us the mine, I managed to pick up a good specimen of half-hand sized garnet just at the quarry entrance.

The Dashkesan **garnets** deserve special words. For over the 40 years of my collecting, I have seen nothing comparable in beauty with the garnets from the Northeastern Area. In their composition, they were **andradites** with some admixed aluminum, some more, some less. They looked like dark hessonite: crystals up to 3 cm of magnificent dark orange color, with strong luster and elegant thin striations on

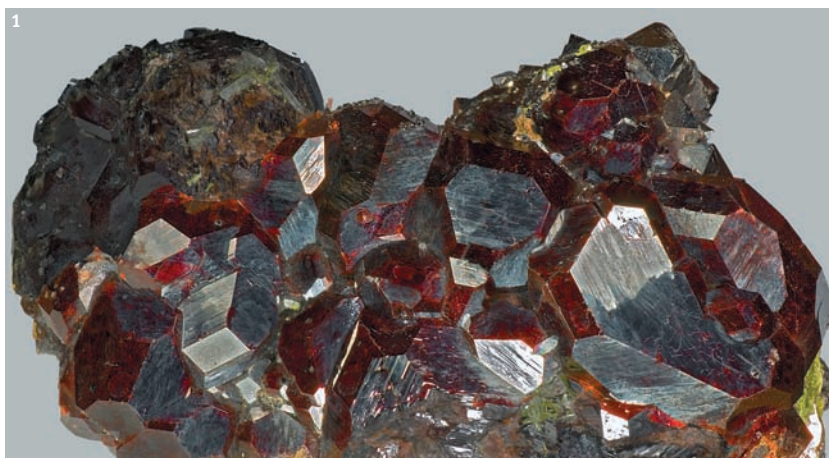


Figure 1. Crystals of **andradite**
(up to 2.8 cm). Northeastern Area.

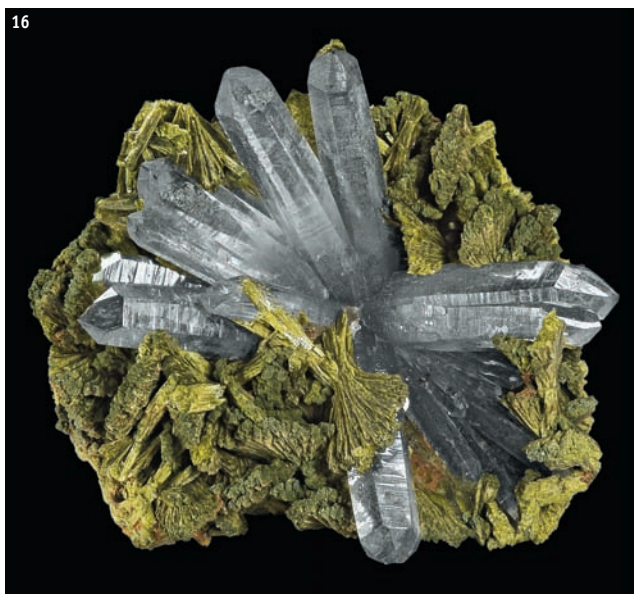


Figure 16. Divergent crystal of **quartz** (3.4 cm). Northwestern Area.

Figure 17. Divergent crystal of **quartz** (9.8 cm). Northwestern Area.



Figure 18. Crystal of **calcite**, 5.5 cm. Northwestern Area.

Figure 19. **Calcite** (6 cm). Northwestern Area.



Figure 20. Twin of **calcite** (8.3 cm). Northeastern Area.

Figure 21. Twin of **calcite** (3.7 cm). Northeastern Area.