

**Boris Z. Kantor,**

Russian Mineralogical Society

boris\_kantor@mail.ru

„Please do not shoot the pianist.  
He is doing his best“.

Oscar Wilde

**Specimens and photos:**  
**Boris Z. Kantor**  
**if other is not specified**

Minerals have been collected for millennia, just about since the Stone Age<sup>1</sup>. But what makes people collect minerals? I have been seeking a response to this important question for a long time. Some collectors told me “*I like collecting minerals*,” while others referred to their interest in the mineral world and the thirst for knowledge of minerals. However, why quench one's thirst for knowledge through such an intricate and laborious way as collecting minerals? It's much simpler to read the “*Mineralogical Almanac*” and books on minerals or to attend lectures on mineralogy. Besides, it's less expensive and leads to the goal more directly. As for satisfying one's interest in the mineral world nothing is better than visiting a mineralogical museum...

But anyway, why does anyone collect something? The more I think of this, the more collecting seems to be a goal in itself – the historical record, i.e. the need to preserve rare, unusual, disappearing objects, the evidence of events, place and time, is Homo sapiens's specific and unherent nature, like mentality. If so, “*I like collecting minerals*” is an appropriate reply, and there is nothing to add to it.

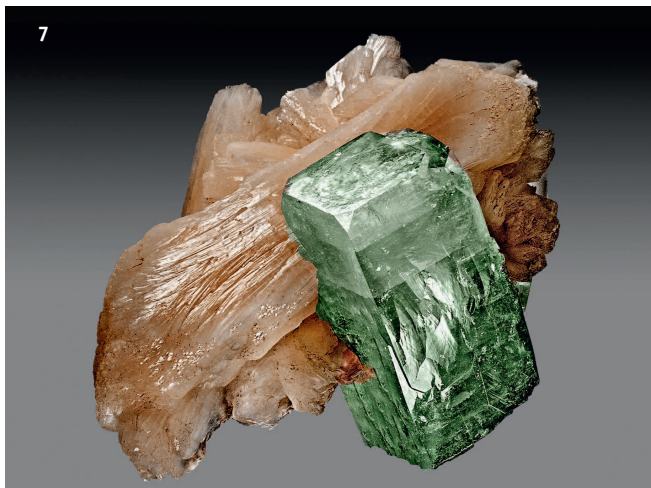
There are also other considerations. Why does everyone collect minerals in one's own special way? How to do this correctly? There is plenty to discuss. In 2008–2009 Rock H. Currier published in the “*Mineralogical Record*” a great study of the collecting of minerals<sup>2</sup>; Igor V. Pekov and Nikita V. Chukanov, reputable scientists who discovered a lot of new species and amassed a wide experience in collecting minerals, discussed the same subject recently in the “*Mineralogical Almanac*”<sup>3</sup>. Having gotten acquainted with these important works, I realized that I have my own private opinion of all this. To begin with, the figure of speech “*scientific mineralogical collecting*” seems to me incorrect. Not because the collecting cannot be scientific but just the contrary, it can only be scientific.

I picked up my very first specimens in the autumn of 1967, and in a short time a happy occasion allowed me to get acquainted with Viktor Ivanovich Stepanov (1924–1988), a wise man, the highest authority both in professional mineralogy and collecting, and a naturalist in his own mind. We became friends, and he was a mineralogical guru for me (and many others). V.I. had much influence upon the collectors' movement and was an ardent propagandist of collecting “*by science*”. He kept a sharp watch on collecting development and was in contact with many amateurs, thus being closely familiar with their collections. And he was lavish in his estimations of which of them was a “*scientific*” collector and which was not. So “*scientific collecting*” has come to stay in our lexicon possibly just because of his initiation.

<sup>1</sup> Pober S.E. (1991) From humble cave, to noble cabinet. Matrix, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Currier Rock, About mineral collecting. Reprinted from The Mineralogical Record, 2008–2009

<sup>3</sup> Pekov I.V. and Chukanov N.V. (2016) Scientific mineralogical collections: past, present and future. Mineralogical Almanac, vol. 21, iss. 1, pp. 55–75.



7. **Apophyllite** crystal, prismatic-pinacoidal habit, with **stilbite**. 9 cm. Nasik, Maharashtra, India.

8. **Apophyllite** crystal, long prismatic habit, with stilbite. 4 cm. Jalgaon, Maharashtra, India.

9. **Apophyllite** bowtie split crystal. 4.5 cm. Rahuri, Maharashtra, India.

10. **Apophyllite** crystal, tabular habit. 7 cm. Nasik, Maharashtra, India.

11. **Apophyllite** crystal, pseudocubic habit. 2.5 cm. Nasik, Maharashtra, India.

