

In memoriam: Alexander Kanonerov



Untimely left us Alexander Kanonerov (b. February 27, 1955, d. September 27, 2003), an outstanding Uralian amateur mineralogist, a talented researcher of the regional natural history, one of the top Russian collectors, and an active member of the All-Russia Mineralogical Society. He lived in Nizhny Taghil and was a staff member of the Uralian Mining Preserve-Museum. Anybody who encountered this bright person would not forget his sparkling energy and unusual enthusiasm he emanated in every matter he took up. It was Alexander Kanonerov who a decade ago initiated detailed mineralogical studies of the Murzinka pegmatite fields famous for their gems and ore deposits of the Nizhny Taghil surroundings; he was tireless in inspiring this work and was its immediate part. During the last eight years he prepared more than 20 papers, both solely and as a co-author. These are detailed mineralogical descriptions of the Nizhny Taghil area, monographs on the Alabashka pegmatite field, one of the best-known mineralogical objects of the Urals. The most significant of these publications are *Mineralogy of the Kazennitsa pegmatite vein, Middle Urals* (Popov *et al.*, 1996), *Murzinka gem mines — A mineralogical guide and cadastre* (Kanonerov and Chudinova, 1998), *Cr-bearing kassite from Saranovskoe deposit: first find in the Urals* (Popova *et al.*, 1998), *Minerals of the Nizhny Taghil area* (Ka-

nonerov, 1999), *Mineralogy of granite pegmatite: the Alabashka field of the Uralian Gem Belt* (Popova *et al.*, 1999), *Murzinka: Alabashka Pegmatite Field* (Popova, Popov, Kanonerov, 2002) and the Russian version of the latter, *Abandoned Ag-Pb mines at the Taghil River* (Kanonerov, Radostev, 2002), *Be-bearing cordierite from desilicated Lipovka pegmatites, Middle Urals, and specialties of its crystalline structure* (Pekov *et al.*, 2003), *New data on mineralogy of the Gorno-Anatolsky silver mine, Middle Urals* (Popov, Kanonerov, 2003), and *Massive sulfide copper deposits of the Taghil area: a chronicle of discoveries (1640–1968)* (Kanonerov, 2003).

He was a person of detailed knowledge of mineralogy and mining of the region; ever thirsty for new data, he not just managed to extract these from archives and old publications, but pinpointed abandoned mine workings to make excavation and cleaning with his own hands dreaming of the time when these will become the outdoor museum items.

Since his childhood Alexander Kanonerov has been interested in minerals, and his collection comprises ten thousand samples and more. Along with its systematic part, it comprises complete and variegated selections on individual local objects of the Middle and South Urals, these real masterpieces of a high professional. Formally, a geological college limited his edu-

cation; nevertheless, he was a member of the Uralian Academy of Mineralogy. Alexander was a proved connoisseur of practical mineralogy. AS a staff member of the Mining museum, he prepared from his personal collection a vast mineralogical exhibition, as well as selections on history of mineralogical studies and mining in the Nizhny Taghil area. Thousands (!) of samples he collected joined the museum collections over the whole Russia. Alexander's generosity matched his energy. Nobody recalls a case when an interested visitor left his home with no gift. He was an active and unselfish volunteer in organization of the student training courses, mineralogical excursions, visits to hardly accessible mines; weeks and weeks of his unpaid time were spent for that. Alexander thoroughly prepared rich mineral sample selections for further thematic studies of mineralogical problems to be carried out by narrow academic specialists.

He was a unique in fieldwork with his huge experience and deeply developed intuition. Alexander amazed his colleagues by his ability to unmistakably pinpoint old pits, tiny rock exposures, and hardly recognizable mounds of mine dumps abandoned a century and a half ago, be it located in a dense forest or in a town outskirts. He was a real mineral hound: minerals used to come to him in localities where our great-granddads lost hope to find them. His field work geography during the 1970's — 1980's is quite impressive: hundreds of objects over the Soviet Union, from Carpathians and Kola Peninsula to Tien Shan and Russian Far East. Naturally, he considered Middle Urals, his home place, as a key region, so during the

last decade he focused his efforts here. Along with Nizhny Taghil and Murzinka, he was highly interested in Lipovka, Potanya Hills, Berezovskoe, and a series of other Middle Ural mineralogical localities. He knew no season breaks in his field work, and samples he collected had been invariably interesting.

A classical old hand of a Uralian digger peacefully co-existed in his personality with a seeking researcher and collector; a Uralian dialect word *khitnic*, what can be invariably imperfectly mirrored in English as mineral predator, adds some color to Alexander's portrait. This component of his personality made him an unforgettable companion: with his outstanding appearance, juicy humor, powerful efficiency, and deep knowledge of Uralian nature, history, and traditions, Alexander effortlessly was becoming a leader in any relevant discussion. Along with it, he was always keen to information provided by his counterparts, asking for new publications and studying these meticulously. We know not of other amateur mineralogist in Russia comparable to Alexander by his sparkling energy and results achieved during the course of a period so short. And how vast were his plans for future! Alexander's heart has ever been at the heart of his matter, and once it failed...

Visible memory about this outstanding person remains in his papers and books, in collections and exhibitions he prepared, and, certainly, in mineral kanoneroite, the only natural triphosphate, which Alexander found in the Alabashka pegmatite field he loved so dearly.

Igor V. Pekov, Valentina I. Popova,