

# Virtual Museum of the History of Mineralogy

Newsletter 2010/1 (April 2010)

<http://www.mineralogy.be>

We previously announced that we were preparing the addition of more books to the collection of the Museum in order to offer an overview of the most important and representative works in the fields of mineralogy and crystallography. Since our newsletter of December 2009, we have introduced detailed descriptions and pictures of not less than 57 books. It seems worth focusing attention on some of them:

- In the "[Grundriss der Mineralogie](#)" (1822) translated in "Treatise on Mineralogy" (1825), Mohs extends to six the four crystal systems previously proposed by Weiss and he introduced the explicit mention of the crystal system of each mineral in its description.
- W. H. Miller's important publication "[A Treatise on Crystallography](#)" (1839) as well as the "[Traité de Cristallographie](#)" (1842) which is the French translation by Senarmont. In this work Miller presents his well known indexing system.
- The first stereoscopic representations of crystals may be found in Martius-Matzdorff's book "[Die Elemente der Krystallographie mit stereoskopischer Darstellung der Krystallformen](#)" (1871); surprisingly, this book was overlooked by C.P. Schuh in his extensive bibliography.
- In the rare Berzelius's book "[Försök, att genom Användanted..](#)" (1814) the author applies his electrochemical theory to the mineral classification; our book presents an autograph dedication by J.J. Berzelius.
- The two nice editions of Patrin's "[Histoire Naturelle des Minéraux](#)" 1801 and 1803 (contents identical to the original edition) contain 40 hand colored plates; many original observations made by the author as a result of his extensive travels in Russia are presented.
- A copy of Dezaillier d'Argenville's "[L'Histoire Naturelle éclaircie...](#)" (1742) offers the (unique?) originality of a delicate hand coloring of the plates.
- "[The Book of the Pearl](#)" by G.F. Kunz (1908) contains an interesting autograph dedication of the author to Miss Belle da Costa Greene, the personal librarian to J. P. Morgan and later the first director of the Pierpont Morgan Library.
- The first edition (1837) of Dana's "[A System of Mineralogy](#)" also deserves a mention as "one of the most significant contributions to American mineralogy and the science as a whole...[and]...the first entry into an extraordinary publishing history" (C.P. Schuh).

The group "[Oryctics](#)" continues to be successful: 149 messages were exchanged between members during the last year. Questions, satisfying answers and interesting discussions mainly concerned antique books (comparison, colored plates, ex-libris, ...), instruments and accessories, instrument makers, crystal models, identification of portraits of mineralogists, origin of mineral labels, etc. Many pictures were posted to illustrate questions like those on portraits and labels; they constitute an interesting source of documentation for the group members.

It is also gratifying for us to observe that the "[museum shop](#)" was recently enriched by offers of some renowned professional booksellers proposing rare antique books. Let us remember that we always welcome advertisements for the museum shop and that this service is entirely free; it gives you the possibility to sell and/or to acquire collectibles related to the history of mineralogy.

Claude Hootelé, Paul Tambuyser  
[info@mineralogy.be](mailto:info@mineralogy.be)

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