

Virtual Museum of the History of Mineralogy

Newsletter 2010/2 (December 2010)

<http://www.mineralogy.be>

Since our previous newsletter (April 2010) the collection of the Virtual Museum continued growing in the different fields. We are very satisfied to see the persisting success of our site and the interest for all our sections, with a higher number of visitors interested in goniometers, microscopes and crystal models.

As far as instruments are concerned, we recently added seven goniometers and one microscope to the collection.

The newly introduced goniometers include two horizontal circle instruments, three vertical circle types as well as two contact goniometers:

- in the first category, the most interesting instrument is a [Babinet goniometer](#) the circle of which can be tilted from horizontal to vertical orientation; the signature by Lerebours et Secretan dates it not later than 1855. The other instrument is a [Fuess Model IVa](#) reflecting goniometer
- the three newly introduced vertical circle goniometers are of the Wollaston type with their mirror attachments and may be dated from the 19th century. One of them bears the signature of [Secretan](#) (Paris); the other two are not signed
- in the contact goniometer category, we added two 19th century instruments coming in their elegant vividly colored plush-lined leather covered cases. One of them comes with fixed limbs and bears the signature of [Elliott Bros](#) (London) while the other one with [detachable limbs](#), is unsigned.

The newly introduced [polarizing microscope](#) is signed by Nacet (Paris). It is a simplified version of the "[grand modèle](#)" petrographic microscope for which the constructor introduced a mechanical coupling between the objective and the stage that eliminates the necessity for optical centering.

In the crystal models collection we recently included an interesting [wooden model](#) illustrating Haüy's laws of decrement and fitting exactly the illustration in the atlas of Haüy's "[Traité De Minéralogie](#)" (1801).

In our site statistics we observe that information about crystal models is

always in demand. Unfortunately there is quite a discrepancy between the high variety of existing crystallographic model types and the insufficient and dispersed documentation. We would very much like our museum to become a richer source of information in this field and we invite collectors to contribute with pictures and descriptions of their models.

In the field of books, 22 additions were made to our previous list; it seems worth focusing attention on some of them:

- the rare "[Études Cristallographiques](#)" (1866) presents a series of the most important monographs of Auguste Bravais
- "[Der Diamant](#)" of A. von Fersmann and V. Goldschmidt (1911) includes a remarkable atlas with shaded crystal drawings made from actual stones
- the "[Tableau Méthodique Des Espèces Minérales](#)" (1806-13) was written by J. Lucas who supported Haüy's recently published theories and offers a well-known portrait of Haüy measuring a calcite cleavage rhombohedron with a contact goniometer
- three books written by A. Hamlin "[The Tourmaline](#)" (1873), "[Leisure Hours Among The Gems](#)" (1884) and "[The History Of Mount Mica](#)" (1895) well-known for their chromolithographic plates
- two editions of Wilhelm's "[Unterhaltungen aus der Naturgeschichte](#)" (1825-28 and 1834) with their quaint and charming hand-colored plates, several of which being copied from other mineralogy books (e.g. Schmedel's "[Fossilium Metalla](#)")
- another book of interest, especially for its plates with nice figures of quartz crystals, is that of G. Storr "[Alpenreise vom Jahre 1781](#)".

We hope you enjoy!

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