

# Virtual Museum of the History of Mineralogy

Newsletter 2009/2 (December 2009)

<http://www.mineralogy.be>

Since our previous newsletter (July 2009), the collection of the Virtual Museum increased in various fields. Detailed descriptions and pictures of a number of antiquarian mineralogy/crystallography books were added, but the main additions will be found in the crystallographic goniometers category.

According to the website statistics it appears that the goniometers category as well as subjects related to crystal models and microscopes are the most frequently consulted parts of our site. The collector's interest in goniometers is basically related to their historical importance in the development of crystallography as a science. It is also caused by the attractive appearance of these instruments, the variety of models and our admiration for the ingeniousness of their designers and the skill of their makers. We recently added not less than nine of these rare instruments to our virtual museum which now presents a large reference collection of 67 goniometers.

The newly introduced instruments include 3 contact goniometers, 3 vertical circle goniometers, 1 two circle goniometer, 1 two circle contact goniometer and 1 ocular goniometer.

Among the contact goniometers, the most noticeable one is signed "[G. Huck in Wien](#)" and comes with its elegant original chamois-leather case; Gregor Huck was an instrument builder who was active in Vienna around 1820.

All three newly introduced vertical circle instruments belong to the Wollaston type; two early goniometers are signed respectively by [Cary](#) (London) and by [Carlo Grindel](#) (from the Brera astronomical observatory in Milano); the third instrument dates from the late 19th century and bears the signature of the firm [Jules Duboscq & Ph. Pellin](#) (Paris). The instrument signed Cary belongs to the earliest examples of vertical circle goniometers.

The newly introduced [two circle contact instrument](#) is the most recent example in our series of Stoe goniometers. We also scanned the complete contents of a rare [Stoe catalogue](#), with a price list dated march 1929; the reference to it may be found on our introductory page on goniometers.

In the crystal models collection, we included a very nice set of 18 rotatable wooden models of [twinned feldspar crystals](#). On the occasion of his inauguration in 1834, Gustaf Eduard Kayser presented and dedicated this set to the German crystallographer Christian Samuel Weiss (1780-1856), then professor at the University of Berlin.

A large [projector polariscope](#) signed "F. Pellin, Paris" (a type of instrument initially made by Duboscq) and its wooden box with numerous accessories is described in the appropriate section. Félix Pellin worked with his father Philippe (actually Philibert) Pellin and took over the company after his death in 1923. This superb instrument was mainly used for demonstration purposes.

An attractive and interesting set of [indicators for specific gravity measurement](#) of small mineral fragments by means of heavy liquids (after V. Goldschmidt) is also added to our pages on areometers and specific gravity balances.

The group "[Oryctics](#)", initiated in September 2008, is a forum for questions, answers and discussions between its members. Topics include all subjects -or objects- related to the history of mineralogy. It continues to be successful.

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