

Virtual Museum of the History of Mineralogy

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<http://www.mineralogy.eu>

In this newsletter we focus on one aspect of the virtual museum: *crystal models*.

Since the late 18th century, beginning with Romé de l'Isle and Haüy, craftsmen produced crystal models in a variety of materials. Later these were produced by firms that sold them to scholars, mineral collectors, universities and institutes (see our [introduction](#) to early crystal models). This led to an enormous amount of models ranging from isolated pieces and small sets to large collections of several hundreds of crystals.

Over the years, many of these sets were frequently modified (by adding, removing or mixing) by users, sometimes with renumbering of the models, according to the specific needs of the successive owners. The result is that the collector or curator frequently encounters problems when trying to identify crystal model sets.

As pointed out earlier, we would like our museum to also become a reference source of information on crystal models and recent questions and discussions in the [Oryctics](#) group urged us to tackle this problem.

Thanks to the courtesy of Mrs. Ursula Müller-Krantz (director of [Dr. F. Krantz, Rheinisches Mineralien-Kontor](#) GmbH & Co. KG) and to her interest in our project we are presently able to offer detailed lists of the sets of crystal models that Krantz produced over the years. This documentation is of great value as this firm supplied most of the models made of pear wood or walnut.

In a first stage, we are scanning old Krantz catalogues to present complete descriptive lists of their production of wooden models during the 20th century. Many scans are already available on our "[Krantz Wooden Crystal Models](#)" page and we foresee that information on their 19th century production will soon be available as well. At a later stage, we will include scanned lists of other models (glass, cardboard, etc.) offered by the same firm.

In addition to this current project, we would like to draw your attention to one of the new entries in the virtual collection: a wonderful set of [20 colored glass crystal models](#) in its original case probably from Czechoslovakia from the collection of Bill Larson of Pala International. The set is also described in the [Palagem Newsletter](#) (November 2012) where it is suggested that it may be attributed to [Václav \(Wenzel\) Frič](#), who opened a natural history company in Prague in 1862.

We wish you Happy Holidays!

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