

Virtual Museum of the History of Mineralogy

Newsletter 2023/2 (december 2023)

<https://www.mineralogy.eu>

In the present newsletter we report on the recent developments of our Virtual Museum. New items have been added in the three sections: archive, books and microscopes.

Archive

Many old mineral names are scattered in German literature.

One of us (P.T.) provided a useful overview of the main old typical German mineral names, their derivatives and their origins (as far as can yet be determined) with the corresponding names used for them in English. The old German names of the chemical elements are also indicated.

All those names are still used today and knowledge of this terminology is necessary when consulting older German mineralogy books. Useful references are presented at the end of the tables.

Books

- Goldschmidt's encyclopedic and rare work 'Atlas der Krystallformen' (1913-1923) is undoubtedly the most important in the recent additions to our Virtual Museum; it consists of two parts.
The first volume comprises 1,578 pages of plates (spread over 9 volumes) that excellently reproduce more than 23,000 drawings of the crystal morphology of 669 minerals.
The text, on the other hand (also in 9 volumes arranged alphabetically by mineral name) lists the crystallographic characteristics of the minerals and gives the locations and reference sources for each figure depicted in the first part. This book is "the keystone of the author's crystallographic work" (Schuh).
- Ansted's 'In Search of Minerals' was published by the Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge. Half of the book is about gemstones and ornamental stones "with emphasis on the cultural, rather than scientific aspects" (Sinkankas). The content is interesting and the information provided is generally correct and accurate; verses from Marbod's poem on gemstones are quoted.
- Since its first edition, Comstock's book 'An Introduction to Mineralogy' has been a very popular text devoted to an introduction to mineral science followed by a descriptive section covering all aspects of minerals. After the third edition (1836), Comstock updated the book (adding descriptions of minerals and new localities), which was issued again and again, and after the eleventh edition the publisher replaced the words "Third edition, improved" with an edition note (Schuh).
- The pocket book 'Mineralogie', written by R. Brauns, is a nice and popular introductory book to mineralogy. It contains general information on the morphology of minerals, their physical and chemical properties and descriptions of the most common species.
- Rutley's 'Mineralogy' is a popular illustrated textbook from Murby's 'Science And Art Department' series of textbooks. Numerous and valuable notes, additions, and corrections have been made, and their authors have been thanked by Rutley from the second edition onwards.

Microscope

Another Leitz polarizing microscope (lacquered brass) with its original wooden box has been added to the collection. The instrument was made around 1908 and comes with some accessories, including 5 eyepieces, 5 objectives, 3 wave plates and an ocular goniometer.

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