

■ DRUZA vs. DRUSE

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**Photos and specimens:
Boris Z. Kantor,
except for the Photo 6**

God, having gotten angry with people for their self-will, confused words and names so “that they may not understand one another’s speech” (Genesis 11:7). Some hint of this *Old Testament* dilemma is apparent in the use of the term “druza”.

In old German, “druse” means “brush”. Early miners’ used the name to describe cavities in rocks and veins where the walls were covered with “brushes” of mineral crystals. From miner folklore, the term “druse” migrated to the western mineralogical lexicon, meaning, as before, a cavity with crystals on its walls; something akin to a geode or vug.

In Russia, use of the word was different, and focused on the crystal aggregate rather than the cavity in which the aggregate formed; thus the original sense of “druse” was recovered. This usage was set not by a mineralogist but by a philologist, Vladimir Ivanovich Dahl (1801–1872). He wrote in his *Explanatory Dictionary of the Living Great Russian Language*: “**DRUZA** – some crystals densely overgrown upon the same stone, piled in a heap of crystals, a brush”, see Photo 1.

It is interesting to note that V. I Dahl was not just an etymologist. He was naturalist, doctor, and the corresponding member of the Petersburg Academy of Sciences to its physico-mathematical section. Everything is available in the cited definition that should be said of mineral aggregates in general and of *druza* in particular: that this is an assemblage or aggregate of intergrown (word-for-word, “densely overgrown”) min-

Photo 1. **Vanadinite** druza. Crystal size up to 9 mm. Mibladen, Morocco

Photo 2. **Quartz** druza, 9 cm high. Pelengichei River, Nether Polar Urals, Russia

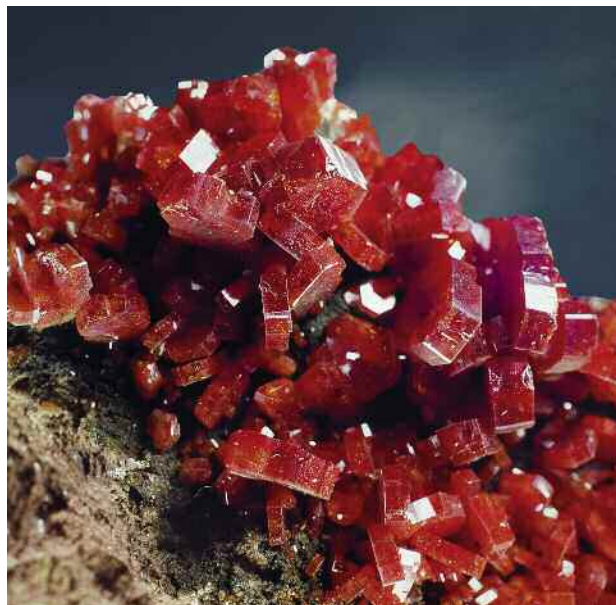




Photo 17. Cr-bearing **Amesite**, columnar aggregate 5 cm wide. Sarany, Urals, Russia



Photo 18. **Stibnite**, radiaxial aggregate 6 cm wide. Baiut, Romania

terminological accentuation of *druza* is avoided by hefty profs. E.g., A.G. Zhabin considers *druza* not more than the initial phase of a columnar aggregate formation (Zhabin, 1979).

Anyway, as Kozma Prutkov² used to say, “while regarding a tall person or a tall subject, hold your cap by its visor”. The above professional approach is seen too formal by the eyes of a collector. Among the preserved and carefully stored mineral monuments of nature, just *druzes*, not columnar aggregates, hold specific places and vividly demonstrate the collective growth of mineral individuals. Both dynamism and the want of finish, readiness for further development are inspired by a *druza*. Each *druza* is a “family” with its every member’s peculiar features. All this in one creates both informatory capacity of *druzas* and their particular loveliness.

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²⁾ See Wikipedia