

HISTORY OF THE MINERAL COLLECTION AT THE GERMAN FEDERAL GEOLOGICAL SURVEY (BGR)

Angela Ehling, Maria Sitnikova, Stephan Kaufhold,
Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources, Berlin–Hannover, Germany,
Angela.Ehling@bgr.de
Jan Hartmann, Free University of Berlin

Mineral photos:
Jens Rätz, BGR, Berlin.

Photos 12, 13:
BGR archive.

The first interest in collecting minerals in Berlin was connected with decorative aspects. Beautiful crystals had been used for the decoration of grottos in the royal parks in Berlin, Potsdam and Rheinsberg since the middle of the 18th century. Friedrich II used them for the decoration of the “Grottensaal” in the New Palace of Sanssouci Park in 1768 (Fig. 1).

Beautiful minerals and stones were representative royal gifts in those times and built the stock for the first mineral collections.



1 (a,b). Grottensaal, New Palace, Sanssouci Park, Potsdam.
(a) general view. R. 177. SPSG.
Photo: Roland Handrick.
(b) detail of the wall decoration with mineral bands. Photo: Angela Ehling.



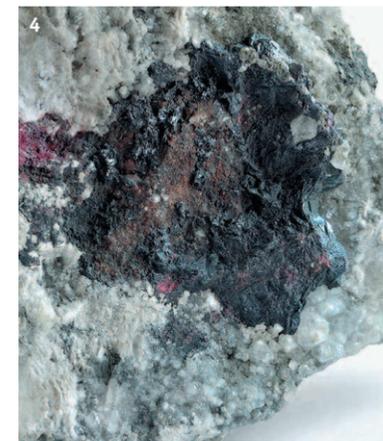
2. Galena crystals with dolomite and pyrite.
28 x 17 x 34 cm. Velbert, Bergisches Land, NRW, Germany.

From the heyday of ore mining in this region in the second half of the 19th century. Original label got lost.

3. Rhodochrosite on limonite.
14 x 10 x 6 cm Wolf mine, Herdorf, Siegerland, Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany.
Typical crystals from the well-known locality in Germany.



4. Pyrrargyrite crystals and masses with calcite crystals, löllingite, pyrite.
16 x 13 x 6 cm. Samson Hauptgang, Samson Mine, St. Andreasberg, Harz, Germany.



The first scientific mineralogical collection in Berlin is connected with the 1770 founding of the Mining Academy in Berlin. Friedrich II enacted a cabinet order that “not only mineralogy... but also mining should be taught”. It reflected the increasing interest in mining of raw materials in the Prussian state. The mineralogist and Oberbergrat (Mining Councilor) K.A. Gerhard was the first director of the Mining academy. His private mineral collection was acquired in 1781 and provided the base of the so-called “Royal Mineral Cabinet” (Hoppe, 1982). His follower G. Karsten collaborated with the famous chemist M.H. Klaproth. With this cooperation the chemical elements Zr, U, Sr, Ti, Te, Cr, Be and Ce were discovered. At the beginning of the 19th century two large mineral collections were donated to the Mineral Cabinet: american minerals, collected during Alexander von Humboldt’s South- and North-American expeditions, and the collection of Russian minerals as a gift from Tsar Alexander I. The Mineral Cabinet was too small to contain all of the collections so in 1810 the new University of Berlin was founded by A. von Humboldt the collections were transferred there. C.S. Weiss, a crystallographer and geologist was appointed as a professor and took on the responsibility of the collections. The mineral collection of the famous chemist M.H. Klaproth – the original minerals he used for his mineral analysis and publications – was bought after his death in 1817 by Berlin University (Damaschun & Schmitt, 2019). A Mineralogical Museum was founded in 1814. Since 1822 Gustav Rose worked as an assistant for the collections. In 1829 A. von Humboldt at the invitation of Count G.L. Kankrin, the Minister of Finance of Russia, took part in the expedition to the Urals and Altai, and also to collect minerals for the museum in Berlin. Rose accompanied him during this expedition and documented all of the collected minerals (Damaschun & Schmitt, 2019). In 1839 Rose succeeded Weiss together with H.E. Beyrich, who separated the fossils from the mineral collection (Hoppe, 1982).



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14. **Villiaumite** and **aegirine**.
8 x 6 x 4 cm.
Koashva Mt., Khibiny Massif,
Kola Peninsula, Russia.

15. **Galena** and **quartz** (rock crystal).
6 x 6 x 3 cm.
Mogilata, Madan, Bulgaria.

16. The **malachite** (polished).
15 x 20 x 2 cm.
Arizona, USA.

17. **Ilmenite**, **aegirine**, **zircon**, and
microcline. 5 x 5 x 4 cm.
Marchenko Peak, Kukisvumchorr Mt.,
Khibiny Massif, Kola Peninsula, Russia.



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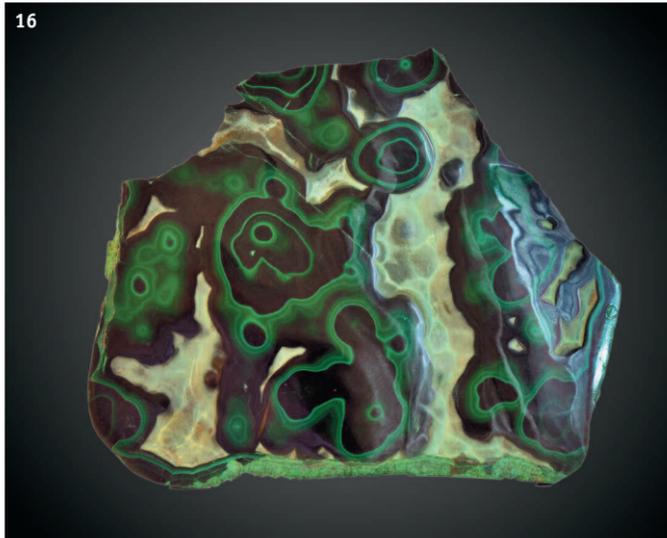


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20. Cluster of **andradite** (melanite) crystals.
11 x 8 x 6 cm.
Ojos Espanoles Mine, Chihuahua, Mexico.

21. Large and well developed **siderite** crystal.
15 x 12 x 7 cm.
Panasqueira, Portugal.

22. **Tincalconite**,
pseudomorphs after well-formed borax crystals.
11 x 9 x 8 cm.
Boron deposit, California, USA.



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17



22



18



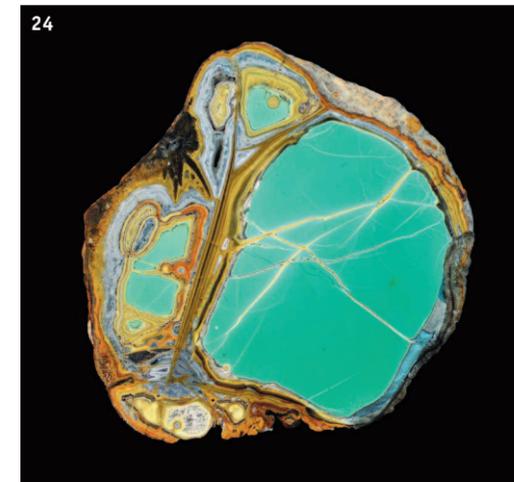
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18. **Carrollite** crystal on **calcite** matrix.
5 x 11 x 6 cm.
Kamoya South II Mine, Kambove,
Democratic Republic of Congo.
*It was bought in Lubumbashi in 2003.
The crystals from this locality are highlights of
our mineral collection.*

19. **Azurite** crystals on matrix.
7 x 7 x 8 cm.
Tsumeb, Namibia.



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23. **Calcite**, intergrowth of
two large crystals.
17 x 8 x 6 cm. Missouri, USA.

24. **Variscite** (polished plate).
12 x 11 x 2 cm.
Little Green Monster mine,
Fairfield, Utah, USA.