

‘THE MINERALOGICAL SYSTEM OF SLOVAKIA’ EXHIBITION

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The Faculty of Natural Sciences at the Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia, was founded in 1940. Mineralogical collections of the Department of Mineralogy and Petrology have been formed through the history of the Faculty. Nowadays it contains some 9000 registered mineral samples (samples for research are not counted). The majority of specimens come from private contributions, either as gifts or through purchase. Most of the mineral samples are stored in the depository, approx. one quarter of them are displayed in cases and several hundred samples serve the study of students in geology.

There are several collections of exhibited minerals. The major one is the mineralogical system, built of ca. 1000 mineral samples from deposits and occurrences all over the world. Smaller collections are devoted to genetic and regional mineralogy.

The most attractive collection is the Mineralogical System of Slovakia, the only one of its kind exhibited in the Slovak Republic. The exposition is composed of minerals only from Slovak sites. Samples of minerals are systematically organised into nine groups, from elements to organoliths. The collection was made up of mineral samples from the Department of Mineralogy and Petrology as well as of loaned samples from several private mineral collections. The exhibition will be flexibly completed and changed in the future, mainly by contributions from private mineral collectors.

Presently the collection consists of samples of approx. 250 mineral species (counted without their varieties). Rare minerals that can not be seen macroscopically are presented by photographs made by either optical or scanning electron microscopes.

The worth of minerals increases with time in the sense that mining has declined rapidly in the past years and almost all mineral deposits are closed in Slovakia. Very valuable are the old mineral samples coming from occurrences that do not exist any more, i.e. kermesite from Pezinok, pharmacosiderite from Nová Baňa, or celestine from the Špania Dolina (Herrengrund) locality. Perhaps the most unique ones are minerals that were described for the first time in the area of the Slovak Republic, such as euchroite, evansite, hodrushite, libethenite, mrázekite, tetradymite, vashegyite, as well as other minerals rare in the Slovak Republic, Europe or in the world.

The Mineralogical System of Slovakia exhibition has been built over the last several months. It is currently in the final changes and will be opened in March 2000.