



Mineralogy and Lithology. History of the collections: the collectors

Giancarlo Brizzi

The result of the passionate collection activity of Giancarlo Brizzi, this impressive collection is made up of around 4600 specimens of Italian origins, in particular Tuscany (about 60%) and Sardinian (18%) collected between 1965 and 1992 not only in the major mineralogical areas, but also in secondary ones giving a comprehensive picture of Italian mineralogy. There are also about twenty minerals from the type localities and some rare species, such as campigliaite, cetineite, frazzinone, onoratoite, peretaite.

Tuscany and Sardinia, the richest Italian mining regions, are the most studied areas; the old mines and their landfills were carefully examined in search of both aesthetically appreciable samples and samples of scientific significance, in particular the products of alteration of the deposits of metallic minerals. Thus, from Tuscany we find numerous samples of the pyrite deposits of the Grosseto area (Gavorrano, Niccioleta, Campiano and Boccheggiano), antimony (Cetine, Pereta, Montauto) and spectacular specimens from the marbles of the Apuan Alps. From Sardinia come the beautiful anglesites and phosgenites of Monteponi in the Iglesias province and numerous silver minerals from Sarrabus.

Brizzi, born in Florence in 1936, studied Pharmacy and worked in that sector, approaching Mineralogy as a pastime. A pastime, however, carried out not only with passion but with great accuracy and preparation.

Thus, from the collection of specimens the research then expanded to the search for texts, including antique ones, concerning minerals and mines and to putting a lot of care in the documentation of the collection, also through micro and macrophotographs of the most aesthetically interesting samples. After the sudden disappearance in 1992, the family wanted to donate the collection to the Museum, while the photographic archive was entrusted to the mineralogical group of which Brizzi was co-founder.

In the 25 years of field research, Brizzi became well known not only in the collectors' milieu, but also, and above all, in the scientific one, thanks to the intense and effective collaboration with University and National Research Council scholars, to whom he proposed doubtful specimens from which works of high scientific value were sometimes produced. Precisely as a result of this, after the premature and tragic death of Brizzi, those who collaborated more frequently with him wanted to dedicate a new mineralogical species to him, the "brizziite".



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Many specimens of the Brizzi collection have been studied, right at the time of inclusion in the collection, while those of high aesthetic value do not lend themselves to analyses, at times destructive, which can damage the sample.