



Mineralogy and Lithology. History of the collections: the collectors

Giorgio Roster

A fundamental part of the Elban mineralogical collection, the approximately 1,500 specimens collected by Giorgio Roster at the end of the nineteenth century give a complete image of the island's mineralogy, especially when it comes to the minerals of the pegmatitic area of Monte Capanne. Particularly known and appreciated are the tourmaline samples (elbaite) from Grotta d'Oggi, with green, black, pink and red crystals.

If the minerals of the Island of Elba can be schematized in tourmaline and hematite, the Roster collection reflects what was extracted in the last nineteenth century in terms of beryls, tourmalines, quartz, etc. Pyrites and hematites are well represented, but not prevalent. Perhaps the most famous specimen of the Elban collection is the large portion of geode with 132 tourmaline crystals associated with beryls, quartz, orthoclases, coming from the aforementioned Grotta d'Oggi. This specimen did not belong to the Roster collection but was purchased in 1882 by the Museum by Roster himself and later combined with the rest of the collection.

The multifaceted work of Roster, a doctor and professor of hygiene, materialized on the Island of Elba not only in the research and collection of minerals, but also in botanical studies of great importance: it is precisely to Roster that the Ottonella acclimatization garden owes its existence.

A highlight of the Roster collection, in addition to its aesthetic and scientific value, are the 6 manuscript volumes of the catalogue, which accurately illustrate the various specimens, their date and location of discovery together with the characteristics of the deposit.

The catalogues, crystallographic forms and other documentation kept both in the Museum and in the historical archive of the University, have recently been the subject of further studies.