

The mineralogical collections at the Earth's Science Department, University of Milano: history, conservation, digitization, and valorization

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The Museo delle collezioni mineralogiche, gemmologiche, petrografiche e giacimentologiche at the University of Milano has a rich history dating back to 1939 when Professor Emanuele Grill acquired the prestigious collection of Ing. Eugenio Bazzi. Over the years, under the direction of Professor Giuseppe Schiavinato, the collections expanded significantly through donations, acquisitions, and contributions from the Institute's personnel. Noteworthy additions include the Sala dei Minerali delle Alpi, dedicated to Ing. Magistretti, and a collection of mineral deposits curated by Professor Dino di Colbertaldo.

Currently, the museum houses over 30,000 specimens, including minerals, gemstones, and rocks, displayed across showcases and corridors. Notable exhibitions include the prestigious demantoide samples from Luigi Magistretti collections, as well as notable historical specimens from Baveno and other alpine localities. The museum also preserves historical analytical instruments, archival material, and educational resources.

Ongoing efforts focus on updating and digitizing the inventory, alongside the creation of multimedia materials. Conservation activities involve assessing the overall condition of specimens, with some undergoing restoration processes to enhance their display quality. The collections serve educational, scientific, and public engagement purposes, including teacher training and outreach activities with primary and secondary schools. Recognized as a Museal Collection by the University in 2004, the museum plays a vital role in preserving and disseminating scientific and cultural heritage.