

Vera M. F. HAMMER & Franz PERTLIK
Hans LEITMEIER (1885 – 1967)¹ -
academic teacher, scientist and collector at
the turn from analytic to experimental mineralogy

Vera M. F. HAMMER, Mineralogisch-Petrographische Abteilung, Naturhistor. Museum Wien, vera.hammer@nhm-wien.ac.at

Franz PERTLIK, Institut für Mineralogie und Kristallographie der Universität Wien, franz.pertlik@univie.ac.at

At the end of the 19th century the investigation of minerals turns from an absolute descriptive method according to their physical characteristics established by Friedrich MOHS (1773 - 1839) and later on extended by chemical analysis of Franz LEYDOLT (1810 - 1859) and Josef GRALICH (1829 - 1859) to a paradigmatic turning point. Based on experimental mineral syntheses of Cornelio DOELTER (1850 - 1930) at the University of Graz in Styria, the knowledge about crystals and minerals was extended. At this time of scientific change, Hans LEITMEIER starts his studies at the University of Graz, which gave distinction for his further path of life.



Fig. 1: Hans LEITMEIER (1885 - 1967); Photo: Archive University Vienna

Hans LEITMEIER, born 24th October 1885 in Vienna, finished compulsory education in Vienna, Brunn/Pitten (Lower Austria) and in Graz. From 1904/1905 on he was student at the University of Graz in mineralogy, geology, chemistry and philosophy. 1908 LEITMEIER finished his thesis *“Der Basalt von Weitendorf in Steiermark und die Mineralien seiner Hohlräume“*, under the direction of his academic teacher DOELTER. After his graduation he followed DOELTER to the Institute of Mineralogy at the University of Vienna, where he accepted an appointment as demonstrator. His habilitation treatise *“Zur Kenntnis der Carbonate“* was followed by the postdoctoral lecture qualification in 1916.

¹ * 24th October 1885 in Vienna - † 8th June 1967 in Vienna

Shortly before his deposition by the Nazi-Regime in 1938 he was distinguished as a university professor. After Second World War in 1945 he was re-nominated, this time as professor for mineralogy and petrography; in 1949/1950 LEITMEIER became dean of the faculty of philosophy; in 1957 he was retired.

In the years 1908 to 1912 LEITMEIER investigated problems of colloidal chemistry and its significance for mineralogical and geological research, inspired by his colleague and personal friend Felix CORNU (1882 - 1909).

Between the years 1912 to 1918 LEITMEIER was author of numerous articles and chapters in the "*Handbuch der Mineralchemie*" of Cornelio DOELTER. After the First World War he continued this lexical work and became co-editor in 1925 and after DOELTERS's death in 1930 he finished this great compilation in mineralogy, an early history of geochemistry studies including a large number of new mineral species. Furthermore LEITMEIER was author of entries in the German dictionary "*Goethe Handbuch*", as well as of nearly 100 publications.

The mineral and ore collection of LEITMEIER, with more than 1.800 typical specimens from alpine and south-alpine deposits was transferred in the 1990ies from the Institute of Petrology (University of Vienna) to the Natural History Museum in Vienna, including not the petrographic collection of about 1.550 rock samples.

The commitment of LEITMEIER concerning adult education was reflected in his active membership of the Austrian Mineralogical Society (till 1947 Vienna Mineralogical Society) and by numerous public lectures about the natural history, the typical minerals and the geology of the Alpine region. LEITMEIER passed away 8th June 1967 in Vienna, incinerated in closed family circle.