

Two unsolved problems: unidentified authors of labels and undiscovered specimens

As we reported in 'Mineral Collection and 'Lapidographia Japonica' by Philipp Franz von Siebold' (Tagai & Mikouchi, 2008), we identified the authors of the specimen labels by comparing handwriting and label types. It can be concluded that 96 specimens were labeled by Siebold (herein called 'Siebold specimens'), 69 specimens were labeled by Bürger (herein called 'Bürger specimens'), and 242 specimens were labeled by an unidentified labeler (herein called 'UL'). 42 (it increases now to 55) of those UL specimens were revised by Siebold, indicating that the unidentified person worked for Siebold. Photos 3 - 6 show labels written by Siebold, Bürger, UL, and UL revised by Siebold, respectively.

In the current research, a further investigation of the labels was conducted, comparing the UL labels with documents written by Temminck, Schlegel, de Haan, Baima, Hoorn, and Martin; the documents written from identified sources are distinct from those of the UL. It is well known that Siebold employed many assistants to label an enormous number of specimens. Though temporary, the UL must have been well versed in geology and mineralogy in order to give specific mineral names which were being used at the cutting edge of mineralogy along with detailed descriptions such as;

"Holzopal. Wahrscheinlich aus trachyt-Tuff wie am Siebengebirge",
(opalized petrified wood. Perhaps from trachytic tuff in Siebengebirge)
"dem Eisenthon vom Kaiserstuhl im Breisgau",
(similar to the iron-bearing clay from Kaiserstuhl in Breisgau)
"Steinkohle, der deutschen Schieferkohle ähnlich",
(coal similar to the German bituminous coal)
"sehr ähnlich dem Tyroler",
(very similar to that from Tyrol)
"Dem vom Harz und im Naussauischen vorkommenden ähnlich",
(similar to those from Harz and occurred in Nassau)
"Talkschiefer, ähnlich demjenigen der Alpen".
(Talc shale similar to the one from Alps)

Another characteristic feature of the descriptions by the UL is an accurate usage mineral and rock



Photo 3. Label by Siebold

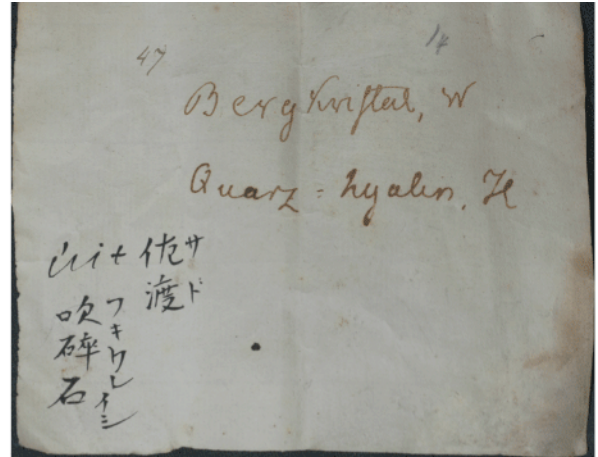


Photo 4. Label by Bürger

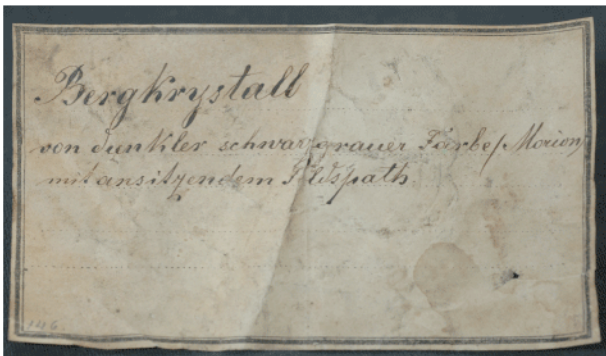


Photo 5. Label by UL

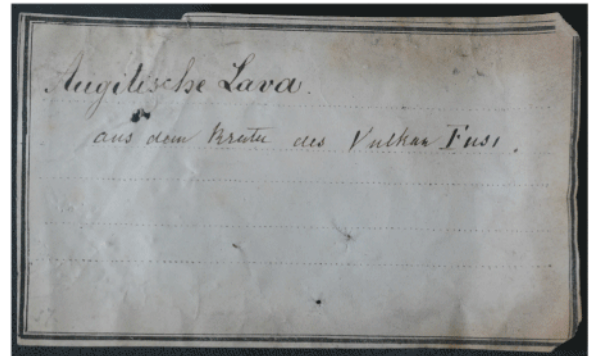


Photo 6. Label by UL
revised by Siebold

names, often better than Siebold. However, detailed description such as locality and occurrence could only have been recorded by Siebold or Bürger as they were the originators of field notebooks or specimen lists by Siebold or Bürger were used by the UL during identification and characterization, which UL used in the course of his identifications. Such notebooks are hoped to be discovered in the near future.

As mentioned above, only 231 specimens in Hoffmann's list correspond to those in Siebold's collection; the remaining 307 specimens cannot be identified. Most peculiar is that none of the 144 specimens in Hoffman's 3rd section was located in the collection at the Naturalis. While 190 specimens in the 1st section and 41 specimens in the 2nd section were good matches with the entries in the collection database, no matches were found in the 3rd section. The specimens in the third section should have been stored in the "Reichsmuseum" (Royal Museum). If "Reichsmuseum" indicates "Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie," then the specimens should have been stored in Naturalis. After an eight-year search at Naturalis, there is almost little possibility of finding another Siebold collection there. It may therefore be more reasonable to think that "Reichsmuseum" may apply to an institution rather than the "Rijksmuseum," such as in Amsterdam. To discover the missing Siebold mineral specimens, we hope to trace the route of the specimens to other national museums in the Netherlands in our future research.

Mineral specimen list by Schlegel

Researching the Siebold archive of Naturalis, we found a list of mineral specimens written by Schlegel. Hermann Schlegel (1804-1884) was the second director of the Royal Museum of Natural History. He was a zoologist who, together with J. C. Temminck and W. de Haan, contributed to the publication of Siebold's "Fauna Japonica". It is not clear why he made a list of the mineral specimens in the Siebold collection. Though no date is mentioned in the list, Schlegel worked at the Museum from 1825 to 1884, at that period when extensive Siebold collection were shipped at the end of his first expedition landed at the port of Antwerp in 1830 and moved to Leiden shortly thereafter. Therefore, this document may demonstrate that Siebold's mineral collection was stored in the Museum at some time during that period. The mineral list comprises three pages and is written in French. We show the list translated in English.