

The historical corner

Editorial

The following paper by Martin Okrusch and Hans-Ulrich Bambauer does not fit the strict template of a publication in the European Journal of Mineralogy. It is not a report on scientific results in the mineralogical sciences as normally demanded by the EJM. Rather, it reports on the conception as an idea in 1974, the birth in 1989 and the growth to maturity of the actual vehicle used to disseminate such information, namely the EJM itself. As such, it is a historical account and of necessity may reflect personal views. On the other hand, it is a fascinating narrative written by authors personally involved in making decisions for the future against a back-drop of the usual inertia of many rank-and-file members of national societies. In many ways, the EJM story mirrors the trials, tribulations and pitfalls experienced by Europe in drawing closer together in the post-war era. It was with the above background in mind that the members of the managing committee voted to include the following essay by Martin Okrusch and Hans-Ulrich Bambauer in a regular issue of the EJM.

The roots of the following paper can be traced back to a plenary lecture in Berlin, 2008, given by Martin Okrusch on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the German Mineralogical Society (DMG). As Okrusch and Bambauer point out in their introduction, this gives the paper a German point of view. Nonetheless, the problems and the resistance faced by decision-makers in the French, Italian and Spanish participating societies were probably quite similar, though seemingly most obvious in the French society. Councils and members had to be convinced that giving up a long-lived national society journal, embracing English as the lingua franca of modern science, accepting peer review procedures, attending to the financial requirements of a large international journal, etc., were all a good idea. As then-SFMC-president Jean Wyart pointed out in 1978 in his historical review article on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Société Française de Minéralogie et de Cristallographie, the Bulletin de Minéralogie was also founded in 1878. Its history thus went back even further than that of the American Mineralogist! One can well imagine the repercussions emanating from a decision to stop publishing the prestigious Bulletin and especially one of abandoning the French language. Most conspicuously, these decisions led to the resignation of a SFMC past-president and an associate editor of the Bulletin. As Okrusch and Bambauer point out, it was nevertheless the impetus provided in 1974 by two French mineralogists, namely SFMC president André Authier and SFMC general secretary Claude Lévy, who in close concert with Hans-Ulrich Bambauer got the ball rolling towards closer cooperation among European mineralogical societies and, 15 years later, the launching of the EJM. Authier and Lévy were most likely inspired by the creation of a true pan-European journal in physics in the early seventies.

As pointed out by Okrusch and Bambauer, the long years between 1974 and 1989 were characterized by a number of efforts to coordinate European mineralogical societies and their publications, notably via the Group of European Mineralogists (GEM) after 1979, an endeavour strongly promoted by Martine Lagache of the SFMC, and the European Mineralogical Union (EMU) after 1987. However, even in those early years it seems that the concept of a true common European mineralogical journal was a goal being actively pursued primarily by the French and German societies, mainly because the British society had little real interest in abandoning its own financially successful Mineralogical Magazine. On the other hand, a “merger” under the flag of Mineralogical Magazine was not what the other societies were striving for. In the end a European Journal of Mineralogy was born, because Giuseppe Rossi and Attilio Boriani led the Società Italiana di Mineralogia e Petrologia into the fold, followed by the EMU as a representative for all other European societies in 1996. In 2004, under the guidance of Emilio Galán, the Sociedad Española de Mineralogía became a member of the EJM publication consortium. In contrast to the French and German societies, the acceptance of the new EJM and the discontinuation of their respective national mineralogical journals appear to have been far less problematic in Italy and Spain, despite the fact that the Rendiconti della Società Italiana di Mineralogia e Petrologia went back to 1941. In Italy the standards of an international peer review journal attracted a new, strong community of authors, namely the mineralogically oriented crystallographers. In Spain as well, acceptance was wide-spread. New modern newsletters – Macla in Spain and Plinius in Italy – probably helped to soften the transition.

As indicated above, the following paper represents an exception in terms of the type of scientific contribution that the EJM endeavours to publish. Nevertheless, it is a captivating account of the development of mineralogy and of publication

in mineralogy in Germany over the last 100 years. The interested reader may want to refer to Wyart (1978) for an analogous but “pre-EJM” essay from the French point of view. In these trying times when basic physics and chemistry are being minimized in the geosciences as a whole, it may be instructive to learn more about the evolutionary history of our field of science.

Reference

Wyart, J. (1978): La Minéralogie à la Sorbonne. *Bull. Minéral.*, **101**, 89–106.

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on behalf of the Managing Committee