

varies in color from medium gray to dull greenish gray. It had good cleavage and has a splintery fracture.

The pyrite, calcite, and quartz show no unusual features. The pyrite is massive, as is the quartz. The calcite occurs as separate masses or intimately mixed with the asbestos.

MOTTRAMITE OR PSITTACINITE—A QUESTION
OF NOMENCLATURE¹

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In the recent paper on psittacinite from Arizona,² I considered psittacinite the proper name for this mineral. Bannister, in his more recent paper on this mineral³ did not accept my conclusion and stated that mottramite was more suitable. This disagreement led to correspondence with Bannister which has finally settled the question of priority.

I wrote him, in part, as follows:

I have been trying to check your conclusions regarding the nomenclature of mottramite and psittacinite, as expressed in your recent paper on The identity of mottramite and psittacinite with cupriferous descloizite. On page 385, you state: "Mottramite is the most suitable choice on all grounds. The use of the name psittacinite should be discontinued." So far as I can interpret the situation, it seems that psittacinite should be the name chosen.

It all depends on the question of priority. I was in error in stating on page 578 of our paper on Psittacinite from the Higgins mine, Bisbee, Arizona, that psittacinite was described by Genth in 1874. It should have been given as 1876, as you correctly do under VII on page 377 of your paper. The reference given on page 791 of Dana's *System of Mineralogy* is misleading.

"However, it seems to me that Genth's name still has priority. The question of priority, I think we will all agree, depends on the date of issuance of publication and not on the date of orally reading a paper. Genth's paper in the *American Journal of Science* was issued, as all numbers of that Journal are, on the first of the month, that is July 1, 1876. Our library copy of the Proceedings of the Royal Society (London), Vol. 25, has printed on the bottom of the title page, MDCCCLXXVII, that is, 1877. Both your footnote No. 1 on page 376, and Dana's reference to mottramite, give 1876. Moreover, as volume 25 of the Royal Society takes in part of 1877, it could not have been printed in 1876. Even if the complete volume (No. 25) were issued in parts, Roscoe did not read or present his paper until the meeting of June 15, 1876, and in order to have priority, the report of that meeting must have been printed and issued in less than two weeks, that is between June 15 and June 30. If I am in error on this subject, I hope you will correct me.

¹ Published by permission of the Director, U. S. Geological Survey.

² Taber, Stephen, and Schaller, W. T., Psittacinite from the Higgins mine, Bisbee, Arizona: *Am. Mineral.* Vol., 15, pp. 575-579, 1930.

³ Bannister, F. A., The identity of mottramite and psittacinite with cupriferous descloizite: *Mineralog. Mag.*, Vol. 23, pp. 376-386, 1933.

Bannister's reply, in part, follows:

In reply to your question on the priority of mottramite, Roscoe's paper was received May 10, 1876, published and issued in Part No. 172 of Vol. 25 of Proc. Roy. Soc. on the 1st June 1876 but was not read until 15th June 1876. The number of these separate paper-bound parts of Vol. 25 of the Proc. Roy. Soc. now in existence is probably very small. I have confirmed, however, that a separate part No. 172 is held by the Royal Society in Burlington House, Piccadilly London, and I am indebted to the Librarian of that Society for the date of publication I am now sending you. There is no doubt, therefore, that the name mottramite appeared in print a month before psittacinite.

The name mottramite, being published on June 1, 1876, two weeks before Roscoe read his paper, thus has a month's priority over psittacinite, published July 1, 1876, as already stated by Bannister,⁴ and is the name to be taken. The reasons for discarding other synonymous names are given in the two papers cited.

Such questions of nomenclature may hardly seem worthy of the time consumed in determining priority but the question is important in the preparation of a standard book of reference, as the new edition of Dana's *System of Mineralogy*.

For this mineral, the copper analogue of descloizite, mottramite and not psittacinite, is the correct name.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 384.

CAUTION AGAINST THE USE OF BORGSTRÖM'S LIQUIDS¹
WITH LEAD-GLASS PRISMS

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The writer recently had occasion to use Borgström's high index liquids, and employed a Pulfrich refractometer to determine their indices. It was found that the liquids attacked the lead-glass prisms of the refractometer, forming an insoluble white film that could be removed only by regrinding and repolishing.

To avoid the possibility of damaging valuable instruments, it is suggested that only such refractometers be used with these liquids as are known to be equipped with hard glass prisms. The Pulfrich type, "with variable refraction angle" and a special high index Abbe refractometer made by the Spencer Lens Co., are very well adapted for this kind of work.

¹ Borgström, L. H., Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklung der Immersionsmethode, *Bull. Comm. Geol. Finlande*, No. 87, pp. 58-63, 1929.