

Emeralds From the Coronation Crown of Napoleon III

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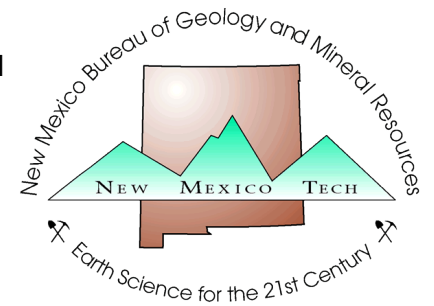
43rd New Mexico Mineral Symposium
November 10-12, 2023, Macey Center, Socorro, NM
pp. 12

<https://doi.org/10.58799/NMMS-2023.636>

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The annual [New Mexico Mineral Symposium](#) provides a forum for both professionals and amateurs interested in mineralogy. The meeting allows all to share their cumulative knowledge of mineral occurrences and provides stimulus for mineralogical studies and new mineral discoveries. In addition, the informal atmosphere encourages intimate discussions among all interested in mineralogy and associated fields.

The symposium is organized each year by the [Mineral Museum](#) at the [New Mexico Bureau of Geology & Mineral Resources](#).



Abstracts from all prior symposiums are also available: <https://geoinfo.nmt.edu/museum/nmms/abstracts>

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<https://doi.org/10.58799/NMMS-2023.636>

The Paris School of Mines discreetly detains a few of the most valuable – in a heritage sense – gems of France: gemstones that used to belong to the French Crown Jewels. The loose gemstones were saved from the 1887 auction voted by the French Third Republic to sell this national treasure, aiming to demonstrate that the monarchy would never return. Among the 77,486 gems, a few hundred were put aside and given mostly to three French Institutions: Le Louvre Museum, the National Museum of Natural History, and the Paris School of Mines. The School of Mines was awarded a series of emeralds, “Brazilian rubies” (pink topazes), and amethysts.

This presentation will focus on the series of emeralds that used to adorn Napoleon III's coronation crown. Created by Alexandre-Gabriel Lemonnier, the Emperor's jeweler, the crown along with that of the Empress, was presented and awarded at the Universal Exhibition of 1855 (Morel, 1988). The golden imperial eagles and palms were set with diamonds and emeralds. Only the fifty small emeralds were spared and awarded to the Paris School of Mines, forty-five of which are still in the collection. Figure 1 shows the eight largest of the suite. The forty-five stones were examined recently by the French Gemological Lab (LFG), and their examination will be described during this lecture. For the first time, the emeralds are exhibited at the museum along with an interpretation of the crown (Figure 2) on the occasion of the temporary exhibit “Collectible Minerals”, running until March 9, 2024.

References

Morel B. (1988) The French Crown Jewels. Fonds Mercator, Antwerp, 417 pages.



Figure 1. Eight of the 45 emeralds from the Coronation Crown of Napoleon III in the Mineralogy Museum's collection. These emeralds were adorning the feet of the golden eagles.



Figure 2. Drawing of the interpretation of Napoleon III Coronation Crown, designed by Lemonnier in 1855. The crown is mostly made of yellow gold (crosshatched and lines), with diamonds (in white) and emeralds (in green).