

## BÁRCENITE DISCREDITED

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Bárcenite, a purported antimonate of mercury, was described from Huitzuco, Guerrero, Mexico by Mallet (1878). A non-type specimen was studied by Vitaliano & Mason (1952) and found to be a mixture of cinnabar and romeite.

Mallet worked as a chemist at the University of Virginia, where a small museum was maintained in the Chemistry building, which was destroyed by fire. Any type specimen of bárcenite was presumably consumed in the blaze, and there is none in the University of Virginia collections. Of eight samples in the U.S. National Museum, only one (R5768) has any pedigree. It was obtained from Mallet by Washington Roebling, whose collection was subsequently obtained by the Smithsonian Institution. Roebling's label reads "from Prof. J.W. Mallet; Bárcenite, antimonate of mercury, calcium; Huitzuco, Guerrero, Mexico." Examination of this specimen, which matches Mallet's description, using X-ray diffraction and microprobe methods, indicates that it is a mixture of romeite and metacinnabar. The romeite is mercury-free.

A proposal that this specimen be accepted as the type for bárcenite, and that bárcenite be formally discredited as a mixture of romeite and metacinnabar, was unanimously approved by the Commission on New Minerals and Mineral Names, I.M.A.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### REFERENCES

- MALLET, J.W. (1878): On bárcenite, a new antimonate, from Huitzuco, Mexico. *Amer. J. Sci.* **116**, 306-309.
- VITALIANO, C.J. & MASON, B. (1952): Stibiconite and cervantite. *Amer. Mineral.* **37**, 982-999.

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