

DOPPIOZERO

Size Matters

[Roberto Casati](#)

31 Gennaio 2015

Nature is on display in a couple of nice photographic exhibit in Paris. It's a great concept: oversize pictures on the walls or the fences of public buildings and spaces. The first exhibit, organized by Mines Paris Tech, a public teaching and research institution, presents crystals. The other one covers biotopes and biodiversity. In both cases we marvel in front of the magnification of beautiful inorganic and organic structures. The figure caption are short and informative. We learn about the features of the depicted items, and about the photographic techniques.

But one crucial piece of information is missing. We have no idea whatsoever of the scale of the pictures.

Sometimes we can just guess it – say, when we look at a picture of a hornet, or of an orchid. But what about the azurite crystal? Untutored viewers can take it to be as small as a grain of dust, or as big as a boulder (provided, of course, that we have an idea of the size of grains of dust and of boulders). Suppose that that was actually the size of a grain of dust. Knowing that, we would appreciate the delicacy of the texture; we would have a completely different appreciation if the crystal was the size of a large boulder. We do not know how big was the object depicted in the poster, but look at how your perception is modulated by the presence of a graduated ruler.

Bleu azur



Family	Formule	Système cristallin	Utilisation
Carbonates	$\text{Cu}_3(\text{CO}_3)_2(\text{OH})_2$	Monoclinique	Baux métalliques industriels

■ Ce magnifique minéral, bleu comme son nom l'indique, est un minéral dont on peut extraire le cuivre. Il toujours associé à la malachite, de couleur verte, un autre minéral de cuivre. Réduite en poudre, l'azurite pigment dans l'Egypte des Pharaons. ■

A photograph of a geological outcrop showing various rock layers and a fence in the foreground. The outcrop displays different rock types and colors, including shades of grey, brown, and white, representing different geological formations and mineral assemblages.

My uncle, a geologist, conformed to the very useful practice of inserting objects or people in his pictures of rocks and strata. This explains why my aunt's smile shows up in so many scientific papers.

Hyper Nature, Jardin du Luxembourg, Paris 2014

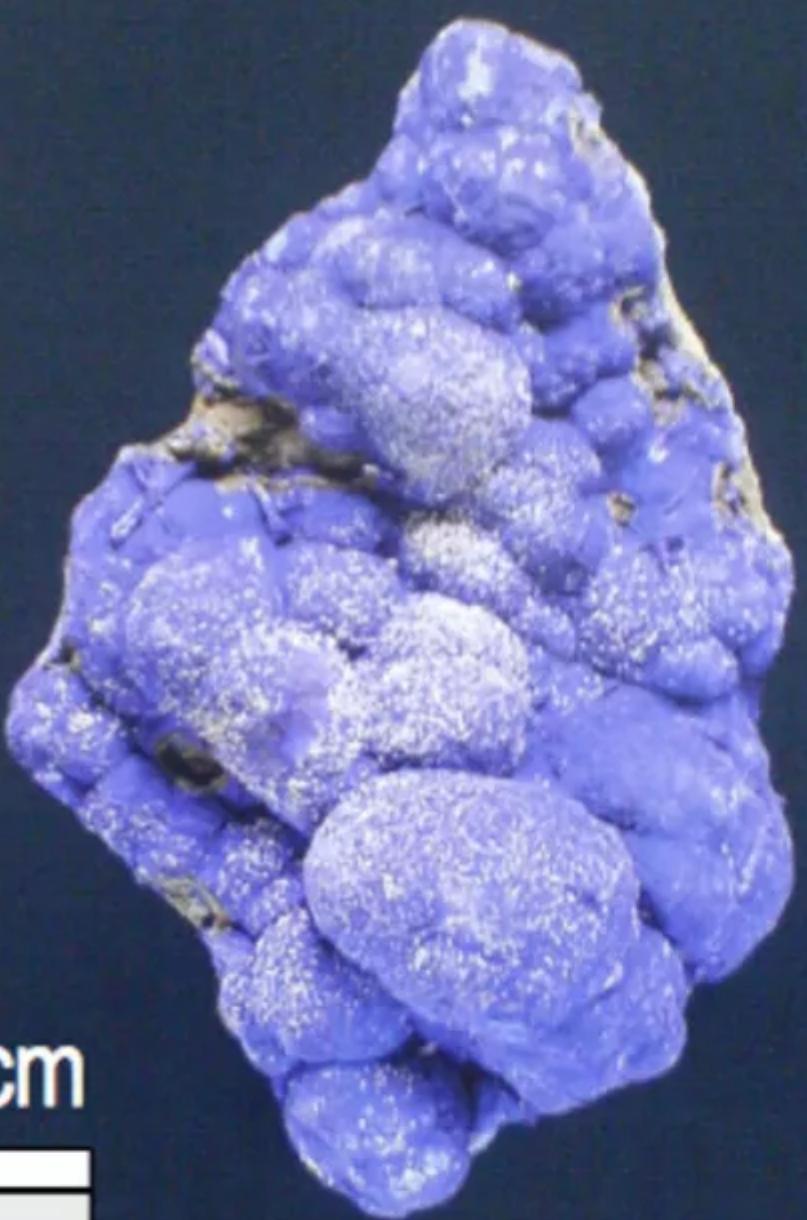
<http://www.senat.fr/evenement/grilles/hypernature.html>

Cristaux, Mines Paris Tech, Paris 2014

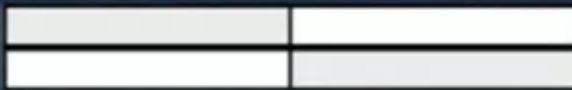
<http://www.mines-paristech.fr/Agenda/Inauguration-de-l-exposition-Cristaux/1731>

Se continuiamo a tenere vivo questo spazio è grazie a te. Anche un solo euro per noi significa molto.
Torna presto a leggerci e [SOSTIENI DOPPIOZERO](#)

Bleu azur



1 cm



Famille

Forme

Système

Structure

Le magnifique minéral, l'ouverture sur son nom l'attique, est un minéral de ferminé, associé à la malachite, de couleur verte, un autre minéral de fer.