

46450 Huntite (Magnesium calcium carbonate)

Huntite is a magnesium calcium carbonate of the composition $\text{CaMg}^3(\text{CO}^3)_4$ and was only accidentally discovered in 1943 by the American chemist George T. Faust and named after his teacher Frederick Hunt. In most deposits Huntite occurs together with Magnesite and Dolomite, only in Western Macedonia and at one place east of Izmir in Turkey quite pure Huntite is mined.

Huntite forms very small primary crystals and is correspondingly soft, which certainly facilitated processing in ancient times. The very soft and voluminous powder is white to translucent.

In thousands of studies on coloration in antiquity, Huntite is found as a white pigment, in Ancient Egypt, Greece and Ancient Rome. Probably Apelles already worked with huntite. In the more recent painting technique of the last 800 years, Huntite practically does not appear in Europe. An important site in ancient Greece was at Laurion, south of Athens. Huntite must also have been a Roman trade item. In the archaeological museum of Marciana on Elba, there is a small box of Huntite on display, which came from a Roman cargo ship sunk off Procchio about 150 AD.

And only in Greece is huntite mined as a color pigment to this day. The famous white of the houses in Greece was marsh lime with huntite until the 1960s.

In coatings today, Huntit is mainly used in wall paints in Greece and Turkey, as well as in fire protection paints.

Huntite is suitable for all aqueous applications and is particularly good as a white pigment in sump lime, cellulose glue and water-thinnable synthetic resin dispersions. In oil, Huntit becomes translucent.

Sources:

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