

## GEMS AND JEWELRY APPRAISING

By Anna M. Miller, 198 pp., illus., publ. by Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 1988. US\$29.95\*

With the emerging acknowledgment of appraising as a field of professional endeavor, *Gems and Jewelry Appraising* is a welcome addition to the "how to be an appraiser" genre.

This well-organized and remarkably complete reference guide differs from its predecessors in that it is written by a professional appraiser for the professional appraiser. The author, working from years of personal experience and with an extensive bibliography, has assembled a useful tool for anyone who may do appraisals, from the retail jeweler who does them only occasionally to the full-time independent appraiser. Tables and charts, historical data, and helpful caveats make this book an important part of every gemological library.

Basics such as appraisal concepts and opening or adding an appraisal service lead to discussions of the different purposes and functions of appraisals. Valuable suggestions on take-in, preparation, and actual appraisal procedures are given. Unfortunately, an overdone discussion of telecommunications is followed by a section on regional pricing that doesn't seem to make its point. A full chapter is devoted solely to the pricing of less common items, but there is no mention elsewhere of modern cut diamonds or commonly used colored gemstones, a sign that this book is not intended for the novice. A chronological history of jewelry from antiquities to "new-wave," touching on many different types of jewels, adds a unique dimension. Also covered are watches, carvings, and silverware. The book concludes with chapters on the legal and ethical aspects of appraising, techniques for expert witnesses, sample report formats, and additional sources of information.

The subject matter is presented in a concise manner, and the text is quite readable. The lack of color photography is disappointing, but

# BOOK REVIEWS

Elise B. Misirowski, Editor

this was never meant to be a coffee table book. The trade-off is reasonable considering the relatively low price.

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## DICTIONARY OF GEMMOLOGY, 2nd edition

By Peter G. Read, 266 pp., illus., publ. by Butterworths, London, 1988. US\$49.95\*

There is no question that Mr. Read's book makes a valuable addition to the gemological literature. It has been many years since a new edition of the Shipley *Dictionary of Gems and Gemology* last appeared, and a good up-to-date gemological dictionary is certainly needed.

Twenty-two pages have been added since the first edition (which was published in 1982). On the whole, the vast majority of essential entries are included, and generally the definitions are clearly worded and understandable. There are, however, weaknesses in some specific areas.

One category that leaves something to be desired is that of pearls and cultured pearls. There seems to be no reference to tissue nucleation (or mantle tissue nucleation) of cultured pearls, or to the existence of freshwater cultured pearls. Black pearls are mentioned as coming only from the Gulf of Mexico, with the waters of the South Seas conspicuously absent. Freshwater pearls are to be found in "Scandinavia, Canada, and the U.K.," but there is no mention of the rest of Europe or of the U.S., let alone Japan or China.

Often, after an entry, a "see"

another entry will follow. The relationship is frequently left to the reader's imagination. For example, after the entry *fowlerite* comes "see *rhodonite*." Under *rhodonite*, there is no mention of the *fowlerite* variety.

The Hoge Raad people will be startled by the omission of the International Diamond Commission Grading Standards for Diamonds in Read's table comparing the different standards used in various parts of the world, or worldwide. In addition, Burma sapphire is described as a synthetic. Also, there is an entry for "shatter marks," followed by "see fire marks." Does he mean "chatter marks," or is this another difference between U.K. English and the version used in the "colonies"?

However, these are minor cavils about individual items in what is a very useful publication overall. Anyone can gain a wealth of information from this dictionary. Even though the tag seems a bit pricey for a volume of less than 300 pages without color, the book is a worthwhile addition to any gemological library.

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## MODERN JEWELER'S GEM PROFILE, THE FIRST 60

By David Federman and Tino Hamid, 129 pp., illus., publ. by Vance Publishing Corp., Lincolnshire, Illinois, 1988. US\$39.95\*

Subscribers to *Modern Jeweler* who enjoy the "Gem Profile" section that appears in each issue will savor this collection of award-winning pieces and superb photos (a total of 60) from the past five years.

As Richard T. Liddicoat says in the foreword, "No one investigates a subject in more depth than Mr. Federman and no one writes with greater clarity on the matters that he

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\*This book is available for purchase at the GIA Bookstore, 1660 Stewart Street, Santa Monica, CA 90404. Telephone: (800) 421-7250, ext. 282.

studies so assiduously." Further, his turn of phrase is frequently amusing as well as illuminating. For instance, rough sapphires that refuse to change color with heat treatment become "incorrigible corundums" as opposed to "redeemable roughs." Frequently his color descriptions, while spectrally unacceptable, lend sense and humor. For instance, who can fail to visualize "bubble gum pink"? (Less identifiable to this reviewer is "eyeshadow blue.")

When the author uses spectral colors in his description, however, a few less than satisfactory terms result. For instance, basically red gemstones such as ruby are referred to as "violet or violetish red," but should be termed purplish red. More unjustified is the description of rhodolite garnet as an "intense-violet." Perhaps all who are concerned with color nomenclature would do well to review that old nursery rhyme, "Roses are red, violets are blue . . .," because violet is right next door to blue. Between violet and red comes purple (actually a nonspectral but necessary term).

Tino Hammid's gem portraits have been acknowledged as among the best currently being taken. In fact, some may be too good! This reviewer has rarely if ever seen color changes as complete as the photographs of both Brazilian and Russian alexandrites shown here. These idealistic photos could come to haunt an inexperienced jeweler looking to satisfy a customer who expects that result. As textbook illustrations, of course, they are excellent.

Admirably, the authors make no pretense at completeness since these are profiles. To some purists, however, several of the titles belie the fact that they were written by the doyen of disclosure. For example, by "Chinese Fresh Water Pearl," he means cultured pearl, just as he does in "Japanese Akoya Pearl" (few readers know what Akoya means) and "Tahiti Black Pearl." It would also seem to be in line with the instructional goal of these profiles to indicate in

the title that indicolite and rubellite are tourmaline.

One especially well-rounded profile, though, is that for peridot. Entitled "Burma Peridot," it is actually a good discussion of all current commercial peridot sources.

In the nit-picker's corner would have to be placed certain errors of fact or observation or spelling. For instance, "synthesized plastic imitation" under amber is a singular usage; the effect seen in cat's-eye is reversed; the shape of the Hope diamond is cushion antique, while the Tiffany is square antique; Malaya garnet is not a species, but a group mixture or variety. In the excellent profile of lapis lazuli and sodalite, the latter is misspelled four times as "sodolite." Finally, it is difficult to picture "colorlessness" in coral.

All in all, *Modern Jeweler's Gem Profile, The First 60* accomplishes the author's goal "to teach, to inform and delight." The quality of the color reproductions, the format, and the innovative text make this book a must for all who love gemstones—particularly readers of *Gems & Gemology*.

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## THE HISTORY OF BEADS

By Lois Sherr Dubin, 364 pp., illus., publ. by Harry N. Abrams, New York, 1987. US\$60.00

Brilliantly organized and genuinely readable, this long-awaited book is the first comprehensive history of beads and the role they have played in society since the advent of modern man. Author Dubin focuses on 12 geographic areas where beads are known to have been important. The social, political, spiritual, psychological, and aesthetic significance of beads within the various cultures is examined, as is the archaeological and technological information that beads carry. The international trade

patterns of beads are not only explained but are also charted in 15 maps of bead sources and distribution patterns worldwide.

Dubin took a scholarly approach to this project, which required five years to complete. In her research, she enlisted the help of many respected bead scholars and gained access to the finest private and museum bead collections. All the contributors, from Dr. Robert K. Liu of *Ornament* magazine to the researchers at the British Museum, shared their best.

The result of this major collaborative effort is immensely informative and absolutely gorgeous. The 364-page book features 356 illustrations, 254 of them in color. The eight-page, full-color foldout bead/time chart is inspired. By showing 2,000 beads assembled in time lines, it visually places every important bead type in its cultural and historic context. The sensitivity of the photography does justice to the magnificent artifacts it records, and qualifies *The History of Beads* as an art book filled with powerful visual imagery as well as a landmark text.

In Harry N. Abrams, Dubin found the perfect publisher. Using first-class talent and materials, Abrams has given the charts, illustrations, and photographs the elegant presentation they merit. Excellent editing keeps the text clear and concise down to the last meticulously prepared annotation, although careful reading reveals occasional contradictions, a reminder that bead research is an evolving area of study, with new facts constantly being discovered and new interpretations being set forth.

*The History of Beads* is a recommended investment. Not only is it an exciting and essential reference for knowledgeable bead enthusiasts, but it is also the perfect vehicle to introduce the general public to the true significance of beads.

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