

PHOTO MASTERS FOR DIAMOND GRADING

By Gary A. Roskin, 94 pp., illus., publ. by Gemworld International, Northbrook, IL, 1994. US\$75.00*

By the title alone, I anticipated *Photo Masters for Diamond Grading* to be a practical combination of E. Gübelin and J. I. Koivula's *Photoatlas of Inclusions in Gemstones* and GIA GEM Instrument's MicroVision 2000. After reading *Photo Masters*, I realized that it is not intended to be a "master" for grading in the same sense that "master color" comparison diamonds are used for color grading. The value of this book is as a reference guide for the trade, mainly for retailers and rusty diamond graders. I used it with a customer in my store to clarify the difference between a VVS₂ feather and a VS₁ feather. It provided the example we needed without my actually looking through dozens of loose diamonds.

This glossy hardcover book has more than 200 color photomicrographs of diamonds representing all clarity grades and other grading characteristics. It is well organized, with a concise table of contents, enjoyable introduction, and a good history of the evolution of diamond grading. For the most part, the caption to each photomicrograph gives the diamond's carat weight, clarity grade, level of magnification, and the grading laboratory, if any. However, not all captions give all of this information, and this book should continue to be updated.

The main grading issue Roskin deals with is clarity. Although this book will not thrust you into the circle of the professional diamond grader, as the title and preface might imply, it does offer a second opinion to help the reader strive for "consistency in an evolving grading system." Nevertheless, more pages should have been devoted to the clarity issue. I also felt that the chapters on Reflectors, Fancy Shapes, Fancy Colors, Large Diamonds, and Recutting were far too short.

Another concern is visual perception as it relates to the use of photomicrographs. A common magnification level (10×) for all diamonds illustrated would have provided a much more realistic comparison within any one clarity grade. As presented, one can look at a dozen different VS₂



inclusions, but, because each is shown at a different magnification, it is impossible to compare them.

The last chapter, on Laboratory Comparisons, seems to have one aim: to show SI₃ clarity grades where they had not been shown before. Even so, the discussion is incomplete and leaves the issue of differences between laboratories unresolved (e.g., the GIA Gem Trade Laboratory does not use this grade). In this reviewer's opinion, it is inappropriate as a concluding chapter to a book that purports to be striving for *consistency* in diamond grading.

Nevertheless, this book achieves its stated purpose of helping to reduce inconsistencies in grading, and it is a valuable tool for the appraiser, wholesaler, and retailer. As a retailer and former diamond grader, I would give *Photo Masters for Diamond Grading* an SI₂... Salable but Incomplete, **too**.

STEVEN L. GINSBERG, G.G.
*Ginsberg Jewelers
Cedar Rapids, Iowa*

A SPARKLING AGE, 17TH-CENTURY DIAMOND JEWELLERY

223 pp., illus., publ. by the Diamantmuseum, Antwerp, Belgium, 1993, US\$65.00*

This bilingual (Flemish/English) catalog of an exhibition held at the Province Diamond Museum in Antwerp June 11–October 3, 1993, capably demonstrates the splendor of diamond jewelry in the 17th century—aptly called "A Sparkling Age." This soft-cover book offers rich insights into both the development of diamond cuts and changing tastes in jewelry during this era.

Four articles provide background information for the exhibit. In the

mid-1600s, the use of table-cut diamonds and the introduction of rose-cut diamonds helped move jewelry design away from elaborate precious-metal and enamel work, reducing their role to that of decorative motif. A scant 40 years later, Parisians demanded more facets on the sides of table-cut diamonds—the first recorded attempt at the brilliant cut. Supporting this historical footnote, Jan Walgrave's article on "Diamond Cuts in the 17th Century" definitively states that "The brilliant [cut diamond] exists already before 1700 but only some decades later completely supersedes the table diamond." Jan Walgrave also provides articles on "Tendencies in 17th-Century Jewellery" and a description of the miniature case of King Louis XIV of France, given by that monarch to a Dutch envoy in 1683.

Diana Scarisbrick, noted British jewelry historian, writes an absorbing 13-page article, "17th-Century Diamond Jewellery and the Ornamental Print." She relies on the ornamental prints that were published for jewelers and their clients to trace the history of jewelry from the end of the 16th century to the reign of Louis XIV at Versailles.

In the actual catalog portion of the book, a rich narrative accompanies each of the crisply illustrated 107 jewelry items. Many of the illustrations show details of the counter engraving or counter enameling prevalent at that time. In a number of instances, a line drawing of the faceted diamond accompanies the photo and text.

Although this book lacks a table of contents, glossary, or index, it is relatively easy to follow along chronologically. The reader can visually track trends in jewelry design and diamond cuts as they emerge and are refined during this fascinating era. For those interested in specific items or types of jewelry, though, browsing would be a problem.

GAIL BRETT LEVINE
*Auction Market Resource
Rego Park, New York*

*This book is available for purchase through the GIA Bookstore, 1660 Stewart Street, Santa Monica, CA 90404. Telephone (800) 421-7250, ext. 282; outside the U.S. (310) 829-2991, ext. 282. Fax: (310) 449-1161.