



# BOOK REVIEWS

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### Pearls

By Elisabeth Strack, 678 pp., illus., publ. by Rühle-Diebener-Verlag, Stuttgart, Germany, 2006. €106.10 (US\$115.00)\*

Broad in scope and deep in detail, this is the most comprehensive book ever written about pearls. It is a rich and valuable resource for industry professionals, students, and anyone with a personal interest in the subject. *Pearls* is the expanded, updated, English-language edition of *Perlen*, which was published in German in 2001. Like the original, the new edition is just under 8 × 10 inches (20.3 × 25.4 cm), hardcover, and printed on high-quality coated stock with excellent color reproduction.

The book is divided into two sections: "Natural Pearls" and "Cultured Pearls." Chapters then thoroughly cover the history, biology, types, geography, formation, structure, farming, properties, grading, marketing, testing, treating, imitating, care, and uses of pearls. *Pearls* is well-illustrated with color photos, maps, charts, and explanatory diagrams. An extensive bibliography follows each chapter, and there are eight indices, arranged by various topics.

That one person gathered the information, wrote the text, shot many of the photos, and assisted with the translation of this book is astounding and commendable. *Pearls* is broad and deep, so it necessarily took years to research and write. That led to one of its few flaws: Some of the information is unavoidably outdated. A second minor drawback is that the English is a little awkward in places.

*Pearls* is an excellent choice for anyone seeking a wealth of information about natural and cultured pearls.

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### Not Your Mama's Beading: The Cool and Creative Way to String 'Em Along

By Kate Shoup Welsh, 224 pp., illus., publ. by Wiley Publishing [www.wiley.com], Hoboken, NJ, 2006. US\$14.99

As a longtime beader, I have read my share of books on the subject. They are usually quite informative, and I often learn new techniques from them. However, I wouldn't go so far as to say that I actually had fun reading them. That was until I found *Not Your Mama's Beading*. With project titles such as "Swinging by the Chandeliers," "The Short and Winding Rope," and "Girls Gone Bridaled," the table of contents (not to mention the book title) makes it clear that Kate Shoup Welsh has a great sense of humor. Imagine having a conversation with your funniest friend, and you'll get a sense of this book's voice.

The book is divided into three sections, with several chapters in each. The first section looks at beads throughout history, including their use in trade and fashion. It also has an informative overview on materials and tools. The section closes with a chapter that teaches basic beading and stringing techniques for the beginner.

The second section consists of specific projects that range from very easy to somewhat complicated, grouped by type. There are chapters on necklaces, rings, bracelets, miscellaneous personal adornments, and gift items. Some of the more interesting (yet simple) projects include bookmarks, zipper pulls, and even bulletin board tacks. Each includes the estimated cost, a materials list, and a rating of the level of commitment needed to complete the project. The diagrams included for the more complicated projects are clear and easy to follow. There is truly something for everyone here.

The beader will find a wealth of helpful information in the third section. Included here are patterns, illustrations of different types of tools and findings, and charts of bead and wire sizes. There are also some nicely prepared lists of absolute essentials for bead stringing, bead stitching, and wireworking kits.

I highly recommend *Not Your Mama's Beading*. The creative beader will find some great projects to try and will enjoy some laughs along the way.

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*\*This book is available for purchase through the GIA Bookstore, 1949 Kellogg Ave., Carlsbad, CA 92008. Telephone: 800-421-8161, ext. 4200; outside the U.S. 760-603-4200. Fax: 760-603-4266. E-mail: myorder@gia.edu or visit www.gia.edu*

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## Special Exhibition Jadeite: Treasure of Orient

*By the National Science Museum [www.kahaku.go.jp/english], 202 pp., illus., publ. by the Mainichi Newspapers Co., Tokyo, 2004 [in Japanese; no price information available].*

In Japan, most people believe that jadeite jade comes from China due to its strong association with Chinese culture. In fact, other than Myanmar (Burma), Japan is the only Asian country where jadeite has been found. The Japanese National Science Museum and the Mainichi Newspapers Co. (one of the largest newspaper companies in Japan) organized a special jadeite exhibition, held from November 2004 to February 2005, and this book was published as a companion to that exhibit.

The first part of the book reviews the history of jadeite and nephrite jade in Chinese culture, with photos showing typical jewelry and art objects from the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911). The second part introduces the mineralogy and geology of jadeite. This is the first work known to this reviewer that systematically describes Japanese jadeite localities and their exploration, as well as their petrology and mineralogy. Included are maps of the localities and photos of rough jadeite. As an example, the use of jadeite from Itoigawa River, in Niigata Prefecture, can be traced back about 5,000 years, although an accurate mineralogical identification was first reported only in 1939, in the *Journal of Mineralogical and Petrological Sciences*. Several new silicate minerals characteristically associated with Itoigawa jadeite, such as blue itoigawite, have been discovered in this region.

The third part of the book covers most of the known ancient jadeite-using cultures in Japan and Korea. Manufacturing techniques such as hole-drilling, shaping, and polishing, as well as early distribution networks, are described and summarized.

The book concludes with a brief introduction to the basic gemology of jadeite. Well-known gem identification techniques, such as FTIR and Raman spectroscopy, are reviewed, as are common jadeite treatments. This section also includes some attractive photos of jadeite jewelry, carvings, and other products belonging to Japanese collectors.

This is an educational book covering a number of elements that may be unfamiliar to Western readers.

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## Hope Diamond: The Legendary History of a Cursed Gem

*By Richard Kurin, 388 pp., illus., publ. by Smithsonian Books [www.smithsonianstore.com], Washington, DC, 2006. \$24.95*

What other jewel has captured the imagination and adoration of so many people as the Hope diamond? Many books have been written about the Hope, ranging from scholarly treatises to folkloric musings. This version is more of a historical journey, covering more than 300 years and three continents, featuring major and minor royal players as well as famous jewelers.

The book begins by recounting the history of what came before the Hope diamond, with rich details of 15th-century trade routes, products, customs, and systems of commerce along the thousands of miles between India and Europe. Exactly where and when the original diamond was purchased by French gem merchant Jean-Baptiste Tavernier is still unclear. Research reveals that it might have come from the former mine of Kollur in the Golconda region, which the author was successful in locating (though no mining currently takes place, as the area is a wilderness reserve). It might have been purchased from a corrupt mine supervisor (who should have turned such a stone over to the Sultan of Golconda), not from one of the mer-

chants who acted as middlemen. It is delicious that even these facts remain in question today. What is more of a puzzle is why Tavernier held on to the diamond for 15 years, through hard times—having his ship sunk, being imprisoned, finding himself in the middle of an armed conflict—and never sold it until he returned to France.

Tavernier eventually did sell the diamond, along with more than a thousand others, to King Louis XIV on December 6, 1668. It was entered into the royal accounts as 112<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ct. This is the point in time where the account of the blue diamond as we know it becomes available, as it is whittled down through its journey from one hand to another. All the historical highlights as well as the years of disappearance are there—the looting of the Crown Jewels during the French Revolution, the extravagance of England's King George IV, and the Gilded Age in America. Also fascinating is the transition of Tavernier's "beau violet" to the "French Blue of the Crown," the "George IV Diamond," and, finally, Henry Philip Hope's modest designation of "No. 1." Yet even Mr. Hope's acquisition of the diamond, like Tavernier's, is shrouded in mystery—though the author theorizes that it was discreetly sold to pay George IV's enormous debts after his death in 1830. However, we do know that the diamond that is now ensconced with high honor at the Smithsonian Institution has been slimmed down to 45.52 ct.

This book is armchair traveling at its best. It is also one of the best-researched books on the subject, with more than 50 pages of credits and sources for photographs, illustrations, text excerpts, and lyrics, with substantial endnotes and references. Should you put the book down for a while, you can bring yourself up to date with the timeline. One of the more fascinating features is the two-page appendix on the diamond's value from 1668 to 1958. This poses a real appraiser's challenge—assessing a 2007 value!

Finally, Dr. Kurin notes in the epilogue that there are 21 missing documents that could complete the historical picture of the Hope. "In all then," he says, "there are still discoveries to be made."

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## OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED

### **Precious Minerals (Gemology).**

By Ruslan I. Kostov, 453 pp., illus., publ. by PENSOFT [www.pensoft.net], Sofia, Bulgaria, 2003 [in Bulgarian; no price information available]. This is a very detailed monograph intended for mineralogists, gemologists, jewelry designers, and art critics. The first section, "Principles of Gemology," recounts the history of gemology and jewelry in the Middle East, Egypt, Greece, Rome, India, China, and the Americas. It also provides a detailed description of gems described in the Bible. The second section is devoted to the principles of crystallography and mineralogy. The third (and largest) section describes virtually all precious, semiprecious, and decorative stones, as well as metals and alloys. The last section covers methods of identification, study, faceting, and evaluation.

Also included are six appendices with lists of about 750 of the world's largest diamonds and about 150 of the largest brilliant-cut diamonds (with weight, name, color, date of discovery, and deposit), a glossary of mineral names in four languages (Bulgarian, Russian, English, and German), a dictionary of gemological materials and terminology (in Bulgarian), and two lists of stones with hardness and colors indicated.

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### **Faceting History: Cutting Diamonds and Colored Stones.**

By Glenn Klein, 242 pp., illus., publ. by the author [www.glennklein.com], Lake Forest, CA, 2005, US\$21.99. Award-winning faceter Glenn Klein chronicles the development of gem-faceting procedures and equipment over the centuries. *Faceting History* begins with background on the early appreciation of gems and the evolution of cut designs before delving into the advances made over the past hundred years. The scholarly text is well supplemented by facet diagrams and historical photos and illustrations.

STUART OVERLIN  
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### **Symposium on Agate and Cryptocrystalline Quartz.**

Daniel Kile, Thomas Michalski, and Peter Modreski, Eds., 144 pp., illus., publ. by *Friends of Mineralogy (Colorado Chapter)*, Colorado School of Mines Geology Museum, and U.S. Geological Survey, 2005, US\$20.00. The Symposium on Agate and Cryptocrystalline Quartz, held September 10–13, 2005, in Golden, Colorado, examined the mineralogy, origin, and worldwide occurrence of agate and other forms of cryptocrystalline quartz. This booklet contains summaries of 33 presentations delivered by speakers from the United States and five other countries. Accompanying the text are tables and illustrations, plus a series of color plates.

STUART OVERLIN

### **The Art of Diamond Cutting, 2nd ed.**

By Sofus S. Michelsen and Basil Watermeyer, 147 pp., illus., publ. by Sofus S. Michelsen [sofus\_sidney@direcway.com], Port Angeles, WA, 2005, US\$49.95. Intended to help the experienced colored stone faceter move into diamond cutting, this work provides basic instruction in the five steps of polishing diamonds: analyzing the rough, cleaving/sawing, bruting, blocking, and brilliantteering. Also included are a brief description of the modern diamond industry and sugges-

tions on how independent cutters can gain work and sell finished stones, a guide to grading and pricing rough diamonds, and a glossary of diamond terminology.

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### **Alexandrite.**

By Yury S. Kozlov, 143 pp., illus., publ. by Nauka Publishers [www.maik.rssi.ru], Moscow, 2005, €33.00. This mineralogical monograph, a translation of the 2003 Russian-language edition, reviews the current scientific knowledge of the titular gem. Chapters cover chemical and gemological properties, the Ural mines, crystallography, X-ray spectral analysis, and cathodoluminescence studies of alexandrite color characteristics. Also included are 60 pages of color plates of alexandrite mineral specimens as well as appendices providing information on alexandrite dealers and pricing.

THOMAS W. OVERTON

## MEDIA REVIEW

### **Aphrodite's Drop: The Power of Pearls.**

A Faction Films production [www.factionfilms.co.uk], London, 75 min., 2005, available in DVD format, £30.00. In this documentary, director Sylvia Stevens offers an engaging glimpse at the world of pearls, from their colorful past to the emergence of cultured pearls in the 20th century and today's elegant jewelry creations. *Aphrodite's Drop* takes the viewer behind the scenes of modern pearl production to reveal the difficult labor and painstaking quality control behind each of these treasures. Historic footage and exotic location shots from the South Seas cut away to interviews with industry insiders such as Ward Landrigan (Verdura), Martin Coeroli (Perles de Tahiti), Andy Muller (formerly of Golay Buchel), and Joanna Hardy (Sotheby's London).

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