

## BOOK REVIEWS

### *Amulets and Pendants in Ancient Maharashtra.*

Jyotsna Maurya. D.K. Printworld Ltd., F-52, Bali Nagar, New Delhi 110 015, India. 2000. 102 pp., 12 b&w figs., 4 maps, index. \$14.70 + \$3.00 postage (hard bound).

The region of Maharashtra was one of the most important political and economic regions of ancient India because of its important subsistence and mineral resources, its internal trade routes, and the seaports that linked it to distant foreign lands. The author attempts to use the study of amulets and pendants to provide insight into the cultural and historical developments in this region from the prehistoric to the historical period, with a major focus on the Mauryan (ca. 322-183 B.C.) and Satavahana (50 B.C. to A.D. 250) periods. In her introduction (Chapter 1), Maurya begins with a general survey of the importance of beads, amulets, and pendants. Unfortunately, here and in subsequent text, she does not make any reference to the numerous important articles on beads that have been published in India and internationally during the past 20 years.

The second chapter discusses the technological features of amulets and pendants. Here, too, the presentation is extremely brief and does not demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the available literature on bead technology. In Chapter 3, the author provides a useful summary of excavations in Maharashtra. She has compiled site coordinates and a general chronology for each site, along with a brief summary of highlights of the excavations including, where available, a list of the recovered bead types. The inconsistency in the amount of information for each site is due to the nature of her resources which range from the brief reports found in the *Indian Archaeology-Review* to more comprehensive final-excavation reports. It is difficult for the reader to pull all of the relevant information out of this chapter and it would have been

nice to have a chart comparing the types of beads found at different sites during different periods.

Chapter 4 is a brief presentation of possible source areas for different types of raw materials used in the production of stone amulets and pendants. This section is not well referenced and there are many other publications that present more detailed discussions of material resource areas.

In Chapter 5, the author embarks on a typological study of amulets and pendants that is quite confusing. Her attempt to differentiate between amulets and pendants is not very consistent and she repeatedly reverts to the use of both terms together and often in conjunction with the term "bead." By trying to differentiate between pendants and amulets, Maurya has also made a major error in terminology. The term "pendant" derives from a descriptive term for how an ornament is *worn* and the term "amulet" reflects the way in which an ornament was *used* as a protective symbol or for its powers. Many of the ornaments she calls pendants were probably used as protective amulets and, similarly, many of the so-called amulets may have simply been decorative objects that no longer had the symbolic or ritual meaning of the original object. There is no way to determine if an object was used as an "amulet" from the archaeological record or even from sculpture. It would have been more useful to use the terms "bead" and "pendant," and then discuss the various amuletic properties of the different shapes and materials that were utilized. If one overlooks this typological morass, the descriptive presentation of the different types of beads and pendants is quite informative. In addition to basic description, she is often able to link specific types of ornaments to textual references and sculptural depictions.

In Chapter 6, the author continues with this approach and provides a summary of the different

types of ornaments (beads, pendants, and amulets) and the sites at which they have been found. In this section she also tries to link the emergence of specific types of amulets to changing social, political, and religious systems. While the discussion is somewhat disconnected and is not fully supported with references, it does raise some important issues that need to be pursued through future research. Perhaps the most important themes relate to internal trade and exchange networks and linkages to external regions.

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*South East African Beadwork, 1850-1910: From Adornment to Artefact to Art.*

**Michael Stevenson and Michael Graham-Stewart (eds.).** Fernwood Press, Vlaeberg, South Africa. 2000. 192 pp., index. South African rands 295.00 (about \$32.00 + postage)(hard cover).

In this book, the beadwork and many of the archive illustrations are from the collections of the editors. Sandra Klopper, of the University of Cape Town, has contributed an Introductory Essay. This has the subheadings: Early Collectors; Beads vs. Indigenous Materials; The Changing Fortunes of Beads; Fashion vs. The Symbolic Use of Colour; Looking for Meaning in Style: Ethnicity vs. Regionalism; The Creative Role of Women; The Role of Beadwork in the Articulation of Male and Female Power and Influence; and Revisiting the Past: Proud Owners of Beadwork in the Late 20th Century.

Most of the pieces are without documentation and are identified by analogy with other published material, though some do have the collector's documentation, such as those acquired by Alfred John Gregory who was in the Cape Colony between 1891 and 1914, some of that time as Medical Officer of Health. Most of his pieces are attributed to the Mfengu, otherwise known as the Fingo. This leads me to raise the matter of the two maps in the volume which have

been taken from *An Atlas of African History* by J.D. Fage. "Fingoland" is shown on the first map, along with a few other tribal areas, but there is no indication on either map of where the Drakensberg range is, even though a number of the beadwork pieces are attributed to this area. It really would have been better to use maps with far less detail (much of it irrelevant to this book), but showing the tribes and areas referred to in the text, and using, for example, Mfengu rather than Fingoland.

The endnotes appear to be designed to incorporate a bibliography so, while authors and titles are indeed given, it does mean that the reader may have to search backwards through the notes to find the relevant title. A properly arranged bibliography is a surprising omission. The index is comprehensive and well laid out.

The pictures of the actual beadwork are of excellent quality and presented in a straightforward manner, whether in total view or in detail—prime requisites for studying beadwork appearance and technique. They are grouped by area, tribal attribution, and object type. Sandra Klopper's Introductory Essay, accompanied by archival illustrative material, some of it from Michael Graham-Stewart's collection, provides a logically arranged and clear background to the whole subject of South African beadwork. As a visual presentation of an insufficiently known assemblage of African beadwork, this volume will be useful as a tool for further research.

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*Ancient Glass in the Israel Museum: Beads and Other Small Objects.*

**Maud Spaer, with contributions by Dan Barag, Tallay Ornan, and Tamar Neuhaus.** The Israel Museum, P.O. Box 71117, Jerusalem 91710, Israel. 2001. 384 pp., 51 color plates, 101 b&w figs., notes, indexes. \$93.00 + \$24.00 shipping (paper cover).