# CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS		xvii
MAPS		<b>x</b> i
FIGURES		xiii
TABLES		xvi
PREFACE		xix
CHAPTER 1:	FOLKLORE AND OBSERVATIONS	
	TO THE ADVENT OF SCIENTIFIC ENQUIRY	1
	The oyster and the raindrop 1	
	India 1	
	The Classical West 3	
	Arabs, Persians, and Jews 5	
	China 7	
	The Medieval and Early Modern West 7	
	The Americas 8	
	Animal "stones" and animal "pearls" 8	
	India 9	
	China 10	
	The pearl as embryo 13	
	Vegetable "pearls" 14	
	The advent of scientific enquiry 14	
CHAPTER 2:	BIOLOGY, DISTRIBUTION, AND ECOLOGY	23
	Scientific classification and nomenclature 23	
	Phylum and Class 23	
	Subclass to Family 23	
	Genera-Pteria and Pinctada 23	
	Other genera, marine and freshwater 27	
	Pinctada spp. 29	
	DISTRIBUTION 29	
	ECOLOGY 32	
	The advance of scientific enquiry 36	

#### CHAPTER 3: THE MOST ANCIENT EAST

42

Egypt before the Ptolemies 42

Mesopotamia, Eastern Arabia, and the Plateau of Iran 44

Archaeological evidence 44

Dilmun and the Epic of Gilgamesh 47

The Phoenicians 48

Eye-stones, fish-eyes, and other textual evidence 49

The Old Persian (Achaemenid) Empire 50

Margaritēs 52

The Mediterranean and the Levant 55

India 57

Archaeological pearls and mother-of-pearl 57

The Vedas and the Brābmaņas 58

The Laws of Manu 59

The Purānas 59

The Rāmayāṇa and the Mahābhārata 59

Panini's Aştādbyāyī 60

The Arthasastra 60

Jainism, Buddhism, and ancient Sri Lanka 63

The Early Greeks 65

China 65

Archaeological pearls 65

References to pearls 66

### CHAPTER 4:

### THE CLASSICAL WORLD: GREEKS AND ROMANS AND THEIR EASTERN NEIGHBORS

80

Pearl-fishing 80

Trade, embassies, and plunder 83

The use of pearls 89

The Graeco-Roman world 89

The Eastern Borderlands: Parthia and Sassania 93

#### CHAPTER 5:

## THE ARABO-PERSIAN WORLD, SEVENTH TO FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

105

Culture worlds and the expansion of Islam 105

Sources 107

Nomenclature and the use of pearls 109

Nomenclature 109

Lapidaries 111

Medicine 112

Treasure, personal jewelry, and decoration 114

Symbolism 116

Artificial pearls 119

Pearl-fishing 119

Red Sea 119

East Africa and the Gulf of al-Yaman 121

The Persian Gulf, the Gulf of 'Omān, and South East Arabia 123

India and Sri Lanka 129

China and South East Asia 131

Trade in pearls 132

India, South East Asia, and China 132

The Levant 137

#### CHAPTER 6:

INDIA

152

Nomenclature 153

Indo-Āryan 153

Dravidian 154

Indonesian 156

Pearl-fishing 157

Trade in pearls 165

The use of pearls 168

Treasure 168

Jewelry 169

Tribute, gifts, and booty 170

Temples and shrines 171

Iconography 173

Symbolism and the supernatural 176

Ratna 178

Maṇi 179

Lunar associations 179

Amulets 180

Медісіпе 181

#### CHAPTER 7: THE CHINESE WORLD

192

Pearls in Chinese culture 192

Nomenclature 193

Freshwater pearls of China and Central and East Asia 195

Marine pearls 198

Chinese territorial expansion 198

The central coast 198

The south coast 199

Pearls from overseas 203

Persians, Arabs, and Indians 203

Chinese knowledge of pearl-fishing overseas 204

Chinese maritime expansion 208

Centers of trade in pearls 211

Tribute in pearls 213

The use of pearls 215

Treasure 215

x

Jewelry and decoration 216

Pearl-embroidered silks in China, Central Asia and beyond 217

Headdress 224

Iconography of Central Asia 228

Materia medica and the supernatural 233

CHAPTER 8: THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

250

The Eastern Empire 250

The West and the North 254
The supply of pearls 254

Pearls in medieval literature 258

Nomenclature 258 Lapidaries 259 Alchemy 261

Treasure and ornament 263

CHAPTER 9: THE AGE OF DISCOVERIES: THE OLD WORLD

276

Europe and European maritime expansion 276

South East Asia 281

Oceania 284 Melanesia 285 Polynesia 287

CHAPTER 10: THE AGE OF DISCOVERIES: THE NEW WORLD

292

Native America 292

Shells 292

Pearls 299

Nomenclature 302

Archaeological evidence 306

European reports 307

AZTEC MEXICO 307

EL MAR DEL SUR 309

las antillas and tierra firme 313

Brazil and the chaco 315

SOUTHEASTERN NORTH AMERICA 316

European Enterprise 318

La Costa de las Perlas 318 El Mar del Sur 329

The New World and the Old 331

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS CITED

347

INDICES

407