

SELECTED TEXTS ON EMERALDS, SAPPHIRES AND RUBIES

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EMERALDS

AN ABRIDGED HISTORY

ANCIENT TIMES

The journey of emerald originated in Pharaonic Egypt, in the Sikhait-Zubara region, located in the Red Sea Hills desert south of Cairo. Although the exact discovery of the legendary "Cleopatra's mines" remains a mystery, historical researches record that mining of these deposits started as early as the 12th Dynasty (2000-1788 BC). Exploitation will only become extensive from 330 BC during the Greco-Roman world and remained so until 1237 AD, reign of Sultan Al-Kamil. Abandoned by approximately 1740, their exact location was eventually forgotten and rediscovered by French explorer F. Caillaud in 1816. (...) Until the discovery of the New World, the Egyptian mines of Djebel Sikait, or Gebel Zabara, will remain as such the unique source of emeralds to the Ancient World. (...)

THE NEW WORLD

While the Egyptian and Greco-Roman worlds, the Byzantine and Indian civilizations sprang up to the East, Great Empires such as the Incas, Mayas, Toltecs and Aztecs to name but a few flourished in the Americas. Not only were they famed for their spectacular and refined constructions and for their mastery of astronomy and mathematics, they were also renowned for their meticulous gold-work and made an extensive use emeralds in their jewelry and objects of worship. Highly prized by the Indians long before the Conquistadores discovered the New World in 1492 (archeologists believe that the pre-Colombian tribes started mining and trading the green gem as early as 1000 AD), the Spaniards were to encounter emeralds as far South as Peru and Chile, and as far north as Mexico during their conquest.

"In one of the houses, which was the richest, there was the figure of the sun, very large and made of gold, very ingeniously worked, and enriched with many precious stones. They had also a garden, the clods of which were made of pieces of fine gold (...) Besides all this, there was a great quantity of jars of gold and silver, all set with emeralds."

Pedro Cieza de León (1520-1554), Conquistador and chronicler of Peru

With the discovery of the Muzo mines, started the dazzling journey of the finest gem quality emeralds from the Colombian Andes to the old continent. Between 1600 and 1820, when Spain controlled the Colombian mines, one fifth of the finest emeralds were reserved by the 'Mina Real' (Royal Mine) for the Spanish Court, while other finest gemstones would enrich the Indian treasures of the Mughal period. (...)

USE OF THE GREEN GEM – FROM ANCIENT TIMES TO THE MIDDLE AGE AS AN ADORNMENT

*"... ivory clothed the hall, and fixed upon the doors with labor rare shells of the tortoise gleamed,
from Indian seas, with frequent emeralds studded.
There in her fatal beauty lay the Queen
thick daubed with unguents and faint beneath the weight of gems and gold."*

Lucanus, Roman poet (39-65 AD)

Although inscription connecting Cleopatra's reign with the mining of emerald are nonexistent, poetry and other texts of the early Roman Period testify the Queen of the Nile's love for emerald. It is said that her palaces were decorated with the green gem and she used to adorn herself with emerald jewellery. Pliny the Elder (AD 23-79), Plutarch (AD 49-120) and other Roman poets attest on numerous occasions the extravagance of the Queen and her love for emerald that she favored amongst all other gemstones (...)

While gold was the most highly valued metal in Imperial Rome, emeralds were one of the most valued gemstones. In his classification on precious stones, Pliny the Elder ranked *smaragdus* third, after *adamas* and after the *pearls*. (*Historia Naturalis* Chap. 18.), further pointing out that one of the "defects" of the green stone was "its exorbitant prices". (...)

PHARMACEUTIC USE

In Ancient Egypt, when crushed and used as a powder, emerald was believed to have medicinal power. Although it was also used as an amulet in Pharaonic Egypt, only a small number of them have been found in ancient tombs. According to early texts of Arabic writer, Ahmad Al-Tifashi (1184-1253) "the best quality emerald will protect anyone who wears it in necklace or a ring from epilepsy. If it is given to drink to someone who has been bitten or poisoned, it will save him from death." Emerald was also said to heal and cure liver, and would relieve stomach aches if worn above the stomach. If a snake looked upon the finest quality emerald, their eyes will burst on the spot. Furthermore not only devils will not come near the ones who wear it, they will also flee the place where an emerald is found.

In his *Historia Naturalis*, Pliny the Elder states that "When the surface of the *smaragdus* is flat, it reflects the image of objects in the same manner as a mirror". Emperor Nero was watching his gladiators through *smaragdus* lens meant to increase his visual sharpness, and Julius Casear himself was praising the green stone for their supposed healing powers. Later again, Pliny comments on the stone's healing power: "No color is more attractive than their color. Furthermore it is the only gem that satisfies without tiring the eyes". (Book 37, 62). Staring at *smaragdi* was at that time recommended to restaure the sight and Roman jewelers would often sooth their strained eyes by looking at or through emeralds while they worked. During the Greco-Roman world (332 BC - 395 AD), the color green was considered to be very important for the health of the eyes and so emerald seemed to have taken an amuletic function to protect vision. "*Collyrium stamps*" made of green scheastite and green schiste were used in Gaul, Southern Brittany and Western Germany, both the green color and the type of stone were believed to have healing attributes able to infuse the medicines with additional healing properties. (P. Baker, *The Archaeology of Medicine in the Greco-Roman World*)

Inspired by the classical heritage of Pliny, the Middle Ages developed a strong tradition including a specific literary genre *Lapidarium* (Latin *lapis*: stone), treating symbolic virtues and properties of stones and minerals. An entire chapter of a late medieval *lapidarium* by Majorcan philosopher, mystic and poet, Raymond Lull (1232-1315), is devoted to the virtues and properties of the emerald : "We saw that as long as we carried it, we healed many suffering falling sickness. By virtue of this stone we also stopped tempests. We tried it on exhausted travelers who immediately recovered from the labors of the long travel." (...)

MYSTIC ASSOCIATION

In Ancient Egypt, emerald is devoted to the deity Hathor, daughter of the Sun God *Re*. Also known as the "Eye of Re", the Lady of the Universe was seen as the supreme Goddess of Love and she was also protecting women during pregnancy and childbirth. As a deity of fertility and moisture, the Supreme Lady was also associated with the inundations of the Nile. It is certainly easy to see how the rich and lavishly green emerald would inspire such attributes in such a dry and arid region.

The Greeks and the Romans too would link the green gem with their Goddesses of Love, respectively Aphrodite and Venus. Much later, during the Middle-Age, emerald helps difficult birth. For centuries, the magnificent green of emerald remained the color of beauty and love, conveying harmony and fertility.

According to Indian lore, the name *emerald* was first translated from Sanskrit as *Marakata*, meaning "the green of growing things" and the Vedas mentions that emerald provides good luck and enhances well-being. During the development of Ayurvedic medicine, it was used as a curative gemstone and described as a "cold and sweet stone". *Garalari*, "enemy of poison", is one of the name by which emerald was also called.

Supposedly Prophet Muhammed's favorite color, his writings abounding with references to the color green, the vibrant hue of emerald is regarded as the traditional color of Islam and is as such highly praised by the Muslim world. In Islamic civilization, holy Mount Qaf (*Jabal Qaf* or *Djebel Qaf*) is said to be entirely made of emeralds. Meeting point between earth and sky, border between the observable universe and the unseen world, the sacred mountain is inaccessible to all men and only God knows of the creatures living there. (...)

CORUNDUMS

A SUMMARY

In the Greco-Roman world, gem names were used to describe a color rather than a particular gemstone. For instance, the term used to describe ruby, *carbunculus*, could also describe any other red stone, such as garnet or spinel. *Hyacinthus*, used for describing sapphire, was also used for other stones of a yellow and blue color, such as topaz, zircon...

Derived from Tamil *kurundam* "ruby sapphire", and Sanskrit *kuruvinda*, which is of unknown origin, the term *corundum* "very hard mineral," will only be in use in the West in the 18th century (...) Like the Indians, the Arabs were rather advanced on the topic. Arabic scholars during the second half of the first millennium AD speak of *Yakut*, a term used for corundum and a few other gemstones. It is believed that red *Yakut* is correctly translated to ruby. (...) During the 11th century, Muslim of Persian origin Al-Biruni (973-1048), one of the greatest scholars of the medieval Islamic era, and very knowledgeable about physics, mathematics, astronomy and natural sciences, conducted specific gravity determinations on a whole series of gemstones. His findings are very accurate; listing a specific gravity of 3.85 for ruby.

The increased contact with the advanced Arabic scholars from the 11th century and later on the invention of movable print during the last years of the Middle Ages engendered a new level of knowledge and awareness among European readers which, combined with a growing mineralogical consciousness, will encourage the West to recognize both ruby and sapphire as corundum in 1802. And so the West had to wait the work, first of French mineralogist Jean-Baptiste Louis Romé de l'Isle (1736-1790), regarded as one of the creators of modern crystallography, and later on the essay of 'Count de Bournon for ruby and sapphire to be formally united under the heading of corundum in 1802'. (Hughes)

In India however this terminology was known and used since antique times (...) According to ancient Indian works on gemology, gems are classified as *Maharatna* ('great gems') and *Uparatna* (precious and semi-precious stones – 'secondary gems'). Among the nine well-known precious gems *yacin* (diamond), *mukta* (pearl), *manikya* (ruby), *indranila* (sapphire), *marakata* (emerald), *vidruma* (coral), *gomeda* (hessonite), *pusparaga* (topaz) and *vaidurya* (lapis lazuli). The first five are classified as *Maharatna* and the last four as *Uparatna*.

The *Kalpa Tree*, a symbolic offering to the gods of the Hindus, is described in the work '*Mani Mala*' as being composed entirely of precious stones: the roots of sapphire, the base of the trunk diamond, leading to topaz, and then cat's eye, the leaves were of zircon, the newer leaves of emeralds and coral, and rubies were the ripe fruit of this magnificent tree. One of the ceremonial offerings of the Hindus consisted of gifts of gems and jewellery to the temples of various gods. Of those who gave the gift of rubies, the text of '*Haiti Smriti*' says: "He who worships Krishna with rubies will be reborn as a powerful emperor; if with a small ruby, he will be born a king."

Ayurveda medicine, regarded by some as one of the most advanced and ancient forms of healing, and in accord with the ancient Indian system of astronomy and astrology, also known as *Vedic* wisdom, makes use of rubies and sapphires since Ancient Times. Supernatural powers were attributed to gems in India and one way this was manifested was the interdependence between gems and planets. Associated with the Sun, ruby was the Lord of Gems, for the Sun lorded over all the planets. Sapphire was associated with Saturn (Wojtilla, 1973). (...)

SERENE SAPPHIRES

"When a man is riding through this desert by night and for some reason - falling asleep or anything else - he gets separated from his companions and wants to rejoin them, he hears spirit voices talking to him as if they were his companions, sometimes even calling him by name. Often these voices lure him away from the path and he never finds it again, and many travelers have got lost and died because of this....

For this reason bands of travelers make a point of keeping very close together.

Before they go to sleep they set up a sign pointing in the direction in which they have to travel, and round the necks of all their beasts they fasten little bells, so that by listening to the sound they may prevent them from straying off the path."

The Travels of Marco Polo, circa 1300

A BRIEF HISTORY

According to the earliest Sanskrit texts, the traditional source of sapphire (and of ruby) is Sri Lanka. Further records indicate that the blue gem was mined in Chanthaburi, Thailand during the 15th century, in Mogok, Myanmar as early as 1597 AD. Much later in 1880 would the most famous of all be discovered in Kashmir. (...)

Although the Egyptians as well as the ancient Greeks and Romans often refer to *sapphire*, most scholars agree that they were probably referring to lapis lazuli. Pliny the Elder gives a description of *sappir* as being like the "night sky spangled with stars", while Greek scientist Theophrastus (372-287 BC) in his 'Book on Stones' described "*sappir* spotted with gold". Both descriptions apply to lapis lazuli, mined in Afghanistan as early as the 7th millennium BCE, and found in many archeological digs of ancient civilizations, including specimens in King Tutankhamun's tomb dating 1350 BC. Evidences also show that powdered lapis was used as an eyeshadow by Queen Cleopatra and Egyptian ladies (...)

Accurate accounts of sapphires, most probably coming from Ceylon, were used in Etruscan pieces of jewellery (600-275 BC), and later by the Greeks and Romans from 480 BC onwards (Ball). Accounts on the blue gem, of Ceylon origin, were also made by Pliny the Elder and by Greek mathematician, astronomer, geographer and astrologer Ptolemy (100-170 AD). A combination of archeological evidences and written texts dating from the Ancient Rome makes evident that sapphires were used as amulets (carved items) as early as the 3rd century CE – e.g. text on stones' engraving using diamond of Latin grammarian and compiler Gaius Julius Solinus. (G.E. Harlow, *The Nature of Diamonds*, 1998). (...)

MYTHS, BELIEFS AND LEGENDS

In India, gems have been admired and valued not only for their external beauty and appearance, but also for their medical virtues and astrological virtues, as well as for their spiritual, magical and supra-natural powers since ancient times. Amongst others, the *Manasara*, a classic architectural manual dating as far back as 5,000 years ago, makes mention of how Indian architects used gemstones to decorate and protect the palaces of Kings. One of the most famous Indian works on gemmology is S.M. Tagore's "*Mani-Mala*" or "*Treatise on Gems*". (...)

In the Greco-Roman World - The ancient Greeks associated sapphire with Apollo, God of music, poetry, art, oracles, archery, plague, medicine, sun, light and knowledge. Whereas in the Roman world, the blue gem has for long been associated with the planet Venus, her counterpart being Aphrodite for the Ancient Greece. (...)

The connection to the concepts of knowledge and wisdom was transmitted through ages and centuries, to the medieval monarchs who wore sapphires to help them rule wisely. Evidence the Imperial State Crown of the United Kingdom, which is set with two famous sapphires, one of which was worn by Edward the Confessor at his coronation in 1042. While *almandine* enjoyed particular popularity as a royal gem in early Middle Ages, sapphire would soon take over : "The sapphire is the finest of gems, the most precious and the most suitable for the fingers of kings", wrote Bishop of Rennes Marbode (1035-1123). Known as an antidote to poison, the blue gem was also sought after for its healing virtues, and was ascribed especially for the eyes. (...)

During the Middle Age in Europe, gemstones, including sapphires, were not only valued for their beauty but also for a certain Christian symbolism attached to them, looking at their references made in the Bible. (...) In the 12th century, Pope Innocent III ordered that the ring of Bishop should be of gold set with a sapphire and a century later, the lapidary of Louis IX, also known as St Louis, proclaimed: "reflecting on this stone leads one's soul to celestial meditation" - "La méditation sur cette pierre amène l'âme à la contemplation des Cieux". (...)

VELVET SAPPHIRES FROM KASHMIR

*"The celebrated land of Kashmir
situated as a diamond in the crown of the Himalayas excels the beauty par excellence"*

Shri Chitkara

THE LAND

Nestled among legendary Himalayan peaks at India's northwestern tip, Kashmir covers approximately 222,236 km², making it about the same size as United Kingdom. Surrounded by China, the Indian states of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Valley of Kashmir is most poetically described by Sir Walter Lawrence (1857-1940) in his book "The Valley of Kashmir" as "an emerald set in pearls, a land of lakes, clear streams, green turf, magnificent trees and mighty mountains, where the air is cool and the water is sweet, where men are strong, and women vie with the soil in fruitfulness."

An ancient text from Kashmir, the *Nilamatapurana* (6th to 8th century AD) refers to Kashmir as the Vale of Gods, created out of water and left to the care of the Nagas. In the beginning, human beings were allowed to dwell in the valley for only six months of the year during the summer and had to leave during the winter due to the excessive cold weather. However once the Lord of Nagas, Nila ("dark blue" in Sanskrit) agreed at a Brahmana's prayer that men could live in the valley during the winter as well.

HISTORY OF THE MINES

In such a legendary and gemmy land, at an altitude of no less than 4,500m, the famous and most exquisite sapphires were to be unveiled for the first time in the Paddar region, south of the Zanskar district. Although the exact discovery date is unknown - geologist Ball reports 1879-1880 and La Touche lists 1881-1882 - both geologists Mallet (1882) and La Touche (1890) agree that the discovery of the velvety blue gem was the result of a landslide that occurred in 1881. At first skeptical, itinerant merchants traded the blue stone for salt on a weight to weight basis, eventually the sapphires were sent down to the summer capital of India, Simla, where they were accurately identified in 1882. (...)

In addition to illegal mining, poaching and theft, the very inhospitable environment, high altitude and severe winters with snow covering all, is a continuous problem, limiting the mining to a very short period of only 3 months during the best years (from July after the snow has melted to September), dropping some years at a maximum of 15 days (Middlemiss, 1931).

From 1911, mining done by local poachers has alternated with official works encountered by several companies acquainted by the Kashmir government to further investigate the area and make detailed mapping of both the Old and the New Mines. Yet with very disappointing results, especially in terms of quality, and even during the best years, the sapphires' quality never matched the first discoveries. Year 1967 saw the end of the Maharaja of Kashmir's power and control of the mines fell in the hands of state government Jammu and Kashmir. Access to the Paddar region was strictly forbidden to foreigners until 1979 and in 1981 when D. Atkinson and Dr. Kothavala, first outside geologists allowed to visit the area in many years, the Kashmir mines were inactive. Government still continued to discuss possible leasing in 1982 and since 1994 the mining region has been under rebel territory.

PAST, PRESENT ... FUTURE

Major fine gem quality sapphires of larger sizes have been produced only sporadically, from 1881 to 1887, in the Old Mine. During that time very large crystals have been found, including "one large piece, bigger than a polo or croquet ball, and others smaller, all of a rich blue color", while others were reported to be "superficially as large as florins" (Middlemiss, 1931), and one could imagine that these stones weighed over 20cts. (...)

A very brief 6-7 year period was therefore enough for the fine gem to establish its reputation of excellency in the gem world. And to be praised by the finest jewelers and collectors there and after. The mines are still not operating today, yet through local trade, the only way for the very few sapphires to emerge out of the Paddar Valley and be sold in Dehli, a handful of fine stones journey each year to the international trading centers around the globe. (...)

Until peace is achieved, one shall treasure the rarity of the deep velvety blue gem and just like the prayers of Kashmir inhabitants to remain in their land for the full year were once granted by Nila, the Lord of Nagas may concede for the gem of His Land to be further exposed to the outside world.

THE ENCHANTED WORLD OF RUBIES

*Je te donnerai une bague enchantée;
Quand tu en retourneras le rubis tu seras invisible,
Comme les princes dans les contes de fées.*

Les chants de Maldoror (1869)
Isidore Ducasse, dit comte de Lautréamont

*An enchanted ring will I give to you:
Turning its ruby, you will become invisible,
Like fairytale princes.*

AN ABRIDGED HISTORY

Although the exact discovery and first use of rubies are unknown, historical records and early examples suggest their origin is Sri Lanka. Ancient texts and poems such as Mahavamsa "Great Chronicle", composed in the late 5th or early 6th century CE by Venerable Mahanama Thera, mentions about a myriad of gemstones, including sapphires, pearls and rubies.

Possibly a source for ruby since paleolithic and neolithic times, the exact date of when rubies were first discovered in *Mogok*, Myanmar is unknown, yet historical records indicate that the Tract has been worked since at least 1597 AD and the locality is mentioned at length in ancient legends. Afghan ruby mines '*Jagdalek*' have been worked for more than 700 years, with records of Muslim merchants having sold rubies to the likes of Kublai Khan in the 1200s. Accounts of gem mining in the *Chanthaburi-Trat* area – East Thailand - was first reported at *Khao Ploi Waen* – 'Pagoda Hill' or 'Hill of Gems' - in 1850 when the Shans and Burmese were mining sapphires here. (...)

The gems of Madagascar were first described in 1547 but it has taken the world 400 years to see the importance of these deposits. More recently, *East African countries*, such as Tanzania (*Winza* mines discovered in 1950's) and the south eastern region of Kenya with *Mangari* deposit discovered by American geologists John Saul and Elliot Miller who claimed a mining lease over the mine in 1973. Sadly they never got to work the mine and were quickly chased out of the country. Rubies in Vietnam first made their appearance in the north of the country in the province of Luc Yen, yet the potential of these deposits were only recognized in the end of the 1980's followed by commercial mining began. In 2008, a new ruby deposit has been found at the border to Zambia in Mozambique. (...)

THROUGHOUT TIME AND AGES, USE AND SYMBOLIC

In India - Legends said that God first created ruby and later created man to possess it. Ruby was given the name of 'Ratnaraj' literally meaning 'King of Gemstones' and 'Ratnanayaka' meaning 'leader of precious stones'. Another name used was 'Padmaraga' meaning 'Red as the Lotus'.

Greco Roman world - Accounts of red stones that could be ruby in the writings of Greek philosopher of the Peripatetic school Theophrastus (c. 371 - c. 287 BC) make reference of red stones that "resemble a hot coal when viewed with the sun behind it". Theophrastus calls this stone *anthrax*, which could as well describe any other (red) gem than ruby, i.e. garnet, spinel. Referring on Theophrastus for his authority, Pliny also mentions red stones, yet it is equally as the term *carbunculus* was used to describe more than one (gem) specie. Greeks legends speak about huge rubies which were given to Heraclea by the female stork to lighten her room as a token of her kindness.

China - Similar myth of using the red sparkling gem to lighten rooms is also mentioned in early Chinese texts. Early recorded transport and trading of rubies are mentioned in texts on the *North Silk Road* of China, wherein about 200 BC rubies were carried along this ancient trackway moving westward from China. Kublai Khan (1215-1294), Mongolian general and statesman, and grandson of Genghis Khan conquered China and became the first emperor of the Yuan, or Mongol, dynasty. It is said that he offered an entire city in exchange for a sizeable ruby (Kunz). During the Qing dynasty (1644-1911/12), the governor of a Chinese province, *Mandarin*, was signified by wearing a hat-pin made of ruby. Whereas the lower ranks of *Mandarins* were signified by hat-pins made of coral, sapphire, lapis lazuli, white jade, gold, and silver.

MIDDLE AGE, EUROPE

Associated with wealth and royalty, the sanguine gem was one of the most sought-after gemstones of European crowns, followed by the nobility and upper classes, and many medieval Europeans wore rubies to guarantee health, wealth, wisdom, and success in love. Composed by Spanish mystic and poet Raymond Lull (1232/33,1315/16), the twenty-fourth chapter of a late medieval *Lapidarium* is entitled "On the virtues of *carbuncle*, or ruby, and how it is the master of all stones", listing its many and powerful virtues: "If you wear it on you, neither spiritual poison can harm you, nor air, nor water, however poisonous it would be, nor even the sight of a Basilisk."

After the serene blue of the sapphire came the majesty of the ruby "which shines so greatly in the night, that it sends flames into the eyes", declared 13th-century scholastic and member of the Franciscan order, Bartholomew Anglicus, also known as Bartholomew the Englishman. (...) Composed by Ragiel under the influence of Hebrew and Greco-Roman tradition about the thirteenth century, the "Book of Wings" lists the power of gemstones when engraved with a specific representation. "The fact that the design is on its appropriate stone is always insisted on". (Kunz) "The beautiful and terrible figure of a dragon : if this is found on a ruby or any other stone of similar nature and virtue, it has the power to augment the goods of this world and makes the wearer joyous and healthy." Sir John Mandeville, in his 14th century travel memoir which first circulated between 1357 and 1371, stated several virtues for ruby as well. According to him, the sparkling red gem ensures its owners and wearers peace and harmony, protects them from their enemies and would guide their houses and property. The treatise advised that the ruby should be set in a ring or a bracelet and should be worn on the left side of the heart.

LATE MIDDLE AGE AND RENAISSANCE

After 80 years of hard trials Vasco Da Gama succeeded in finding a direct sea route from Europe to India in 1497. Not only would this route allow the Portuguese to have direct access to the precious and highly sought after spices from the Far-East, it also enabled European merchants to obtain gemstones directly from India and Sri Lanka. As a result, the influx of gemstones into Europe was greater than ever in the 16th century. Both the influx of diamonds from India, and of sapphires and rubies from Ceylon would increase immensely during this period and for some time Lisbon replaced Venice as the main trading center for Indian gems. The Portuguese later occupied Sri Lanka, establishing direct access to the Ceylon corundum deposits. As for Burmese rubies, they were highly prized because of their supreme color.(...)

Although the Biblical themes dear to the Middle Ages were still popular throughout the Renaissance and remained to some extent a source of inspiration for jewellery designers and artists, new styles from Italy started spreading north gradually over the 16th century. Meanwhile, although colored stones such as sapphires, well-favored by the royalty during the Middle-Age, remained very popular, ruby and emerald became the most sought after gemstones. And so much like the Greeks once called ruby "the mother of all gems" and the Romans prized it above the diamonds, calling the red gem "a flower among stones", distinguished jeweler Benvenuto Cellini declared in 1560 that the price of a ruby was eight times that of diamonds. (...)

MODERN DAYS

Ruby has captured the imagination of many civilizations around the globe and has always been associated with valour and courage, as well as good fortune, fame, joy and power.

Emerging sciences have been emphasizing the great powers of colors and their related gemstones, and somehow the ancient notion that associated ruby with passion is being nowadays backed-up by spectrum analysis, as red rays have been proven to be warming, energizing and stimulating while blue-violet light is calming. As George Fredrick Kunz remarked: "It is impossible to over-estimate the effect of color in determining the supposed influence of gems upon the fortunes or health of the wearers. Not only are gems such as a fine ruby aesthetically pleasing, but the influence of the rays of light cannot be discounted". (...)

Symbolizing power and fame to some, joy and luck to others, the fiery glowing gem has inspired over the centuries monarchs and great empires, sparkling artists' imagination, and very much remains for all a symbol of love and passion.

COEUR DE RUBIS

Je sais dire je t'aime
Mais j'sais pas aimer
Ton cœur de rubis
Qu'est-ce que j'en ai fait ?

J'ai joué à l'amour
J'savais même pas jouer
Ton cœur de rubis
Qu'est-ce que j'en ai fait ?

La vitre est brisée
L'magasin fermé
L'satin déchiré
L'écrin piétiné

Je voulais t'avoir
J'voulais t'posséder
Je jouais à l'amour
J'ai seul'ment triché

Ton cœur de rubis
Qu'est-ce que j'en ai fait ?
Maintenant c'est trop tard
J'ai tout saccagé

Ton cœur de rubis
J'peux même pas le fourguer
Y a pas d'recéleur
Pour l'amour volé.

Jacques Prévert

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