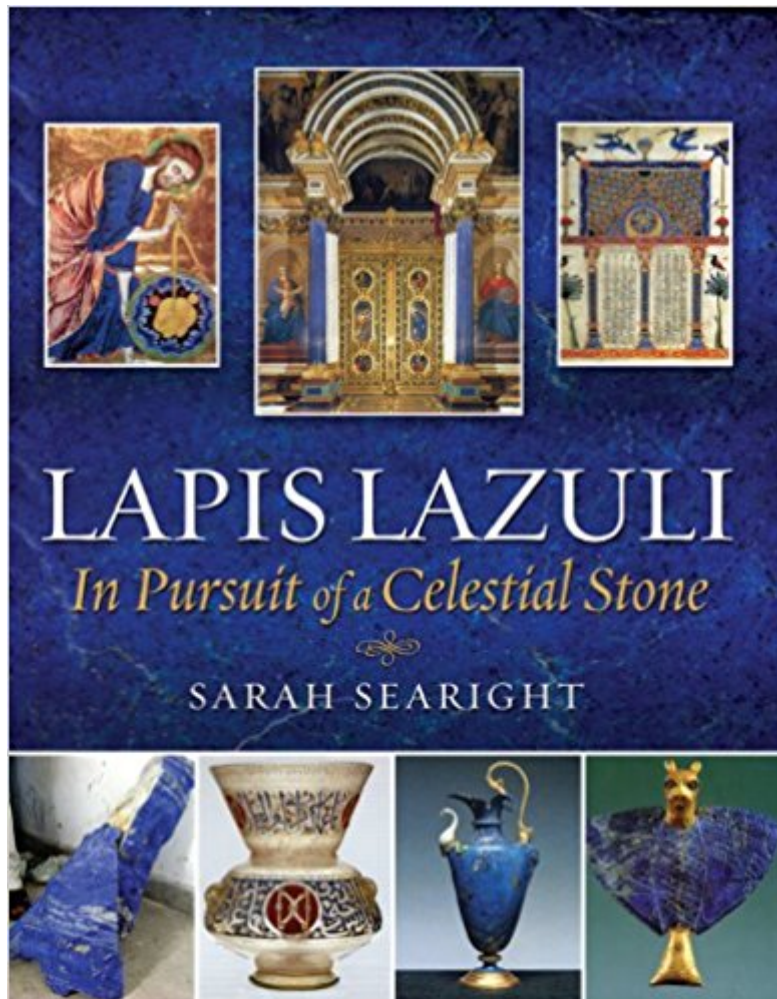


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Lapis Lazuli: In Pursuit Of A Celestial Stone



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Customer Reviews

Lapis Lazuli: In Pursuit of a Celestial Stone (Sarah Searight, London: East and West Publishing, 2010, reprinted 2013); Gemstones of Afghanistan (Gary W. Bowersox and Bonita E. Chamberlin, Tucson, AZ: Geoscience Press, 1995); Afghanistan's Blue Treasure Lapis Lazuli (Lailee McNair Bakhtiar, n.p.: Front Porch Publishing, 2011); Fayzabad, Afghanistan: Including Its History, the Lapis Lazuli Guest House, and More (Sandra Wilkins, n.p.: Earth Eyes Travel Guides, 2012). Your reviewer first became familiar with lapis lazuli while working as an archaeologist in northern Afghanistan during the mid-1960s. Lapis lazuli (sometimes abbreviated as lapis) is a relatively rare semi-precious stone that has been prized since prehistoric times for its intense blue color. In the main, it is formed from a complex mixture of feldspathoid silicate minerals: hauyne $(\text{NaCa})_4\text{-(SO}_4,\text{S)}_1\text{-2(Al}_6\text{Si}_6\text{O}_{24})$ which gives the blue color; sodalite $\text{Na}_8\text{Cl}_2(\text{Al}_6\text{Si}_6\text{O}_{24})$, nosean $(\text{Na}_8(\text{SO}_4)\text{Al}_6\text{Si}_6\text{O}_{24})$ and lazurite $(\text{NaCa})_8(\text{AlSiO}_4)_6(\text{S},\text{SO}_4,\text{Cl})_1\text{-2}$. Lapis usually occurs in crystalline limestone or marble as a result of contact metamorphism. Most lapis lazuli also contains calcite (white), sodalite (blue), and pyrite (metallic yellow) sometimes with minor inclusions of augite, diopside, enstatite, mica, amphibole, feldspar, apatite, titanite (sphene), zircon, or hornblende. Some forms may contain trace amounts of sulfur-rich $\text{I}^{\text{A}}\text{llingite}$ (geyerite variety). Because lapis is a rock of varying composition, its physical properties are variable.

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