

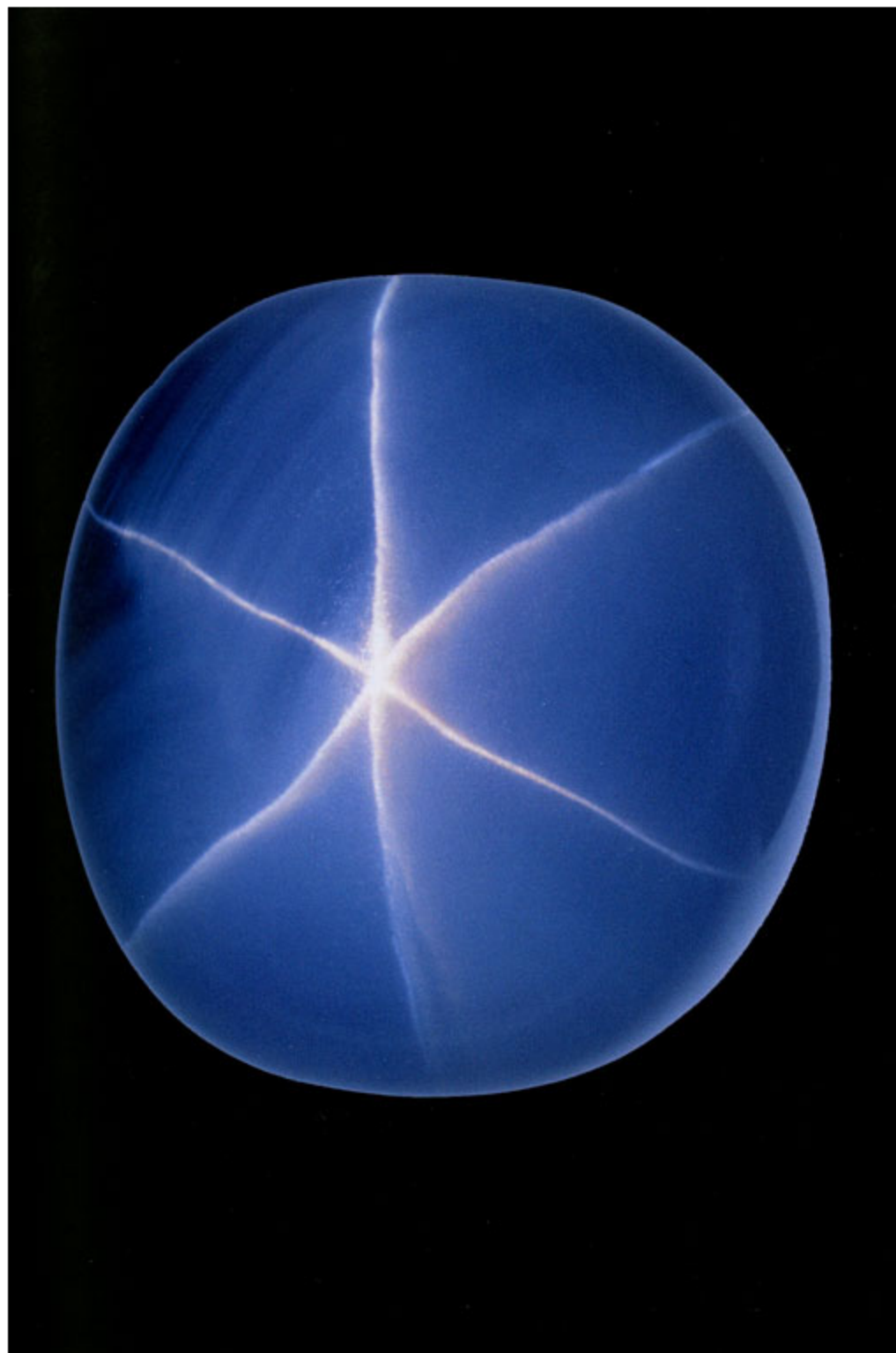






**Urban Friedrich Benedict Brückmann** (1728–1812), a physician and researcher from Brunswick, Germany, portrayed here in about 1800, who wrote a report on some asteriated stones that was widely noted by the mineralogists of this time and influenced their research, the text of which Martin Steinbach includes in Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 deals with Famous Star Stones and is divided into 4 subchapters: famous star rubies, famous star sapphires, the Kazanjian star sapphire sculptures (including our newsletter's introductory image **above**) and literature. This provides a very nice history of the most famous star stones together with fabulous color photographs of the stones themselves and the different places to which the author has traveled in pursuit of stars. Images like these are dispersed nicely throughout the enormous book; I did mention it is enormous, right?



**The Star of India**, originally in the collection of J. P. Morgan, by way of Tiffany & Co.'s George Frederick Kunz. (Photo courtesy American Museum of Natural History)

Chapter 3 covers the Scientific Aspects of Asterism and has 9 subchapters explaining what causes asterism, what a correct/incorrect cut would be, gemstone color, crystallography, geology, history and occurrences of gemstones.





**Celestial.** Above, an assemblage of star rose quartzes on a reflecting surface. Below, a superb network of stars. (Photos courtesy Martin P. Steinbach)

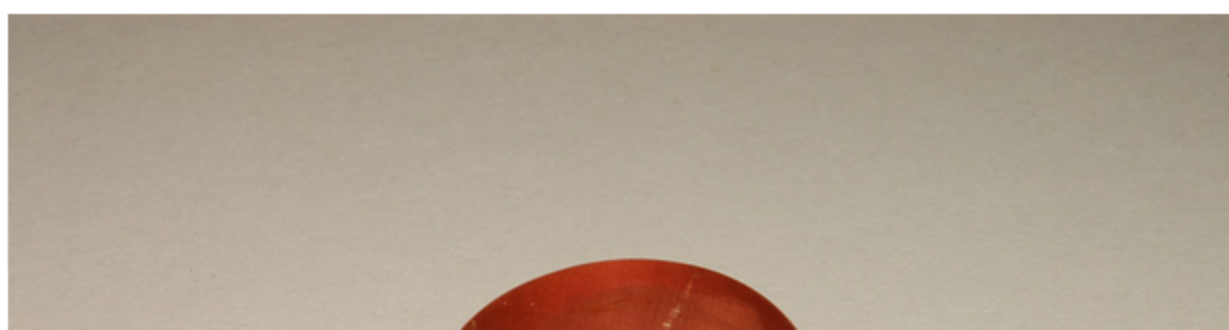


Chapter 4 provides the reader with Treatments of Gems with a Star. This extensive section has 13 subchapters, including a synopsis of treatments found in star gems, history, the treatments one by one, diffusion, irradiation, glass fillings, shellac filling, dyeing and heat treatment.

Chapter 5, Synthetic Star Gems, deals with the various methods used throughout time in producing synthetic gems. This is a comprehensive section of 14 subchapters with lots of valuable information on past techniques and those still being used today.

Chapter 6, Imitations of Asteriated Gems, Assembled Gems and Artificial Products, has 21 subsections and deals with doublets, triplets, other assembled stones and how to identify them. It is a very informative and educational chapter.

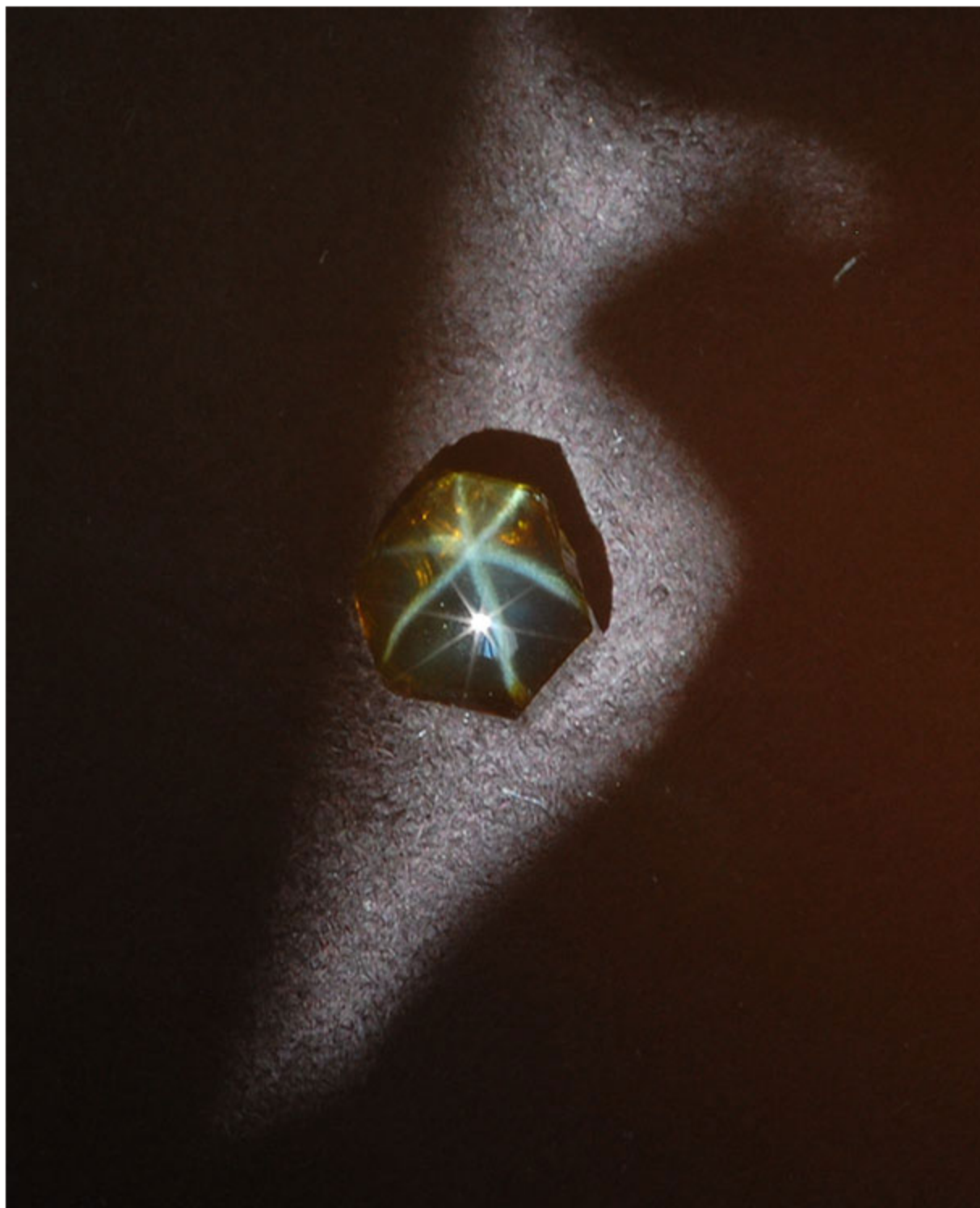
Chapter 7, All Gems with a Star, is a huge chapter of 33 subchapters and covers pretty much all gemstones and gemstone groups from A to Z. Some stones, like andalusite, have little written about them except for their gemological data, where they first were discovered and other localities the gem has been found; asterism in andalusite is very rare. Other gem groups, like the corundum group, occupy as many as 123 pages, and in this section Steinbach also digs into the gemological data, the asterism of star rubies and sapphire, the deposits of star corundum, the various countries where they are found, their deposits, different colors, star formations and variations.







**Singular star.** Very fine 6-rayed star spessartine garnet, 18.15 ct. (Photo courtesy Martin P. Steinbach)

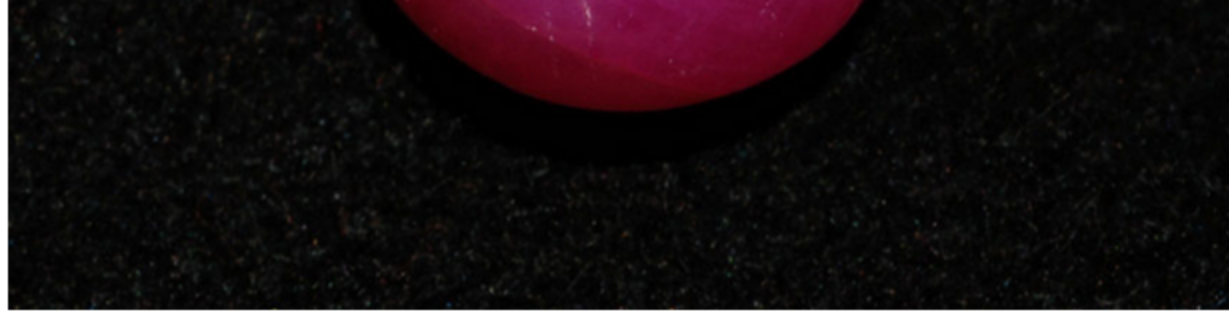


**Twinkle, little superstar.** A rare star tourmaline. (Photo courtesy Martin P. Steinbach)

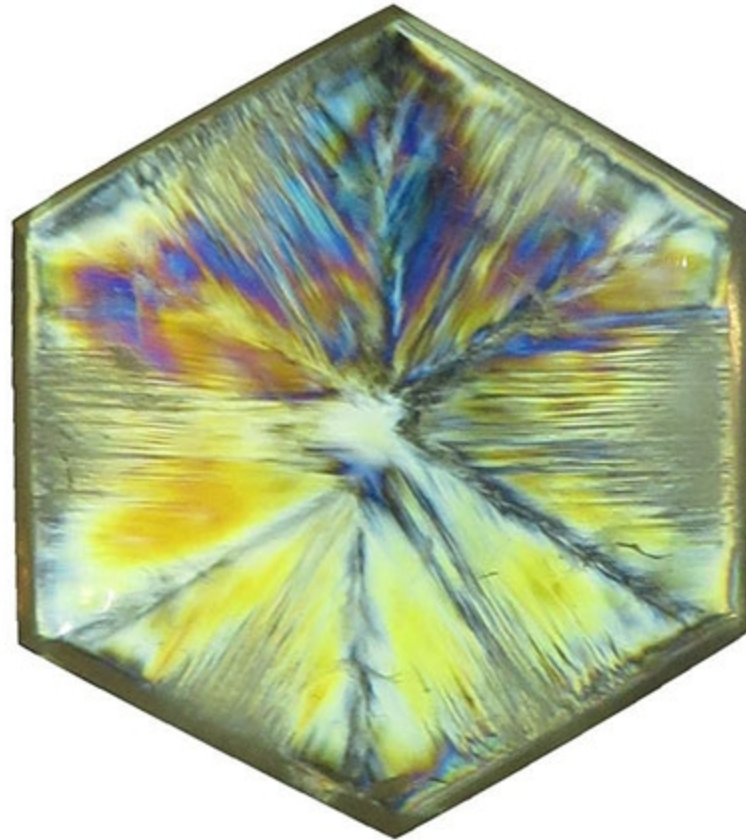
Chapter 8 examines stars with 12 rays, double stars, trapiche stars—the so-called Dream Stars of this chapter's title, which pays tribute to their rarity. It is an interesting chapter with lovely high-quality color photographs and drawings.





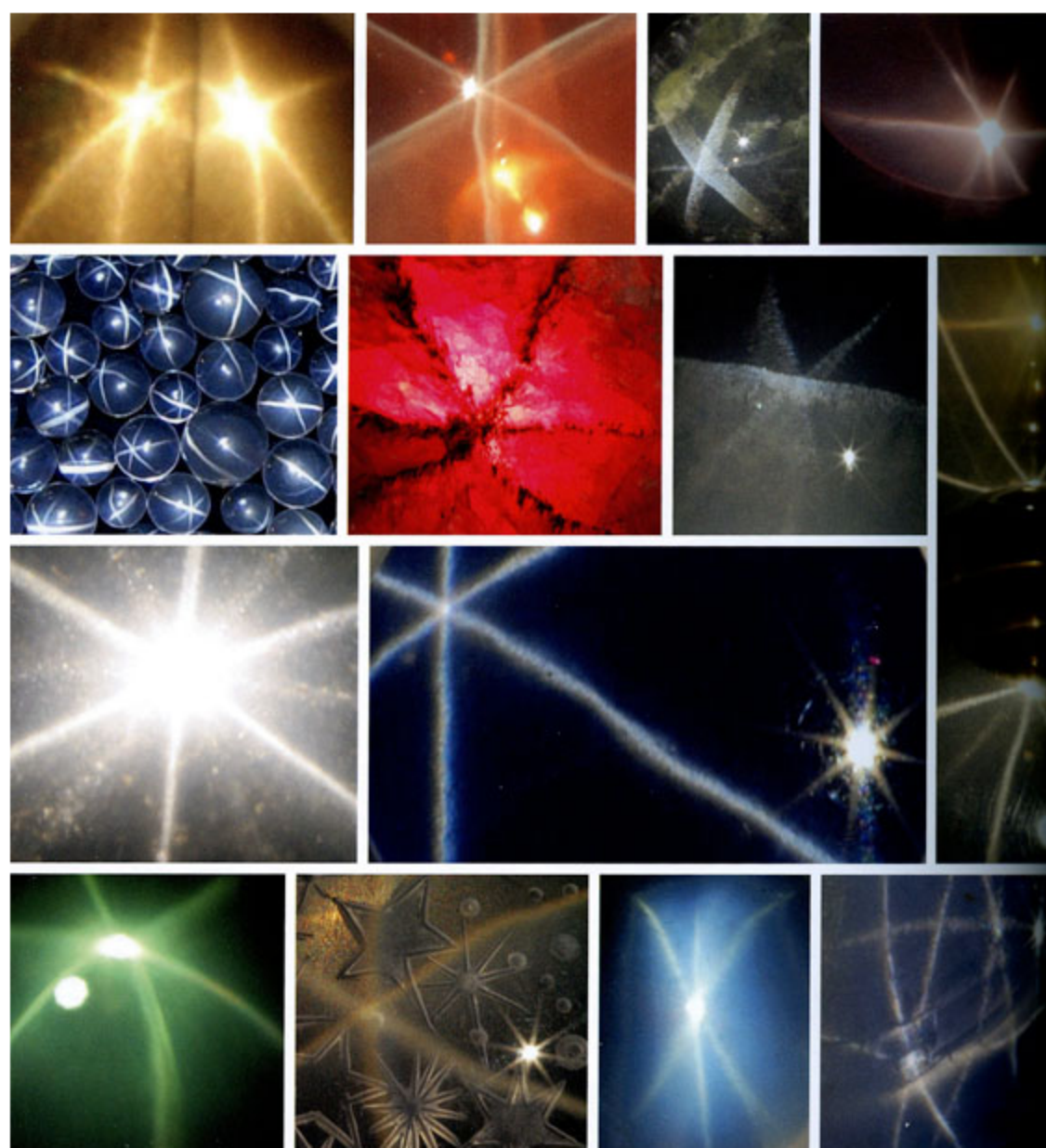


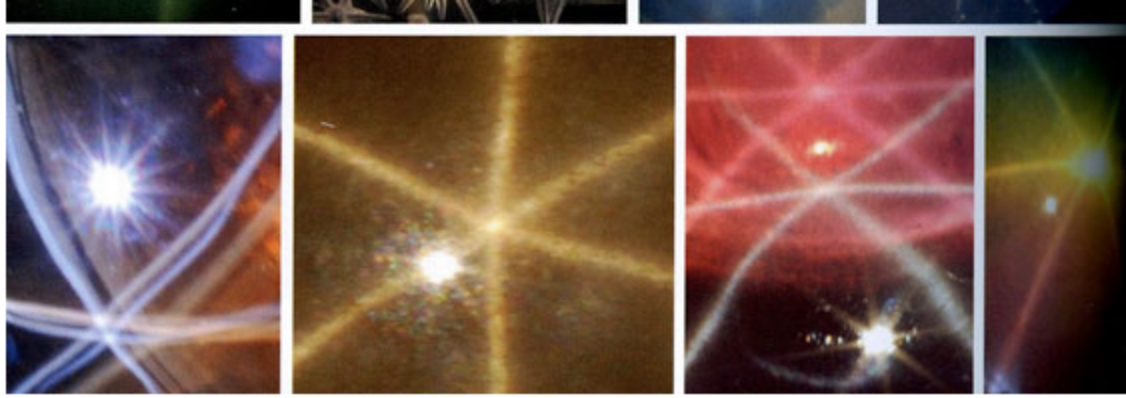
**Seeing stars.** Vietnamese star ruby, 3.16 ct, with two parallel stars, from the collection of Martin P. Steinbach. (Photo: Wimon Manorotkul)



**"Catch the Rainbow."** A trapiche quartz in polarized light. (Photo courtesy Martin P. Steinbach)

Chapter 9, Stars n' Art, is a quad-foldout of fabulous photos by Martin Steinbach, containing a hilarious warning: "Fasten your seatbelts and stop smoking. Put on your sunglasses. Take your pills, if necessary. These coming pics will blow your mind. View at your own risk." The Germans, like us Swedes, have a similar dry sense of humor, I believe!





**Seatbelts fastened.** One portion of the quad-foldout of star stone photographs by Martin Steinbach, demonstrating the rich diversity of asterism in a variety of gemstones.

The 9 main chapters are followed by Annexes and Indices, whereby you can consult a list of fantasy names of stars, Martin P. Steinbach's own star scale (MPSS), a list of different cat's eyes, prices of star stones, scientific institutions, a general index, an index of persons and an index of places.

This is a fabulous book with a massive amount of beneficial information for anybody interested in gems with asterism, for members of the gemstone trade from cutter to retailer, for gemologists and collectors and amateurs alike. The volume can equally be read as a typical specialist book and serve as a reference work on all aspects of asterism. The only thing I would change would be to publish it in two volumes; since it is so heavy it can be awkward finding a good position to sit when you are reading it, unless you want to read at your kitchen table or office desk. (Then again, I guess that's what a **lap desk** is for.)

*Asterism: Gems with a Star*—all 896 pages—can be ordered from the **author's website**, at which a preview of the book also is available. In addition to the standard edition, a deluxe edition will be offered: leather-bound, gold cut, signed and numbered, limited to 200 copies. While the book will not be for sale at Tucson, Martin P. Steinbach will attend the show, order forms in hand—and with a U.S. cellphone. Call him at 480.255.1546, January 28 to February 10, and see **this handout** for more information.