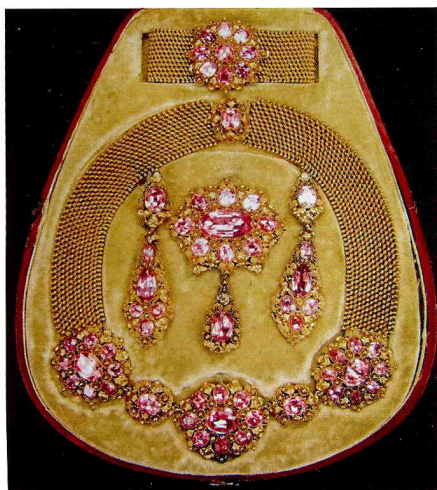


# Georgian Jewellery, 1714-1830

Reviewed by Nigel Israel

*Georgian Jewellery, 1714-1830.* Ginny Reddington Dawes with Olivia Collings. Antique Collectors' Club, Woodbridge, 2007. £39.50. ISBN: 9781851495399

*The Georgian period is strictly 1714-1830, although it is more generally expanded to 1700-1837. It was a pivotal period in jewellery design*



*Cased pink topaz and gold cannetille parure, c.1820. Photo: Tom Dawes.*

At the beginning of the 18th century jewellery was mostly a recognisable development of medieval and renaissance jewellery. By the end of the Georgian period an almost infinite variety of designs, techniques and materials had been employed, with most of the output being still eminently suitable for normal wear today. The vast scope of this subject could

well fill shelves full of specialist books. However, this book gives a really excellent overview of the period in its relatively few 191 pages. It is magnificently and profusely illustrated throughout with colour pictures of a stunning variety of choice pieces, including many portraits of jewellery-clad people. The book is divided into six main chapters: Dawn (a general introduction), Day, Night, Love, Death, and Eternity. The four middle chapters deal, respectively, with daytime wear, evening wear, love jewellery, and memorial and memento mori items. Eternity contains brief but useful information about collecting, facts and findings, adaptations, fakes, reproduction chains, auctions, care (caution is wisely stressed) and investment potential (it might have been wiser in this latter section to omit actual price comparisons). There is a useful bibliography, and a reasonable index.

It is particularly pleasing that the jewellery is interwoven with the social mores of the period, rather than just giving descriptions of the pieces themselves. While there are some

textual points to cavil at (for example while George IV's penchant for elaborate decoration is discussed, Queen Charlotte's is not mentioned although there is a portrait of her festooned with jewels), the contents of a book covering such a range must necessarily be selective.

In some desirable areas there are satisfyingly full details. For instance Pinchbeck, (a name now almost universally erroneously used for any alloy imitating gold) is dealt with extremely informatively. As well as the normal gemstones, many quite unusual materials are shown such as a yew tree wood and gold rivièrè necklace of 1820 with details of the wood's provenance on the back of the main link, and Wedgewood necklaces and earrings.

This is a very desirable book, which will be both enjoyable and useful to anyone, from the beginner to the specialist, with an interest in jewellery. At what seems a most reasonable price, considering its lavish production, it can be unreservedly recommended.



*L to R: Foiled pink topaz and gold pansy necklace, and aquamarine and pink topaz pansy pendant; Gold cannetille work and turquoise-set quizzing glass, c.1830; Agate and gold vinaigrette, c.1870; Coque de perle and iron pyrites bow drop earrings, c.1760. Photos: Tom Dawes.*