



Blue Pigments
5000 Years of Art and Industry
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Each civilization devised its own solution for manufacturing the color blue. The names of the different pigments often reflect this geographic diversity: from Egyptian blue to copper phthalocyanine, ranging through Maya and Han blues, smalt, Prussian blue and artificial ultramarine. This book does not intend to account for the taste of Man for the color blue, but only to show to what extent ingenuity was deployed to artificially realize these blue materials which he lacked. Many of the natural blues were the object of international commerce and exported far away from their production sites. For instance lapis-lazuli accompanied silk along its slow path toward the Mediterranean Sea. However these prized pigments were very expensive and substitutes were sought. With the 18th century came the introduction of new substitutes for ultramarine, Prussian blue, indigo from the West Indies and cobalt blue and yet none proved fully satisfactory. The demand for blue was driven by the growing paper and dyeing industries.