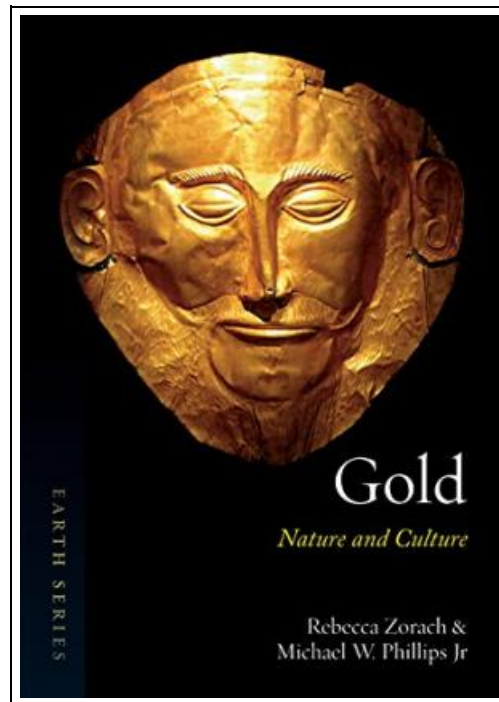


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Reaktion Books, United Kingdom, 2016. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. Gleaming and perfect, gold has beguiled humankind for many millennia, attracting treasure hunters, adorning the living and the dead, and symbolizing wealth, power, divinity and eternity. This book offers a lively, critical look at the cultural history of this most regal metal, from its use in religious ceremonies to colonial expeditions to modern science, examining its importance across many cultures and time periods and the many places where it has played a central role. Gold reveals this metal as a substance of paradoxes. Its softness makes it at once useless for the making of tools and highly suited for the exploration of form and the transmission of images, such as the faces of rulers on currency. It has been the icon of value - the surest bet in times of uncertain markets - yet also of valuelessness, a discovery that King Midas learned the hard way. Furthermore, Gold shows how this element has been at the centre of many clashes between cultures throughout history, the unfortunate catalyst of countless moments of bloodlust. Ultimately, this book shows that the questions posed by our relentless desire for gold are really questions about value itself. Lavishly illustrated, this book offers a shimmering exploration of the mythology, economy, aesthetics and perils at the centre of this simple yet irresistible substance.

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