quality of the binding could have been better—my copy fell apart as I was one-third through reading it!

However, despite all its drawbacks, the low price of the handbook makes it a worthwhile purchase for any geologist interested in learning more about TEM or SEM techniques.

P. E. CHAMPNESS

Pies, W., and Weiss, A. *Crystal Structure Data of Inorganic Compounds. Part d1α: Key Element Si.* (Landolt-Börnstein: Numerical Data and Functional Relationships in Science and Technology, New Series. *Group III. Crystal and Solid State Physics. Vol. 7*). Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, and Tokyo (Springer-Verlag), 1985. xxiii + 464 pp. Price DM 950.

Not surprisingly, the volume of this series covering compounds with anions containing Si has had to be split into two parts of which this, the first, deals with 'simple silicates' without H_2O. As in the rest of the series, the entries contain (i) formula and mineral name; (ii) space group, cell dimensions, number of formula units per cell, experimental density; (iii) structure type, method used for structure determination and its completeness; and often (iv) additional information on colour, habit, optical properties, phase diagram. References are of course included but as codes which have to be looked up in a separate volume: some may find this irksome, especially when referred on to Structure Reports.

The arrangement of entries is chemical and only a little thought is required to locate the compound or class of compounds one wants. Formula and mineral name indexes have yet to appear and compounds of a particular structure type are inevitably scattered in a chemical arrangement.

A reference series like this one serves two practical purposes: it is a quick route to basic data on a compound and a way into the literature on it. Unfortunately, this careful and thorough compilation does not come cheaply and only the major libraries will be able to afford a full set of this new Landolt-Börnstein. One wonders if compilations like this one, started in the 1970s, may not find themselves overtaken by information technology. The Inorganic Crystal Structure Database (ICSD) and the Crystal Data Identification File are both now available in Britain. Computer searching should be less laborious and, one may hope, cheaper and more versatile. The ICSD contains the full atomic parameters from each structure determination and the data can be manipulated by computer, for example, to work out bond distances or to draw diagrams of the structure. It is hard to see how reference books can compete when their contents are limited by the space available.

J. E. CHISHOLM