

**‘RUSSIA ABROAD’: THE CHRONICLE OF A
FORGOTTEN EXHIBITION**
**“RUSIA ÎN STRĂINĂTATE”: CRONICA UNEI
EXPOZIȚII UITATE**

Christina Știrbulescu*

‘Here is Imperial Russia, here we breathe its air’¹

Rezumat

La Londra, în vara anului 1935, timp de 40 de zile, a fost deschisă o expoziție temporară unde au fost expuse obiecte de factură rusească, de mare valoare artistică și istorică. Printre aceste piese de artă rusească, a fost expus un număr însemnat de opere create de Fabergé. Astfel, sunt prezente și opt ouă Fabergé care au fost comandate de țarul Nicolae al II-lea pentru a fi dăruite mamei sale, Maria Feodorovna (patru), și soției sale, Alexandra Feodorovna (patru), cu ocazia celebrării sărbătorilor pascale. Printre multe alte figuri regale care împrumută comorile lor, se numără și regina Maria a României care trimite la Londra două piese, respectiv o tiară, de tip cocoșnic (creație Cartier), și șapte piese ale unui serviciu de birou (creație Nicholls & Plincke): mapă de birou, suport de stilouri, prespapier (?), cutie de papetărie, sfeșnic, ceas și postament cu recipiente pentru cerneală și nisip).

Keywords: Russian Art Heritage, High jewellery, Cartier, Fabergé, Queen Marie of Romania.

From 4th June until 13th July 1935 London was witness to a memorable exhibition on Russian art, for which a catalogue was published (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/mode/1up>). The exhibition was apparently linked to one organized in 1917, the purpose of both being to raise funds for the Russian Red Cross (Cross 2010, pp. 32-35).

The Londonian mansion which housed the exhibition, located at 1 Belgrave Street (**Pl. 1**), was the property of Mrs Peter Koch de Gooreynd (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, p. 7). In the house, as well as the

* Curator, The National History Museum of Romania, Numismatic Cabinet & Historical Treasure Department (The Historical Treasure Office); christina_stirbulescu@yahoo.com.

¹ Shilovsky 1991, p. 297.

connecting landings, the items were displayed in fourteen rooms on three floors. The price of admission was of '2s. 6d.' which means today £6.33 (see <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#currency-result>; <https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n12/mode/1up>, p. 3).

The structure of the exhibition was divided in different sections, enclosing icons, paintings, engravings, silver, jewellery, porcelain, enamels, brocades, coins, and glass. There were 955 numbered entries in the catalogue, but the overall number of items on display was considerably higher (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, pp. 11-167).

The exhibition was to be a great success with the British public. Prior to the opening, George V and Queen Mary paid a private visit for eighty minutes to the exhibition, as reported in the British newspapers ('The Scotsman', 31 May 1935, p. 10).

It was officially opened by Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent, not by chance selected by her father-in-law, King George V. The British monarchy's family ties with the Romanovs were strong enough through her mother, a born Grand Duchess of Russia, which accompanied her daughter on this occasion ('The Sphere', 15 June 1935, p. 490; <http://www.almanachdegotha.org/id301.html>, 5h (Elena Vladimirovna). Marina, recently entered in the British Royal family, delivered her first official speech. In total were delivered nine words: 'I have much pleasure in declaring this exhibition open' ('The Scotsman', 5 June 1935, p. 13). The opening was filmed by BBC.

By extension, Princess Marina, as well as Grand Duchess Xenia Alexandrovna² and Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich³ (both lenders and grandsons of Tsar Alexander II), embodied the lost Imperial power and magnificence.

The setting for the exhibition was designed by the Lithuanian artist Mstislav Dobuzhinsky, well known for his stage decorations (Cross 2010, p. 35; about the life and work see <http://www.rusartist.org/mstislav-valerianovich-dobuzhinsky-1875-1957/#.XuiiBEUzZPY>). 'The Times' newspaper complimented him, 'as much upon the simplicity as upon the gaiety of the scheme. The walls of the different rooms are colour-washed in full tints: orange, bright yellow, wine-red, intense blue, Wedgwood-blue, green, grey, and mauve, with the relief of white woodwork; so that, with variety, there is an effect of unity in the setting of the exhibition as a whole' ('Art of Imperial Russia', in 'The Times', 4 June 1935, p. 11; Cross 2010, p. 35).

The exhibition was historically significant for the prominence given to the works of Peter Carl Fabergé⁴, the goldsmith and jeweller to the Russian Imperial

² A small selection of items: 'Nephrite bowl', 'Emperor Alexander III', miniature by Zehngraf, in nephrite frame by Fabergé, see <https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n114/mode/1up>, p. 105, nos. 552-553; 'Easter Egg', see <https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n115/mode/1up>, p. 106, no. 563.

³ He loaned a silver sanctuary lamp, see <https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n107/mode/1up>, p. 98, no. 499.

Court. **(Pl. 2)** Furthermore, the artist's son, Agathon, was among the guests at the opening of the exhibition on 4th June (<https://www.geni.com/people/Agathon-Faberg%C3%A9/6000000019757242819>). It was the first public exhibition where were displayed eight Imperial Easter Eggs, all of them commissioned by Nicholas II (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/mode/1up>, nos. 560, 575A, 581, 582, gifted to Empress Maria Feodorovna, and nos. 563, 578, 585, 586 gifted to Empress Alexandra Feodorovna) and 164 treasured bibelots created by Fabergé (Cross 2010, p. 37).

In total there were 185 lenders, including the Louvre, the Uffizi, and the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh (now the National Museum of Scotland) (Cross 2010, p. 36), as well as many European Royals, such as: Queen Consort Mary of the United Kingdom⁵ and two of her children, Princess Mary (Princess Royal)⁶, Duke George of Kent, Princess Victoria⁷, sister of King George V, Queen Marie of Romania, Queen Consort Victoria Eugenie ('Ena') of Spain⁸, King Gustaf V of Sweden⁹, Prince Nicholas of Greece and Denmark, father of Princess Marina of Kent, and high ranked aristocrats, among whom Russian Princess Zenaida Yusupov (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, p. 6).

The Room no. 6 was destined to exhibit jewellery and other valuable items in eight showcases (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, pp. 95-121, nos. 486-657).

Case no. 1 - an array of various items, such as: chalices, icons, a marble bust of Catherine II (1779) made by Jean Antoine Houdon, etc. (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n104/mode/1up>, pp. 95-98).

Case no. 2 - ornaments made by Carl Fabergé, such as many representations of elephants made in agate, chalcedony, jade, jadeite, jasper, lapis, nephrite, obsidian, orletz¹⁰, and rock crystal, parasol and umbrella handles. In addition, were

⁴ He was one of the greatest goldsmiths, jewellers, and designers in decorative arts.

⁵ Only to mention a few of them: 'Mauve enamel box', 'Smelling salts bottle', 'Jewelled egg', 'Bell push', by Fabergé, see <https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n112/mode/1up>, p. 103, no. 530-535.

⁶ She lent a necklace of sapphires and diamonds, see <https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n129/mode/1up>, p. 120, no. 649.

⁷ A small selection of the items: 'Pink orletz pig', 'Sprig of raspberry', 'Crystal paper knife', 'Bust of Alexander III', see <https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n109/mode/1up>, p. 100, and nos. 513-521.

⁸ A gold box set with diamonds and an emerald cabochon on the lid, pictured in 'ILN', no. 5016, 8 June 1935, p. 1038=<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, p. 117, no. 624.

⁹ He lent a bowl by Fabergé, see <https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n112/mode/1up>, p. 103, no. 526.

¹⁰ A variety of Rhodonite, <https://www.mindat.org/min-39041.html> .

displayed the Nicholls & Plincke desk set¹¹, a kovsh¹², Easter eggs, a gold topaz bust of Alexander III, and a model of the monument of Peter the Great¹³ (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n107/mode/1up>, pp. 98-102).

Case no. 3 - ornaments by Fabergé: a nephrite table, Easter eggs, six miniatures of the Tsar Alexander III by Zehngraf¹⁴, in nephrite frame, etc. (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n112/mode/1up>, pp. 103-109).

Cases nos. 4 and 5 - a vast collection of ornaments by Carl Fabergé (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n118/mode/1up>, pp. 109-115).

Case no. 6 - icons and other ecclesiastical items (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n118/mode/1up>, pp. 115-116).

Case no. 7 - two kovsh, cigarette cases, silver-gilt enamelled tea service, etc. (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n118/mode/1up>, pp. 116-118).

The big center case (no. 8) contained six pieces of high jewellery whose combined worth is valued at £100,000, which means in 2017 the amount of £5,066,260.00 (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n118/mode/1up>, pp. 118-121; <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#currency-result>)

Among the six items were: the sapphire and diamond tiara or *kokoshnik*¹⁵ of the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna ‘the Elder’ (also known as Grand Duchess Vladimir, after her husband, Grand Duke Vladimir, son of Tsar Alexander II)¹⁶ (Pl. 3), the pear-shaped black pearl ‘The Agra’, the Yusupov pear-shaped pearl ‘La Pelegrina’ (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n127/mode/1up>, p. 118, no. 638; more about this jewel, see Meylan 2018, pp. 226-229 and Papi 2016, p. 184) (Pls. 4-6), the corsage ornament of diamonds and amethysts given by the Emperor Alexander I to the Marchioness of Londonderry (‘The Sphere’, 15 June 1935, p. 490), a diamond rivière¹⁷ given by the Tsar Alexander II to his first cousin Grand Duchess Olga Konstantinova (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, p. 119, no. 646) on

¹¹ I owe many thanks to Dr Narcis Dorin Ion (director, the Peleş National Museum), Corina Dumitrache (curator, the Peleş National Museum), and Lelia Borugă (coordinator of the Conservation Compartment, the Peleş National Museum).

¹² A ladle or drinking vessel with a boat-shaped bowl and a handle at one end (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/kovsh>).

¹³ The original monument is located in St. Petersburg, Senate Square, a creation of Étienne Maurice Falconet (18th century), see https://www.wga.hu/html_m/f/falconet/peter_gr.html.

¹⁴ Johannes Zehngraf (1857-1908), principal miniaturist at Maison Fabergé (St. Petersburg).

¹⁵ The term is derived from the Russian word *kokosh* meaning ‘cock’s-comb’ and primarily rendered a head ornament based in design on a cock’s-comb, Nadelhoffer 1999, p. 70.

¹⁶ <https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, p. 119, no. 641; Clarke 2010, p. 122; bought after the Great War by Queen Marie of Romania. It is mentioned in the newspapers of the time, as ‘The Sphere’, by the journalist who visited the exhibition, ‘The Sphere’, 15 June 1935, p. 490.

¹⁷ A necklace of precious stones, such as diamonds (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/riviere>).

her 1867 marriage with King George I of Greece, and a Fringe tiara (which could also be worn as a necklace) given by the Tsar Nicholas II to his first cousin Grand Duchess Elena of Russia on her 1902 marriage with Prince Nicholas of Greece and Denmark (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, p. 121, no. 655; Papi 2016, p. 140).

This study presents pieces that were displayed in cases nos. 2, 3 and 8.

001 The Sapphire and Diamond *Kokoshnik* (or the Russian Tiara)

In her diary, Queen Marie wrote that her aspiration was to buy jewellery from her brother-in-law Grand Duke Kirill (<http://www.almanachdegotha.org/id33.html>, 2h) and her sister Grand Duchess Victoria Feodorovna (<http://www.almanachdegotha.org/id55.html>, 3d) in order to help their desperate financial family situation (Maria, regina României 2003, pp. 313-314 (12.11.1920)). The wealth of the two Romanovs was formed by jewellery personally owned by Victoria Feodorovna and items, such as the diamonds and sapphires tiara, inherited by Grand Duke Kirill from his mother, whose collection was divided upon her death between her four children¹⁸. Along with other invaluable pieces, the sapphires and diamonds tiara was smuggled out of Russia in 1920 during the Bolshevik revolution (Ileana, Princess of Romania 1952, p. 13).

King Ferdinand generously funded Queen Marie's purchase of jewellery from Victoria Feodorovna and Kirill in order for it to remain in the family (NAR, RM V/452, letter of Queen Marie to Ferdinand, Zürich, 12.11.1920; Maria, regina României 2003, pp. 313-314 (12.11.1920)); see also Cristescu 2015a, p. 322-323, letter no. 148 (12.11.1920); Mandache 2018, p. 128). Among others, the tiara was chosen by Marie to form a new collection of her own¹⁹.

Queen Marie was overwhelmed by the beauty of this item, writing that it was 'the most incredibly glorious thing imaginable' (Cristescu 2015a, p. 323, letter no. 148 (12.11.1920)).

In December 1920, the future King Carol II brought from Zürich the remainder of the Russian jewellery, beautiful strings of pearls and the *kokoshnik* (Maria, regina României 2003, p. 345 (15.12.1920)).

The sapphire and diamond *kokoshnik*²⁰ loaned by Queen Marie (**Pl. 7**), was designed by Cartier²¹ (**Pl. 8**), in 1909. The tiara, a genuine showstopper, was commissioned by Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna 'the Elder' (<http://www.almanachdegotha.org/id22.html>, 3f). A 'cushion-cut' sapphire of 137.2 carats and six cabochon sapphires (102.16 carats in total), which belonged to the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna (<http://www.almanachdegotha.org/id30.html>, 3e), wife of Nicholas I of Russia, were used for it, as well as diamonds. The gemstones can be removed and used as

¹⁸ Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna was Kirill's mother and Victoria Feodorovna's mother-in-law; she died in September 1920; Papi 2016, p. 315.

¹⁹ The former jewellery collection of Marie was sent away, for safe keeping, to Moscow in 1916 and never returned to the owner, see Mandache 2018, pp. 112-119.

²⁰ Known also as 'tiare russe'.

²¹ In Paris, in 1898, Alfred and his son, Louis, founded a jewellery firm of great refinement.

brooches or hair ornaments (Nadelhoffer 1999, p. 71, no. 63; Munn 2011, p. 318, pl. 288; Mandache 2018, p. 128).

In its fugitive existence in the Romanian Royal vault, the piece was used by the Queen Marie and only in one case, by her daughter, Ileana. As detailed below, in Queen Marie's diary and daily notes there are entries about various occasions when she wore the tiara, with mentions of the outfits she then chose.

Queen Marie first used the tiara in February 1921 at a performance given at the National Theatre on the occasion of the nuptials of her daughter Princess Elisabeth with King George II of the Hellenes. She was then dressed in black velvet and in her diary she complained of the tiara's heaviness (Maria, regina României 2004, p. 60 (26.02.1921).

On 19 January 1922, a general rehearsal for the fancy dress ball organized by Sir Herbert Dering, the British minister in Romania, was scheduled at the Cotroceni Palace. Marie wore a long white dress, a cloak, and a turban over which was placed the diamond and sapphires tiara. She also wore a diamond sautoir with a gigantic sapphire (Maria, regina României 2005, p. 44; Tomescu 2008, p. 273).

In Belgrade, on 7 June 1922, at the reception occasioned by the wedding of her daughter Marie (<http://www.almanachdegotha.org/id32.html>, 3a), the Queen wore the Russian tiara, the Cartier sautoir, and five decorations. She was clad in blue velvet (Maria, regina României 2005, pp. 186-187; Tomescu 2008, p. 273).

Queen Marie wore the same jewel, a long veil, and a purple velvet cloak²² at the reception organized at the Union Hall following her Coronation in Alba Iulia on 15 October 1922 (Maria, regina României 2005, p. 317; Ileana, Princess of Romania 1952, p. 12; Tomescu 2008, p. 274; Încoronarea 2012, p. 27; Papi 2016, p. 316). **(Pl. 9)** She perfectly complemented the deep blue notes of the tiara with the Cartier sautoir and the sapphire drop attached to it²³. In her diary entry of 16 October 1922, Marie mentions that she wore a golden gown at the Alba Iulia festivities (Mandache 2011, p. 145).

Almost two years later, on 11 April 1924, during a European diplomatic tour, Marie wore her Russian tiara at the Romanian Legation in Paris where a 200 people dinner was held. She was dressed in a golden gown, and finished her look with a gigantic, orchid (a shade of purple) color, feather fan (Regina Maria a României 2014, p. 189).

²² Worn earlier during the Coronation ceremonial.

²³ About the disputed topic of the existence of the sautoir and its sapphire drop after 1947, read <https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-a-magnificent-and-historic-sapphire-pendant-by-4190982/?from=salesummary&intObjectID=4190982&sid=46018e0d-dd25-4985-be9a-0e9289b52a30> and <http://www.princemichaelschronicles.com/the-biggest-sapphire-in-the-world/>; Mandache 2018, p. 134-136.

On 12 May 1924, while in London, during a State dinner (APJ, 13 May 1924, p. 7-8) at the Buckingham Palace, she wore the Russian tiara and was dressed in a silver attire (Regina Maria a României 2014, p. 222).

On 15, 20, 21 and 22 May 1924, Queen Marie visited the studio of Philip Alexius de László, which proposed painting her portrait (Regina Maria a României 2014, p. 230). On 20 May 1924, Philip Alexius de László expressed the desire to conclude the portrait until June in order to exhibit it at the French Gallery in London (Regina Maria a României 2014, p. 236).

For her portrait, Marie once again opted for the sapphire *kokoshnik*. On the forehead she had a golden plaited headband²⁴, which she almost always wore under her tiaras, 'my stunning Russian tiaras', and she also wore long pearl earrings and a pearl pendant (Regina Maria a României 2014, pp. 238-241), a golden veil to match her golden garb and the Cartier diamond sautoir with the 'cushion-cut' sapphire drop. The result was spectacular and was praised by Marie (Regina Maria a României 2014, pp. 266-267). **(Pls. 10-11)** In 'The Gentlewoman' magazine is published a photo of Marie as sitter in front of Philip Alexius de László in his studio ('The Gentlewoman', 7 June 1924, p. 588). **(Pl. 12)**

In the second edition of the catalogue 'A series of portraits and studies' from the French Gallery, the Queen Marie's portrait is at no. 13 but is not illustrated²⁵.

The Queen also chose to wear the tiara on state occasions during the American visit, in 1926 (Ileana, Princess of Romania 1952, p. 12; Mandache 2018, p. 153). For the reception offered on 20 October 1926 by 'The Society of Friends of Romania' at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, she wore a Redfern black velvet gown, with silver embroidery, a blue peacock color *manteau de cour*. The Russian tiara, adorned with huge sapphires, was set in a new way made up by Queen Marie (Maria, regina României 2013, p. 335; Ionescu 2009, pp. 41-42). **(Pl. 13)**

In the evening of the first day in New York, William Nelson Cromwell, the founder and president of 'The Society of Friends of Romania'²⁶, gave a reception for 700 people (Pakula 2004, p. 440). Under the Russian tiara, Marie wore a pearl 'cap' from which a string of pearls fell like a waterfall being fastened under the chin and hanging on the chest (Pakula 2004, p. 440). Also, she adorned her outfit with the Cartier diamond sautoir with a 'cushion-cut' sapphire (Cartier. Le style et l'histoire 2013, p. 92).

Marie did not select the Russian tiara at the State dinner hosted by the President Calvin Coolidge at the White House on 19 October 1926. Instead, she wore a Cartier diamonds and pearls tiara, and the Grand Cross of the Order 'Carol

²⁴ See the same style of a golden plaited headband worn at the reception following the Coronation **(pl. 9)**.

²⁵ Information offered by Katherine Field (senior editor, the Catalogue Raisonné of Works by Philip de László (1869-1937), for which I'm indebted.

²⁶ Founded in 1920 under the patronage of Queen Marie.

I'. Probably, she chose a slight and light-colored tiara owing to an embroidered white gown, and white cloak with golden thread tailored by Patou²⁷ which she was clad in that evening (Maria, regina României 2013, p. 329; Ionescu 2009, p. 41; Pârvan, Opaschi, Martin 2016, p. 106). As well, while in New York, she wore one more time the Russian tiara at the Metropolitan Opera, at a ballet show inspired by her fairy tale 'The Lily of Life', with the choreography by Loïe Fuller (Maria, regina României 2013, p. 353; Pakula 2004, p. 442; Ionescu 2009, p. 42. For the professional life of Fuller, see Sommer 1975, pp. 53-67, Maria, regina României 2005, p. 422, no. 87; Tomescu 2008, pp. 270-271).

The Queen wore the Russian tiara continuously throughout her reign, often pairing it with her theatrical costumes. **(Pl. 14)** At this point it is relevant to note that the clear choice of Marie was to combine the blue of the sapphires with golden, silver, and, less often, black attires.

In terms of jewellery, the Russian tiara was generally matched with the Cartier diamond sautoir with sapphire pendant or with pearl strings.

The Cartier sautoir and the sapphire drop were bought by king Ferdinand of Romania in 1921 as a Coronation gift (Maria, regina României 2004, p. 286 (13 September 1921); for more informations about this piece, read Mandache 2018, p. 133).

The first reference made by Cartier to the gargantuan 478.68 carats sapphire pendant was in 1913 when the Sri Lankan gemstone was added to other seven sapphires to form a majestic sautoir. It was set in a diamond and platinum mount with a floral pattern. Later that year, the diamond sautoir was altered to eliminate the smaller sapphires in order to concentrate on the large sapphire drop attached to a pendant ring of 'calibré-cut' sapphires (<https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-a-magnificent-and-historic-sapphire-pendant-by-4190982/?from=salesummery&intObjectID=4190982&sid=46018e0d-dd25-4985-be9a-0e9289b52a30>; for more see Mandache 2018, pp. 133-136).

Since 2003 it belongs to the Qatar Museums Authority (Cartier. *Le style et l'histoire* 2013, p. 92, cat. no. 63) and was showcased two times, firstly at the great retrospective exhibition of Cartier, opened in 2013, in the magnificent Grand Palais in Paris (Cartier. *Le style et l'histoire* 2013, p. 92, cat. no. 63), and secondly in 2018, in a Cartier exhibition laid out by the National Gallery of Australia, in Canberra (https://nga.gov.au/collection/pdfs/pcol_report_20180301.pdf).

Queen Marie used the Cartier diamond sautoir and the sapphire drop at the Coronation from Alba Iulia. Also, the items were used during the official visit of Ferdinand and Marie to the United Kingdom, and later during the United States visit, etc (Mandache 2018, p. 133).

²⁷ Very likely Queen Marie wore the Grand Cross of the Order 'Carol I', instituted by King Carol I in 1906, in remembrance of the 40th anniversary of his reign. It was the highest distinction in the hierarchy of the Romanian orders until 1947. I owe thanks to Tudor Al. Martin (curator, NHMR).

Reverting to the tiara, many other photos show Marie using the piece, matched with the Cartier sautoir or pearl strings. In these photos she is wearing a sort of headband (like a turban), a long veil, and a white mourning dress or a light-colored gown (Maria a României 2018, vol. II, p. 148; p. 156; p. 266).

In a photo (on which Marie handwrote '1927'), the Queen is wearing the tiara above a beaded headband and pendants on which hung pearl drops (Maria a României 2018, vol. II, p. 153).

Later, Marie gifted the piece to her daughter, Ileana²⁸, on her wedding day in 1931 (Ileana, Princess of Romania 1952, p. 13).

Ileana wrote in her memoir that she wore the exquisite tiara in one single circumstance, at the Austrian Legitimist Party ball in 1935, at the Hofburg Palace (Ileana, Principesă de România 2005, p. 31). Craving to rummage about this event, I unsuccessfully browsed through the Austrian newspapers, which puzzled me. Instead, I found out something else. On February 1935 Princess Ileana did participated at the ball of the city of Vienna. She was dressed in a white silk gown and 'ein diadem trug und Orden angelegt hatte' (Wiener Salonblatt, 24 February 1935, p. 12).

In May 1935 when the Silver Jubilee of King George V was celebrated, Princess Ileana loaned it to her mother to wear at the festivities. For this reason, on 28 April, Marie made a brief stopover at the Austrian Sonnberg Castle, her daughter's residence, on her way to London (NAR, The Royal House Fund Archive, Queen Marie Archive, file no. III/194, The Queen Marie's diary, reel no. 488, frames nos. 483-485 (= pp. 114-116).

On 13 May 1935, three weeks prior to the opening of the exhibition, Lady Anastasia ('Zia') Wernher, the exhibition Executive Committee's Vice-Chairman, paid a visit to Marie in order to make arrangements about the tiara's displaying. In her diary, Marie reluctantly admitted that 'I most unwillingly lend' it (NAR, The Royal House Fund Archive, Queen Marie Archive, file no. III/194, The Queen Marie's diary, reel no. 488, frame no. 524 (=p. 156).

Due to 'unsettled conditions at home', after the exhibition concluded, Marie left it in her London unnamed bank for safekeeping (Ileana, Princess of Romania 1952, p. 13; Clarke 2010, p. 125). Princess Ileana wrote further: 'After her death I had no small trouble in claiming it, but I got it away from England just before World War II began. I kept it in Austria until 1943 when I smuggled it into Romania, and there I saved it from the Communists when I left in 1948. It went to Switzerland with me, and then to Argentina, where I pawned it to put money into an unfortunate business that failed' (Ileana, Princess of Romania 1952, p. 13; Ileana, Principesă de România 2005, p. 23). Furthermore, the Romanian princess penned down

²⁸ <http://www.almanachdegotha.org/id32.html>, 5a. After marriage she was known as Archduchess Ileana of Austria.

the adventurous journey of the tiara from Europe to Argentina and, finally, to the United States (Ileana, Princess of Romania 1952, pp. 13-18).

Owners of the Russian tiara:

01 Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna.

02 Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich, inherited from his mother in 1920.

03. Queen Marie of Romania, acquired; the amount of money is not specified.

04. Princess Ileana of Romania received it from her mother for her marriage in 1931.

05. Sold in 1950 to an unknown owner (<https://www.tiara-romania.com/search/label/Romania>). About the sale, Princess Ileana did not specify the received amount of money, saying only ‘[...] it was sold for a sum much below its value’ (Ileana, Princess of Romania 1952, p. 18; Clarke 2010, p. 125). An important information revealed anew by Ileana in her memoir is that at one point the estimate price of the tiara was \$80,000²⁹.

06. Acquired by Cartier (<https://royal-magazin.de/russia/tiara-safir-maria-pawlowna.htm>).

002 Desk set (Pl. 15 a-g)³⁰

Another item offered by Queen Marie for the 1935 Russian exhibition in London was a desk set which she had received from her mother, Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna. The set, made of gilded bronze and lapis lazuli, was a creation by Nicholls & Plincke in 1862³¹.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the Englishmen Charles Nicholls and William Plincke set up a workshop in St. Petersburg. After a few decades of success, the firm was eclipsed by the ascent of Fabergé workshop and was closed in 1880 (<https://www.pushkinantiques.com/antiques-blog/important-silversmiths-nicholls-plincke>).

The loaned pieces were: a blotting pad, an inkstand, a pen case, a stationery box, a paperweight (?)³², a candlestick seal, and a clock.

Technique: cast, chased, gilded; application; lapis lazuli, cut, polished.

²⁹ Ileana, *Principesă de România* 2005, p. 23; I calculated the amount of money at the currency rate of 1935, and today it means \$1,571,941.61, see <https://www.in2013dollars.com/us/inflation/1935?amount=80000>

³⁰ I’m indebted to Dr Oana Ilie (head of the Medieval, Modern & Contemporary History Department, NHMR) and Alexandra Mărășoiu (counselor, NHMR).

³¹ Which belonged firstly to Duchess of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, the mother of Queen Marie; <https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, p. 102, no. 525; *Maria a României* 2018, vol. I, p. 179, it is stored at the Peleş National Museum, inv. nos. 17577 (blotting pad, pen case, paperweight, candlestick seal, clock) and 17578 (stationery box and inkstand).

³² In the British catalogue (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, p. 102, no. 525), the piece is considered to be ‘oval blotter’; I think it is likely to be a paperweight.

a) Blotting pad: length: 33.2 cm; width: 25.2 cm; rectangular shape; double profiled frame; laurel wreath on the edge. In the central part is a medallion, in which is applied the monogram of Marie Alexandrovna surrounded by an oval beaded frame and surmounted by the Russian Imperial Crown and a ribbon. Two winged *putti* flank the medallion; they are holding a garland of flowers.

b) Inkstand: height: 13 cm; length: 40 cm; width: 23 cm. On the large pedestal are placed two pots (diameter: 6 cm), encircled with garlands. Probably, the right pot was for the ink, and the left one was reserved for the sand. Two bucrania are applied on each pot. Between the two circular pots is a circular lidded box on whose lid is a reclining winged *putto* with the right arm raised and the left one leaning on the lid. A little nail fixed on the lid can be noted. The two pots and the box are placed on individual small pedestals. A horizontal groove (length: 7.6 cm) is carved in the lapis lazuli and it was there the pens were stored. On the long sides are placed two monograms of Marie Alexandrovna and above them are surmounted by the Russian Imperial Crown. On the short sides are applied two large ribboned bucrania.

c) Pen case: length: 24.6 cm; rectangular shape with rounded ends. On the edges are one ribboned bucranium on each side. On each of the long sides one monogram is surmounted by the Russian Imperial Crown. On the rim is placed a metal twisted string.

d) Stationery box: height: 17 cm; length: 28 cm; width: 13.5 cm; parallelepiped shape. The lid has the monogram of Marie Alexandrovna placed in a beaded frame, encircled by a medallion which is supported by two winged *putti*. The medallion is surmounted by the Russian Imperial Crown and a ribbon. Artistically crafted ribboned garlands are an extra to the workmanship of the piece. On the main side is placed the lock, compassed by a small garland of flowers. On the main side can be noted two ribboned bucrania atop columns.

e) Paperweight: height: 12.5 cm. On the base are represented two *putti*, one of them holding a small oval basin, and the second one supporting his mate. Two doves are placed on the basin's oval rim (decorated with a beaded frame). On the base are two monograms of the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna, surmounted by the Russian Imperial Crown.

f) Candlestick seal: height: 23.5 cm; it has festoons on the cup; below a profiled band is a beaded frame.

In the middle of the piece are applied three young female herm-like busts. Between the beaded frame and the busts is a double flared cylinder. On the base is the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna's oval monogram, which is surmounted by the Russian Imperial Crown.

g) Clock: height: 20 cm; on the base two *putti* are holding a garland of flowers, and, also, supporting the clock itself. At the bottom of the base is the ducal monogram, surmounted by the Russian Imperial Crown.

003 The Fabergé Eggs

As part of the exhibition concept, a special regard was paid to the Fabergé Easter Eggs presented by Nicholas II to his mother Maria Feodorovna and his wife Alexandra Feodorovna.

1 The Order of St. George³³ Egg with the miniatures of the Tsar Nicholas II and his son (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, p. 106, no. 560; Fabergé, Proler, Skurlov 2000, pp. 227-229, no. 49). Presented by Tsar Nicholas II to his mother in 1916. It was the last Easter gift of Nicholas II. Today it is stored in the Fabergé Museum (St. Petersburg). **(Pl. 16)**

2 The Winter Egg. It was made from rock crystal set with diamonds and platinum and contained a basket of wood anemones in white quartz with nephrite leaves. It was given by Nicholas II to his mother, the Empress Dowager Maria Feodorovna in 1913 (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, p. 107, no. 575A (considered to be snowdrops); Fabergé, Proler, Skurlov 2000, pp. 209-211, no. 43; <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1581826/Worth-hunting-for-the-ultimate-Easter-eggs.html>). Today it is in the private collection of the Emir of Qatar. **(Pl. 17)**

3 The Mauve Enamel Egg was presented by Nicholas II to his mother in 1897. Today the Egg is lost, but the surprise placed inside it is displayed in the Fabergé Museum. The surprise consists of three miniatures of Nicholas II, Alexandra, and their firstborn daughter, Olga (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, p. 106, no. 563; Fabergé, Proler, Skurlov 2000, pp. 126-129, no. 15). The item is housed in the Fabergé Museum (St. Petersburg).

4 The Peacock Egg, whose surprise is a mechanical peacock in a gold tree. Nicholas II offered it to his mother in 1908 (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, p. 108, no. 581; Fabergé, Proler, Skurlov 2000, pp. 179-181, no. 33).

5 The Bay Tree Egg was presented by Nicholas II to his mother in 1911. The surprise is formed by a songbird (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, p. 109, no. 586; Fabergé, Proler, Skurlov 2000, pp. 197-199, no. 39). The item is housed in the Fabergé Museum (St. Petersburg).

6 The Rosebud Egg is the first Egg presented by Nicholas II to Empress Alexandra in 1895. The surprises are missing (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, p. 108, no. 578; Fabergé, Proler, Skurlov 2000, pp. 120-122, no. 12). The piece is housed in the Fabergé Museum (St. Petersburg).

7 The Coronation Egg, made in 1897, and presented by Nicholas II to Empress Alexandra (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, p. 108, no.

³³ The order was instituted in 1807 by the tsar Alexander I for the warrant officers and soldiers. It was granted for deeds of bravery on the battlefield, to capture the enemy flag, for the first to enter an enemy fort, to save the life of the commander in battle, Pârvan, Opaschi, Martin 2011, p. 162.

582; Fabergé, Proler, Skurlov 2000, pp. 130-132, no. 16). Now it is displayed in the Fabergé Museum (St. Petersburg).

8 The Lilies of the Valley Egg, decorated with three miniatures of Nicholas II, the Grand Duchesses Olga and Tatiana. It was presented by Nicholas II to Alexandra Feodorovna (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n125>, p. 109, no. 585; it was pictured in 'ILN', no. 5016, 8 June 1935, p. 1038; Waterfield, Forbes 1978, p. 118).

004 'La Pelegrina' pearl

The 133.16 grains 'La Pelegrina' is a pear-shaped pearl, with a rose-cut diamond foliate cap and a circular-cut diamond surmount (Meylan 2018, p. 228). The jewel is supposed to have been part of the treasury of the Spanish crown. Infanta Maria Teresa received it from her father Philip IV as a marriage present when she married Louis XIV of France. It is likely that the pearl was stolen with the crown jewels in 1792, during the French Revolution (Papi 2016, p. 184).

Starting with 1826, the pearl became part of the Yusupov collection, when two Greek antique dealers sold it to the family. It was one of the few Yusupov jewellery to leave Russia officially with Prince Felix Yusupov in 1918. In 1953 'La Pelegrina' was sold to a merchant from Geneva and in 1987 arrived at Christie's in Geneva (Meylan 2018, pp. 227-228).

The vast collection of pearls remarkable for their beauty and historic importance also included the drop-shaped black pearl known as the 'Azra', which originally formed part of the Russian crown jewels (<https://archive.org/details/RussianArt/page/n127/mode/1up>, p. 118, no. 636, 'pearl necklace with black pearl'). In 1783, it was given by Catherine the Great to Prince Potemkin, who bequeathed it to his niece, Princess Tatiana Vassilievna Yusupov (Papi 2016, p. 184). This jewel was inherited by Princess Zenaida Yusupov, along with many others invaluable jewels.

Conclusions

In the Russian émigrés' homeland, the 17th Communist party congress in 1934 was a turning point. Stalin had already defeated his rivals. Violence and terror had already become part of Soviet life. The country was set on the road to industrialization (Kenez 2006, p. 105).

A far cry from this internal gloomy atmosphere, some 3000 km away, the Russian craftsmanship, luxury, and elegance were the main watchwords of the Albion's exhibition.

As a personal touch of her Romanov heritage, Queen Marie of Romania sent two masterworks that originally belonged to two Grand Duchesses (Marie Pavlovna 'the Elder' and Marie Alexandrovna), a tiara (*kokoshnik* type) and a desk set.

During forty days, the exhibition was opened to the thousands of visitors who crisscrossed fourteen rooms of the three-storeyed Late Georgian mansion. The visitors were fascinated by the pieces' brilliance, opulence, and accomplishment.

Particularly, for the Russian emigrants it was the ultimate revival of the bygone days of their glorious fatherland. Certainly, the thought of the fatherland is never ending.

References

- Cartier. Le style et l'histoire 2013 *Cartier. Le style et l'histoire*, exhibition catalogue, Paris, 2013.
- Clarke 2010 W. Clarke, *Hidden Treasures of the Romanovs. Saving the Royal Jewels*, 2010.
- Cristescu 2015a S. Cristescu, *Queen Mary of Romania: Letters to her King*, Bucharest, 2015.
- Cristescu 2015b S. Cristescu, *Scrisorile regelui Ferdinand I al României*, vol. I, Bucharest, 2015.
- Cross 2010 A. Cross, *Exhibiting Russia: The Two London Russian Exhibitions of 1917 and 1935*, *Slavonica* 16, 2010, pp. 29-39.
- Fabergé, Proler, Skurlov 2000 T. Fabergé, L. G. Proler, V. V. Skurlov, *The Fabergé Imperial Easter Eggs*, London, 2000.
- Ileana, Princess of Romania 1952 Ileana, Princess of Romania, Archduchess of Austria, *I live again*, New York, Toronto, 1952.
- Ileana, Princesă de România 2005 Ileana, Princesă de România, Arhiducesă de Austria, *Trăiesc din nou*, Bucharest, 2005.
- Ionescu 2009 A.-S. Ionescu, *Regina Maria și America*, Bucharest, 2009.
- Încoronarea 2012 *90 de ani de la încoronarea de la Alba Iulia*, coordinators Ernest Oberländer-Târnoveanu, Cornel Constantin Ilie, Bucharest, 2012.
- Kenez 2006 P. Kenez, *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End*, second edition, Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Mandache 2011 D. Mandache, *Regina Maria a României: Capitalele târzii din viața mea: Memorii redescoperite*, Bucharest, 2011.
- Mandache 2018 D. Mandache, *Bijuteriile reginei Maria*, Bucharest, 2018.
- Maria a României 2018 *Maria a României. Portretul unei mari regine*, 2 vol., coordinator & co-author Narcis Dorin Ion, Sinaia, 2018.
- Maria, regina României 2003 Maria, regina României, *Însemnări zilnice (ianuarie 1920-decembrie 1920)*, vol. II, editor Vasile Arimia, Bucharest, 2003.
- Maria, regina României 2004 Maria, regina României, *Însemnări zilnice (ianuarie 1921-decembrie 1921)*, vol. III, editor Vasile Arimia, Bucharest, 2004.
- Maria, regina României 2005 Maria, regina României, *Însemnări zilnice (1 ianuarie-31 decembrie 1922)*, vol. IV, editor Vasile Arimia, Bucharest, 2005.

- Maria, regina României 2013 Maria, regina României, *Însemnări zilnice (1 ianuarie-31 decembrie 1926)*, vol. VIII, editor Vasile Arimia, Bucharest, 2013.
- Meylan 2018 V. Meylan, *Christie's. The Jewellery Archives Revealed*, Woodbridge, 2018.
- Munn 2011 G. C. Munn, *Tiaras. A History of Splendour*, Woodbridge, 2011.
- Nadelhoffer 1999 H. Nadelhoffer, *Cartier. Jewellers Extraordinary*, London, 1999.
- Pakula 2004 H. Pakula, *Ultima romantică: viața reginei Maria a României*, Bucharest, 2004.
- Papi 2016 S. Papi, *The Jewels of the Romanovs. Family&Court*, London, 2016.
- Pârvan, Opaschi, Martin 2011 K. Pârvan, C. Opaschi, T. Martin, *Onoarea Națiunilor. Ordine și decorații din patrimoniul Muzeului Național de Istorie a României*, vol. I, Bucharest, 2011.
- Pârvan, Opaschi, Martin 2016 T. Al. Martin, K. Pârvan, C. Opaschi, *Onoarea Națiunilor, Ordine și decorații românești din patrimoniul Muzeului Național de Istorie a României*, vol. II, Bucharest, 2016.
- Regina Maria a României 2014 Regina Maria a României, *Însemnări zilnice (1 ianuarie-31 decembrie 1924)*, vol. VI, editor Vasile Arimia, Bucharest, 2014.
- Shilovsky 1991 P. P. Shilovsky, *Here is Imperial Russia*, memoir in Michael Glenny, and Norman Stone (eds.), *The Other Russia: The Experience of Exile*, London, 1991, pp. 289-297.
- Sommer 1975 S. R. Sommer, *Loïe Fuller*, *The Drama Review: TDR*, vol. 19, no. 1, Post-Modern Dance Issue (Mar., 1975), pp. 53-67.
- Tomescu 2008 D. Tomescu, *Despre bijuteriile și rochiile reginei Maria*, *Muzeul Național* 20, 2008, p. 265-276.
- Waterfield, Forbes 1978 H. Waterfield, C. Forbes, *Fabergé. Imperial Eggs and other fantasies*, New York, 1978.

Abbreviations

- APJ - *The Aberdeen Press and Journal*, newspaper, Aberdeen.
- Gentlewoman - *The Gentlewoman: An Illustrated Weekly Journal for Gentlewomen*, magazine, London.
- ILN - *The Illustrated London News*, magazine, London.
- NAR - The National Archives of Romania, Bucharest/ANR - Arhivele Naționale ale României, Bucharest.

NHMR – The National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest/MNIR – Muzeul Național de Istorie a României, Bucharest.

Scotsman – *The Scotsman*, newspaper, Edinburgh.

Sphere - *The Sphere: The Empire's Illustrated Weekly*, newspaper, London.

Wiener Salonblatt – *Die Wiener Salonblatt*, newspaper, Vienna.