

CHRISTIE'S

THE JEWELLERY ARCHIVES REVEALED

Vincent Meylan



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Cover: The Cambridge Lover's Knot tiara, created at the beginning of the nineteenth century for Princess
Augusta of Hesse Cassel, Duchess of Cambridge, and later sold at Christie's on 13 May 1981. A copy of the
tiara, commissioned by Queen Mary, has since been worn by Queen Elizabeth II and, without the upright
pearls, Diana, Princess of Wales and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge. See page 57 for more on the
Cambridge Lover's Knot tiara.

Frontispiece: Diamond parure, formerly the property of Queen Amalia of Greece, Princess von Oldenburg
(Christie's Geneva, 14 May 2014).



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Queen of Romania Sapphire



Above: Queen Marie of Romania wearing her sapphire as a pendant on a long diamond sautoir, created by Cartier.

Right: A 478.68 carat sapphire pendant by Cartier (Christie's Geneva, 19 November 2003).



Catherine the Great Emerald Brooch



Above: Portrait of Catherine II, also known as Catherine the Great, by Fyodor Rokotov, 1780.

Right: Catherine the Great Colombian emerald and diamond brooch (Christie's New York, 22 April 2010).



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Above and facing page: The Bagration spinel and diamond parure. The tiara was created in France at the beginning of the nineteenth century, possibly by Jean Baptiste Fossin. The necklace and earrings were made later, possibly in the 1840s. Princess Catherine Bagration was one of the most adventurous women of her time. Born in Russia, she was niece to Prince Potemkine, Catherine the Great's famous lover. Extremely rich, she led a very free life and was known as the "Naked angel" all around Europe. She died in Venice in 1857 (Christie's Geneva, 13 November 1975).



ONCE UPON A TIME ... IN JEWELS

This is the story of Christie's and its 250 years as the world's leading auction house, written in jewels, the most fascinating language of all.

Jewels play numerous and diverse roles in our lives: they can serve as measurements of wealth, icons of power, mementoes of love, the spoils of war, objects of desire and, even, emergency cash. But, above all, jewels are the embodiment of beauty. They have been coveted by the most memorable names in history, heroes and villains, famous lovers, glamorous stars, distinguished families, commanding dynasties.

They have been passed from owner to owner, across time and distance, connecting people, accumulating history, creating legends. They have been tenderly preserved, surviving wars, disasters and the ravages of time. Their allure has endured through the centuries, sought after by successive generations of connoisseurs.

My own story with jewels began in 1969, when I joined Christie's London as an intern in the jewellery department. In the spring of 1971, I was an assistant specialist, entrusted with my first major consignment, a marvellous diamond necklace that once belonged to Marie Antoinette. From 1793 onwards, the necklace passed through six royal families, before being presented at auction at Christie's Geneva on 30 June 1971. It didn't sell that day, but even now, I can still

remember the magnificence of the piece, and how my heart raced as I held the diamonds that once touched the skin of the Queen of France, almost two hundred years earlier.

Throughout the subsequent forty-five years, I would relive this incredible dream, over and over, with the Wittelsbach Diamond, the Archduke Joseph, the Princie, the Emperor Maximilian, la Peregrina pearl, Liz Taylor's emeralds, the gems of the Indian Raj – all awe-inspiring adventures of time travel, which had me mesmerised time and again in my long career as a jeweller; even today, I still crave for more.

This inexplicable bliss continues to draw me – and, I believe, many of my colleagues and fellow jewellers – to what is a privileged and addictive universe. One that transcends time and space, bonds people from different periods, countries and cultures. The jewels help us to archive and narrate the stories of royals, stars and tycoons – Madame du Barry, Marie Antoinette, Princess Margaret, Elizabeth Taylor, the Romanovs, the Rothschilds – and their realm of beauty, grandeur and provenance. They give us a precious glimpse of the wonders of once upon a time.

Welcome to our enchanted world.

François Curiel
Chairman, Christie's Asia-Pacific

THE MARIE ANTOINETTE DIAMOND NECKLACE

This piece of jewellery is part of the amazing legend surrounding Marie Antoinette, Queen of France. What we know with certainty is that, at the beginning of the French Revolution, Marie Antoinette sent most of her jewellery to her native land, Austria, for safekeeping. Her maid, Madame Campan, recalled in her memoirs that she spent a whole evening locked in a room with the queen, packing all her diamonds, rubies and pearls. She added that the jewels were then passed to the Austrian ambassador to France, Comte Mercy-Argenteau, who sent them on to Austria (see page 46 for more).

Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI's only surviving child, the Duchesse d'Angoulême, inherited the jewels. Like her mother, the

duchess adored diamonds, and it's very likely that she had some of Marie Antoinette's diamonds mounted on a necklace. She is depicted wearing the diamond necklace in all her official portraits.

After the death of the Duchesse d'Angoulême in 1851, the necklace was inherited by her niece, the Comtesse de Chambord. She, in turn, left it to her own niece, Marguerite de Bourbon-Parme, Duchesse de Madrid. The necklace then passed to Marguerite's son, and on to his sisters, who finally sold to the collector who brought it to Christie's in 1971.

The diamond necklace was presented by Christie's with a long letter from a previous owner explaining how it had been passed from one generation to the next, through the French and Spanish royal families and their descendants.

A
C A T A L O G U E
O F T H E G E N U I N E
H o u s h o l d F u r n i t u r e ,

Jewels, Plate, Fire-Arms, China, &c. And
a large Quantity of Maderia and high Fla-
vour'd Claret.

Late the Property of

A Noble P E R S O N A G E ,
(D E C E A S ' D ,)

The Furniture Consists of Rich Silk Damask, mix'd
Stuff ditto, Cotton and Morine in Drapery Beds,
Window-Curtains, French Elbow and back Stool
Chairs, a large Sopha with an Elegant Canopy over
ditto, Variety of Cabinet Work in Mahogany Rose-
wood, Japan, Tortoisshell, inlaid with Brass, &c.
Large Pier Glasses, a curious Needle-work Carpet 4
Yards by 5, Turkey and Wilton ditto, some valu-
able Jewels, and Plate, &c. Useful and ornamental
Chelsea, Dresden and Oriental China,, a Musical
Spring Clock and Eight-day ditto, some fine Bronzes,
Models, Pictures, &c. &c.

Which will be Sold by Auction
By Mr. C H R I S T I E ,

At the Auction Room, in P A L L M A L L , on Fryday
next, and the Four following Days.

The whole to be view'd on Wednesday next, and 'till
the Time of Sale, which will begin each Day at
Twelve o' Clock.

Catalogues to be had at the Great Room as above, and
at *Mr. Christie's, Castle-Street, Oxford-Road.*

5 December 1766

THE DAY IT ALL BEGAN...

(12)		Plate and Jewels.		
	47	A chas'd silver tankard at per oz.		W/ps Morris
	48	A tureen and cover		do
	49	A chas'd coffee-pot		do
	50	A sugar basin and ladle		do
	51	A pair snuffers and snuffer-pan		do
	52	A fine ruby and diamond buckle		do
	53	A brilliant hoop ring		do
	54	A fine large garnet set round with diamonds		do
	55	An emerald set with diamonds		do
	56	Two rings		do
	57	A set of coque de pearl		do
	58	A fine gold seal		do
	59	A pair fine stone buckles		do
	60	An etwee case		do
	61	A tortoisshell snuff-box mounted		do
	62	Four stone rings set in gold		do
	63	A red morocco pocket book gold lock and two keys		do
	64	A handsome table service of 16 oblong dishes 5 sizes forty eight table plates, eighteen soup ditto, a tureen cover and dish		do
5	65	A small India cabinet on a frame		do
	66	A beautiful honey-comb cream basin, cover dish and four enamell'd Chelsea compotiers		do
	67	A pair pier glasses in mahogany and gilt frames plate 36 by 18		do
	68	A pair of fine ornamental candlesticks		do
	69	A beautiful box and tray of the old japan		do
	70	A pair of clay figures the governer of Bengal and his lady		do
	71	A fine ton'd guitar		do
	72	A commode dressing table curiously inlaid with brass and tortoisshell		do
3 10 0	73	A black and gold marble table on a carv'd and gilt eagle		do
3 10 -	74	A ditto		do
	75	A Turkey carpet		do
	76	Two blue octagon old japan basons, covers and plates		do
	77	Two		do

Above and facing page: Catalogue of the first auction at Christie's, held on 5 December 1766. Lot 52 on the third day of sale was the very first jewel ever sold at Christie's.

DEUX MILLE LOUIS

A GAGNER,

DIAMANS ET BIJOUX

PERDUS.

IL a été volé chez Madame DU BARY, au Château de Louvecienne, dit Lucienne, près Marly, dans la nuit du 10 au 11 Janvier 1791, les Diamans & Bijoux ci-après :

Une bague d'un brillant blanc, carré long, pesant environ 35 grains, montée en cage.

Une dite d'un brillant, pesant environ 50 grains.

Une dite d'un brillant, de 26 à 28 grains.

Une dite d'un saphir, carré long, avec un amour, gravé dessus, & deux brillans sur le corps.

Un baguier en roufette verte, renfermant 20 à 25 bagues, dont une d'une grosse émeraude pendeloque, montée à jour, pesant environ 36 grains, d'une belle couleur, mais très-jardineuse, ayant beaucoup de dessous; une d'une onix, représentant le portrait de Louis XIV, dont les cheveux & les moustaches sont en fardoine; une d'un César de deux couleurs; une d'une émeraude carré long, pesant environ 20 grains; une d'un brillant brun puce, pesant 14 à 16 grains; une d'un onix, représentant Bacchus, &c.

SUR LE PAPIER.

Un brillant blanc, pesant 29 grains.

gros brillant au bout, pesant environ 12 grains, tenant sur le tout par une visse.

Une paire de boutons de manches, d'une émeraude, d'un saphir, d'un diamant jaune & d'un rubis; le tout entouré de brillans de grosseur de pierres de 4 grains.

Un bouton d'un très-gros brillant, couleur de rose, pesant 36 à 40 grains, monté en bouton de colle.

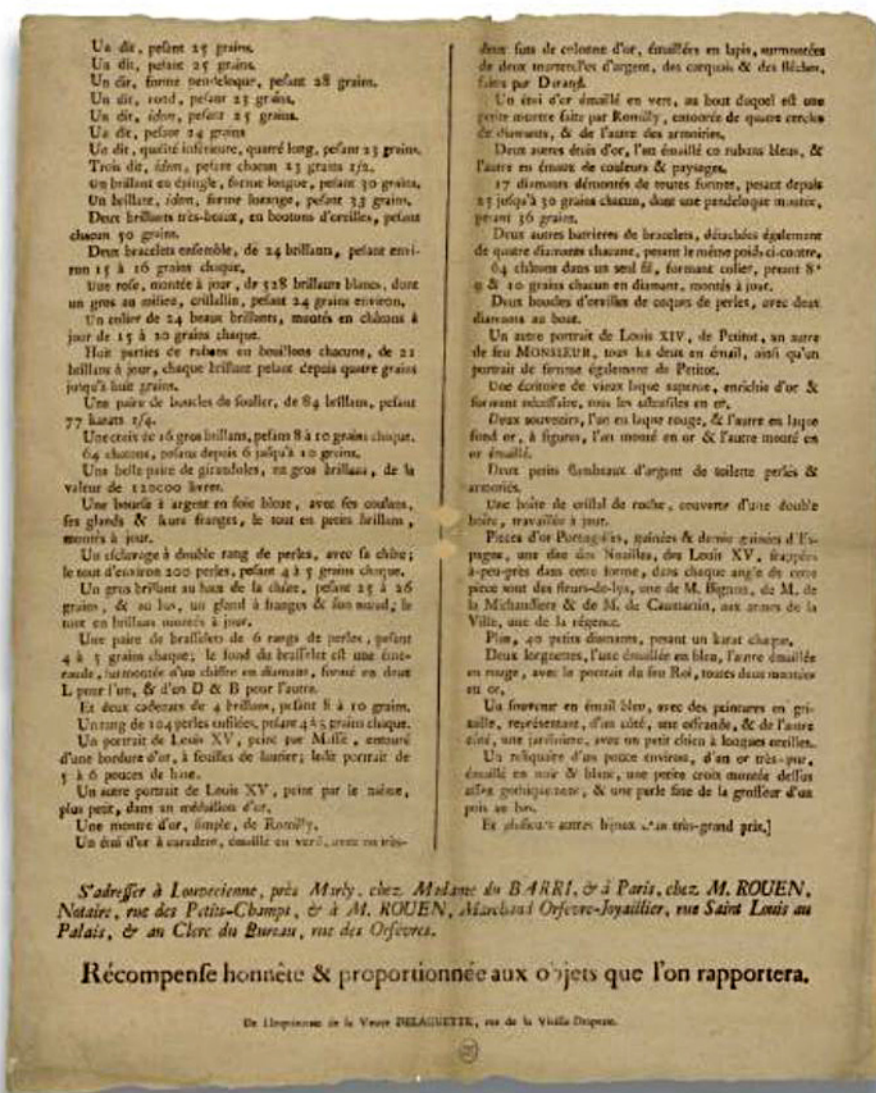
Deux grandes bandes de cordon de montre, composé de 16 chaînons à trois pierres, dont une grande émeraude, & deux brillans de 3 & 4 grains, de chaque côté, & 3 autres petites bandes de deux chaînons chaque, pareils à ceux ci-dessus.

Une barette d'un très-gros brillant, caré-long, pesant environ 60 grains, avec trois grosses émeraudes dessous, pesant 8 à 10 grains, avec deux brillans aux deux côtés, pesant un grain chaque, montés à jour; il est à observer que cette barette n'est pas polie.

Une bague d'un brillant d'environ 26 grains, montée à jour, avec des brillans sur le corps.

Deux girandoles d'or, formant flambeaux, montées sur

GUILLOTINE DIAMONDS



Above and facing page: Tract announcing the theft of the Countess du Barry's jewels, 1791.



Madame La Comtesse du Barry

ONE MOMENT MORE, EXECUTIONER
(1743-1793)

Paris, La Conciergerie Prison
Sunday 8 December 1793

When Jeanne Bécu entered the room where the condemned prisoners were prepared for the guillotine (their heads were shaved) even Sanson, the executioner, was horrified:

She walked, supporting herself against the walls as her legs gave way from under her. It had been twenty years since I last saw her, I hardly recognised her; she had grown stout and was disfigured by pain and anxiety. When she saw me behind the other condemned prisoners she let out a loud 'Ah!' and hid her face in her handkerchief, she fell to her knees crying out: 'No, not that, not that.'¹

Beyond the small vaulted room that served as the clerk's office, there were seven steps leading to a gate that opened onto the Cour du Mai. It was here that the wagon waited for the prisoners. Queen Marie Antoinette herself had climbed this Calvary only seven weeks earlier. So many women had been here before her. How many would follow? None of them had shown fear. The gawping crowd waiting patiently in the square before the Palais de Justice, in front of Mother Guibal's tobacco shop, had always wasted their time; there had never been any noise, nor pleading.

However, Jeanne Bécu, once Comtesse du Barry, did not have the same strength as her predecessors who had gone to the guillotine in noble silence. Since her death sentence had been announced the previous day, all her energies had been concentrated on one thing: survival, no matter the cost! The events following her arrest on 19 November 1793 were incoherent. After two weeks of imprisonment in Sainte-Pélagie, where no one seemed to know what to do with her, she was transferred to La Conciergerie, to the same cell in which Marie Antoinette had awaited death. Standing before the revolutionary tribunal, Jeanne had been accused of "conspiring with the opposition, spying on behalf of the enemy and plotting against the Republic".²

Fouquier-Tinville, the renowned public prosecutor, had given

his closing address, a violent diatribe strewn with historical references: "This Aspasia of a French Sardanapale [an influential mistress from antiquity] had been an instrument, an accomplice of the 'Emigrés'.³ Supporting them and giving shelter to those remaining in France."⁴ One witness after another showed pitiful cowardice. A housemaid swore to having seen her "burning papers"; a valet had heard her describe people as "miserable blackguards". Zamor, the Bengali slave who had worked in her household for some twenty years, accused her with obvious pleasure, stating that she "celebrated the failings of the Republican army and had continued to entertain aristocrats at home". Zamor also claimed that she dismissed him from the household, despite his entreaties. In truth, he was let go for stealing.

George Greive, the man who had arrested Jeanne at her château in Louveciennes, near Paris, presented a particularly incredulous denunciation: she had simulated a burglary on the night of 10 January 1791 to smuggle her diamonds out to England where they could be sold to help the "émigrés". Jeanne had never met Greive before, and yet seems to have become his bête noire. Although he was a British citizen, he became a fervent defender of the French Revolution, constantly harassing the Comité de salut public (Committee of Public Safety) with letters of denunciation, calling for the arrest of the "Messaline des Bourbon". The courts, she thought, could not possibly believe the absurd accusations; she was innocent. When her death sentence was announced, it numbed her to the core.

At fifty, Jeanne was still attractive, and yet had to accept her undignified end: death by guillotine, in a public place, in front of thousands of curious onlookers. All night, in a stupor, exuding anxiety from every pore, she looked for a way to avoid death. Then suddenly, as the executioner prepared to clasp her by the neck and cut off her hair, she had an idea. What if she told them everything? What if she revealed where all the treasures were hidden? All the places in the garden at the Château de Louveciennes where, with the help of her faithful servant, Morin, her fortune had been stashed. Judge Denisot and citizen Royer, assistant to the public prosecutor, who had come to oversee the execution as required by law, looked at Jeanne with interest. She began to list the Louis d'or, the silverware, the jewellery, the diamonds, the pearls... she remembered everything.

¹ Facing page: *Portrait of the Countess du Barry as 'Flora' by François-Hubert Drouais, 1774.*

In the sheds where tools were retightened, just in front of the cold store, could be found gold items – a plateau, a teapot, a kettle, two cafetieres, a milk pot, a strainer, a covered pot, its plate and three spoons. All the handles of these objects were in blood red jasper. In a basket, buried in the same place: fifteen hundred and thirty one Louis d'or, a string of diamonds, two "chain" earrings with diamonds, with nine or ten of those of great size. Three rings, one with white diamonds, one with ruby and white diamonds, one with emeralds and white diamonds. A necklace of fine pearls, ear chains in fine pearl.⁵

Royer, writing the list, addressed her without pity: "Is that all, citizen?"

Jeanne, desperately searching, would find another object in a corner of her confused mind and confess. There was so much to tell, an endless list of treasures. She had loved luxury, precious ornaments, jewels and, most of all, diamonds.

The first of these had been given to her in July 1768 by King Louis XV, several weeks after she had become his mistress. She was twenty-five. He was fifty-eight. Those close to the ageing, depressive king had dismissed the relationship as passing folly, but it had become a passion. Within a few years he had lost his mistress, Madame de Pompadour; his son and successor, the dauphin, and the dauphin's wife, Marie-Josèphe of Saxony; and finally, on 28 June 1768, his queen, Marie Leeczinska. Jeanne had brought a little gaiety to his life.

The king appreciated his comfort and wished to settle his young mistress at court. And for the former shop assistant with a dubious past, the promotion was equivalent to accomplishing the twelve labours of Hercules. Firstly, it was necessary to find her a suitable name. Her lineage wasn't clear-cut. Certainly, one of her grandfathers, Fabien Bécu, had reputedly been one of the most handsome men in Paris; his second wife was the Comtesse de Cantigny, who was much older than him and from whom he had taken his civil status. However, he was unable to pass her title on to his children. His daughter, Anne Bécu, had enjoyed a lively youth, of which Jeanne was the result. In truth, no one knew who her father was, although a conveniently dead priest, Friar Jean-Baptiste Gomard de Vaubernier, had been recognised as such.

It was not enough just being Mademoiselle de Vaubernier, she also needed to be wed. A young girl, unless a princess, had no legal recognition in the court of France. Her ex-lover, the Comte Jean du Barry, a playboy and part-time pimp who had presented her to the king, also supplied her with a husband; none other than his brother, Guillaume. An attractive financial incentive persuaded him to play the role of understanding spouse.

Jeanne was beautiful and well brought up. She had grown up in a convent, even though she had many lovers. Not long after

leaving the convent, after a period spent working with Claude-Edmé Labille at his fashion house, she began her life as a courtesan. Jean du Barry had become her protector, at least in title, ignoring her occasional lovers particularly when they were rich and generous. After several years, he became bored by the relationship, and realised that he could take advantage of the king's loneliness by ensuring he noticed Jeanne. The plan succeeded well beyond his imagination. The king fell hopelessly in love with the pretty, young blonde to such a degree that he confided in one of his companions, the Duc de Richelieu: "She has woken me to pleasures I did not know existed."⁶

He had provided everything for Jeanne's marriage, including the dowry, the trousseau and the indemnity paid to Guillaume so that he could return to Toulouse on the wedding night. He also offered her a "necklace of fine diamonds worth 8,000 livres, an aigrette and a pair girandoles of the same value".

Jeanne's dream had begun. For five years she would reign over Versailles. The king sent her 100,000 livres⁷ of diamonds to adorn her dresses and hair for her presentation to the court. And not a week went by without some precious gift arriving from the monarch. Jewellery worth almost three million livres was amassed in her safe box; and there was the furniture, rare porcelain and silverware adorning the salons, and the music pavilion at the Château de Louveciennes, all presents from the king. Louis XV's love for Jeanne was unconditional, allowing her to be capricious, even impertinent. The future Louis XVI, grandson of Louis XV, was a virtuous young man who distrusted her openly; in front of the court she referred to him as a "big boy badly brought up". While his wife, the future Marie Antoinette, who detested Jeanne and was not afraid to show it, was dubbed "The Little Redhead" by the king's mistress.

Her dream ended abruptly. On 10 May 1774, Louis XV died from smallpox. The day before, Jeanne had been asked to retire to the sinister Abbaye de Pont-aux-Dames, with only one maid in attendance. She spent a year in exile, after which the newly crowned Louis XVI allowed her to return to Louveciennes. He reinstated her allowance, which had been offered to her by his grandfather, under the strict condition that she remain discreet. Her relatively quiet life was made more agreeable by a new affair; the Duc de Brissac, a rich, older man, became her lover. He offered respectability to the old king's favourite.

The first months of the revolution did little to impinge on Jeanne's comfortable lifestyle; and she would undoubtedly have lived a peaceful life had she remained discreet. However, the theft of a large quantity of her diamonds during the night of 10/11 January 1791 turned her destiny on its head. She spent the night in Paris, at the House of Brissac who was giving a dinner. Early the next morning, one of the domestic

servants discovered a double ladder leaning against the wall of the Château de Louveciennes. One of the windows had been broken. The thieves, well informed it seems, had no trouble finding the jewels, which were stored in a superb commode decorated with Sèvres porcelain inlay plates.

Instead of alerting the police, Jeanne boasted of the theft throughout Europe. At her own expense, she printed tracts (see pages 16 and 17) offering a 2,000 Louis (40,000 livres) reward to anyone who found her diamonds, following with a list of the magnificent stolen items:

Thirty or so rings with inserts of sapphires, emeralds and large diamonds

Two large brilliant-cut diamond earrings

Bracelet clasps, shoe buckles, a cross, a rivière, a second necklace, and diamond girandoles

A double string of pearls, a sautoir of pearls and pearl bracelets

Sixty-four loose diamonds.

A rose of diamonds [which she wore on her belt] and numerous pieces of precious metal decorated with diamonds and precious stones.

The total value of the stolen items was estimated at 1.5 million livres. In what was a period of austerity and political unrest, revealing ownership of such riches drew Jeanne much attention.

In London, a month after the theft, the English police arrested a group of ruffians who were offering unmounted diamonds of excellent quality to jewellers in the city. Jeanne, invited to view the recovered haul, travelled to England four times between February 1791 and March 1793. However, her efforts were in vain. Certainly, her ownership of the diamonds was recognised, but they remained in the possession of the English authorities while the thieves went untried.

In France, the revolution was entering its most bloody period. Jeanne's lover, the Duc de Brissac, was literally cut to pieces by a mob in 1792. Louis XVI went to the scaffold and "The Terror" (the period of violence following the French Revolution) began.

Jeanne was in London at the time of the king's execution. Had she remained there, quietly awaiting the return of her diamonds, the valuables could have been sold to ensure a comfortable exile. Her bankers, who had placed a part of her fortune overseas, advised her to do just that. But, in a remarkable show of whim bordering on madness, she returned to France. Jeanne paid for the imprudence with her life.

In La Conciergerie, she tried again to negotiate with her executioners, offering all that was left of her riches. "Is that all, citizen?" Royer asked once more.

No, that was not all. There was still gold, diamonds, things of beauty that could be transformed one by one into precious minutes of life, a life that she had no wish to leave:

In a small pine box, a repeater watch mounted with diamonds, a small packet of diamonds perhaps 14 or 15, a small packet of rubies. A chain of emeralds and diamonds of which the largest weighed 50 grains... In the cellar, under the stairs, 115 plates in silver, 18 silver candlesticks, 64 silver servers...⁸

The listing, interrupted by sobbing and cries of terror, lasted for four hours. Until, suddenly, there was nothing left. The cellars of Louveciennes, the spaces under the stairs, the ponds and the groves in the park – she had remembered every place. There was not one single gold coin left to be offered up to her executioners. Her last recourse, to gain some time, was to propose that she go to London to retrieve the stolen diamonds, returning them to Paris for the nation. If only they would let her live.

Royer and Denisot shrugged their shoulders, mockingly.

"You must accept your fate citizen and regain your honour through your courage," said the judge as he turned, disgusted, with the dossier under his arm.⁹

And so, the face of death returned, more hideous than before. The executioner approached once again to cut off her hair. With the first cut of the scissors, Jeanne fought, she shouted, she cried. Two assistants held her down. Sanson reflected that she ought to be grateful for the removal of her curls. The citizen du Barry had a thick neck. This fleshiness, added to the mass of curls, would hinder the blade or slow it down. It would be a slow death, which he wished upon no one.

Jeanne climbed into the wagon in the company of her banker, Jean Baptiste Vandenyver, and his two sons, Edmé-Jean and Antoine Augustin. During the first part of the journey, she appeared to be in a trance, oblivious to the impending act. Or perhaps she was just exhausted from having given battle, from all the crying and pleading. But, as the wagon passed in front of the Palais Royal, halfway along the route, she began having convulsions and had to be restrained by the attendants to stop her jumping out of the wagon. She began shouting again; agonising cries in public.

"Friends, would you wish to see me dead? Save me. I harmed no one. Life... leave me my life and I will give my wealth to the nation..." she implored.¹⁰ The crowd threw back insults: "Your wealth! You give the nation nothing that it doesn't own" replied one man.

Then, little by little, the crowd quietened down, fascinated by the spectacle of impending death. Silence descended, as if, for once, the crowd had decided to pity the condemned. After all, this woman was a daughter of the people, not an aristocrat. Unsettled by the crowd's change of mood, the executioner whipped the horses. His wagon arrived at the scaffold on the Place de la Revolution almost at a gallop. It was half past four. Still shouting, Jeanne was the first to climb down. Sanson's assistants had to lift her to the scaffold while she pleaded: "One moment more, executioner." "She fought, trying to bite them," Sanson later recounted.

She was as strong as powerful; it took four men three minutes to bring her up. If she had not made them so angry by wrestling them, I do not think they would have been able; they were in consternation. The people did not breathe a word, many of them turned to leave. She began again, shouting. She could have been heard beyond the river and she was frightening to look at; eventually they managed to quieten her, and it was done.¹¹

The inventory and requisition of her estate, overseen by her denouncer, George Greive, began the next day. For weeks, republican representatives listed and estimated the paintings, furniture, objects of gold and silver, precious ornaments and jewellery discovered in the château, the music pavilion and the grounds – including the fountain – of the Louveciennes estate. Morin, loyal valet to the comtesse, was guillotined on 18 December. Deliant, another domestic servant, who almost certainly acquired several of the hidden objects, escaped the guillotine by dying in the infirmary at Versailles several days after his arrest. His widow, less fortunate, cut her own throat with a razor while in prison.

The inventory recorded more than 1.3 million livres of precious objects, of which 400,000 livres comprised diamonds or jewellery. Rents from the estate and the properties sold added to the total. In all, the assets of citizen du Barry enriched the Republic by several million livres; funds that were urgently needed to pay the troops battling on the frontiers of France. But, the legend of the Comtesse du Barry's diamonds did not finish there. It continued in London, at Christie's.

Two years later...

Christie's 125, Pall Mall, London 19 February, 1795

Every time he entered his grand saleroom, James Christie took a moment to admire his portrait. The painting, by his friend Thomas Gainsborough, was a résumé of his career. Born in Perth, Scotland, in 1730, to an English father and a mother who

belonged to the clan of MacDonald, he began with very little. In thirty years, he had built a renowned business while retaining his respectability as a gentleman. The painting was testament to this achievement; leaning gently on the painting's gold frame to read the inscription, a discreet smile came to the lips of the elegant Christie, in modest recognition of his own success.

When he was fifteen years old, Christie embarked for an adventure on the high seas. His father had offered him an officer's commission in the Royal Navy. The discovery of the world had amused him and he would have made a career of seafaring had he not fallen in love during a period of shore leave. His marriage at the age of nineteen persuaded him to choose a more sedentary profession and he settled in London. His natural curiosity led him into the fascinating world of *objets d'art*. He learnt his profession alongside Mr Annesley, an auctioneer in Covent Garden, before deciding, in 1766, to become independent.

Christie's chosen profession, which many of his colleagues considered simply a way of emptying houses, warehouses, bankrupt shops or castles, offered him credentials. Richard Dalton's print shop on Pall Mall became his base. The glass roof in the principal room of the shop projected light in such a way that it was perfect for viewing paintings, a quality that inspired Christie to hold exhibitions. Viewers were given two complete days to admire and assess the works on offer before auction day.

Christie's other ingenious idea was to use the power of the press to publicise the auctions. The first article was published in *Lloyd's Evening Post*, on 14 December 1767. He created private viewings for the most privileged clients. Events would be arranged in the evening, with entry supervised by the doorman of the Royal Opera at Covent Garden who, knowing all the entitled members, could ensure that only the most discerning guests were allowed in. All of this helped gain Christie the title of "prince of auctioneers"; and never was this title more merited than on 19 February 1795.

Christie's became the talk of all London when the diamonds of the Comtesse du Barry came to auction. The theft from Louveciennes in January 1791, their discovery in London a month later and the identity and tragic demise of their owner lent the stones an aura of mystery – as the sumptuous and tragic title of the catalogue demonstrated perfectly: "A most Capital and superb Assemblage of Valuable jewels, of most singular excellence, beauty and perfection, late the property of madame la Comtesse du Barry, deceased".

The auction comprised sixty-five lots, featuring 1,000 pearls; 150 brilliant diamonds, weighing between one and

Facing page: *Portrait of James Christie* by Thomas Gainsborough, 1778.



twelve carats; 1,200 smaller diamonds; and some stones of colour. Unfortunately, none of the stones were mounted. The stolen jewels had been broken up by the thieves to avoid suspicion. On their arrival in London, the thieves had sold a few of the diamonds for £1,500 to a well-known jeweller, Mr Lion. This gentleman, delighted with such a bargain – the diamonds were worth six times what he paid – had not been unduly worried. It was not unusual for the French to be selling diamonds cheaply at this time. The “émigrés” had fled the French Revolution, selling their belongings to survive. Many had chosen London over other European capitals. Indeed, more than 10,000 French citizens had taken refuge in the British capital.

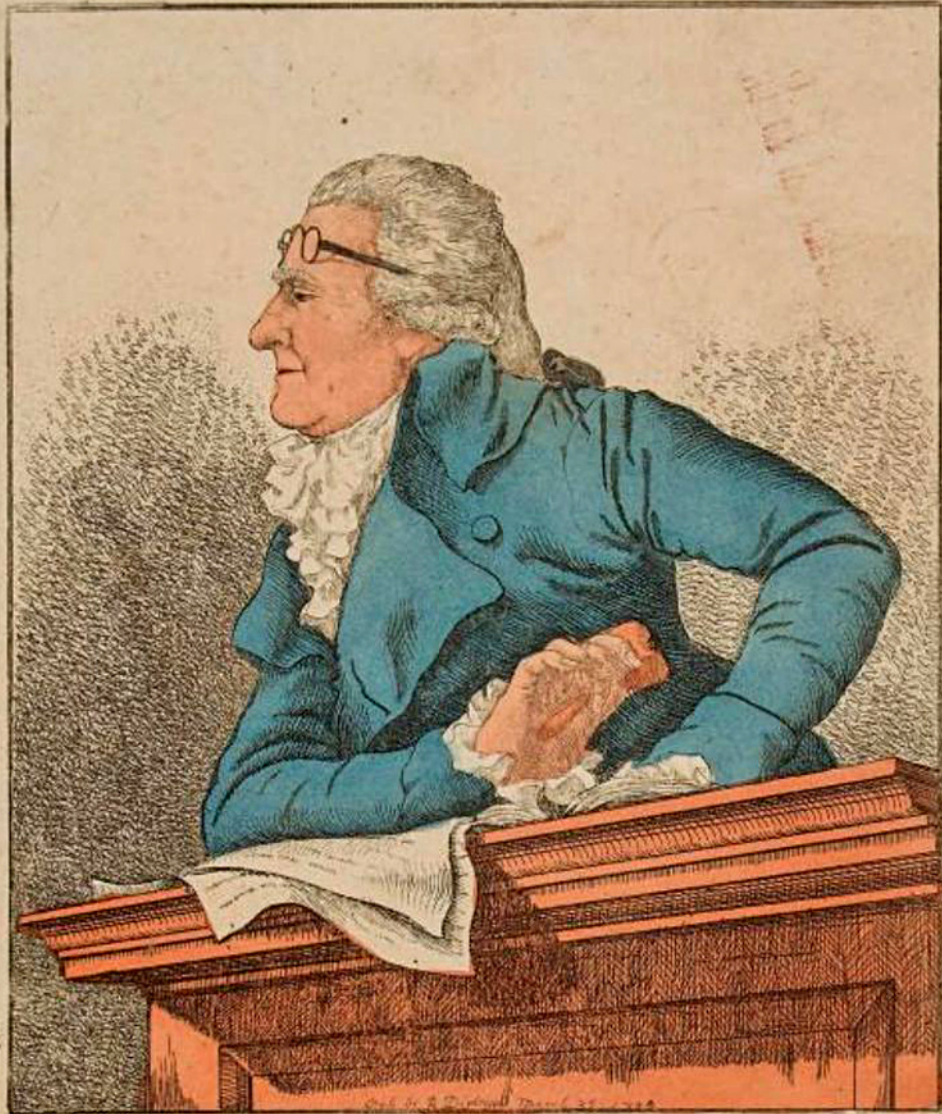
Several days after his purchase and after some consideration, Lion had decided that the gentlemen selling the diamonds did not have the look of French “émigrés” and had alerted the police. The gang had been arrested and the treasure retrieved. The Comtesse du Barry had duly arrived in London soon after, intent on identifying the stones. Three years later, the trial over the thieves condemned and Madame du Barry guillotined, the British authorities had sanctioned the sale of the diamonds, the proceeds from which were to be paid to creditors. What remained of the legendary collection, given by a king of France to his mistress, was offered at Christie's.

The sale made £8,788, twenty percent of the value announced by Madame du Barry when the diamonds were

stolen four years previously. Of course, certain stones, perhaps the most valuable, had already been sold. The diamonds that Lion had acquired for £1,500 were, according to him, worth at least £9,000. The influx of precious stones onto the London market, resulting from the French Revolution, was without doubt a contributing factor to the fall in value.

Surprisingly, the sale catalogue appears to mention stones that were not included in the list of jewellery stolen from Madame du Barry. Jeanne had mentioned a necklace of 200 pearls, another of 100 pearls and a bracelet of four strings of pearls, coming to a total of 500 pearls. However, Christie's catalogue mentions more than double that number. Was Madame du Barry mistaken? Or did the pearls come from another burglary, and were then included in the thieves' haul?

Surely, the most intriguing question of all is what became of Madame du Barry's diamonds after the Christie's sale. The most important stone, a white brilliant weighing 12 carats, was sold for £910. The list of buyers' names mentioned in the margin of the catalogue is a little deceptive. Only the dealers are featured. Obviously, one can imagine that the diamonds were sold again once they had been remounted. It is almost certain that a number of these diamonds remain within British collections today. However, without the discovery of a named receipt referring to the tragic provenance, Madame du Barry's diamonds will remain anonymous. Forever.



THE SPECIOUS ORATOR.
WILL YOUR LADYSHIP DO ME THE HONOR TO SAY $\pounds 50,000$
— A MERE TRIFLE — A BRILLIANT *of the* FIRST WATER.
an unheard of price for such a lot, surely.

Wm. Kent

16
A

CATALOGUE

OF

A most Capital and superb Assemblage of Valuable

JEWELS,

Of most singular EXCELLENCE, BEAUTY, and PERFECTION,

LATE THE PROPERTY OF

Madame La COMTESSE DUBARRY,

DECEASED.

WHICH (BY ORDER OF THE ADMINISTRATOR)

Will be peremptorily Sold by Auction

By Mr. CHRISTIE,

At his Great Room in Pall Mall,

On THURSDAY, FEBRUARY the 19th, 1795,

Commencing precisely at Half past Twelve o'Clock.

To be Viewed Two Days preceding the Sale; when Catalogues may be had at the
Rainbow Coffee House, Cornhill; and in Pall Mall.



CHARLOTTE - GENEVIEVE - LOUISE - AUGUSTE - ANDRÉE - THIMOTHÉE
D'ÉON DE BEAUMONT
*Chevalier de l'Ordre Royal et Militaire de Saint Louis,
Capitaine de Dragons et des Volontaires de l'Armée,
Aide-de-Camp de M.M. le Maréchal-Duc et Comte de Broghe,
Ministre-Pleupotentiaire de France auprès du Roi de la Grande-Bretagne.*
Né à Rennes le 2. octobre 1732. M. 1784 81.

Charles Geneviève d'Eon

THE STRANGE CHEVALIER
(1728-1810)

Thursday 14 February 1792

James Christie had to admit that the French Revolution had been to his advantage. Unintentionally, these bloody fanatics who had guillotined their royalty had driven thousands of objects into his auction house. Certain aristocrats had successfully fled France, bringing the greater part of their estate with them. Others had only managed to save a few jewels. And it was always to him that they came when they wanted the best price, particularly when they had the good sense to sell everything in one single auction. During the month of February, 1792, he organised the first auction of a collection owned by a lady "émigrée". He was fortunate, she accepted that her name be published in the catalogue:

Some valuables and elegant jewels, some few fine prints, valuable coins and medals, the property of mademoiselle la Chevalière d'Eon.

No one else could have generated as much curiosity, in London or all of Europe, as Mademoiselle la Chevalière d'Eon. Twenty years earlier, she had turned the British capital on its head by being the subject of the most important bet ever wagered with a bookmaker. The total stake money paid on d'Eon came to £100,000. The question arising was simple, but fundamental: Man or Woman, what was "its" sex? No one could provide an answer. Uncertainty and ambiguity had existed ever since her birth, in Bourgogne, on 5 October 1728. Her parents gave her a double Christian name, both masculine and feminine: Charles and Geneviève. The misunderstanding directed her whole life, perpetuated by d'Eon herself; sometimes she dressed as a man, sometimes as a woman, regularly changing clothes so as to mislead. Officially, since living in London, Mademoiselle d'Eon had chosen feminine clothing, but she could still draw a sword with skill and precision.



Above and facing page: The Chevalier d'Eon, dressed as a woman and The Chevalier d'Eon, dressed as a Dragoon, both by Jean-Baptiste Bradel, 1779.



James Christie, however, was certain about one point in particular. This lady admitted openly to shaving her beard and had been involved in a number of conspiracies, battles and intrigues. She was a spy – or at least she had been – in the pay of King Louis XV; her first adventures in espionage had been at the court of Russia, in the time of the Tsarina Elisabeth Petrovna.

Above: The Assault, or Fencing Match, which took place at Carlton House on 9 April 1787, between Mademoiselle La Chevaliere D'Eon de Beaumont and Monsieur De Saint George; in the presence of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, several of the nobility and many eminent fencing masters of London, artist unknown.

Her ambivalence may have been responsible for her recruitment into the French secret service in 1756. The Seven Years' War threatened Europe. France against England; Prussia against Austria. In the diplomatic wrangling, the stance of the Russians was crucial and each European nation sent ambassadors and spies to Saint Petersburg in the hope of influencing the tsarina. Brutal, lunatic and undoubtedly nymphomaniac, this refined woman owned one of the most impressive wardrobes in Europe, and collected lovers, jewels and palaces. She gave bizarre parties, masked balls where men were obliged to dress as women, while the women dressed as men.

The Chevalière d'Eon was officially of masculine sex during his time in the Russian court. Without doubt, he enjoyed the

atmosphere that encouraged transvestism. In order to succeed in his mission, he dressed as a woman, allowing him to be introduced to the tsarina as a reader. The tsarina wanted to make d'Eon a lover or mistress, no one knew quite which. She tried in vain; the young man remained unaffected. He didn't need to succumb – the diplomatic victory had already been sealed when the Russians announced their alliance with the French. The mission launched d'Eon's diplomatic career, along with all the myths that surrounded his sexual identity.

At the beginning of 1774, he was sent to the French Embassy in London on a secret mission: stop the publication of a pamphlet that described Louis XV's romantic liaison with Madame du Barry. Entitled *Secret Memories of a Public Woman*, it was the work of Charles Theveneau de Morande, an exile who had been resident in England for several years. The pamphlet described Madame du Barry as a prostitute of the lowest order. Nicknamed "Chonchon,"¹² she had two lovers, both of whom she treated very familiarly. One of them was the King of France who, according to Theveneau, prepared du Barry's coffee every morning. The second, the Archbishop of Reims, was given the charge of presenting her slippers on rising from their debauchery. D'Eon and another of the king's emissaries, M. de Beaumarchais, the celebrated writer, negotiated hard to obtain the destruction of the pamphlet.

Mission completed, d'Eon returned to France. However, the death of Louis XV signalled his retirement. The new king, Louis XVI, preferred to distance himself from this strange secret agent. To guarantee his discretion, and in restitution for all the secret papers he held, d'Eon was awarded a pension of 12,000 livres. Once again he changed sex, no doubt to cover all traces of his past activities.

Mademoiselle la Chevalière d'Eon settled permanently in London, in a small house in Brewer Street, Soho. There she became a book lover and, on the occasion of an auction, made the acquaintance of James Christie. To supplement her income she sometimes organised public duels, during which she would draw her sword against some very able opponents. The Prince of Wales had occasion to organise an event especially for her in the salon of his London residence, Carlton House. D'Eon fought another celebrated swordsman, the Knight of Saint George, the mixed-heritage son of a rich planter from Guadeloupe and a slave.

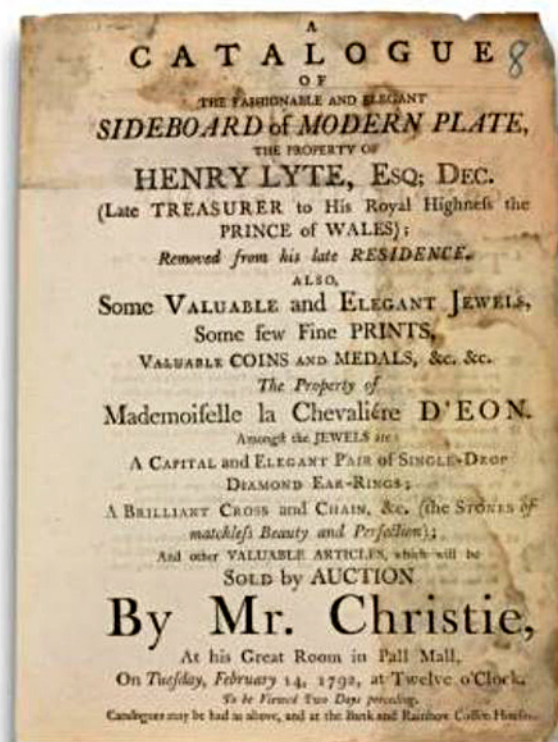
The suspension of d'Eon's pension due to the French Revolution dealt her finances a cruel blow. Equally, the duels

didn't generate much income, and so, in February 1792, approaching the age of sixty, she decided to place part of her wardrobe, diamonds – notably a beautiful pair of pendant earrings – gravures and furniture in the hands of James Christie.

The years that followed were not kind to Mademoiselle la Chevalière d'Eon. In 1796, she was injured during her final duel. And, in 1803, the year in which James Christie died, she was imprisoned for her debts. Only the intervention of Queen Charlotte, who awarded her a small pension, enabled her to live out the final years of her life in relative comfort. She died in 1810.

Her famous books were auctioned in February 1813 by James Christie's son, also called James. In a book dedicated to the Christie family, written in 1896, William Roberts, reported that the younger James Christie owned several very personal souvenirs of the Chevalière d'Eon, notably a corset.¹³

In May 1810, two days after d'Eon's death, a doctor and seventeen witnesses were called to the autopsy. Dr Coppeland and the witnesses could finally confirm, without any ambiguity, that the lady was indeed a man.



Right: Catalogue of the Property of Mademoiselle la Chevalière D'Eon (Christie's London, 14 February 1792).



MURDERED QUEENS



Above: A pair of diamond 'dormeuse' earrings, c.1870. Formerly in the Collection of Empress Elisabeth of Austria (Christie's Geneva, 17 May 2006).

Facing page: *Elisabeth, Empress of Austria* by Franz Xaver Winterhalter, 1865.



Mary, Queen of Scots

A QUEEN BEHEADED
(1542-1587)

Fotheringhay Castle
Sunday 8 February 1587

The first strike of the executioner's axe fell flatly on her neck. The attending crowd would all have been able to hear the queen say "Sweet Jesus". The second blow cut three quarters of the way through her neck. It was the third and final cut which severed the head from the body. Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, dowager queen of France and claimant to the throne of England, was dead. The beheading of a queen was unthinkable, but it had been carried out on the order of her cousin, Elizabeth, Queen of England. The myth of rule by divine right was over. From this moment onwards sovereigns could be subjected to trial and execution.

The Queen of Scotland was only told of her impending death on the eve of the execution. Nevertheless, she organised the end carefully. Her voice during the last hours of her life was that of a courageous queen and a martyr to the Catholic faith. Her life had not been lacking in passion or frivolity, and in the final few hours she prepared for her salvation. This death needed to be recorded for posterity. Several days before, she had written in a final letter to her cousin, the Duc de Guise: "the fact of being condemned by heretics and enemies of the church, who have no jurisdiction over me – an independent queen – is advantageous in the eyes of God".

On the night of the 7 February, having listened to the bleak verdict, Mary, Queen of Scots, retired to her apartments. She dictated her last wishes, assembled her remaining possessions and gave something away to each of her loyal servants as a keepsake. Suspicious of her jailer, Amyas Paulet, a Protestant fanatic who had always refused to show her the slightest courtesy, she confided instead in Andrew Melville, her chamberlain, naming the objects and jewellery that she wished to be passed on to her son, James, and her parents in France and Spain. The rest of the evening was spent quietly, in the company of her loyal friends. While taking her last meal, the queen asked her maid of honour, Jane Kennedy, to read her a passage from the scriptures. Jane chose the story of the thief who

repented on the cross before dying. "Certainly he was a great sinner; but my sins are yet greater," the queen commented. Then, towards midnight, she lay down on her bed to take a little rest, without sleeping. What a strange life she had led.

She was born on 8 December 1542, in the palace of Linlithgow, near Edinburgh. Six days after, upon the death of her father, she became Queen of Scotland under the turbulent regency of Cardinal Beaton, the Count of Arran and her mother, Marie de Guise, widow of James V. Her kingdom was often under threat from powerful English neighbours, and Marie de Guise soon turned to their traditional ally, France, for protection. Mary (also "Marie") was promised to the heir to the French throne, François. For her safety, she was sent to the court of Henry II, where she spent her formative years.

Already Queen of Scotland, in 1559 she came to the throne of France with François. Unfortunately, he died the following year at the age of sixteen. Widowed, she returned to her own country. Scotland was waiting for her. Or so she thought. The next seven years were ones of deception, disloyalty, deaths and trials. Mary was harassed by the Protestants for being a Catholic; deceived by her step brother, the Earl of Moray, who was plotting treason; and used by her second husband, Lord Darnley, a scoundrel who fathered her a son. She became lost in religious controversy, court intrigue and clan squabbling. Her marriage to Darnley became a nightmare after he killed one of her favourites, David Rizzio, in front of her. Darnley died a year later, suffocated in the garden of his Edinburgh home following an explosion. Mary sealed her fate by marrying the man reputed to have killed Darnley, James, Earl of Bothwell. Their union unleashed a wave of anger. Her Catholic supporters criticised her union with a Protestant; the Protestants called her an adulterous sinner; the people accused her of being involved in the murder of Darnley; and the lords of Scotland, without justification, accused her of being unfit to govern. A coalition was formed against Mary, ultimately leading to her abdication in favour of her son in July 1567.

Facing page: *Mary, Queen of Scots* by Nicholas Hilliard, c. 1572.

A
CATALOGUE
OF
THE FOLLOWING
Very Valuable Articles.
VIZ.
THE ORIGINAL DIAMOND SIGNET RING
OF
MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS,
Engraved with the Arms of England and Scotland quartered.
AS ALSO,
A few Books, Prints and Pictures,
OF THE LATE
BARRINGTON POPE BLACHFORD, Esq
DECEASED.

Which will be Sold by Auction,
(By Order of the Executors,)
BY MR. CHRISTIE,
AT HIS GREAT ROOM, FALL MALL,
On SATURDAY, MAY the 24th 1817,
PUNCTUALLY AT THREE O'CLOCK.

May be Viewed till the Sale.

Mary's time in the wilderness began. Branded an incompetent queen, absent mother and unscrupulous wife, she was imprisoned in a small castle on an island in Loch Leven. She duly escaped and gathered an army of 6,000 men, only for them to be beaten by troops under the command of her step brother, the Earl of Moray. Believing that she could take refuge with her cousin, Elizabeth, with whom she had always contested the right to the English throne, she fled to England. But Elizabeth was distrustful of the fiery, uncontrollable personality of her Scottish cousin, and placed Mary under house arrest. For the following twenty years, Mary moved from castle to castle, changing gaoler and residence often, never meeting her English cousin and never seeing her son, who by now had become King James VI of Scotland. This did not stop her conspiring, as always, with Spain, France or Rome. Eventually, Elizabeth's patience wore thin and – after much hesitation – she passed sentence and condemned her cousin to death.

In the great hall of Fotheringhay Castle, where a scaffold had been erected and adorned in black velvet, 300 gentlemen assembled to witness the execution. The Queen of Scotland arrived a few minutes after nine o'clock in the morning. She had negotiated, with much difficulty, for six of her loyal servants to accompany her. Mary did not wish to die alone. Moreover, she wished that her death could be faithfully retold; the role of martyr offered by her cousin only acquired value once the news had been made public. She affirmed her Catholic faith many times. When the dean of the Protestant community of the neighbouring town of Peterborough approached to give a final prayer, she waved him away, saying: "Sir, I persevere in the Roman Catholic faith for which I am about to spill my blood."

Looking saintly, in a long satin dress with long white veils trimmed with lace, the queen climbed onto the scaffold. Jane Kennedy and Elizabeth Curle stood alongside, charged with undressing her. They took off Mary's veils, the two gold rosaries that she wore on her belt, then the long black dress, under which she wore an underskirt and a bodice in blood red. The queen put on two long red sleeves before kneeling in front of the block. Three times she pronounced the words, "In manus tuas domine, confide spiritum meum" (Into your hands O Lord, I commend my spirit). Then the axe fell.

At this precise moment the legend of Mary Stuart began. The executioner grabbed the dead queen's head by the hair to show it to the assembly. Sadly, the head rolled away across the scaffold leaving the executioner holding a red wig in his hand. Almost immediately, a muffled yapping was heard coming from the queen's clothing; her small dog had been hidden in her

skirts and was now crying for his mistress. Castle Fotheringhay fell into a deep lethargy. The servants were dismissed. The late queen's clothing was carefully burnt. Only one person was allowed to leave the castle to carry news of Mary's death to the English queen. All the castle doors were locked, beginning a curfew that lasted eight months.

The King of Scotland, angered by the death of his mother, broke off all diplomatic relations with the English crown. Elizabeth was obliged to grant funeral rights to her cousin, and a service was duly held on 1 August 1588, at Peterborough Cathedral, according to the rites of the Protestant church. As a mark of respect, those loyal servants authorised to assist at the ceremony stopped short before the cathedral. Furious, Elizabeth denied them their liberty until the following October; ten months after the death of their mistress, Andrew Melville, Jane Kennedy, Elizabeth Curle and twenty other loyal members of her household finally left Fotheringhay. The castle never overcame the stigma of Mary's execution and it fell into ruin, as if forgotten. Very little remains today. Jane Kennedy returned to Scotland to marry Andrew Melville, and it was they who took King James the last souvenirs of his mother. It is also thanks to Jane Kennedy and Andrew Melville, and Elizabeth Curle and Mary Seton, another follower of Mary Stuart, that Christie's became linked to the legend of the beheaded queen at the end of the eighteenth century.

Mary Stuart is the first historical character to be mentioned in the company's archives. The sales catalogue for an auction between 16 and 21 February 1767, reads:

A signum of the order of the holy ghost, composed of diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, onyx, pearl... wore by Mary Queen of Scots, the morning she was beheaded, which she gave to a lady, then in waiting, in whose family it has been till this short time, as can be well authenticated.

The suggestion that the queen wore the jewel on the morning of her execution is erroneous. Mary Stuart only wore two gold rosaries that day. One was destroyed; the other survived, and now belongs to the Duke of Norfolk. However, it is certain that some jewels, objects and souvenirs did leave Fotheringhay after her execution. The signum was not the only ornament to surface in the auction catalogues and each piece from Mary Stuart that does appear is catalogued at length.

On 24 May 1817, Christie's offered "the original diamond ring of Mary, Queen of Scots, upon which are engraved the arms of England, Scotland and Ireland". The catalogue described the journey of the ring from the time of Mary through to its appearance at the auction house. The ring was given to her son, James VI (James I of England), by Andrew Melville and Jane

Facing page: Catalogue of the diamond signet ring of Mary, Queen of Scots (Christie's London, 24 May 1817).



Upon the death of the 14th Earl of Eglinton, in 1892, his four sons entrusted Christie's with the sale of part of the family collection, including the "Eglinton Jewels". The event was written up in the press of the time; on 23 February 1894, the *Glasgow Herald* noted:

The last lot in the Eglinton collection, number 69 in the catalogue, is the historic suite of a necklace, brooch and earrings, which, according to tradition in the family, belonged to Mary Queen of Scots. Of this necklace a photograph was reproduced in the catalogue. After some

rather languid competition, the jewels were sold to Philips, a London dealer, for £365. The total sum raised by the sale of the Eglinton jewels was in excess of £6,050.

Almost half the value of the sale was derived from a parure in black pearls and diamonds, which was sold for £3,000. Unlike many of the other jewels once owned by Mary Stuart, these haven't been lost. In 1935, the jubilee year of King George V, the Countess of Bathurst offered them to Queen Mary. Today, they form part of the Royal Collection.



Marie Antoinette of France

THE GUILLOTINED QUEEN
(1755-1793)

Christie's London
22 October 1812

This time it is not gems but a snuffbox. Oval, in enamelled gold, with a miniature on the lid: "The young Telemachus and his mentor". It was auctioned by the second James Christie (1773-1831), who, following the death of his father on 8 November 1803, had taken the family business in hand. His four brothers led very different lives. Charles, a captain in the 5th Bengali Regiment, died in 1812 fighting against the Russian Army in Persia. Albany and Edward both died in 1821. Of the first, nothing is known. Of the second, however, history retains a trace. He joined the British Navy and died in Port Royal, Jamaica, at the age of thirty. The last of the Christie brothers, Samuel Hunter, born to James Christie senior's second wife, became a celebrated mathematician.

James was educated at Eton and was destined for the Church. He was thirty when he took over the auction house, most likely because he was the eldest son and none of his younger brothers wanted the role. Throughout his life, his great passion was antiquity. He wrote several works on the subject, and Christie's undoubtedly owes its development in the domain of archaeology and Greco-Roman art to James. The aforementioned snuffbox was certainly to his liking. It was sold for £35, a respectable sum in the early nineteenth century. It is interesting to note the amusing notation in the catalogue: "formerly presented by the queen of France to the Comtesse de la Motte".

The 'queen of France' is certainly Marie Antoinette of Lorraine d'Autriche, wife of Louis XVI, guillotined in 1793. What of the Comtesse de la Motte? She was not just any comtesse. An authentic descendant of the Valois kings of France, a line of the Capetian royal dynasty that included the celebrated King Francis I, and a formidable schemer, she instigated one of the most famous frauds of the eighteenth

century: the "affair of the queen's necklace", the theft of diamonds that led to a political scandal.

At the start of the 1780s, Marie Antoinette had already been labelled with a reputation for frivolity and extravagance, and she was lampooned in pamphlets throughout Europe. Her penchant for diamonds was well known. She received an impressive quantity on her marriage to the future King Louis XVI in 1770. She also bought several gemstones. One of her finest acquisitions was a pair of earrings made up of six important pear-shaped diamonds. She followed this purchase several years later with a pair of beautiful bracelets, featuring several rows of diamonds. None of these could match the fabulous necklace that would elevate her reputation to new heights, but which would also prove to be her undoing.

The jewel, valued at 1,600,000 livres in France, is a tower of precious stones created by Boehmer and Bassange; nearly 650 diamonds (which took several years to collect) weighing 2,840 carats in total. The magnificent piece resembled a horse's harness in diamonds. The jewellers created the necklace for an



Right: The Cipher of Queen Marie Antoinette, attributed to Pierre Gouthiere, c.1790 (Christie's Paris, 3 November 2015).

Facing page: A pair of diamond earrings, c.1700s. Formerly in the Collection of Queen Marie Antoinette, currently held by the Smithsonian Natural History Museum in Washington (Christie's London, 25 June 1891, for the diamonds).



old acquaintance of the Christie family, Madame du Barry. Sadly, Louis XV, who commissioned the piece, died before it was finished in 1774. Boehmer and Bassange had to find a new client. Marie Antoinette loved diamonds, but she already had a substantial collection and the massive necklace wasn't really to her taste. She refused to buy it. Negotiations were prolonged and the jewellers, indebted, feared bankruptcy.

The jewellers' predicament opened the door to a dubious character in the shape of Jeanne de Valois de Saint Remy. She was twenty-five years old and unscrupulous. The descendant of a genuine bastard of the King of France, Henri II (1519-1559), Jeanne was born into poverty in 1756. Her mother was a prostitute and her father disappeared when she was six years old. She lived, badly, from poaching. However, following intervention from Madame de Boulainvilliers, she was sent to a convent to be educated. As poor as she was, in 1780 her pretty face helped secure marriage to Nicolas de la Motte, an officer in the gendarmerie. The couple had no fortune; they settled in Paris and begged for their rent or an advancement, or perhaps a game of cards that would allow them to earn some money.

It appears that Queen Marie Antoinette, on confirmation that Madame de la Motte was indeed a descendant of the

kings of France, was moved by her fate. She met Jeanne, perhaps several times, in the privacy of her apartments in the Trianon, Versailles, but without her being received officially at court. Jeanne was allotted a small pension. In 1783, bored, she took a lover of somewhat dubious reputation: the Chevalier de Rétaux de Vilette. He was twenty-four and handsome. He lived from prostitution, his own and that of his mistresses, whom he regularly sold on to his acquaintances. He developed a relationship with Jeanne and her husband; an alliance that would prove somewhat lacking in morality.

With the help of Cardinal de Rohan, a rich ecclesiastic prince, of whom Jeanne was almost certainly a mistress, the tricksters plotted the fraud of the century. Rohan dreamt of becoming the Cardinal de Richelieu of Louis XVI, envisaging himself as prime minister. To acquire the role, he sought favour with the queen, with whom he was infatuated and who – it was acknowledged – had considerable influence over her husband. Jeanne managed to gain this favour under condition that Rohan helped her acquire the famous necklace she coveted so much. Already vilified by the press for her spending, the queen wished the purchase to remain confidential. Rohan fell in with the plot. Jeanne arranged for him to meet a carefully veiled "queen" in a secluded garden of the palace at Versailles. In fact, the "queen" was actually a Parisian prostitute who vaguely resembled Marie Antoinette.

Rohan agreed to serve as an intermediary and to put down a deposit, which was given to the jewellers. He took delivery of the necklace, which he gave to Madame de la Motte. Several months later, the jewellers, astonished by the queen's silence, presented her with a number of requests to pay the outstanding sum. Little by little the affair became embittered. In August 1785, King Louis XVI ordered the public arrest, in Versailles, of Cardinal de Rohan. The scandal was uncovered. The most fabulous necklace ever made had been stolen. The queen, the Cardinal de Rohan and various members of the court were all implicated!

The affair was renowned for the recklessness both of the accused and the victims. The jewellers, who had accepted a secret transaction without any guarantee, had been driven by the fear of being unable to sell the necklace. Cardinal de Rohan, member of one of the most prestigious and noble French families, was deceived with unbelievable ease. The Comtesse de la Motte, her work completed, felt

Above: The diamond necklace involved in the affair of the 'Collier de la Reine'. c.1785.

Facing page: Natural pearl necklace from the Collection of Barbara Hutton. Reputed to have been owned by Queen Marie Antoinette (Christie's Geneva, 16 November 1999).





Secondly, the destination of queen Marie Antoinette's jewellery became known in the later part of the nineteenth century. Madame Campan, once again, relates that shortly before the royal family's failed attempt to flee Paris in June 1791, she spent an evening in a salon of the Tuileries wrapping diamonds, pearls and rubies belonging to the queen, all of which were entrusted to the ambassador to Austria, the Comte Mercy-Argentauf. Transferred secretly to Brussels, to the queen's sister, Archduchess Maria Christina, the jewels were then carried to Vienna where they were conserved in the imperial treasury. They were finally given to the daughter of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, Madame Royale, on her arrival in Vienna after release from the Prison du Temple (she was the only survivor) at the beginning of 1796.

The story of Madame Royale is a novel in itself. Having seen her father (Louis XVI), her mother (Marie Antoinette), her brother (Louis XVII) and her aunt (Madame Elisabeth) perish during the revolution, she lived in exile for twenty years, variously in Vienna, Courlande (Latvia), Poland, Prussia and England, before finally returning to France in 1814 during the restoration of the Bourbons. (See Chapter pages 155 to 164 for more on Madame Royale and her time in exile.) She married her cousin, the Duc d'Angoulême, but it wasn't a happy union. Returning to France, the Duchess d'Angoulême became first (royal) lady. Both her uncles, King Louis XVIII and his brother, the Comte d'Artois, had lost their wives in exile. Portraits of the duchess from this time show her covered in pearls and diamonds principally from her mother's collection. In one portrait she is wearing two rivières of diamonds, one of which is augmented with pendants of diamonds in the pear-shaped form. Her ears are adorned with two enormous, sparkling diamonds.

In 1830, when the Bourbon monarchy fell, Madame Royale went into exile for a second time, living more comfortably than during her first spell as an émigré. The French royal family, now more prudent with their affairs, had placed significant funds outside France. Travelling from Edinburgh to Venice, Vienna and Prague, Madame Royale's second spell in exile ended in 1851 when she died in Frohsdorf Castle near Vienna. She left her more important possessions to a nephew, the Comte de Chambord. Her jewellery was divided into three equal lots, destined for the Comte de Chambord; his wife; and his sister, the Duchesse de Parme. Her fantastic diamond diadem went to the comte, and he gave the stones that adorned it to his nieces. The rivière with the pear-shaped diamonds was given to his wife. (See the Introduction on page 13 for more on this rivière.)

Thirdly, the Comte and Comtesse de Chambord died, respectively, in 1883 and 1886, bringing about the dispersal of Marie Antoinette's effects. Their goods, including the jewellery, were given to nephews, princes from the houses of

Bourbon de Parme and Bourbon d'Espagne. Living in exile in Austria and in Trieste, the princes had limited wealth, and they sold some of the jewels in the following years. Another possibility is that Madame Royale herself sold the diamonds during her last exile. A pair of diamond earrings with similar weight and provenance was bought by the Duke of Brunswick in 1845 and sold at auction in Geneva after his death in 1874. The appearance of two pear-shaped diamonds mounted as earrings at Christie's in 1891 would not, therefore, have been impossible. The two pear-shaped diamonds worn by the Duchesse d'Angoulême in the official portrait could well have been those that appeared in the sale catalogue at Christie's in 1891.

The most troubling point – the fourth chapter in the saga – is the claim by the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington that they have in their collection today two pear-shaped diamonds mounted as pendant earrings that belonged to Marie Antoinette. An accompanying note reads:

These two large, pear-shaped diamonds weigh 14.25 and 20.34 carats respectively and are originally from India or Brazil, the only significant sources of diamonds in the eighteenth century. The diamonds were supposedly set in earrings that belonged to Marie Antoinette, the Queen of France who was guillotined in 1793 during the French Revolution.

Before entering the collection of the museum in Washington, these earrings were the property of Marjorie Merriweather Post, the famous American heiress. She had bought them before the Second World War, from Cartier in Paris. The renowned French jewellers had, in turn, purchased the earrings a few years earlier, from Prince Felix Youssouпов, heir of one of the richest Russian aristocratic families, then living in exile in Paris. The archives of French jeweller Mellerio show clearly that Prince Nikolai Youssouпов, Prince Felix's grandfather, had bought many very important diamonds during his life: the Sultan of Morocco, a brilliant with slightly grey hue weighing a little more than 35 carats; the Ram's Head, a rose diamond of 17 carats; and the Polar Star, a brilliant of 41.28 carats. In his memoirs, Prince Felix Youssouпов, assassin of Rasputin, mentioned that his grandfather "constantly wore a chamois purse full of unmounted stones which he took pleasure in showing to his friends". The pendant diamond earrings of Marie Antoinette were, perhaps, the last addition to an already exceptional series of diamonds acquired by the prince.

In any case, the provenance and the weight of the principal diamonds (about 40 carats) makes it very likely that the earrings sold at Christie's in June 1891 were the same as



those that now reside in the collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington.

Ironically, at the same time Prince Felix Youssoufov was selling the Marie Antoinette earrings to Cartier, other magnificent pieces that had once belonged to the Queen of France began to emerge through Christie's in London. On 8 February 1928, two pieces with rubies and diamonds were offered under lot numbers 43 and 44 in the catalogue. They were a diadem of rubies and diamonds in the form of leaves and flowers and a necklace that could be worn as a tiara, inlaid with the same stones. The catalogue remarked: "The stones in this and the following lot are said to have belonged

to Marie Antoinette", offering us the key to the provenance of the items. Marie Antoinette owned a parure of rubies and diamonds; her taste for rubies was such that she asked her husband, Louis XVI, to give her a parure that belonged to the official collection of the French Crown, in order to complete her own suite.

These jewels, like all the sovereign's pearls and diamonds, left France in 1791 and were given to Madame Royale when she arrived in Austria in 1796. The rubies didn't remain in her possession for long; she sold them to finance her first months in exile. The buyer was none other than her first cousin, Francis II, Emperor of Austria, who, in 1801, officially added them to the collection of the Habsburg family. In 1851, the rubies were remounted by the jeweller Köchert for the Empress Elisabeth, the legendary Sissi. From this time on, the parure bore little resemblance to the one owned by Marie

Above: *Portrait of Marie Antoinette* by Philipp Jacob Nicodemo, c.1770 (Christie's Paris, 3 November 2015).



Antoinette, who had only possessed the stones, as described in the 1928 Christie's catalogue.

The arrival of various pieces of that same ruby parure in the London auction rooms in 1928 is very plausible. After the First World War, the last Austrian Emperor, Charles I, had to leave his homeland for a very long period of exile. He took with him the jewels belonging to the imperial family collection. It seems that the ruby parure and the empress's crown of diamonds were sold at the beginning of 1921 in order to finance an attempt at restoring the monarchy in Hungary, a venture that sadly failed. Exiled to Madeira, the last emperor of Austria died of pneumonia on 1 April 1922.

Another indication of provenance comes from the sale catalogue of 1928. The two pieces inlaid with diamonds and rubies were sold by a member of the Barings family, the celebrated British banking dynasty. Perhaps they were acquired by the Barings during the emperor's attempts to garner funds for the restoration. A third piece from this parure, a brooch in the form of a flower with diamonds and a ruby centre, was placed for sale at Christie's on 21 February 1934.

The list of Marie Antoinette's jewellery does not stop there. A pair of pearl drop earrings from her estate was sold at

Christie's in 1906. The catalogue mentions they had been the property of the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, born Alice de Bourbon-Parme. The grand duchess being a great niece of the Duchess of Angoulême (Marie Antoinette's daughter), the provenance seems very plausible. It is possible that the grand duchess had given these earrings to her daughter, Louise, wife of the Crown Prince of Saxony. In 1902, after she had borne six children to the Prince of Saxony, she fled from the court of Dresden with her children's tutor. A few years later she started a romance with the Italian composer Enrico Toselli, whom she married in 1907. Several portraits of Louise show her wearing fabulous pearl and diamond earrings. Several years later, separated from Toselli, she sold the other pieces of jewellery, very officially and under her own name, at Christie's.

Further sales followed the Second World War. On 9 April 1951, a parure in gold and white enamel, comprising a necklace, a pair of earrings, and bracelets was put on sale. The necklace featured:

Six enamel miniatures of ladies of the French court and suspending a large miniature of Marie Antoinette herself. Said to have been the property of Marie Antoinette, taken from her at the time of her imprisonment in the Conciergerie. The names at the back of the miniatures are reputed to be in the queen's handwriting.

Unfortunately, the catalogue doesn't give the names on the back of these miniatures. It would have been precious information. At two o'clock on the morning of 1 August 1793, when Queen Marie Antoinette was still in the Prison du Temple, she was awoken and transferred to the gaol at La Conciergerie. The soldiers moving the queen took the contents of her pockets. The items included three miniatures representing two of the Princesses of Hesse, who had been brought up with the young Marie Antoinette in Vienna, and her close friend, the Princess de Lamballe, assassinated in La Force Prison during the massacres of September 1793. The miniatures were sold at auction in October 1793, several days after the death of the queen. They made four francs. Perhaps it was these that had been mounted on the necklace; sadly, it is impossible to prove.

Above: *Portrait of the Empress Elisabeth of Austria* by Theodor Breidwiser, c.1860. She is wearing the ruby, spinel and diamond parure. The tiara, part of the necklace and a small brooch were sold at Christie's in 1928 and 1931.

Facing page: Extract from the catalogue featuring a pair of pearl earrings that belonged to Queen Marie Antoinette (Christie's London, 2 May 1906).

- 102 A PAIR OF LARGE BRILLIANTS, mounted as earrings,
with smaller brilliants above *Sxx/1/.*
- 103 A BRILLIANT COLLET NECKLACE, composed of thirty-
five graduated brilliants and single-brilliant snap *ddxx/1/.*

The Hon^{ble} Mrs Hewitt.

The following earrings once belonged to MARIE ANTOINETTE, who gave them to her daughter, the DUCHESSE D'ANGOULÊME, who gave them to her niece, the DUCHESSE LOUISE DE PARME, who left them to her daughter, the GRAND DUCHESSE ALIX OF TOSCANA, who gave them to the present owner.

943BA.

- 104 A PAIR OF LARGE PEARL EARRINGS, with pear-
shaped pearl drops and bouton pearl tops, in diamond
mounts *SSx/1/.*

DIFFERENT PRIVATE PROPERTIES.

JEWELS.

Church,

Adams 16

85613A.

- 105 A pearl half-hoop ring; and a sapphire and diamond ring *dt/dt/1/.*
- 106 A brilliant half-hoop ring *oc/x/1/.*
- 107 Another *ou/1/.*
- 108 A circular brilliant pendant or brooch, with loop *dt/dt/1/.*

*discretion &
the Sixteenth of
a few pounds*

Draga of Serbia

THE ASSASSINATED QUEEN
(1864-1903)

Belgrade
the night of 10/11 June 1903

For hours the soldiers searched the royal palace. The troops had infiltrated the building at around two in the morning, making little noise so as not to raise the alarm. The guards were neutralised and quickly a manhunt began. Manhunt, or rather "queen-hunt". Draga, the wife of King Alexander Obrenovitch of Serbia, was hated by the army, the Serbian people and the rival dynasty that coveted her throne, the Karageorgevitch.

In this unstable region, which had recently come out of Turkish control, political turbulence was frequent. From the early nineteenth century, the two dynasties – Karageorgevitch and Obrenovitch – regularly disputed power. The former was aligned with Russia and the Western powers, while the latter depended on the Austro-Hungarian alliance, a powerful neighbour.

Alexander, the last Obrenovitch heir, only survived through the power of his wife, twelve years his senior, who lead him by the nose. Queen Draga's word carried the force of law, whether she was handing out scandalous promotions to her two brothers in the army, buying jewellery, dresses or furs, throwing parties or exiling her mother-in-law, the much loved queen Nathalie.

Alexander came to the throne in 1889, aged 13, following the abdication of his father, King Milan. Four years later, he officially took power, still only aged seventeen, recalling his father to Serbia and naming him commander of the armed forces. He also abolished the liberal constitution of 1889. The father – son alliance was a strange one: the king without any real power; the former king holding the real authority. The unusual balance of power could have lasted for many years had the father not interfered in the love affairs of his son. To consolidate his dynasty, Milan Obrenovitch had undertaken to find a suitable German princess who could become Queen of Serbia. He ignored the fact that his son had already found the woman of his dreams who overpowered him completely.

Draga Mashin had been one of Queen Nathalie's maids of honour. Long separated from King Milan, who had been outrageously unfaithful to her, Nathalie lived comfortably in France with a reduced entourage. It was during a visit to his mother in Biarritz that Alexander met Draga, a widow of thirty-five from a bourgeois family. She had little fortune and what could only be described as moderate beauty. Small, round and often of bad humour, Draga subjugated the young, timid king of twenty-three who had never been at ease in the company of ladies. Against the advice of his mother, his father and his government, he married her. The former king, Milan, who was to die some months later, and all his cabinet, resigned. The queen mother, Nathalie, remained in permanent exile.

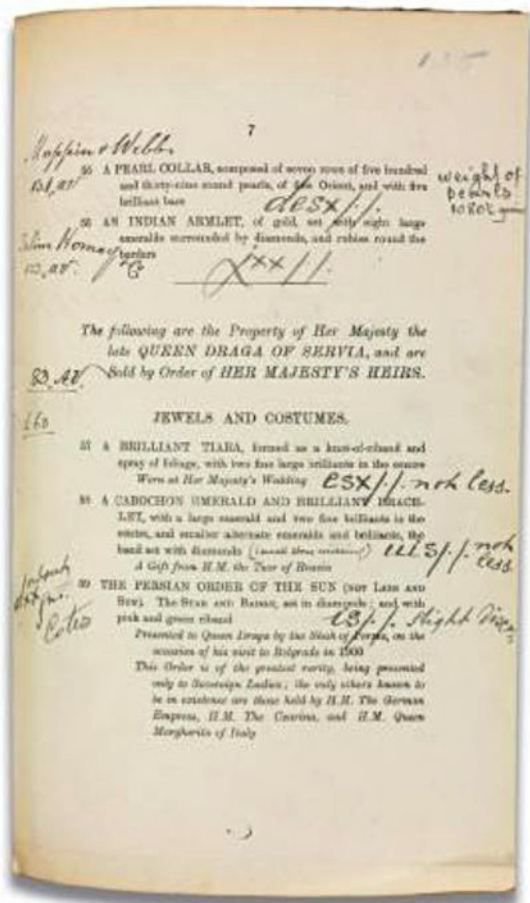
Under the controlling influence of Draga, the king went from disaster to disaster. At the beginning of 1903, he conceived a new way of countering the opposition of the Senate and the State Council to his reforms: he suspended the constitution for half an hour in order to govern by decree, and proceeded to revoke the power of a number of senators and counsellors of state. He then alienated himself from the army by ordering superior officers to give a military salute to the queen's brothers.

While the royal marriage remained sterile, dangerous rumours began to spread. Alexander prepared to rewrite the decree of succession, designating the queen's oldest brother, Lieutenant Linjevica, as heir to the throne. The ensuing *coup d'état* against the unpopular king and his hated wife developed quickly. It took place during the night of 10 June 1903; it was a bloodbath.

Having searched the royal bedchamber several times, a mutinous soldier noticed a small tear in the wallpaper that covered the walls. A hidden door was found beneath, leading to the dressing room where the sovereigns, half dressed, were hiding, listening to the hunt. After protracted negotiation, the king and queen finally agreed to leave the room. Shots were fired. Their bodies, mutilated, were then thrown from the window. The king was finally killed by dagger blows as he lay below the window.

Ten months later, on 8 December 1904, the "Jewels and costumes of her late majesty queen Draga of Serbia" were

Facing page: Queen Draga of Serbia in her state costume, wearing her pendant and earrings of "Serbian design with pearls and diamonds".



offered to Christie's in London for auction; seven fantastic lots, without doubt the most precious possessions of one of the most tragic queens of the twentieth century.

The first lot, a diadem of brilliants, with two central stones of significance, was "worn at her majesty's wedding – 5th of August 1900". The second, an important bracelet of emeralds and brilliants with a large emerald cabochon at its centre, had been a wedding present from Tsar Nicolas II to the Queen of Serbia. Following that, two medals of honour in enamelled gold and brilliants. One was Persian; the other Turkish. The fifth lot was Queen Draga's wedding dress, in ivory satin and encrusted with lace from Bruges. The sixth was her state costume. In Byzantine style, the costume consisted of a cloth tunic, embroidered in gold and silver; a matching skirt; a stole in white satin embroidered with gold thread and crimson; the queen's crown, made in gold and

inlaid with ruby cabochons, turquoise, pearls and diamonds; a veil of silk embroidered with gold; and a belt of crimson velvet encrusted with motifs in vermillion and imitation stones. The list ends with a pair of pendant earrings "of Serbian design with pearls and diamonds".

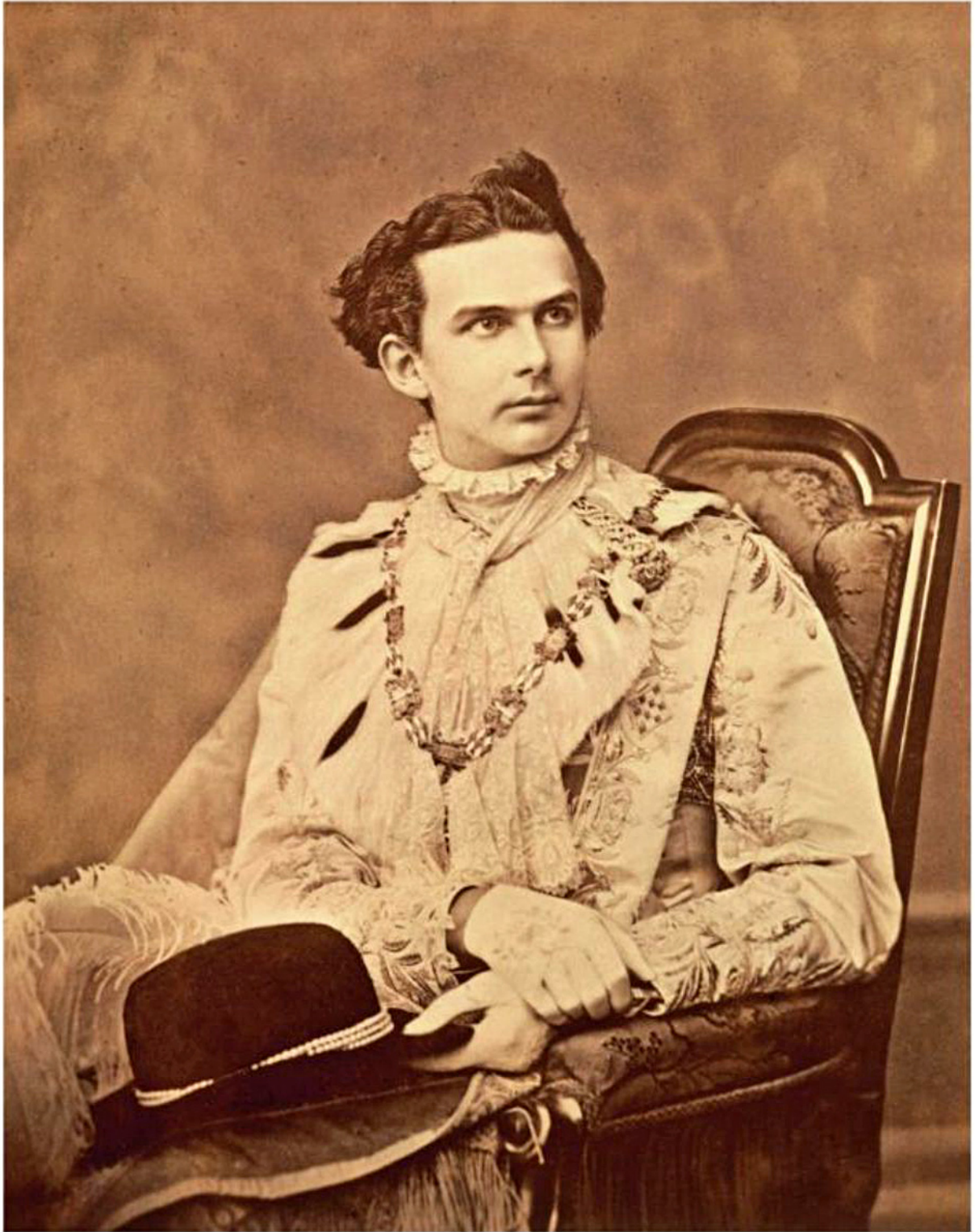
The tragic destiny of Queen Draga of Serbia finally came to an end at Christie's. No one knows who bought the gems, the lace or her wedding dress. Equally, the identity of the person who brought the items to auction remains a mystery.

Above left and facing page: Catalogue of the Jewels and Costumes of her Majesty the late Queen Draga of Serbia (Christie's London, 8 December 1904).

Above right: Draga, Queen of Serbia, wearing her diamond tiara.

*slight
disc.*

- 60 THE TURKISH ORDER OF NISCHANI-SCHERKAT: THE STAR OF THE FIRST CLASS, of enamelled gold, the points ending in brilliants, and with brilliant rays between, with applied enamelled foliage wreath; and riband *dux/1.*
- 61 THE BRIDAL GOWN OF HER MAJESTY THE LATE QUEEN DRAGA OF SERBIA. It is of soft ivory satin, worked into tucks, and profusely trimmed with narrow flounces and insertions of Bruges lace; the lace upon the bodice being secured with paste ornaments *dux/1.*
- 62 HER MAJESTY'S STATE COSTUME, being of the design of the Royal Servian costume of the 14th Century, comprising—
- A ROBE, of royal purple velvet, the borders richly embroidered with the Servian Arms and arabesque ornament in gold and silver thread
 - A SKIRT, with train, of similar velvet *dux/1.*
 - A LONG STOLE, of white satin, embroidered with a trellis design and border of trefoil foliage in gold thread, and down the centre quatrefoils worked in purple silk
 - A TIARA, of gold, set with cabochon rubies, turquoise, pearls and diamonds, and with silk veil attached, embroidered with gold
 - A GIRDLE, WITH PENDANT, of purple velvet, mounted with ~~gold~~ silver ^{set} and set with paste stones
- This costume was worn at all State Receptions*
- 63 A GOLD PENDANT AND PAIR OF EARRINGS, of Servian design, set with pearls and diamonds *oc/1.*
- These were usually worn with the State Costume*
-



Ludwig II, King of Bavaria

THE KING COMMITS SUICIDE
(1845-1886)

Christie's London
17 April 1890

On 13 June 1886, the body of King Ludwig II of Bavaria was found floating in Lake Starnberg. The previous day, the sovereign, declared mentally ill, had been assigned to a residence in the small castle at Berg, on the lake shore.

At forty-one, Ludwig, who acceded to the throne at the age of eighteen, and whose angelic beauty had charmed the whole of Europe, had become an old man. He wore a faraway look, as if he was in a place to which only he held the key. He was a gourmand, a man of constant mental meanderings, with a fascination for the music of Richard Wagner, and a penchant for extravagant spending on castles that were uninhabitable. His refusal to acknowledge reality had led him to hand authority over to his ministers. Wandering from one castle to another, never stopping in Munich, the king had forced the government to ask for a regency. His younger brother, Prince Otto, had been declared mad fourteen years previously so it was their uncle, Prince Leopold, who took charge. One of his first decisions was to intern the monarch in semi-liberation in one of his castles, on the side of the Starnberg lake he loved so much.

On the night of 13 June, Ludwig expressed a desire to take a walk in the park at Berg, beside the lake. His doctor, Gudden, deemed the request without danger and decided to accompany the king. Some hours later, when neither man returned, the park was searched. Their bodies were discovered floating in the water. The autopsy revealed that the doctor had died of drowning, and the king of a heart attack.

Conspiracy theories swept through Europe. The most fantastic imagined a strange rescue organised by a cousin of the king, the legendary Sissi; Ludwig was said to have attempted to swim to a small boat that she had sent from the other side of the lake to free him. The effort had provoked a heart attack. Other rumours suggested the influence of Prussia, which Ludwig had always put under pressure; he was the only monarch to refuse to sign the proclamation of the German Empire in Versailles on 18 January 1871.

The simplest theory – and no doubt the most authentic – is that the king simply wanted to end his life. Haunted by memories of his mad brother, traumatised by his homosexuality, which he considered a mortal sin, depressed and refusing the attentions of the world around him, he simply walked into the water to drown himself. The doctor would have tried to stop him. Ludwig strangled him before collapsing, dead.

Four years after his strange death, a selection of Ludwig's precious objects was proposed for sale at Christie's in London; eleven pieces that corresponded perfectly to the style of the king. The first was a double salt set in shell form made from rock crystal and enamelled vermeil; the second, a vase covered in lapis lazuli mounted in vermeil with a cupid on the lid. Then there was a service for hard-boiled eggs in enamelled vermeil, and a glass plaque from Venice engraved with the profile of Richard Wagner, the idol of the king. There were also objects in ebony and in ivory, and Louis XV and XVI clocks in bronze. In short, a collection of what the Germans call "Schatzkammer". A treasure trove.

The most interesting question: who sold these objects in 1890? The king had no children. His brother Otto, who became King of Bavaria, was confined to the small baroque castle in Fürstenried, near Munich. He died in 1916, incapable of taking any decisions on the management of his estate. Only one other person could have inherited some of the personal possessions of Ludwig II, such as his eggcups or the portrait of Wagner on Venetian glass, and that was his mother, Queen Marie. She died in 1889. Her only other relative, apart from her two mad sons, was her nephew, the Grand Duke of Hesse Darmstadt (her sister's son). Being rather poor, by royal standards, and having married one of Queen Victoria's daughters, the grand duke used to spend a lot of time in England, at Windsor, with his mother-in-law. He may have been the seller of the objects, which he could have inherited on the death of his aunt, the Queen of Bavaria. One of the grand duke's daughters would later become famous as the last Empress of Russia, Alexandra Feodorovna.

Facing page: Portrait of Ludwig II of Bavaria.

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE



Above: A pair of George III girandoles ear pendants, c.1780. Formerly the property of Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent (Christie's London, 29 November 2000).

Facing page: The Cambridge Lover's Knot tiara was created at the beginning of the nineteenth century, possibly in Germany, for Princess Augusta of Hesse Cassel, Duchess of Cambridge. It was inherited by her daughter, the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg Strelitz, and then her great granddaughter, Princess Jutta of Montenegro. It was sold at Christie's on 13 May 1981. A copy of that tiara was made at the request of Queen Mary, who left it in her will to Queen Elizabeth II. Since then, that copy has been worn, without the upright pearls, by Diana, Princess of Wales and, more recently, by the present Duchess of Cambridge. Two other models of the tiara were created in Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century. One was for Amalia of Oldenburg, Queen of Greece, which still belongs to the Bavarian royal family and is on display at the Residenz Museum in Munich. The other was created for Princess Youssouпов, but subsequently disappeared after the Russian Revolution. Two other models (or possibly only one) of the same tiara were worn in the 1900s by Princess Maria Immaculata of Saxony, Princess of Bourbon-Two Sicilies, and in the 1930s by the Maharani of Patiala. One of these two tiaras (unless there is only one) was sold at Christie's in 1985.



The Mad King's Women

QUEEN CHARLOTTE (1744-1818)

AUGUSTA, PRINCESS OF WALES (1719-1772)

Christie's, Great Rooms, Pall Mall, London

17 May 1819

The sale began with small precious objects in gold and silver filigree. Lot number 26 was presented as a miniature watch mounted on a ring, set with diamonds. The most beautiful piece was an antique agate cup set with pearls and turquoise. These ornaments, about thirty in all, were offered for sale before the diamonds. The collection evoked the "cabinet of curiosities" of a rich, refined lady, such as a duchess, a princess or a queen. And it was precisely such a person who had once owned this collection.

All of this, and the diamonds that would follow, the silverware, the paintings, the furniture – several hundred lots in all – came from the estate of Her Majesty Queen Charlotte. The wife of King George III had died on 17 November 1818, while sitting in her armchair at her Kew residence. Her eldest son, the Prince Regent, the future George IV, held her hand. Of her twelve surviving children, only he was present. The king's absence wasn't unexpected. Did he understand that his wife was dead? No one could tell, because George III was mad.

For the ten years prior to Charlotte's death, the king had been living as a recluse in his apartments in Windsor Castle, having lost all contact with reality. He had also lost his sight and his hearing, and was crippled by rheumatism that considerably curtailed his mobility. At eighty years old, the king was a phantom living in a vegetative state. Queen Charlotte no longer visited him.

The couple, having lived together in close alliance for more than thirty years, had seen their marriage fade. The king had always been faithful to his queen, unlike his ancestors, the Hanovers and Stuarts, who kept an entourage of mistresses and lovers. He put loyalty to the kingdom before affairs of the heart. The long relationship he had known as a young man with Lady Sarah Lennox had been sacrificed for his marriage to Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, a German princess of impeccable pedigree but doubtful beauty. He had faithfully given her fifteen children, until the day he began to

lose his mind. The king began pursuing his wife's ladies-in-waiting in a manner that was particularly indecent. He also began to have periods of frenetic activity, talking incessantly for many hours without a break, before withdrawing into periods of great depression that would last just as long.

King George's "madness" remains the subject of debate. For a long time it was thought to have physiological roots. The king, it seemed, suffered from porphyria, a rare hereditary illness that leads to an abnormal presence of porphyrins in the body, a key element in the production of red blood cells. This excess can provoke serious illness resulting in death. However, the king's longevity – he died aged eighty in 1819, one year after his wife – has led certain researchers to draw a different conclusion. According to them, the king was probably suffering from acute bipolar syndrome aggravated by periods of manic depression. Psychological or physical? Whichever illness it was, he had to be interned in Windsor Castle. His eldest son, George, Prince of Wales, was officially declared regent. His second son – who was also his preferred son – Frederick, Duke of York, took on the role of legal executor.

It's true that the psychological condition of George III's forebears in the House of Hanover had proved a burden. A century of family shame filtered through the generations. Upon the death of the last Stuart monarch, Queen Anne, from whom he had inherited the Crowns of England and Scotland, King George I arrived in England in 1714, bringing with him mistresses but not his wife. For twenty years, the wealthy Sophie Dorothea of Celle, his cousin as well as his wife, had been imprisoned in the small castle at Ahlden, between Bremen and Hanover. Even while George was renowned for his infidelity, he would never pardon his wife for having an affair with the handsome Philip von Königsmarck. He had her lover killed and the body was hidden behind a chimney in Hanover Castle, before he imprisoned his wife in Ahlden.

Relations between the king and his eldest son, the future George II, were tense. Deprived of his mother, the young prince was in constant conflict with his brutal father. He was never able to free Sophie Dorothea; she died in November 1726, in Ahlden, seven months before her husband. On becoming King of England and Hanover, George II replicated

Facing page: Queen Charlotte by Benjamin West, 1779. Currently held by the Royal Collection Trust.

the tormented relationship he had endured with his father with his own son, Frederick, Prince of Wales. Born in 1707, Frederick had been "forgotten" in Hanover when his grandfather came to the throne. His education in the hands of a German tutor was supervised from a distance by this same grandfather, who showered him with the honours he refused his son. Frederick did not see his own father until 1728, after George II's accession to the throne. At twenty-one years of age, he had officially become the Prince of Wales and was discovering the kingdom he would one day reign.

Frederick's marriage to the German princess, Augusta of Saxe-Gotha, bore eight children, and, following the family tradition, the Prince of Wales had tried his best to separate the children from his own parents. Princess Augusta, the eldest child and future Duchess of Brunswick, was born on the night of 31 July 1737. The family were in residence at Hampton Court when the Princess of Wales went into labour. A carriage was hastily prepared and the prince himself drove her to London, where she gave birth away from the eyes of the king and queen. Princess Augusta, thrown around in the carriage over several hours during the journey, nearly died. However, she didn't hold this against her husband. Indeed, she faithfully adopted the hatred her husband felt for his parents; hatred that the king and queen and a good part of the British public felt, in turn, for her. She was often clumsy in her approach. Arriving in England just after her wedding, she declared that her mother, a Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, hadn't taught her English, "because it was certain that, with the Hanovers ruling England for several decades, the people would soon be speaking German".¹

The birth of the future King George III, on the 4 June 1738, offered the couple a fleeting moment of popularity. Their son was the first future king of England from the Hanover dynasty to be born on English soil. Six other children followed until the untimely death of the Prince of Wales in 1751. Augusta found herself widowed, alone and relatively impoverished. George II allowed his daughter-in-law only the most limited of allowances. Her eldest son being only thirteen at the time, she became pretender to the Regency should her father-in-law die. The prospect made Parliament shake with horror.

On the death of George II nine years later, the dowager Princess of Wales's star reached its zenith when her son acceded to the throne under the name of George III. A woman of conviction, severe even, Augusta didn't have a very close relationship with her children. It was her death in 1773 that inaugurated the tradition of Royal Sales at Christie's. Unsure of how to divide her estate between his brothers and sisters, George III decided to entrust everything to James Christie. The funeral of the dowager Princess of Wales was a

miserable affair, the convoy was jeered by the crowd, and it was decided that the sale should be held anonymously and with the utmost discretion.

The original catalogue, conserved in the archive of Christie's, is dated 1, 2 and 3 of February, 1773, and entitled "*Jewels, Trinkets, Plate, Gold and Silver Medals, China, &c. of a Person of great Rank*". It was only in 1935 that "Princess of Wales, Widow of Frederick Lewis, Prince of Wales, Mother of George III" was added, in ink. The coloured stones and pearls were presented on the first day: emeralds, sapphires and rubies, principally mounted as rings; then starting from lot 89, pearls, a three-row pearl necklace, a twelve-row necklace, a single-row... etc. The second day ended with the sale of an ensemble of "superb jewels": the first four lots were probably the principal diamond parure of the princess, comprising a diamond necklace with a cross in pendant form, five diamond knots and a pair of girandoles each set with three pear-shaped diamonds. The ensemble was sold for £3,500. The total sales of the auction came to £10,946, equivalent to approximately £1 million today.

Forty-six years later, in a will written a few days before her death, Queen Charlotte suggested that elements of her jewellery be sold and the proceeds shared out between her surviving daughters. The sovereign divided her diamonds into two lots:

Firstly, those which the King bought for £50,000 and gave to me. Secondly, those presented to me by the Nawab of Arcot, to my four remaining daughters, or to their survivors or survivor in case they or any of them should die before me, and I direct that these should be sold and that the produce shall be divided among them, my said remaining daughters, or their survivors, share and share alike.

The first lot, estimated at £50,000 (a little under £5 million today), was inherited from the House of Hanover. In 1761, King George III had bought out his brothers' shares in the family jewels, gaining sole ownership. He then offered them to his young wife. In her will, Queen Charlotte stated that this ensemble – a necklace, a cross, brooches in the form of knots, a small crown and various pearls – being part of the heritage of the House of Hanover, should always remain in the Hanover line of succession.

Facing page, top left: *Portrait of Princess Augusta of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg, Princess of Wales* by Jean-Baptiste Loo. She is wearing some of the diamond jewels that would be sold at Christie's in 1773.

Facing page, top right and below: Catalogue featuring the property of Augusta, Princess of Wales (Christie's London, 1-3 February 1773).



9

A Catalogue of the Jewels, Plate, Gold, and Silver Medals, China, &c.
of the late
CATALOGUE
OF THE
**JEWELS, TRINKETS, PLATE, GOLD
and SILVER MEDALS, CHINA, &c.**

Princess of Wales.
Person of great Rank, dec.
*Wife of Frederick Prince of Wales, a member
of George III.*
Which will be sold by AUCTION,
By **Mr. CHRISTIE,**
At his Great Room, the Royal Academy, in Pall Mall,
On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, the 18, 19 and 20th of February,
1759.
To be viewed on Friday and Saturday preceding the 18th, which will begin
at Twelve o'Clock.
Catalogue may be had at home.

(9)

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177

In her memoirs, much celebrated in France, the Comtesse de Boigne, daughter of the Marquis d'Osmond, who was French ambassador to London between 1815 and 1819, explained that the queen wore the "small crown" at all official ceremonies:

It was not that Queen Charlotte had an imposing presence. If one thought of a block of sugar covered in gold brocades then they would have a fairly accurate description of her. She was not tall, and over several years has grown heavy and become deformed. She wore a bonnet, a turban, a toque, depending on the occasion, but always, I saw her wearing a small, closed crown, with many stones, in her hair. I have heard it said that it never leaves her.²

Some years later, the jewels became the subject of a long battle between Queen Victoria and her uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, King of Hanover. The dispute was finally settled and right of ownership given to the duke. Certain pieces, notably the crown, are still owned by his descendants.

The second lot of jewels mentioned in Queen Charlotte's will comprised several large Indian diamonds given to her by the Nawab of Arcot, a prince whose states were situated in the Deccan region of southern India. Richard Scott Morel, curator of the East India Company archives at the British Library, recently published some interesting details about the diamonds. He asserted that following help given to the nawab by England against the French, a correspondence began between the Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan Wallajah, who reigned from 1752 to 1795, and the British sovereigns. A letter addressed to Queen Charlotte, dated 1771, mentions that the late wife of the nawab offered the queen one of her personal jewels in recognition of the military support given to her husband: "A cluster consisting of a brilliant set round with other diamonds, cut and polished after the manner of this country, with a polished emerald drop scallop'd on the surface and the edge".³

The nawab probably added various stones to the gift offered by his wife, and it was these diamonds that the queen wished to be sold after her death for the benefit of her daughters. The two most beautiful were two pear-shaped

diamonds of 33.70 and 23.65 carats respectively. In all probability mounted as pendant earrings, the jewels were named the Arcot Diamonds. Sadly for the princesses, the Prince Regent, the future George III, did not obey their mother's wishes. He appropriated the most beautiful of her diamonds, including the Arcot Diamonds. The stones were finally sold at the beginning of the 1830s, perhaps in a private sale with a jeweller.⁴ Only then did the four surviving daughters of Queen Charlotte – Princesses Augusta, Elizabeth, Mary and Sofia – receive their inheritance.

Perhaps the prince regent – and the executors of the will – decided to sell all the objects in the late queen's estate at Christie's in 1819 in a bid to pacify his sisters. Once the two items mentioned specifically in the queen's will were put aside, the remaining jewels amounted to a significant group. They were put to auction at the end of the first day of sales. Their description provides a valuable insight into the changes in fashion during the nineteenth century. A new type of jewellery had made an appearance: the diadem. The collection of Queen Charlotte consisted of several ornaments destined to be worn in the hair, as headbands. The first offered for auction, number 38 in the catalogue, was composed of forty natural flowers in diamonds, rubies and other coloured stones. The queen also owned a band of chrysopters and diamonds from a parure that made up lot number 56, as well as three diamond hair ornaments.

The collection also had an important parure of sapphires and diamonds, of which ten or so pieces were sold separately, as well as an ensemble of opals and brilliants sold in one single lot. The pearls were divided into two sautoirs of 218 and 220 pearls respectively, various one-string necklaces, bracelets and pendant earrings. But it was the diamonds that made up the lion's share. Aside from the Hanovers' jewels, and those gifted by the Nawab of Arcot, Queen Charlotte also owned necklaces, chains, bracelets, brooches and a series of sixty-three chatons of unmounted diamonds all sold as one lot. The total sale from Queen Charlotte's diamonds alone reached £6,441. Little trace remains of the queen who reigned England for nearly sixty years; save for several good portraits conserved in the Royal Collection and, of course, Buckingham Palace – purchased by George III in 1762 as a private residence for his wife.

Facing page: Detail of Portrait of Queen Charlotte by Daniel Dance-Holland, c.1769.

Right and facing page:
Catalogue of 'the Property
of Queen Charlotte'
(Christie's London, 17 May
1819).

Queen Charlotte

A CATALOGUE
OF
A SUPERB ASSEMBLAGE
OF
JEWELS,
TRINKETS;
A DESERT SERVICE OF FILLAGREE PLATE;
SILVER-GILT DRESSING PLATE;
AND
USEFUL TABLE PLATE.
WHICH WILL BE SOLD BY AUCTION
By **MR. CHRISTIE,**
At his Great Room, Pall Mall,
On **MONDAY, MAY 17, 1819,** and Two following Days,
PUNCTUALLY AT ONE O'CLOCK.

May be publicly Viewed on Friday and Saturday preceding the
Sale, when Catalogues (at Two Shillings and Sixpence each;
without which no Person can be admitted,) may be had of
Messrs. FRANCE and BANTING, Upholsterers to their Majesties,
and of Mr. CHRISTIE, Pall Mall.

G. Smeeton, Printer, 17, St. Martin's Lane.

- 23 A gold and enamelled etui case with a brilliant, an agate ditto, a delineator for taking miniature portraits in a beautifully chased gold case, a small scent bottle, two patch boxes, and a shell for scent
- 24 Three superb silver gilt medallions highly chased, viz. one Henry VIII. one Queen Elizabeth, in high relief, with reverse "non ipsa pericula tangunt"; and one of Elizabeth, with richly chased border, in morocco case lined with velvet
- 25 A small bust of Charles I. carved in rock chrystal, *unique and very fine*
- { 26 A very small watch in an enamelled ring set with brilliants, }
 — { and a ditto, in a case of Dresden porcelain, painted with }
 — { miniatures }
- 27 A large and finely chased silver gilt George, in a red morocco case; and a small ditto
- 28 A massive and very richly chased gold snuff box, with a subject on the lid in relief from Teniers
- 29 A small equestrian figure of the Emperor Charles V. in silver, the armour silver gilt, on an ebony pedestal with festoons of silver chasing
- 30 A cup of beautiful semi-transparent agate, on stem and foot of the same, with enamelled mountings, set with pearls and turquoises; and a small vase composed of emeralds, rubies and pearls, gold mounted

Diamonds.

- 31 A pair of diamond and enamel purse runners, with mottos, a double heart locket with topazes and brilliants, a brilliant locket with hair, a pair of small diamond (cross) sleepers, a lily of the valley broach, of gold and pearls, a heart and arrow ditto of pearls



The Fleurs-de-Lys of the Queen of England

ALEXANDRA OF DENMARK
(1844-1925)

Christie's London
3 May 1937

The jewel is described under lot 107 in the catalogue as, "a diamond brooch, designed as a fleur-de-lys. This brooch once formed a portion of the crown worn by her late majesty, Queen Alexandra, at the coronation of King Edward VII". The detail concerning the coronation of King Edward VII seems doubtful. Indeed, Queen Alexandra wore a diamond crown with four fleurs-de-lys for her husband's coronation on 9 August 1902. It had been made especially for her. But the armature of the crown is on display today in the Army Museum, London. The four fleurs-de-lys are still there. The jewel is set with strass; the diamonds that decorated the crown during the coronation were the personal property of Queen Alexandra and were duly returned to her after the event. This detail may well have caused the confusion.

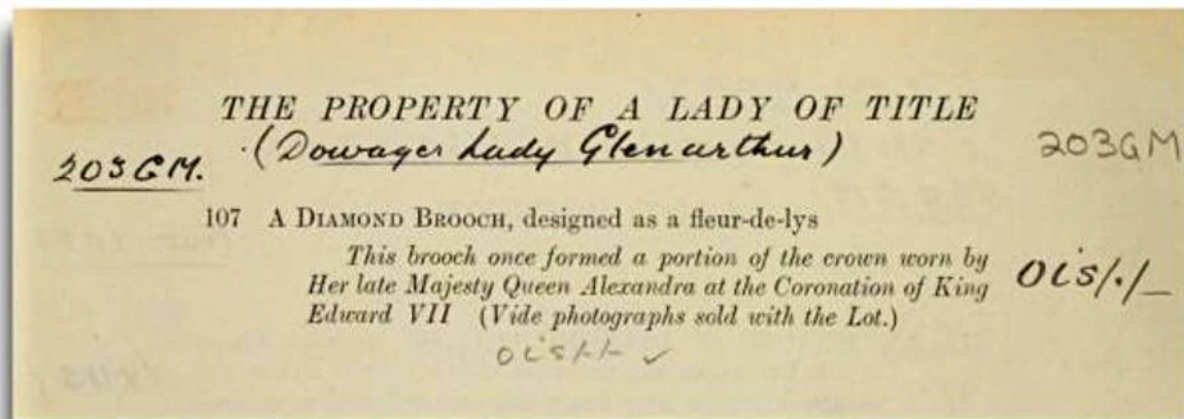
Queen Alexandra did own another crown that was made immediately after the death of her husband in 1910. On becoming a widow she had passed several pieces of crown jewellery, notably the crown of George IV, an elegant circle of pearls and diamonds, displaying a cross and rose motifs, shamrocks and thistles in diamonds, to her daughter-in-law, Mary, the new queen. Therefore, she commissioned a new diamond crown to compensate for the loss. This diamond

circle decorated with fleurs-de-lys was ordered from the jewellers Carrington for her personal use. And it was set with diamonds removed from the coronation crown.

Following Alexandra's death in 1925, her daughter, Queen Maud of Norway, inherited the crown. It is still often worn by the present queen of Norway. It is a complete circle of diamonds, on which are attached four crosses whose position can be altered at will. It appears that the four fleurs-de-lys set with the crosses on the original crown had already been unmounted when Queen Maud inherited the jewel. Perhaps they were given as personal gifts by Queen Alexandra. It is one of those fleurs-de-lys that was offered for sale at Christie's on 3 May 1937.

Facing page: Queen Alexandra, widow of King Edward VII, wearing her personal diamond crown. She is also wearing a diamond chain that was inherited by her daughter, Princess Louise, Duchess of Fife, and then her granddaughter, Princess Alexandra, Duchess of Fife. Princess Alexandra bequeathed this jewel to her cousin, Lady Patricia Ramsay, and it was sold at Christie's in 1974, in Lady Patricia's auction.

Below: Detail of Catalogue (Christie's London, 3 May 1937).





The Scottish Princess

HH PRINCESS MAUD OF FIFE, COUNTESS OF SOUTHESK
(1893-1945)

Christie's, King Street, London
22 June 1946

For the first time in the history of Great Britain, the Labour Party had achieved a crushing majority in the House of Commons. Churchill had won the war but lost the election. It was Clement Attlee who was now running the country and he had a revolutionary programme. He established a National Health Service that gave access to medical services for all, and pursued nationalisation, reconstruction and decolonisation. The significant tax rises accepted by the country as a necessary part of the war effort against Germany and Japan were not reversed. On the contrary, the financial burden increased, particularly for the large landowners, the core of the wealthy British aristocracy.

Apart from the sovereign, George VI, who benefitted from an extraordinary tax exemption, the royal family were not spared their share of the burden. The sale of jewellery from the estate of Princess Maud of Fife, Countess of Southesk, organised by Christie's on the 22 June 1946, was a clear sign that something had changed definitively in the kingdom of Great Britain.

Born in 1893, Princess Maud was one of the lesser-known members of the royal family. Her mother, Princess Louise was the eldest daughter of Edward VII and Queen Alexandra,

who had grown up at Marlborough House and Sandringham, the two residences of her parents, cushioned by a family life full of luxury and reserve that shaped her into a particularly shy princess. In 1889 the British public learnt – with no great sense of surprise – of her intention to marry a Scottish aristocrat, the Earl of Fife, soon to receive a dukedom from Queen Victoria. Her fiancé had an illustrious family history, counting the Macduff family – rendered immortal in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* – amongst his ancestors.

His estate in the Braemar region of Scotland stretched to thousands of hectares, and his properties in England and London were many and luxurious. The newlyweds had four homes to choose from, each one as sumptuous as the next: Mar Lodge in Scotland, East Sheen Lodge in Richmond Park, a townhouse in Portman Square, London, and Fife House in Brighton.

Facing page and below: A cabochon sapphire and diamond necklace, c.1888, by Bolin, presented to Queen Alexandra by the Tsar of Russia. The property of Princess Maud, Countess of Southesk (Christie's London, 26 June 1946).

19

157 A FINE SAPPHIRE AND DIAMOND COLLAR, composed of eight cabochon sapphires of fine colour, with single row diamond borders in the form of oval clusters, and held by diamond panels of twisted bar design, the centre formed of three single diamonds set vertically —with fittings *OSXX/1.*

OSXX/12 (Three small stones deficient)
The above lot was presented to Queen Alexandra by the Czar of Russia, from whom it was bequeathed to H.R.H. The Duchess of Fife

See Illustration, facing page 13

94

CATALOGUE
OF
HIGHLY
IMPORTANT JEWELS

THE PROPERTIES OF
H.H. PRINCESS MAUD, COUNTESS OF SOUTHESK, *deceased*
(Sold by Order of the Executors)

LADY GREVILLE
THE COUNTESS D'ARCY
THE DOWAGER LADY FOLEY
LADY FORTUNE
MRS. M. SYKES
MRS. CLAUDIA PACKE
MISS OSWALD SMITH
MRS. GEORGE BELLVILLE
MRS. H. McGRATH
THE RT. HON. LORD NUNBURNHOLME
SIR MICHAEL A. J. MALCOLM
SIR GEORGE OLIVER COLTHURST, BART.
A. KEEN, ESQ.
MRS. PERCY FREEMAN, *deceased*
(Sold by Order of the Executor)
MRS. ETHEL TENNENT, *deceased*
(Sold by Order of the Executor)

ALSO

JEWELS AND JEWELLERY

FROM OTHER SOURCES

WHICH

WILL BE SOLD AT AUCTION BY

CHRISTIE, MANSON & WOODS, LTD.

(I. O. CRANE, SIR HENRY FLOYD, BART., C.B., C.B.E., THE RT. HON. LORD GREYTON, P.C.,
GORDON HANWEN, R. W. LLOYD, SIR ALCO MARTIN AND W. A. MARTIN)

AT

DERBY HOUSE,

STRATFORD PLACE, OXFORD STREET, W.1.

On Wednesday, June 26, 1946

AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK PRECISELY

May be viewed MONDAY and TUESDAY preceding and Catalogues
had at Messrs. CHRISTIE, MANSON AND WOODS' Offices, *Derby House,*
Stratford Place, Oxford Street, London, W.1

TELEPHONE: - - - MAYFAIR 5311

TELEGRAMS: CHRISTIAN, WERDO, LONDON

Catalogues, with four plates of illustrations, Price 2/-

Above and facing page: Catalogue featuring the property of Princess Maud, Countess of Southesk (Christie's London, 26 June 1946).

148 A DIAMOND AND RUBY BRACELET, composed of four cabochon rubies intersected by three graduated diamonds, with four stone graduated diamond shoulders to the white gold link band *dox/*
dark

149 A DIAMOND AND SAPPHIRE BRACELET, composed of four diamonds of varying size and two cabochon and two oval-cut sapphires of varying size, with platinum link band *dox/*
dark

150 A DIAMOND RING, composed of two circular-cut diamonds set vertically in separate collets, with white gold hoop *logo*

151 A DIAMOND AND RUBY SINGLE CLIP BROOCH, in the form of a cone-shaped panel, enriched with a semi-circle of rubies carved as leaves and diamond baguettes

152 A DIAMOND AND RUBY DOUBLE CLIP BROOCH, composed of diamond scrolls with diamond cone-shaped centres set diagonally with cabochon rubies, and terminating in square-cut ruby semi-circles

153 A DIAMOND, TURQUOISE AND PEARL TIARA, composed of fifteen diamond trefoil bars graduating from the centre, each surmounted by a single pearl and intersected by diamond and turquoise bars, supported by a single line of diamonds *Sxx/*

The above lot was the gift of Queen Alexandra to H.H. Princess Maud on the occasion of her marriage.
dark

154 A DIAMOND AND AMETHYST NECKLACE, composed of six hexagonal-cut amethysts graduating from the centre and flexible within diamond wreaths, intersected by diamond club-shaped scroll drops, the whole supported by a diamond scroll collar *Uxx/*

The above lot was made to the special order of Queen Alexandra
dark

155 A DIAMOND FLEXIBLE BRACELET, composed of eight octagonal pierced slightly convex panels, the centre of each set with a single oval diamond and held by diamond bars *Sxx/*
dark

156 AN IMPORTANT DIAMOND AND AMETHYST TIARA, composed of seven single oval amethysts graduating from the centre to form flowers, supported by twin leaves and single diamonds within a graduated oval diamond frame, each intersected by diamond bars, with single diamond tops, and supported by twin diamond semi-circles, with single line diamond base *dox/*
(two small stones deficient)

The above lot was presented to Queen Alexandra by the Czar of Russia from whom it was bequeathed to H.R.H. The Duchess of Fife
dox/

The marriage produced a son, who died at only two months old, and two daughters, Alexandra and Maud. The health of the duchess being fragile, the family often travelled to the Mediterranean during the winter months, and it was during one of these expeditions to Egypt that the Fifes were shipwrecked. The drama unfolded close to the Moroccan coast. The family were initially unharmed, but the duke contracted pleurisy and died in Aswan in January 1912. Princess Louise survived her husband by fifteen years, dying in Scotland in 1927.

The story of their daughters is somewhat unusual. Neither had any interest in public life. The eldest, Alexandra, 2nd Duchess of Fife, married her cousin, Prince Arthur of Connaught, in 1913. He would die of stomach cancer in 1938. She was probably the first British royal to pursue a profession. From childhood, her ambition had been to be a nurse, and the First World War gave her the opportunity to fulfil her dream. Specialising in gynaecology and surgery, she went on to practise under the name of "Nurse Marjorie" right up to the end of the Second World War.

In 1923, her younger sister, Maud, married Charles Carnegie, the eldest son of the Earl of Southesk, another Scottish aristocrat with a colourful family. Rooted in Brechin, midway between Dundee in the south and Aberdeen in the north, the Carnegie clan was one of the few families who stayed loyal to the Stuarts, in particular Queen Mary. Their role in the Jacobite revolt of 1715, one of various attempts to put a Stuart back on the throne of Scotland, led to the confiscation of their lands. They would have to wait another 140 years, until 1855, for the return of their fortune and lands at Kinnaird. Four years later, the 9th Earl of Southesk, having restored the family's fortune, decided to fulfil his dream and became an explorer. For two years, he travelled through Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains in North America, returning with an important collection of Native American art, which was eventually sold by his descendants in 2006. The family, and certainly the castle at Kinnaird, has some interesting ghosts, notably, the 2nd Earl of Southesk who, it is said, practised black magic.

One of the sisters' rare public appearances dates from 1937, when they were seen at the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. The Duchess of Fife and Princess Maud were seated in the gallery overlooking the queen's throne at Westminster Abbey. Alexandra, the eldest, a duchess in her own right and wife of Prince Arthur of Connaught, was in the second row with sisters of the new queen and cousins of the new king. Maud was in the third row. Alexandra wore many fabulous pieces of diamond jewellery; Maud wore the amethyst tiara and necklace of her grandmother, Queen Alexandra.

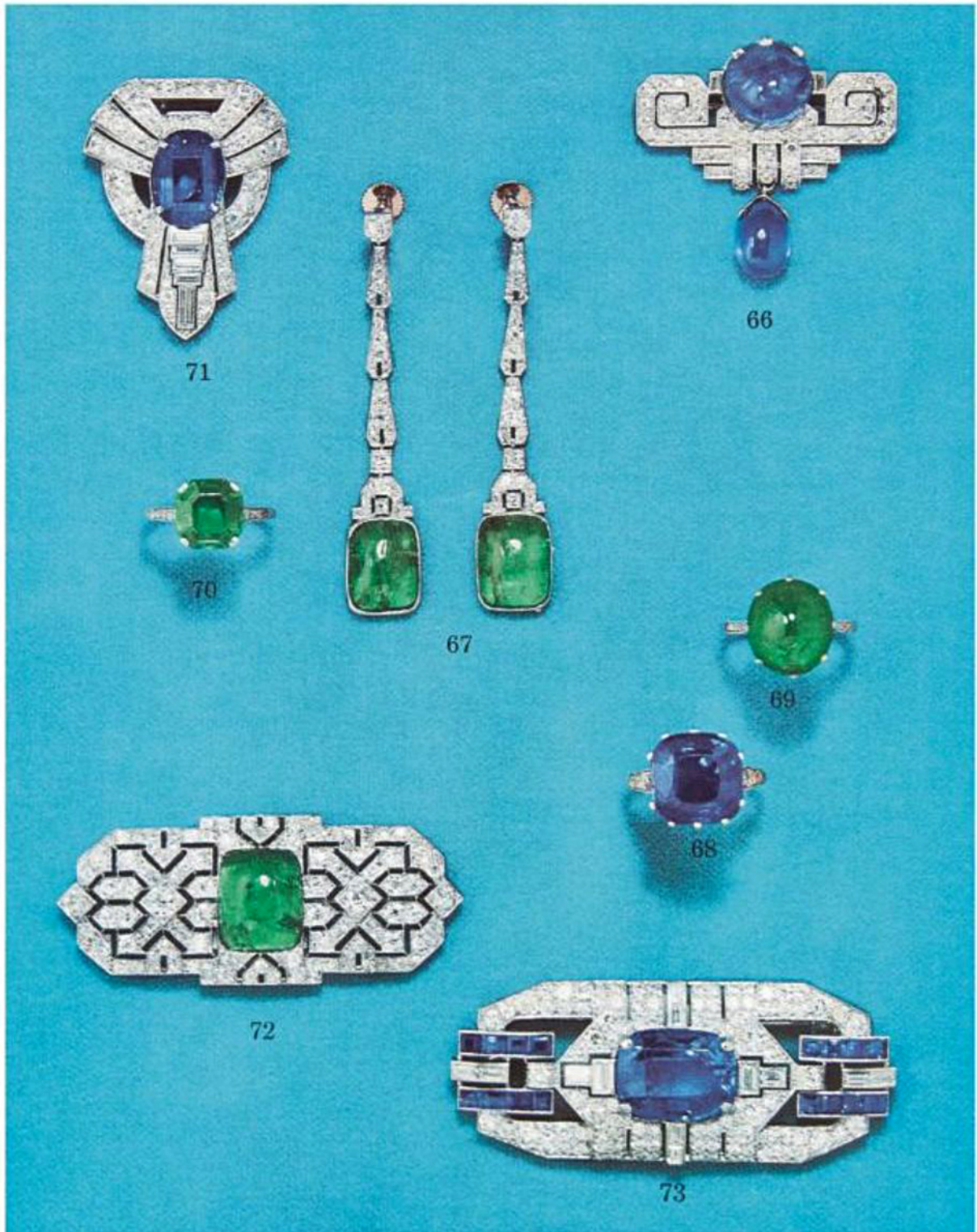
Eight years later, at the end of the Second World War, Princess Maud died at the age of fifty-two. Her only son, James Carnegie, was aged sixteen. A cadet in the British Army, he had been home on leave and was waiting on the station platform for the train to take him back to barracks when he learnt of his mother's death. James being a minor, the administrators of his mother's estate decided to sell part of her jewellery collection at Christie's. The most important item was a necklace of sapphires and diamonds given to Queen Alexandra by Tsar Alexander III. It sold for £4,900. The jewellery worn by Princess Maud for the coronation in 1937 was included in the catalogue. The amethyst diadem, also a gift from the tsar, but this time to Princess Louise, reached £1,750. The necklace ordered personally by Queen Alexandra sold for £580. A diamond bracelet sold for £520, and a second diadem of diamonds, turquoise and pearls, given as a wedding present by Queen Alexandra to her granddaughter, Maud, made £380. The forty pieces of jewellery in the collection of Princess Maud, Countess of Southesk, were sold for a total of £10,989. The Earl of Southesk lived for a further forty-seven years, dying in 1992, aged ninety-nine.

Princess Alexandra, Duchess of Fife, lived until 1959. Her last years were clouded by the death of her only son, Alastair. The young man had inherited the title of Duke of Connaught from his paternal grandfather, who had died in 1942. A year later, Alastair succumbed to hypothermia, aged twenty-eight, in circumstances almost as comic as they were tragic. Famous for his pranks, Alastair was sent to North America as aide-de-camp to his uncle, the Earl of Athlone, who was appointed Governor General of Canada during the Second World War. On a particularly cold winter's night, an inebriated Alastair apparently forgot to shut his window. Some witnesses said he simply fell from his bedroom window and died in the snow.

Princess Alexandra rewrote her will after the death of her son. The title of Duke of Fife and the estate that accompanied it were to be left to her nephew, James Carnegie, Maud's son, who died in 2015. Anything that came from the Connaught estate and all that she inherited from her husband was given to another nephew, Alexander Ramsay, the son of her cousin, Lady Ramsay, born princess Patricia of Connaught. By coincidence, this princess also features in the Christie's legend: her collection of jewellery was sold by the auction house in 1974.

Facing page: The amethyst and diamond necklace of Queen Alexandra. The Property of Princess Maud, Countess of Southesk (Christie's London, 26 June 1946).





Queen Victoria's Granddaughters

LADY PATRICIA RAMSAY
(1886-1974)

Christie's London
15 May 1974

Seventy-three pieces of jewellery, principally pearls, diamonds, emeralds and sapphires, offer valuable insight into the lifestyle of one of Queen Victoria's granddaughters, a woman all but forgotten today. Her illustrious ancestry was recalled in lot number 37 of the sale: "A diamond set jubilee brooch, composed of a crown, between the dates: 1937 and 1887." Princess Patricia of Connaught was just a couple of months old when Queen Victoria celebrated her golden jubilee, and it's difficult to know if the brooch was given to her as a gift or if it belonged to her mother, the Duchess of Connaught, daughter-in-law of the queen. The memory of the same Duchess of Connaught, born Princess of Prussia, is written into another gem, lot 47: "A diamond and emerald badge brooch of the Rifles Brigade, presented to the duchess of Connaught by the officers of the first battalion Rifle Brigade, July 25th, 1880."

Her Royal Highness, Princess Patricia of Connaught, was born in Buckingham Palace on 17 March 1886. Her childhood was privileged, but colourful. Her father, Queen Victoria's favourite son, was a military man through and through. He travelled the world, from India to Canada, depending on his posting. The military badge mentioned above was probably linked to a promotion awarded while serving with the first battalion of the Rifle Brigade. Similarly, several of the pieces of jewellery in the 1974 sale had an Indian purchase receipt and almost certainly related to the time that the duke and his family spent in India during the 1890s.

Golden jubilee aside, the great event that marked the youth of Princess Patricia was the appointment of her father to the post of Governor General of Canada in 1911. In contrast to her sister, Margaret, who had married the

pretender to the Swedish throne in 1905, Princess Patricia showed little inclination to marry. She was very happy living with her parents, despite the fact they were not a particularly unified couple. She was twenty-five when she arrived in Canada where she very quickly became popular. Her portrait was used to decorate the dollar bill, and during the First World War a newly formed unit of the Canadian army became known as the "Princess Patricia Light Infantry" in her honour. She designed the unit's colours herself and remained their colonel-in-chief until her death in 1974.

It was on Patricia's return to England, in 1919, that she decided to involve herself with one of her father's aides-de-camp, the Honourable Alexander Ramsay, third son of the



Right: Princess Patricia of Connaught, Lady Patricia Ramsay.

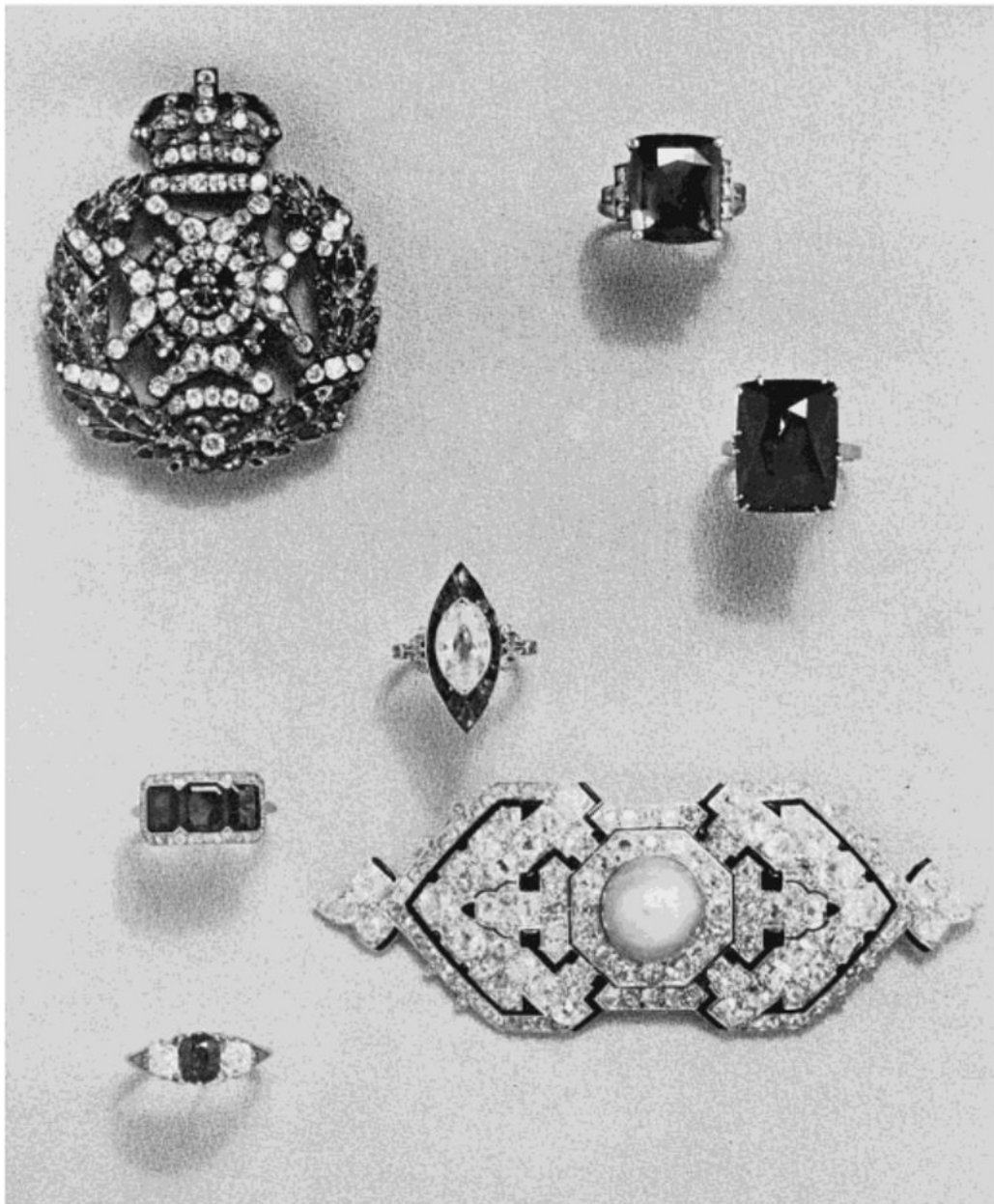
Facing page and overleaf: Jewels in emeralds, sapphires and diamonds. The property of Lady Patricia Ramsay (Christie's London, 15 May 1974). The sapphire in lot 71 weighed 14.88 carats; the emerald in lot 70 was 3.28 carats; the sapphire in lot 68 was 12.39 carats; the cabochon emerald in lot 69 was 9 carats; and the sapphire in lot 73 was 23.50 carats.





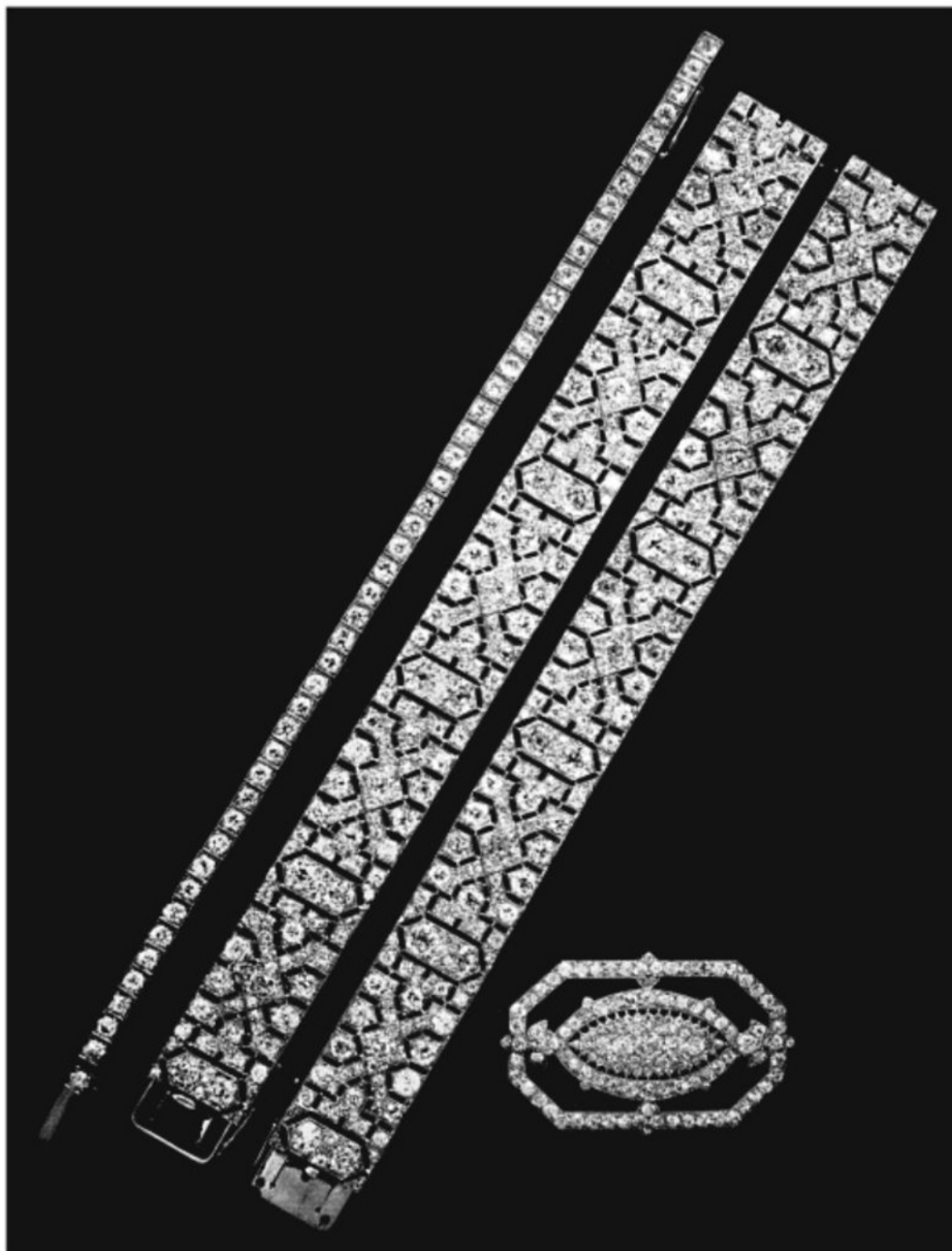
Above: A second diamond rivière and two diamond rings. The property of Lady Patricia Ramsay (Christie's London, 15 May 1974).

Facing page: Diamond rivière and diamond bow brooch. The property of Lady Patricia Ramsay (Christie's London, 15 May 1974). The diamond bow brooch used to belong to her mother, the Duchess of Connaught.



Above:

Top left: a diamond and emerald badge brooch of the Rifle Brigade, presented to the Duchess of Connaught in 1880. **Top right:** a ring with a 13.20 carat sapphire and another with a 21.70 carat sapphire. **Centre:** a ruby and diamond ring. **Lower corner, left:** two emerald and diamond rings. **Lower corner, right:** a pearl, diamond and onyx brooch by Cartier, inherited by Lady Patricia from her cousins, Princesses Helena Victoria and Marie-Louise of Schleswig-Holstein (Christie's London, 15 May 1974).



Above: Three diamond bracelets and a diamond brooch. The collection of Lady Patricia Ramsay (Christie's London, 15 May 1974). The two large diamond bracelets can be clipped together to form an even larger band.



Above: A diamond tiara. From the collection of Lady Patricia Ramsay (Christie's London, 15 May 1974). This tiara formerly belonged to Princess Helena Victoria.

Facing page: The Royal Box at the coronation of King George VI in Westminster Abbey, 12 May 1937.

First row, from left to right:

The Countess of Strathmore and Kinghorn; the Duchess of Kent (wearing her pair of diamond earrings sold at Christie's in 2000); the Duchess of Gloucester; Queen Maud of Norway (wearing Queen Alexandra's diamond crown); Queen Mary; Queen Elizabeth (then Princess Elizabeth); Princess Margaret and the Princess Royal, Countess of Harewood (wearing the sapphire and diamond parure sold at Christie's in 1960 and 1970).

Second row, from left to right:

Princess Helena Victoria (wearing the diamond tiara which sold at Christie's in 1974, in Lady Patricia Ramsay's auction, see above); Prince Arthur of Connaught; Lady Patricia Ramsay (wearing her two diamonds rivières and the diamond bow brooch sold at Christie's in 1974); Princess Alexandra, Duchess of Fife.

Third row, from left to right:

The Marchioness and Marquess of Carisbrooke; Princess Maud, Countess of Southesk (wearing the amethyst and diamond necklace sold at Christie's in 1946); the Earl of Southesk.

13th Earl of Dalhousie. The young officer belonged to an excellent Scottish family, but the princess's marriage to a man without title posed a problem with protocol. What would Princess Patricia's title be as a married woman? George V, unlike his father, Edward VII, was strict about titles, and he felt the royal family was already too large.

Princess Patricia resolved the problem very simply. She renounced her royal titles as princess to become Lady Patricia Ramsay. Her marriage to Alexander Ramsay was the subject of

one of the first Pathé films about a member of the British Royal Family. The ceremony took place on 27 February 1919, and if the film is to be believed, the weather was appalling. The young couple returned to the reception at Buckingham Palace amid torrential rain. The cortège of bridesmaids included Princess Mary, daughter of George V; Princess Ingrid of Sweden, niece of the bride; and Princess Maud of Fife.

The union of Alexander Ramsay and Lady Patricia was blessed with the birth of a son, Alexander. In 1956, he married





Flora Fraser, Lady Saltoun, one of the two chiefs of the Fraser clan. It was Alexander who ordered the sale of the seventy-three pieces of jewellery at Christie's in 1974. The auction made a total of nearly £100,000 (equivalent to £700,000 today).

The list of jewellery presented in the catalogue reveals an interesting detail about the life of Lady Patricia Ramsay. It appears she was much loved by several members of the royal family. Many of her cousins left her significant endowments in their wills. When her cousin, Alexandra, Duchess of Fife, died in

1959, she bequeathed Patricia several pieces of jewellery, notably a long sautoir made of diamond links, which could be transformed into four assorted bracelets. The ensemble sold for £9,400. Another cousin, Princess Marie-Louise, who died in 1956 without children, left Patricia a diadem in diamonds, which would prove to be the most expensive item in the sale, reaching a total of £12,000, and a beautiful art deco brooch signed by Cartier. The catalogue also mentioned other pieces of art deco jewellery in sapphires, emeralds and diamonds.



**HRH PRINCESS ALICE OF ALBANY, COUNTESS OF ATHLONE
(1883-1981)**

**Christie's London
12 December 1984**

This sale was made up of only six pieces and only one of these – a diamond diadem – is of any interest, yet it marks the end of an era. HRH Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, was the last living granddaughter of Queen Victoria. She was seventeen when her illustrious grandmother died, and if one believes the photographer Cecil Beaton, that grandmother would become her number one subject of conversation. Princess Alice of Albany was born in Windsor Castle in 1883. Her father, Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany, was the youngest son of Victoria. He was the only one of her sons to inherit the haemophilia gene that ran in the family. Alice would pass it to one of her sons, who then died prematurely. Less than a year after the birth of his daughter, Prince Leopold fell while walking on a path at his home on the Côte d'Azur and

suffered a fatal cerebral haemorrhage. His wife, one of the Princesses of Waldeck and Pyrmont, was pregnant at the time of his death. She gave birth to a son who would be the last Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.

On 10 February 1904, during the reign of her uncle King Edward VII, Alice married her cousin, Prince Alexander of Teck, at Windsor Castle. The marriage produced three children: May, who would be the only one to have

Facing page: Princess Alice of Albany, c.1905.

Below: An art deco diamond tiara. The property of Lady May Abel Smith (Christie's London, 12 December 1984).



descendants; Rupert, who died in 1928, aged twenty-one; and Maurice, who died aged six months. In June 1917, in the midst of the First World War, Prince Alexander agreed to renounce his title and his German name, adopting instead the name of Cambridge and the title, Earl of Athlone. Being a princess in her own right, his wife kept her royal title. She was a cousin to most of Europe's sovereigns. On her father's side, she was related to the last Tsarina of Russia, the Queen of Spain, the Queens of Greece, Romania and Sweden, and the last emperor of Germany, whom she apparently found pompous and complex. On her mothers' side, she was cousin to Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands.

Related to the royalty of Europe, born during the reign of Queen Victoria, Princess Alice participated in four coronations in the twentieth century; those of Edward VII, George V, George VI and Queen Elizabeth II. For the first three ceremonies, she wore the diamond diadem in the form of ears of wheat that she inherited from her mother-in-law, the Duchess of Teck; for the fourth, in 1953, she wore a diadem in Egyptian art-deco style which was, it appears, commissioned by the princess herself, probably at the end of

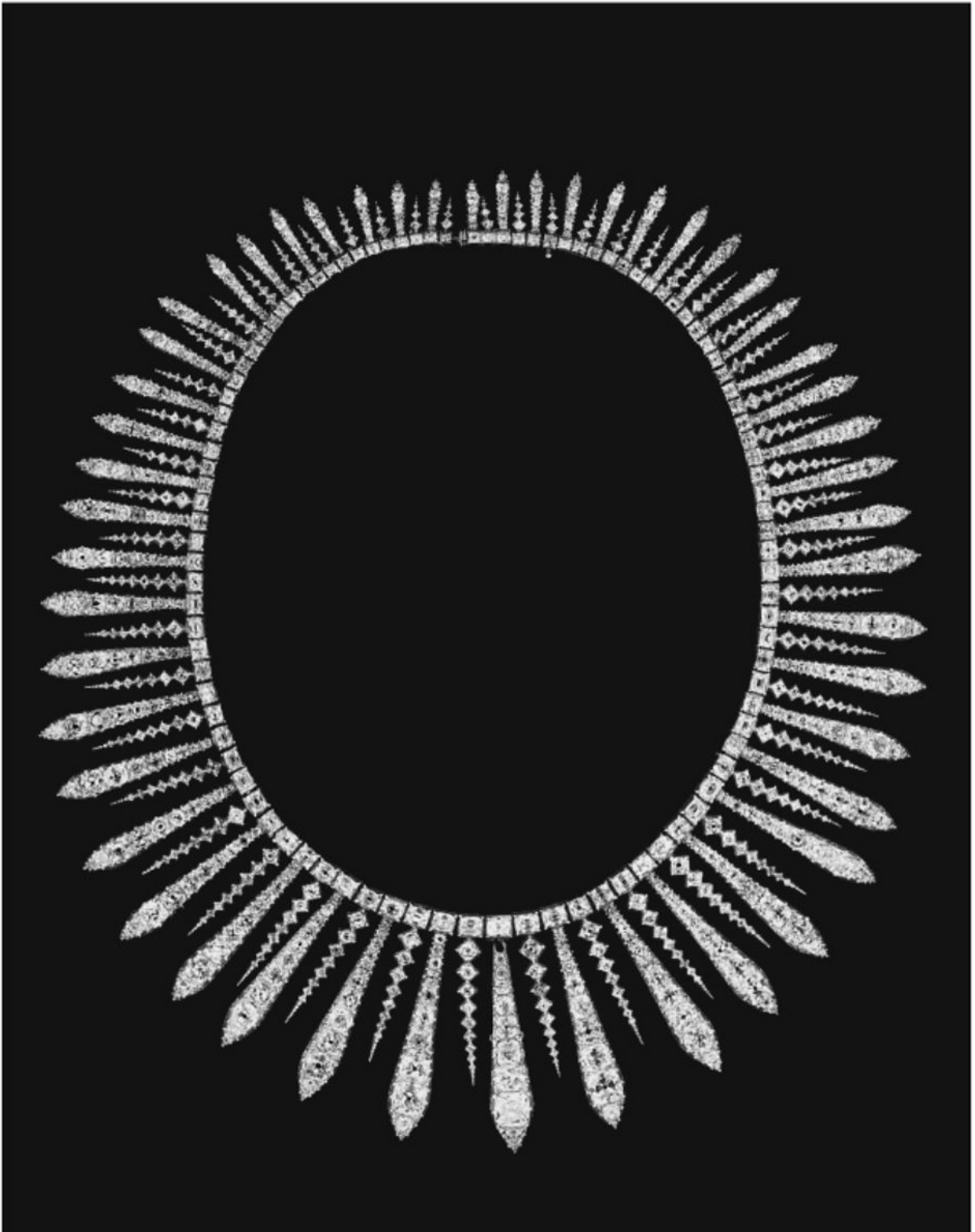
the 1930s using old pieces of jewellery that she considered out of fashion.

At the beginning of the 1970s, Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, was a survivor from a different age. She was certainly one of the only granddaughters of Queen Victoria (along with Queen Victoria Eugenie of Spain) to have given a television interview. She lived in Kensington Palace in an apartment very close to that of Princess Margaret, and where the present Duchess of Cambridge now lives. At nearly ninety years of age, Alice was still taking an annual flight, in economy class, to the Antilles or Africa for a holiday. Her secretary once confided that, after a late arrival, the princess was obliged to sit up all night at an African airport; she was over eighty-five years of age and didn't complain once.

Her ninetieth birthday was celebrated in style with a reception given by her daughter and son-in-law at Claridge's Hotel. Female guests were asked to wear a diadem, if possible. Several dozen, including Queen Elizabeth, followed etiquette and wore the required jewel. The princess died at Kensington Palace on 3 January 1981, just a few weeks before her ninety-eighth birthday.

Facing page: Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, wearing the Art Deco diamond diadem, 1937.





The Last Princesses

HRH PRINCESS MARY, THE PRINCESS ROYAL, COUNTESS OF HAREWOOD
(1897-1965)

Westminster Abbey
28 February 1922

It was the greatest wedding of the interwar period. King George V and Queen Mary's only daughter, Princess Mary, was getting married to Viscount Lascelles, heir to an old and very rich aristocratic family. Thrones were falling around Europe. Austria, Russia, Prussia and all the small German monarchies with whom the British royal family were connected, were becoming but memories in the history books. Was it for this reason, perhaps, that the British sovereigns decided to celebrate their daughter's marriage with such elegance? Times were changing. The dynastic alliances of the past that had put British princesses on European thrones had given way to more prosaic unions; marriages that would strike more of a chord with the British public who were, perhaps, weary of seeing their princesses, endowed by Parliament, taking their fortunes off to royal dynasties less prestigious than the Windsors – the new name adopted by the British royal family during the First World War, in a bid to distance themselves completely from their German origins.

Certainly, many questioned the sentiments of the couple. The Prince of Wales, brother of Princess Mary, opposed the wedding on the pretext that his sister did not love Viscount Lascelles, who was fifteen years her senior. He suggested the young princess was simply accepting the union to escape the "prison" of Buckingham Palace.

Marriage of love or marriage of convenience? Whatever the truth, Princess Mary must have smiled when her wedding gifts began to arrive at Buckingham Palace. They were fabulous. Her father gave her a parure in sapphires and diamonds made up of a necklace, diadem and bracelet, which came from the collection of Queen Victoria, her great grandmother. Her mother, Queen Mary, completed this with a large brooch of an oval sapphire surrounded by fourteen diamonds and a diadem of brilliants. Princess Mary's future

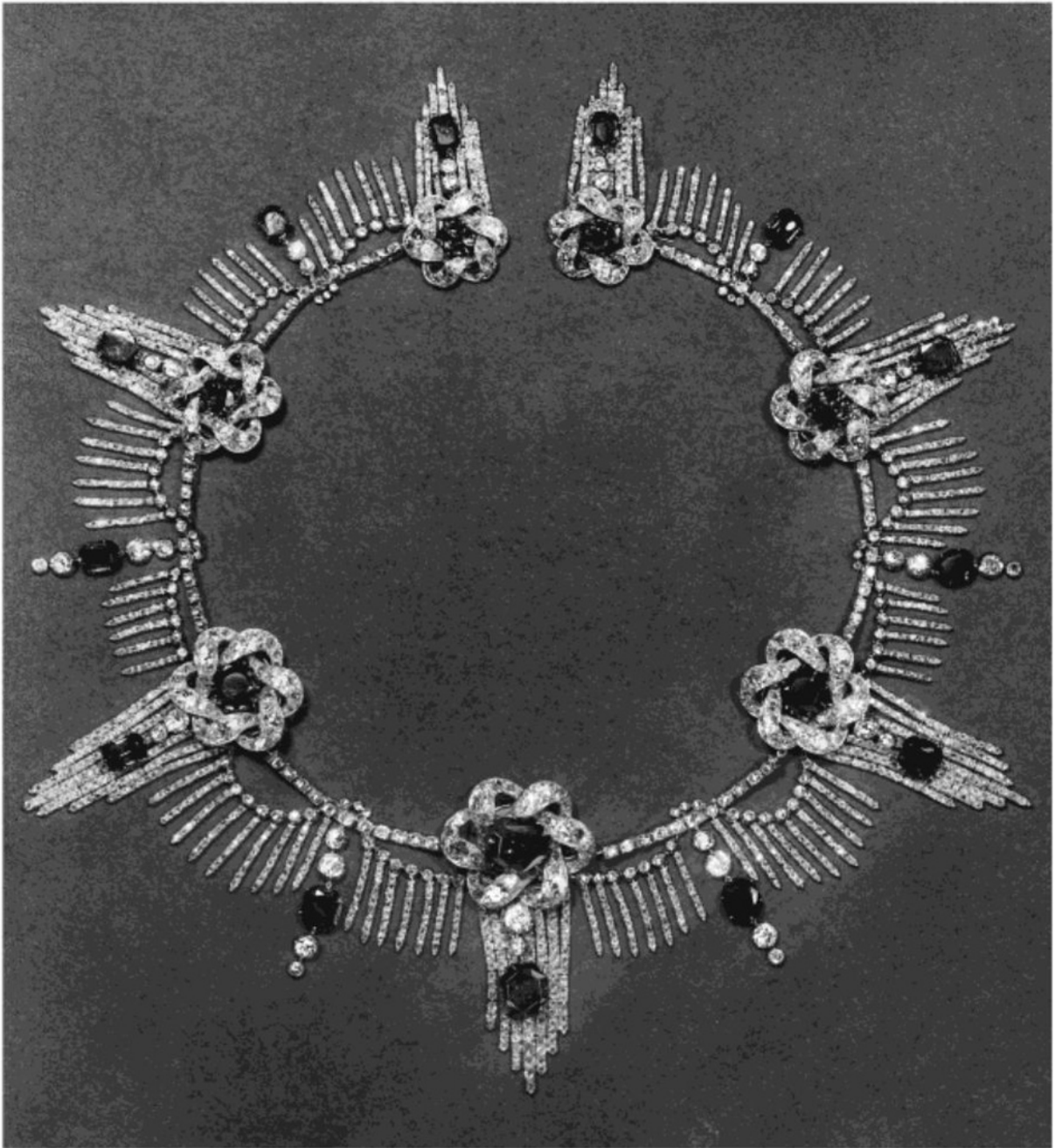
husband had acquired an extraordinary, flexible corsage ornament made up of diamonds linked together by knots and pendants set with diamonds and twenty large oval sapphires. The piece came from Grand Duke Michael of Russia, who had inherited it from his mother, Grand Duchess Olga, born Princess Cécile de Bade. The brothers of the bride, the Prince of Wales and the future Dukes of York, Gloucester and Kent, all chose pieces of jewellery in diamonds and sapphires.

Other wedding gifts came from official organisations. The Royal Navy gave a "negligé" necklace in emeralds and



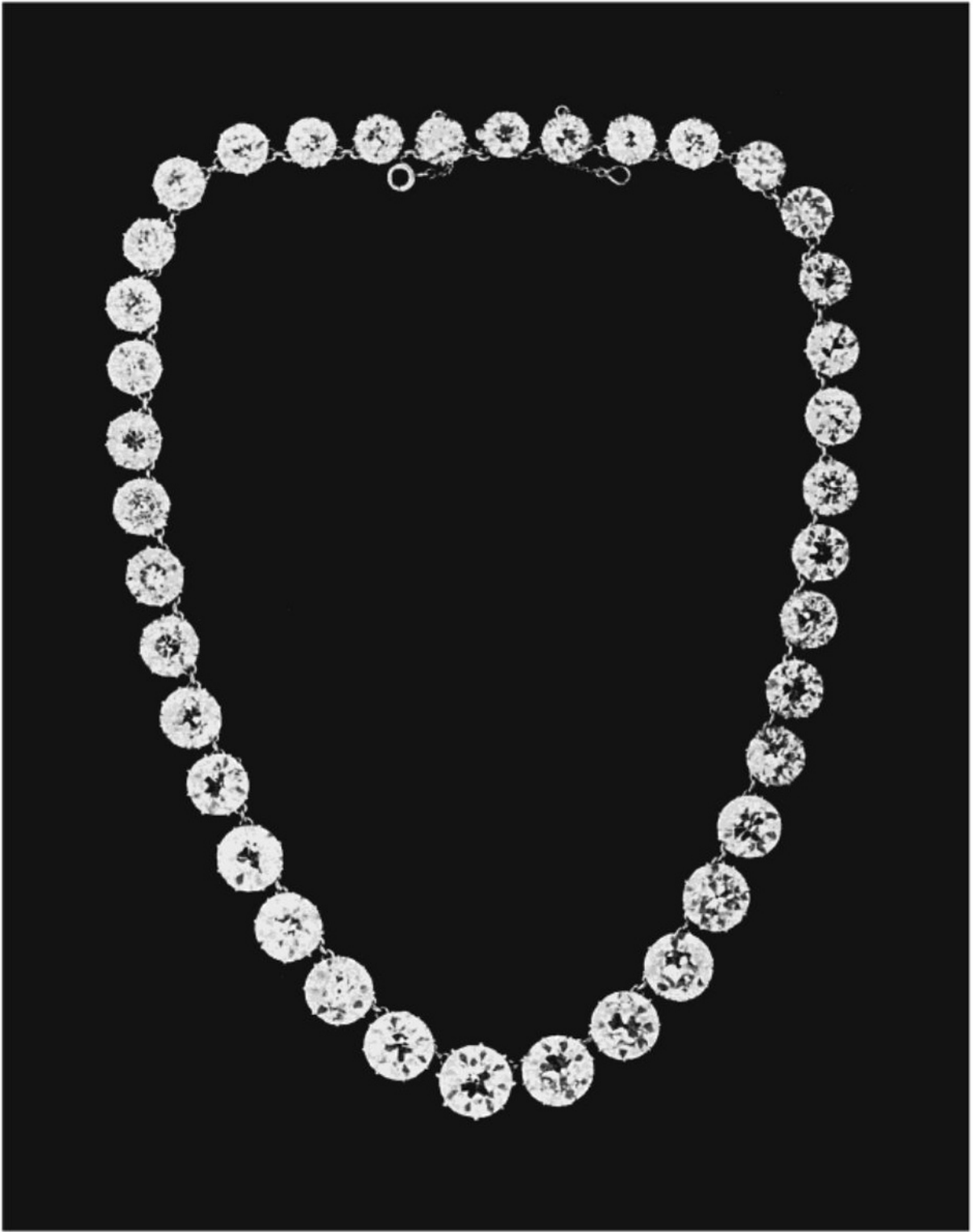
Right: The Princess Royal wearing the diamond fringe tiara.

Facing page: A diamond fringe necklace/tiara. The Property of the Princess Royal (Christie's London, 29 June 1966).



Above: A sapphire and diamond Russian necklace/ornament. The property of The Princess Royal (Christie's London, 23 November 1960).

Facing page: A diamond rivière. The property of The Princess Royal (Christie's London, 23 November 1960 (unsold), and Christie's London 28 June 1966).









shoulder, brushing away a speck of dust from his uniform. The innocent gesture implied an intimacy hitherto unseen.

However, Townsend was a divorcee and scandal raged. Winston Churchill added to the controversy when he commented that the princess was too close to the crown to marry a divorced man. After all, she was, in fact, third in line to the throne after her sister's two children, Charles and Anne. Were she to ascend to the throne one day, she would become head of the Anglican Church. Unlike her uncle,

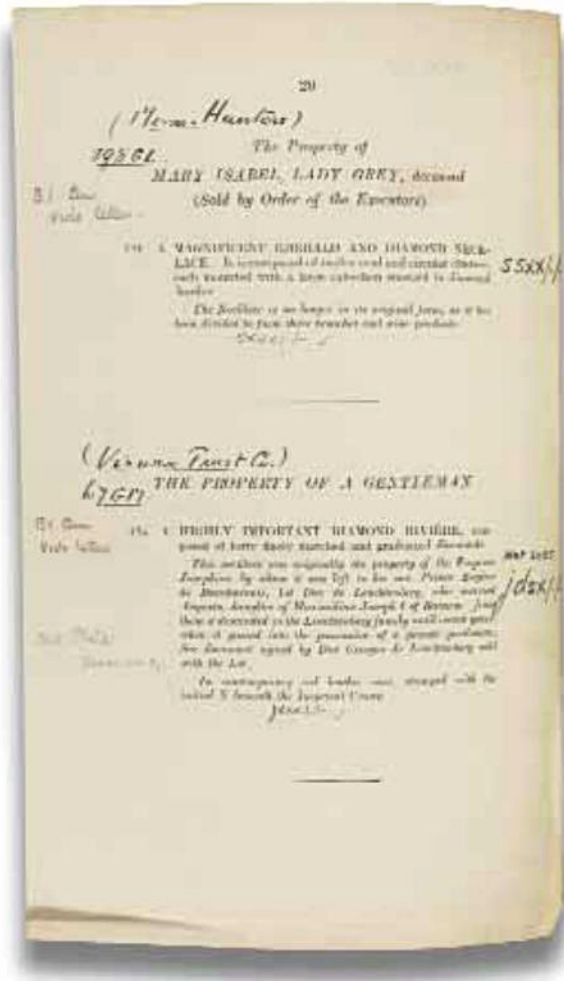
Above: The "Poltimore Tiara". Property from the collection of The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon (Christie's London, 13 June 2006).

Facing page: The Princess Margaret on her wedding day, 6 May 1960, wearing the "Poltimore Tiara".

Edward VIII, who had abdicated the throne to marry the woman he loved and became the Duke of Windsor, Margaret finally gave up Townsend.

A new chapter began in her extraordinary life: the bohemian years. In 1960, she married a young, talented photographer, Antony Armstrong-Jones. Through him, Margaret discovered a new universe. Their vast apartment in Kensington Palace became a rendezvous for artists who lived in – or were passing through – London. They welcomed dancers, choreographers, Hollywood actors and the jet set. Several amazing pieces of jewellery signed by John Donald and Andrew Grima date from this period, and would later feature in the sale of 2006.

Unfortunately, Margaret's marriage to Antony Armstrong-Jones, made Lord Snowdon by his sister-in-law, Queen Elizabeth II, ended in divorce. The couple had two children,



Above: Catalogue featuring the diamond rivière of Empress Josephine (Christie's London, 21 April 1937).

Facing page: A diamond tiara, by Fabergé. The diamond briolettes on the tiara, which belonged to the dukes of Leuchtenberg, were said to be part of Empress Josephine's collection. (Christie's London, 13 June 2007).

collapse of the first French Empire. Her considerable estate went to her two children who were burdened with several million francs of debt.

It was Joséphine's grandson, Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, the only surviving son of Hortense from her marriage to Louis Bonaparte, who sold the aforementioned cameos through Christie's in London. Resident in London, having lived in Switzerland and Italy, he decided to sell several items after squandering a large part of his inherited fortune. Alongside the cameos, the sale at Christie's comprised several busts, paintings and weapons. He kept aside various pieces of jewellery. On becoming Emperor Napoleon III, he offered these to his wife, Eugénie de Montijo, and it is from her that we can trace, in the sale of 1872, the pink diamond that had been part of Joséphine's collection.

Several other important items of jewellery, mostly diamonds, drawn from the dispersal of Joséphine's estate came to auction at Christie's during the twentieth century. Most came from a branch of the family descended from her son, Eugène, the Duke of Leuchtenberg. Perhaps the most important was a rivière "composed of forty finely matched and graduated diamonds". The attendant catalogue entry, dated 21 April 1937, noted that it had belonged to Empress Joséphine,

by whom it was left to her son, prince Eugène de Beauharnais, 1st duke of Leuchtenberg, who married Augusta, daughter of Maximilian Joseph 1st of Bavaria. From then, it descended in the Leuchtenberg family, until recent years when it passed into the possession of a private gentleman. See document signed by duke George of Leuchtenberg, sold with the lot.

The genealogy mentioned in the catalogue, the document signed by Duke George of Leuchtenberg, and the box described in the catalogue seem to confirm the imperial provenance. Extremely generous, Joséphine gave her jewellery freely to her daughter, Hortense, and to her daughter-in-law, Princess Auguste, who had married her son, Eugène. Duke George was their grandson. After the Russian Revolution in 1917, he settled with his wife, Princess Olga, and their many children in Seon Castle, Bavaria, a property he inherited from his great grandfather. Their fortune was left behind in Russia, and so the Dukes of Leuchtenberg had to sell their jewellery to survive in exile. An important part of their treasure was sold discreetly in Switzerland at the beginning of the 1920s; and a diadem of diamonds signed by Fabergé, of which certain stones were reportedly from the collection of the Empress Joséphine, was sold through Christie's, Geneva, in 2007 for £1 million.





Huge international loans weighed heavily on the country's straitened finances. The indigenous population, reduced to virtual slavery, regularly rebelled. In 1860, the accession to power of a new president, Benito Juárez, a liberal, secular lawyer of Zapotec origin, raised hopes of possible reform, but he soon came up against the country's conservative elements, not least the clergy, whom he incensed with the confiscation of property. The fight against Juárez was led by several conservatives who hoped to turn the failing republic into a new empire, the stability of which would be guaranteed by a prince from an ancient European dynasty. Even while the idea had little real support in Mexico, the proponents were encouraged by France and Empress Eugénie, who saw the scheme as a way of confirming the civilising properties of Catholicism in Central America. The imperial project also benefitted from the support of several important banks which saw an opportunity to launch new, lucrative loans.

They went in search of an emperor. The Duke of Aumale, maternal uncle of Charlotte, stepped aside, and the Spanish Bourbons adopted the same prudent attitude. Archduke Maximilian of Austria, ex-viceroy of Lombardy and younger brother of Emperor Franz Joseph, appeared to be the easiest candidate to manipulate. His wife aspired to being crowned, and she didn't mind which crown so long as she was sovereign. She harassed her husband about the prospect of becoming emperor, but the archduke, more prudent than his wife, and very attached to his European comforts, hesitated. However, he eventually agreed to receive the Mexican delegation at Miramare. After a vague promise of support from France, who sent a military aide, and Austria, and of the neutrality of the English, he accepted the crown of Mexico.

The voyage of the newly crowned Austro-Mexican across the Atlantic required several ships. The new empress, a careful woman, took a trousseau befitting a queen. Luggage included crockery, silverware, furniture, household linens, courtly furnishings, jewellery and a sumptuous rococo carriage in golden wood that can be admired today in Chapultepec Castle, one of the ancient imperial palaces, near Mexico City. During the Atlantic voyage, Maximilian and Carlotta, her new name, were confined to their suite, organising the ceremony of their new court: chamberlains, imperial guards, livery and uniforms, the organisation of audiences and so on. In all, they created nearly six hundred pages of protocol, which they would print on their arrival in Mexico.

On 26 May 1864, Veracruz came into view. The new empress wrote to her grandmother, the dowager queen of France, Marie Amélie: "We are going to touch land in several hours, the land of our new kingdom... I am delighted with the tropics and I dream only of butterflies and humming birds..."¹⁴ The dream of butterflies and humming birds became a nightmare in the space

of just three years. Few Mexicans recognised their new emperor; fewer still wanted an imported European monarchy running their country. The finances of the moribund empire had already been exhausted by loan repayments at exorbitant rates of interest. The unpopular occupying French and Belgian troops retreated leaving the emperor without an army, without funds, alone in the palace at Chapultepec before an army of rebels.

In July 1866, Maximilian sent Charlotte to Europe to encourage a renewal of military and financial support from the major powers. Her diplomatic tour was disastrous. Napoleon III sent a clear message that her presence was acknowledged but not welcome. She began to send her husband strange letters; Emperor Napoleon III was described as demonic:

You can be certain, to me, he is the devil incarnate. During our last meeting, yesterday, he had such an expression, his hair fashioned hideously. It was the expression of his soul. All the rest is façade. [...] You must get out of his sphere of influence as soon as possible. Too kind Mephistopheles, he kissed my hand today as I left him. But it is play acting, because on looking at him closely several times; I shudder still! The world has never seen anything like it before, but the reign nears its end and we will breathe again.

Her letters couldn't have reassured the poor emperor who was confronted daily by a growing rebellion and a diminishing army with which to protect himself. Having exhausted all avenues of diplomacy, and been abandoned by the French sovereign and his troops, Charlotte finally turned to Miramare, the home that she had built with Maximilian in better times. She stayed for several days. It was here that she chose to celebrate Mexico's national day.

Several weeks later, Charlotte embarked on a crusade to save her dear, much-loved Maximilian. With the powerful nations refusing to help the moribund Mexican empire, she turned to the Vatican and its spiritual power. The final drama was played out in Rome. The pope had recently lost territory to the new Italian kingdom and wasn't in a position to supply troops. During an audience with the empress, he took fright when she confessed a fear of being poisoned and refused to leave the Vatican where she felt safe. In haste, two temporary beds were made up for her and her secretary in the pontiff's library. The empress agreed to leave the palace the following day to return to her hotel. En route, she stopped her

Facing page: The diamond corsage ornament, which used to belong to Empress Charlotte of Mexico. From the collection of Queen Marie-José of Italy (Christie's Geneva, 1 May 1969).







Above: Sybil Sassoon, Marchioness of Cholmondeley, at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, wearing the sapphire and diamond tiara and necklace of the French Crown Jewels, in their modified form. Photographed by Cecil Beaton.

speech and most ungrateful. In the adversity of a destiny such as hers, under perpetual menace of a bleak future in prison, Madame Royale was hardened to all. Her wish to be always standing, fighting back constantly in the fashion of a king's daughter, was constantly fighting the natural sensibility of her soul.⁵

To help her endure the occasions on which she was obliged to appear in public, the Duchesse d'Angoulême relied on the subtleties of etiquette, of which she knew every detail. She undertook the restoration of all pre-revolution customs, including fashion, leading the Comtesse de Boigne to gently mock the duchess in her memoirs:

Madame desires to bring back the side hoops as at the time of Versailles; the protest was so widespread that she gave up. However, to the imperial costume all the ancient paraphernalia of Versailles was added. To our Grecian coiffures, the ridiculous ruffs of lace were added, and then one replaced the elegant collerette, which recalled a Van Dyck portrait with a heavy mantilla and a pleated front. In the beginning, Madame ordered that this should be strictly observed. A model was given to merchants who must observe the style strictly. She showed her displeasure if this was not done.⁶

One of the traits that Madame Royale inherited from her mother was her love of jewellery, diamonds and precious stones. In 1815, her personal collection, principally of pearls and diamonds, was added to with the stones from the Crown. Louis XVIII and Charles X were both widowers, and she was the only person able to wear the items assembled by Napoleon I. The ensemble consisted of several parure of diamonds and coloured stones – rubies, sapphires, emeralds and turquoises – that she had entirely reset. It seems that Madame Royale obtained several decrees from Louis XVIII that allowed her to preserve several state pieces in her private collection, notably an imposing diadem of diamonds and a parure in emeralds. The king reimbursed the treasury the value of the precious stones.

The first parure reset by request of the Duchesse d'Angoulême contained rubies and diamonds. Created by her favourite jeweller, Ménières, the large diadem, a comb, two necklaces, two bracelets, a pair of pendant earrings, a series of buttons in flower form, a corsage pendant, three shoulder brooches and even a splendid belt, were reworked. Another jeweller, Bapst, brother-in-law of Ménières, was employed to redesign the parure of sapphires and diamonds, comprising a necklace, diadem, comb, two bracelets, a pair of pendant earrings and three shoulder brooches. At the coronation of

her father-in-law and uncle, Charles X, at Reims on 28 May 1825, Madame Royale wore the grand parure of rubies and diamonds created especially for her.

In 1830, when yet another revolution chased the Bourbons from France, to be replaced by the House of Orléans, Madame Royale was forced into exile once more. After a brief stay in Scotland, she settled in the Czech lands (then part of the Austrian Empire) with the French royal family, and then in Austria. It was in Austria that the daughter of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette died, forgotten by history. She had no children, but channelled her affections instead to her nephew, the Comte de Chambord, and niece, the Duchesse de Parme. Her last will and testament stated that her jewellery be divided into three equal parts: one for the Comte de Chambord, one for his wife, the Comtesse de Chambord (it was in the Comtesse de Chambord's share that the diamond necklace put to auction at Christie's in 1971 was included), and a third for the Duchesse de Parme.

The fantastic parures of coloured stones designed for Madame Royale and created with the stones from the Royal Collection stayed in France during the revolution of 1830. The new queen, Marie Amélie, never wore them. However, Empress Eugénie made great use of the stones and found them so much to her liking that they were never altered. In 1887, diamonds from the crown were sold at auction, lot by lot, in Paris.

Searching out those prestigious jewels is a favourite pastime amongst historians of precious stones. The author of this book had the good fortune to identify a pair of sapphire and diamond earrings from the parure of the crown owned by the d'Orléans family. During the famous sale of the French Crown Jewels in 1887, they appear to have been bought by Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg, future king of Bulgaria. They stayed in his family until just after the Second World War. His grandson, King Simeon II, then offered the earrings to a princess of the d'Orléans family on the occasion of her marriage in 1957. The diadem of emeralds and diamonds, in the hands of an old aristocratic English family for many, many years, was also purchased and exhibited by the Louvre.

Over the years, other pieces from the French royal treasury have regularly come up for auction in London, Geneva and New York. For example, a diadem and necklace of sapphires and diamonds went on sale at Christie's in Geneva in 1973. The catalogue made no mention of their prestigious royal provenance. In fact, the two pieces had been transformed at some point after their purchase in 1887,

Above and facing page: The sapphire and diamond parure from the French Crown Jewels, in their modified form (Christie's Geneva, 21 November 1973).



unfortunately not to their advantage. They were acquired by a jeweller representing the Rothschild family of Paris. Both diadem and necklace were part of the wedding gift presented at the marriage of Aline de Rothschild and Edward Sassoon in 1887. The couple went on to have two children, Philip and Sybil. Sybil inherited the sapphires that had once been worn by the Duchesse d'Angoulême. On becoming the Marchioness of Cholmondeley, she wore them to the coronation of King George VI and his wife, Queen Elizabeth, in 1937. The Marquess and the Marchioness of Cholmondeley asked the celebrated photographer, Cecil Beaton, to immortalise the event. The double portrait, taken in the salon of Houghton House, one of the Cholmondeley family homes, is extraordinary. The marchioness wears the necklace and the sapphire and diamond diadem which, at that time, were still intact. She also wears a good ten strings of pearls in garland form on the front of her dress. And, of course, both wear the garb of peers of the realm: scarlet velvet robes bordered with ermine and gold embroidery.

Twenty-five years later, during the State Opening of Parliament, Lady Cholmondeley was photographed on the peers' bench. She was seated next to the Duchesses of Buccleuch, Rutland and Fife. This time she wore the pearls, and the sapphires and diamonds, but they had been altered. Six of the eight sapphire necklace pendants had been dismantled, and now formed a peacock tail in the middle of the diadem. The two other small sapphire pendants from the necklace were set in the centre of two pear-shaped forms, which were positioned at the two extremities of the necklace in place of the two large, rectangular sapphires that made up the original form. The only original piece of the necklace was its central section, which was made up of seven big, oval sapphires. The diadem no longer boasted its big sapphires; they had been replaced by the peacock tail motif. Part of the rinceau and leaves of diamonds had also disappeared. No one has seen the diadem since its sale in Geneva in 1973. However, the necklace does still exist; it belongs to an Italian antique dealer who exhibited it a few years ago in Paris.

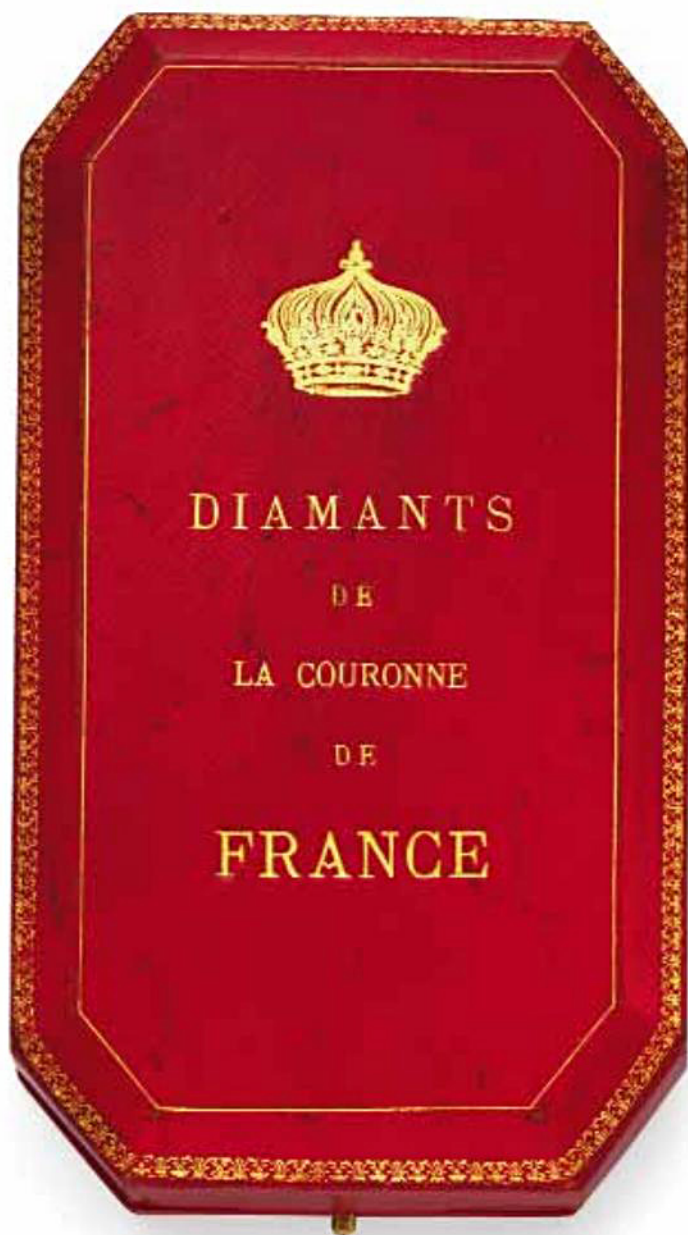
The parure of rubies and diamonds made for the Duchesse d'Angoulême to celebrate the coronation of Charles X has had more luck. The major part of the parure has stayed intact. After numerous journeys between France, England and the United States, the bracelets have returned to the Louvre Museum; the diadem is in a private collection, and the shoulder brooches, certain elements of the belt and the front corsage pendant, are also still in existence.

In 1901, at Christie's in London, three pieces in rubies and diamonds, described as "purchased at the sale of the French crown jewels in 1887", went through the auction house. The parure consisted of a corsage ornament in the form of a bouquet of flowers set with diamonds, seven large rubies and

six smaller rubies; a bracelet of rubies; and a pair of earrings, each composed of rubies and diamonds. These jewels do not correspond to any of the pieces sold in 1887, but it is likely that they were created after the sale from elements of the original parure, most probably with the fourteen dress buttons of rubies surrounded by diamonds. One of these jewels returned to sale, with Christie's in London, half a century later, but it was only in the 1980s that the most important piece of the set, the large necklace created for the Duchesse d'Angoulême, reappeared. It was placed with Christie's in Geneva in December 1982, along with a more recent pair of earrings of similar design. The owner of the necklace had commissioned the earrings from Van Cleef & Arpels, Paris, in 1951. The piece then returned to Geneva once more, for a sale on 27 May 1993.

The saga of Christie's and the French Crown Jewels continued with a spectacular announcement in 2008. One of the pieces from the fabulous French national collection, the grand knot of diamonds created in 1855 by the jeweller Kramer for Empress Eugénie, was coming back on the market. The item comprised a brooch in the form of a knot, from which were suspended two long ribbons of diamonds, which then ended in pendants, also in diamonds; not only a historic ornament but also a perfect example of the elegance of French jewellery from the nineteenth century. The quality of work from the jewellers, setters and polishers who created the piece is of such a high standard that the ribbons can be wrapped around a finger. During the famous sale of 1887, it was sold to a jeweller who was obviously an intermediary for one of the most celebrated millionaires of the New World: Mrs Caroline Astor. Renowned for the elegance and sophistication of the balls and receptions she hosted in New York, 'The' Mrs Astor, as she was known, owned a fabulous collection comprising several pieces that had originated with the royals and emperors of France. For the pieces that she was unable to buy at the sale of 1887, she commissioned copies from the jeweller Boucheron. On the other side of the Atlantic, this woman of strong character was considered the queen of high society. Those who didn't figure on the famous 'List of 400' – the 400 people she invited to her annual grand soirée – were not worth knowing. On her death in 1908, Mrs Astor's jewellery was divided between her five children. Exactly one hundred years later, the most spectacular of these pieces, Empress Eugénie's corsage knot, was being prepared for sale by auction in New York when conservators and the Friends of the Louvre

Facing page: Catalogue featuring a ruby and diamond suite, purchased at the sale of the French Crown Jewels in 1887 (Christie's London, 9 July 1901).



Above and facing page: The diamond bow brooch of Empress Eugénie. Sold by Christie's to the Musée du Louvre.





Elizabeth Taylor

JEWELSWERE HER BEST FRIENDS
(1932-2011)

Christie's New York
December 2011

A final total of more than \$130 million, with some items sold for more than fifty times their estimate! The greatest names in jewellery represented in the catalogue, with prestigious provenance and legendary stones. The sale of Elizabeth Taylor's jewellery collection at Christie's in New York in December 2011 was a sale to beat all previous sales: the fabulous emeralds bought at Bulgari in Rome by Richard Burton; rubies mounted by Cartier and given to Elizabeth Taylor by Mike Todd, her third husband; La Peregrina, the historic pearl that had belonged to the kings of Spain and which was remounted by Cartier in the 1960s; the Krupp diamond, a solitaire of 33 carats; and pieces given to her by Michael Jackson. Everything was sold.

"The success of this sale was not due to the stature of Elizabeth Taylor," explained François Curiel, Director of international jewellery sales at Christie's. "It was due, purely, to the quality of the precious stones. Most of the pieces were of exceptional quality. Elizabeth Taylor was, of course, a star like no other, but she was first and foremost a woman with the best eye for jewellery."

The sale was staged like a Hollywood blockbuster. No theatrical effect was spared, François Curiel continued: "The most important pieces were auctioned during a special sale on the first night. When everyone had been seated in the sale room the lights were lowered and an archive film was projected. One saw Elizabeth Taylor, in her swimming pool in Los Angeles, in the 1980s. She was on the telephone negotiating to buy a diamond brooch, which had belonged to the Duchess of Windsor, during a sale of jewellery at Sotheby's in 1987. The price was soaring but she held on! Suddenly, when it had reached \$200,000, she said 'Holy Cow!' At that moment, the lights came back up and I discreetly mounted the podium and said simply: Lot number one."

The love story between Elizabeth Taylor and her precious

stones is one of the best-known sagas of the twentieth century. Similarly, the intimate love life of the star who married eight times, twice to the same man, Richard Burton, is well documented. Burton, and her third husband, Mike Todd, gave her the most beautiful pieces in her collection. Her first fiancé in 1950, Nicky Hilton, heir to the celebrated hotel chain, gave her a 4-carat diamond ring mounted on platinum. Seven years later, in 1957, when Mike Todd proposed, he bought her a rectangular diamond, seven times larger, weighing 29.40 carats. Richard Burton surpassed this by offering her the Krupp several years later, a diamond of 33 carats.

At the end of the 1980s, her collection was such that it could rival any of the greats. "I have been at Christie's for over 40 years," says Curiel. "And since the very first this collection has fascinated me. When I was asked which of the most famous collections I would like to sell one day I always replied: that of the Queen of England, but there is little chance of that. And that of Elizabeth Taylor."

Christie's met with the violet-eyed star in 1998. "At the time, she simply wanted an inventory done on her collection," continues Curiel.



Right: A pair of diamond girandoles ear pendants. The collection of Elizabeth Taylor (Christie's New York, 13 December 2011).

Facing page: Christie's New York saleroom on 13 December 2011.





“When Mike gave me this tiara, he said, ‘You’re my queen, and I think you should have a tiara.’ It wasn’t fashionable to wear tiaras then, but I wore it anyway, because he was my king.”

Elizabeth Taylor

Above: A diamond tiara, from the collection of Elizabeth Taylor (Christie’s New York, 13 December 2011).

Facing page: Elizabeth Taylor, wearing her diamond tiara and girandole earrings, and husband, Mike Todd, dancing at the Continental Hotel in Paris on Valentine’s Day, 14 February 1958.



Above: Elizabeth Taylor wearing her emerald necklace by Bulgari at a masked ball in Venice in 1967.

Facing page: An emerald and diamond necklace by Bulgari, from the collection of Elizabeth Taylor (Christie's New York, 13 December 2011).



Right: Elizabeth Taylor wearing her ruby parure by Cartier, in 1957.

Facing page: A ruby necklace by Cartier, from the collection of Elizabeth Taylor (Christie's New York, 13 December 2011).



She had so much. I went to her residence in Los Angeles. We had a meeting arranged for 10 o'clock in the morning and I had arrived [in LA] the previous evening. We [Christie's] installed ourselves in the dining room. At regular intervals we would be brought a new tray laden with pieces. All the boxes noted the origins of the gem within: who had given it to her; where and when it was bought. Sometimes we heard a noise from above. I asked if Miss Taylor was there. I was told that she was and that she would be down later. Towards 11.30, she descended the stairs in a stunning orange kaftan. It was like a scene out of Sunset Boulevard. She sat down with us and stayed for the rest of the day. She was passionate and knew her collection well. She asked all the right questions. I remember at one point she showed us an emerald which had been given to her. It

was not like the others, not ugly, but not of the same great quality. It weighed 30 carats. She asked me my opinion. I told her that it was a big stone which was a diplomatic way of telling her it was not of great quality. She looked at me and said: 'There you have it, the man who gave me this knew nothing.'

Elizabeth Taylor adored her jewellery and yet she never imagined an alternative destiny – other than sale – for her collection. What she had not foreseen was the incredible success that the sale would have. The sale of Elizabeth Taylor's collection of jewellery was, in fact, the highest grossing ever recorded in this field. The eighty lots sold in the evening sale netted \$115 million dollars. The next day, 190 additional lots totalled more than \$21 million dollars in sales. The global total of the sale would be \$137 million dollars.







Above: The Maharani Sita Devi of Baroda wearing her pearl necklace made with the top three strands of the seven-strand Baroda necklace.

Facing page: The Baroda pearl necklace, made with the best pearls from the lower four strands of the seven-strand Baroda necklace (Christie's New York, 25 April 2007).





La Peregrina

THE ROYAL SPANISH PEARL

Hotel des Ventes, Paris
1 July 1878

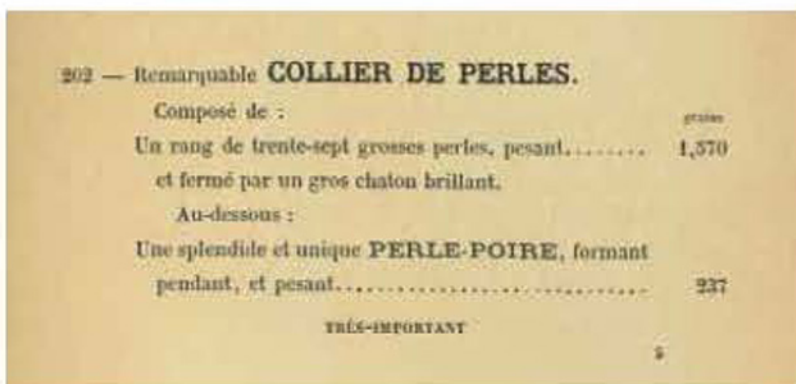
Messrs Dubourg and Guidou, the two auctioneers responsible for the sale, had difficulty hiding their satisfaction. Rooms 8 and 9 of the Paris auction house overflowed. The curious, merchants from the world over; jewellers and even the grandest names of the Spanish and French nobility were there to see the sale of one of the greatest jewellery collections in the world – the Spanish Royal Collection – on the instruction of Queen Isabella II.

In total, 308 lots, with the most jewels of the collection included in the first three days of the auction that would last a week. They included the most beautiful pearls in Europe, emeralds as big as snuffboxes, diamonds by the hundreds, sapphires and turquoises set in necklaces, diadems, brooches, sautoirs and pendant earrings. The Queen of Spain had lost her throne ten years earlier, leaving her country to experiment with several regimes, including a sovereign from the House of Savoy – all in vain. In 1874, a Bourbon crown was re-established favouring the Prince of Asturias, Isabella's son, who became king under the name of Alfonso XII. However the former queen was asked to remain in exile. Her private life had been agitated, to say the least: rumour had it that none of her four children had the same father; that she was easily led by her generals, particularly if they were handsome, and that her spending was excessive. All of this had left a few bitter memories in Madrid. Furthermore, during her years in Paris, the queen had grown accustomed to the liberty she enjoyed in

France, even managing to rid herself of her husband, the king consort, Francisco, with whom she had never had a good relationship. Nicknamed "Paquita", the effeminate sovereign had retired to Épinay-sur-Seine with one of his close male friends. The queen continued to live a society life at her Parisian home, appropriately named the Palace of Castile.

The only impediment to her pleasant lifestyle was that she retained the habits of a reigning sovereign. Controlling her budget became a nightmare for her financial advisers, and debts began to accumulate. Certain suppliers went as far as taking her to court in the hope of payment. An extreme decision was made; the fantastic collection of jewellery, which she had taken into exile, must be sold.

Impressed by the wealth of the royal collection, the auctioneers organised the sale with precision. Each session began with a dozen very important lots; followed by a collection of less important items. The first day included the sale of large diamond pieces; the second, the sale of the most impressive emeralds, notably a corsage ornament boasting a principal stone weighing 166 carats. At the beginning of the third day, the most beautiful pearls went to auction: a string of thirty-seven large, round pearls and, most significantly, a "splendid and unique pear-shaped pearl forming a pendant to the necklace, weighing 237 grains".² Who bought this pearl? And what has become of it since? That is the question. Today, the catalogue has become a rarity and little trace remains of



Left: Detail of the auction catalogue of the jewellery collection of Queen Isabella II of Spain, 1 July 1878. Lot 202 includes a drop-shaped pearl of 237 grains which is most probably La Peregrina.

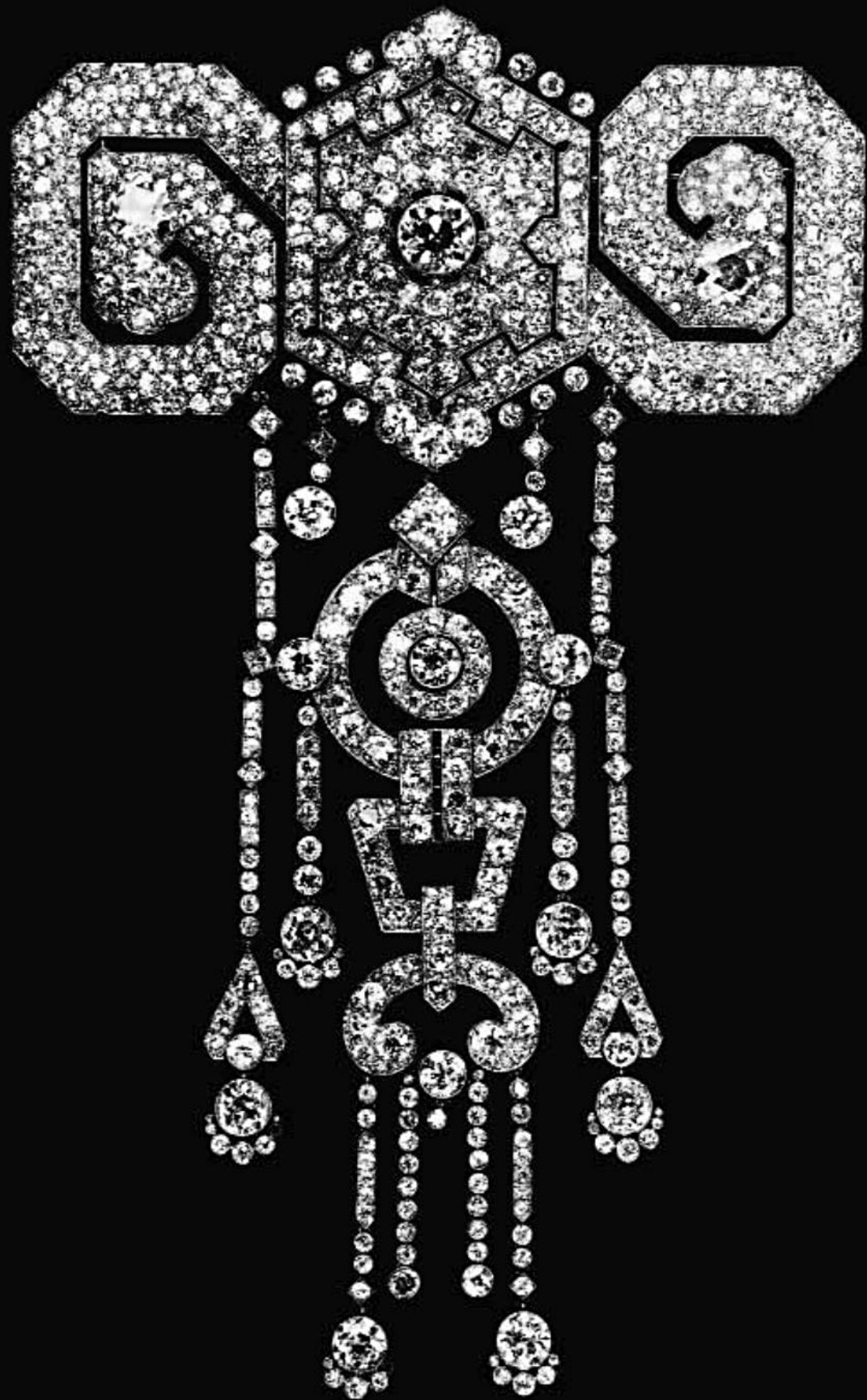
Facing page: La Peregrina pearl, from the collection of Elizabeth Taylor (Christie's New York, 13 December 2011).



BLOODY REVOLUTIONS



Above and facing page: A ruby and diamond tiara by Bolin, and a ruby and diamond necklace, parts of the parure presented by Tsar Alexander II to his daughter Maria Alexandrovna on the occasion of her marriage to Alfred Duke of Edinburgh, 1874 (Christie's Geneva, 16 November 1978).





1927 it was sold to a dealer by the name of Wall for £2,100. In fact, he was an intermediary for the Duchess of Marlborough, born Gladys Deacon. Five years earlier, she had married the 9th Duke of Marlborough, who had recently divorced from his first wife, Consuelo Vanderbilt. The Marlboroughs didn't own any family jewels, so Gladys had to buy her own "duchess diadem". By coincidence, Consuelo had sold her own diadem at Christie's on 12 December 1919; it was a tower of diamonds by Boucheron, given to the 9th duke's first wife by her father on the occasion of her marriage in 1895.

Unfortunately, the Duke of Marlborough's second marriage was no happier than his first and, despite the grandeur of their Blenheim Palace home, the couple had difficulty living together. Gladys even took to placing a loaded revolver beside her plate during the evening meal. A dinner guest once asked her what the gun could possibly be for: "I'm not sure, perhaps to kill Marlborough one day," she replied. The couple separated in 1933 and Gladys, a somewhat unstable character, retreated to the country and into her own, reclusive world. In the early 1960s she was confined in a

psychiatric hospital, where she lived for the last fifteen years of her life. In 1978, some months after her death, Gladys's imperial diadem was sold at Christie's London. But the story of the jewel doesn't end there. It returned to the public eye recently during a press conference organised by the government of the Philippines. The event was organised to show off jewellery confiscated from Imelda Marcos, wife of the former Philippines dictator. In the middle of dozens of display boxes shone the pearls and diamonds of the Russian imperial crown. The Philippines government has repeatedly stated its intention to sell the jewellery, so it is not impossible that the diadem will soon return to the auction block.

Above: A diamond bow bracelet, from the Russian State Jewels (Christie's London, 16 March 1927 and Christie's Geneva, 17 May 2006).

Facing page: A multi-gem bird on a branch brooch, from the Russian State Jewels (Christie's London, 16 March 1927 and Christie's Geneva, 15 November 2007).





The sale catalogues from the auctions organised by Christie's in Geneva include a number of pieces of jewellery that belonged to Queen Victoria Eugenie of Spain, one of the great collectors of the twentieth century. A rivière of twenty-seven diamonds and a spectacular corsage ornament in art-deco style signed by Cartier were included in the sale of 29 April 1977, along with two more modest brooches, a plaque of the Order of the Bath¹ in diamonds and a pendant watch. The pieces remained with the descendants of the queen's second son, Infante Jaime, Duke of Segovia. Two items with the original turquoise and diamond setting, from the queen's

Above: The diamond tiara of Queen Victoria Eugenia (Christie's Geneva, 14 November 1984).

Facing page: The art deco diamond devant de corsage brooch of Queen Victoria Eugenie (Christie's Geneva, 29 April 1977).

second daughter, Infanta Maria Cristina, were placed for auction with Christie's in 1984 and 1987. The first was a Chaumet diadem, a wedding present to Victoria Eugenie from her future husband, the King of Spain. The sovereign wore it for the last time in public, with the original turquoise, in Rome in 1954, at a ball arranged by her eldest daughter, Princess di Civitella-Cesi, on the eighteenth birthday of her granddaughter, Sandra Torlonia. The ornament was sold without the turquoise, which had been replaced in the centre of the fleur-de-lys with large diamonds. The second item was a bracelet set with turquoise and diamonds.

Lastly, two pieces of jewellery set in rubies and diamonds from an even more prestigious ensemble that had belonged to Victoria Eugenie emerged several years ago at Christie's. Before they belonged to the Queen of Spain, the bracelet and brooch were owned by her grandmother, Queen Victoria. The full parure dates from 1849 and in her journal entry for 30 July of that year, Victoria writes of her delight at



Above: A publicity photograph for Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard*, with Gloria Swanson and William Holden, 1950. Swanson is wearing her rock crystal and diamond bracelets by Cartier.

Facing page: A pair of rock crystal and diamond bracelets by Cartier, 1930, formerly the property of Gloria Swanson (Christie's Geneva, 17 November 1988).





GEMS FROM THE EAST

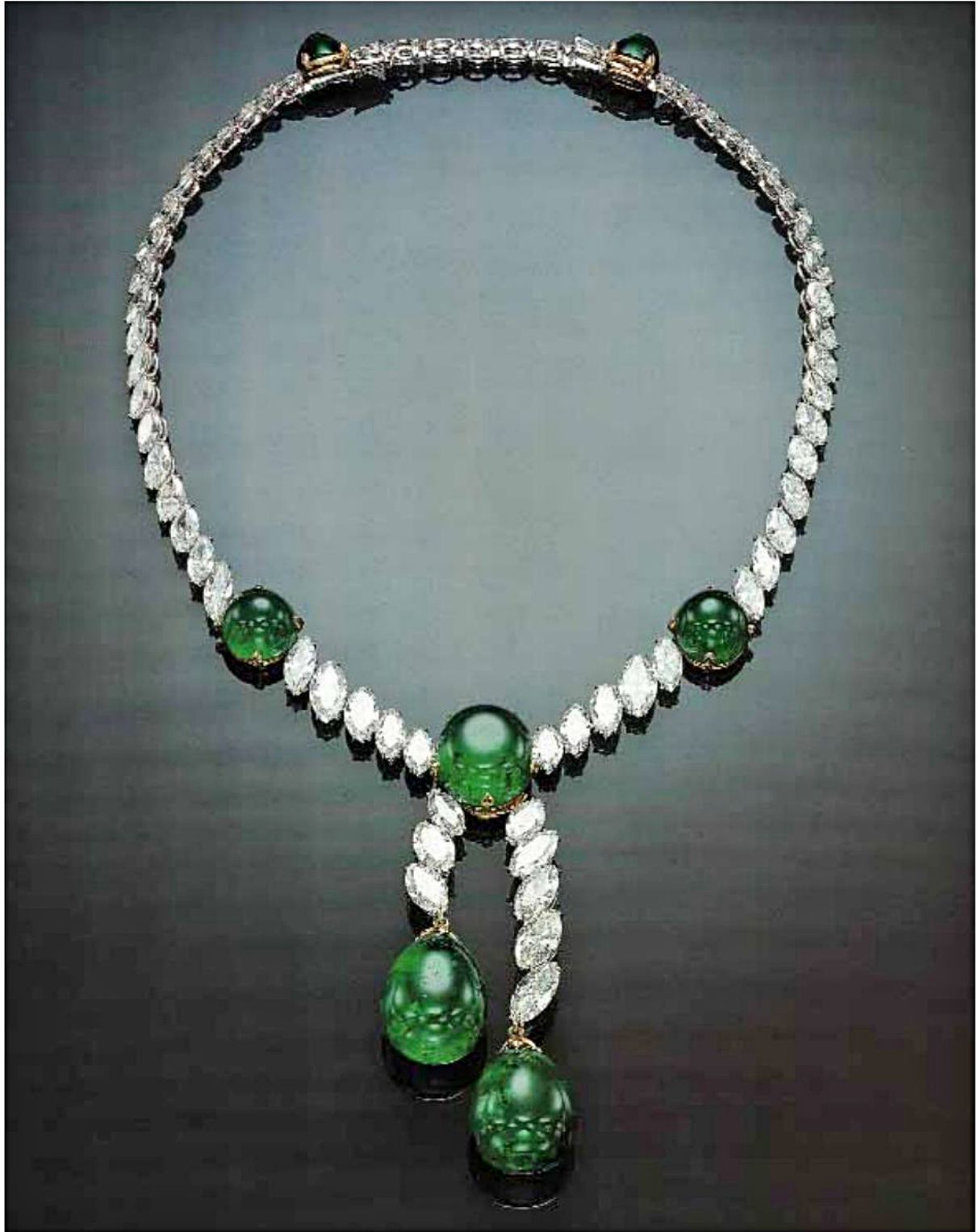


Above: An emerald wine cup, Mughal, from the Jahangir period, 1605-27 (Christie's London, 24 September 2003).

Facing page: An engraved Imperial Mughal spinel necklace (Christie's Geneva, 18 May 2011).



Above and facing page: The emerald cabochon and diamond parure by Cartier. From the Personal Collection of Princess Salimah Aga Khan (Christie's Geneva, 13 November 1995).







The Soong sisters all played key roles in the story of twentieth century China. The eldest, Ai-ling, who began the jewellery collection, was born in 1888, when the Chinese Empire was under the governance of Empress Dowager Cixi. Ai-ling married Kung Hsiang-hsi, the richest man in China in the early twentieth century. Soong Ching-ling, five years younger than Ai-ling, married Sun Yat-sen, the first Chinese President, often regarded as the father of modern China, in 1915. More radical than her sisters, she became a fierce Communist militant, and was made honorary President of the Chinese Republic a few months before her death in 1981. The third sister, Mei-ling, was to be the most famous of the three. Twenty-nine in 1927, she married the military strongman of China, General Chiang Kai-shek. They had known each other for seven years but Mei-ling's family had opposed their union. Only when the general, a Buddhist, promised to convert to Christianity did his future parents-in-law give their consent. The marriage gave rise to a Maoist proverb about the Soong sisters: "One loved money [Ai-ling], one loved power [Mei-ling], one loved her country [Ching-ling]."

Evidently, Ai-ling's marriage to a millionaire lay at the root of the Soong sisters' fabulous jewellery collection. Not only was Ai-ling a very rich woman, she was also always a woman of style. Born in China, to a family that converted to Christianity, she was educated partly in the United States. At the crossroads of two cultures, she was a harmonious blend of East and West.

One of the most extraordinary things about this collection was its journey between the sisters. When Ai-ling died in New York in 1975, Ching-ling, who had become an iconic figure of Maoism, inherited the collection. Upon her death, six years later, the jewels went to Mei-ling, who had become a strong symbol of resistance against Chairman Mao and his doctrine. Early in 1950, Mao Tse-tung completed his conquest of the Chinese territories and his rule, which would last more than thirty-five years, began in earnest. Chiang Kai-shek had no choice but to retreat to the small island of Taiwan, where he proclaimed a new Chinese republic. Mei-ling was by his side. Until her husband died in 1975, she played the role of first lady of Taiwan with brilliance. Widowed, she moved to New York, and remained there until her death forty years later.

Above: A jadeite plaque and diamond ring, Property of the family of Kung Hsiang-hsi (Christie's Hong Kong, 2 June 2015).

Left: Soong Mei-ling on her marriage to Chiang Kai-shek, Shanghai, 1 December 1927.



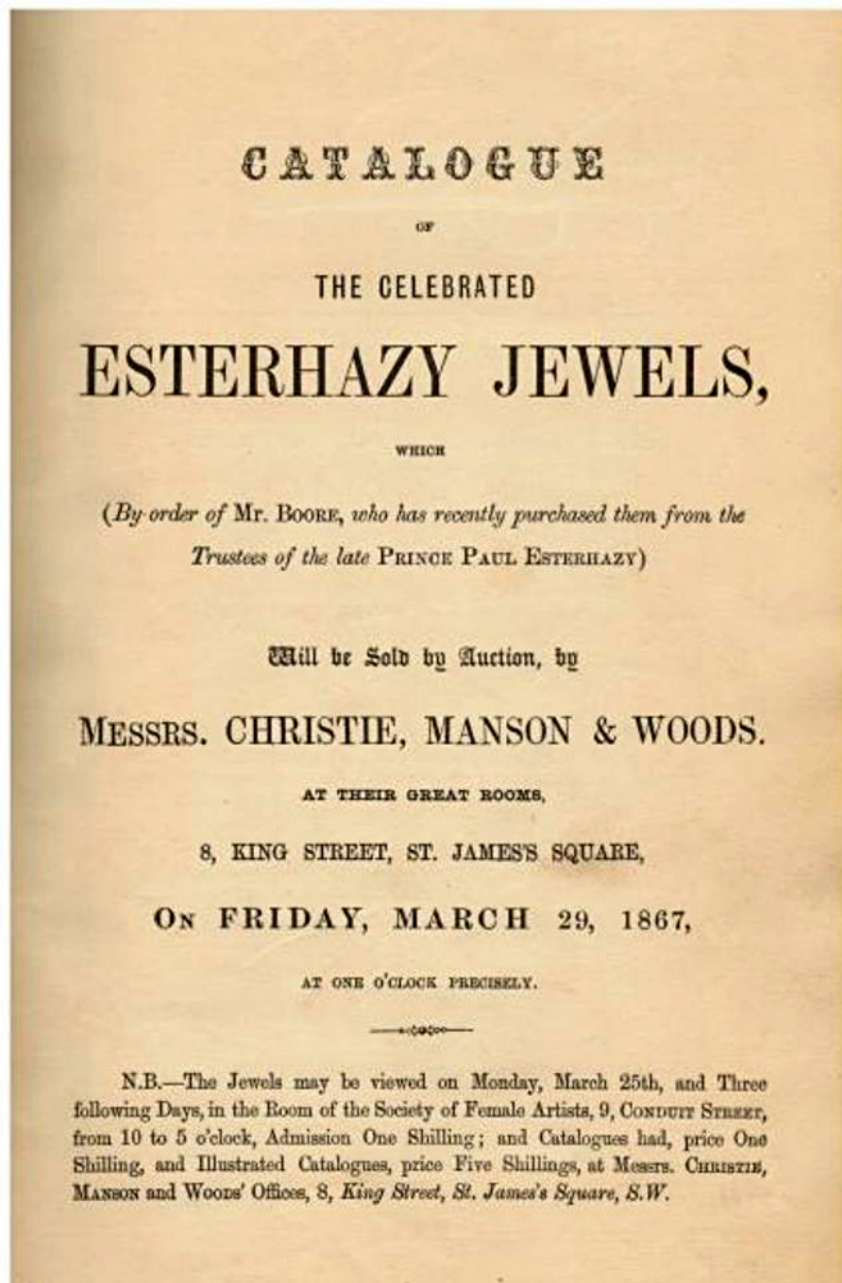
The earnings from the sale of the Soong sisters' collection were spectacular. The conservative pre-sale estimate of between US\$2 and US\$3 million was dwarfed by the actual sales total of more than US\$14 million. Three lots, fought over by 250 collectors, some in the saleroom and

Above: A pair of jadeite saddle rings. Property of the family of K'ung Hsiang-hsi (Christie's Hong Kong 2 June 2015).

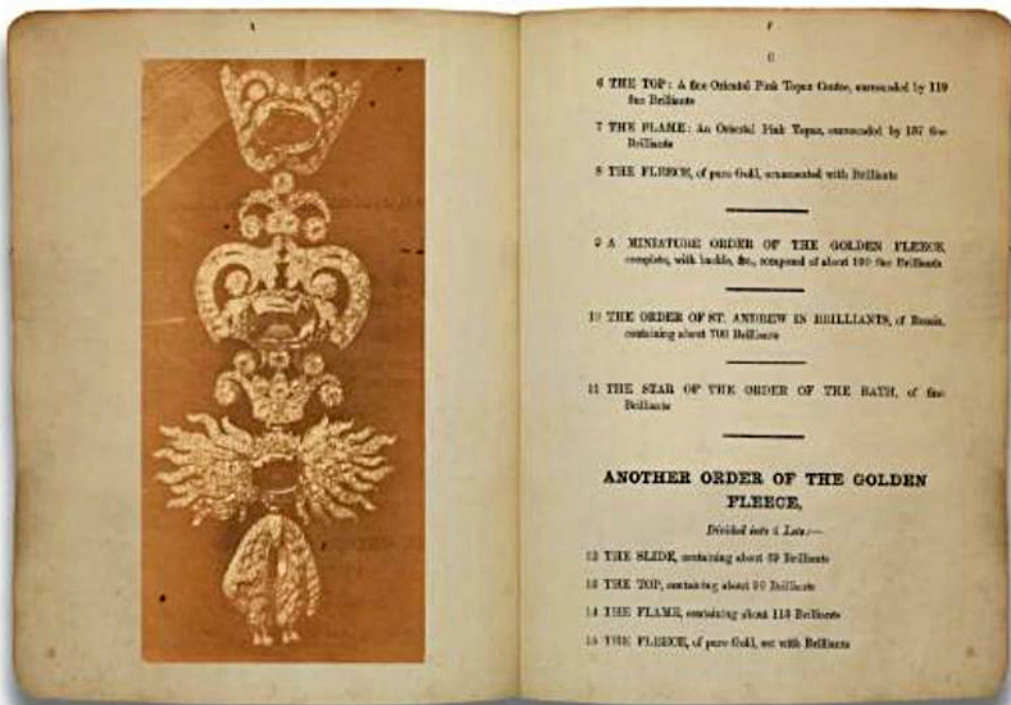
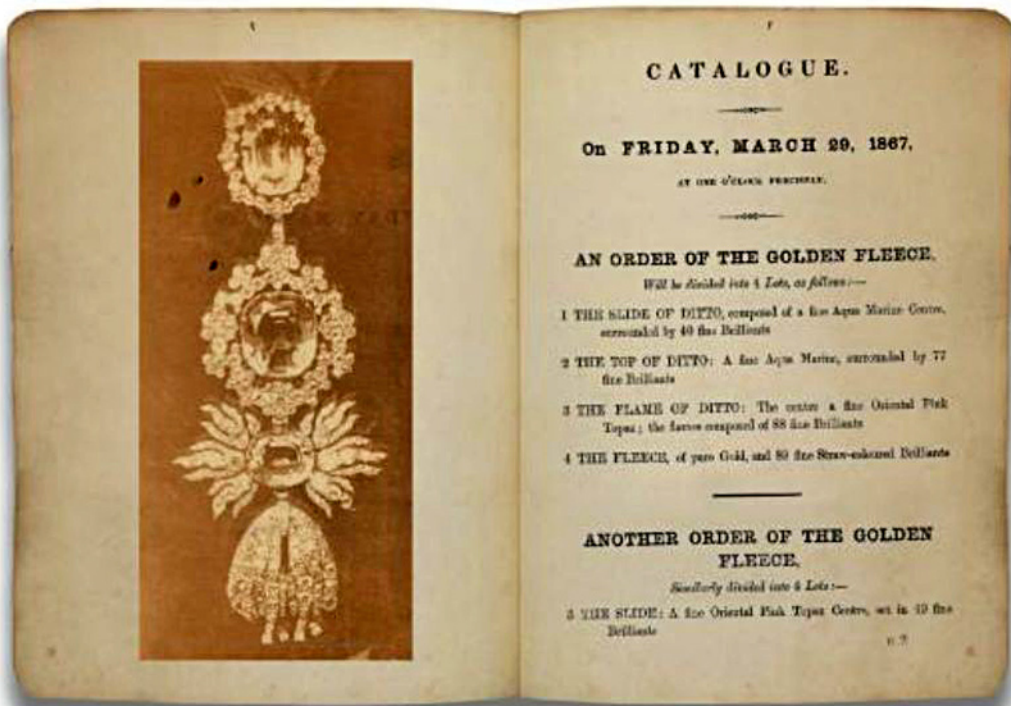
some on the telephone, made twenty times their estimated value. The first was a diamond ring, set with an octagonal-shaped jadeite. Valued at US\$100,000, it finally sold for US\$2,337,000. The second, a pair of saddle rings in jadeite, went for US\$1,327,000, and the third, again a ring, this time set with a concave jadeite plaque of perfect quality, was estimated at US\$70,000 but sold for US\$1,715,000. The sale was one of the most successful ever organised by Christie's Hong Kong.

The Esterházy Diamonds

Christie's London
29 March 1867



Left and overleaf: The catalogue of "The Celebrated Esterházy Jewels" (Christie's London, 29 March 1867).





THE AIGRETTE.

Divided into 38 Lots, as follows:—

- 35 ONE SMALL FEATHER IN DITTO, on left side, about 174
Brilliant
- 37 ONE SMALL DITTO, *ditto*, about 228 Brilliant
- 38 ONE SMALL DITTO, on right side, about 140 Brilliant
- 39 ONE LARGER DITTO, on left side, about 205 Brilliant
- 40 ONE LARGE DITTO, about 486 Brilliant
- 41 ONE LARGER DITTO, about 412 Brilliant
- 42 THE LARGEST FEATHER, about 535 Brilliant
- 43 TWO SMALL CURLS, about 186 Brilliant
- 44 A LARGE CURL, about 170 Brilliant
- 45 A LARGER CURL, about 145 Brilliant
- 46 A LARGE CURL, containing about 157 Brilliant
- 47 A LARGER CURL, containing about 187 Brilliant
- 48 THREE SPRAYS OF EMERALDS, containing about 139
Stones
- 49 AN EMERALD AND BRILLIANT HINGE, containing 25 Bri-
lliant and 7 Emeralds
- 50 A DIAMOND CRESCENT, with face in profile



THE MAGNIFICENT ORDER OF THE GOLDEN FLEECE, all Brilliants.

THIS ORDER IS MATCHLESS.

In 6 Lots, as follows:—

- 60 THE SLIDE OF DITTO, composed of 27 Brilliant. *Very fine*
- 70 THE CENTRE: a magnificent cross of 77 large Stones,
of the greatest purity
- 71 THE FLARE: the centre of this, one large and very fine
Brilliant, of great purity, and 170 smaller Brilliant
- 72 THE FLEECE, composed of 108 colored Brilliant, set in Gold

Another SUPERB ORDER of the GOLDEN FLEECE, in Brilliant and Emeralds.

In 4 Lots, as follows:—

- 73 THE SLIDE, formed of one large and very fine Emerald, with
6 smaller ditto, and 44 Brilliant
- 74 THE CENTRE ORNAMENT OF DITTO, composed of 1 large
and matchless Emerald, of wonderful colour and extraordinary
purity, surrounded by 36 smaller ditto, and 150 Brilliant
- 75 THE FLARE, composed of 1 Emerald and 116 Brilliant
- 76 THE FLEECE, composed of about 80 Brilliant, set in Gold



The Idol's Eye

Christie's London
14 July 1865



The Agra

Christie's London, 22 February 1905
Christie's London, 20 June 1990



Above: The Agra pink diamond is one of the oldest precious stones in the world. It comes from India and legend has it that it belonged to the rajahs of Gwalior and came to the great moguls of Delhi after Emperor Babur defeated the armies of the Rajah of Gwalior in 1526. No one knows exactly how it arrived in Europe, but in 1844 the Agra was acquired by the Duke of Brunswick, one of the greatest collectors of precious stones in the nineteenth century. Its weight then was 41 carats but at one point the stone was recut down to 31 (old) carats (or 32.24 carats as per the modern standards). In 1909 the Agra was presented in Paris in the auction of Salomon Habib. During the Second World War, it was kept in an iron box buried in a garden. It was finally sold again at Christie's Geneva in 1990. Since then, it appears to have been recut once more, to 28.15 carats, to improve its colour and clarity.

Facing page: This 70.21 carat light blue Indian diamond made its first recorded appearance at Christie's in 1865. At the time it was rumored the buyer was the future sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hamid II. We have no proof of this, apart from the fact that the sultan indeed owned a very important collection of diamonds and that the "Idol's Eye" does not appear in the auction of his jewellery collection which took place in Paris in 1911. What we know is that the Idol's Eye resurfaced more than forty years after its sale at Christie's, in 1909 in Paris, with the other diamonds (amongst them the "Hope" blue diamond and the "Agra" pink diamond) belonging to a very mysterious collector: Salomon Habib. Habib was living in Paris and it seems he was trading in precious stones for wealthy collectors. The Idol's Eye then arrived in America in 1946, when Harry Winston sold it to Mrs Bonfils. It is said that this very rich, but rather eccentric, lady used to wear her diamond every morning at breakfast. After her death in 1962, the Idol's Eye was sold again, this time to Harry Levinson, a Chicago jeweller who gave it to his wife. From there it went to the famous jeweller Laurence Graff, who sold it to a private collector.

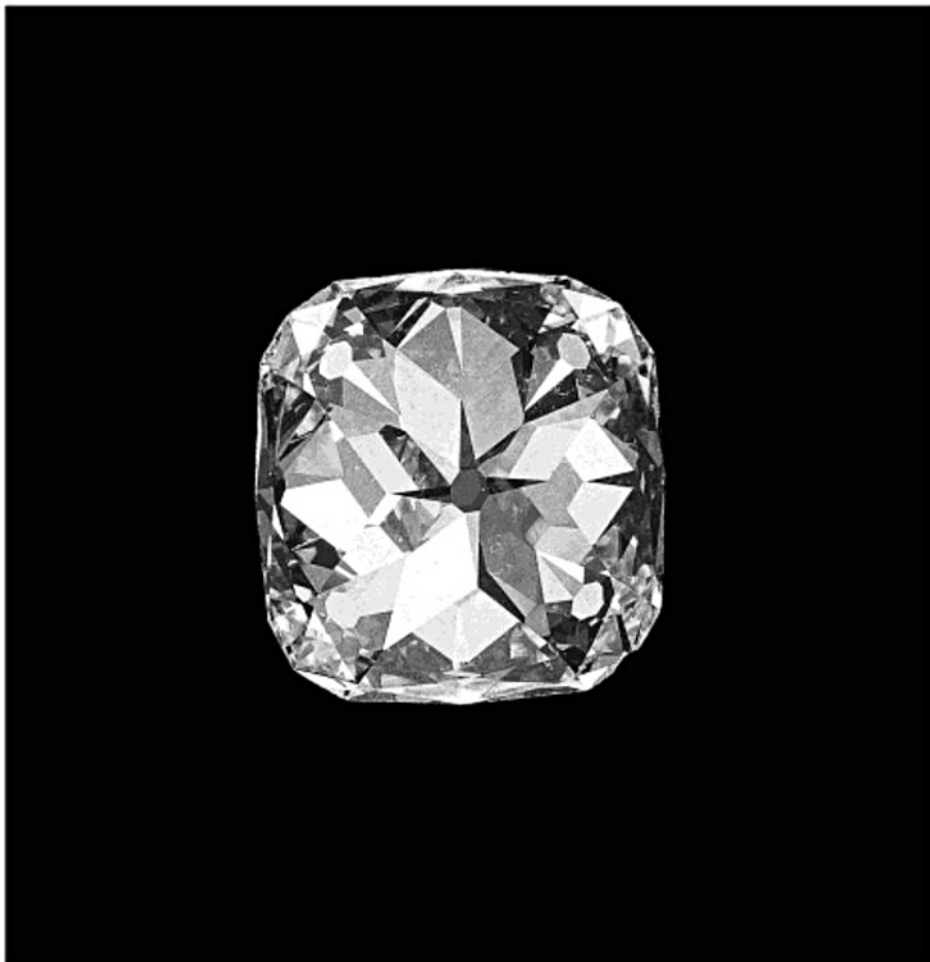
The Red Cross Diamond

Christie's London, 10 April 1918
Christie's Geneva, 21 November 1973



The Polar Star

Christie's Geneva, 20 November 1980



Above: This 40 carat Indian diamond first appeared in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century in the collection of Napoleon's older brother, Joseph Bonaparte, King of Naples and King of Spain. It then went to Russia, when it was bought by Prince Nikolai Youssouпов. It is one of the stones that Prince Nikolai's grandson, Prince Felix Youssouпов, took with him when he fled Russia after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. He sold it through Cartier to Lady Deterding, an English woman of Russian origin. It finally came to Christie's in 1980 when Lady Deterding's jewels were sold at auction.

Facing page: In 1918, this 205.07 carat fancy yellow diamond was presented for sale at Christie's by the Diamond Syndicate in aid of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John. It had been discovered in South Africa in 1901. The Red Cross auctions raised more than £50,000; the Red Cross diamond alone sold for £10,000. It came back to auction in Tokyo in 1973 (where it failed to sell), and finally in Geneva at Christie's, in November 1973.

The Eureka Diamond

Christie's London
16 April 1946



Appendix

PRESTIGIOUS PROVENANCES

It would take too long to name each and every former owner of the jewels presented for auction at Christie's during its remarkable 250-year history. Instead, a selection of some of

the most prestigious names in the Christie's auction catalogues – drawn from a roll call of so many more – are presented below.

1767

Mary, Queen of Scots

1773

Augusta, Princess of Wales

1774

Commodore Forrest

1784

Christopher Pinchbeck

1791

Duchess of Kingston

1792

Mademoiselle la Chevalière [sic] d'Eon

1795

Madame La Comtesse Dubarry
Duchess of Bedford

1808

Zaman Shah, King of Afghanistan

1812

Comtesse de la Motte

1825

Daniel Eliason

1827

Duke of York

1837

Marchioness of Exeter

1839

Prince Poniatowski

1840

Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte
Empress Josephine

1841

Lucien Bonaparte and Madame Murat

1842

King George III

1843

Duke of Sussex

1849

The Right Hon. John Nevill, 3rd Earl
of Abergavenny

1860

Emperor Alexander

1863

Countess of Ashburnham

1867

Prince Paul Esterhazy

1869

Lady Doveton

1871

Lady Olivia Burgoyne

1872

Empress Eugenie
Marquis of Hastings

1875

George, 3rd Duke of Marlborough

1876

Lady Fellows

1878

Lady Louth

1879

The Hon. Lady Menzis
John V. King of Portugal
The Right Hon. Earl of Lousdale

1880

Queen Isabella of Spain

1881

Count Jaraczewski

1883

Lady Eden
Duke of Brunswick

1886

The Right Hon. Viscount Ravelaph
Henry Philip Hope
Philippe Egalité, Duke of Orléans
King of Kandy
Queen Marie-Amélie
Marquis of Breadaltane
King Victor Emanuel

1887

Viscountess Cardwell

1888

The Countess of Charlemont

1890

Ludwig II, King of Bavaria

1891

Queen Marie-Antoinette
The Hon. Mrs. Edward Coke
The Most Hon. Marquis of Ely

1892

Madame Grisi
Lady Dashwood

1894

The Eglington family
Empress Marie-Louise
Sir James Henry Langham
Earl of Essex
Maharajah of Singh
Sir Hugh Hume Campbell

1895

Mme Trebelli Bettini

1896

Raja Randhir Singh of Kapurthala

Facing page: An emerald and diamond tiara, c.1900. Formerly the property of Viscountess Harcourt (Christie's London, 15 June 2005).

- 1897**
Miss Ellen Farren
Lady Ann Ashburton
William Drago Montagu, 7th Duke
of Manchester
- 1898**
Lady Garvagh
Mr. and Mrs. Charles J. Kean
- 1899**
Helena Saville Faucit, Lady Martin
Louise, Princess of Saxe-Coburg, Princess of
Belgium
Julep Singh
Prince Victor Duleep Singh
Maharajah Ranjit Singh of Lahore
Mrs. Mary Gwyn, Oliver Goldsmith's
"Jessamy Bride"
- 1900**
The Hon. Mrs. Alderworth
- 1902**
Countess of Mexborough
Lady Matheson
Lady Cunliffe Brooks
Viscount Hill family
Consuelo, Duchess of Manchester
Earl of Dudley
King of Saxony
- 1903**
Lady Henry Gordon-Lennox
- 1904**
Sir John Conroy Bart
Mrs. Lillie Langtry (Mrs. De Bathe)
Queen Draga of Serbia
Countess of Rosslyn
The Most Hon. Marquess
of Anglesey
- 1905**
Reuben D. Sassoon
- 1906**
Mary, Duchess of Sutherland
The Hon. Mrs. Hewitt
Lady C. Montgomery
- 1910**
Baron Schröder
- 1911**
Lily, Duchess of Marlborough
- 1912**
Colonel Sir Francis Sidney Graham-Moon,
3rd Baronet
Lady Caroline Lindlay
- 1913**
Comtesse of Plater
King Thibaw of Burma
Henriette, Duchess of Newcastle
- 1914**
Comtesse of Carnarvon
Mrs. Charles Wertheimer
- 1915**
Lord Huntingfield
- 1916**
Sir Arthur Bignold
Queen Mary
Victoria, Princess Louis of Battenberg
Duke of Marlborough
Duchess of Albany
- 1917**
Lucy, Countess of Egmont
Tipu Sahib
Arthur, Viscount Peel
Katherine, Duchess of Westminster
Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll
Duchess of Roxburghe
Sir Hugh Lane
Lord Francis Pelham-Clinton-Hope, 8th Duke
of Newcastle
Caroline Anne, Marchioness of Ely
- 1918**
Madame de Falbe
Countess of Dartmouth
Countess of Bradford
Countess Feodora Gleichen
Lady Cunard
Walburga, Lady Paget
- 1919**
The Rt. Hon. Thomas de Grey, Baron
Walsingham
Baron Rolf Cederström
Viscountess Knutsford
Earl of Ashburnham
- 1920**
Lady Poltimore
Miss Ellen Terry
Earl of Wharnccliffe
- 1921**
Earl of Galloway
- 1924**
Marquise de Lavalette
- 1925**
Sir Francis Cook
Mrs Henry Oppenheim
Duke of Leicester
- 1926**
The Most Hon. Marquis of Waterford
Florence, Lady Garvagh
Don Pedro, Emperor of Brazil
Sultan of Morocco, Muley Hafid
Pope Pius X
- 1927**
The Russian State Jewels
The Right Hon. Lady Sackville
- 1928**
The Right Hon. Countess of Stradbroke
- 1929**
Duchess of Leeds
Baroness Kinloss
Christina Nilsson, Countess de Casa Miranda
- 1931**
The Royal House of Wittelsbach
- 1932**
Duchess Natalie of Oldenburg
- 1933**
Viscountess Guillamore
Cora, Countess of Strafford
Countess Bubna
Duke of Montrose
Lady Mount Stephen
Grand Duchess Anastasia Nikolaevna
of Russia
Duchess Auguste-Amelie of Leuchtenberg
Hortense de Beauharnais
- 1934**
Lady Baring
- 1935**
Duke of Bedford
Solomon Barnato Joel
- 1936**
Baroness van Haeften Hatch
Lady Lawrence of Kingsgate
Duchess of Somerset
Lady Irene Congreve
- 1937**
Eugène de Beauharnais, 1st Duke of
Leuchtenberg
Queen Alexandra
Louisa, Countess of Sandwich
Miss Lilian Hall-Davis
The Right Hon. Lucy, Countess of Egmont
Mrs. Mabelle Swift de Wichfeld
Lady Clayton
Lady Alice E. de Gex
- 1938**
Mme Nicholas Fabergé
Lady Elizabeth Lascelles
Countess Ida Cahen d'Anvers
Queen Louise of Prussia
- 1939**
Lola Montez
Louise Antoinette Marie, Countess of
Montignoso
The Rt. Hon. Lord Strachie
- 1940**
Lady Alexander Palmer
Lady Juliet Duff
Mme Nashaat Pasha
Anthony de Rothschild
Dame Marie Tempest
- 1943**
Marchioness of Downshire
- 1944**
Lady Augusta Fitzclarence
- 1945**
Lady Campbell of Barcardine
Lady Cunliffe-Owen
Madame Anna Pavlova



1946

Princess Maud, Countess of Southesk
Duchess of Fife
Constance, Duchess of Westminster
Lady Ludlow
The Rt. Hon. Lord Holden

1947

Duchess of Montrose
Marquesa de Misa
The Rt. Hon. Earl of Lonsdale

1948

The Rt. Hon. Viscountess Hambleden

1949

Loelia, Duchess of Westminster
Kathleen, Duchess of Newcastle

1950

The Rt. Hon. Lady Strickland
Mrs. Heriot Maitland

1952

Marchioness of Bristol

1953

Lady de Frece (Vesta Tilley)
Henrietta, Duchess of Portland
The Rt. Hon. Viscountess Lee of Fareham
The Rt. Hon. Lord Granley

1954

The Most Hon. Marchioness Curzon of
Kedleston
Marchioness Conyngham
Duchess of Beaufort
William Philip, 4th Earl of Sefton
Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Burdwan
Prince Hussein Kadjar
The Most Hon. Marchioness of Carisbrooke

1955

Prince Vsevolod of Russia
The Vagliano Collection

1956

Lady Cowley

1958

Duke of Rutland

1959

Duke of Gloucester
Princess Marie Louise
Baron De Stempel
Princess Bibesco
Emilie, Princesse de Chimay

1960

Queen Isabella II of Spain
The Hon. Adele, Countess of Cadogan
Mary, the Princess Royal

The Rt. Hon. Earl of Harewood
The Rt. Hon. Countess of Rosse
The Egerton family
Grand Duke Michael of Russia
Major Cecil M. Wills

1961

Empress Maria Feodorovna
Prince Dimitri of Russia
The Rt. Hon. Countess of Munster
Pauline Borghese
Duke of Norfolk

1962

Prince Ali Khan
Lady Courtland
Countess Rosario Zouboff
Countess Anna Maria Bentivoglio

1963

Lord Astor of Hever
Princess Neslishah Abdel-Moneim
The Ranees of Sarawak
The Treasury of the Commonwealth of Australia

Above: A late nineteenth-century emerald and diamond parure, by Cartier. Formerly the property of Princess Bibesco (Christie's Geneva, 23 April 1970).



1965
Prince Constantin Hohenlohe-Langenburg

1966
Earl of Feversham

1967
Princess Eleonor of Romania
Countess Fitzwilliam
The Rt. Hon. Viscount Hambleden

1969
Nina Dyer
Queen Marie Jose of Italy
Charlotte, Empress of Mexico
Marie Mancini

1970
Queen Geraldine of Albania
Mrs. Agathon Fabergé
Baronne Von Kories

1971
5th Earl of Caledon
Margherita, Lady Howard de Walden
Countess Luisa Guicciardini of Florence
The Barberini Family
Maharani Sita Devi of Baroda
Comtesse of Bonneval
Anna Thomson Dodge
Count Thun-Hohenstein

Above: One of the six copies of the Cambridge Lover's Knot pearl and diamond tiara (Christie's Geneva, 14 November 1985).

Princess Marie-Valérie
Count Orssich
Liane de Pougy
Maharajah Diraja of Darbhanga
Countess zu Waldeck und Pirmont

1972
Countess John Esterhazy
J. Pierpont Morgan
Marquis de Jaucourt
Lord Clive
Princess Ibrahim

1973
Saud Al Saud of Saudi Arabia
Earl of Rosslyn
Marchioness of Tweeddale
Leopold de Rothschild
Marquess of Cholmondeley

1974
Hester Sassoon
Lady Patricia Ramsay
Lady Vansittart

1975
Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester
Sir Ian Macdonald of Sleat
Lady Nabarro
Princess Katharina Pawlowna Bagration

1976
Queen Victoria Eugénie of Spain
The Egyptian Royal Family

1977
Lady Leconfield
Princess Sadrudin Aga Khan

1978
Joan Crawford
Lady Miranda Emmet
Maharaja of Rajpipla
Countess Isa De Jodko Potocki
Elvira de Hidalgo
Duchess of Palmella
Eleonora Duse
Baron Von Essen

1979
Lady Eastwood
Marie Alexandrova daughter of Alexander II, married to Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh
Queen Ana Maria Victoria of Portugal
Ferdinand IV, Grand Duke of Tuscany

1980
Merle Oberon
Mary Pickford Rogers
Lady Marcia Cunliffe-Owen
King Alexander of Yugoslavia
Princess Amina Toussoun

1981
Joséphine, Countess of Sefton
Viscountess Ward of Witley
Baroness Bellio
Maria Malibran
Graziella Patino de Ortiz-Linares.
The Champollion family
Rosita Winston
Dolores Costello Barrymore

1982
Countess of Dundee
Queen Maria Cristina of Spain
Marjorie Merriweather Post



Empress Victoria Augusta
 Cardinal Jean Verdier
 Cardinal Antonelli
 Baroness Eugene de Rothschild
 Princess Karl of Hessen-Darmstadt
 Marchioness of Sligo
 Duchess of Angouleme

1983

Prince Egon von Furstenberg
 Princess Maria Mihalescu Nasturel
 Archduke Leopold
 Princess Pauline Metternich
 Lady Pollen
 Shah Jahan
 Maharaja of Kapurthala

1984

Marquesa De Muros
 Nelson A. Rockefeller
 Maria Felix

Florence J. Gould
 Princess Alexandra Troubetzkoy
 Lady May Abel Smith

1985

Comtesse Michel De Vautibault
 Miss Zsa Zsa Gabor
 Princess Nathalie Paley
 Grand-Duchess Helen
 Prince Stefan Czetwertynski
 Baroness Margit Sigray Besseney

1986

Lady Celia Milnes-Coates
 Mona Countess Bismarck
 Mrs. Nubar Gulbenkian

1987

Countess Lilliana Teruzzi
 Countess F. R. Rothermel Esternaux
 Ingrid Bergman

The Hon. Mrs. Reginald Fellowes
 The Duchess de Sevillano
 Leonie Countess Lanckoronski
 Princess Zenaide Youssoupov
 King Leka of Albania
 The Maharani of Cooch Behar
 King Farouk of Egypt

1988

Gloria Vanderbilt
 Lord Doneraile
 Josette Day
 Sir Sultan Mohamed Shah Aga Khan III
 Lady Melchett
 Marchioness of Crewe

Above: A diamond tiara. Formerly the property of Pauline Borghese (Christie's Geneva, 14 November 1985).

Duke of Atholl
Dame Margot Fonteyn
Princess Michael of Kent
Princess Soraya Esfandiary
Prince Georg of Denmark

1989

Helena Rubinstein
Countess Consuelo Crespi
Baroness Bellio
Duke of Osuna
Norman Parkinson
The Hon. Bridget Astor
The Hon. Sir John Baring
Viscountess Harcourt

1990

Marchioness of Cholmondeley
Violet Oppenheimer
Baroness Diplock
Princess Melekper Toussoun of Egypt
Duchess of Torlonia
Lauren Bacall

1991

Laura Antonelli
Princess Auersperg
Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent
Anna Harriman Rutherford Vanderbilt
Prince David Z. Mdivani
Countess Irina Tolstoy
Ingrid Bergman

1992

Commander Harold Campbell
Princess of Poonch, Rajni Singh Chand
Lady Illingworth
Princess Irène of Greece and Denmark
The Rt. Hon. Alexander Francis St. Vincent
Baring, 6th Lord Ashburton
Earl of Northesk
Lady Ludlow
Nawab Bismillah Khan of Rodhanpur

Queen Margherita of Italy
Frieda Hempel
Baroness G. de Rothschild
Sir Sidney Nolan
Lady Jewel Magnus-Allcroft

1993

Lady Patricia Ramsay
Prince Nicholas of Romania
Audrey Hepburn
Archduke Joseph
Princess Margaret Boncompagni

1994

Lionel Nathan Rothschild
Barbra Streisand
Baron Heger De Loewenfeld
Hans Nadelhoffer
Mary, Viscountess Rothermere
Lord Dunleath
Mrs. Ralph Pulitzer
Alice Tully
Don Giovanni Torlonia

1995

Marquise Josephina de Amodio and Moya
Princess Nicolas De Hohenzollern
Duchesse Talleyrand Perigord
Duc de la Rochefoucault
Rudolf Nureyev
Genevieve Chaplin
Princess Salimah Aga Khan
Lord Southborough

1996

Joan Fontaine
Baroness Von Bercht
Caroline Ryan Foulke
Maria Felix
Gene Tierney
Lucie Dassier
Queen Alexandrine of Denmark
Srinavas Ray Chaudhuri

Lyn Revson
The Family of Yuan Shi Kai
Robert Hoe III
Vera Hue-Williams

1997

Claudette Colbert
Countess De Boisdauphin
Madame du Breuil de Saint-Germain
Princess Nina Mdivani
Molly Danielson
Viscount Cowdray

1998

Marie-Blanche, Countess de Polignac
Irving Scott
Cecil B. DeMille
Samuel Insell III
Ambassador Louis G. Dreyfus
Princess Mooryati Soedibyo
Martina Navratilova
Baron Schroder
Lady Portsea
Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis
Countess Eliza Krasinska, née Branicka
Count Lanckoronksi
John D. Rockefeller
Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna of Russia
Jacqueline Delubac
Jessie Woolworth Donahue
Baron and Baroness Franz Josef Zweckenburg
The Hon. Jacques E. Turner
Theresa Po Lau

1999

Serra Shapiro
Condesa Cecilia Barba Jijon-Caamano
Maureen, Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava
Margaret de Graaff
Baroness Ilse von Platel
Louis B. Mayer
Victoria Principal
Cary Grant
Sybil Harrington
Marilyn Monroe
Mrs. Lee Kiu Kan Sin
Baroness Trouvé

2000

Lily Damita
16th Earl of Dalhousie KT
Tamara de Lempicka
Princess Lucile Scherbatow
Carolyn Oei
Caroline Bonaparte-Murat, Queen
of Naples
Suzanne Laliq
Prince Polignac
Doris Weinstein
Paulette Goddard
Yolande de Bourbon-Parme



Left: A spinel, ruby and diamond butterfly brooch, by JAR. From the Estate of Jacqueline Delubac (Christie's Geneva, 18 November 1998).

Liselotte Lafrenz
J.Pierpont Morgan
Duc de Blacas
Prince Kemal El Dine Hussein
Sir Thomas Cullinan
Adele Bloch Bauer
Baroness Batsheva de Rothschild

2001

Virginia Carroll Crawford
Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi Aryamihir
George Hamilton
Ruth Hall
Marquess of Abergavenny
Lady Diana Cooper
King Ludwig II of Bavaria
Margaret Shaffer Smith
John Rockefeller Jr.
Donald and Henrietta Klock
Mrs. Arthur W. Bingham
Jackie Collins
Mrs. J.C. Penney
Penny Marshall
Princess Marie Bonaparte
King Alexander I of Yugoslavia
Luz Mila Patino, Countess du Boisrouvray
Mr. Irving Berlin and Mrs. Ellin Mackay Berlin
Baruch Samstag
Grand Duchess Anastasia of Mecklenburg-Schwerin
Irene, Lady Astor of Hever
Archduchess Marie-Louise
Marie-Felix Bonaparte
Edwina, Countess Mountbatten of Burma
Maria Sophia, Queen of the Kingdom of two Sicilies
Edith, Countess of Lytton
Baron and Baroness di Portanova

2002

Helen Lurie
Countess Johanna de Willinich
Alice Gwynne Vanderbilt
Barbara Woolworth Hutton
Tsar Nicholas II
Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala
King William IV
Baroness Gabrielle von Canal
Catherine O'Leary Lupo
Empress Nam Phong D'Annam of Vietnam
Lilian Harvey
Barons Nathaniel and Albert Von Rothschild
Andy Warhol

2003

Grand Duchess Anastasia Michaelowna
Jocelyn Wildenstein
Marguerite M. Peet
Mrs. Arthur Rubinstein
Eleanor Searle Whitney McCollum
Lillian Goldman
Nina Paris Kronberg
Marielle Teryazos
Marajen Stevick Chinigo
Cécile De Rothschild
Margaret Calvin Bowles
Phyllis Grant
William and Mildred Archer



Nadejda Stancioff, Lady Muir
Barbara, Countess of Moray
Raymond H. Weill
Queen of Romania
Archduke Francois Ferdinand
Alicia, Countess Paolozzi
Eugène Fould, Baron Fould-Springer
Byron Goldman
Muriel Vanderbilt Adams

2004

Henry F. Kennedy
Yvonne Coty
Lilian Appleton
Elsie de Wolfe
John R. McLean
Tara Colburn
Kim Basinger
Countess Damao

Gladys, Duchess of Marlborough
Maharaja Digvijaysinhji of Nawagar
Doris Duke
Ganna Walska
Marie-Hélène, Baronne Guy de Rothschild
André Dubonnet
Josephine Baker
Orson Welles
Madame Grès
Queen Maria Pia of Portugal
Maria Callas
Brigitte Bardot

Above: The Rockefeller Sapphire. A 62.02 carat Burmese sapphire ring, by Tiffany & Co. Formerly the property of John D. Rockefeller (Christie's New York, 11 April 2011).

Lana Turner
Diana Vreeland
Eleanor Lambert
Gwendolyn Rose Mackay
Queen Geraldine
C. Ruxton and Audrey B. Love
Baroness Gabrielle Van Zuylen
Thierry le Luron
Mrs. Deenik-Verhoeven
Audrey Meadows
Ava Gardner

2005

Countess Grocholski
Michael Douglas
Mrs. Charles W. Engelhard
Eva Peron
Lucille Roberts
Princess Helene of Thurn und Taxis
Countess Moira Rossi di Montelera
Carolyn Oei
Grace Andrews-Smith
Margaret Adderley Kelly
Ginger Rogers
Princess Irena Obolensky
The Hon. Robin Baring
Mihailina, Countess von Steel
General Nguyen Van Thieu
Princess Cecile of Prussia
Marie Valerie, Archduchess of Austria
Prince Demeter and Princess Elisabeth Ghika
Silvana Suarez
Count Friedrich von Pourtales
Marie Caroline, Duchess of Berry-Bourbon
Naples

2006

Empress Elisabeth 'Sissi' of Austria
Princess Olga of Yugoslavia
Princess Margaret
Princess Elena of Romania
King Carol II of Romania
Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna of Russia
Ellen Barkin
Oscar de la Renta
Charles Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak
Prince Stanislas Poniatowski
Annie-Laurie Aitken
Eva Gabor
Eleanor May Guggenheim
Duchess Jutta zu Mecklenburg Strelitz
Lady Helen Hermione Blackwood
Lydie Hamel

2007

Cornelia Countess of Craven
Dorothy Draper
Franco Maria Ricci
Simone del Duca
Isabella de Chirico
Libbie Moody Thompson
Rudolf Nureyev
Stéphanie de Beauharnais
Princess Maria Gabriella of Savoy
Queen Elisabeth of Belgium
Princess Clementine of Belgium
Queen Elena of Italy
Empress Josephine

Duchess of Devonshire
Empress Maria Feodorovna of Russia
Grand Duchess Elena Vladimirovna of Russia
Catherine the Great
Princess Marie Abimelek Lazarev, née
Demidova
La Principessa Reale Maria Gabriella Di
Savoia
Marchioness of Bath
Princess Shevikar
Princess Cecil Amelia Von Fürstenberg
Princess Katharina Henckel Von
Donnersmarck
The Hon. Mrs. Angela Lascelles
Rani Anar Devi Sahiba of Kapurthala
Anita Delgado
Lady Elizabeth Sutherland, Duchess of
Sutherland

2008

Danielle Steel
Julie Grant, Princess Cantecuzène
Joan Warren Stuart
Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna Vladimir
Christina Onassis
Count Palmieri
Mona Bismark
Mae West

2009

Umm Kulthum
Monseigneur le Comte de Paris et de
Madame le Comtesse de Paris
Lillian Booth

2010

Lady Emma Alice Margaret, Countess of
Oxford
Princess Mathilde
Empress Nam Ph'U'Ong of Vietnam
Fleur Cowles
Sir Elton John
Winifred Anna Cavendish-Bentinck, 6th
Duchess of Portland
Max Palevsky
Anna Thomson Dodge
Babe Paley
Juliette Gréco

2011

Sultan Ahmad Shah Qajar
Gloria Swanson
Susanne Erichsen
Madame Claude Arpels
Isabelle de la Moussaye
Princess Ingeborg of Denmark and Sweden
Mary Pickford
Dame Miriam Rothschild
Susan Burton
Sultanah Nora Ismail of Johor
Dame Margot Fonteyn
Princess of Faucigny-Lucinge
Elizabeth Taylor

2012

Renate Wald
Huguette M. Clark

Diana, Princess of Wales
Lily Safra
Countess Marina Coudenhove-Kalergi
Luz Mila Patino, Countess du Boisrouvray
Maria Felix
Lucille E. Davison
Countess of Dudley
Beatrice Countess of Granard
Ruth Freeman Solomon
Baroness Zoé Lambert, née Rothschild
Henri-Georges and Inès Clouzot
1st Marchioness Conyngham

2013

Katharine Dupont Weymouth
Princess Sophie of Greece
Grand Duchess Olga of Russia
Prince Poniatowski
Don Marco Alfonso Torlonia, Principe di
Civitella Cesi
Comtesse Robert de Bourbon-Busset
Madame Hélène Rochas
Joseph Asscher
Princess Elisabeth of Saxony
Princess Lucia of Bourbon-Two Sicilies
Princess Faiza of Egypt
Countess Maria Puslowska
Princess Gloria von Thurn und Taxis
Anna Pawlowna von Holstein-Gottrop-
Romanov
Helene Countess Pueckler
Marion Rumsey Cartier

2014

Riki and Jerome Shaw
Bernard and Florence Roth
Lucretia Perry Osborne
Duchess of Genova
Baroness Gunhild Thyssen-Bornemisza de
Kazon
Queen Amelia of Greece
Princess von Oldenburg
Isabella Stewart Gardner
Duchesse de Luynes
Princesse Murat, née Cécile Ney d'Elchingen
Kathleen and Martin Field
Sarah Brightman
Duchess of Windsor
Baroness Edouard de Rothschild
The Hon. Mrs Clive Behrens
Duke G. de Leuchtenberg

2015

The Hon. Noreen Stonor Drexel
Millicent Rogers
The Family of K'ung Hsiang-hsi
Prince D'Arenberg
Judith H. Siegel
Diana Dollar Knowles
Gloria G. Meyer
Lana Marconi
Princess Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, née
Princess Josephine of Belgium
Duke of Westminster
Princess Hélène of France, Duchess of Aosta
Mrs. Paul Mellon
Nancy Witcher Langhorne Astor
Caroll Petrie



Above: Yellow diamond and onyx tiger brooch and bangle, by Cartier. Formerly the property of the Duchess of Windsor and Sarah Brightman (Christie's Geneva, 11 November 2014).

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Above and facing page: Jewels by JAR. The collection of Ellen Barkin (Christie's New York, 10 October 2006).



ENDNOTES

Chapter 1

1. Henri Clément Sanson, *Sept generations d'exécuteurs*, Paris, 1862.
2. *Acte d'accusation de la citoyenne du Barry, archives du tribunal révolutionnaire*.
3. Counter revolutionaries were referred to as "Emigrés".
4. *Acte d'accusation de la citoyenne du Barry, archives du tribunal révolutionnaire*.
5. Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, *La Du Barry*, G. Charpentier, Paris, 1878.
6. Jacques Levron, *Madame du Barry*, Editions Perrin, Paris, 1978.
7. The "livre" was the French currency used at the time. Twenty livres were worth one Louis d'or. Napoleon abolished the use of livres and created the French franc. The two words, livre and franc, were used throughout the nineteenth century.
8. Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, op. cit.
9. Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, op. cit.
10. Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, op. cit.
11. Henri Clément Sanson, op. cit.
12. Evelyne and Maurice Lever, *Le chevalier d'Éon, une vie sans queue ni tête*, Editions Fayard, Paris, 2011.
13. William Roberts, *A Memorial of Christie's*, George Bell and Sons, London, 1897.

Chapter 3

1. Barbara Clay Finch, *The Lives of the Princess of Wales*, Remington & Co, London 1883.
2. Comtesse de Boigne, *Memoires of the Comtesse de Boigne*, Mercure de France, Paris, 1909.
3. Richard Scott Morel, *Untold Lives* blog, British Library, 2012.
4. The two pear-shaped diamonds were acquired in 1837 for £10,000 sterling by the Marquess of Westminster, and then resold by the Westminster family in the 1950s. They have since been divided up.

Chapter 4

1. Princess of Metternich, *Mémoires*, Éditions Plon, Paris, 1922.

2. Ibid.
3. Comte d'Hérison, *Journal d'un officier d'ordonnance*, P. Ollendorff, Paris, 1889.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. André Castelot, *Maximilien et Charlotte, la tragédie de l'ambition*, France Loisirs, Paris, 1978.

Chapter 5

1. Duchesse de Dino, *Souvenirs de la duchesse de Dino*, Plon, Paris, 1909.
2. Baronne d'Oberkirch, *Memoires de la baronne d'Oberkirch*, Charpentier, Paris, 1853.
3. Georges Lenotre, *Le tribunal révolutionnaire*, Flammarion, Paris, 1933.
4. Ibid.
5. Comtesse d'Agout, *Memoires*, Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1927.
6. Comtesse de Boigne, *Récits d'une tante*, Emile Paul, Paris, 1923.

Chapter 6

1. Baronne d'Oberkirch, *Mémoires de la baronne d'Oberkirch*, Paris, Charpentier, 1869.

Chapter 7

1. Some historians claim that Rossel was buying on behalf of Fabergé, and that he chose to dismantle the corsage ornament to sell the pearl to Prince Youssouпов. However, nothing in any sales catalogue confirms this theory. There is photographic evidence showing Princess Zénaïde, daughter of Prince Nikolai, wearing the pearl as a headpiece or as a pendant. In one of these portraits by François Flameng, La Régente is clearly visible in its mount with the diamond setting in tulip form that one sees in the Lemonnier photographs of the corsage taken at the beginning of the Second Empire. Additionally, there is a Youssouпов photo album, still in the family's possession, devoted to the family jewels. It features a photograph of the corsage brooch in its entirety, which seems

to prove that they were the owners not only of La Régente, but also the entire ornament in which it was set.

2. Weights in pearls and diamonds are always tricky. One carat is one fifth of a gramme. One grain is one fourth of a carat or five per cent of a gramme. This very rational system only came in to use in 1907. Before that the English carat was slightly different from the French, the Spanish or the Italian versions. In the case of La Peregrina's weight, it seems obvious that the pearl sold in 1878 in Paris, which was used as a pendant for the pearl necklace also sold on that day, had some kind of golden or silver setting to suspend it from the necklace. Therefore, part of the 237-grain weight mentioned in the catalogue – a few grains at most – was derived from the metallic setting that would have been impossible to remove. In 1579, when the pearl arrived in Spain, it must have been weighed at 232 grains, without the setting that must have been added later when it was bought by the king to form a pendant. "Peeling" a pearl is a very common practice. It consists of removing layers of mother of pearl, which the passing of time has altered and turned a yellowish colour, in order to retrieve the original white, silvery colour of the pearl. Of course, in the process, the pearl always loses some of its weight. This is the reason, along with the drilling that happened at the beginning of twentieth century, why La Peregrina sold at the Elizabeth Taylor auction with a weight of only 203 grains.

Chapter 8

1. Princess Paley, *Souvenirs de Russie*, editions Plon, Paris, 1923.
2. The Most Honourable Order of the Bath is a British chivalric order. The name recalls the purification (bathing) element of a ceremony used to initiate knights in the medieval era.

Chapter 10

1. *South China Morning Post*, 22 May 2015.

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