

DIANA SCARISBRICK

TIMELESS TIARAS

Chaumet from 1804 to the Present

ASSOULINE

Symbols of success and happiness, jewels for the head are among the most spectacular jewellery created over the last two centuries. From the diadem offered by Napoleon I to Pope Pius VII, to the model created by Joseph Chaumet for Empress Josephine, these jewels have long fascinated anyone with an interest in precious jewellery. Lavishly illustrated with original drawings, photographs and archival documents from Chaumet, this volume traces the legendary history of ornamental headwear in all its forms, from the aigrette to the bandeau, revealing an illustrious history where exceptional jewels go hand-in-hand with exceptional figures.




WITHDRAWN



TIMELESS TIARAS

CHAUMET FROM 1804 TO THE PRESENT

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wearing a Chaumet model tiara. © Photo Jonathan Becker.

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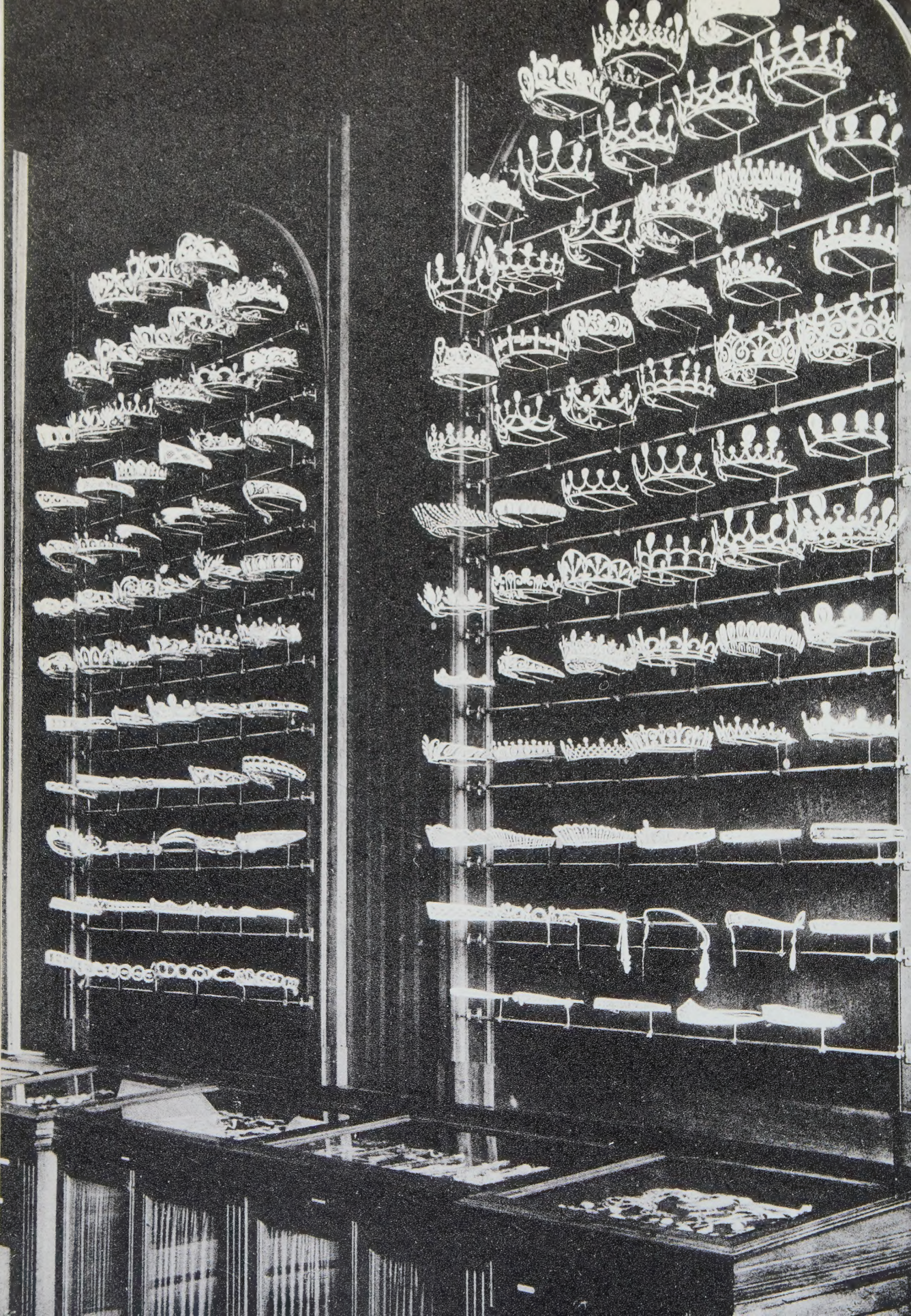
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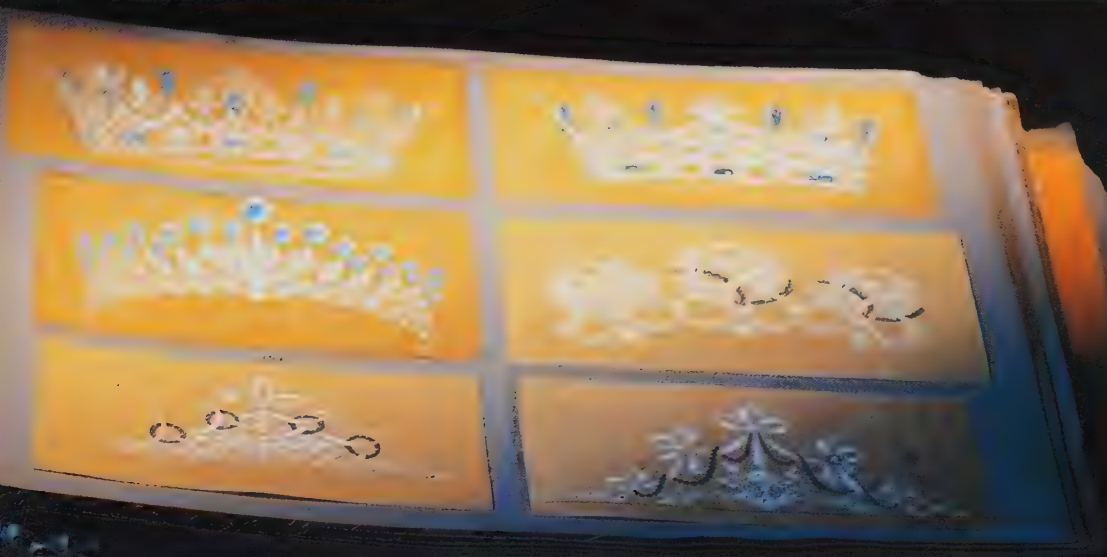
Bal de *têtes*

Stars, flowers, butterflies of light, gleaming stalactites of a night graced by moonlit fairy tales, birds of paradise with ruby eyes. Hair pins, comet-barrettes, tortoiseshell combs and blazing tiaras. Honoured by museums, aigrettes, bandeaux and tiaras will continue to reign over the nights of the twenty first century. Armed with such accessories the goddesses of today can abandon the anonymity of the 1990's and hold their heads high, each adorned in her own distinctive way. The hour of exuberance, fantasy and passion has arrived. Brilliant sunflowers flutter in the hair once again. Elton John has bought a crown for himself, Kate Moss plays at being a queen. The little girls in the land of the Rising Sun love tiaras because they give them stature. Different eras are merging together. Byzantine empresses and film stars, divas and courtesans, debutantes maharajahs and crowned queens parade side by side. But there is a difference. Yesterday, the jewels of Josephine with the classical motifs of lyre, palmette and acanthus leaves, were symbols of Imperial power. Today, the sight of Madonna with a tiara on her wedding day not only conjures up childhood dreams of being a princess, but implies a new attitude, whose keynote is eccentricity. Pleasure now comes from this breaking of the rules, and removed from the formal ceremony beauty can now be enjoyed like fruit long forbidden. Whether buried like treasure in a chignon created for a gala or encircling the curls like a jewelled ribbon these head ornaments are now composing their own bewitching symphony. In this magical kingdom blue and white hydrangeas and hawthorn leaves mounted "en tremblant" sway with every movement of the wearer. Thus, from the golden coach to limousine from Imperial boudoir to Hollywood dressing room tiaras continue to cast their spell. While the necklaces shimmer, the tiaras mock the heraldic shields of the aristocracy, sending up in the air a 1 001 symbols of love—Cupid's quiver of arrows, and "troubadour" lover's crowns. Behind the iron

gates of this heavenly garden a sapphire fountain whispers its secrets beneath the shade of an emerald cypress tree. When “bijoux de tête” grace the hair it is to emphasise an attitude to highlight a character whose every whim they honour. Like so many exclamation points these ornaments stand out above the dancing heads. Freed from the confines of their casket sanctuaries they take off, weaving rays of light as they join up with a past peopled with vestals, courtesans, wayward young women, and Ophelia, her long hair entwined with morning glory. Their meanderings make mazes in the air, open to all comers Here the “drop” motif becomes a pendant, festoons are transformed into necklaces, while oak leaves trailing through a trellis tiara unite together in a dog collar “It is the continuation of the dreams of childhood—the diamonds draw the light upwards towards themselves, exalting the gaze” explains Beatrice de Plinval, in charge of the fabulous temple that is the Chaumet archives. It contains 37 000 glass negatives, 80 000 drawings and as many photographs, and replicas in nickel silver of the 1 500 tiaras made over the past two hundred years. Pinned like butterflies in a case these replicas illustrate the genius of designers who could happily combine the purely classical with the greatest flights of fancy. The albums of drawings show how they presented clients with endless variations on the motifs of coiled snakes, scrolls, feathers, stars, palmettes and trefoils. Artists awarded the Grand Prix de Rome, they happily spent a life time with Chaumet. A sketch of the woman’s hair crowned by a diamond suspension bridge. is followed by more surprises, one after the other. The meticulously kept ledgers record such treasures as the tiara bought by Baron Matsui, the Japanese ambassador, on October 13th 1919, set with 604 brilliants and 284 rose cut diamonds, “with fittings so as to divide into various other jewels as required” Soul mates of the stars, whose messengers they are, jewels for the head give form to fiction. In them nature mingles with the fantastic, giving rise to a bestiary of brilliance and unfathomable mystery. Here they explode in a great display of fireworks blazing an iridescent trail across the night sky. They are the living and secret memory of a multi-faceted world which goes from the intimate to the resplendent, from the benches of the stone cutters and polishers to lighten up the foreheads of the wearers with rays of light, scented with the exquisite remembrance of the past.

Laurence Benaim













Previous pages

Left Angela Linovall wreathed with flowers.

Photograph by Paolo Roversi for Italian *Vogue*.

Right Diamond, pearl and enamel tiara of ears of corn, vine leaves, and grapes, Chaumet, 1909, for Lady Melchett. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite

Audrey Hepburn wearing a bandeau surmounted by an aigrette in *My Fair Lady*, 1963.

Photograph by Bob Willoughby

Above

Diamond ribbon bandeau surmounted by seven feathers on knife-blade wires tied with a bowknot at the base. The diamond feathers would mingle, as if by magic, with the tuft of osprey plumes also worn on the head, which conceal the wires. Chaumet. 1897. Chaumet Collection, Paris.





A. CHAU
Chief of Police
Amherst, MA



Previous pages
Platinum and diamond
tiara surmounted by
leafy sprays tipped
with pear-shaped
diamonds on knife-
bald stems, Chaumet,
1919, for the *Duchesse de*
Doudeauville who gave it
to her daughter *Hadwige de*
La Rochefoucauld on her
marriage to *Prince Sixte de*
Bourbon Parme. Chaumet
Collection, Paris.

Left Diamond
waterfall aigrette:
The diamond drops would
shine out from
the tuft of osprey
plumes also worn
on the head, Chaumet,
c. 1903. Chaumet
Collection, Paris.

Right *Gustav Klimt*,
Hygieia, detail
from *Medicine*,
1900-1907. Schloss
Immendorf, Österreich.





Above

A portrait of *Empress Josephine* wearing a parure by *Nitot* at her coronation on December 2, 1804.
Painting by *L.A. Laurent*, etching by *P. Audoin*.

Opposite

Three platinum and diamond *Chaumet* tiaras:

Top Scrolling leaves, 1910, for *Mrs. Augustin Edwards*, married to the Chilean ambassador in London.

Center Rosettes and palmette, 1904.

Bottom Flowers and leaves, 1921, for *Mr. Baumann*. *Chaumet* Collection, Paris.

Following pages

Comb surmounted by a line of ruby and diamond clusters. A replica from the parure *Napoleon I* gave to *Empress Marie-Louise de Habsbourg-Lorraine* for their wedding, *Chaumet*, c. 1887.
Chaumet Collection. Paris.









Above

Design for a butterfly aigrette, Chaumet, c. 1900. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite

Shizue Kaneko by *Giovanni Gastel* wearing a hair ornament in the shape of a butterfly. Milan, 1997. Photograph by *Giovanni Gastel*.

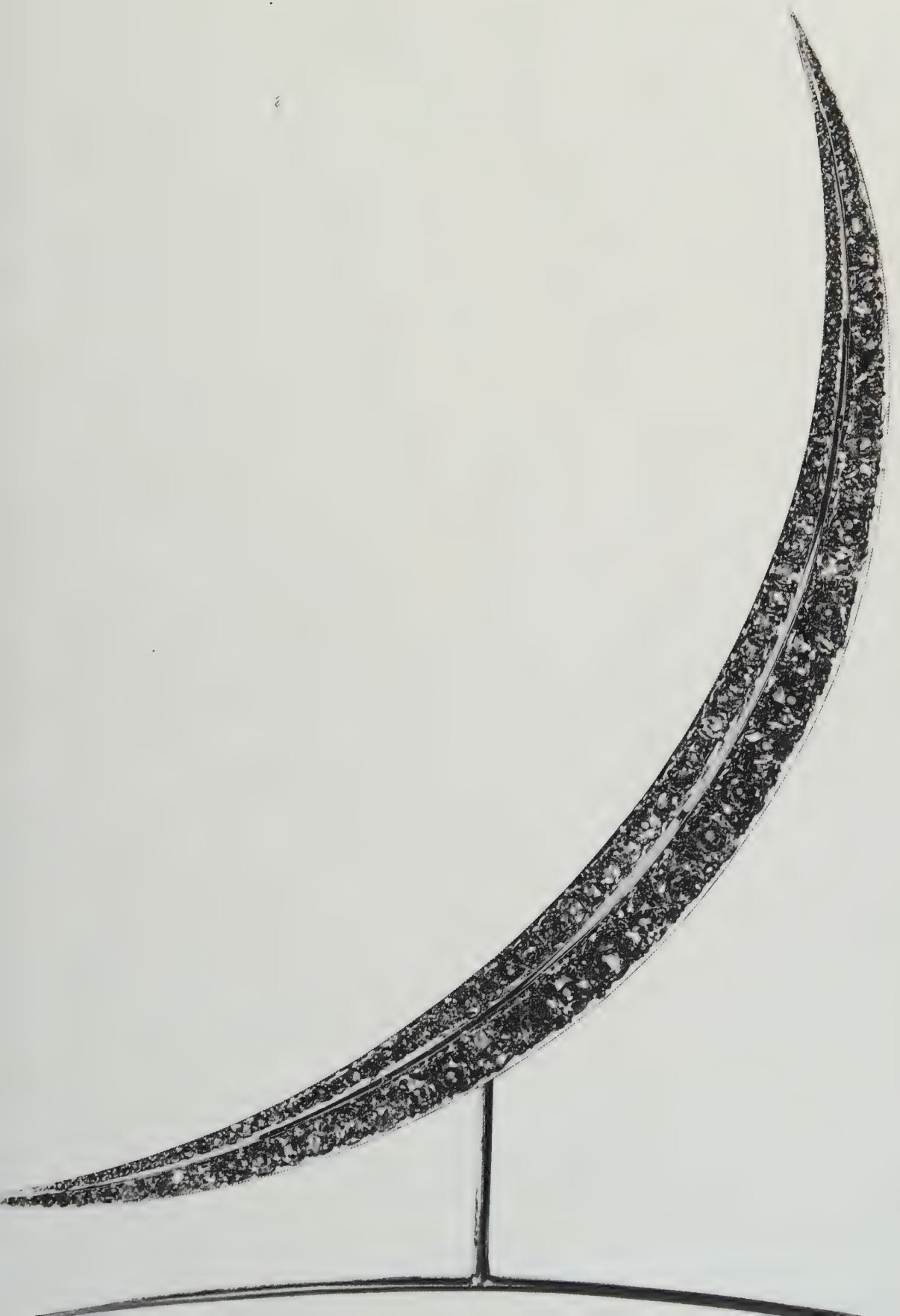
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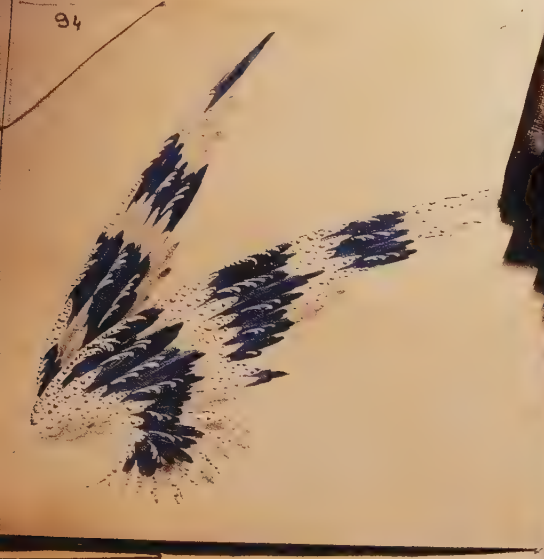
Left Diamond twelve-pointed star aigrette with a ruby center, Chaumet, 1895. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Right Gold and diamond half-moon crescent aigrette, Chaumet, 1909, for *Madame Pillet Will*. Chaumet Collection, Paris.











Drawings of wing tiaras and aigrettes, Chaumet, 1900-1910. Chaumet Collection, Paris. *Opposite*

Above
Top Drawing for platinum, diamond and translucent blue enamel wing tiara,
Chaumet, 1907, for the *Duke of Westminster*.

Below Drawing for ruby and diamond wing tiara, Chaumet, 1907.
Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite
The *Duchess of Windsor* at
the Hotel Meurice,
Paris, wearing a dress
by *Mainbocher* and ruby
and diamond clips
in her hair.
Horst, Vogue (U.S.), 1937.









Opposite

Three drawings for head ornaments.

Top and bottom Egyptian-style bandeaux with the wings converging the disc of the sun with lotus flowers and ureaus.

Center Persian-style with winged monsters guarding a rosette, Chaumet, c. 1910. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Above

Dolores in 1921 wearing wings of diamonds.

Photograph of *Baron Gayne de Meyer*, 1921.





Opposite
Amanda Hearst wearing
a model of a Chaumet
tiara; Cannes, 2002.
Photograph by
Jonathan Becker

Following pages
Diamond tiara,
the ribbon circlet
surmounted by large
and small leafy sprays
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and diamonds,
Chaumet, 1897.
Chaumet
Collection, Paris.







Opposit
James Hayllar,
Going to Court, 1863.







Opposite
Sepia-ink design of a comb surmounted by a flower pattern, Chaumet,
Jean-Baptiste Fassin, c. 1840. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Above
"Recherche" by *Giovanni Gastel*, Milan, 1996.

Following pages
Left The Statue of liberty by *Ruben Toledo*.
Right A Mary Stuart aigrette, styled and photographed
by *Thiemo Sander*. Chaumet Collection, Paris.







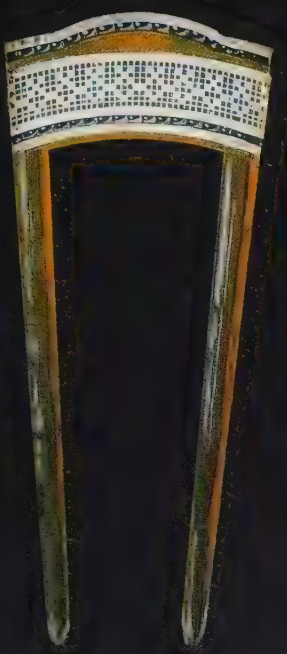


Opposite
Dante Gabriel Rossetti, The Beloved, detail, 1865-1866. Tate Gallery, London.

Above
Drawing for a decorative comb of grapevines which is reminiscent of *Fossin's* creations for the "July Monarchy" of 1830 in France. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Following pages
Left Six designs for tortoiseshell two-prong combs: horseshoe, globular and crosier tops with platinum-and-diamond braided, floral, zig zag, polka dot and husk designs, Chaumet, 1914. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Right Drawing of a mantilla comb by *Edouard Benito*, 1923.









Opposite
Photograph of *Ruth St. Denis* by *Baron Gayne de Meyer*.

Above
Irene Castle wearing a head ornament of Oriental inspiration. London, September, 1919.

Following pages
Left Aigrette of two pear-shaped diamond ornaments with a pear-shaped pearl in the center, *Chaumet*, 1896. *Chaumet Collection*, Paris.

Right *Brigitte Bardot* wearing a bandeau for *François Chatel's* program with *Claude Bolling* and his orchestra, 1963.





Opposite
Rashida Jones wearing
a model of a Chaumet
tiara of ears of corn.

Photograph
by *Jonathan Becker*.







Above
Tiara of ears of corn, reed branches and oat grains set with diamonds,
Joseph Chaumet, 1898, for *Madame Maurice Epbrussi, née Rothschild*.
Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite
Aigrette of ears of corn attached by a bow, *Joseph Chaumet*, 1895.
It can be worn as a brooch. Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.



Opposite
Party "Palais Rose"
at *Boni de Castellane's*
on the theme of
aigrettes and feathers,
L'Officiel, Christmas, 1948.









Opposite
Diamond and cabochon
emerald Russian style
tiara, Chaumet 1910.
for *Mr. Oppenheim*.
Original Photography.
Paris, Chaumet
Collection.



Above
Antennae aigrette with pear-shaped diamond drops, Chaumet, 1905, for *Monsieur Beau*.
Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite
Cyndi Lauper wearing an extravagant head ornament, New York, 1986.
Photograph by *Matthew Rolston*.



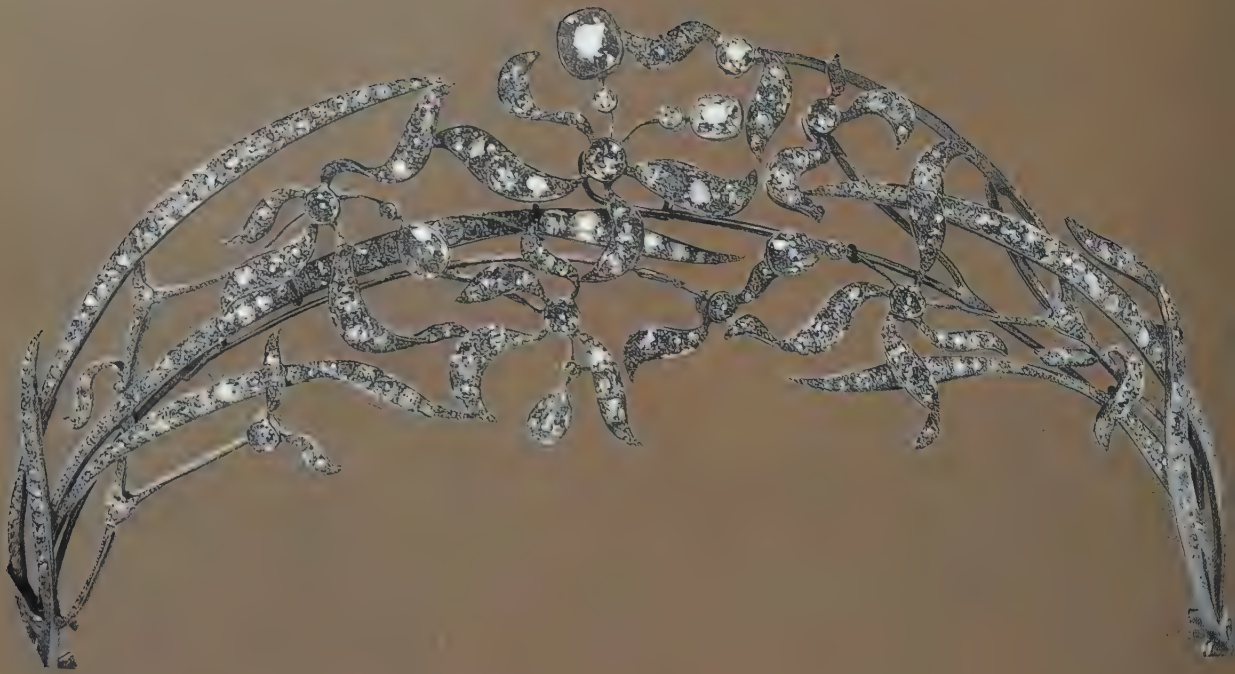




Opposite
 Queen *Sivia* on the day of her wedding to King *Carl XVI Gustav* of Sweden,
 wearing the tiara of Empress *Josephine*, Stockholm, 1976.

Above
 Gold and pearl tiara and onyx cameo tiara brought to the Swedish royal family
 by *Josefina*, granddaughter of Empress *Josephine*, on her marriage
 to the future *Oscar I* in 1823. Attributed to *Nitot & Fils*.

Following pages
Left Four Chaumet platinum-and-diamond tiaras and a bandeau.
Upper left Spray of mistletoe tiara, 1910.
Lower left bandeau of interlaced crowns of oak leaves, Chaumet, 1922,
 for Miss *Marian Munroe* on her marriage to *Baron Hottinguer*.
Lower right Mesh pattern tiara, 1920;.
Upper right Tiara with onyx lines in black-and-white mesh pattern,
 Chaumet. 1921, for *Monsieur Carlos de Olazabale*.
 Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.











Previous pages

Left Portrait of *Wan Rong*, *Pu Yi*'s wife, last China Emperor wearing a tiara surmounted by an aigrette.

Right Drawings of naturalistic aigrettes, the long stems tied by a ribbon at the base, Chaumet, 1880s. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Above

Branch of diamond flowers aigrette, Chaumet, for *Lady Kintore*, 1908. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite

Portrait of the *Duchesse de Montellano* by *Giovanni Boldini*, c. 1910.







Opposite
Head of *Cleopatra*, *Michelangelo*. Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Galleria degli uffizi, Firenze.

Above
Maria Callas wearing a tiara in *Tosca* at the Covent Garden Royal Opera, London, 1965.
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Following pages
The great staircase at the Paris Opera during intermission, by *J. Simonis*, 1934.







Above

Gold diamond and pink spinel tiara and comb, Chaumet (attributed to *J.B. Fossin*) for the *Princess Bagration*, c. 1825.

Opposite

An open album showing drawings for tiaras. In the front, the Talhouet acanthus scroll tiara; in the background, the view of Chaumet's grand salon, 12 Place Vendôme, with a portrait of *Empress Marie Louise* on the right.

Following pages

Photograph of peeresses wearing tiaras at the coronation of Queen *Elizabeth II*, 1953.

Page 76 Two platinum and diamond Chaumet bandeaux and a tiara.

Top A Greek fret bandeau of intertwined leaves, 1915, for *Mademoiselle de Grammont* on her marriage to the *Marquis de Labriffe*.

Center Curved Greek key pattern tiara, 1913, for *Monsieur Paul Lebaudy*.

Bottom Bandeau with knife-blade borders enclosing leaf patterns, c. 1920.

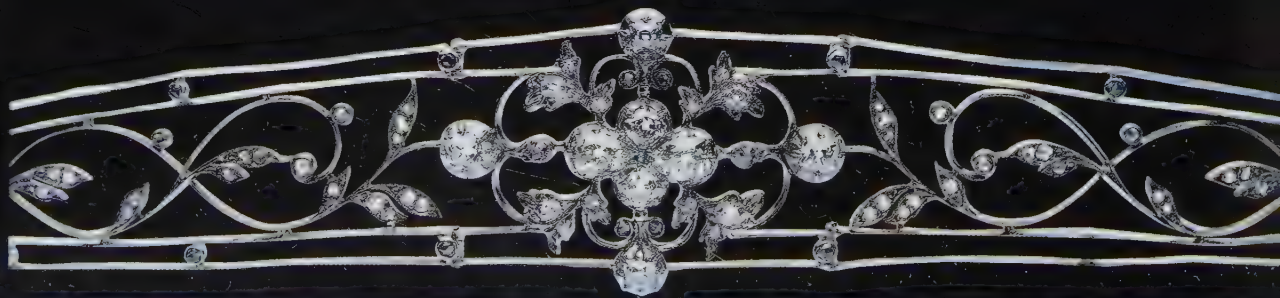
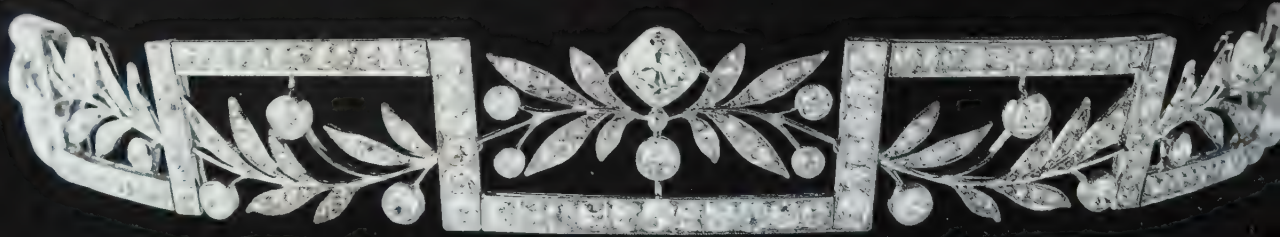
Page 77 *Mae Murray* in *The Merry Widow* by *Eric Von Stroheim*, 1925.



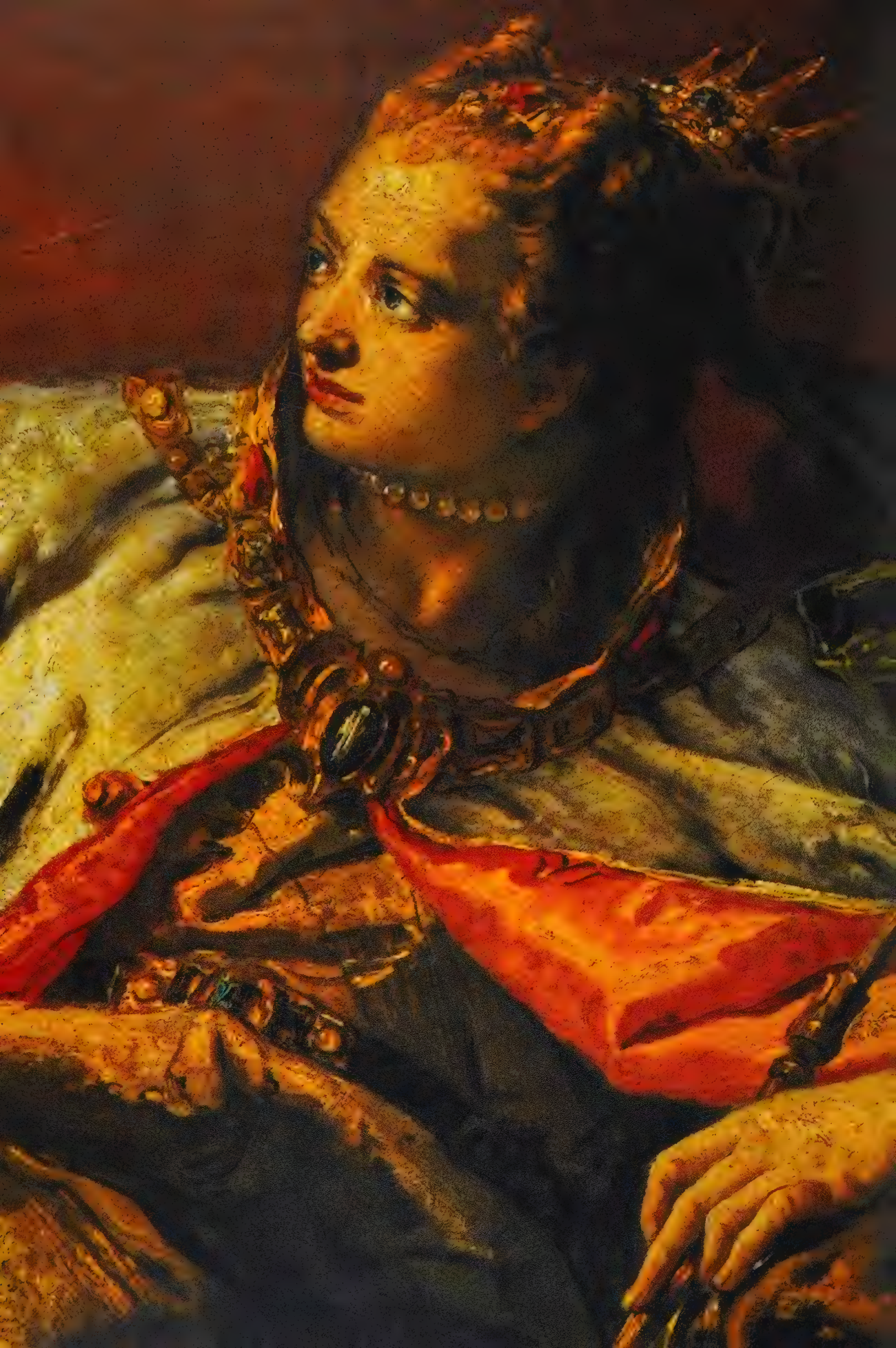
NETAUMET
Paris
London
New York

















Page 78

Detail of Venice by G.B. Tiepolo. Palazzo Ducale, Venezia.

Page 79

Sketch of an aigrette mounted with white gold and diamonds en tremblant, Chaumet, Paris, 2002.

Opposite Three Chaumet platinum and diamond bandeaux.

Top Terminating in circular plaques which cover the ears, 1922, for *Comtesse Bourg de Bozas*.

Center Stylised bowknot tied from simulated black-and-white moir silk ribbons, 1911.

Bottom Greek key pattern, 1922, for the *Comtesse de Clermont-Tonnerre*.

Above

Drawing for a poster advertising Chaumet, showing tiaras and bandeaux worn low, "à la Josephine", with the new short hairstyles of the 1920s.

Chaumet Collection. Paris



Above

Gold and diamond eglantine and jasmine tiara mounted en tremblant,
Chaumet (*J.B. Fossin*), c. 1830 for the *Duchess of Bedford*.

Following pages

Left Head ornament, turn-of-the-century China.

Right *Maria Callas* wearing an extraordinary head jewel for the opera *Turandot*, July, 1957.









Above

Photograph of the *Princesse de Ligne* wearing an emerald and diamond aigrette, 1886, *Felix Nadar*.

Opposite

Marie-Antoinette in court dress wearing a pearl, aigrette, flowers and diamond headdress.

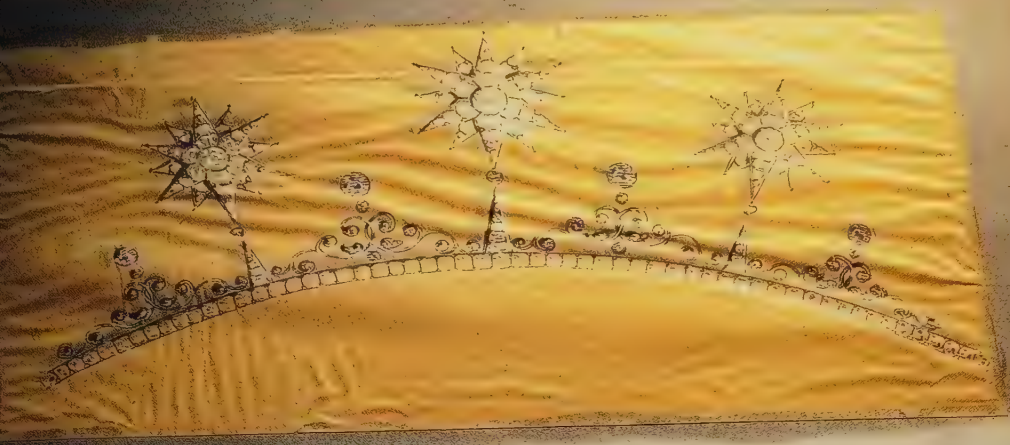
Drawing by *Claude-Louis Desrais* and engraving by *Deny*. Versailles Palace and Trianon.







Opposite
Mae West,
Hollywood, 1944.
Photograph by
Louise Dahl-Wolfe.





Opposite
An album of tiara designs. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

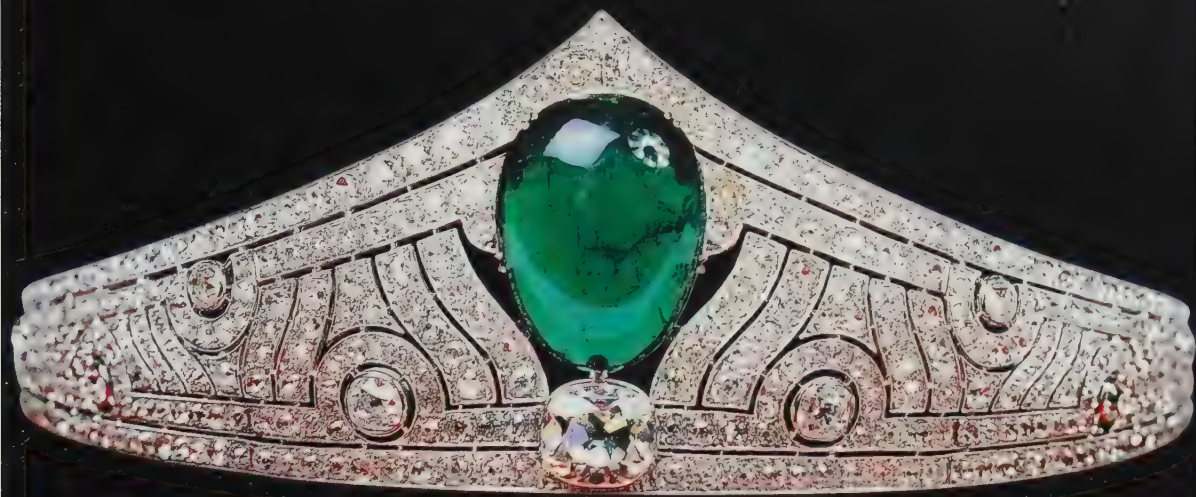
Above
Platinum and diamond fleur de lys tiara, Chaumet, 1910, for *Mrs. Croft*, London.
Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Following pages
Gold, pearl and agathe intaglio bandeau, Chaumet (*Nitor & Fils*),
c. 1810 for *Caroline Murat*, Queen of Naples.









Opposite
Platinum and diamond rising sun aigrette, the rays centred on an emerald,
Chaumet, 1914. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Above
Platinum diamond and emerald cabochon bandeau, Chaumet, 1926,
for the *Grand Duchess of Luxembourg*.

Following pages
Platinum, diamond and translucent blue enamel Russian-style tiara,
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Another, similar tiara was made for the French-born *Mrs. Hope Vere*.









Opposite
Wedding dress, 1950, Barcelona, Museu Textil d'Idumentaria.

Above
Diamond festoon and bowknot tiara, Chaumet, c. 1890.
Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Following pages
Left Drawings of naturalistic tiaras.

Above Mistletoe.
Below Ivy leaves. Chaumet, c. 1900. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Right Wedding dress, c. 1805, embroidered linen.
Photograph by *David Seidner*, 1986.







Above
Drawing for a diamond and emerald sunflower aigrette, Chaumet, 1898.
Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite
Drawings for three versions of a diamond bandeau centred
on a cabochon emerald, Chaumet, c. 1914. Chaumet Collection, Paris.





Above
Platinum and diamond waterfall tiara. Chaumet, 1904 for *Princess Henckel von Donnersmarck*.
Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite
Marisa Borenson in *Marquise Casati* for a *Rothschild* fancy-dress ball.
Photograph by *Cecil Beaton*.

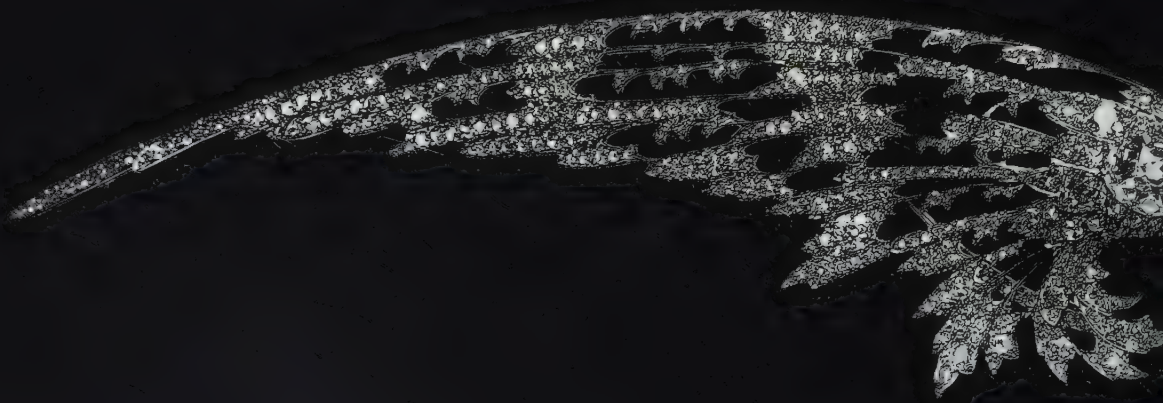
Following pages
Three Chaumet diamond and platinum versions of the *Walkyrie wing tiara*,
inspired by Wagner's opera

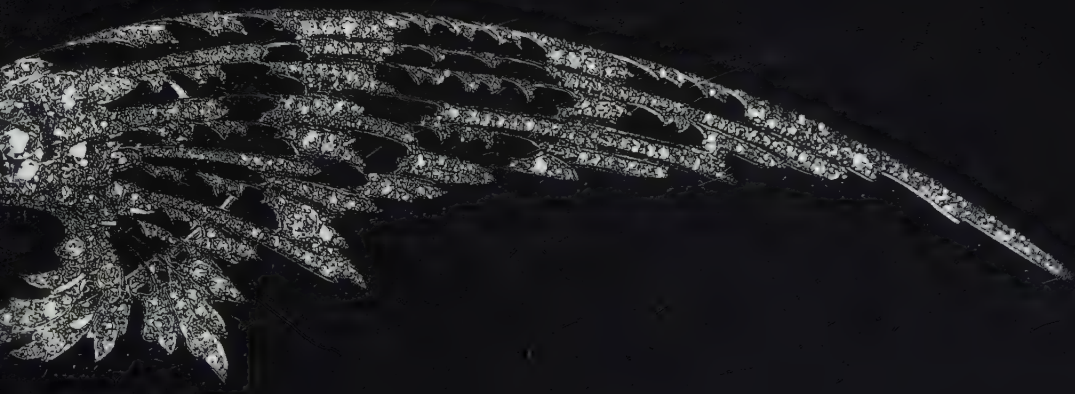
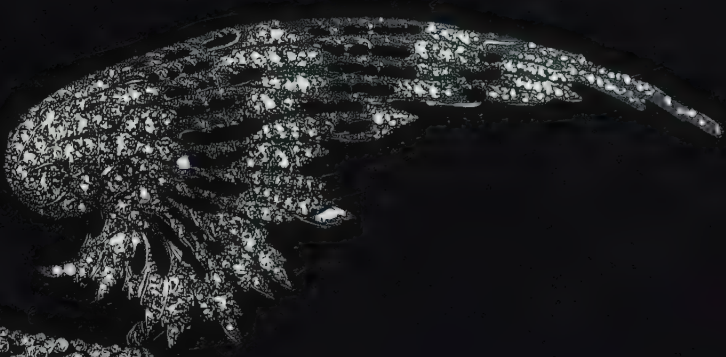
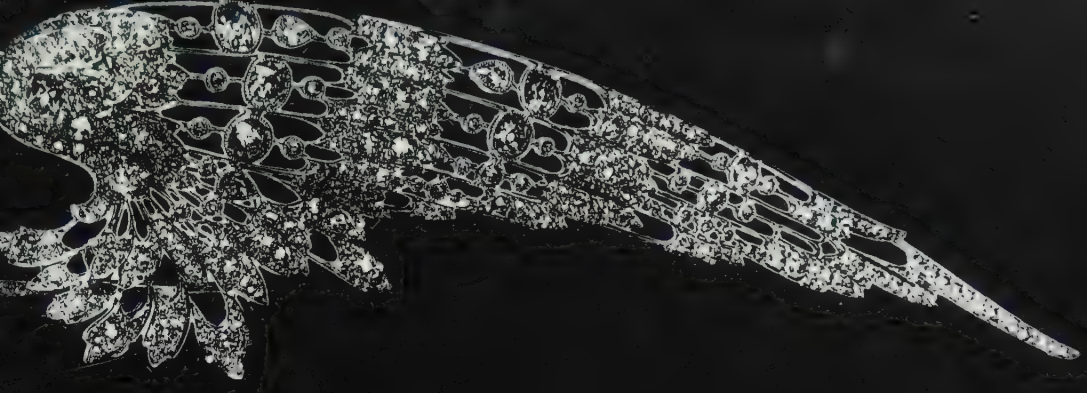
Top For the *Marquise de Pomereu*, c. 1910.

Center With briolettes. 1913. for stock.

Bottom For the *Princesse de Leon*. Original photographs. Chaumet Collection, Paris.







Opposite
Photograph of
Lola Schnabel wearing
a wing tiara model
by *Jonathan Becker*.







Above

Hat pin with a platinum, pearl and diamond rosette, Chaumet, 1919.

Opposite

Simone made-up and dressed for a night out in Berlin, 1957.

Following pages

Left Drawing of an aigrette with two long-stemmed flowers tied at the base with ribbons, Chaumet, 1895. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Right Diamond and coloured stone "plant" aigrette, Chaumet, 1893. Chaumet Collection, Paris.









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made for the *Marquise d'Amadio*. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite
Jane Muhvagh wearing a bandeau.

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Left Mrs. *Arturo Lopez* at the *Bestegui* ball, Venice, 1951.
Right Drawings of naturalistic-style aigrettes with conch pearls,
Chaumet, c. 1900. Chaumet Collection, Paris.



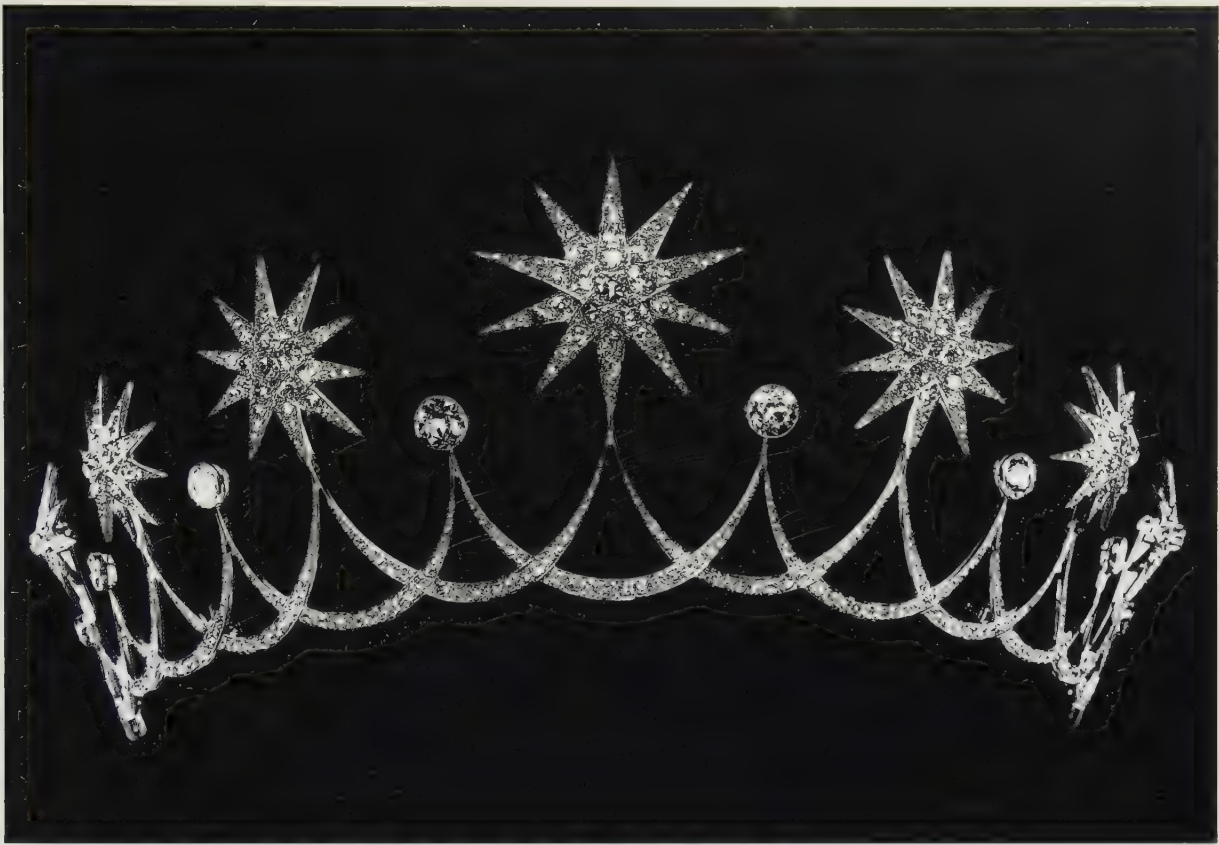












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Diamond-style brooch with flowers and leaves framing the centre trellis,
Chaumet, c. 1900. Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite

Lady Louis Mountbatten wearing her pearl and diamond Chaumet tiara.

Photograph by *Cecil Beaton*, 1937.

Above

Platinum and diamond star tiara, Chaumet, 1912, for *Mr. Van Ypersele*.
Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.





Opposite
 Drawings for two versions of ruby and diamond ecus comptes (“overlapping circle”) tiaras,
 perhaps proposed to *Madame Edme Sommier of the Chateau de Vaux le Vicomte*,
 who ordered a Chaumet tiara of this type, 1912. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Above
 Drawing for a ruby and diamond tiara, convertible for wear as a shoulder strap, 1937.
 Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Following pages
 Left Models dressed as brides wearing tiaras at the dress rehearsal held in the grand salon
 of Chaumet, 12, Place Vendôme, before they left for an exhibition in Japan, 1990.
 Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Right Portrait by *Baron Gerard*, 1806, of the *Grandduchess of Baden, Stéphanie de Beauharnais*,
 wearing court dress and an emerald and diamond tiara, necklace, earrings, and bracelets
 by Chaumet (*Nitot & Fils*), for her marriage. *HRH Prince Rainier III of Monaco*.







Above

Drawings of four two-prong tortoiseshell combs with platinum and diamond tops, Chaumet, 1910. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite

Princesse Victoria Gourama de Coorg by Franz Xaver Winterhalter.

Following pages

Platinum and diamond antennae tiara, Chaumet, 1909, for Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss of Dumbarton Oaks. Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Following pages

Photograph of the most prominent women of the Russian court dressed for a reception celebrating the coronation of *Nicholas II*, 1897.

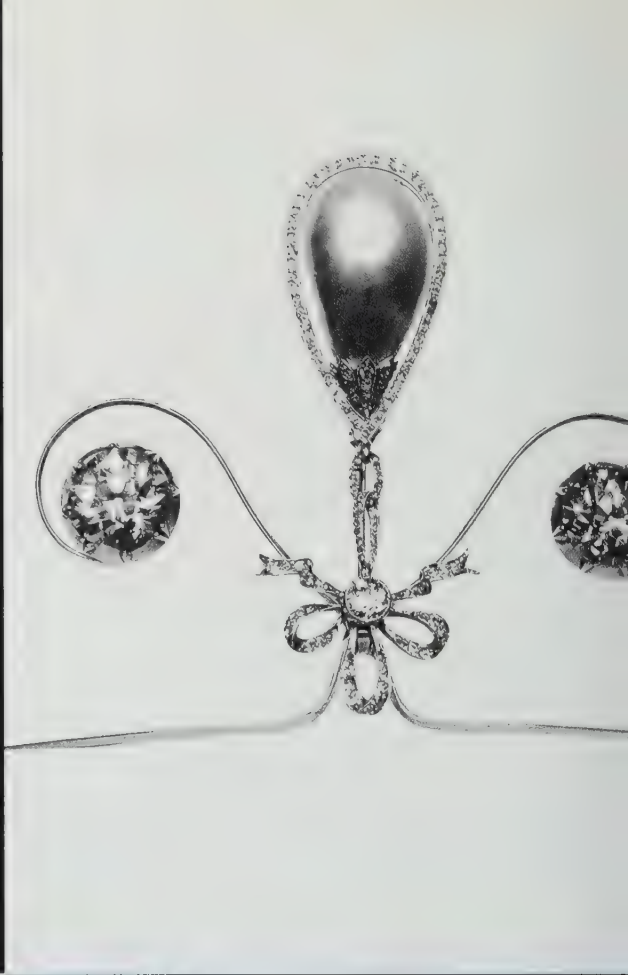




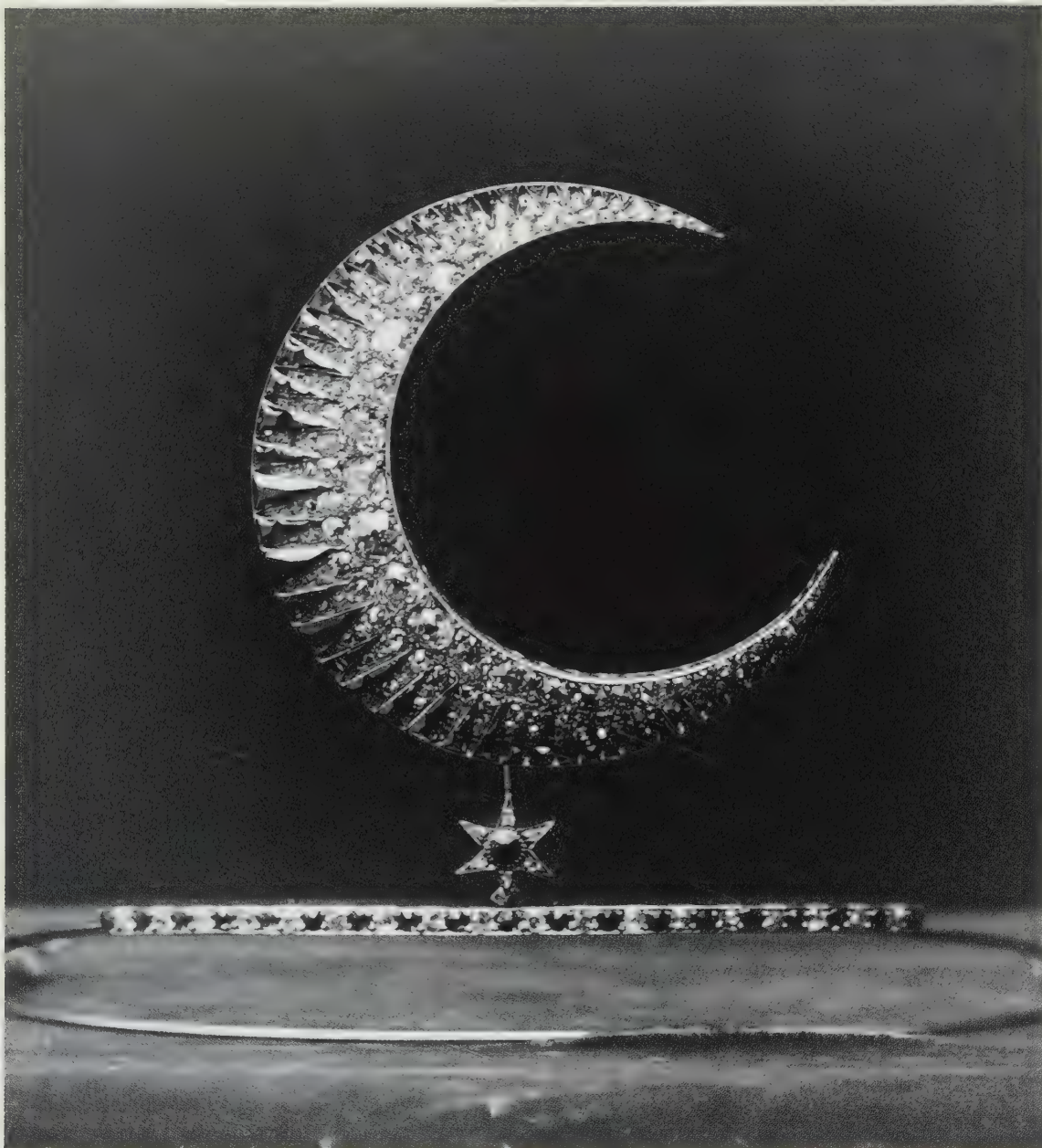












Previous pages

Left Four Chaumet aigrettes.

Upper left Twin plants on long stems, c. 1894.

Upper right Antennae tiara of a pear-shaped pearl between two large diamonds, knotted at the base, 1919, for the *Comtesse d'Indy*.

Lower left Three peacock feathers, 1894.

Lower right Two plants blown by the wind, 1900. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Right The *Comtesse de Ribes* with the *Marquise de Larrain* and *Monsieur Charles de Bestegui* wearing a head ornament with cock and pheasant feathers, fuchsia and pink cyclamen aigrette, and jewels of precious stones: roses, rubies, and amethysts.

Above

Diamond star and crescent moon aigrette, Chaumet, 1880. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite

Gustav Klimt, The Virgin (detail), 1913. Nároni Galerie, Praha.





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ANN



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Opposite

Portrait of *Elizabeth Brydges* with a *Charles IX* hairstyle by *Hieronimo Custodis*, 1589.

Above

Platinum, diamond and calibre emerald tiaras in the style of *Charles IX*, *Chaumet*, 1908,
for *HE Negib Pacha Melbame*, whose Christian wife could wear it in public.



Above

Pearl, navette and brilliant-cut diamond tiara shown by Chaumet at the International Exhibition, Paris, 1900. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite

Photograph by *Valérie Belin* for the series "Madonna", *L'Officiel*, December, 2001. The model, *Agatha Renott*, is wearing a *Christian Lacroix* tiara and Chaumet ring.

Following pages

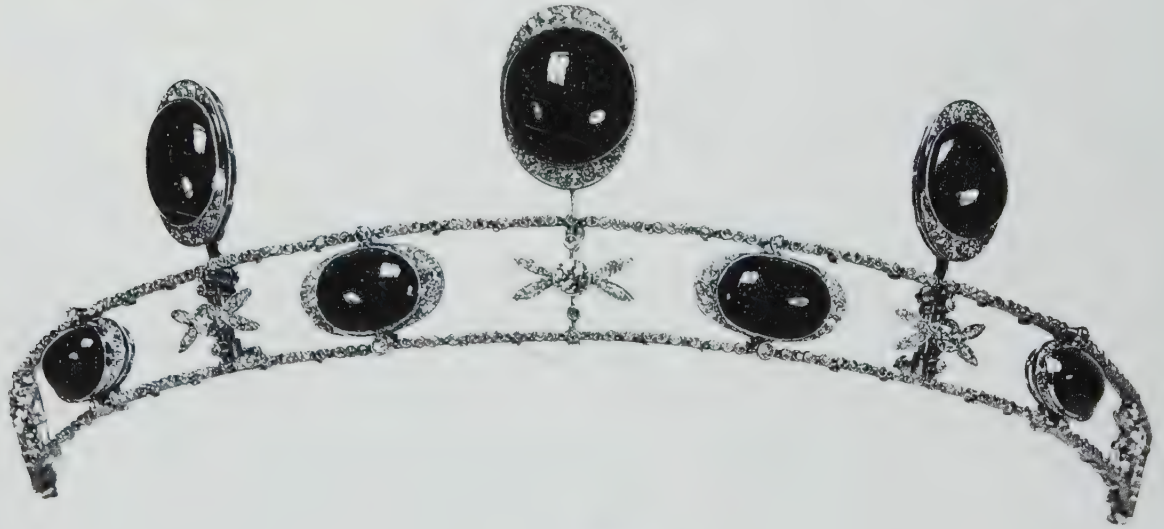
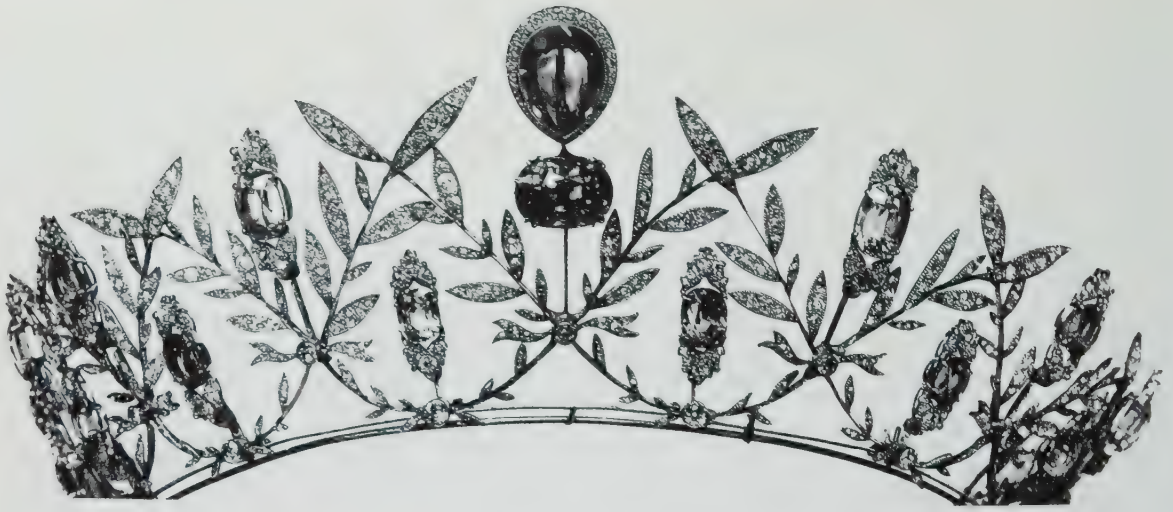
Left Romano-Egyptian lady wearing a gold laurel wreath.

Right Photograph of *Anne Gunning* wearing a Chaumet diamond tiara convertible into a necklace. Photograph by *Henry Clarke* for *Vogue*, 1953.











Opposite

Three Chaumet ruby and diamond tiaras

Top Leafy spray tiara, 1914, for stock.

Center Bandeau surmounted with sapphires, 1911, for stock.

Bottom Festoon tiara surmounted by rubies framed within

diamond borders, 1910, for *Monsieur de Chaponay*.

Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Above

Tiara centred on an emerald between diamond drops, Chaumet, 1905.

Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.









Page 144
Aigrette of diamond flowers terminating in drops, with stems tied
at the base by a bowknot, Chaumet, 1895. Original photograph.
Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Page 145
Mikhail Alexandrovitch Vroubel, Princess Swan.

Page 146
The Great Staircase of the Paris Opera, *Louis Beroud*, 1877.

Page 147
Three Chaumet tiaras.
Top Classical style with honeysuckles centred on a palmette, 1902,
for the *Marquis de Luart*.
Center Acanthus scroll style, 1908, for the *Marquise de Talbouet*.
Bottom Plant style with emeralds, 1906, for *Count Arthur de Vogue*.
Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite
Emperor *Haile Selassie*, Ethiopia, 1933, photographed by *Alfred Eisenstaedt*.



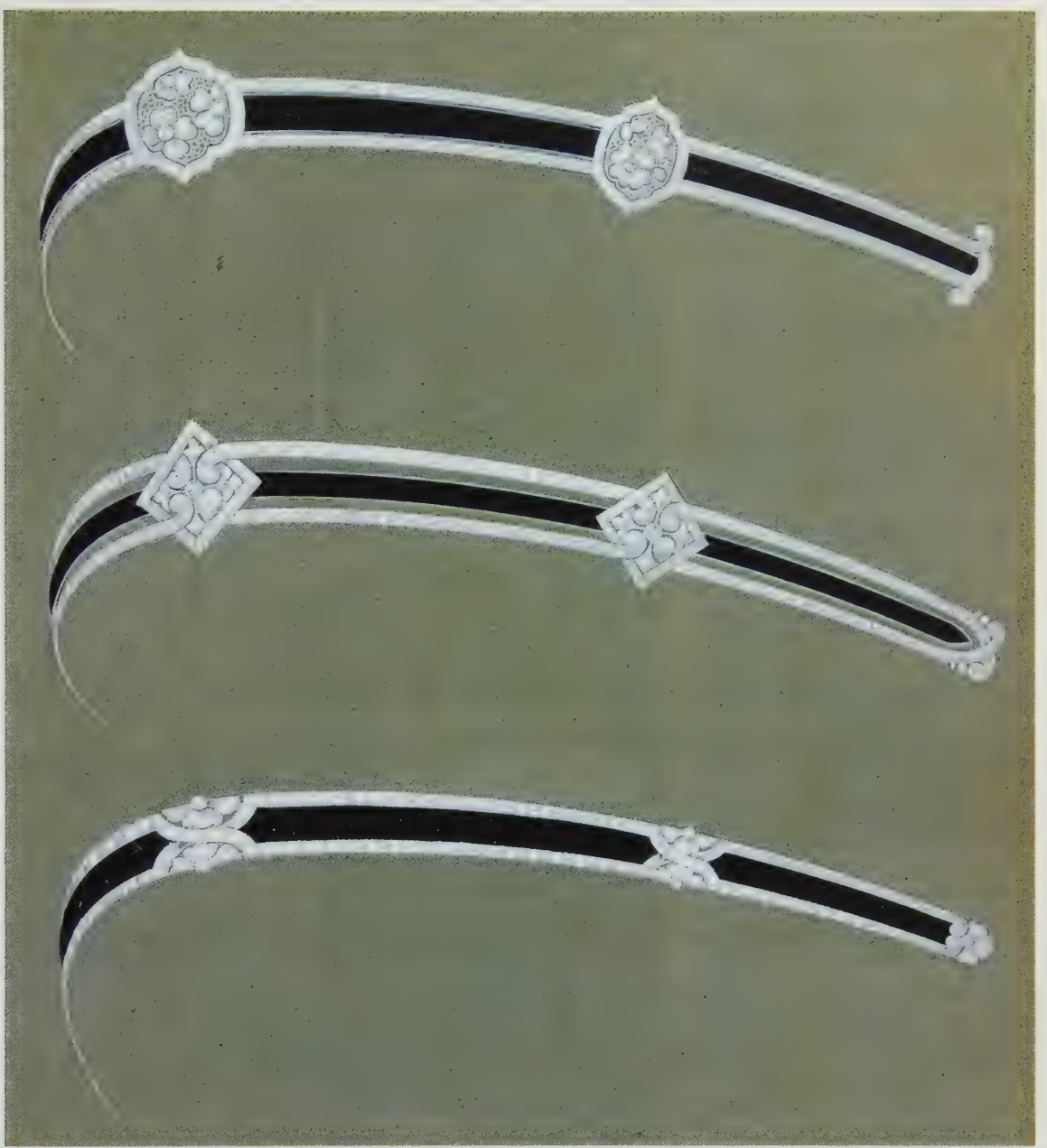


Above
La Victoria by Jean Béraud, c. 1890. A Parisian woman wearing a butterfly hat descends from her carriage.

Opposite
Portrait of *Madame Edgar Stern* wearing a Chaumet diamond crescent aigrette in her hair, by *Carolus Duran*, 1890.







Opposite
Fashion show at the Bal de la Couture at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, 1924.

Above
Three drawings for platinum, diamond and onyx black and white bandeaux,
Chaumet, 1914. Chaumet Collection, Paris.



Above

Photograph of *Princesse Emilia Pignatelli de Strongoli*, Naples, 1960, by *Herbert List*.

Opposite

Photograph of *Viscountess Wimborne* wearing a Chaumet ruby and diamond tiara, long earrings, and a sautoir with pendant and onyx brooch at low waist, by *Cecil Beaton*, 1925.





Above

Platinum and diamond Greek key bandeau surmounted by a lyre with an emerald and a white aigrette, Chaumet, 1919, for *Monsieur de Bonneval*. Original photograph, Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite

Conrad Noel in Nam, the Man, 1924.







Opposite
Drawing of a hair piece in ebony and white gold set with rough diamonds
and brilliant-cut diamonds, Chaumet, Paris, 2002.

Above
Drawing of a three-fork comb in ebony and white gold set with brilliant-cut
diamonds, Chaumet, Paris, 2002.

Following pages
Left Portrait of *Elisabeth de Valois* by *Moro Antonio* wearing a Renaissance-style head ornament.
Right Portrait of *Barbara Pallavicini* by *Allessandri* wearing a Renaissance-style head ornament.

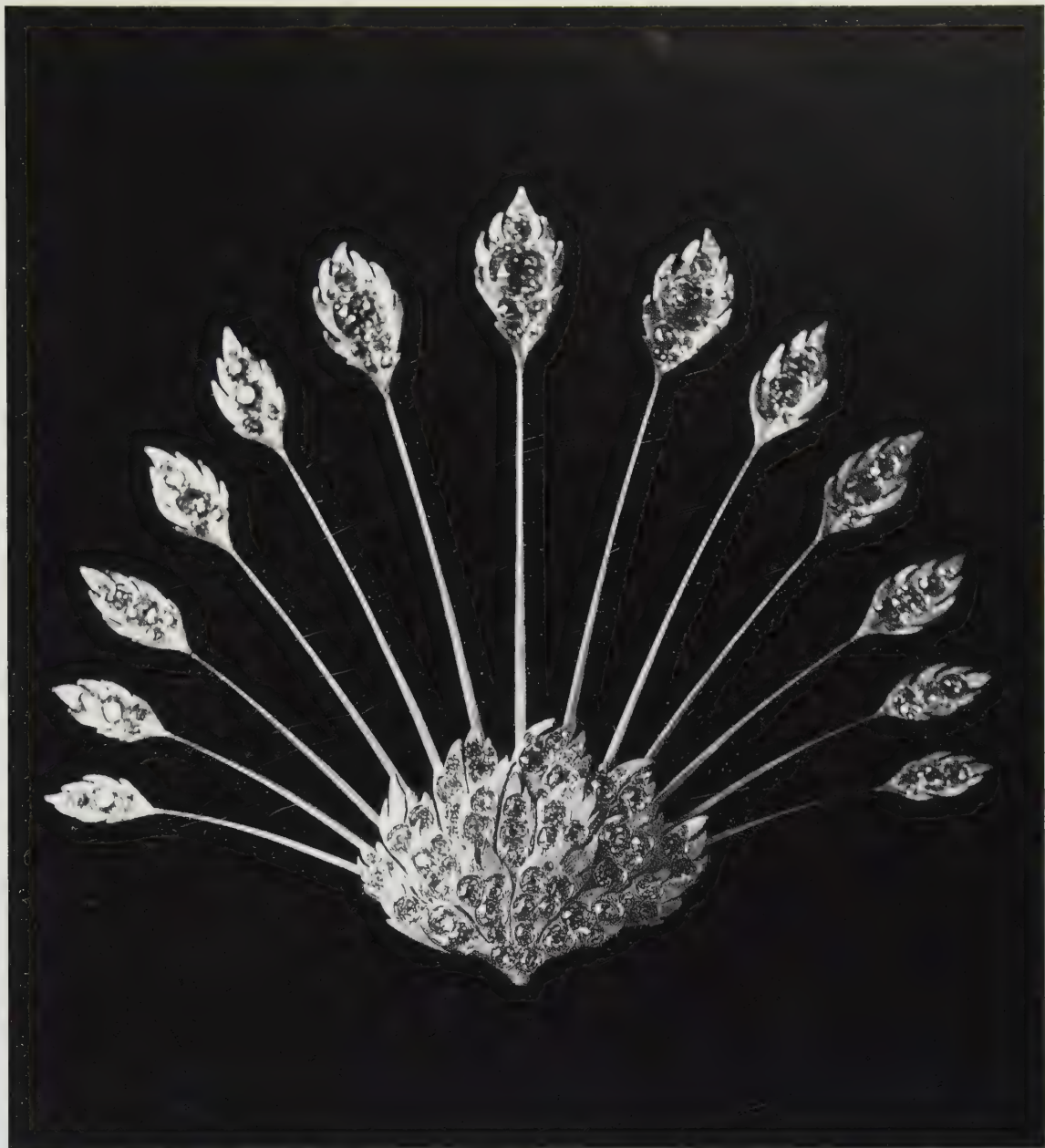












Previous pages

Left Art Nouveau drawings of a bat aigrette,
wings outstretched, Chaumet, c. 1900.

Right Catwoman. Photograph by *Ellen von Unwerth*.

Opposite

Drawing of a diamond aigrette, 1900. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Above

Aigrette with 13 motifs raised high on knife-blade wires,
Chaumet, 1800. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

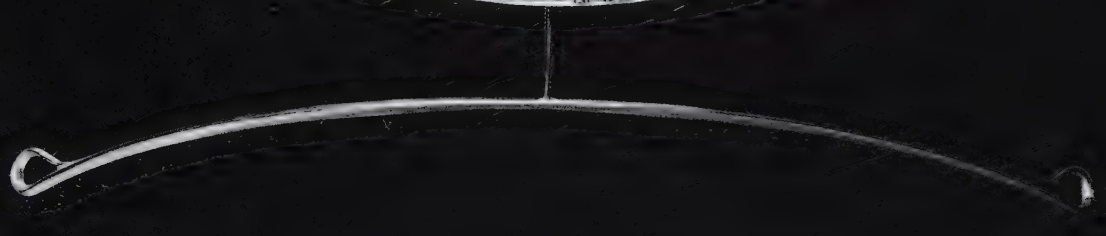
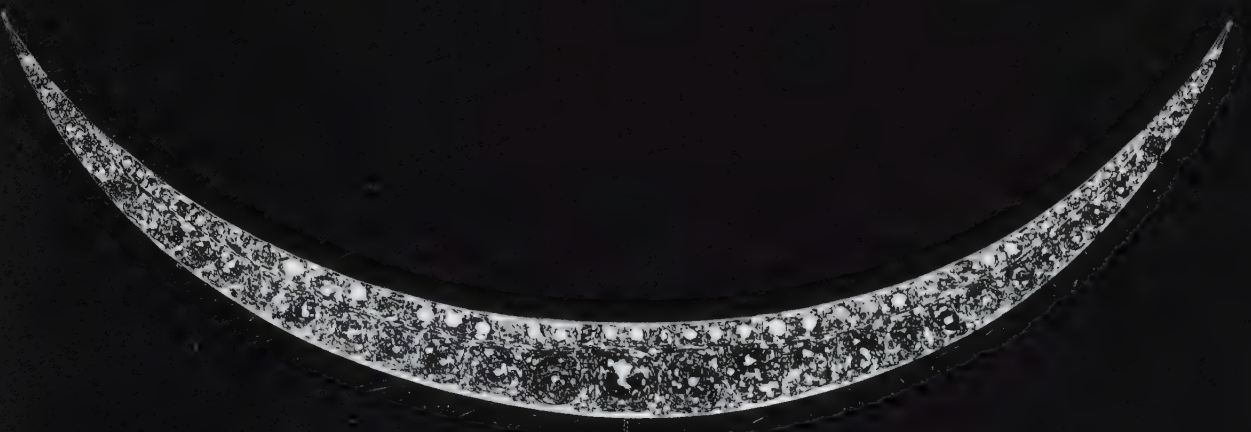


Above
Portrait of *Lady de Grey* wearing her crescent aigrette at the Royal Opera House,
London, by *Baron de Meyer*, 1902.

Opposite
Three Chaumet diamond jewels for the head.

Top Center Crescent half moon tiara, c. 1910, for *Comtesse de Beauregard*.

Bottom Bandeau centred on a pearl, 1920, for the *Comtesse de Bourg de Bozas*.
Original photographs. Chaumet Collection, Paris.











Previous pages
 Left Print of the *Duchesse d'Angouleme* wearing a diamond tiara surmounted
 by ostrich feathers, after a portrait by *Baron Gros*, c. 1815.

Right Two Chaumet tiaras.
 Top Diamond bowknot and ribbon tiara with pear-shaped drop, 1895.
 Bottom Platinum and diamond tall curvilinear tiara, 1920, made for the
Marquise de Lambertye. Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite
 Aigrette with diamonds on knife-blade wires. Seemingly independent
 of any support, the stones mingle with the osprey plumes, Chaumet, c. 1900.

Above
 Diamond cross-over bandeau surmounted by an aigrette of ruby
 and diamond sprays, Chaumet, c. 1900. Chaumet Collection, Paris.





Opposite
Madame Takezo Okamoto, wife of the second secretary at the Japanese embassy,
London, dressed for a reception at Buckingham Palace, 1922.

Above
Aigrette of diamonds and pear-shaped pearls, Chaumet, 1895.
Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.



Opposite
Photograph of *Punch Hutton*
wearing a model of a
Chaumet ears of corn tiara
by *Jonathan Becker*.





Above

Drawing for an Art Nouveau style tortoiseshell comb depicting a sea monster attacking three mermaids, Chaumet, c. 1900. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite

Photograph of *Sasha Lazard* wearing a model of a Chaumet spider's web tiara by *Jonathan Becker*.







Opposite
Portrait by *Vicente Lopez* of Queen *Maria Cristina of Spain* with diamond flowers in her hair,
above a veil with plumes, 1829. Museo del Prado, Madrid.

Above
Diamond and pearl gardenia aigrette, Chaumet, 1905, for stock.
Chaumet Collection, Paris.



Above

Drawing of a triple crescent aigrette, one of the half moons set with sapphires, convertible into brooch or comb, Chaumet, 1890. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite

Photograph of *Nancy Beaton*, as "sternschuppe" for the Bal des Etoiles, by *Cecil Beaton*, 1929.





Above

Three Chaumet platinum and diamond bandeaux.

Top 1916, for stock.

Center With diamond ribbons intertwined with leaves, 1913, for *Princess Garrega Lucedia*.

Bottom With pearls and diamonds, 1923, for stock Original photographs.

Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Opposite

The *Princess Pallavicini Rospighosi* and her daughters at the *Maria Camilla* first ball, 1950.





Above
Duchess Maria Grazia Salviati, donna Arabella Lanza di Scalea and donna Domitilla Ruspoli at the coming out party for Maria Camilla Pallavicini in the Palazzo Rospigliosi, Rome, 1959.

Opposite:
Drawings for three Chaumet diamond tiaras.
Top and bottom with pearls, and *center* with rubies,
c. 1914. Chaumet Collection, Paris.







Opposite
Gold and platinum stalactite tiara, Chaumet, 1904, for the *Marquis de Lubersac*,
Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Above
Diamond tiara with leafy sprays above crossed ribbons, Chaumet, 1904.
Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.



Above:
Platinum, pearl and diamond curvilinear tiara, Chaumet, 1950.

Opposite:
The Wedding March, Fay Wray, 1928.







Opposite
Photograph of *Lady Phunket*, 1924.

Above
Platinum, pearl and paved diamond Russian-style, kokochnik tiara,
Chaumet, 1914, *Madame de Bestegui*.
Original photograph. Chaumet Collection, Paris.



Above
Original design of a ruby and diamond parure that *Nitot*
made for *Empress Marie Louise*, January 18, 1811.

Opposite
Kate Moss photographed by *Nick Knight*, *Vogue*, December, 2001.



Opposite
Ruby and diamond humming bird aigrette with osprey plumes. Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Following pages
Drawing albums. Chaumet Collection, Paris.





VOLUMES
4

DIADÈMES

DIADÈMES
AILLES

AILLES



I

Napoleonic jewels for the head

1802 · 1814

Portrait of the Empress Marie Louise by Robert Lefèvre, in 1812.
The Empress is wearing the jewels which *Nitot* created for her in 1810.
Chaumet Collection, Paris.

Chaumet's founders, Marie Etienne Nitot and his son, François-Regnault Nitot, won fame and fortune as court jewellers to Napoleon (1769–1821). Their great opportunity came when, after rising from lieutenant to general at the age of twenty-four, and from Consul to Emperor of France ten years later, Napoleon faced the challenge of maintaining by peaceful means the imperial authority gained by his sword. Having raised his wife, mother, brothers and sisters to the very highest rank, he had to surround them with an aura of majesty that would transform them from suspicious upstarts to dignified royalty. To this end he established a hierarchy of princes, marshals and officials—grand almoner, grand chamberlain, grand master of the horse, grand marshal of the palace—along the lines of the old monarchy, and court ceremonies took place in an atmosphere of the utmost splendour. This policy gave the Nitots the task of creating jewels that ensured that the Imperial family always stood out from the crowd at great events, not only coronations but also marriages, state visits and court balls. It was for these occasions that the Nitots created their stately parures, or sets of ornaments comprising tiara, comb, earrings, necklace, belt clasp and bracelets matching in design and stones. The tiara, which drew attention to the head, gave the wearer an unmistakable air of authority.

Epitomising the grand Empire style of jewellery, like so much of the art of that time, the tiara originated in antiquity. According to Hesiod, in his c. 700 B.C. *Theogony*, ll. 578–84, Athena gave Pandora “a golden tiara. On it were wrought many intricate designs: a wonder to behold, of all the many creatures that land and sea foster, most were there, exuding great charm, wonderful designs, like living creatures with voices of their own.” Sappho declared in *Athenaeus* (c. 612 B.C.) that those who approached the gods should wear garlands on their heads as beautiful things acceptable to them. Whereas in ancient Greece they were awarded to the victors of athletic and musical contests, during the Roman Empire the tiara and the narrow bandeau, worn low on the forehead, symbolised absolute power, inseparable from the image of the Emperor and Empress.

As the new Augustus, Napoleon revived the tiara for his first Empress, Josephine, and then for her successor, Marie Louise: where the Empress led, the women of the Imperial family and court followed. Their heads are

crowned with tiaras in the paintings by J.-L. David of the Coronation of 1804, by J.-B. Regnault of the marriage of Jérôme Bonaparte and Princess Catherine of Wurtemberg of 1807, and in the official portraits by Robert Lefèvre and Baron Gros. However, although inspired by antiquity, these tiaras are quite different from those of the Greeks and Romans, which were made of gold and only occasionally enamelled and set with coloured stones. During the Empire they were usually mounted with pearls and precious gems, particularly diamonds, so as to obtain an effect of brilliance. Balzac described the Napoleonic court in *La Paix du Ménage*: “Diamonds glittered everywhere—so much so that it seemed as if the entire wealth of the world were concentrated in the salons of Paris. Never had the diamond been so sought after.” This stone made the greatest impression in the tiara, for as John Mawe observed in his *Treatise on Diamonds and Precious Stones* (1823), while other gems set in rings and bracelets might be enjoyed by the wearer herself and almost entirely lost on the distant beholder, the diamond “blazing on the crown of state in courts and feasts and high solemnities wreathing itself with the hair . . . proclaims to the surrounding crowd the person of the monarch, of the knight and of the beauty.” Mawe explained that this was due to the diamond’s property of absorbing the “pure solar ray and then reflecting it with undiminished intensity and unyielding brilliancy.” This explains why the diamond tiara was an indispensable weapon in the battle for social supremacy; as *Lady’s Magazine* observed in 1799, “How can a woman even of the most illustrious descent command awe and respect if a mere silken fillet binds her brow?”

Here the Nitots, father and son, were ideally suited to the task of creating jewels for the purpose of commanding respect. Well before the Revolution of 1789 Marie-Etienne had made jewellery to the exacting standards of the Ancien Régime, both for his own clientele and as supplier to the court jeweller, Aubert. They were such excellent judges of quality that they were entrusted with refilling the Trésor de la Couronne, the contents of which had been dispersed during the revolution. They not only repatriated the original jewels but acquired new precious stones and pearls—required for the wonderful parures worn by the women of the Imperial court.

Designs, in accordance with the style devised for the Empire by the architects Charles Percier and Pierre Fontaine, were strictly classical: symmetrical in shape, with clear silhouettes and decorated with motifs

derived from Greek and Roman art. Particularly becoming was the laurel-leaf tiara, worn by the Empress Josephine at the coronation of 1804, which has been reproduced many times over the past 200 years. Cameos and intaglios, so esteemed by the emperors of ancient Rome, were equally prized by Napoleon, who bought them for jewellery from the Roman gem engravers Nicola Morelli (1771–1835), Giuseppe Girometti (1779–1851) and Luigi Pichler (1773–1854). Napoleon's enthusiasm was so great that he did not scruple to authorise the removal of eighty-two cameos and intaglios from the state collection of the Cabinet des Médailles in 1808, which Nitot & Fils mounted with quantities of pearls into a tiara with matching necklace, belt and bracelets. Unfortunately, it proved too heavy for the Empress Josephine to wear, but she enjoyed taking the parure from its box and discussing the subjects of the cameos with her friends. After the divorce, the same gems were remounted, again by the Nitots, into another parure for the Empress Marie Louise.

The most deluxe designs were embellished with pearls and diamonds, wrought into classical motifs: the lyre, Greek key, leaves of olive or laurel, acanthus and vine scrolls, palmettes and honeysuckles. This grandiose yet timeless style is represented by the tiara worn today by the Queen of Sweden, which is set with contemporary onyx cameos within pearl borders, alternating with palmette and scroll between pieces. In simpler taste were frames of plain gold with a matte border, perhaps outlined by a fillet of blue enamel. Because of the scarcity of hardstone cameos, tiaras might also be mounted with cheaper substitutes: coral and shell, both so much easier to carve. Essential as statements of rank, tiaras were also included in the relatively inexpensive sets of Berlin iron, faceted steel, black enamel and jet worn by the Empress with mourning dress.

although the tiara was the most prestigious of Empire head jewels, it was only one of many designed to make women look their best. Typically Empire was the bandeau of diamonds or pearls, centred on a cameo and worn so low as almost to touch the eyebrows. Another favourite was the headdress “à la Cérés,” with sheaves of corn standing up over the brow. Hair, whether dressed short in the simple “à la Titus” style, or smooth in front, plaited behind “à la Ninon,” or swept up into a chignon and framing the face, was kept in place by tortoiseshell or silver-gilt combs with

tops mounted with Roman micromosaic plaques, with cameos or diamond and coloured-stone classical urns and Cupid's quiver of arrows. The Irishwoman Catherine Wilmot, visiting Paris in 1802, was intrigued by a young French girl dressed like one of the Louvre marble statues come to life, in transparent drapery and on her head a crescent like a goddess. Quantities of golden pins with pearl and diamond tops in the form of a lyre, the caduceus of Mercury or an arrow were placed in the hair beside the comb or fixed the lace veil to the back of the head. Such was the supremacy of Parisian fashion that even though France was at war with England these jewels, faithfully reported and illustrated in *Lady's Magazine*, were quickly copied across the Channel, and also by women in those continental countries occupied by French troops and ruled by a Napoleonic court.

The lead came from Nitot's first and greatest patroness, the Empress Josephine, who had not only poise and charm but excellent taste. Moreover, she was so generous that forty years later she was remembered by Levesque, the craftsman who made her coronation laurel tiara, as "la Bonne Josephine." Nitot, who often had cause to be grateful to her, wrote an account of an incident for his descendants to remember her by. Short of money, he called on her at Malmaison, asking for payment of his bill:

"As they were talking in the small sitting room next to her bedroom, they heard the sound of trumpets announcing the arrival of the First Consul. As he made for the door, Madame Bonaparte held him back, saying, 'I've thought of something, get into this cupboard and don't move.' No sooner was Nitot hidden away than Bonaparte appeared, kissed his wife passionately and in his haste to remove her peignoir tore the fabric. Poor Nitot went white with fear as he heard the First Consul carried away by his ardour. Eventually the love scene was concluded and Nitot could breathe again. As Bonaparte said brusquely, "I must go now, Rapp is expecting me." Josephine held him back. "Not quite yet," she said, "not until you have signed this draft for 20 000 francs in compensation for the damage you have done to my peignoir . . . as you promised." After saying he had made no such promise, the First Consul relented and scribbled instructions to the banker Hainguerlot before making off. Then when

Nitot emerged, pale and trembling, from his hiding place, she waved the paper in triumph, “Here you are . . . 20 000 for you, but please don’t ask for more. I’ve had trouble enough obtaining this!”

Her successor, the Hapsburg Archduchess Marie Louise who married Napoleon in 1810, although lacking Josephine’s elegance, had sufficient presence to sustain her role on all official occasions. Here again, Nitot & Fils were commissioned to supply parures both for her private collection and that of the state. Their greatest achievement was the all-white parure of the historic diamonds from the Trésor de la Couronne, which Bernard Morel, in his 1988 book *The French Crown Jewels*, judged “the most fabulous of the whole nineteenth century.” It combined majesty with elegance, as only the Nitots knew how. As crown property, it was returned by the Empress Marie Louise in 1815.

The entire state collection was remodelled in the Restoration period, and only vestiges remain of its original splendour. One of the most important is in the Chaumet museum. This is a garnet and white topaz replica of the great ruby and diamond parure delivered to the Empress Marie Louise by Nitot in 1813. It is copied from the original drawing and therefore a precious record of his intention. However, others have survived from her personal collection, bequeathed to her family. These bequests included the tiara from her emerald and diamond suite, which was preserved intact until 1953, when the American branch of the jeweller Van Cleef and Arpels removed the emeralds from the tiara to set in modern jewellery for a Texan customer. After the empty settings were filled with turquoises, the tiara was bought by the American businesswoman and hostess Marjorie Post. She showed that even in its altered state, a Nitot tiara could still be worn to great effect, making a great impression at state visits in Washington and at the annual Red Cross Ball in Palm Beach, Florida. However, she understood that to look her best in it, she needed to hold her head high, and she trained herself accordingly. The interior designer Thomas Anthony Buckley remembered a visit to her Washington house, Hillwood, one afternoon before a formal social event:

“We were in the hall, taking our coats off, when this voice came from upstairs, ‘Don’t be surprised at the way I look, but I’m practising.’ We

sort of looked at each other and thought, ‘Oh, my lord, what can it be?’ Down the stairs she came with one of those silk dresses she used to wear a lot with a little sweater thrown over her shoulders, but on her head was this huge tiara—I mean flashing diamonds, this huge tiara that had belonged to the Empress Marie Louise that she was wearing because the Queen was coming to this state dinner in the White House. She had gotten this tiara out, and she was wearing it because it was so heavy and she wanted to get accustomed to it so that she would walk without her head bowed. She was straight as a ramrod . . . she never slouches . . . she looked absolutely fabulous wearing this tiara even when practising without her evening dress on.”



II

Romanticism

1815 · 1848

Sketch by *Thomas Couture* for his portrait of *Princesse Mathilde Bonaparte*,
the wife of *Prince Anatole Demidoff*, wearing a diadem and coronet
designed for her by *Fossin*.

As a result of the encouragement Napoleon had given to the art of jewellery and his success in using it as an expression of political power, the collapse of his regime did not mean hard times for the Parisian jewellers. On the contrary, the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in France and the victory of the allied powers of Europe brought a desire to emulate the splendour of the Empire, and the demand for formal jewellery—albeit in a different style—continued. The court ceremonies of Louis XVIII and Charles X, who reigned from 1815 to 1830, followed by Louis-Philippe and Queen Marie-Amélie until 1848, were attended by women splendidly dressed and jewelled. At a ball in 1817 an American diplomat, James Gallatin, was impressed by the Duchess d'Angoulême, niece of Louis XVIII, who was “regal in white with a train entirely of ermine. She was absolutely covered in jewels—pearls and diamonds. She is the most royal-looking person one can possibly imagine.” Similarly, *Les Lettres Parisiennes* described an 1836 reception at the Tuileries held by Queen Marie Amélie: “Three rows of jewelled women were paraded before the queen. On every side the eyes were dazzled by the radiance of the colours darting out from the emeralds and the rubies.

The sight of those serried ranks of women crowned with so many precious stones had the same effect as an illumination made of coloured glass.” It was the same in England and at the coronation of George IV in Westminster Abbey. According to the English *Lady's Magazine* in 1821, “coronets, tiaras, circlets, aigrettes, combs of diamonds, pearls and coloured gems were mingled with the feathers of the headdress.” The American envoy Richard Rush observed the scene in *The Queen's Drawing Room* in London in 1818: “No lady was without her plume. The whole was a waving field of feathers. Some were blue, like the sky, some were tinged with red, here you saw violet and yellow, there were shades of green. But most were like tufts of snow. The diamonds encircling them caught the sun through the windows and threw dazzling beams around . . . It seemed as if the curtain had risen to show a pageant in another sphere.” As this pattern was repeated all over Europe and in Russia, women travellers of rank and wealth were obliged to travel with their tiaras for court presentations and social events.

It was in this atmosphere that Jean-Baptiste Fossin, who succeeded François-Regnault Nitot in 1815, won an international reputation for beautiful jewels in an entirely new style. He started with a great advantage over his rivals, for as head of the Nitot & Fils workshop he had executed the great imperial commissions. With his son, Jules, he opened a shop on the rue Richelieu, where their artistry and taste attracted court patronage as well as that of the nobility of the Faubourg St. Germain and of the newly enriched bankers of the Chaussée d'Antin. Equally important was the foreign clientele drawn to Paris, as always. Some foreigners, such as the Russian Princess Bagration, the American Colonel Thorn and the Italian Duchess of Galliera, were permanent residents in the city. Some of the best customers were there for shorter periods, including diplomats and visitors staying at famous hotels such as the Bristol in Place Vendôme. Turning away from the severe classicism of the Empire style, the Fossins won acclaim for their naturalistic tiaras and bandeaux, reviving the theme that had been the glory of the jewellers of the Ancien Régime.

after a ball at the Austrian embassy in 1830, the fashion magazine *Les Modes* reported that never before “had stones been mounted with such finesse, elegance and taste. The heavy combs and severe tiaras had vanished while everywhere topazes, emeralds, rubies and diamonds were ingeniously combined and set by Fossin’s inimitable art to reproduce the many diverse forms of garlands, flowers, bouquets and bowknots.” They used leaves of ivy, volubilis, olive and chestnut, flowers of eglantine, hawthorn, jasmine, geranium and cactus as well as fruits such as grapes, cherries and red currants with equal assurance. The flowers were set on trembler springs so that every movement showed them from a new and still beautiful point of view, and, for extra realism Fossin introduced enamel, particularly green for leaves. Thus, *Les Modes* reported from the Opera in 1843, “We noticed a whole crop of red currants in the blonde hair of a beautiful foreigner: each of the currants amidst the green leaves was set with a large ruby. There were branches of red currants covering her white *gros de Naples* dress.” For those who imagined themselves as water sprites, the Fossins created garlands of bullrushes or waterlilies mixed with other plants and leaves. Again, *Les Modes* (1838) was impressed by

“Madame de W . . . in a green gauze dress with silver lamée, and falling down across her right shoulder was a tuft from the crown of bullrushes encircling her blonde hair. . . . This Ondine look perfectly suited the young Russian.” These garlands might be tied with ribbons, a motif also used on its own for Baron Nathaniel de Rothschild’s ruby and brilliant knot tiara (1842). A variant of the garland was named after Marie Mancini, the first love of Louis XIV, and whose ringlets framing her face set a new fashion for his court. The Mancini was composed of twin branches or bouquets falling down like showers against the cheeks and culminating in long fringes of diamonds or a contrasting coloured stone such as opal.

Some of the classical motifs—palmette, honeysuckle, Greek key, acanthus—so typical of the Empire continued in fashion, as did the cameo tiara, sometimes set with hardstones, ancient or contemporary, but more often with the less expensive coral and shell. Festive amethyst or garnet grapes with diamond or green-enamel vine leaves might be surmounted by a palmette and supported by a band of Greek key. Most popular of all were the ears of corn similar to those ordered by Prince Borghese (1845), which could be worn either high on the crown of the head or low on the brow as a garland “à la Cérès”, hanging down, Mancini style, beside each cheek. *Le Petit Courrier des Dames* (1829) described a woman at an evening reception in a “rich pink gauze dress . . . diamonds fastening the draperies of the bodice at the shoulders, in front and at the waist, a necklace of diamond rosettes linked by a large diamond. Nothing could have looked more splendid than the coiffure completing this toilette, comprising a bandeau and fifteen or twenty ears of wheat that mingled with her curls and stood up like a sheaf high above the head.” Three separate ornaments might be worn at the same time: a diamond bandeau round the head, a floral garland in the middle and ears of corn in front of the comb at the back of the head. These expensive designs were adaptable. An emerald and diamond bandeau made for the Princesse de Ligne (1848) divided into a pair of bracelets, and the turquoise and brilliant ivy crown of Lady Harriet Baring (1838) could be split into seven different bouquets to pin to the bodice. For the Marquis de Villafranca in 1848 Fossin made “an important bandeau/tiara/wreath of green-enamel vine leaves, between two lines

of green enamel interspersed with collet-set diamonds dividing into bracelets, centred on a rosette with a large pearl amidst green leaves, converting into a brooch.”

This was the age of eclecticism, and thus Fossin found inspiration for hair ornaments in the world of the Renaissance and Middle Ages, as *Le Petit Courrier des Dames* noted in 1829: “the sight of a thousand different jewels now weighing down on the hair is like a museum collection of all those invented by art and coquetry over many centuries.” In 1841 *Les Lettres Parisiennes* declared “what is coming into fashion is quite simply the love, the perfect love, of past times . . . in a word, this year the style of the troubadour is generally adopted.” There was the *ferronière* derived from the portrait of *La Belle Ferronière* by Leonardo da Vinci in the Louvre: worn low across the brow, like a chain or necklace, it centred on a pearl or coloured-stone drop, perhaps hanging from the mouth of a chimera or framed in leafy branches enamelled to match the colour of the dress. To imitate the air of a medieval chatelaine Fossin revived the *Bandeau Berthe*, which followed the contours of the head and face. Also evocative of the age of chivalry were ducal strawberry-leaf crowns, bought by the Duchesse de Dino and the hereditary princess Hohenzollern, set with pearls and precious stones. Alternative versions were executed in *bijouterie*—enamelled gold, filigree, *cannetille*, *graineti*—with semi-precious stones, which were much less expensive and thus gave more scope for experiment than diamonds.

The Duchess of Palmella purchased in 1843 an “important strawberry-leaf tiara set with turquoises and brilliants in chased gold with translucent red enamel.” These coronets might be worn high, surmounting a plait encircling the crown of the head, or much lower, as described by an 1838 issue of *Les Modes*: “coronets worn straight over the forehead are often seen . . . They are placed today exactly as Raphael painted them on the brow of his angels.” The diamond remained the most sought-after stone, particularly for the older woman, for as *Le Petit Courrier des Dames* explained in 1826, “in giving brilliance to the appearance it proved how much luxury could add to the charm of women who could no longer rely on the attractions of youth.” It was therefore hardly surprising that in 1829 *Les Modes* should

observe that “diamonds were almost universally worn in the hair at the court reception.” However, a woman of fashion might own several parures so that she was not always seen in the same jewellery, and every woman wanted something different and new. Fossin responded by offering not only original designs but also an unusually wide range of materials. The turban, toque or beret was worn with numerous ornaments: bandeaux, chains of pearls, diamonds and coloured stones across the brow, and aigrettes, pins with jewelled tops standing out against the black or rich crimson velvet. However, for the Opera and at balls the hair was increasingly shown off on its own, ornamented with flowers, feathers and jewelled birds of paradise, one or more diamond arrows, golden snakes with fangs gripping a pearl drop, and aigrettes. *Le Petit Courrier des Dames* (1829) observed women wearing “aigrettes of bright little stones of different shades of colour shooting upwards, kept in place by a large sapphire or emerald at the base, two or three worn at once in the hair.” Some of these ornaments were more than decorative, for they were also the key to personality. Thus the crescent indicated shyness, the dove a warm heart, the parrot the chatterbox, the butterfly the inconstant, the star the intellectual, the violet modesty, the forget-me-not susceptibility, the pansy thoughtfulness; the anchor was the symbol of a bride, birds in the nest of an expectant mother, and ears of corn a mother with sons and daughters. The Fossin design books contain many ideas—branches of leaves, flowers, bullrushes, ribbons, arabesques—for the decoration of the tops of combs, some so high that according to an 1827 edition of *Le Petit Courrier des Dames*, “one begins to despair of ever finding turtles with shells big enough for the latest whim of the women of fashion.” It was in fact these whims that were the inspiration of the jewellers. Fossin recognised that it was through his dialogue with these *élégantes* always seeking something new, different, “soigné et joli,” that the Parisian jeweller maintained his preeminence.



III

Court Grandeur

1848 · 1900

Photograph of *Countess Lanckoronska*, wife of a Polish nobleman, dressed for a court reception in Vienna wearing the sapphire and diamond parure created for her by *Josep Chaumet* in 1894.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, industry flourished while investments in property and banking enriched the new European business class and the old aristocracy alike. Across the Atlantic the millionaires of North and South America grew wealthier every year. This prosperity, coinciding with decades of peace, low taxation and no inflation provided the social background in which the women of the upper classes were permanently on show, and a husband's success could be measured by his wife's jewellery. In most European countries society was headed by a monarch who encouraged brilliance at court, and nowhere more so than in France during the Second Empire of Napoleon III.

His marriage to Eugénie de Montijo in 1853 was followed by rounds of balls, dinners and concerts held every year at the Tuileries in Paris and in the palaces of St. Cloud, Compiègne and Fontainebleau. Wealth ruled the world of fashion, creating sumptuous evening gowns that were worn with much jewellery. For the Empress, who set the standard, the Bijoux de la Couronne were remounted into parures that always included a tiara. More than this, the Emperor actively supported French participation in the International Exhibitions of 1855 (held in Paris), 1862 (in London) and 1867 (again in Paris), where the jewellery stands, which always showed a selection of jewels for the head, attracted huge crowds and the French won most of the prizes. Jules Fossin remained active on the rue Richelieu until 1862, when Prosper Morel assumed control.

for years the Empress Eugénie, her sister, the Duchess of Alba, and their mother, the Countess de Montijo, had regarded Fossin as their family jeweller, and indeed, he supplied many of the pieces commissioned for her marriage. However, because he refused to discontinue his relationship with the family of Louis Philippe, living in exile since the revolution of 1848, the Empress was displeased and thereafter turned to other jewellers. Even so, Fossin kept the loyalty of the most attractive and lively women of the Imperial court—Princesse Mathilde Bonaparte, the Duchesses de Mouchy, de la Pagérie, Cambacérès and Bassano, and the Countesses Walewska and Pourtalès. His clientele also included members of the old aristocratic families of de La Rochefoucauld, Luynes, Harcourt and Beaumont, the Paris bankers Rothschild, Fould, Cahen d'Anvers and

Delessert, the industrialists from Lyons, Rouen and Lille and the merchants from Bordeaux and Marseilles. Then there were customers from abroad, attracted by the gaiety and pleasures of Paris: the Moldavian Princesses Cantcuzene and Bibesco, Mrs. Astor from New York, the Russian Princess Bariatinska, her sister-in-law, Leonilla Sayn Wittgenstein Sayn, and Princess Tatiana Youssouppoff. For her Prosper Morel mounted the Polar Star diamond in the centre of a butterfly aigrette, which she wore with a dress of pink gauze over grey to the ball given by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Paris, in 1865.

as designs were static for some years after the Revolution of 1848, Fossin continued to supply the naturalistic garlands of the Romantic period. There were two diamond coronets of jasmine flowers for the Elector of Hesse Cassel (1852), a diamond branch of chestnut leaves with diamond and pearl showers (the centre section convertible into a bracelet and the two side bouquets into brooches for the bodice or pins for the hair) for Prince Borghese in Rome (1852), and a bandeau/wreath of diamond ivy leaves for the Polish Count Zamoyski (1850). However, by 1860 these naturalistic tiaras and bandeaux were contained in symmetrical frames of imposing proportions. The eighteenth-century motifs of trellis, bowknots and ribbons were also introduced, as a consequence perhaps of the Empress Eugénie's passion for the time of Queen Marie-Antoinette. Classicism was given a stimulus after the purchase by Napoleon III of the celebrated Campana collection of 1200 items of Greek, Etruscan and Roman jewellery for the Louvre in 1862. Three bandeaux reflect this taste: a diamond Greek-key pattern bandeau surmounted by acanthus scrolls supporting large collet diamonds with "illusion" settings between pieces, ordered by General Jacquiminot (1862); a diamond Greek-key style bandeau convertible into necklace with chain added (1869); and a bandeau of diamond Greek key and palmettes centred on sapphire palmettes, for Princess Ladislaus Czartoriska (1868). Most popular of all were stars, perhaps because of their versatility, for they looked equally well whether in sets mounted on a tiara or worn separately as pins in the hair or brooches on the dress.

As every woman aspired to look like an Empress, all who could afford to do so wore diamonds. This preference could be indulged more readily

after the discovery of the mines of South Africa in 1867, coinciding with the introduction of electric light, which suited their glitter and sparkle. Another change was political, for in 1870 the Second Empire fell, and after a difficult period of siege, famine and anarchy, there was a return to order with the establishment of the Third Republic in France. Although presidential receptions at the Elysée lacked the brilliance of the imperial court, private wealth was increasing constantly as was the desire to display it, and Prosper Morel continued to do well. In 1875 his daughter Marie married Joseph Chaumet, who was to lead the firm to great heights. Although pearls were his greatest passion, he was also an authority on rubies and other precious stones. Like Bernard Damaze in Marcel Boulenger's *Les Doigts de Fée*, who was "fanatique de son art" ("mad about his art"), he took care to select stones in harmony with the woman who was to wear them, such as "this rose-red ruby, in a pale-gold setting, what a lovely effect amidst honey coloured hair."

The mainstay of the firm was the aristocratic French clientele whose world was captured by Marcel Proust in his novel *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu*. For them the tiara was a political symbol, asserting their traditional leadership of society against the Republican interlopers. Tiaras such as the triumphant diamond laurel-leaf tiara for the Duc de Doudeauville (1889), the heraldic diamond strawberry-leaf tiara for the Duke de Luynes (1889) and diamond bullrush tiara with diamond leaves for the Duchesse d'Harcourt (1892) all signified the glory of a great family. It was in this spirit that, according to Paul Chabot's *Jean and Yvonne Domestiques en 1900* (1977), Felix, the butler, applauded the bejewelled Marquise d'Harcourt as she left the house on the rue Constantine for the British embassy: "Ah! Madame la Marquise, que *notre* diademe vous va bien!" ("Oh, Madame, how well *our* tiara suits you!")

The most dramatic of the many tiaras proclaiming loyalty to the exiled House of Orléans was the Duc de Doudeauville's paved-diamond eagle carrying the Bourbon symbol, the fleur de lis. Led by the Duchess de Luynes, the royalist Femmes de France expressed their hopes for a return of the monarchy by subscribing to the purchase of a diamond fleur-de-lis crown for the Hapsburg Archduchess Maria Dorothea on her marriage to

the Duc d'Orléans in 1896. The Duc, who had given his niece, Hélène, a Chaumet tiara with diamond ribbons centred on an emerald surmounted by an aigrette on the occasion of her marriage to the Duc d'Aosta (1895), then bought another for his new wife in 1897. The tiaras ordered by his great aunt, Princesse Clementine de Saxe Cobourg Gotha, for the marriage of her son, the future King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, included a new design of bird's wings, executed in emeralds and diamonds and a ruby and diamond festoon design (1893).

Of the great banking dynasties, it is the French Rothschilds whose names appear most frequently in the ledgers. For the formidable Baroness Gustave de Rothschild (1840–1912), Chaumet made the magnificent diamond tiara with fifteen pear-shaped brilliants and two black, two white and one button pearl (1896), and two others for her niece, Beatrix, daughter of Baron Alphonse, married to Maurice Ephrussi (1898). Dressed in rose pink, a diamond tiara sparkling in her hair, which had turned white when she was young, Madame Ephrussi must have looked as if she had stepped out of an eighteenth-century portrait.

Ever more foreigners visited Paris now that the steam ship and the railways made travel easier, and new hotels such as the Ritz, which opened in 1897, ensured their comfort. The palm of splendour was awarded the Russians, led by the Grand Duchess Wladimir, aunt of Tsar Nicholas II, who ordered Chaumet's famous *chute d'eau* tiara. The Polish Countess Lanckoronska ordered a parure that included a sapphire fleur-de-lis tiara (1886) and a "diadème Mary Stuart" (1888), popular because of its romantic associations with the ill-fated Queen. Pride of place in the *corbeille* or display of the jewels of the Mexican Mademoiselle Escandon, after her marriage to the Duc de Montellano, was given to Chaumet's diamond coronet/tiara with five pear pearls and her turquoise parure (1891). In England the tiara was now worn by so many people that the *Illustrated London News* complained in 1898, "Hereditary jewels are even outshone by tiaras of no ancestry whatsoever." Most were bought in London, but the Duchess of Portland acquired her diamond tiara with pear-shaped diamond points in Paris in 1897.

From North America came visitors such as the Vanderbilts, Mrs. Perry Belmont, and the railway heiress Anna Gould, whose aesthete husband,

Comte Boni de Castellane, bought her a pair of emerald and diamond wings, and a diamond tiara/bandeau centred on a briolette diamond (1895). Another American client, Mrs. Margaret “Daisy” White, married to a diplomat, was so attached to the daisies Chaumet had made for her hair, which were stolen from her in 1889, that she felt nothing could ever replace them. One evening, after dressing for dinner, she confided her sorrow to her diary:

“My lovely, beloved lost jewels—all my lovely daisies. Gone, for I’m sure I’ll never set eyes on them again. After the glow of their faithful and brilliant attendance at balls it is strange and depressing to have them no more. I wonder where the pretty things are. It seems as if they must be pining to be back. I’m sure they felt I did them credit, I shall never like the new ones, if I get them so well. I seem older and soberer since they have gone and not so much interested in myself.”



It was the opinion of Eugène Fontenay, in *Les Bijoux Anciens et Modernes* (1887), that “because the tiara was hardly compatible with government by republic, French women made do with combs and aigrettes instead.” At the same time as this change of government came a new way of dressing the hair, with the chignon standing up high and narrow at the back of the head, well suited to show off the aigrette that had been so popular in the eighteenth century. Chaumet’s favourite themes were the stars, sun, crescent moon (single, double or triple), hummingbirds, feathers, ribbons tied into bowknots, flowers (marguerites, wild roses, gardenia, sunflower, orchid), leafy sprays, bullrushes, ears of wheat, fine specimen pearls, briolettes or pear-shaped diamonds falling down in a cascade like a small waterfall. At Christmastime a pretty woman might place a sprig of aquamarine or opal mistletoe—sacred to the Druids—in her hair and, in accordance with the custom imported from England, allow herself to be kissed. Aigrettes, which might be also worn as brooches, were designed to be placed in the hair with feathers, usually white, but sometimes matching the dress colour, in front of the chignon. Mrs. Daisy White, who always dressed well and wore the right jewels, was pleased with her effect when dining with Queen Victoria

at Balmoral in 1897: "I wore my black brocade Worth dress, with tulle sleeves, and a big yoke on one side, a diamond and pearl chain and diamond collar with a row of pearls and an aigrette in my hair. Lady Lytton said I looked nice!"

Combs were as important as ever, and the magazine *Queen* observed in 1897, "The prevailing mode of hairdressing requires the aid of combs of various shapes and sizes, broad side combs, small combs with long teeth, high back combs besides forked pins. In all these blond tortoiseshell combs the preferred styles of ornamentation are the Louis XVI scroll and the Greek-key pattern executed in diamonds and pearls." However, *L'Illustration* also noticed the influence of Japan: "the claw-shaped pin is most unusual, being made from the delightful cerise tortoiseshell with its tawny shimmer, similar to the Ylang pin with branches twisted like a Japanese plant."



IV

Twentieth Century I

1900 · 1918

Portrait of a noblewoman by *Philip de Laszlo* wearing Chaumet tiara
acanthus scrolls meeting at double crescents above the brow, 1910.

At the time of the International Exhibition, held in Paris in 1900, the Belle Epoque seemed to have reached its apogee. The luxury trades were more prosperous than ever, and fashion, dominated by Worth, Redfern, Paquin and Doucet, was designed for the feminine, hourglass figure with small waist and full bosom, featuring leg-of-mutton sleeves and crowned with huge hats. Often the jewelled tops of the pins, which secured these hats to the head, were exquisitely wrought as if each was an individual work of art. At night, ablaze with diamonds, the hair dressed high à la Pompadour and puffed out at the sides, flattered the face and made a firm foundation for jewellery. Tortoiseshell combs with decorative galleries were essential, and the size and value of the other jewels worn was in ratio to the importance of the social event.

●

In all countries governed by a monarchy tiaras were much in evidence. For German court receptions Chaumet supplied heraldic tiaras to Princess Henckel von Donnersmarck and the Baron de Courlande, and in 1908 he made a garland of flowers for the English-born Daisy, Princesse of Pless. The King of Spain bought a turquoise diamond tiara for his bride Princess Victoria Eugenia of Battenburg (1906), who years later replaced the turquoises with diamonds. In England, *Tatler* (1909) reported that the tiara, formerly reserved for royalty or the wives of wealthy peers and ambassadors, “was now worn on all sorts of unsuitable occasions. Nowadays one sees them at the play, at small parties, and at dinner in restaurants. Then the modern bride expects at least a couple of tiaras among her wedding presents, and four or five are sometimes seen at smart marriages. There is a story of a woman who returned to London after some time away and found that even those marrying on an income of £500 a year expected a tiara.” In England during the reign of Edward VII, who loved ceremony, the most splendid dinner gowns were worn with tiaras—beginning with his coronation in 1902, and then at court balls, state openings of Parliament, and gala performances at the Opera. The ritual of country-house visiting required several changes of dress during the day and formal evening gowns with a display of tiaras. To meet the demand Joseph Chaumet

opened a London branch on Bond Street in 1905, where customers included the Duke of Westminster and the Empress Eugénie, whose wedding gift to her goddaughter, the Queen of Spain, was a tiara with two wings to each side of an emerald trefoil (1906), alluding to the first jewel she received from Napoleon III. In 1907, in order to be more accessible to foreign visitors, he moved from the rue Richelieu to 12 Place Vendôme, opposite the Ritz hotel and close to the couturiers and jewellers of the rue de la Paix.

Although still inspired by the art of the reigns of Louis XV and Louis XVI, the tiaras he offered now were much lighter than those of the previous period, thanks to the finesse of the platinum settings that were so thin as to be almost invisible, thus giving full value to the brilliance of the large stones and the sparkle of the smaller. The bright white surface of this metal, so strong that it could be used to delicate effect in small quantities, was broken up by the mille-grain technique into beads that reflected the light coming from the diamonds in countless points, so that not only the stones but the metal itself seemed ablaze with fire. A further refinement was the use of coloured stones cut to measure the settings. These new techniques made such a difference that quantities of old family tiaras were brought into Chaumet for remodelling in the “modern style.” As each tiara was the result of a dialogue with the client, it was usually a French woman who spurred him to his greatest successes. The nucleus was from the Faubourg St. Germain, whose residents still lived like princes in their town and country houses. Once Chaumet gained the confidence of the Duchesse d’Uzes, the families of La Rochefoucauld, Lubersac, Gramont, Luynes, de Broglie, de Vogue, Talhouet, Luart, de la Trémoille and others, they remained loyal to him.

most tiaras were ordered for marriages, as in 1901 when Chaumet set the Sully diamonds into a ducal tiara for the bride of Comte de Béthune Sully. To these names were now added those of the wives and daughters of the sugar refiners Say and Lebaudy, and the industrialists Wendel and Schneider of Le Creusot, whose daughters had married into the families of Brantes, Juigne and de Ganay. The most prestigious orders for tiaras as wedding presents came from the Rothschilds, as *Les Modes* revealed in 1907:

“The most important social event of last month was the reception given by Monsieur and Madame Edmond Beer after the signing of the marriage contract between their daughter Nelly and Baron Robert de Rothschild. The display of wedding presents was breathtaking. From the fiancé, a tiara, the masterpiece of Lalique, a ruby pendant, a superb emerald ring, a sapphire and diamond bracelet, a diamond and ruby necklace, combs with pearl and diamond tops. Souvenir from Baronesse James de Rothschild, diamond tiara. Souvenir from Madame Anspach, silver dishes and flatware. From Baron and Baronesse Gustave de Rothschild, large emeralds mounted in a tiara and matching necklace, a string of marvelous pearls, Sèvres vases with blue ground and painting, bracelets, a diamond and emerald ring, a ruby and diamond bracelet, an antique fan, black pearls. From Monsieur and Madame Edmond Beer, a motorcar. From Madame Edmond Kann, diamond stomacher, travelling bag, a set of drawingroom furniture upholstered in antique Beauvais tapestries. From Baron and Baronesse Lambert, a diamond and sapphire brooch, a Louis XVI secrétaire, an antique clock and candelabra. From Baron and Baroness Edmond de Rothschild, antique Sèvres dinner service. From Sir Edward and Lady Sassoon, combs topped with pearls and diamonds, pearl and diamond bracelet. And from the Baroness James de Rothschild, a diamond crescent, antique Dresden figures and a jardinière.”

Splendid tiaras were bought by American men and women married to French, English, German or Italian titles. There was a fleur-de-lis design for Rita Bell, niece of James Gordon Bennett, owner of the *New York Herald Tribune* and wife of Comte Paul d’Aramon, and a diamond tiara with ribbons, trefoils and crescent moons with pear-shaped diamonds (1909) for Maggie Thuret, married to Adolphus Whitcomb. In England the American clientele was led by the Duchesses of Marlborough, Manchester and Roxburgh, Lady Randolph Churchill, Lady Almeric Paget, Mrs. Arthur Paget, and by Mrs. Adair, said to be the greatest landowner in Texas. A large number of tiaras were bought by the American wives of diplomats such as Lady Lowther, Countess von Moltke, Mrs. Myron Herrick, Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss, Mrs. Henry White, Mrs. Ridgely Carter, Mrs. Daniel Sickles Others. Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, Mrs. Perry Belmont, J. P. Morgan, Mr. Crawford Hill of Denver, Mrs. Sears and Mrs. Ames of Boston, Mrs. MacClean of Washington, and

several members of the Vanderbilt family took their tiaras home.

The American women and their tiaras made a great show at the Metropolitan Opera, which, according to *A Practical Treatise on Etiquette and Dress of the Best American Society* (1881), “called out the richest of all dresses. A lady goes to the Opera not only to see, but to be seen, and her dress must be adopted with a full realization of the thousand gaslights which will bring out their merits or defects. . . . Jewelry of the heaviest and richest description is worn on this occasion and there is no place where the glitter of gems will be seen to better advantage.”

Joseph Chaumet maintained the firm’s long association with Russia by opening a branch in Kiev, keeping a representative in Moscow, and participating in an exhibition of French jewellery held in St. Petersburg in 1902. The Russian government recognised his contribution to Franco-Russian relations by appointing him to the Order of St. Anne. Tiaras were bought by clients from the large Russian colony who were part of *le grand monde parisien*: the diplomats Prince Ouvaroff and Prince Orloff, the military attaché Count Nostitz and his American wife, Madame Benardaky, the bankers Ephrussi and de Gunzbourg. The list of regular visitors was headed by the Grand Duchess Vladimir and the Countess Orloff-Davidoff. The greatest accolade came in 1914 when Prince Felix Youssouppoff brought a large collection of family jewels to be remounted into parures for his bride, Irena, niece of the Tsar Nicholas II. Among these superb commissions were a ruby and diamond garland-style tiara, a bandeau centred on a huge emerald and an aigrette with the Polar Star diamond blazing like a great rising sun.

but the old order was changing. Around 1910 threats of revolution shook the political stability of many countries. New taxes led to a decline in formal entertaining for which grand parures were de rigueur, and people now began to hold small dances, dinners in restaurants and card parties at home. Moreover, under the influence of Paul Poiret, women’s dress changed, evoking a chapter from the *Arabian Nights* instead of the classical elegance of the Petit Trianon. The smart women who adopted his

avant-garde fashions wore straight loose-fitting tunics, patterned in shapes and colours inspired by the costumes designed for Madame Ida Rubinstein in *Schcherazade* and the other pageantries of Diaghilev's Ballet Russe. As Proust wrote in *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu*, the fashion extended to the head: "With the prodigious flowering of the Russian Ballet, revealing one after another Bakst, Nijinski, Benoist, the genius of Stravinski, Princess Yourbeletieff, the youthful sponsor of all these new great men, appeared bearing on her head an immense quivering egret unknown to the women of Paris, which they all sought to copy." The tall majestic tiaras, fenders, were not compatible with this silhouette, and the simpler bandeau and aigrette worn with osprey feathers came into fashion. As the *Gazette du Bon Ton* commented in 1912, "Feathers and aigrettes give a delightful air of fantasy. Raised up, sumptuous, commanding, dominant, they triumphantly exalt the head held high above the upright body . . . placed like so many fountains, the light from the aigrettes radiates around the silhouette." The verdict of *Fémina* in 1913 was "although lovely in its lightness, its daring upward thrust, the aigrette is expensive and those people who would rather look rich than beautiful have adopted it as a sign of this preference."

Chaumet also looked to the East for new sources for design: the pointed arches of Islamic architecture and the flowering cherry branches of Japanese prints. For the American portrait painter Romaine Brooks, who, much influenced by Aubrey Beardsley, lived in a house entirely decorated in black and white without a single note of colour, Chaumet made an onyx and diamond bandeau. A success, it was followed by orders for other variants of this dramatic contrast, which anticipated the Art Deco style of the 1920s.



2

IV

Twentieth Century II

1918 · 2002

Princess Irina Youssouppoff, née Grand Duchess of Russia,
wearing a diademe of diamonds in the shape of an articulated sun,
remounted by Chaumet in 1914.

The period between the end of World War I and the opening years of the twenty-first century has been a time of great economic and social change, interspersed with alternating moments of prosperity and recession, and including the disastrous World War II. It divides into three parts: the first covers the years of frenetic extravagance between 1918 and the New York stock-market crash of October 24, 1929; the second ended with the declaration of World War II in 1939; and the third consists of the half century that followed the peace of 1945.

how did jewellery survive all these vicissitudes? Once again, it was by adapting to the changing sequence of fashions in dress and to the political and social climate of each period. The post-World War I jewel had to be compatible with the new short hair and the sleeveless, tubular dresses of Chanel and Lelong. Nevertheless, this simplification of dress called out for luxury, as *Vogue* magazine asserted in 1921: "There is no doubt but that brilliant jewellery is an absolute necessity to the modern mode." This meant long earrings to balance the short hair, chains hanging down to below the waist and glittering ornaments in the hair, which by emphasising horizontal rather than vertical lines, gave additional effect to the eyes and the oval of the face. In spite of the abolition of the monarchies of Germany and Austria, the rise of democracy and heavy taxation, the tiara was not considered obsolete. Indeed, in 1920 *Vogue* affirmed that for a bride it was "no less important than our mother's time," and again the following year the magazine declared that "after the engagement ring the tiara is the most thrilling topic of conversation not only in the mounting but in the choice of stones, which depend on the type of woman." In England tiaras were seen at the state openings of Parliament and at court, as was also the case in Spain, but in all other countries they were worn to give brilliance to formal events, notably the Opera, charity balls and weddings. Parisian taste continued to attract the international buyers to the jewellers of the rue de la Paix and the Place Vendôme.

Designs fell into two categories: romantic traditional or contemporary chic. For weddings such as that of Hedwige de La Rochefoucauld and

Prince Sixte of Bourbon Parme in 1919, and those of other grand and rich women of European and American society, new tiaras of traditional style were commissioned. Some, particularly in England, went on wearing family pieces dating not only from the Belle Epoque but even earlier. However, Chaumet also proposed more modern alternatives, in the style that crystallised at the Exposition des Arts Decoratifs held in Paris in 1925. This is characterised by a simplification of line, the dominance of geometric shapes—circles, squares, rectangles—contrasts of colour, and of opaque and transparent, of cabochon and faceted stones. The platinum mounts were reduced to mere skeletons, and calibre cutting was the rule for coloured stones. New decorative themes were introduced, not only from the East but also from ancient Egypt, especially after the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922.

another design source providing bold and exotic patterns was the folk art of central Europe and Roumania. The bandeau, which like the tiara was worn à la Josephine, low on the brow, reached a height of popularity, becoming almost required for private parties. *Vogue* (1919) approved of “a jewelled bandeau or tiara which admirably supplements the low style of coiffure and draws attention to the line of the profile.” Now made of overlapping discs, braiding and geometric motifs, wrought as supple as silk in platinum, it was ingeniously divisible into brooches, bracelets and could be clasped round the neck. Chaumet made bandeaux not only for the French, British, Italian and Spanish aristocracy but also for the ultra-fashionable women married to “new money.” There were also diplomatic wives whose world was still that of an eighteenth-century elite, governed by protocol and formality. As Roger Peyrefitte wrote in his 1952 book *Les Ambassades*, “Admit it, ours is a noble profession. We are the last of a noble line. We live as well as the most fortunate people of this world and moreover continue to have privileges they no longer enjoy.”

International relations brought a new element to the clientele after 1918, when the Peace Conference at Versailles was attended by the Japanese, who adopted Western fashions in dress. Whereas the Baron Matsui and the Marquis Maeda (1920) bought tiaras of conventional design, another ambassador, Baron Otchiai, chose a diamond tiara of interlaced rings centred on a rising sun, perhaps alluding to the country he represented.

After this decade of great luxury came to an end with the stock-market crash of October 24, 1929, Chaumet struggled to survive the economic depression that followed. In these difficult times Marcel Chaumet, who had succeeded his father in 1929, was supported by those Parisian customers who were still determined to shine at the Opera and other formal events. Besides Princesse Aymon de Faucigny Lucinge, who brought her diamond floral bandeau in for remodelling into a modern tiara (1934), there were many others who bought jewelled brooches to fasten veils and to shimmer in their well-dressed hair. *Vogue*, for instance, described the two diamond clips holding a white camellia over the ear of the dark-haired Princess Jean de Faucigny Lucinge, and how a “smart Parisienne placed a very narrow bandeau of diamonds high above her brow, fastening it at the back between two thick rolled curls.” These jewels for the head were designed to play several roles: the bandeau could divide into bracelets, or be clasped round the neck, and the clip or brooch was equally versatile.

The London branch at 22, Bruton Street benefited from the celebrations that marked the Silver Jubilee of George V in 1935 and the coronation of George VI in 1937. *Vogue* (1935) observed, “Have you noticed lately that tiaras are all the rage? Every woman wears one on the slightest provocation and they always seem to look their best in them.” Lady Howard de Walden ordered a new tiara for her coronation ball at Seaford House in London, where Sir Henry “Chips” Channon noted in his *Diaries* “the gorgeous cavalcade of our best tiaras moving up London’s most effective staircase.”

In these circumstances, to avoid feeling out of place, women who did not own tiaras hired or borrowed them. The Countess of Bessborough lent the tiara Chaumet had made for her in 1931 to Rose Kennedy, wife of the American ambassador, for a reception at Buckingham Palace in 1938. In her memoirs, Rose Kennedy remembered:

I had an early supper on a tray in my bedroom. I was carefully inserted in my lovely Molyneux gown by a covey of enchanted, murmuring maids. The man from Molyneux came to check over details and to secure and pin our three head feathers at the proper angle as I had no idea how this should be done. A dresser was there to place the tiara on my carefully

constructed coiffure. The maids helped me to draw extra long white kid gloves almost all the way to my shoulders. My jewels were added. I viewed the complete picture in a long mirror and was perfectly amazed at myself. I never dreamed of looking this way and being part of such magnificence. I felt a little like Cinderella. I went into my husband's room to show him my elegance. He hadn't quite finished dressing but he turned and looked at me and his blue eyes lit up and he grinned in the most loving way and said, as he would say, You're a real knockout! which was the highest compliment I could ever want.

The strength of Chaumet's links with Spain was demonstrated by commissions for tiaras from the Duchess of Fernan Nunez (1931) and the Marquise de Portago (1931) and then by the task of resetting family stones into modern parures for the marriages of Princess Beatrice, Don Jaime and Don Juan in Rome (1935) and of Prince Alfonso de Bourbon in Vienna (1936). The Chaumet tiara of the 1930s was in tune with the soft curls of the longer hairstyles and the slender yet more feminine silhouettes of the stately evening gowns of Molyneux, Patou, Schiaparelli and Vionnet in Paris, and of Norman Hartnell in London. No longer worn low on the brow, these tiaras now stood high encircling the head like a halo. The platinum mounts were thinner than ever, and the diamonds and coloured stones cut to ever more precise geometric shapes were mounted in strong, emphatic designs. Unfortunately, although the economic situation improved considerably towards the middle of the 1930s, the outbreak of World War II in 1939 brought another crisis, and it was not until after the peace of 1945 that Chaumet returned to "business as usual."

although tiaras were regularly seen in New York at the Metropolitan Opera, it was some time before they reappeared in Europe. They were brought out for the ball held at Buckingham Palace in celebration of the marriage of the future Queen Elizabeth II to Prince Philip of Greece in 1947, and again in 1950 when President Auriol came on a state visit to England. The diplomat Jacques Dumaine described the "enchanted atmosphere in the great rooms once more. . . . Queen Victoria's world has come back as if by magic thanks to the brilliance of the tiaras." The high point of English postwar splendour was the display that accompanied the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, when the sight of the peeresses

massed together blazing with diamonds at the service in Westminster Abbey and the ball at Buckingham Palace made an unforgettable impression.

Elsewhere in Europe there were other brilliant scenes. In Rome, according to *Vogue* (1951), everyone in attendance at the coming-out ball of Princess Maria Camilla Pallavicini “would remember the extraordinary beauty of the jewels—tiaras, necklaces and bracelets—adorning the ladies of Rome, Florence and Milan present.” It was the same in France, at balls held at Versailles, at the Hôtel Lambert, at the Château de Groussay, the Hôtel de Mery and elsewhere where stars of stage and screen as well as the wives of the captains of industry wore tiaras bandeaux and aigrettes with their Dior and Balenciaga gowns.

The great change in social attitudes that occurred during the 1960s sent not only the great couture houses into retreat but also the jewellers, who took some time to adjust to the new situation. Then, in the 1980s Chaumet, who had never completely ceased making tiaras and aigrettes, was given an opportunity to create many more by the late King of Morocco. Attached to symbols of royalty, King Hassan ordered them not just for his daughters but for his infant granddaughters to look their best at court and at family celebrations. In Europe the tiara has remained continuously in use over the past fifty years for weddings, where the bride is dressed as if for her coronation. A further boost to that tradition has come from Hollywood, when Madonna, for her wedding with Guy Ritchie in a romantic Scottish chapel, wore a borrowed tiara over her veil with a white dress. There are other signs that the tide is turning towards a revival of the fashion for jewels for the hair—although not from Buckingham Palace, where they seem to have been given up. Instead, it is the private individual who has rebelled against the drab uniformity of dressing down to a point where almost no distinction is made between clothes for work and pleasure, between day and evening. Recently, the late Maureen, Marchioness of Dufferin, and Ava, Mrs. Juliet Brooks, and the singer Elton John have held balls at which guests were invited to wear tiaras or other jewels to highlight their hair. The success of these events, and of others in America, and the huge popular appeal of tiara exhibitions in Boston in 2000 and in

London in 2002 has encouraged Chaumet to create new designs for the head that will accentuate the individuality and charm of women in the twenty-first century. They will be a joy to wear and a joy to look at—a mutual pleasure, as all good jewellery should be.



GLOSSARY

AIGRETTE: Jewel worn on the head, backed by feathers, derived from the tuft of feathers, which it may imitate but can also be of floral, leafy, ribbon, star and crescent or other design.

ANTENNAE: Jewelled ornament for the head imitating the feelers projecting from the head of an insect.

BANDEAU: Flexible, flat, jewelled band usually worn low on the forehead.

BETWEEN PIECES: Elements alternating with the principal motifs in a continuous line.

BRILLIANTS: Diamonds brilliant cut with 58 facets, 33 on the top, 25 below.

BRIOLETTE: Oval or drop shaped diamond, faceted on all sides and often pierced at the top.

CABOCHON: A stone with surface unfaceted, polished smooth and rounded only.

CALIBRE: Small coloured stones cut to measure the space into which they will be set.

CAMEO: A hardstone, usually of several layers of contrasting colours carved with a motif in relief.

CANNETILLE: Gold filigree fine spiral and squab decoration.

CARTOUCHE: Scroll shaped ornamental frame.

ECUS COMPTES: Tiara or bandeau design imitating a series of overlapping circles, or coins as if being counted.

EN TREMBLANT: A jewel, usually a star or flower mounted on springs which shake with every movement.

FENDER: A tiara of imposing character, associated with the dowagers who, as chaperones "fended off" or guarded young unmarried girls at balls.

FERRONIERE: Narrow chain encircling the forehead held by a jewel in the centre, inspired by the portrait in the Louvre, *La Belle Ferroniere*, attributed to Leonardo de Vinci.

FESTOON: Garland or swag linking elements together.

FOURCHE: Tortoiseshell comb with two prongs, and a decorative top, introduced around 1900.

FLEURON: Trefoil or strawberry leaf, symbol of ducal rank therefore used in heraldic tiaras.

GRAINITI: Filigree gold beaded ornament.

INTAGLIO: A hardstone with motif incised below the surface so that an impression can be taken from it for use as a seal.

KOKOCHNIK: Halo shaped tiara of traditional Russian design, standing up on the head like a cock's comb.

KNIFE BLADE: Platinum wire so thin as to be almost invisible, so that the stones attached to it seem to hang as if by magic.

MILLEGRAIN: A technique by which the platinum securing the stone is wrought so as to form tiny beads or grains instead of claws.

NICOLO: A type of onyx with black ground and white upper layer, which takes a bluish tint when incised.

PAVE SETTING: A massed effect obtained by covering or paving a surface with stones placed sufficiently close together to conceal the metal.

TRANSLUCENT ENAMEL: Enamel held in a metal setting with no backing so that the light shines through as in a stained glass window.

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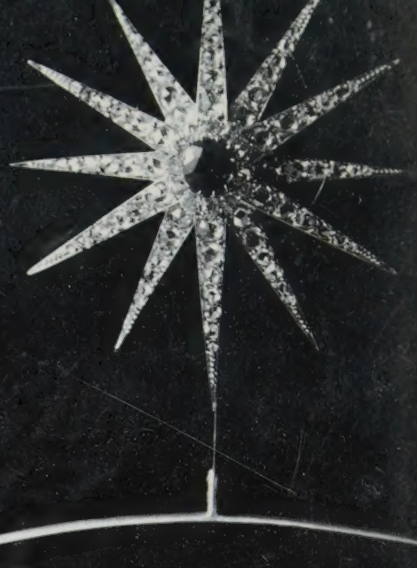
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Diana Scarisbrick, who lives in London, is a well-known author of books on jewellery and cut gems, including *Rings, Symbols of Power, Wealth and Affection* (1993), *Jewellery in Britain 1066-1837* (1994) and *Chaumet: Master Jewellers since 1780* (1995). She has contributed to the catalogues of exhibitions held in Sweden, England, France and most recently that of *Crowning Glories: Two Centuries of Tiaras*, which she organised for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, from March to June 2000. She is currently writing the catalogue of her next exhibition, *Jewellery from the Renaissance to Art Deco 1540-1940*, which opens at the Teien Metropolitan Art Museum, Tokyo, in April 2003.

Preface by Laurence Benaim, journalist at *Le Monde* and writer.



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