THE CATALOG documents jewels that date from Peter I (reign 1689-1725), better known as Peter the Great, through Nicholas II (reign 1894 to 18 February 1917). In 1922 Vladimir Lenin, leader of the USSR and chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, ordered an inventory and catalog of the treasure. Under the management of the People's Commissariat of Finance, the appointed experts undertook the examination of each specimen and kept a record of all documents. The project was overseen by mineralogist Aleksandr E. Fersman with the help of several experts. Among the advisers was prominent jeweler Agathon K. Fabergé, son of Carl, from the House of Fabergé. While the catalog entries are very detailed, the catalog was published with only 100 plates, many of which are different views of the same object.

Fersman's catalog states that the National Property would "never be sold or done away with." However, because of the new government's desperate need for money, attempts to sell some of the treasure, along with other works of art, started almost immediately after the revolution. And once the catalog was published, in 1925-26, it was given to potential buyers. Some of the pieces were sold to an American-British syndicate, who subsequently put them up for auction at Christie's London on 16 March 1927. Most of the collection documented in the Fersman catalog remains in Russia, at the Kremlin Diamond Fund in Moscow.



Aleksandr Fersman (seated sixth from the right, behind the Imperial Crown) with members of the committee examining Russia's regalia. Photo courtesy of Private Collection, the Stapleton Collection/Bridgeman Images.



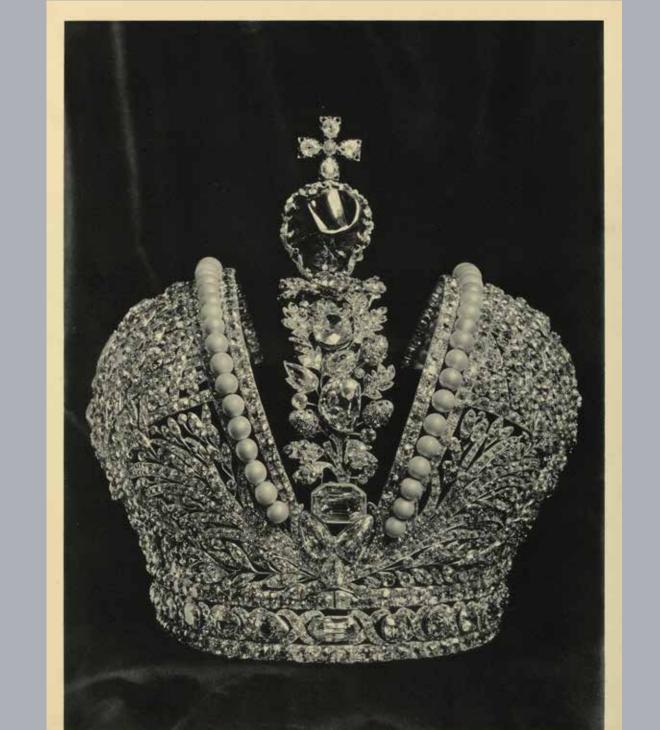
was born in St. Petersburg and raised in southern Russia. He developed a strong interest in minerals early on and went to a mining academy n 1901. He later studied with professors in Moscow, Paris, and Heidelberg. Working with German mineralogist Victor Goldschmidt, while in Heidelberg, he published an in-depth book on the crystallography Photo courtesy of Fersman

Mineralogical Museum

of diamonds, Der Diamant, in 1911. Fersman recounts that it was his

ALEKSANDR FERSMAN (1883-1945)

1909 trip to see the tourmalines of Italy's Elba Island that led to his fascination with granitic pegmatites and gemstones. An energetic and prolific scientist, he was director of its Mineralogical Museum from 1919 to 1930.



fashioned in 1762, as depicted in Fersman, part 1, plate II.

The diamond encrusted Imperial Crown, Title page for part 3 of Fersman's catalog.

RUSSIA'S TREASURE

DIAMONDS

PRECIOUS STONES

The People's Commissariat of Finance

THE GREAT IMPERIAL CROWN was designed by Jérémie Pauzié, a jeweler from Geneva. When Catherine, wife of Peter III (reign 1 January to 9 July 1762), became Catherine Il in the summer of 1762, she ordered a new crown for her coronation, which was to take place on 22 September of that year. Pauzié had permission to mine the treasury for the materials that would be used to make this new crown.

Although it was not completed in time for Catherine's coronation, the Imperial Crown was used at subsequent coronations. It was slightly altered during Catherine's reign: Many of the colored stones originally mounted on the crown by Pauzié were later replaced with diamonds, and the large spinel ("balas ruby") was added to the top.

The spinel was purchased in Peking "for a 'load of gold ingots'" in 1676 by the ambassador to Tsar Alexis (reign 1645-1676). The large spinel and diamond cross originally sat atop the coronation crown of Catherine I (reign 1725-1727), second wife to Peter I. It was removed from this crown and added to the Imperial Crown during Catherine II's reign. In the catalog, the spinel is alternately described as a ruby or spinel-ruby with a weight of 389 old carats, or approximately 402 metric carats (ct). The crown is built on a silver frame, lined in red velvet, and encrusted with 4,963 diamonds and pearls.



Detail of the Imperial Crown's large spinel topped by a diamond cross. Left to right: back, side, and front views. Fersman, part 3, plate Ll.

Right: A selection of the 406 items in the Russian treasure exhibited in the offices of the Moscow National Metal Fund, where the inventory and cataloging took place in 1922. The Imperial Globe, Great Imperial Crown, and Nuptial Crown are seen in the center back row. The Imperial Sceptre is placed below the Great Imperial Crown. Fersman, part 1, plate I.

Russia's Treasure of Diamonds and Precious Stones

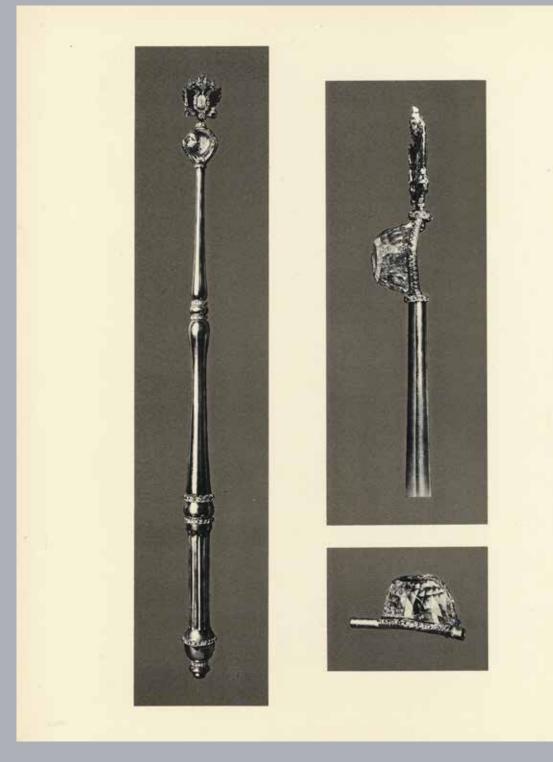
Rose Tozer, rtozer@gia.edu; Cathleen Jonathan, cjonathan@gia.edu; Dona Mary Dirlam, ddirlam@gia.edu; Paula Rucinski, prucinsk@gia.edu; and Sarah Ostrye, sostrye@gia.edu

THIS RARE CATALOG documents Russia's regalia and crown jewels at the time of the overthrow of the tsarist regime following the February Revolution of 1917. Published in 1925-26 by the Bolshevik government, this four-part inventory was printed in three languages: Russian, French, and English. Of the 350 copies that were produced, approximately 20 copies are known to exist today.

THE ROMANOV DYNASTY ruled Russia for more than three centuries, from the rise of Mikhail I in 1613 through Catherine II (reign 1762-1796), also known as Catherine the Great, to the abdication of Nicholas II in 1917. The early Romanovs retained the title of tsar that was first adopted by Ivan the Terrible in 1547, but in 1721 Peter I abandoned the designation in favor of "emperor." Though "tsar" continued to be popularly associated with Russia's rulers, it was no longer used as an official title.

THE RUSSIAN TREASURE as described in the catalog is composed of regalia and jewelry including crowns, globes, scepters, chains, stars, crosses, emblems, diadems, necklaces, brooches, rings, and earrings. The treasure also includes loose diamonds, emeralds, sapphires, rubies, spinels, pearls, alexandrites, and more. Of the 406 separate items in the treasure, 269 pieces were documented as having come from a particular Romanov reign.







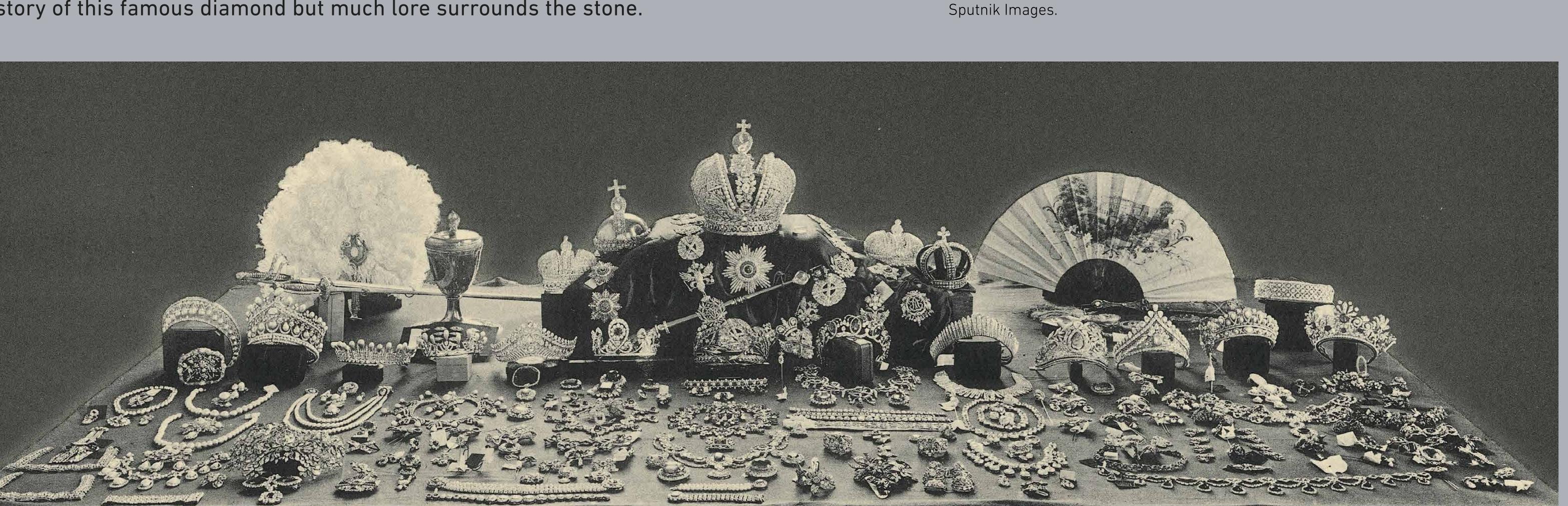
The Orlov diamond as it appears today in the Imperial Sceptre. Photo courtesy of

THE IMPERIAL SCEPTRE was fashioned in 1770 and holds the famous ORLOV DIAMOND. Catherine II received the diamond as a gift from her lover, Count Grigory Grigoryevich Orlov. The Orlov is mounted in silver and is surrounded by small diamonds; a detachable black enameled double-headed eagle sits above it. According to old inventories, its weight was recorded as 185 old carats, or approximately 190 metric ct. When Agathon Fabergé first cataloged the gold scepter in 1914, the Orlov fell out of the mounting and he was able to weigh the diamond, however, the record was lost.

Fersman says "Our world-famed diamond, Orlov, is supposed to be the most important specimen of the Regalia. It is a large and remarkable stone, oddly cut and very clear, save for a slight greenish tint." The rose-cut Orlov is thought to have been cut from a fragment of a very large octahedron. The diamond likely originated in the Kollur mine of Golconda, and was cut in India before arriving in Europe. When Count Orlov purchased the diamond in Amsterdam, it was known as the Amsterdam diamond. Very little is known about the early history of this famous diamond but much lore surrounds the stone.



Portrait of Catherine II in her coronation robe with regalia, circa 1762. Photo courtesy of

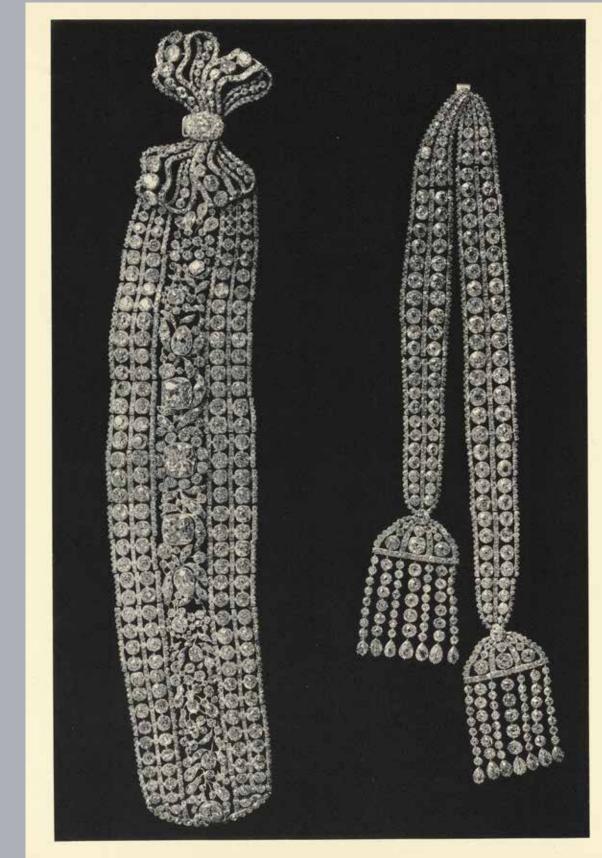




Nicholas II (center, right) with his and wife Alexandra center, left) and their children (clockwise, from left) Maria, Olga, Tatiana, Anastasia and Alexei, circa 1910. Photo courtesy of George Grantham Bain Collection.



Nuptial Crown by Nichols and Plincke, circa 1840. Photo by Edward Owen, courtesy of Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.



Remaining portion of the diamond girdle used to create the Nuptial Crown. Attributed to Louis David Duval. Fersman, part 2,

plate XLV.



THE IMPERIAL GLOBE was made for Catherine II when she was crowned empress in 1762. She wanted to use the globe of Empress Elisabeth (reign 1741-1762), but it had been dismantled and the gold used for other objects, so she had a new Imperial Globe fashioned, possibly also by Pauzié and his craftsmen. The red-gold orb is decorated with diamond-set silver appliqués; a large oval Ceylon (Sri Lankan) blue sapphire and a diamond cross sit at the top.

The front of the globe is set with a large pearshape diamond from Golconda that weighs 46.92 ct. The diamond cross was added later, during the reign of Paul I (1796-1801). The diamonds in the cross are mostly Indian, with a few Brazilian stones, some of which are slightly pink or yellow. The cross stands above an oval Ceylon sapphire The Imperial Globe featuring the Great that weighs approximately 200 ct (according to an

THE NUPTIAL CROWN was constructed around 1840 by the English jewelers Nichols and Plincke. Fersman comments that it was hastily put together using "trimmings" from a diamond girdle (or belt) that was possibly made by Louis David Duval, a jeweler from Geneva. In 1866 it became part of the imperial wedding regalia when Grand Duchess Maria Feodorovna (1847-1928) wore it for her marriage to the future Emperor Alexander III (1845–1894). Grand Duchess Alexandra Feodorovna (1872–1918) subsequently wore it in 1894, when she married Emperor Nicholas II (1868-1918).

The top of the crown consists of a cross with six large old-mine-cut diamonds (about 15 old carats total weight). The base and six arches each bear two rows of large brilliantcut diamonds (320 stones weighing a total of 182 old carats) framed by three rows of smaller diamonds (about 1,200 stones weighing a total of 80 old carats). At the base of the cross are three solitaire diamonds, with an approximate total weight of six old carats, set in silver. Fersman described the crown as not very "artistical." It was sold at auction by Christie's London on 16 March 1927, for £6,100, and is currently in the collection of the Hillwood Estate in Washington, D.C.



Sapphire. Fersman, part 1, plate VII.

carved as a fruit, as tourmaling Photo courtesy of RIA Novosti.

CAESAR'S RUBY was first named Caesaris rubinus in 1609 by Belgian mineralogist Anselmus de Boodt (1550-1632). When Fersman examined the stone for the catalog, he determined that it was, in fact, a rubellite tourmaline, not a ruby. The mounting was made in the 17th century in Western Europe. Fersman noted that "the peculiar cutting, evidently done in the Orient, gives the gem the form of a fruit. The tone is a pleasant deep one; native place-probably Burma. In literature, this tourmaline is generally referred

The recorded history of Caesar's Ruby begins when Queen Elisabeth of France (1554-1592) acquired it in the early 1570s. After passing through many hands, the jeweled pendant was

given by King Gustav III of Sweden to Empress Catherine II in 1777, on the occasion of his state visit to Russia. In 1695, it was determined to weigh 255.25 Amsterdam carats. One Amsterdam carat is equal to 0.2057 gram, or 1.0285 metric ct, so the weight of Caesar's Ruby can be approximated as 262.52 ct. Until it was correctly identified as a tourmaline, this was thought to be the largest ruby in the world.

THE BLUE DIAMOND in this stickpin weighs approximately 7.20 ct and was originally set in a ring for Empress Maria Feodorovna (1759-1828), second wife of Emperor Paul I (1754-1801). Around 1800, the diamond was taken out of the ring and refashioned into this stickpin with a diamond-studded gold and silver mounting. The blue diamond is an irregular rhomboidal shape with a step-cut crown and pavilion. The filigree setting has a rose motif accented with 0.96 carats of colorless diamonds. Fersman notes that the "intensive blue tone reminds us of the colour of a Ceylon sapphire." It is thought this stone may have a connection with the well-known Tavernier Blue diamond, a large Indian stone that was purchased by King Louis XIV (1638-1715) in 1668 from famed gem dealer Jean Baptiste Tavernier.

Left: Gold and silver stickpin, circa 1800, set with a blue diamond weighing approximately 7.20 ct. The State Diamond Fund of the Russian Federation. Photo courtesy of San Diego Museum of Art.

