



**Romanov News**  
**Новости Романовых**

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*Emperor Nicholas II*

## Portrait of Emperor Nicholas II

*This portrait was in the Officers' Assembly of the Life Guards Semenovskiy Regiment in St. Petersburg; then it was moved to their Regiment museum, went on the run through the Civil War, and in exile was kept in the museum of the Union of the Life Guards Semenovskiy Regiment in Paris, then in private collection in USA, and finally returned to Russia - in a private collection.*



Late XIX - early XX century. The artist I.S. Galkin (?). Canvas, oil. Dimensions 80 × 65 cm. Restoration of the portrait was carried out at the Department of Restoration of easel oil painting of the Russian Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. Canvas is duplicated; the author's painting is fully preserved. The portrait is inserted in a modern wooden frame with the imperial crown at the top.

Emperor Nicholas II is depicted in the uniform of the Life Guards Semenovskiy Regiment, with a blue ribbon and star of the Order of St. Andrew the First-Called, with the guard's officer's badge of 1883, the epaulettes of the colonel and the aiguillette of the adjutant of the Emperor Alexander III Suite. In the medals on the chest, from left to right: the order of St. Vladimir of the 4th degree, medals in memory of the coronation of Emperor Alexander III, in commemoration of the reign of Emperor Alexander III, in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the Poltava victory, the Danish order of Dannebrog and the sign of the Greek Order of the Saviour.

The portrait of Nicholas II was commissioned by the officers' of the Semenovskiy regiment. Emperor was regiment's chief since 1894. In 1910, however, after the restoration of the uniform to the time of the reign of Emperor Alexander II, the portrait was transferred to the regimental museum and replaced by another.

In December 1917, the Life Guards Regiment of Semenov was disbanded, and all military ranks were instructed to remove shoulder straps and conduct election of the commanders in the new Guard Semenovskiy Regiment. The last commander of the Life Guards Semenovskiy Regiment, Colonel Alexander Vladimirovich Popov, being a convinced monarchist refused to participate in the elections, left the regiment and went into the Volunteer Army. With the permission of the elected commander of the Guards Semenovskiy regiment, Colonel N.K. von Essen, Popov took with him the old portrait of Nicholas II in the uniform of 1883, miraculously preserved after the outrage of revolutionary-minded soldiers.

This portrait was with him throughout the Civil War, and in exile was kept in the museum of the Union of the Life Guards Semenovskiy Regiment in Paris as a symbol of the future revival of the Russian monarchy. In the late 1950's, the portrait of Nicholas II was transferred to a private collection in the United States. In Russia, the portrait is in a private collection since 2003.

Alexander Vladimirovich Popov (29.09.1880-23.03.1963), Orthodox. He received general education in the Second Moscow Cadet Corps, entered service 31.08.1898. He graduated from the 1st Pavlov Military School (1900), entered the 16th Grenadier Mingrelesky regiment. Transferred to the Life Guards Semenovskiy regiment. Participated in the First World War. Colonel (10.08.1915). From 29.05 - 10.12.1917 the commander of the Life Guards Semenovskiy Regiment. Since 1918 in the Volunteer Army. In 1919 he emigrated to France, lived in Paris. Since 1924 he was the chairman of the Association of the Life Guards of the Semenovskiy Regiment in France. Member of the Board of the Union of Russian Cadet Corps, Honorary Member of the Transfiguration Union. He was a member of the Union of zealots in memory of Emperor Nicholas II. He died in Paris, and is buried in the cemetery of Sainte-Geneviève-des-Bois.

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## Patriarch Kirill calls to respect the life of Nicholas II



January 7th. / TASS. - The life of the last Russian Emperor Nicholas II and his family is worthy of respect, regardless of the political assessments of his rule, said Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill during the Christmas interview to the TV channel "Russia 1".

"Regardless of the political evaluation of his activities, people should have respect for this life path, especially liberals, but nothing like this happens ... <...> I simply react to a very important part of his life connected with the discovery of freedoms and rights for the citizens of the Russian Empire, and with the outcome of his life, and in this sense, of course, everything that happened to the Emperor, everything that happened to our country, it should make us think about many things," he said.

According to the patriarch, the Emperor was a strong man who agreed to the creation of the State Duma and thereby allowed to discuss openly current problems of the country. "Now there is such an opinion that the Emperor was weak, but let's think if he was a weak or internally strong person? He had the power to finish this State Duma with one clap, disperse all parties, re-introduce censorship - he had real political power", Patriarch Kirill said.

"Our liberal historians are still watering him with dirt and extolling Emperor Alexander II, and from the point of view of opening up opportunities for democratic discussion of problems, participation in shaping state policy, who did the most: Alexander or Nicholas? - Nicholas... If he were such a weak person, he would not have accepted death as he had accepted it," - the head of the Russian Orthodox Church emphasized.

He noted that the last Russian Emperor was canonized "because he adopted a Christian death, and not only death, but this whole part, the terrible part of his life" and lamented that in the year of the century of the revolution "nothing else appears on the screens except a film that throws another filth into the face of the passion-bearer."

The patriarch added that the work to investigate all the circumstances of the death of the Imperial family and establish the authenticity of the "Yekaterinburg remains" continues, and noted that "no one specifically delayed this process, but no one specifically push the scientists who are trying to answer exhaustively the questions, which constantly arise. "



## Patriarch Kirill told why the ROC recognized Nicholas II as a saint



January 24. RIA Novosti - The Russian Orthodox Church canonized Emperor Nicholas II and his family for placing moral ideals above the Imperial crown, Patriarch Kirill said at the opening of the Christmas readings.

"As a reward for the love that reigned in this family: they remained inseparable in death, the Christian moral ideals were higher for them than the Imperial crown." "A sign of nobility is not belonging to Imperial or noble family, but the purity of thoughts and the purity of the soul," the patriarch said.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church quoted a letter of the daughter of the Emperor, Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna: "Father asks to pass on to all those who remained loyal to him ... so that they do not take revenge for him, since he forgave all and prays for

everyone, and that they do not take revenge for themselves, and that they remember that the evil that is now in the world will be even more, but that evil will not defeat evil, but only love".

"It is sometimes asked why the Imperial family was canonized - for this," he added, noting that the Emperor's family managed to "preserve the moral image under the conditions of colossal stress."





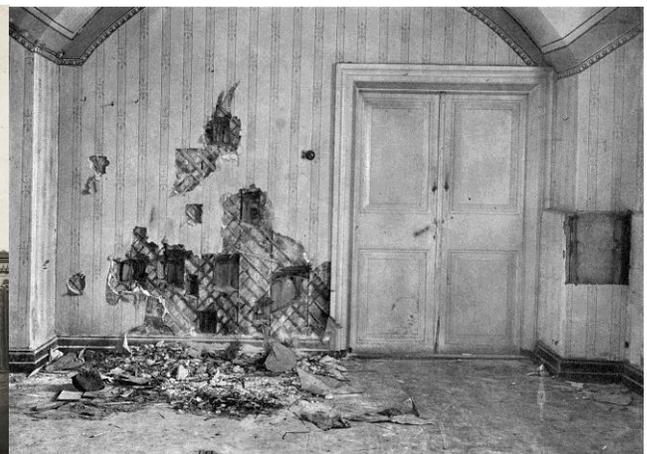
## The Tsarevich Alexei and Grand Duchess Maria burial-case continues

### Report of "Vesti" - "Whether the murder of Nicholas II was ritual"

January 13, 2018. Vesti. - A report mainly about Robert Wilton - the military correspondent for the London newspaper *The Times*.

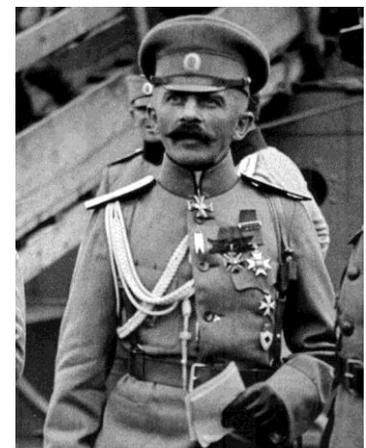
*So who was Robert Wilton - the author of the truly amazing first book about the murder of the Romanovs. Wilton, having already visited the site of the tragedy in 1919, was the first who unveiled these details, photographs from the site of the Romanovs' remains in the Ganina Yama area, and the "bridge of sleepers" in the Porosenkov Log, where in 1991 the remains of nine people were found. The first English edition of Wilton's book "The Last Days of the Romanovs". The author writes: "This will be the true story about the martyrdom of Nicholas II". Well, Wilton, having collected a colossal factual material, neither in his articles in *The Times*, nor in his book did he even once use the phrase "ritual murder".*

"Vesti" are grateful to everyone who wrote and called the editor even on Christmas holidays, commenting on our pre-New Year's story about a new investigation into the possible ritual murder of the Imperial family. We returned to this topic after the Investigative Committee and the Russian Orthodox Church conducted a very informative conference on the preliminary results of the investigation, which began now from scratch. They really remembered about the amazingly vivid version of the ritual murder. What is it about?



About incomprehensible signs, found on the wall of the room, where the Romanovs were shot. Another room was covered with pornographic drawings: the Empress with Rasputin and all that. So these are the letters ... Is it just a pen? Or is it something cabalistic, or even Jewish? But even on the wallpaper of that room was found a very ambiguous couplet from Heine: "Belshazzar was killed this night by his servants." The curator of the Kolchak investigation, which was passing in the hot pursuit, General Dieterichs, was categorical: this inscription was made in "German-Jewish slang." The theory of the ritual murder of the Imperial royal family is based in many respects on this phrase of General Dieterichs: it was a conspiracy to destroy the white Tsar-Ruler of the Orthodox world.

However, at the end of 2017, there was a curious subject on our air - from Riga. In the capital of Latvia, VGTRK's own correspondent in the Baltic States, Daria Grigorova, interviewed specialists, and it turned out that the inscription could have been in Latvian slang, but not in any Jewish



General Mikhail Konstantinovich Diterikh

language. Moreover, it could be done after the shooting, in which the possible author of that inscription was a Lett named Svikke, although he was a Communist, he did not participate in the murder.

If so, the version about the ritual murder of the Romanovs falls apart. But! We ourselves are the first to admit that the reference to the book of Dieterichs alone is incorrect. The fact is that before that, the first book appeared. And it was in this book that the theory that the Russian murderers of the Romanovs were only an instrument in the hands of the Jews who were in collusion with the Germans. Who was the author?

Man, of course - the St. George Cross - for the unprecedented courage shown before the revolution on the Russian-German front - on his chest. But at the same time he was not a Russian, but a Briton, including a military correspondent for the London newspaper *The Times*. In the eyes of the admirers of his theories, this only adds to his objectivity: a man on the one hand, in love with Russia, but, on the other hand, an outside observer. His name was Robert Wilton, but Russian editors called him "Wilton". So we will call him. So, it's not the Lettish, but the British branch of this story.

So who was Robert Wilton, the author of the truly amazing first book about the murder of the Romanovs? "Vesti" already many times used one excerpt from the film "The Romanovs, the Crowned Family," but they never explained that, for example, details about how the Grand Duchesses were covered from bullets by pillows - namely, from Wilton. Having already visited the site of the tragedy in 1919, he was the first to unveil these details, photographs from the site of the Romanovs' remains in the Ganina Yama area, and the "bridge of sleepers" in the Porosenkov log, where in 1991 the remains of nine people were found.

Today *The Times'* editorial office is not so far from the Victorian Big Ben, but closer to the glass-concrete business centre of London. From this newspaper, Wilton worked in Russia. Now - computers, but still they also keep the history. We literally roll out the treasure - the files of *The Times* for 1917-1919. Let's check!

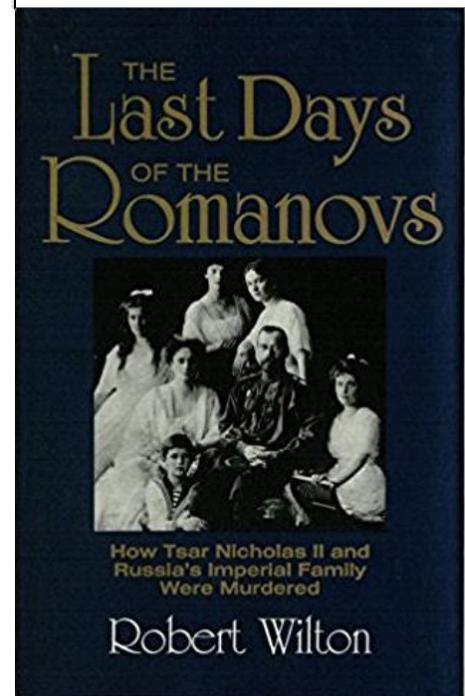
It was Wilton who first wrote about the abdication of the Emperor. And in revolutionary Petrograd, his sources were excellent. According to some information, his brother is a British diplomat accredited in Petrograd. But we are even more interested in 1920. Wilton's series of articles, where he expounds his theory on the bunch of the German Kaiser and the Bolshevik Jews. That series of articles is the basis of that book. In London there are the original articles. But not only.

- The beginning of this series differs from what is in the book, - we appeal to the archivist of *The Times* newspaper Nick Maza. "And I have the first English edition," says Nick. - Let's check.

The first English edition of Wilton's book "The Last Days of the Romanovs". First part. "This will be a true story about the martyrdom of Nicholas II," the author writes. The same lines - one in one - are found in the first article in a series of articles that Wilton published in *The Times*. Only the book has a different beginning. This is the beginning, where are the references to the Germans and the Jews? This is not in the newspaper.



Robert Wilton, correspondent of *The Times*



How this can be explained? Of course, you can become like the Nazis. Dr. Joseph Goebbels - chief of Hitler's propaganda - who will have to refer to those who see in seizures in *The Times* a "plot" over cover, including "ritual murder." Goebbels just suggested to read the name of the newspaper *The Times* in the opposite direction - it turns out "semit".

Do you want to be like the Nazis? Then we read and understand: in the series of Wilson articles in *The Times*, the biting prologue was removed, but the word "Jew" was used - in fact 16 times. But! "Red" Jews - so Wilton writes. That is, such Jews who have broken with God, and therefore, it turns out, somehow already do not stick with the ritual Jewish assassination of the Romanovs. This is an important nuance. We move forward.

Another question - Did these reporters send their reports only to *The Times*? Yes, colleagues assumed he was not only a journalist, but also a spy in Wilton. In Britain, intelligence is part of the Foreign Office system. Not without difficulty, but we found that folder in Moscow, in the State Archives of the Russian Federation. And what is there in these materials according to Wilton? We were waiting for both disappointment and discovery.

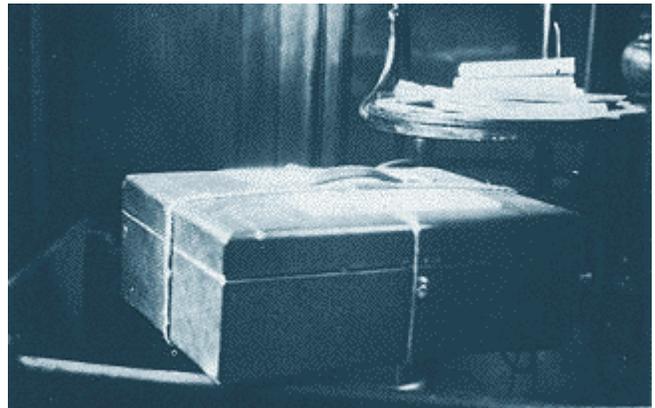
Contrary to rumours that are still circulating in London, we found no reference to the fact that Wilton could be their employee or even an informant in documents from British diplomats, British intelligence agents. It's another matter - some "roll-calls" that exist between Wilton's information and information from British diplomats.

For example, in 1919. Message from the British High Commissioner Eliot. He writes that there is reason to believe that before the murder of the Romanovs, the Bolsheviks in Moscow ordered the Tsar's family to be transported to the centre, but the Council in Yekaterinburg refused. And then they decided to shoot the Romanovs. There is another document in which the British write that there is information that the Imperial family must be handed over to the Germans. In theory, very useful for the British.

"Any anti-German information that could be used to support the spirit would be used, because the war was not yet won, the Germans were still a threat, and in 1918 they began to move troops from the Eastern Front to the West. A real threat: the Germans could win the war at the last minute, that is, to tie the crime against humanity, this terrible murder of the Imperial family with the Bolsheviks connected with the Germans would be good propaganda," Michael Binion, commented *The Times*.

Already in 1920, General Dieterichs, passing the valuable things of the Imperial family to the British authorities, mentions that "we fought a common enemy, with Germany." In the British report, this is all limited to just one phrase. That is, Wilton's version of the German trail in the murder of the Imperial family is no longer being developed by official authorities.

Wilton's theory of the German track in the murder of the Romanovs has mystical confirmation. When in 1991 a burial was discovered near Yekaterinburg, they found a cable. In the Porosenkov Log it was laid by Soviet signalmen, whose milling cutters under the ground, where they did not know that someone was resting, cut off the hand of the skeleton number 4 attributed to the former Emperor. Meanwhile, it was Wilton who first discovered how the Emperor reacted to rumours about why the Bolsheviks want to return him from exile to Moscow. He said that he would never sign the Brest Treaty, as the Bolsheviks wanted, but would rather cut off his hand.



*The box in which the belongings of the Imperial Family were placed*

As we found out in *The Times*, no matter what theories Wilton told in this book, he was not a witness to everything in revolutionary Russia. For example, it was not him, but the bureau's man Busyev who was in Russia in October 1917.

"He called the event a coup, not a revolution." How interesting!

"I think the revolution has already taken place and gone." And here it is a seizure of power," said Nick Maze.

When, a month and a half after the 5th Congress of Soviets, the Bolsheviks already took and even killed other Western diplomats, another colleague of Wilton, Dobson, a legend of British journalism, was arrested along with the British Ambassador Lokart.

The street of Lexham Gardens is a good place to explain the awareness and influence of Dobson, correspondent of *The Times* in Russia. Before the revolution, Chicherin lived here in the room. Remember who he is?

Georgii Vasilievich Chicherin is the same People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the RSFSR, who signed the Brest Peace Treaty. But before the revolution, he lived in London, where he was already conducting such anti-war propaganda that the British decided to hold this Russian immigrant. He was released through mediation. By whom?

Historians of the newspaper *The Times* claim that from the number 96 on Lexham Gardens Chicherin left for Moscow not just through the mediation of Dobson - Trotsky appealed to Dobson with such a request.

"Who was Dobson?"

- Correspondent of *The Times*, who worked in St. Petersburg until 1901. Since 1876," explained Nike Maize.

- The longest business trip in the history of the newspaper?

"I'm not sure that he spent the longest, but kind quarter of a century in Russia."

- It turns out he covered the Russian-Turkish war?

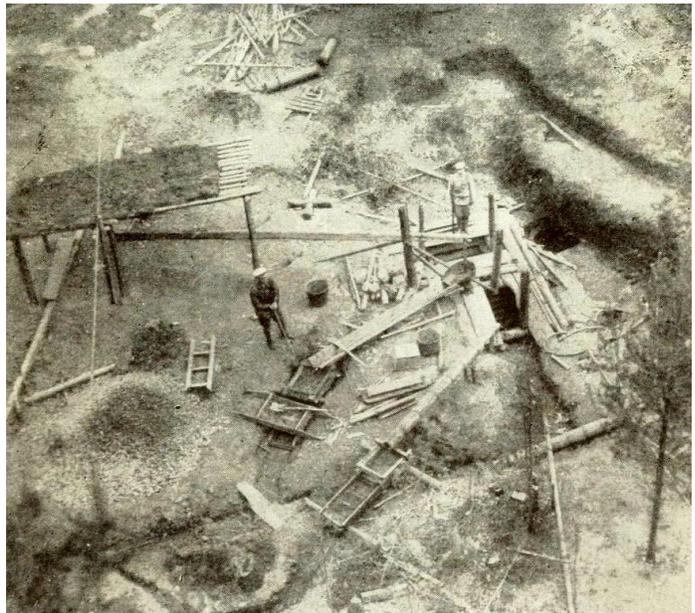
- Yes.

The next question is obvious: why did he apply to him? Because Dobson was the oldest correspondent in Russia, he worked since the times of the Russo-Turkish wars. And that's interesting: what did this experienced journalist Dobson write in addition to the theories that his colleague, another correspondent of *The Times* Wilton developed?

Dobson wrote nothing! But it was he, and not Wilton who told the British reader about the execution of the Emperor. Here is the note. The subtitle is quite critical: "The official approval of the crime." But there is not a word about the German trace.

Perhaps the most significant discrepancy between Wilton's information and the versions that British diplomats presented: Wilton, as we remember, was sure that the Imperial family was destroyed on Ganina Yama, but on December 12, 1918, the high-ranking British commissar in Siberia Eliot wrote to London that there is evidence that killers first tried to bury Romanovs in one place, and then there was a reburial.

Well, Wilton could have missed something, obviously screwed himself up against the political theory about the German track. But, having collected a colossal factual material, neither in his articles in *The Times*, nor in his book he himself did once use the phrase "ritual murder", even in that same whipping prologue. This expression - from the comments of publishers, who even changed the name of Wilton. And we studied the scripts.



The Sokolov investigation inspecting the mineshaft in Spring 1919

Video - <https://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=2975597>

## **The ROC will not artificially slow down the decision on "Yekaterinburg remains"**

January 22. TASS - No one is going to slow down the decision-making process, whether the so-called Yekaterinburg remains are genuine fragments of the bodies of the Imperial family. This was stated on Monday in an interview with TASS by the chairman of the Synodal Department for the Relations of the Church with the Society and the Media Vladimir Legoyda.

"I emphasize that there is no task to slow down the process, or, on the contrary, it should not be accelerated." Numerous expert examinations that go on several lines - genetic, anthropological, historical, forensic, are coming to an end," he said. "While the questions remain, when all the expert examinations are over and the criminal case, which is being conducted by the Investigative Committee, is closed, then the Church, having received full information, will make its decision," the head of the Synodal Department explained.

"The degree of openness on the part of the Church on this issue is unprecedented. What is only a nine-hour conference in the Sretensky Monastery with the participation of the patriarch, which was broadcasted live and is now available to anyone who wants to see. No situation relating to the church, and generally public life has such transparency and readiness to talk about everything that happens" Legoyda said. He recalled that the decision will be made by the Bishops' Council. "Whether it will be convened separately or will be next (the next Bishops' Councils are held every four years - TASS comment) depends on when the final results will be received," Legoyda concluded.



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## **A competition for a commemorative sign for the 100th anniversary of the memory of the Holy Royal Passion-Bearers**

January 31. Administration of Sverdlovsk Region - The Ministry of Culture of the Sverdlovsk Region and the Regional Methodological Centre for Arts Education have announced an open competition for the development of a draft design of a commemorative sign for the 100th anniversary of the memory of the holy Royal Passion-Bearers. The contest is held in preparation for the events dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the death of the family of the last Russian Emperor Nicholas II and representatives of the Romanov family in the Urals, which will be held in the Sverdlovsk Region in 2018.

According to the details of the competition, organizations, artists, designers, sculptors, unions of creative figures, public associations can become its participants. To participate in the creative competition is necessary in the period from February 1 to 22 to send an application. Each participant can submit no more than three applications. The draft design of the memorable sign should contain an idea reflecting the generally accepted associative paradigm of holy Royal Passion-Bearers. In addition, it is necessary to present the text part of the draft design of the memorable sign - an explanatory note (annotation) to the draft design of the memorable sign, containing a description of its concept, namely, plastic and imaginative ideas; materials from which the production of a memorial sign is supposed; justification of the use of certain symbols used in the development of a memorial sign, indicating the approximate cost of the product.

The main prize of the contest will be a cash reward of 40 thousand roubles.

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## The day after ..... the exhibition "Hessian Princesses in Russian History"

On December 19th, the conference and opening of the exhibition "Hessian Princesses in Russian History" was held in Frankfurt am Main (See previous issue of Romanov News). The day after the Elizabeth-Sergei Enlightenment Society had arranged a tour for the Russian participants to the Russian Orthodox Church of Saint Elizabeth and cemetery in Wiesbaden, the Russian Orthodox Church of St. Mary Magdalene Chapel in Darmstadt, and the Hessisches Staatsarchiv in Darmstadt.

### St. Elizabeth's church in Wiesbaden

The Russian Orthodox Church of Saint Elizabeth in Wiesbaden is located on Neroberg, on a hill overlooking the city. Besides the Russian church there is a parsonage and a Russian cemetery, which is the largest in Europe (outside Russia itself). St. Elizabeth's Church and its parishioners belong to the Diocese of Germany in the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia.



The Russian Orthodox Church in Wiesbaden was built from 1847 to 1855 by Duke Adolf of Nassau in the memory of his wife, the 19-year-old Russian Elizabeth Mikhailovna, Grand Duchess of Russia and Duchess of Nassau (1826-1845). She was the daughter of Grand Duke Michael Pavlovich (1798-1849), the younger brother of Tsar Alexander I (reigned in 1801-1825) and Nicholas I (reigned in 1826-1855). Adolf and the Grand Duchess married in 1844, but the following year, she died in childbirth, as did their newborn daughter. He grieved so profoundly that he decided to build a church around her grave. He obtained the money for this church from her dowry, with the blessing of Tsar Nicholas I.

Construction of the church was assigned to senior building officer (Oberbaurat) Philipp Hoffmann, who studied Russian church architecture in Russia.

As a template for this church, he took the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. On 25 May 1855 the church was finally dedicated in honour of St. Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist and patron saint of the deceased Princess. Shortly afterwards, the coffin containing the late



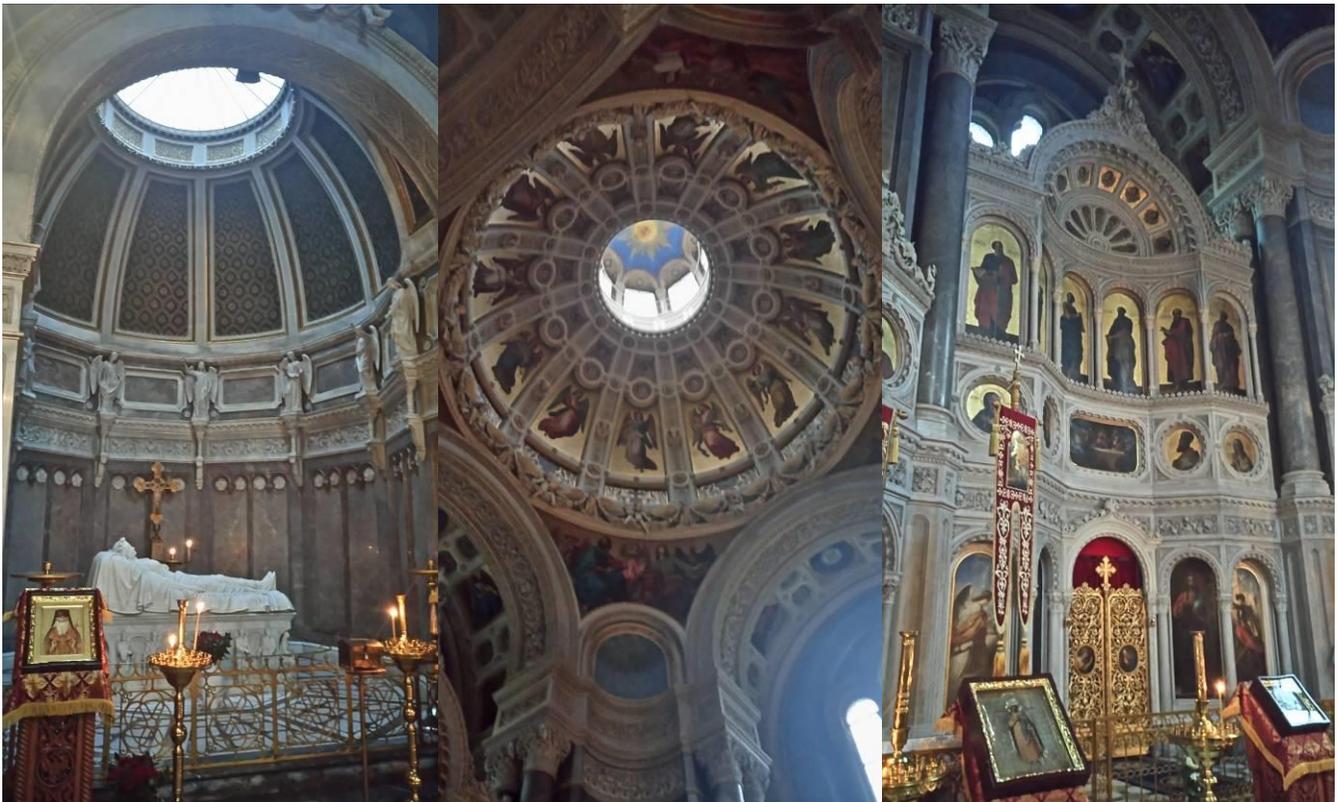
Grand Duchess and her baby was taken in a procession from the Bonifatius kirche, its previous temporary shelter, into the crypt of the Russian church and buried there.

A small rectory and a Russian cemetery, located about 100 meters northeast of the church were built simultaneously with the construction of the church.

The church was used by the already-existing Russian Orthodox community, mainly Russian guests, for whom Wiesbaden was a popular resort in the 19th century. Even Tsar Nicholas II worshipped in the church during his stay in Germany, together with his newly wedded-wife, the Tsarina Alexandra Feodorovna. This event is noted on a gold panel attached to the wall in the church.

A lasting community formed around the church only in the 1920s, when many White Emigres fled in the wake of the Russian Revolution, the Russian Civil War and the Bolshevik takeover of their country and came to Germany.

During the 1990s, the interior of the church, particularly its marble and frescoes, was renovated and restored. The crypt was renovated in 2002–2005.

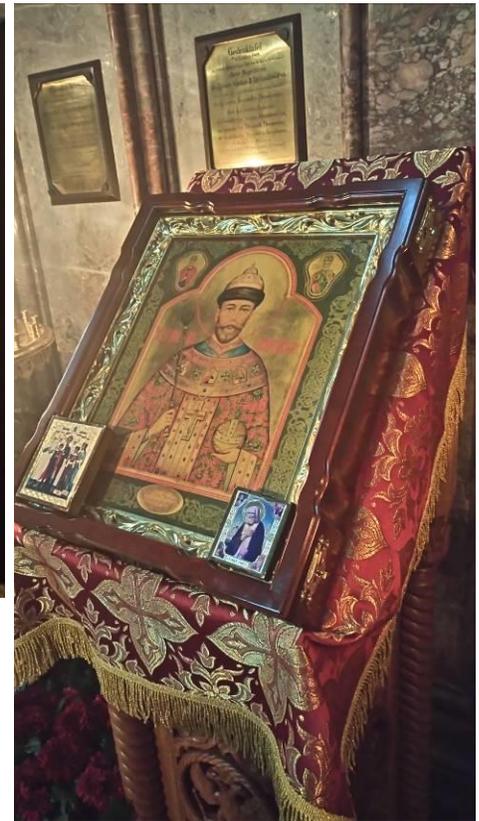


The church is a beige building of hard sandstone. The outer layout of the church is a square with an extended arc in the north. The building is "crowned" with five fiery-gilt domes, with the four smaller ones surrounding the large central dome to the northeast, northwest, southeast and southwest. The domes, typically for Russian churches, are onion-shaped and have grooves running lengthwise from top to bottom. Each dome is topped by a similarly gilt Orthodox cross. All crosses point to the south; the cross in the centre is above and slightly larger than the other four, which are of the same size.

The domes rest on smaller cylindrical towers, with the main one in the centre higher and wider than the others. This is also at the top under the dome completely covered with window panes cover, so that here, light can fall directly into the interior of the church. The smaller towers have rather narrow, oblong windows, through which the light falls only inside the tower, since these are not connected with the interior. The northeast tower is an exception: this contains a spiral staircase, the entrance of which is directly under the dome; from here it is possible to reach the roof of the church by a small gate in the tower.



*Top - The iconostas. Above - to the right of the iconostas is an icon of the Tsar-Martyr Nicholas, in front of the two plaques commemorating the visit of Romanovs to the church.*



"Memorial plaque - 18/6 October 1896. Their Imperial Highnesses, Sovereign Emperor Nicholas II Alexandrovich and Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, with the Imperial Highnesses: Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, Grand Duchess Elisabeth Feodorovna, Grand Duchess Alexandra Josephovna, attended the holy service by Archpriest and dean Sergei v. Protopopov. Made for eternal remembrance by the Russian colony in Wiesbaden, under guidance of John v. Rachau, Professor of architecture."



A spiral stair leads down to the lower church, where an old travelling iconostas (can be folded) is installed. To the left there is the crypt where is buried Grand Duchess Elizabeth Mikhailovna, and two children of Grand Duke Adolph's second marriage to Princess Adelheid-Marie of Anhalt-Dessau: Prince Friedrich Paul Wilhelm of Nassau (23 September 1854 – 23 October 1855) and Princess Marie Bathildis Wilhelmine Charlotte of Nassau (14 November 1857 – 28 December 1857).



*The tomb of Grand Duchess Elizabeth Mikhailovna and her icon of Christ on the wall nearby*

The church has two entrances: the south and the west entrance. The south entrance was originally only for Royals and other members of the nobility. It offered its royal visitors a panorama of Wiesbaden.



After the fall of Tsar Nicholas II, in 1917, this entrance was sealed forever.

The entrance for commoners, the current main entrance was the west entrance. Visitors entering the church through this door see, as in most Russian Orthodox churches, the iconostasis opposite. Medallions of particular saints, crafted from sandstone, are located above the outside entrances.

A medallion of Saint Helena rests above the west entrance; at the southern entrance - Saint Elizabeth; and on the east side, above the window of the sanctuary - the Holy Archangel Michael. These were the patron saints of the father (Mikhail) and mother (Elena) of the Grand Duchess, as well as her own (Elizabeth). Approximately ten steps of red sandstone lead up to the entrance, which is spanned by an arch that in turn sits on each side upon two columns.



The Russian Cemetery on the Neroberg next to the Church of Saint Elizabeth was opened in 1856. The Regent Duke Adolph I of Nassau provided a forest in the immediate vicinity of the church for the construction of the cemetery. Hoffmann then designed a cemetery in the form of a cross, which was surrounded by a brick wall. The cemetery was transferred in 1864 to the Russian community in Wiesbaden. The cemetery has been enlarged several times since 1866, most recently in 1977.

For a long time the cemetery was the only Russian Orthodox cemetery in Germany and for this reason it was also used for funerals far beyond the catchment area of Wiesbaden. The cemetery is still managed by the Russian community of Wiesbaden and used for funerals. At present, the graves of some 800 deceased, including many nobles, but also scientists, civil servants, clergy and writers are on the site.



From left - Posters on the cemetery wall tells its history. The chapel in the cemetery. Clotilde Elisabeth von Rintelen at the graves of Prince George Alexandrovich Yurievsky and his sister, Princess Olga Alexandrovna Yurievskaya, on December 20, 2017.

At the cemetery the visitors met Clotilde Elisabeth von Rintelen, Countess of Merenberg, who is a great-granddaughter of Emperor Alexander II, via his marriage with Princess Catherine Dolgoroky, and a descendant of the Russian poet Alexander Pushkin.

## The St. Mary Magdalene church in Darmstadt

In the German city of Darmstadt, there is a rarely-used train station. This wastefulness, so uncharacteristic for Germany, has a historical reason. The fact is that the station was built for only one purpose - to accommodate the wide trains from Russia. There were over four hundred such train cars. Granite was shipped here from the Urals, the Caucasus and Siberia. It wasn't because Germany didn't have its own granite, but because a Russian Orthodox Church dedicated to St Mary Magdalene, Equal-to-the-Apostles, the patron saint of the mother of Emperor Nicholas II, was being built in Darmstadt. It was decided that the church must be built of imported Russian stone and upon Russian soil.



It was being built for Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, nee Princess of Hesse-Darmstadt. She and Emperor Nicholas wished to have the opportunity to pray in an Orthodox church while visiting Germany. The church was built on the personal funds of the Emperor. The architectural style is called "Early Yaroslavl". It was designed by Leonty Benois, who was awarded with the title Architect to the Court for his efforts. The drawings for the liturgical objects were approved by Empress Alexandra herself.



The Romanovs visited Darmstadt once every year-and-a-half or two years. Alexandra Feodorovna, who was given her mother's name at birth, Alix, was the sixth of seven children born to Grand Duke Ludwig IV. One of her older sisters was named Ella, and she was to become Grand Duchess Elizaveta Feodorovna. The family had endured two great tragedies: one of their brothers died as a child, and a few years later, their mother and youngest sister died of diphtheria. Half-orphaned, Ella and Alix made frequent long visits to their grandmother, Queen Victoria of England.

The interior of the church is unusually decorated: there are few frescoes or icons, and a mosaic of the Mother of God soars above the altar. Her Face is rendered in a manner reminiscent of the artist Viktor Vasnetsov. In fact the sketches were made by his hand, and the Frolov brothers crafted the mosaic. The iconostasis was imported from London. It consists of only one row (which reveals the altar mosaic), and was painted in oil, a popular method of the period, by Karl Neff. The walls are adorned by stylized lilies, flowers particularly loved by Alexandra Feodorovna (she also liked carnations and roses). The church's decorators had in mind the splendour of Eden, and so there are many vines throughout the space.

From the outside, the church is adorned by mosaic icons of the heavenly patrons of the Emperor's family, including St Nicholas, St Alexander Nevsky, the parents of John the Baptist - Elizabeth and Zechariah... Over the entrance there is an image of St Olga, Equal-to-the-Apostles, patron saint of the eldest daughter of Emperor Nicholas.

Among the holiest items in the church are fragments of a plashchanitsa (burial shroud) embroidered by Alexandra Feodorovna, and a Kazan Icon of the Mother of God which belonged to Grand Duchess

Elizabeth Feodorovna. The church in Darmstadt received it from a priest who brought the relics of St. Elizabeth and Barbara from Russia to the Holy Land. The likeness of the Mother of God reminds many of Elizabeth Feodorovna herself.

The narthex of the church of St Mary Magdalene in Darmstadt contains two portraits - that of Emperor Nicholas II and his wife, Empress Alexandra, now glorified as Passion-bearers. These portraits were painted long before the canonization of the Imperial Family. Right after they were canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia in 1981, these portraits became icons and beneath them lampadas was hang that are never extinguished.



*December 20, 2017 the participants of the Elizabeth-Sergei Enlightenment Society's tour on the stairs of St. Mary Magdalene church in Darmstadt.*

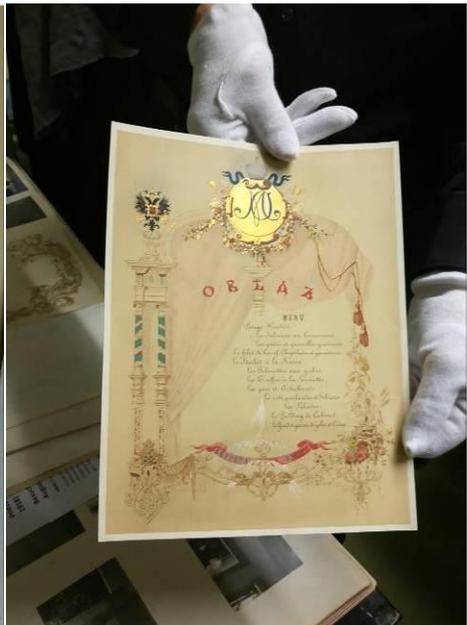
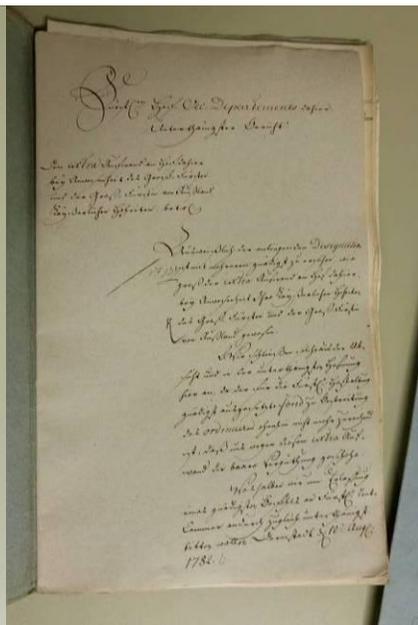


### The Hessian State Archive Darmstadt

The Hessian State Archive Darmstadt is housed in the former Hoftheater (Court theatre), built in 1819 after a design by the architect Georg Moller (1783-1852). It now also doubles as a nuclear bunker, in 7 floors below the surface.

As a historical archive, the Hessian State Archive Darmstadt preserves the archives of the former Landgraviate of Hesse-Darmstadt, and the territories (nobles and clerics, imperial cities) incorporated over the centuries and the Grand Duchy of Hesse (until 1918) and the People's State of Hesse (until 1945) with the three provinces Oberhessen, Starkenburg (South Hesse) and Rheinhessen.

After the historical introduction, the visitors were taken through the building and eventually ended up in the storage area with the documents connected to the Romanovs and the Hessian Grand Ducal family. On a table, photos, documents, menus, and a photo album were spread out - a treasure island! The guide introduced all of it - date, what it was, and if any anecdotes was connected to the item.



On the next table there were more documents. One very interesting was the marriage agreement between Tsarevich Alexander Nicholaevich (Later Emperor Alexander II) and Princess Marie of Hesse and by Rhine (Later Empress Maria Alexandrovna), dated 25 July 1840 and signed by Emperor Nicholas I - not by the two persons involved!



One photo album named "Krim", contained small snapshots of the Crimean palaces, including the old Livadia palace. Very interesting were the photos showing the construction of the Small Livadia Palace, used by Tsarevich and Grand Duke Alexander Alexandrovich (Later Alexander III, and where he died in 1894). From the photos taken after its completion it looks like it is a wooden palace, but the construction photos show it was built with bricks and then covered with wood.



A big photo album (45.5 x 30 cm) were with photos from the visit of Emperor Nicholas II and Empress Alexandra Feodorovna's to Hessen in the summer of 1909 and in August 30 to November 14, 1910. It has several photo from their many sightseeing trips in Hessen, all locations mentioned and dated, but rarely with the persons identified.



Photos from the Imperial Yacht Standart's arrival at Brunsbüttel-Holtenau (Kiel canal), Germany, 7 August 1909. Below - At Himmelmark, 1909, and Friedberg, 1910.



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## **Tsar's Choice**

**"The main thing is to convey to the people the truth about the Tsar"**

*An interview with historian, theologian and author Konstantin Kapkov, who in his recent books has described Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II and his family's spiritual life, selfless understanding of duty, the spiritual blindness that struck the Russian people, and how the Tsar did not find support in the clergy.*



*Konstantin Gennadievich Kapkov (Moscow, 1969- ) has been participating in several events organized by the Elizabeth-Sergei Enlightenment Society presenting his books and other projects, last time - in December 2017 in Frankfurt, at the scientific conference "Hessian Princesses in Russian history".*

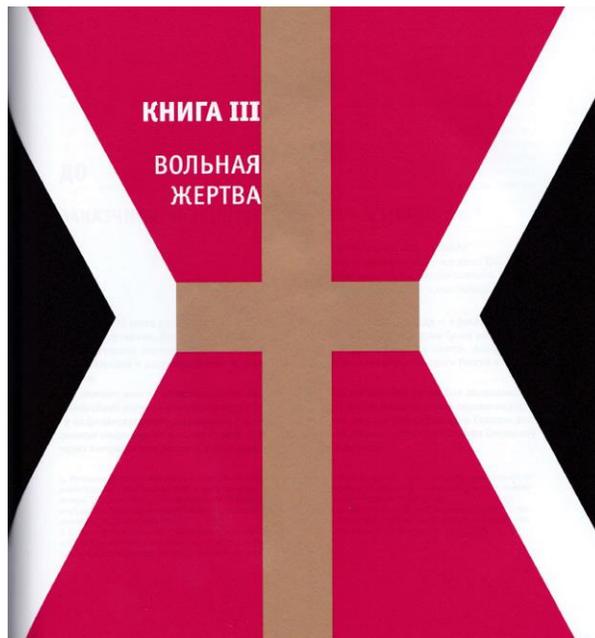
*Interviewed by Ludmila and Paul Kulikovskiy*

### **How started your interest in the Imperial Family?**

I had a plan to create a database of Orthodox clergy of the Russian Empire. I started with the military clergy: I found over 10,000 personalities and published a record of 1000 people from them. Then I was engaged in court clergy and became interested in people whom they confessed. I gave up research of court clergy and began to focus only on the Tsar's personality, as I saw his enormous spiritual potential. The important thing is that initially I was not engaged. I did not know anything about the Emperor, I studied him from scratch. And if I had found something negative about Nicholas II, I would have written that. I did not have any orders. I do not work in any institute. I write what I want and publish what I want and as I want. I solve all issues, including design of the book. I came to the conclusion that the Tsar, the Tsarina, and their children, were people of great spiritual life. I studied all sources, memoirs, archival materials, worked in total in 10 archives, including GARF, RGIA, RGVA, RGVIA and regional archives. I analyzed unpublished material, such as the relationship of the Emperor with the clergy, when the family was imprisoned for 1.5 years, which no one had ever studied. And I came to this conclusion on the basis of archival documents.

***From this material you made the book "Tsar's choice", which is unusual in many ways. Written by a historian with a theological background, with little previous knowledge of Tsar Nicholas II and his family and yet dives directly into the Tsar's spiritual life, a topic not many others have touch upon in such a way.***

First of all about my book "Tsar's Choice". It is dedicated to the spiritual life of the Imperial Family. Being a historian with a theological education, I was able to study this issue deeply. It is also unique that I did not depend on anyone. My friend, a businessman, sponsored me and did not demand a report and did not interfere in the process. I invited a good artist, Andrei Drachenkov, who is a calligrapher, he is a member of the Union of calligraphists and a professional icon painter. My idea was to use the style of Suprematism in the artistic design of the book, which was born shortly before the revolution, then developed during the revolution, it reflected the spirit of the times, the tragedy of the era and the mentality of people. Everything turned out very quickly: in two years I wrote the book, and we made the layout in one year. It is printed in the Czech Republic, because not one printing house in Russia could fulfill the technical parameters. In a word, we rose to the occasion. We tried to do the best we could for the Tsar.



### ***How did you approach to the spiritual life of the Tsar?***

The book "Tsar's Choice" examines three approaches to the history of the spiritual life of the Tsar. The first is the spiritual life of the Imperial Family. The second is the story of all the Tsar's confessors. His spiritual life is seen through relationships with priests before and during imprisonment. The third approach is the murder of the Tsar. If we are talking about the stages of the spiritual life of the Tsar, then this refers to the first topic. The peculiarity of the spiritual life of the Tsar was that there was no discreteness in it, there was a single line from childhood to the last day. His whole life was spiritual. He quietly walked step by step to his martyrdom.

I think it would be a big mistake to consider that before the abdication, the Tsar, had one spiritual life, and after abdication - another. An adult person cannot change so drastically. For example, there lives a man who does not pray, does not think about humility. And then he is in custody. Would he immediately become an ascetic who, with humility, accepts reproach, humiliation, as the Sovereign did from the guard in Tsarskoe Selo? If in his heart there was no humility from the beginning.



Столик, на котором служили обеды, украшенный к Рождеству 1917 года. Покрывала вышиты Императрицей

I proceed from the analysis of the life of the Tsar and the Tsarina. Alexandra Feodorovna, when she was only 12 years old, wrote out quotations of the saints about humility. She was brought up in a religious family. Nicholas, especially as soon as he became a Russian Tsar, went along a narrow path, in the Christian sense, and followed it to the grave. His officer's document was preserved, in the column "call-up period" he wrote "To the Gravestone". He served as an officer, as a Tsar, and as a Christian he served God. He and the Tsarina always had one question when deciding - whether God would like it. And after that they made decisions.

Secondly, in search of an answer to the question, how to understand the Tsar and the Tsarina, I studied their lives and realized that it was necessary to look at their children. "By their fruits you shall know them." The Imperial children were angels.

Yesterday in the bookstore I saw a book where it is said that Nicholas was a weak-minded. A special moment of criticism of the Imperial couple is always connected with the figure of Rasputin. Even in Germany, in Darmstadt, I went to the bookstore, and in the department of biographies, I discovered that all the central shelves were filled with the book "Rasputin". Rasputin is a brand.

***You analyze many interesting aspects of the time, one being the relationship to Rasputin, but also the Tsar's abdication. Some historians doubt it even happen. What do you think?***

Abdication was not *de jure*, but it was *de facto*. During the revolution, one cannot speak in legal terms, there cannot be legislative acts. There was not an abdication of the Tsar, but a removal of the Tsar from the throne. The people renounced the Tsar. And this is the first. The peasants did not renounce, but they did not intercede. The Grand Dukes renounced the Tsar *de facto*. On March 1, 1917, Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich renounced the Tsar. The paper that the Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich wrote so-called abdication paper which does not make any sense at all. To whom did he write it? To his secretary? Mikhail generally wrote a fantastic paper that he passes power to the Constituent Assembly, which did not exist, that is, to an empty space. In Michael's diary this day remained unfilled. The recording begins, dated March 3: "Rodzianko will come to me, called at 7 am, arrived at 10 o'clock". And that's all. Until the end of his days he did not fill this place. He was afraid to write even in his diary. Next record is on March 4.

***Tsar Nicholas II, having given an oath to his father, having a duty to lead the country, being anointed by God, how could he come to the decision to abdicate?***

I could make comparison between the Tsar and the first Russian Saints Boris and Gleb. They had a legitimate right to the throne of Kievian-Rus. They allowed their brother Svyatopolk, later nicknamed "the Cursed", to kill them. They begged their killer not to kill them, they burst into tears, but did not resist. A feat not everyone can understand. What is a feat? They are Princes-warriors, why did not they resist. And Ancient Rus appreciated this feat. These are the first Russian saints, whom they revered very much. Many lists of their hagiographies have survived, so it means that people read them. People's reverence is not assigned from above.



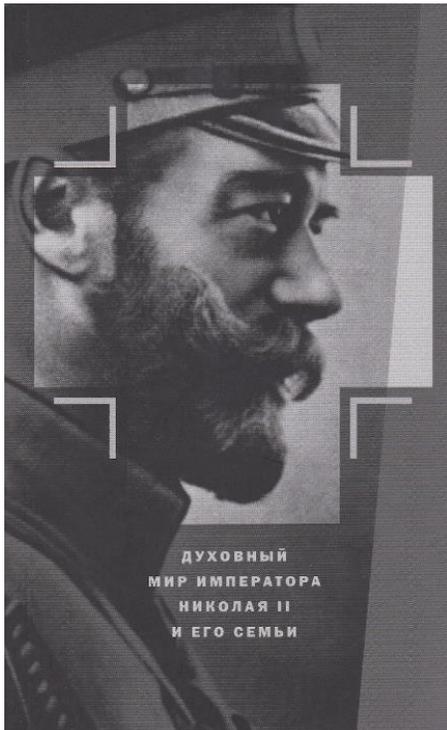
The Tsar realized that there is a will of God to retreat. Russia in 1917 did not understand this feat. The Tsar realized that he had done everything possible to prevent this situation. But they do not hear it. What else can he do? Then he meets the wall. Two times two are four, but the people says five! And he retreated. If Nicholas II knew the future, what would happen to the country, he would not abdicate. And, if the people who surrounded him knew what would happen to them, they would not have done it in the first place. In a year General Ruzsky was slaughtered by the Bolsheviks, he was chopped into pieces, like a salad. Do you think that if he had known this, would he have detained the Tsar in Pskov? And Rodzianko and Guchkov, politicians, wealthy people, they became emigrants and became nobody. They could only write memoirs, who of them was the biggest fool in 1917. None of those who made the revolution in February 1917, none of them won.

To judge the Tsar in hindsight, knowing what happened to Russia after the abdication, is wrong. To understand the Emperor, one must move into that time, understand the situation, the people who surrounded him, understand his inner speculation. And do not proceed from the fact that later there was

a Bolshevik terror. I am sure that if the Russian intelligentsia knew what would be done to them, they would carry the Tsar on their hands.

The fact is that the Emperor did not plan to abdicate before March 2. If someone had guessed it, he would be very surprised. It was not his plan. On the contrary, he defended the monarchy as best he could. One of his last decrees was the dismissal of the Duma. He did not make any concessions to the opposition. The very last thing that could come to his head was abdication.

Of course, Nikolai Alexandrovich knew from the newspapers about the situation in the country. I would emphasize two points. The Tsar had a clear, simple, logical idea. First, we must bring the war to a victorious end, and then carry out reforms, since changes in the state structure during the course of the war would be disastrous for the country. It seemed to him that this simple logic was understandable to the opposition, which, he believed, would scream and scream, but would not take extreme steps, since for them it was suicide. The Sovereign trusted the army leadership, believed in the common sense of the staff. It is not by chance that there is a saying in Russia "Do not change horses at the crossing." When he was isolated, he saw that no one can think sensibly. Telegrams came to him from the commanders of the fronts, in which he was "asked to abdicate by his loyal subjects." This formulation is absurd. He sees that there is nobody to talk to about it. Such an impression consists of an analysis of documents, including the records of the Camera-Junker magazines, fixing all people whom the Tsar received, his correspondence with the Tsarina, diaries, memoirs. But the interlocutor was sick. What to do? In a society embraced by mass insanity, only the Tsar had a sober mind.



***In your book, there is a closer look at the relationship between the clergy and the Tsar, not just the priest that was next to him during captivity, but also in general. Tell us what you found regarding the clergy's position to Tsar?***

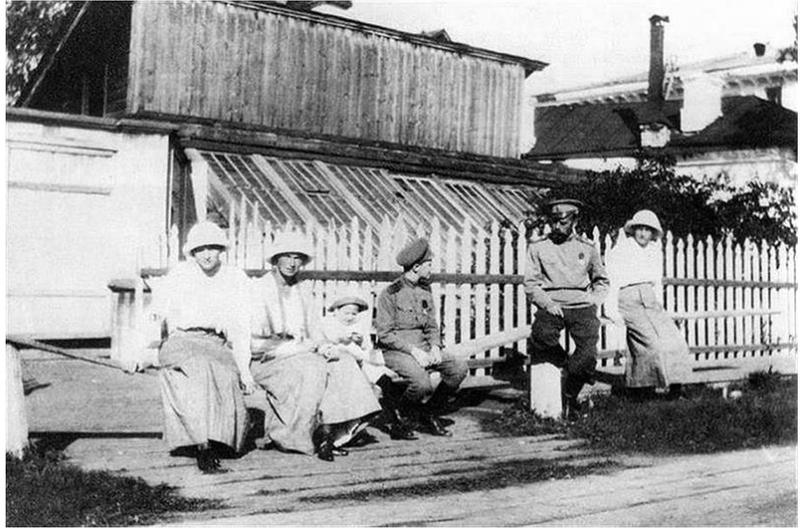
The clergy betrayed the Tsar. This is absolutely unambiguous. Perhaps even the highest hierarchs were involved in negotiations with Rodzianko and Guchkov and knew in advance what would happen to the Tsar. There are no documents confirming this plot. But I shall refer to some curious fact.

Already on March 2 in the journal "Church Gazette", the official publication of the Holy Synod, it was reported: "New liturgical instructions are sent to you free of charge." And in the parishes, new books began to be distributed, in which the Sovereign and members of the August family no longer are remembered. To make changes in the Orthodox liturgical ranks, it is necessary to create a huge number of volumes. The fact is that there are a lot of services, so there are also a lot of books, and the Tsar is always remembered in them. One must know the relationship in the church between the bishop and the priest, that the bishop never does anything for free, he will take any penny. So they were printed in advance and given free of charge to the parishes.

In the State Archives of Russia there are letters addressed to the Tsar when he was imprisoned. Letters are different: there are nasty, there are portraits of the Tsar with burnt eyes and there are loyal, expressing respect and sympathy, from different people, from peasants, from women, from children, but not a single letter from the clergy.

Of the clergy of Tsarskoe Selo no one went to exile with the Tsar in Tobolsk. The court clergy included 150 people, favored by the authorities, well paid. None of them went to Tobolsk. Princes, peasants (servants), sailors, soldiers, women - several hundred people voluntarily went to exile with the Imperial family, but none of the clergy. They did not want to. The court priest refused to come, on March 2 even the Tsar's spiritual father did not come to him - he said "I'm sick". They all abandoned him.

When Imperial Family was in custody in Tsarskoe Selo, a priest of the military department from the Cathedral of St. Fedorovsky served. He was more than 70 years old, he had a family, and he did not go with August Family to Tobolsk. But Catholic Aloysius Trupp, the Calvinist Pierre Gilliard, the Anglican Charles Gibbs voluntary went to exile with the Imperial family. It is also significant that in Tobolsk, a drinking priest, unprepared, just from the nearest church served for Imperial Family. The Bishop Hermogenes of Tobolsk and the Siberian did not appoint another priest.



The Church hierarchs, did not speak out against the imprisonment of the Tsar's family. The Holy Synod did not utter a single word. Did not ask why the children were placed in custody? Personal belongings of the Imperial family in the Winter Palace, the cars of Nicholas II, were confiscated, later Kerensky and his company used them. This was authorized by the Provisional Government, the people, who in words defended the principle of private property. That is, as a matter of fact, they sanctioned theft and again representatives of the Church did not utter a single word ....

Obviously, Yurovsky knew the engineer Ipatiev, who was the chairman of the Committee for Public Salvation, formed on March 3-4. He organized a procession in Yekaterinburg in honor of Free Russia after the abdication of the Tsar. In this committee was also the priest John Storozhev - the last priest of the Tsar. There was also Yurovsky .... The circle was closed.

In dislike for the monarchy, a variety of forces have come together, from the rabid revolutionary to the intelligentsia and the church.

### ***What is your own family background?***

My family comes from wealthy peasants from the Andreevsky village of the Zvenigorodsky district of the Moscow province. At the end of the 19th century, my great-grandfather, Ivan Ilyich Minyaev moved to Moscow and opened a production of wooden boxes. In the directory "All of Moscow" he was mentioned as - the producer of wooden packaging. The two-story mansion, where they lived at the Kuznetsky Most, is still preserved, now there is a third floor added. There was production on the first floor, and on the second floor they lived. I have pictures, where my great-grandfather with his workers stands next to this building. He fought in the Russo-Japanese War, but since he was from the peasants, he fought in the lower ranks. He participated in defense of Port Arthur, and received St. George's Cross 4th degree.



The cross did not survive, but the order for rewarding was preserved. The number of this cross is known and the wording "He committed an act with complete coolness and dexterity." He was however captured by the Japanese. His wife came from Moscow to Japan to visit him. In those days it was considered the norm. A wife could come to a captive soldier. Then my great-grandfather returned to Moscow, he was respected, like a man who was restrained in a foreign land by the burdens of captivity. In 1917, with the arrival of the Bolsheviks, he was thrown out of the house. And then the family wandered, lived with their acquaintances, but in the end they somehow settled themselves. In the early 30's my great-grandfather disappeared without a trace in the streets of Moscow. He just left and never returned.

His son, my grandfather worked in a factory, became manager and in the 30s even got a good, big apartment with several rooms in the center of Moscow. In 1942, together with the factory left in an evacuation to Kuibyshev. In Kuibyshev, my mother was born. Before leaving, the Moscow apartment was sealed, and when they returned in 1945 the apartment was occupied, it was now the home of a NKVD general. They were offered a choice - to go to Siberia or to find another place of residence. The general allowed them to take some things. And they again lived with some of their acquaintances. Then in the 1970s they received another apartment, from which, thank God, no one has driven the family out since.

From my father's side, the story is less detailed, as my parents were divorced. And I am just now restoring my father's line.

The family name Kapkov is rare. From the 19th century, I found one line - poor nobility of Kashirsky Uyezd in the Moscow province. In the book of the nobility of the Moscow province only one Kapkov family is listed.

There was also an artist Yakov Kapkov. His works are in the Tretyakov Gallery. He painted pictures on religious subjects. The most famous of his paintings is "Healing of Taydula-Khan by Metropolitan Alexei." There are many postcards with this painting.

***You were not from childhood embraced with the idea of nobility, monarchy, or church, so from where came your interest in the Imperial family and church?***

That's right, my interest in the personality of the Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II is not connected with my family. This is my own. Even in Soviet times, I was excited by the issues of Russian history. Why, I do not know. When I served as a frontier guard in the Soviet Army at the Norwegian border, I used to read history books every free second. Then for 10 years I was engaged in business, but still I was attracted to history. I resigned as one of the founders of a company that produced popcorn, took my share from the company and at the age of 30 entered the St. Tikhon Theological Institute, which I graduated with honors. I graduated from bell ringing courses as well, I can ring bell also.

At 30 years old I saw an announcement that in the Belgorod region you can work in a monastery. There I was baptized on Christmas Eve, after the Christmas night service. And I later received initiation (hirotessiya) in the rank of clergyman from the Bishop John of Belgorod and Stary Oskol.

***From history, to church, and there you got into publishing your own books?***

Once, I took the Gospel and read it for the first time. It struck me. And before entering the institute, I learned the New Testament, I wanted to check whether the translation is correct in Russian. I had a doubt whether the clergy conceal the meaning of the New Testament. I read all the books on the text of the New Testament, all the apocryphal and Gnostic Gospels. I took the "Critical Edition of the New Testament" in Greek as the basis, and all the different Gospel's interpretations. I took the translation of Bishop Kassian Bezobrazov, published in the middle of the century in Paris, one of the best translations of the Gospel into Russian. And I compared this translation with other books for discrepancies, with all Russian and Slavonic translations, as well as with English and American editions. I studied the etymology of words. I verified the whole text and published it as a book. This first of my books I published on my own money, in 10 thousand copies. Recently discovered that my book, the "Canonical Gospels. New Russian edition" is called the best translation of the New Testament into Russian in the Great Orthodox Encyclopedia.



***Why did you doubt that the New Testament translations were wrong?***

I think it was the influence of the USSR. All this propaganda gave me the notion, that the churchmen were deceiving people.

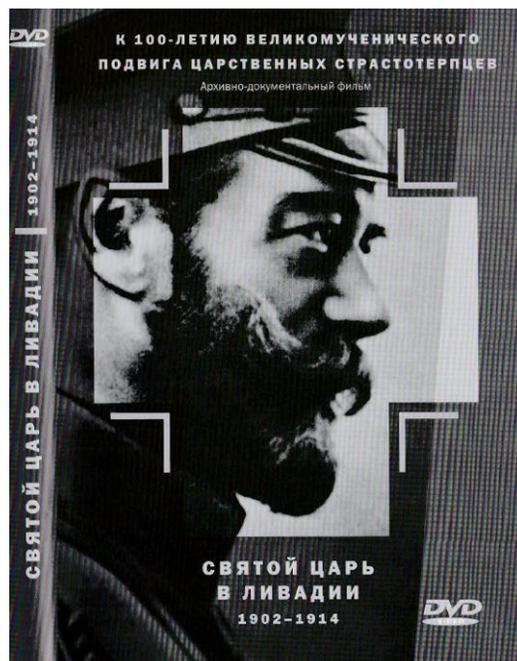
### ***You have now published several books. How do you do it?***

How do I publish my books? I'm looking for people who are interested in publishing a book and who will buy some of the circulation in advance, and I list them as participants in the project. For example, 350 copies of my future book have already been bought by the Society "Two-headed Eagle", about 100 by Father Dmitry from the Livadia Church, my spiritual father from Belgorod bought 150 books and 100 - by Alexander Renzhin, owner of the icon painting workshop "Canon." I sell the next book at a cost price of 1100 rubles. 700 thousand rubles have already been redeemed, but this is half of the amount required. When I find the customers, I'll start typing. Then I distribute books to the participants of the project.

### ***The next book is also about the Tsar?***

Now I'm writing the third book about the Tsar. The book "Tsar's Choice" - the first book about the Emperor - is an expensive publication, and the second one costs only 200 roubles. The second was published in May 2017 and already 11,000 copies sold. I gave it to my customers. For example, Vladyka Vikenty Tashkent (Morar) bought 1,000 copies. The new book also will be big, with the same design, with the same cover in black. I hope that the new edition will be just as beautiful. It will include my first two books plus new interesting information about the spiritual life of the Tsar and the Tsarina. I found the descendants of the priest Storozhev, who was last priest to serve the Tsar. After Yekaterinburg he worked in Harbin. I found his descendants, talked with them. Some of them live in California, some - in Moscow. I bought the Harbin archive of this priest. I also found the descendants of the priest Vladimir Khlynov - last priest who gave communion to the Tsar. His descendants live in Yekaterinburg, I maintain contact with them.

Two discs will be attached to the book. On one - a documentary chronicle about the stay of the Imperial family in Livadia. I found two records of the Tsar's voice in the State Archive of Audio Documents. There it is not written that this is his voice, but there is a parade record. And the soldiers answer "Your Majesty, Your Majesty", they could greet like this only to the Tsar. So the second disc is with the voice of the Tsar. In addition, I bought 4 thousand postage stamps, published in 1913, blue and brown with the portrait of the Emperor. One stamp will be attached to each book as a gift. In a word, this will be the first unique edition: one can read about the Tsar, see photos, see the Tsar in motion, hear his voice and receive as a gift a real object of that time.

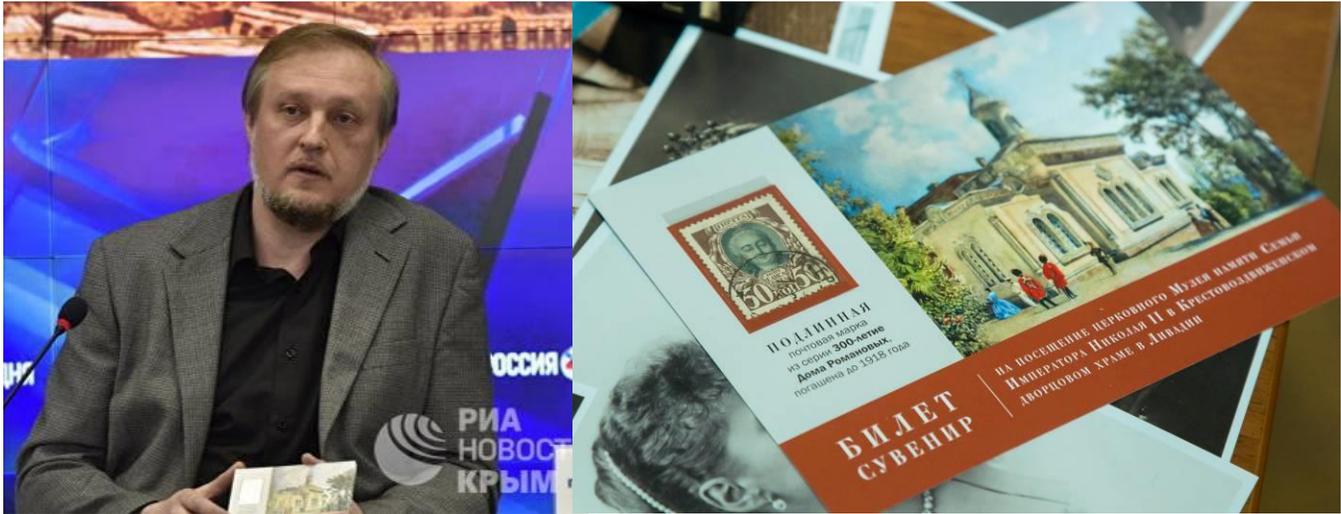


### ***You also recently launched another interesting project - a souvenir ticket. Can you tell us about this idea?***

The first ticket was made for the Nicholas II Memorial Museum in Livadia. The idea is simple - to purchase genuine postage stamps with portraits of the Tsars - Nicholas I, Alexander II, Alexander III and Nicholas II. These stamps were issued in large numbers in 1913, to the 300th anniversary of the Romanov dynasty. With Father Dmitry, we already bought 15 thousand marks. Dimitry and I sold this souvenir in Livadia - a ticket with a stamp.

In the US and Switzerland, I bought more than 100,000 marks, not with portraits of Emperors, but with the double-headed eagle. They were taken out of Russia by emigrants. Clean stamps, in large sheets, on the sides of sheets - watermarks and the inscription "Credit Printing House, 1908". I patented this idea in the Russian copyright society, as well as an industrial design. I received several copyright certificates, on the basis of which a State contract was concluded with me. In addition, I wrote an article - "A new word in the museum business." Museum visitor can keep a ticket for memory. Stamps of 30 different colors and 4 colors of the dies are already selected.

I now hope, my idea will be used from the opening of the Romanov Museum in the Governor's House in Tobolsk on April 26, 2018. I suggested to make a ticket based on the same technique, that is, an entrance tickets with a postage mark will be sold to each visitor.



**As you just mentioned, you are also involved in the "Emperor Nicholas II memorial museum in Livadia", located inside the Palace Church in Livadia, Crimea. Tell us more about it?**

The museum in Livadia is made by two people, I and Father Dmitry (Rector of the Holy Cross Exaltation Church, Protopriest Dmitry Gotskalyuk). The museum is located directly on the premises of the church. The room is small, so the principle of forming the exposition is only genuine objects. There is not a single copy. We cannot attract many people if there are copies. Some of the exhibits are bought by Fr. Dmitry on the income from the church, and we take some of the exhibits for safe keeping. For example, the estimated value of the mosaic with the Nicholas II's portrait was \$ 100,000. The museum has many very expensive items. Among them, the Order of St. George of the fourth degree, belonging to the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich the youngest, who fought in the Crimean War; The state seal of Emperor Paul I. One of the first Bibles published in Russia, which belonged to the Tsar's steward Timothy Levshin. There is a very interesting inscription in it, each word of which is located on a separate page so that they cannot be torn out: "This book of Timofei Platonovich Levshin. Signed in order not to be stolen. And if it is stolen, it should be found".



The Museum has many original portraits of Alexander III, which were made in England, Germany and Russia. The Emperor is depicted on them at different age. There are interesting portraits of Nicholas II. The unique thing is a photo of archpriest Athanasius Belyaev with an autograph. He was a Tsarist confessor during the family imprisonment in Tsarskoe Selo. There is no such photo in any museum. Among the rarities, a piece of priest cloth belonged to the confessor of Alexander I. The last

purchased exhibit is the rescript of Nicholas II to Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich. Signed "I remain a nephew who loves you Nicholas, Livadia, 1898". The cost of the document was 8 thousand dollars. One person presented a book of religious poems published in England and signed by Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna.

The territory of the church belongs not to the museum, but to the diocese. Before the revolution besides the palace church, there was also a parish church for the residents of the village Livadia. It was destroyed. Father Dimitry is re-building the large

Ascension church and wants to dedicate the entire underground floor of this new church to the memorial museum of Nicholas II. I think that in two years the construction will be finished. The museum that exists now, is based only on our enthusiasm, so how it will be, is unknown. It is not known whether we will still be given items for gratuitous storage in the future.



The latest books by Konstantin Karkov:



2017 - "The spiritual world of Emperor Nicholas II and his family" / "Духовный мир Императора Николая II и его семьи"

2016 - "Tsar's choice. The spiritual world of Emperor Nicholas II and his family. The last priests of the Tsar" / "Царский выбор. Духовный мир Императора Николая II и его семьи. Последние священники при Царе"

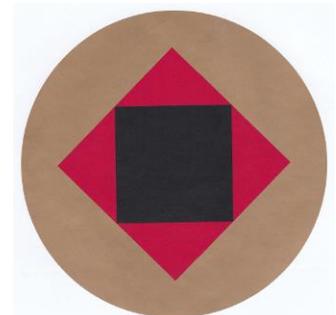


2012 - "Priests-Knights of the Imperial Military Order of the Great Martyr and Victorious St. George" / "Священники-кавалеры Императорского Военного ордена св.Великомученика и Победоносца Георгия"

2009 - "Essays on the history of the military and naval clergy of the Russian Empire of the XVIII - early XX centuries" / "Очерки по истории военного и морского духовенства Российской империи XVIII - начала XX веков"



2008 - "Memorable Book (Dictionary) of the Military and Marine Clergy" / "Памятная книга военного и морского духовенства"



## Elevator of the XIX century was found in the Gatchina Palace

26 January. Newspaper *Gatchina Pravda* - 170 years ago the elevator was already working in the Gatchina Palace. A unique find - the elevator shaft, and an old mechanism in it - were accidentally discovered by restorers in the Arsenal square.

The lifting machine was made in 1847, when Nicholas I was engaged in the reconstruction of this part of the palace. According to experts of the museum, what the elevator looked like is unknown. Now in the basement in a small niche right under the rooms of Nicholas I, overlooking the private garden, there are metal remains - wheels, shafts, a coil with a winch. A miracle of 19th century engineering, rusted and compressed over time, but it is impressive in complexity and size.

The elevator rose to the third floor. It can be assumed that in the shaft with the help of cables the elevator construction with a wooden chair, with upholstered cloth was fastened. In the basement there were different services, including the duty footman in charge of the elevator. The mechanism of lifting and descent worked on manual traction, and then, when the Gatchina Palace was electrified, probably on electricity.



As Irina Ryzhenko, head of the sector of documentary funds of the Gatchina Museum-Reserve, described, nobody knew about the lifting mechanism. True, when dealing with historical information, they saw on the drawings some kind of a square - the question arose what it is. Then they discovered a pre-war document, where a mechanism appeared that ended on the third floor in the rooms of Alexander III. Restorers tightly took up the restoration of this part of the Arsenal Square only in 2015. Thanks to their scrupulous, scientific approach to business, a mysterious find was discovered.

Why, then, was nothing known about the royal elevator? Here we need to recall the post war history of the Arsenal Square. In the palace, which was badly damaged by the fire, the first to enter was not restorers. The Higher Naval Engineering Radio Engineering School on the first floor of the Arsenal square had, presumably, the Department of Marxism-Leninism until 1960, and the "Electronstandart" Institute had its offices. Going through the park under the windows of the palace, the Gatchins could see dark green walls, gray tables and cabinets for three decades and, naturally, no plafonds, paintings and stucco moldings. Neither the school nor the institute had any mechanisms for the past. And ordinary workers who descended into the basement paid little attention to such things.

To completely recreate and run the elevator mechanism is not planned. It is planned that you can see the elevator from the rooms of Nicholas I on the first floor through a glass that will be installed in the floor. The basement will be highlighted so that you can contemplate the rarity. Immediately, on the ground floor, at the eye level of visitors, a restored elevator will be hung but still. The principle of the elevator - as from the basement, the cables lifted the structure to the third floor, they plan to show it on a mock-up. On the question: when will it be, museum workers cautiously answer: "Everything depends on financing."

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## Triumphal arch in honour of Tsarevich Nicholas Alexandrovich will be restored in Khabarovsk

January 26, 2018. NADV - In Khabarovsk, they want to restore the triumphal arch in honour of the visit of Tsarevich Nikolai Alexandrovich to the city in 1891. Khabarovsk people initiated to erect the arch on Komsomolskaya Square.

The Tsarevich, being in Khabarovsk in 1891, was honoured by the people, with a construction of a triumphal arch. In the mid-1920s the wooden arch was demolished. Arches for the visit of the Tsarevich Nicholas in 1891 were erected in several Far Eastern cities (Blagoveshchensk, Khabarovsk, Ussuriisk and Vladivostok). All of them were destroyed in Soviet times. In Vladivostok and Blagoveshchensk, the arches were recreated in 2003 and in 2005, respectively.



*The model of the modern arch was created by Khabarovsk artist Vladimir Naumenko*

The triumphal arch was located on Shevchenko Street, but now it is impossible to reproduce it at a historical place. In this regard, the public of Khabarovsk appeals to the deputies of the City Duma with a proposal to consider the arch project as an element of framing the staircase of the descent to the Amur from Komsomolskaya Square. In the opinion of citizens, the recreation of the triumphal arch in Khabarovsk in the year of the 100th anniversary of the death of the Imperial family would be an important event in the cultural life of the city, and the building itself would be an adornment of the regional centre.

The city and regional authorities supported the project, but the construction financing will be joint - with the city's public.



## Bust of Emperor Nicholas I was opened in Nevinnomysk

23 January. News 1777 - In Nevinnomysk, in a separate railway battalion, the opening of the bust to the Emperor Nicholas I was held. It was on his orders that on August 6, 1851, for the first time in the world, railway troops were formed, which were part of the engineering troops of the Russian Imperial Army.



From the very beginning of the formation, the railway troops solved tasks of great importance, both in the time of war and peace. Military railway workers built access roads to Severodvinsk, Plesetsk, Baikonur, objects of the Ministry of Defense, as well as to Ekibastuz and Berezovsky coal mines, reconstructed the railway facilities of the ports of Vanino and Vladivostok, and built the Baikal-Amur Main Line.

The head of the city Mikhail Minenkov took part in the solemn opening ceremony of the bust in the military part of Nevinnomysk. Addressing the soldiers, he said that the history of the country needs to be known and respected.

The head of the city wished the "cadets" high marks in military work, because the war is the strictest examiner. Also before the personnel of the railway battalion were Colonel of the reserve Alexander Netepin and Lieutenant Colonel Sergei Pugachev, later the rector of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God, Archpriest Dmitry performed a moleben for any good deed with the order of consecration of the bust. It was donated as part of the "Alley of Russian Glory" project.

The opening ceremony ended with the execution of the Russian anthem and solemn passing of the ceremonial parade. Going into the ranks under the battle flag of the unit, the railway soldiers kept a strict alignment on the bust of Nicholas I.

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## #Romanovs100: RT tells Imperial family's story in new online photo-project

17 Jan, 2018. RT - RT's new interactive project dedicated to the Romanovs will let to learn about Russia's last reigning Imperial family and their horrific fate following the Revolution.

2018 marks 100 years since the execution of the Romanov family.

To commemorate this tragic event, RT cooperated with the State Archive of the Russian Federation.

The result - a multi-platform online project that will launch later this year with the first teaser hitting the web on Wednesday.



"#Romanovs100 is going to be a multi-platform social media project that will run for several months. We will try to tell the story of the Romanov family through hundreds and hundreds of their own photos." #Romanovs100 Creative Producer Kirill Karnovich-Valua said, revealing some of the team's plans. 1918 was a year of terror for ex-Emperor Nicholas II, his wife Alexandra, and their five children. They were held in captivity since 1917, their living conditions went from bad to worse in 1918, until the family was relocated to their final destination in the Urals, where they were brutally executed by Bolsheviks.

#Romanovs100 is brought to you by the same team behind the award-winning #1917LIVE project, dedicated to the 1917 Revolution in Russia.

The year-long historical re-enactment on Twitter garnered more than 250,000 followers and participants across the globe.



Just this January, #1917LIVE scored another award to add to its collection, which includes a Shortys for "Best in Education."

Adweek nominated RT's #1917LIVE for Best Use of Social in its prestigious Arc Awards, celebrating the Best Brand Storytelling of 2017.

In October 2017, #1917LIVE made it to the finals of the Drum Social Buzz Awards in the "Most Innovative Use of Social" category, the finals of the 2017 Clio Entertainment for "Best TV Promo Campaign," and the finals of the Epica Awards.

Although the authors are hesitant to share more details about their new brainchild, they do say that, as much as #Romanovs100 will be different from #1917LIVE, there will be certain parallels.

For example, the team will continue to work with British author and historian Helen Rappaport, who wrote the *Romanov sisters* Twitter account for #1917LIVE.

**FABERGÉ from St Petersburg to Sandringham**  
 at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich UK,  
 running until 11th Feb 2018

*By Sue Woolmans, Romanov News correspondent in UK*

Norwich, a small city in eastern England, doesn't seem the most obvious place for an exhibition about Fabergé - until you remember that Sandringham, home of Queen Alexandra, sister of the Empress Maria Feodorovna, happens to be nearby. Norwich itself is rather splendid, with a lovely old town and 2 cathedrals. On the outskirts of the city is the University of East Anglia campus, and it's here that the exhibition is being held, in the Sainsbury Centre (and if anyone is able to get there, you need the number 25 bus from the railway station). On entering, you are immediately enveloped into pre-Revolution Russian culture as images of Pavlova dancing are projected onto a wall, and a deep female Russian voice sings a traditional folk song. This is the voice of Varvara Panina - who frequently performed at the Romanov court. She was so popular that Faberge made his largest hard stone figure of her, and it is here to see - amazingly detailed, even down to large gold hoop earrings and traditional Russian patterned shawl.



The Basket of Flowers Egg", 1901, Silver, parcel gilt, gold, oyster guilloche and blue enamel, diamonds, Royal Collection Trust"



Left -The silver dog "Vassilka", 1908, silver, aventurine quartz, Royal Collection Trust.  
 Vassilka the Russian wolf-hound or borzoi had been presented as a pair with Alex as a gift from Tsar Alexander III and Tsarina Marie Feodorovna to King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra and were probably the first examples of their breed to be represented in the Sandringham kennels. A further pair, Molodetz and Oudalska, was later given to King Edward VII. Queen Alexandra became well known for her borzois, which she bred and showed. Vassilka won the prize for best dog at the Norwich Kennel Club Show and won second and third prizes at Manchester in 1903, when eleven months old. In total throughout his life he won more than seventy-five prizes and achieved Champion status.  
 This portrait is very finely modelled. Vassilka and Persimmon are the only animal portraits from the Sandringham commission to have been executed in silver and produced in Fabergé's Moscow workshops.

Right - The goose, 1911, Henrik Wigstrom, Quartzite, obsidian, rose diamonds, gold, Royal Collection, The La Vielle Russie.  
 The design for this goose - exactly as executed, with the date 1911, appears in the album from the workshop of Henrik Wigström. The sculpture is executed in a combination of white quartzite and black obsidian, to which a cornelian beak and gold feet have been added. The sculpture is finished with rose diamond eyes. Text adapted from Fabergé's Animals: A Royal Farm in Miniature  
 Commissioned by King Edward VII, 1907 (the Sandringham Commission).



There are no surprises in the layout of the exhibition - basically chronological, with an opening timeline combining political events with the lives of Fabergé and the Romanovs. The wow factor that makes this exhibition stand out is the very detailed text panels that go with the exhibits; and space - small items in big glass cases giving you plenty of room to see them. For anyone who visited the Buckingham Palace Fabergé a few years ago, you will know how vital this is. It's the minute workmanship by these master craftsmen that really has to be seen to be appreciated - tiny diamond eyes in a dog, the platinum whiskers of a dormouse, the carved feathers on a goose ... Most of the items are in cases that you can walk around so you can see front, back, above, below. For the really tiny animals, the curators have mounted magnifying glasses for you to peer through.

The majority of the exhibits are the hardstone animals that Fabergé made for Queen Alexandra at the behest of King Edward VII - and which were displayed in glass cases in Sandringham. A large pink quartz pig caught my eye, probably because I've eaten too much chocolate over Xmas. There is one egg to see - the 1901 Basket of Flowers egg - an explosion of wild flowers and grasses that populate the Russian tundra, given by Nicholas to his wife and eventually acquired by Queen Mary. And, of course, some of the delicate flowers in rock crystal vases that never cease to impress. A La Vielle Russie have sponsored and so have lent copiously to this exhibition, and their most stunning contribution is a Byzantine-style triptych icon given by the St Petersburg elite to Nicholas and Alexandra when Grand Duchess Olga was born.

So is there anything new that we haven't seen before, I hear you ask? Well, yes there is. A Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna painting of an Easter table with flowers and eggs. This was lent by the Queen, as was a very delicate painting of Lillies of the Valley by Grand Duke Michael Mikhailovich!!! There is a shimmering painting of Empress Alexandra on porcelain. And some nice local history - the story of the Sandringham company of soldiers who fought and perished at Gallipoli.

There is a catalogue - cheaper online than at the exhibition:

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/FABERGE-Petersburg-Sandringham-Ian-Collins/dp/0946009716/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1515963057&sr=1-1&keywords=from+st+petersburg+to+sandringham](https://www.amazon.co.uk/FABERGE-Petersburg-Sandringham-Ian-Collins/dp/0946009716/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1515963057&sr=1-1&keywords=from+st+petersburg+to+sandringham)

which is nicely illustrated though not with all the items - rather disappointingly without the above mentioned paintings. There is very little time left in the run of this exhibition but if you have any chance at all, do go.

There is a pre-opening video available in the article in this link: <http://www.itv.com/news/anglia/2017-10-12/the-queens-faberge-egg-and-the-russian-craftsmans-links-to-sandringham/>



## The memory of the Romanovs in prerevolutionary postcards will be presented in Tobolsk

14 January. Tyuman Line The collectors of the Union of Russian Filokartists intend to bring to Tobolsk an exposition of pre-revolutionary postcards featuring the imperial family of the Romanovs in 2018.

The president of the Union of Russian Philocratists Arsen Melitonyan told this in an interview with a correspondent of the "Tyumen line". According to him, perhaps, the largest collection in the world associated with the Imperial family of the Romanovs, which has about 4 thousand postcards is at the disposal of postal card collectors.



"This is the largest collection of postcards featuring the image of the Imperial family in such a creative miniature." It is really an art, besides the fact that it fixes the appearance of specific historical figures», Arsen Melitonian said.



Postcards based on portraits of Imperial family were issued by the Community of St. Eugene under the auspices of the St. Petersburg Committee of Guardianship of the Red Cross sisters - this is the first organization that had the exclusive right to publish portraits of the Romanovs.

The value of the collection is its historical significance, rather than has a monetary value, stressed Arsene Melitonian: "For the postcards of the Imperial family, life could have been paid if someone had found a portrait of the Emperor in the thirties." This is a feat. The value of a postcard is the preservation of historical memory. "

The collection is diverse: there are portraits of the Imperial family, event cards, which captured the visits of the Emperor, parades, reviews. There is everything connected with the 1903 ball in St. Petersburg - the most famous ball, when the whole Imperial family was in historical costumes. There are separate and themes - such as the First World War.

December 2017 the member of the Presidium of the Union of Russian Filokartistov Alexei Latyzhynsky came in Tobolsk with this exposition. Tobolaki remained impressed by the exhibition of postcards, and Muscovites, learning about the opening of the museum of the Imperial family of Emperor Nicholas II, planned in Tobolsk, expressed the desire to bring an exhibition of postcards of the Imperial family, explained Alexey Vakulik, the head of the museum "House of the Governor-General".

"Knowing that the museum of the Imperial family will be opened in Tobolsk, Alexei Latyzhinsky suggested to bring to us a unique exposition."

The project is still in development, at the negotiation stage, explained in the Tobolsk Historical and Architectural



Museum-Reserve. Its implementation is planned in 2018. Arsen Melitonyan specified that by the 100th anniversary of the shooting of the Romanovs, the Union of Filokartists plans to show in the exhibitions all places of residence and the way to the Golgotha of the Imperial family, starting from the Alexander Palace of Tsarskoe Selo.

"There are not many postcards from four thousand will be shown at the Tobolsk exhibition, there are not many postcards with the views of Tobolsk and the Imperial family in Siberia." There are also images of royal palaces and residences in this exposition, "said Arsen Melitonian.

Presumably, the exhibition of the postcard of the Imperial family will be presented to the opening of the museum of Romanov family in Tobolsk, which was planned for April 2018. In the two-story building of the Governor-General's house, repairs are being completed, and the exposition filling of 18 rooms of the new museum object began.

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### Stolen, rescued and returned photos

11 January. Pravda - Even in ancient times, a tradition appeared to select masterpieces from the defeated enemy. Trophies were considered a symbol of victory and honour. Collections of the palaces of Leningrad and its suburbs have always been famous for their wealth and, of course, could not help attracting the attention of Germans who valued art.

In Nazi Germany, several organizations were established that dealt with the confiscation and export of cultural property from the occupied countries, under the pretext of their salvation. Count Ernst-Otto von Solms-Laubach, Colonel of the German Army, Doctor of Arts visited occupied Gatchina (then Krasnogvardeisk) and took from the palace 400 portraits of personalities of German origin. The Sonderkommando Baron Eberhard Max Paul von Künsberg, competing with him during the Second World War, was in charge of the special unit responsible for the confiscation of archives, libraries and art treasures. The immediate head of this organization was Joachim von Ribbentrop, and since August 1942 - Heinrich Himmler. In addition, representatives of the Reichsleiter's Operational Staff: Alfred Rosenberg, who led the seizure of cultural property in the occupied territories, Georg von Kruzenstern, Helmut Speer, and others, "worked" here.



Teams also competed among themselves. For example, the group of Künsberg prepared for the export of more than 300 thousand objects of cultural and historical heritage, withdrawn from the eastern occupied territories at the request of Rosenberg.

During the occupation there were also unsystematic robberies of palace collections by soldiers and officers of the Reich.

Almost 74 years have passed since the liberation of the city of Gatchina from German fascist troops. Every inhabitant of our city knows the tragic history of the palace, which caught fire after the retreat of the invaders. The commission of museum workers, who arrived on January 31, noted the death of all the interiors of the palace from a fresh fire. Fortunately, the walls of the unique monument survived. The generally accepted version is that the building burst out as a result of triggered time bombs.

Before the Great Patriotic War, the museum's funds were replete with valuable collections of paintings, decorative arts, textiles, weapons, precious metals, rare books. In addition, there was a vast (more than 100 thousand photographs) photo archive, which included both personal photographs of the Romanov family, and pre-war images of the interiors of the palace. But, unfortunately, during the evacuation the entire photo archive was left in the palace (in value it was inferior to other exhibits).

For the current restoration process, this has become a big problem, so every authentic snapshot of the pre-war palace is very expensive. German antiquary Thomas Mertens, who bought for 1500 euros 45 photos with images of interiors of the Gatchina Palace and porcelain from the pre-war collections of the museum understood this very well. It was easy to guess about the belonging: on the back of each picture there was a GDM stamp. Antiquarian decided to display photos on the auction Ebay for 12,500 euros.

On November 9, 1990, Bonn signed an agreement on good-neighborliness, partnership and cooperation between the USSR and the FRG. Article 6 states that "the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic of Germany agree to notify each other of the existence on their territory of art objects of the other party to the treaty and recognize as fair the return of cultural masterpieces to their owners." On December 16, 1992, an agreement was signed in Moscow between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on Cultural Cooperation.

According to these documents, both sides must inform each other about the exhibits they discovered. German colleagues, museum workers, if possible, try to help us in the return of relics to the rightful place. In this situation, an attempt to expose a lot with exhibits, of which accessories are known, was illegal. For this entrepreneur could face a major fine. Priority of the world cultural policy is the preliminary negotiation with the owners, without involving the courts.



In April 2017, the staff of the scientific archive of the Gatchina Palace became aware of 45 pictures from the museum's collection for sale on the Ebay website. To the lot were attached images, including the turnover of photographs, on each of which stood the rooms of the Gatchina Palace, inflicted in 1938 during the general inventory. There was also a list listing the scenes of the pictures. Among them: the main halls of the Central Corps, silverware and porcelain. However, a special and main interest of the scientific employees of GMZ "Gatchina" was caused by photographs of the Ministerial Corridor and the Bear Staircase in the Arsenal Square. The images of these interiors, like the interiors themselves, were lost during the war years and until now have not been found in archives or museums, and therefore are of great value for carrying out restoration and exposition works.

Employees of the palace appealed to the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, as well as to German colleagues, doctors of science, history professors Wolfgang Eichwede and Corinne Kur-Korolev. Those in turn sent requests to the Foreign Ministry of Germany, the Russian embassy in Berlin, as well as to the local police. The outcome of the case was decided unexpectedly and quickly: the photographs were seized by a police officer, who, guided by the law on property rights, took a valuable find to the local office.

Then the employees of GMZ "Gatchina" sent a written confirmation of the photos belonging to the Gatchina Palace to the Russian embassy in Germany. In August 2017, a response was received from the Commissioner for the Federal Chancellor of Germany for Culture and the Media, Monika Grutters, in the form of an invitation to Berlin for the transfer of photographs.

September 20, 2017 photos were returned to representatives of the GMZ "Gatchina". The ceremony was held in the mansion of the director of the German-Russian Museum Dialogue, Professor Herman Parzinger.

In May 2018, on the eve of the Victory Day of the USSR in the Great Patriotic War, an exhibition is planned, where the most interesting of the returned images will be presented.

In the order of the People's Commissar of Defense I.V. Stalin on February 23, 1942, said: "It would be ridiculous to identify Hitler's clique with the German people, the German state. The experience of history says that the Hitlerites come and go, but the people are German, and the German state remains. " And this is important to understand, since the role of the individual in the history of a single country can sometimes cast a negative imprint on the attitude of the entire world community to it. So it happened with Germany. Some Russians still cautiously and distrustfully treat the Germans, considering them descendants of the Nazis. However, many of these people were communists and anti-fascists, someone got to the front as punishment for disobeying the regime.

Now, there is a tendency to consider every discovered exhibit to be saved, no matter if it was stolen, or indeed rendered for the purpose of salvation. Now, under current conditions, this is not so important. The main thing is that the relics are, and sometimes in the most unexpected places. German colleagues - diplomats, historians, museum staff, funds help us to discover these values .



However, it is very important that not only they help in the search for exhibits. It is necessary that those who keep the memory of their ancestors in the form of services, paintings, furniture or even photographs from the palace, display a civil position and perpetuate the names of their great-grandfathers, passing the relics they saved to the museum for perpetual storage.

Each donor becomes a contributor to the priceless work of restoring the masterpiece of architecture of world significance and contributes to the opening of new halls, interiors and expositions of the Gatchina Palace, accessible to all visitors. Currently, there is an active revival of the age-old musical traditions of the imperial residence, balls and social receptions are held, exhibitions and new museum objects are opened, rooms and park pavilions are restored.

## Empress Catherine the Great's spinel

### *Origin of Name*

The "Catherine the Great's Ruby" is the 398.72-carat "ruby" that is mounted on top of the Great Imperial Crown of Russia, that was designed and constructed for the coronation of Catherine the Great in 1762. The Great Imperial Crown was used for the coronation of all Czars after Catherine the Great, up to the coronation of the last Czar Nicholas II in 1896.

### *Characteristics of the gemstone*

The Catherine the Great's Ruby is a 398.72-carat, semi-polished, somewhat pear-shaped, blood-red, fiery gemstone, mounted on the top of the Great Imperial Crown.

Like all other large rubies of the past found in the jewelry collections of several monarchies around the world, the Catherine the Great's Ruby is also not a ruby but a large spinel. In the past, when gemology and geology had not developed as a science, spinels were not identified as a separate mineral. The large red stones which displayed a fire of their own were thought to be large rubies, and were considered to be priceless and much sought after by monarchies around the world.



The large red gemstones were set in the crowns, tiaras, necklaces and other items of jewelry of the monarchy. The greatest collection of these large red spinels are found in the Crown Jewels of Iran. The British Crown Jewels also contain some very large and famous spinels, like the Timur Ruby and the Black Prince's Ruby, previously thought to be rubies.

The 398.72-carat Catherine the Great's ruby is the second largest spinel in the world after the 500-carat Samarian spine. The third largest spinel is the 361-carat Timur ruby which is part of the British Crown Jewels.

### *Identification of spinel as a separate mineral*

The situation continued until 1783, when the French mineralogist Louis Rom de Lisle identified spinel as a separate mineral from ruby, using chemical analysis and physical properties. It was shown that rubies do not grow to enormous sizes as the chromium atoms incorporated in the crystal of corundum, that causes the red color of rubies, also causes cracks and fissures to develop in the crystal. Only a very few ruby crystals may receive the appropriate conditions enabling them to grow undisturbed to considerable sizes.

Thus good quality rubies are smaller in size and generally less than 3 carats in size. Most of the famous rubies in the world are less than 100 carats in size, and those greater than 100 carats are only a few in number. Thus the so-called enormous rubies in the crown collections of the world are in fact not rubies but actually spinels.

Some of the important differences between rubies and spinels can be summarized as follows:

1) While rubies are corundum made up of Aluminium Oxide ( $Al_2O_3$ ), Spinel is not corundum, and are made up of Magnesium Aluminium oxide ( $MgAl_2O_4$ ).

- 2) Corundum occurs in all the colors of the rainbow, and only the red variety of corundum are known as rubies. Spinel occurs in shades of red as well as in other colors, such as pink, purple, violet, blue, green, yellow, black and brown.
- 3) While the red color in rubies is caused by chromium, the red color in spinels is caused by chromium and iron.
- 4) While rubies crystallize in the hexagonal system forming trigonal prisms, spinels crystallize in the isometric system forming cubic and octahedral crystals.
- 5) While rubies have a hardness of 9 on the Mohs scale, spinels have a hardness of 8 on the Mohs scale.
- 6) While rubies have an absolute hardness of 400, spinels have an absolute hardness of only 200.
- 7) While the specific gravity of rubies is between 3.99 and 4.02, the specific gravity of spinels is between 3.57 to 3.63.
- 8) While the refractive index of ruby is between 1.76 to 1.78, the refractive index of spinel is between 1.71 to 1.83.

The non-identification of rubies and red spinels as separate minerals for a long time was caused by their somewhat close physical and chemical properties, and the fact that they usually occur together in the same mines.

#### *Source of Catherine the Great's Ruby*

The source of the 398.72-carat enormous spinel was in all probability the ancient ruby and spinel mines of Badakhshan in northeastern Afghanistan, famous for its Balas rubies and Lapis Lazuli. The famous traveler Ibn Batuta wrote in 1354 A.D. in his travelogue as follows: "People generally attribute the Lapis Lazuli (Arabic-Lazward) to Khurasan, but in reality it is imported from the mountains of the Province of Badakhshan, which has given its name also to the ruby called Badakhshi." - Travels of Ibn Batuta.

The Badakhshi Rubies later came to be known as Balas Rubies. The Badakhshan mines were in active production until the end of 19th century, and all the large Balas Rubies (spinel) in the collections of jewels of monarchies around the world are believed to have originated in these mines.

#### *History of the Catherine the Great's Ruby according to Yevdokimov*

Yevdokimov wrote in an article titled "A Ruby from Badakhshan," published in the journal *Soviet Soldier* in December 1991, that Catherine the Great's Ruby was actually found by a Chinese mercenary soldier by the name of Chun Li, who fought for the mighty conqueror of Central Asia, Tamerlane (Timur), who set up a vast empire between 1366 and 1405, that rivalled the empire created by Alexander the Great in 3rd century B.C. Timur set up his capital at Samarkand, and after one of his conquests Timur's soldiers captured an enormous booty. Chun Li happened to be a part of this expedition, and he failed to turn in some of the booty, and was exiled as a slave to the ruby mines of Badakhshan which was under the domains of Timur. Chun Li discovered the enormous "ruby" while working in these mines, and managed to hide it from his supervisors. Later that night he escaped from the mines with the "ruby" and found his way back to China. Having reached China safely, Chun Li made an attempt to see the Emperor, possibly to present the stone as a gift to the Emperor, and expecting some form of compensation in return. But, unfortunately before he could see the Emperor, a palace guard came to know about his mission, and stole the gemstone after killing him. The guard was later apprehended when he tried to dispose of the stone to a jeweler, who informed the palace authorities. Finally the guard suffered the same fate as Chun Li and the enormous gemstone became the property of the Emperor of China.



### *Catherine the Great's Ruby enters the Romanov Crown Jewels in 1676 A.D.*

Whatever may be the merits of the above story, the large "ruby" remained the property of the Chinese Emperors for over 250 years, until Nikolai Milescu also known as Nikolai Spafari was appointed as Ambassador of the Russian Empire to China in 1675, whose mission included the settlement of several border disputes between Russia and China, improving trade relations with China, and the survey of newly incorporated Russian Lands along the Amur River. While in Beijing Nikolai Spafari was shown the enormous red "ruby" by the Chinese Emperor Kon Khan, and Nikolai showed an interest in purchasing the gemstone for the Russian Emperor if he was interested. The message was passed to Moscow about the large red ruby, and Emperor Alexei Mikhailovich, the second Czar of the Romanov dynasty, expressed his interest and lost no time in sending a return message to Beijing. The giant red "ruby" was then duly purchased by Nikolai Spafari from the Chinese Emperor on behalf of Czar Alexi Mikhailovich. Thus the red ruby entered the Romanov Crown Jewels in 1676 A.D.

### *Catherine the Great's Ruby is mounted on the Great Imperial Crown in 1762*

The Romanov Crown Jewels entered the Russian Crown Treasury, the forerunner of the Russian Diamond Fund, started in 1719 by Emperor Peter the Great, to separate the Romanov family wealth from that of the state. Peter the Great constructed a special diamond chamber for this purpose at the Winter palace in St. Petersburg. Catherine the Great's Ruby remained in this Chamber until 1762, when Catherine the Great ascended the throne of Russia, after the successful coup d'etat organized by Catherine's lover Grigory Orlov against her husband Peter III. Catherine the Great ordered the design and manufacture of a new Imperial Crown for her Coronation as the Empress of Russia. The court jewelers Jeremiah Pausie and Ekart were assigned the task of producing the Great Imperial Crown.

### *The Great Imperial Crown of Catherine the Great*

The Great Imperial Crown of Catherine the Great, was based on the medieval Byzantine crown, consisting of two half spheres representing the eastern and western halves of the of the Roman Empire, connected by an arch of oak leaves and acorns, symbolizing the temporal power of the monarchy. The two half spheres in this case represents the two continents spanned by Imperial Russia. The crown is surmounted by the 398.72-carat Catherine the Great's Ruby (Spinel), which in turn is surmounted by a jeweled cross. The cross symbolizes three things: the faith of the sovereign, the God-given power of the monarchy and the supremacy of the divine order over earthly power.

The crown was quite heavy weighing approximately 5 pounds. The crown is adorned with 4,936 diamonds arranged in floral and leaf patterns on the entire surface of the two hemispheres and the connecting arch. Two rows of large white pearls, border the edges of the mitre.

It is said that Catherine was so impressed by the design of the new Imperial Crown, that she did not mind its slightly higher weight. She told the jeweler that she would manage to wear the load throughout the four to five hour coronation ceremony. But it turned out that she bore the load of the crown throughout her long reign that lasted 34 years from 1762 to 1796.



## Activities in Tsarskoye Selo



### *Behind the State Rooms*

Twice a month from February to May 2018, Tsarskoye Selo will receive local high school students for the eight-class course Museum World, aimed at those interested in history and art and might see their future in cultural heritage preservation.

The classes will show what's behind our famous State Rooms and open doors into our reserve collections, exhibitions, park pavilions, as well as into a deeper understanding of museum work. Our specialists will share some secrets of their profession.



## *Romanov* buzz



On 25th of March, 2018 Sue Woolmans will talk about the Memoirs of Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna - "25 Chapters of my life" at the "AYE Write", Glasgow Book Festival.

The Grand Duchess Olga wrote her memoirs as a personal account of the final years of Imperial Russia. The youngest daughter of Alexander III and sister of Nicholas II, Olga was brought up in a happy and loving environment, where the wealth and majesty of the Russian court seemed forever

assured. With an artist's eye for detail, she records her life against the background of the historical events, which shook the world. Containing many letters and pictures this is the first time her personal account has been fully published in English.



The plan for the exhibition activities of the Federal Archival Agency for 2018 has been announced, and it includes an exhibition dedicated to Emperor Alexander II - "The thorny path of Freedom. Emperor Alexander II and his era. On the 200th anniversary of his birth." The opening is planned for October 17 - December 14, 2018 in St. Petersburg.

Two other exhibitions might be of interest - "100 rarities of the Russian statehood (to the 100th anniversary of the state archival service of Russia)", with planned opening from 25 February to 25 March 2018 in New Manage in Moscow, and "The Civil War in Russia", with planned opening from November 22, 2018 to January 20, 2019, in Moscow.



Kostroma artists are invited to participate in the unique project "Return", dedicated to the Romanov dynasty. Painters, graphic artists, sculptors, masters of arts and crafts, artists who dedicate their work to the great dynasty of the Romanovs are invited to the project "Return".

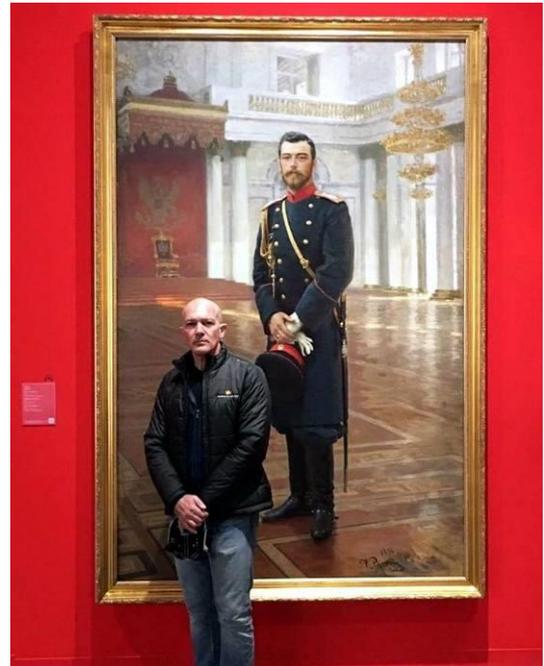
The submitted and selected works will participate in the exposition of the Kostroma State Historical, Architectural and Art Museum-Reserve. The exhibition is planned for the period from June 15 to October 20 this year.

To participate in the project, it is necessary to send the proposed work indicating the year of creation, the name of the work and the technique in which it was performed, before May 1, to the email address [vystavki.semenova@yandex.ru](mailto:vystavki.semenova@yandex.ru)



A bald man with a sort of cap in his hands on the background of the portrait of Nicholas II looks quite provocative. But it was this photo that was placed in the official "Facebook" of the branch of the Russian Museum in Malaga on January 7, 2018.

Do not immediately recognize in this visitor a movie star on a world scale! And meanwhile this man with absolutely smooth bald head is the Hollywood actor Antonio Banderas. Now he is in Malaga, where he is casted in the role of Pablo Picasso from the series "Genius", for which he parted with his hair.



The video "The Yekaterinburg Royal Route" invites to visit 11 holy places - the churches and monasteries of Yekaterinburg, Alapaevsk and Verkhoturys, keeping the memory of the holy Royal Passion-bearers, their faithful servants and friends who shared a tragic fate with them.

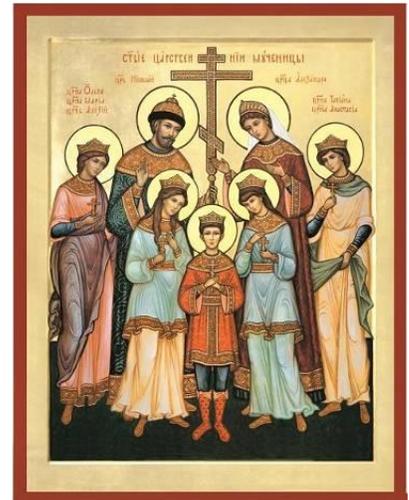
The project "Yekaterinburg Royal Route" was created by the specialists of the Yekaterinburg Diocese with the blessing of Metropolitan Kirill of Yekaterinburg and Verkhoturys. The objects of the route are part of the family history of the last Russian Emperor. The project was developed on the eve of 2018, when the centenary of the martyrdom of the Imperial Family will be commemorated, and many pilgrims from all over Russia, as well as from the far and near abroad are expected in the region.

Video - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=78&v=xpJ5Lpvqz7k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=78&v=xpJ5Lpvqz7k)



In the Mogilev Orthodox Diocese, with the blessing of Bishop Mogilevsky and Mstislavsky Sophrony, a children's competition of youthful creativity was launched, dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the martyrdom of the Romanov family.

The competition is held from 8 to 21 of January in the nominations "Fine Arts" and "Literary Creativity", reports [mogeparhia.by](http://mogeparhia.by). Pupils from institutions of additional education for children, art schools and Sunday schools, as well as individual families and children, can become participants in the competition.



The video "Hermitage. The Russian revolution - the exhibition "1917". The Hermitage is a museum where people do not like revolutions, but at the same time revolutions are constantly taking

place here. Kerensky came, then the Bolsheviks, then they call the Belgian Fabre to organize an exhibition-revolution, or they invite Dutch designers to tell about the Russian revolution of 1917, so that literally everyone who personally acquainted with this story, are leaving the museum, either bubbling with rage, or with difficulty to restrain tears.

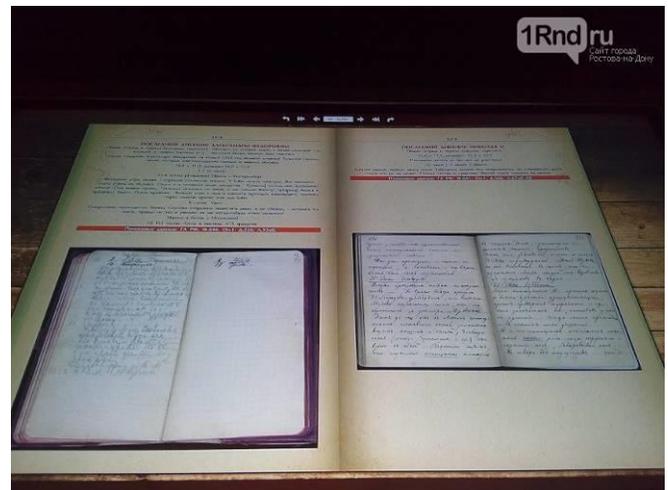
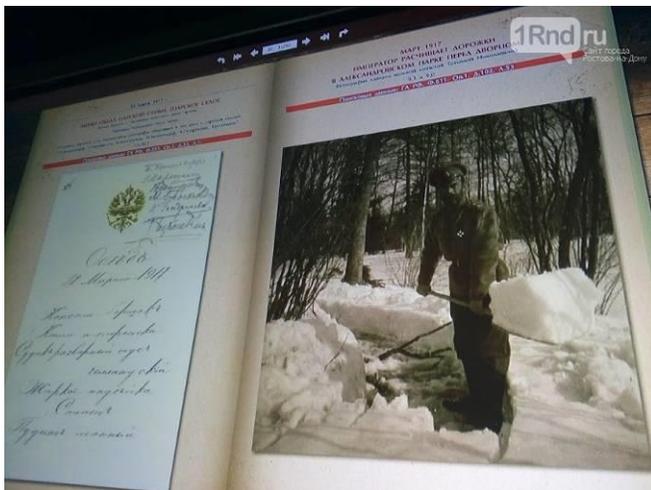
Video - [https://tvkultura.ru/video/show/brand\\_id/59697/episode\\_id/1609647/](https://tvkultura.ru/video/show/brand_id/59697/episode_id/1609647/)



The shooting of a film about Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna started in Kazan. It will be a film about the Lutheran Princess and the Orthodox Saint Elizabeth Feodorovna. The role of the Grand Duchess will be performed by the People's Artist of Russia, ballerina Ilze Liepa. - "Indeed, our group began work on a film about St. Elizabeth Feodorovna. The events covers a long period - from the time of the reign of Alexander III until 1918, - said the most productive director of Tatarstan Alexey Barykin. I act as the author of the script and the director. It will be a full-length picture at the junction of documentary and feature films. Filming takes place in Kazan, in the Martha and Mary Convent of Mercy in Moscow. We have already visited Alapaevsk, on the site of the martyrdom of Elizabeth Feodorovna on July 18, 1918. Soon there is a trip to Jerusalem, where her holy body rest in the Mary Magdalene Church" - said Barykin  
- It is planned that the premiere will be held on July 18, 2018 - this day, a hundred years ago, Elizabeth Feodorovna was killed..." - said Barykin



Rare documents on the life of the last Russian Emperor Nicholas II was presented by the State Archives of the Russian Federation for an exhibition in Rostov-on-Don. The multimedia exposition dedicated to the family of the last Russian Emperor of the Romanov dynasty became part of the exhibition "Culture and history of Russia through the eyes of genius creators". It started January 11, at DonExpocentre on Nagibin Avenue. Two more halls are dedicated to the Imperial family, which the revolution deprived not only of the homeland, but of life. In one hall, visitors can see "animated" by the designers paintings of famous artists who made the Imperial family. In the second - to get acquainted with the key moments of the biography of Nicholas II, his wife and children.





A video of the photo album from the Imperial family that was returned to Livadia. It also includes views of the lift in Livadia Palace.

Video - [https://tvzvezda.ru/news/vstrane\\_i\\_mire/content/201801100947-nj9e.htm](https://tvzvezda.ru/news/vstrane_i_mire/content/201801100947-nj9e.htm)



Director Alexei Uchitel's recently-released film "Mathilda" about the relationship between ballerina Mathilde Kschessinskaya and then-Tsarevich Nicholas II has been banned in Ukraine. Also the book "To My Matilde. Love Letters and Diaries of Nicholas II" was banned for sale in Ukraine. The State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting of Ukraine has refused to issue permits for import to Ukraine of 25 books published in Russia in 2015-2017 on the basis of a negative conclusion by the expert council on the analysis and evaluation of printed products.

The list of products banned to be sold in Ukraine, which was approved on January 10 this year, includes Antony Beevor's "Stalingrad," two books by Boris Akunin from the series "History of the Russian State," "Lenin's Daughter - A Look at History" by Edvard Radzinsky, "To My Matilde. Love Letters and Diaries of Nicholas II" by Boris Sokolov, "Orthodoxy: An Honest Conversation" by Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin and others, including several books of children's literature.



January 16 on BBC Russia Service - #London blog at the Russian Princess Olga. In 2018, Britain is waiting for quite a lot of royal news - the wedding of Prince Harry and Megan Markle and the third child of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. But in Britain there live Russian royal blood. Our video blogger Ben Tavener received a "royal invitation" of Princess Olga Andreevna Romanova, the grand niece of the last Tsar of Russia, Nicholas II, and visited her in the grandiose estate of the 13th century Provender House.

Video - <http://www.bbc.com/russian/media-42708932>



A memorial stone to mark the 320th anniversary of Peter the Great's (1672-1725) visit to England was installed on January 16 near a mulberry, reportedly planted by the Russian Tsar in London.

The ceremony in the Sayes Court Park in southeast London was attended by Russian diplomats, local administration officials and community members.

"The visit of Tsar Peter in 1698 was a very historic event for both nations. We believe he may well have

planted the tree. This was another way of strengthening and celebrating the links between our two nations," said Mayor of the London Borough of Lewisham Steve Bullock.

Russia's ambassador to the UK, Alexander Yakovenko, stressed the importance of this event in restoring cultural ties between the nations.

"We also appreciate the fact that the local community keeps the memory of Peter the Great's visit," he said.

The tree, also known as Evelyn's Mulberry, is believed to have been planted by Peter the Great during his four-month stay in the house of John Evelyn. Last year, it was included in the shortlist of the Woodland Trust Tree of the Year award.





"Railways of Russia" a large-scale exposition to the 180th anniversary of the opening of the first steel railroad. Pictures and old photos, picturesque works and no less colourful train schedules... In the Tsar's Tower of the Kazan Station in Moscow the exhibition "Railways of Russia" is presented. The exposition is timed to the 180th anniversary of the opening of the first steel mainline of the country - Tsarskoselskaya.

The first railway in Russia was opened in 1837. It connected St. Petersburg with Tsarskoe Selo. The trip took 35 minutes. At first, the new mode of transport was perceived as entertainment. However, it soon became clear that without railways Russia has no future. The Golden Age begins with the construction of the St. Petersburg-Moscow branch. In 1851, Emperor Nicholas I personally tried the new route. Then in Moscow there were the first stations.

They built railroads mainly for private money. Quality in this case was not always on top. In the archive of the Historical Museum, there is a unique photo - "The collapse of the Imperial train on October 17, 1888". The cause was recognized as a bad condition of the rail. In a terrible accident, more than 20 people died. The Imperial family was saved by a miracle.

"Alexander III himself showed an example of courage and strength ... He saved not only his family, but all those who were in the car: maids and soldiers. Until everyone came out, he was holding the roof of the car on his shoulders," says curator of the exhibition Natalia Chevtaykina.

Ten years after these events in Russia, they began to build the Trans-Siberian Railway by the decree of Alexander III. It was one of the most ambitious projects. The railway connected Moscow, Siberia and the Far East.

Video - [https://tvkultura.ru/article/show/article\\_id/215386/](https://tvkultura.ru/article/show/article_id/215386/)



In the series about Hermitage, Director Mikhail Piotrovsky told about the 1903 costume ball in the Winter palace. 115 years after the famous costume ball in the Winter Palace, the outfits of its participants went on an unusual journey. After leaving the Hermitage storerooms, they moved to a new open storage facility in the restoration and storage centre "Staraya Derevnya".

What were the last balls in the Winter Palace? What role did they play in the development of Russian style? How does the Hermitage preserve the memory of the fantastic masquerade of 1903?

See it in the video - [https://tvkultura.ru/video/show/brand\\_id/59697/episode\\_id/1634119/](https://tvkultura.ru/video/show/brand_id/59697/episode_id/1634119/)



Eight paintings of Karl Bryullov from the private collection of St. Petersburg are presented in the Tretyakov. Until recently, even the art historians did not know the whereabouts of many of them. Part of the work did not appear in any documents at all. In 2013, the paintings were found in a private collection of Andrei Katkov, a descendant of the great artist. His collection began with a family relic - "Portrait of the Abbot."

"We believe that collectors are becoming important partners for us, and it is interesting for us to show those things that are now being re-introduced into scientific use," Zelfira Tregulova said.

It was easier to find pictures than to pass the examination. Dozens of art experts for months explored each painting. There are no doubts - these are the masterpieces of the master's brush. It is almost impossible to forge Bryullov. Grigory Goldovsky, a specialist from the Russian Museum, was among those who studied paintings.

This self-portrait of Bryullov is made during a serious illness. The work belonged to the Grand Duke Konstantin; then the painting hung in one of the scientific institutes, and disappeared after the war. Found in the west, where it was considered a copy. And this portrait of Elena Pavlovna - mistress of the Mikhailovsky Palace - was considered the work of an unknown artist. Bryullov wrote several such portraits, where the Grand Duchess shines in different outfits.

Video - [https://tvkultura.ru/article/show/article\\_id/217705](https://tvkultura.ru/article/show/article_id/217705)



In the framework of the International Orthodox Fair "Good Light of Christmas" in Kurgan, the exposition "The Historic Fracture of the Era of 1918" is presented: the way to Golgotha and the glorification of the Royal Passion-Bearers, dedicated to the death of Emperor Nicholas II and his family, consisting of five parts: Yekaterinburg and Alapayevsk Golgotha, the shooting room, a museum exposition and a copy of the cross-moschevik (reliquaries).

"Yekaterinburg Calvary" will help to get deeper into the history of the family of the Romanovs and Nicholas II, their way of life and tragic death. The stands will feature detailed information on commemorative events and dates that occupy an important place in the history of Russia.



"Yekaterinburg was the first project of the Russian Empire" says the city's administration. To the 300th anniversary of Yekaterinburg, the city administration will disclose some of the historical documents related to the capital of the Urals. They will be decorated in a three-volume encyclopaedia, the first part of which has already appeared in circulation of one and a half thousand copies. The first volume tells the history of the city from its inception (1721) to the beginning of the XIX century. The book begins with a forgotten fact. As the author of the encyclopaedia, the researcher of the Institute of History and Archaeology of the UrRR RAS, the secretary of the Scientific Information Centre of the Museum of History Nikolai Korepanov writes,

October 23, 1721, one of the founders of Yekaterinburg, Wilhelm de Gennin, received from Peter I a personal instruction with the order to build a city under the Iset River.



"It is important to emphasize that Peter signed his instructions the very next day after he was proclaimed Emperor. It turns out that Yekaterinburg was the very first project of the Russian Empire," Korepanov concludes.

The book has 184 pages. But, to master it, enough a few hours. There is little text in the first volume. The main emphasis is on the schemes and drawings of the most iconic buildings of that time: factories, churches, city hall. Many of them are published for the first time. The second volume of the encyclopaedia has not yet been published. It will tell you about how Yekaterinburg lived from 1807 to 1917. And the third - about the city of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.



The Russian Orthodox Church suggests renaming the "Communist" islands of the Northern Land in July 2018. The Northern Land, which was discovered in 1913 by an expedition directed by Nicholas II, says Jacob Bishop of Naryan-Marsky and Mezensky, head of the Patriarchal project "Russian Arctic". The Northern Land archipelago was discovered on September 4, 1913 by the expedition of Boris Vilkitsky and was named the Land of Emperor Nicholas II, while one of the islands was named after Tsarevich Alexei. In the Soviet era, the archipelago was renamed, and its islands were named *Pioneer*, *Komsomolets*, *Bolshevik*, *the October Revolution*.

"We must follow the path of historical and divine truth ... Geography and names of lands should capture the way of creation, not destruction." Such names as *Komsomol*, *Bolshevik*, *Pioneer* look comical in the Russian Arctic. "We must take our history seriously, respect and love our land. That we have few heroes, pioneers, people we are proud of?" Said Jacob.

In 2006 there was an attempt to return the name of Nicholas II to the archipelago, and rename the islands in honor of the executed daughters of the last Russian Tsar. However, to escape from the imposed clash of "whites" and "reds," it is now proposed to give new names to the islands and perpetuate actions for the good of the Fatherland, Jacob noted.

"I even think that it could remain the Northern Land." It is prudent to approach this issue. "I did not quite like the attempt to give all the islands exclusively the names of the Imperial family, they do not have any special merit in this." Another thing is that Emperor Nicholas II ordered this expedition. Maybe, the main island to be named after Nicholas II, and the rest in honor of researchers of the Arctic,"- added Jacob. Northern Earth is located in the central part of the Arctic Ocean over the Taimyr Peninsula. From the mainland of the Krasnoyarsk Territory the Northern Land is separated by the Vilkitsky strait.



A banner with an appeal to the last Russian Tsar Nicholas II: "Sovereign, forgive us!" appeared in Novocherkassk.

The initiative to install the banner belongs to a group of parishioners of local churches. One of the initiators, Sergei Khudyakov, said that the installation has the blessing of the Mother of God herself (who recently appeared to him) and three active priests. Asked about the purpose of this action, he replied that the parishioners were asking "the Emperor's forgiveness for the sin of betrayal that our forefathers committed."



- In 1613 the Great Russian Convention was held, where the oath of allegiance of the Russian people was given to the Romanovs' house until the end of the century. In fact, this vow was not only related to the ancestors themselves, the drafters of the oath, but all of us, their descendants. In 1917, the oath was violated," - he explained to the publication.

Sergei Khudyakov believes that "the feat of Imperial family is still not realized by society," and compares Nicholas II with Jesus Christ, who brought himself into the ransom sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

- Nicholas II is like Christ, but, I emphasize, he is not God! You do not need to call us cadres. It's just that Jesus redeemed the sin of all mankind, and the Sovereign redeemed only the sin of betraying the Russian people, having lain himself and having sacrificed his family. Therefore, we need to bring repentance.

At the same time Khudyakov added that they pray "for the admonition of Patriarch Cyril," who called evasive "calls for universal repentance for what the current generation did not commit." "Because God himself, returning to us our holy things, showed that he forgave our people," said the patriarch.

When asked who Khudyakov himself is, he refused to answer. It is only known that at different times he served under different churches and helped in their construction.



In Tarko-Sale on Yamal, a poster with a picture of the Imperial family of the Romanovs was installed. Emperor Nicholas II is in the centre. The inscription on the banner reads "Forgive Us, Sovereign".

The poster was installed near the Church of St. Nicholas in the city of Tarko-Sale. The priests themselves decided to fix it. The rector of the church, archpriest Alexei Padylin, told about this.

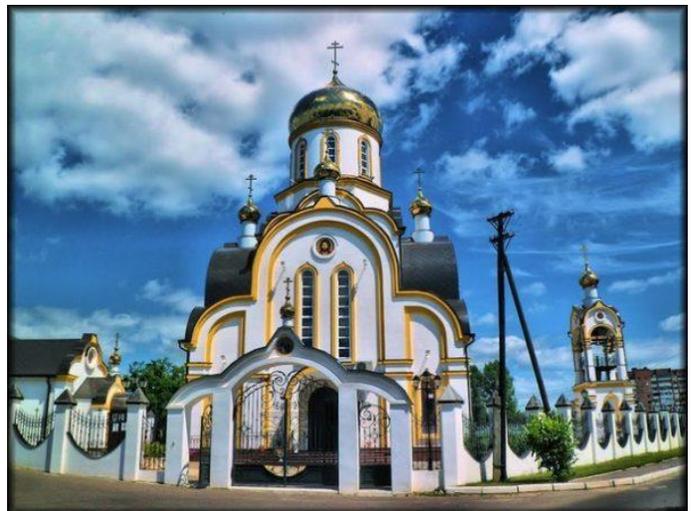
"People in our country, unfortunately, do not perceive Nicholas II and the Imperial family as saints. The Imperial family is treated not as a martyrs, but as a talentless rulers, to people who in their passions stewed, the story is strongly misinterpreted. All this was discussed just after the centenary of the revolution and because of the film "Matilda." But the soul of man is holy. It stays. The Sovereign's soul sees everything, and this attitude towards himself and his family, "said the archpriest. He added that the banner was specially hung from the side of the road so that people, noticing it on the way, thought and rethought their attitude to the saint.



The first Church in honour of Emperor Nicholas II and his family was erected in the north of Moscow. It is designed for 200 parishioners.

The State Duma deputy Vladimir Resin, who oversees the capital's program for the construction of churches, reports. The parish's website notes that the Royal Martyrs were chosen as the church's patrons because many Christians in Russia today are turning to them in prayer to strengthen their families and for aid in raising their children in faith and piety, for preserving their purity and chastity, for help in school, and for the prosperity and revival of the Russian Fatherland.

The second step of the construction is currently underway - the building of a two-story parish house.



Video - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=2&v=iOodCBzRYr0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=iOodCBzRYr0)



The Kremlin Archangel Cathedral is 510 years. The Archangel Cathedral of the Italian architect Aleviz Novuy was erected during three years, consecrated in 1508. But this is the second building, the first one was built under Ivan Kalita in the XIV century. The Grand Duke bequeathed to bury him and his descendants in it.

"The first Archangel Cathedral was built in the end of the XV century, it was small in area, was already filled with tombs. And it was decided to rebuild the Archangel Cathedral, as they write in the annals: "because it is crowded and dilapidated", - said the curator of the museum "Archangel Cathedral" Olga Tsitsinova.

The Archangel Cathedral has no foundation. It is right on the ground. Therefore, white stone sarcophagus were placed to a depth of about two meters, a tomb made of bricks was placed above the grave. In the end there is a plate with the name of the deceased.

"All the Kremlin cathedrals survived" the Times of Trouble. "But they were robbed at this time. And in the first half of the XVII century, all gravestones in one style were executed," Olga Tsitsinova explained. From Ivan Kalita to the grandson of Peter the Great - here are 56 Rurikovichs and Romanovs. The Grand Dukes, both the great and even the disgraced, that challenged the existing power. Often they died in confinement, but they were buried all the same in the family burial vault as members of one dynasty.

And we know from the annals that the Russian Grand Dukes came here since the XVI century before going on a campaign - to say goodbye and to be blessed by their ancestors," added Andrei Batalov, deputy general director for research work at the Moscow Kremlin Museums.

Video - [https://tvkultura.ru/article/show/article\\_id/218365/](https://tvkultura.ru/article/show/article_id/218365/)



A scam with an allegedly imperial cabriolet started end of January in Russia. The Russian media was flooded with articles about Emperor Nicholas II's Rolls Royce at sale for Roubles 278.000.000 or about 4 mill Euros on the Russian website Auto.ru. The same car is currently auctioned at Bonhams with a starting price of 450,000 euros, where it will be sold at the auction on February 8.

The author of the announcement on the Russian site assures that this Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost in 1914 was in the garage of Emperor Nicholas II. However, in the description of the lot on the site Bonhams it says - That in 1915 a car was ordered by a Russian named Tchitchkine (Chichkin or Shishkin), moreover, there was an open body of the torpedo type on the chassis 9AD. In June 1916, the unpaid car was bought by the British military department. After the First World War, the Rolls-Royce was auctioned off September 5, 1919. For the first time, as a private car, the limousine was registered on August 26, 1920. Its owner was a certain Wallace. Then Rolls-Royce came to America to circus impresario John Ringling. In 1984 the car was in the casino Imperial Palace in Las Vegas. There they came up with the story about Nicholas II, which auctioneers from Bonhams calls mistaken.

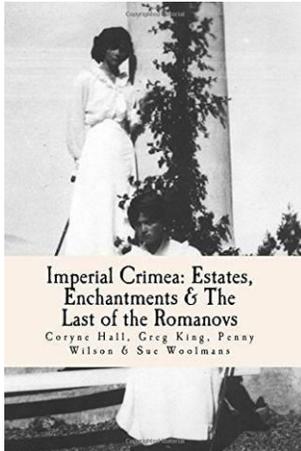
In 1984 the limousine was bought by the German collector Helmut Krogman, from Lübeck, but until 1998 the Rolls-Royce remained in America, and it was not until 1998 that the new owner transferred it to Germany. In 2001-2003, the limousine was restored and carried through registration in Germany in 2007. After the death of the collector, his son sold the Rolls-Royce to the current owner.





### ***Imperial Crimea: Estates, Enchantments and the Last of the Romanovs***

by Coryne Hall, Penny Wilson, Sue Woolmans, and Greg King



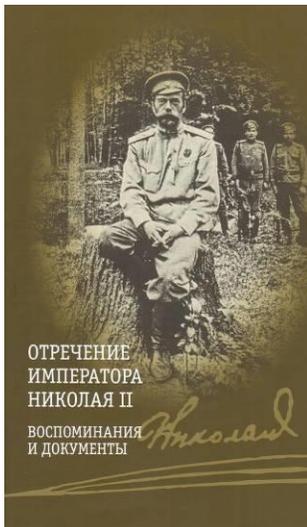
Imperial Crimea: Estates, Enchantment and the Last of the Romanovs offers the most comprehensive account of Russia's Imperial Family and its ties to the Crimea available in English. The book draws on both published works and on unpublished sources, including German diplomatic reports on Empress Alexandra Feodorovna; the unpublished memoirs of tutor Charles Sidney Gibbes; private letters by members of the Imperial Family; and correspondence and materials from Broadlands Archives; The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace; The Mainau Archives; the Staatsarchiv, Darmstadt; the State Archives of the Russian Federation; and the State Public Library, Russian National Library Collection, in St. Petersburg.

Encompassing travelogue, Tartar history, Russian conquest and the flowering of the peninsula under Romanov rule, Imperial Crimea takes readers on a Turn of the Century tour of the peninsula through the eyes of tourists; follows the Imperial Family from Nicholas I to Nicholas II; explores the diverse array of palaces dotting the edge of the Black Sea; and concludes with the 1919 departure of Dowager Empress Marie Feodorovna and other Romanovs from the Crimea.

*Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. Paperback: 778 pages. ISBN-13: 978-1981436828*

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### **The abdication of Emperor Nicholas II. Memoirs and documents**



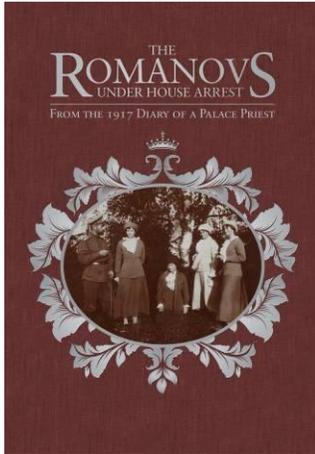
The collection includes memoirs and documents related to one of the key events in the history of Russia in the 20th century - the abdication of Emperor Nicholas II, which put an end to the Romanov dynasty and served as one of the main reasons for the two revolutions - the February and October Revolutions. Many materials are published for the first time. Of these, it is clear that the great role in the Emperor's abdication was played not only by Russian politicians, but also by the country's top military leadership, and also by the closest relatives of Nicholas II.

*Publisher: PROZAiK. Moscow. Hardcover + dust jacket. Pages: 314. ISBN: 978-5-91631-264-5*

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## **The Romanovs Under House Arrest: From the 1917 Diary of a Palace Priest - to be released March 1, 2018**

By Afanasy I. Belyaev (Author), Victor Potapov (Author), Marilyn Pfeifer Swezey (Editor)



“...for the last time the former rulers of their own home had gathered to fervently pray, tearfully, and on bended knee, imploring that the Lord help and intercede for them in all of their sorrows and misfortunes.” Thus the Archpriest Afanasy Belyaev described the faith and piety of the Russian Imperial family, whom he served as priest and confessor, on the occasion of the Tsarevich’s thirteenth birthday. These selected excerpts from the chaplain’s diary open a window into the souls of the now sainted Royal Family and the struggles endured in their first five months of confinement following the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II in early 1917. Russian cultural historian Marilyn Pfeifer Swezey sets the diary in its historical context and offers an epilogue to complete the story of the Romanov’s journey to martyrdom at the hands of a Bolshevik firing squad in a Siberian basement.

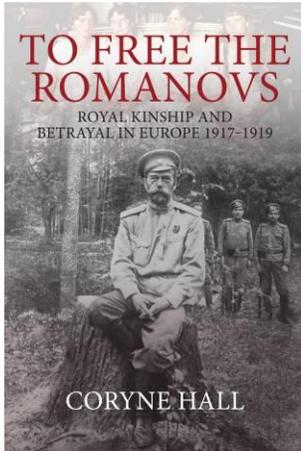
About the Authors - Archpriest Afanasy Belyaev was the father confessor of the Russian Imperial Family during their first five months of confinement following Nicholas II's abdication in early 1917. Archpriest Victor Potapov is rector of St. John the Baptist Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Washington, D.C. Over the course of three decades, he ran the "Religion in Our Life" program on Voice of America. Marilyn Pfeifer Swezey is a historian specializing in Russian decorative arts and cultural history, as well as the Russian spiritual and liturgical tradition.

*Publisher: Holy Trinity Publications, New York. Hardcover: 136 pages. ISBN-13: 978-0884654544*

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## **To Free the Romanovs: Royal Kinship and Betrayal - to be released June 15, 2018**

Coryne Hall (author)



When Russia erupted into revolution, almost overnight the pampered lifestyle of the Imperial family vanished. Within months many of them were under arrest and they became `enemies of the Revolution and the Russian people'. All showed great fortitude and courage during adversity. None of them wanted to leave Russia; they expected to be back on their estates soon and live as before. When it became obvious that this was not going to happen a few managed to flee, but others became dependent on their foreign relatives for help. For those who failed to escape, the questions remain. Why did they fail? What did their relatives do to help them? Were lives sacrificed to save other European thrones?

After 35 years researching and writing about the Romanovs, Coryne Hall considers the end of the 300-year-old dynasty - and the guilt of the royal families in Europe over the Romanovs' bloody end. Did the Kaiser do enough? Did George V? When the Tsar's cousins King Haakon of Norway and King Christian of Denmark heard of Nicholas's abdication, what did they do? Unpublished diaries of the Tsar's cousin Grand Duke Dmitri give a new insight to the Romanovs' feelings about George V's involvement. The centenary of the murder of Nicholas II is in 2018. This throws a fascinating new light on the events and personalities of those turbulent times. King George's role in the withdrawal of an asylum offer was covered up. Britain refused to allow any Grand Dukes to come to England, a fact that is rarely explored.

*Publisher: Amberley Publishing. Number of pages: 304. Dimensions: 234 x 156 mm. ISBN: 9781445681979*

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Under the hammer...

## Romanov related items in Auctions



Doyle, New York, USA, on January 31, 2018

### Russian Gold and Enamel Pendant

Maker's mark J.W., St. Petersburg, circa 1913. In the form of a book, the cover chased with the Russian Imperial double-headed eagle, the Russian Imperial crown, the cap of the Monomakh and the dates 1613 and 1913 to commemorate the Romanov Tercentenary, all on an enamelled ground in the colours of the Russian flag, enclosing pages depicting Russian sovereigns. Height 1 1/8 inches (2.86 cm), width 7/8 inches (2.2 cm).  
Estimate: \$2,000 - \$3,000



### Grand Duke George Mikhailovich - Important Group of Four World War I Photograph Albums

Enclosing approximately 1,000 photographs in four albums, depicting Grand Duke George Mikhailovich with family and in various locations during World War I, including throughout the Russian Empire, at the Stavka in Mogilev, the Far East (China, Korea), and on a diplomatic mission to Japan in 1915-1916. Included in the photographs are Emperor Nicholas II, Tsarevich Alexei Nikolaevich, Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, General Brusilov, General Tatischev, and various Japanese dignitaries.



Grand Duke George Mikhailovich, who had a limited military career due to injury, entered the army in World War I as a lieutenant general. By 1915, he was appointed aide-de-camp to the commander in chief, and Emperor Nicholas II appointed him supervisor of operations, in which capacity he reported to the Emperor on the situation at the front.

In December 1915, Nicholas II sent Grand Duke George on an important diplomatic mission to Japan. From the beginning of the year, the Japanese had openly expressed a desire for an alliance with Russia, as both nations were fighting against Germany and the Central Powers. Japanese Field Marshal and former prime minister, Yamagata Aritomo, was a major advocate of the alliance. After his

proposal was rebuffed by Prime Minister Okuma Shigenobu's cabinet, Yamagata enlisted the support of Emperor Taisho to encourage a visit to Tokyo by a member of the Russian Imperial Family. Major General Nakajima Masatake, an observer to the general headquarters of the Russian army, was tasked with approaching the Emperor's surgeon, Sergei Fedorov. Masatake remarked to Fedorov that should the Emperor send the Grand Duke to Japan, the Japanese would be duly impressed and would intensify their efforts to help Russia in the battle with Germany. Nicholas II immediately dispatched Grand Duke George to Japan ostensibly to congratulate Emperor Taisho on his formal enthronement ceremonies in November 1915.



Prior to arriving in Japan, Grand Duke George visited Korea and returned to Russia at the beginning of 1916 by way of Vladivostok, inspecting the situation in the Far East on the way. In July 1916, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov and Japanese Ambassador Motono Ichiro signed a treaty in Petrograd which concluded a military and political alliance. Russia and Japan agreed to a five-year alliance, which was to remain secret until the Bolsheviks seized power one year later and declared an end to secret treaties.

The present lot, part of the personal collection of Grand Duke George Mikhailovich and never before seen in public, includes an extensive group of photographs which document the Grand Duke's 1915 diplomatic visit to Japan.

Estimate: \$4,000 - \$6,000

For further information on the Russo-Japanese alliance, please see V. Molodiakov, "The Secret Alliance with Japan Shattered by the Russian Revolution." Nippon.com, November 6, 2017, <https://www.nippon.com/en/column/g00377/?pnum=1>.

*Grand Duke George Mikhailovich - Russian Imperial Family:  
Two Guest Books and Photographs*

Comprising two guest books of Grand Duchess Marie Georgievna, with the names of visitors including to her Crimean residence Kharaks; an album and approximately 350 photographs of members of the Russian Imperial Family and members of European royal families; and a ribbon in a case affixed with a label inscribed in Russian: Ribbon of Emperor Alexander II.

Estimate: \$2,000 - \$3,000



*Two Portrait Photographs - Grand Duke George Mikhailovich (1863-1919) and Family and Princess Nina Georgievna (1901-1974)*

Each in a rectangular leather frame, one applied with a gilt-metal crown, signed and dated 1902 or 1903. The interior of one frame stamped V. Legon'kov, St. Petersburg. The larger frame 10 x 7 3/4 inches (25.4 x 19.7 cm).

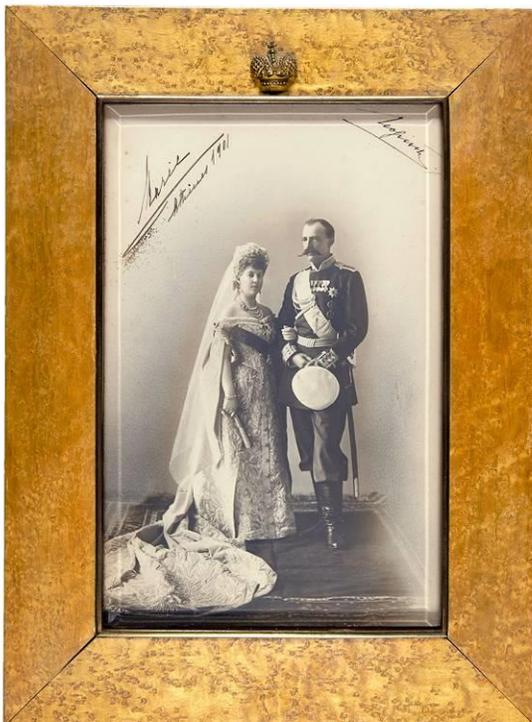
Estimate: \$2,000 - \$3,000



*Two Portrait Photographs - Grand Duke George Mikhailovich (1863-1919) and Grand Duchess Marie Georgievna (1876-1940)*

Each rectangular, in a wood frame, one applied with a gilt-metal crown, inscribed Athens and dated 1900 or 1901. The photograph of Grand Duke George and Grand Duchess Marie stamped on the reverse H. Rentz & F. Schrader, St. Petersburg. The larger frame 15 3/4 x 11 1/2 inches (40 x 29.2 cm).

Estimate: \$2,500 - \$3,500



*Fabergé Silver Presentation Waiter*

Workmaster Alexander Wäkeva (Väkevä), St. Petersburg, circa 1913, scratched inventory number 21005. Circular, with a chased ribbon-tied receded rim, centring an engraved presentation inscription in Russian: To Her Highness Princess Nina Georgievna / on the day / of the 300th anniversary / of the Royal House of the Romanov Family / from the loyal / subjects of the court / 1613-1913, Diameter 5 1/8 inches (13 cm), approximately 5 1/2 ounces (175 grams).

The present lot, which commemorates the Romanov Tercentenary in 1913, is one of three Fabergé silver waiters presented to Grand Duchess Marie Georgievna and her two daughters, Nina and Xenia. The waiters presented to Marie and Xenia are held in the collection of the Middlebury College Museum of Art in Vermont.

Estimate: \$5,000 - \$7,000



*Statue of Emperor Nicholas II*

Inscribed in Russian Bernstamm, Paris 1897, struck with Siot-Decauville Foundry mark and applied with wax seal on the base. Silvered bronze. Height 14 3/4 inches (37.5 cm).

Léopold Bernhard Bernstamm, a French sculptor of Russian origin, was trained at the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg. He rose to prominence in the 1880s with the completion of a series of portraits of French and Russian political and cultural figures. In September 1895, Emperor Nicholas II and Empress Alexandra Feodorovna sat for Bernstamm. In an entry in his diary on Wednesday, September 20, the emperor recalls that he "spent more than an hour sitting for Bernstamm." (Diaries of Nicholas II, Moscow, 1991, pp. 103-104).

Estimate: \$12,000 - \$18,000



*Painting by Grand Duchess Olga*

"View of Hvidøre". Signed Olga. Watercolour on paper. 10 3/4 x 7 3/8 inches (27.3 x 18.7 cm).

Hvidøre, located just outside Copenhagen, Denmark, was acquired in 1906 by Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna of Russia (1847-1928) and her sister, Queen Alexandra of Great Britain (1844-1925), as a residence for use during summer visits to their native Denmark. Maria Feodorovna was the daughter of King Christian IX of Denmark (1818-1906) and mother of the last Emperor of Russia, Nicholas II (1868-1918). Following the Russian Revolution of 1917, Hvidøre was the home in exile of the Dowager Empress until her death in 1928. She shared the home with her youngest daughter, Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna (1882-1960), the artist of the present lot.

Estimate: \$1,000 - \$1,500



**Kunker, Berlin, Germany, February 1st.**

*Gold medal 1903, for the completion of the Trinity Bridge over the Neva.*

Medal unsigned, but by A. Vasyutinsky. With the heads of Alexander III, Maria Feodorovna and Nicholas II side by side/View of the new bridge, front the crowned coat of arms of St. Petersburg, above six lines of script. 63.87 mm; 176.49 g.



The bridge was laid August 12, 1897, at a solemn ceremony attended by Emperor Nicholas II and the President of the French Republic. The visit of the French president was reciprocal: in October 1896, Nicholas II was present at the laying of the Alexander III bridge in Paris. The Emperor, members of the Imperial Family and the French president laid in the foundation of the bridge on the side of Suvorov Square each a gold coin.

The opening of the bridge was timed to coincide with the celebration of the bicentenary of St. Petersburg. May 16, 1903 the bridge was opened in a solemn atmosphere in the presence of Nicholas II and members of the Imperial Family. The program of events included a gun salute and a procession. In addition, the first solemn bridging of the bridge took place: Nicholas II, pressing the electric button, activated the huge electric motors of the bridge's drivable span. At the end of this procedure, Their Majesty, in the precedence of the clergy with holy water, entered the bridge. On that side the procession was waiting for the decorated pavilion with the bust of Emperor Alexander III. Here the city head presented their Majesties with golden jubilee medals in memory of the consecration of the Trinity Bridge and an album with photographic images of the works on its construction. On the front side of the medal were images in the profile of the Emperors Alexander III and Nicholas II, and between them - the Empress Maria Feodorovna. On the reverse side - in the centre: Trinity Bridge and part of the embankment; on the inscription: Troitsky bridge across the river Neva was built in memory of the 25th anniversary of the marriage of Emperor Alexander III and Empress Maria Feodorovna; below: laid - 1897 finished - 1903

Estimated price: 80,000.00 €

**Znak, Moscow, Russia, on February 18**



*"In memory of the construction of the Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow. 1912"*

Workshop: A. Jacquard. Medalist E. Malyshev. Silver. Diameter 49.8 mm. Weight 64.82 g.

On the front the profiles of Emperor Nicholas II and Emperor Alexander III. On the reverse a bust of Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich.

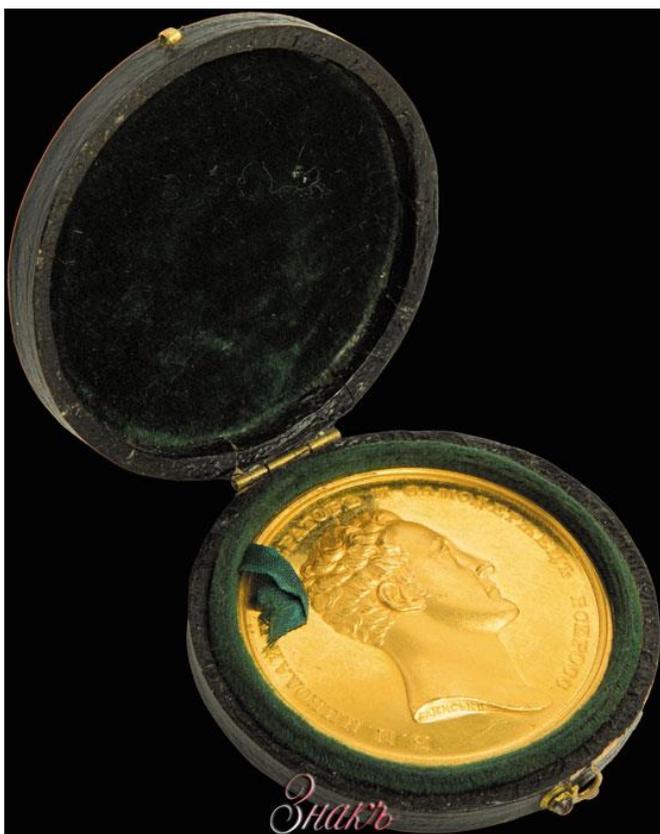
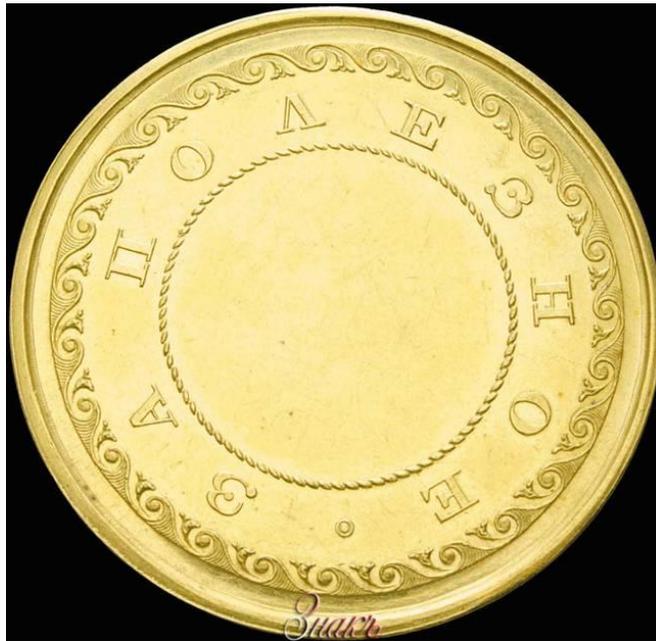
Estimate: 120 000 roubles.



*"In memory of the 25th anniversary of the patronage of Nicholas II over the Life Guards reserve infantry regiment. 1898"*

St. Petersburg Mint. Medalists P. Stadnitsky, A. Griliches. Bronze. Diameter 71.6 mm. Weight 178,80 g.

Estimate: 25 000 roubles.



"For the Good"  
St. Petersburg Mint. Medalist V.  
Alekseev. Gold. Diameter 41.8 mm. Weight 34.10  
g. In the original box.  
Estimate: 1 800 000 rub