



WEDNESDAY

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5

JULY



















among 16 brilliants. The King gave it to Princess Charlotte after whose death it was embodied in Queen Victoria's State Crown.

The crown of Empress Catherine of Russia is reputed to have been adorned with an oriental ruby the size of a pigeon's egg, the largest known till then. She received it from King Gustav of Sweden when he visited her in Petersburg in 1777.

There is also mention of a ruby of 436 $\frac{1}{2}$ ct and of one of 240 ct as well as of a wonderful cabochon with the shape and size of half a hen's egg. Its apex was engraved "Sheikh Sephy".

A British legation to Ava saw a blue sapphire of 951 ct which was not, however, quite "clean".

In the mineral collection of the Jardin des Plantes in Paris in 1860 there is mention of an oval corundum of 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ ct which was blue at both ends and topaz yellow in the middle. The same collection held one of the most beautiful blue sapphires without a spot or flaw, weighing 132 $\frac{1}{2}$ ct. This collection could well be the same as the present Musée. It still exhibits a wonderful blue sapphire over 100 ct in weight.

The sapphire of 132 ct mentioned above had been found in Bengal by a poor man who dealt in wooden spoons. It was acquired by the House of Rospoli in Rome and sold to a German Prince, who in turn sold it to the French jeweller Perret for 170,000 francs, a sum well below its true value.

The Russian Imperial Crown prepared for the coronation of Catherine I in 1724 contained a large ruby or spinel the size of a pigeon's egg, besides pearls and diamonds. Catherine probably obtained it from Mendukov who in turn had taken it from Prince Galzarine who had been Governor General of Siberia and had been shot for corruptibility. The crown of Catherine II was remodelled in 1762. A large spinel of 414.30 ct was set at its tip. It was bought in Peking in 1672 by the Russian Ambassador Nicolas Spahany for Tsar Alexis. The Black Prince's Ruby is a spinel. An unpublished inventory dated 1843-1846 of the firm Rundell, Bridge and Rundell, the court jewellers of that time, states in connection with the remaking of the Imperial State Crown for the coronation of King George IV (1821): "The main stone was a very large balas ruby of poor quality which is said to have belonged to Edward the Black Prince. He is said to have taken it from the French King at the battle of Crecy and to have worn it later as a jewel on his breastplate."

An inventory of 1858 describes the stone as follows: "A ruby said to have been given to Edward, Prince of Wales, the son of Edward III, called the Black Prince, by Don Pedro, King of Castile, after the battle of Najera near Vittoria, in 1367. The ruby was worn by King Henry V at the battle of Agincourt in 1415. It is pierced in oriental fashion, the end of the hole being filled by a small ruby."

This is the more generally accepted version. The history of the stone can be traced back through various accounts of it, including a Commonwealth inventory in 1686 when it was valued at only £4. A famous painting by George Vertue (1732) shows King George III wearing it.

Another so-called ruby in the British Crown Jewels, the Tamerlane, is a spinel. It weighs 352.5 ct and obtained its name from its owner, an Afghan conqueror, known in Europe as Tamerlane. It is not kept at the Tower with the crown jewels but belongs to the British Crown. It was set in the crown of Queen Victoria in 1851 together with several other jewels mentioned here.

One of the most valuable emerald treasures is in custody at the church of San Ignacio at Bogotá. Its goldsmithing was carried out by Joseph de Galaz in the course of six



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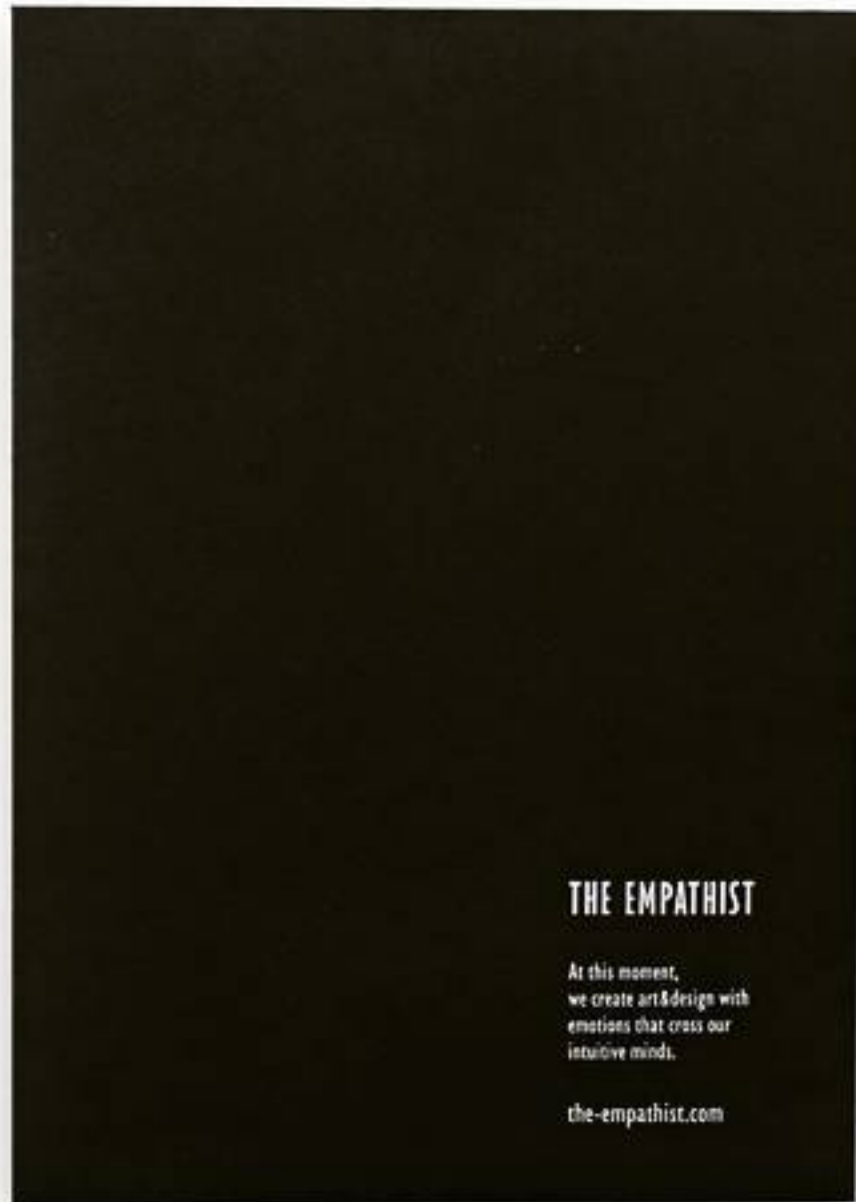
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