

Switzerland | +41 2 908 48 14 | Catherine Allen | catherine.allen@sothebys.com

London | +44 20 7293 6000 | Marie-Béatrice Morin | marie-beatrice.morin@sothebys.com

Germany | +49 69 74 07 80 | Selei Serafin | selei.serafin@sothebys.com

New York | Amanda Bass / Darrell Rocha | amanda.bass@sothebys.com | darrell.rocha@sothebys.com

Hong Kong | Blake Kwok | blake.kwok@sothebys.com



*Royal Jewels
from the
Bourbon Parma Family*

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ROYAL JEWELLERY
COLLECTIONS EVER TO COME TO AUCTION

OVER 100 LOTS SPANNING MORE THAN 200 YEARS OF HISTORY
OFFERING FASCINATING INSIGHTS INTO THE SPLENDOUR OF
ONE OF EUROPE'S MOST IMPORTANT ARISTOCRATIC FAMILIES

EXQUISITE JEWELS FORMERLY OWNED BY QUEEN MARIE ANTOINETTE,
AND FROM THE COLLECTION OF KING CHARLES X OF FRANCE,
THE ARCHDUKES OF AUSTRIA AND THE DUKES OF PARMA

AUCTION IN GENEVA ON 12 NOVEMBER 2018



Geneva, 13 June 2018 – One of the most important royal jewellery collections ever to come to auction is set to capture the world’s imagination when it comes for sale at Sotheby’s in Geneva on 12 November 2018. Entitled “Royal Jewels from the Bourbon-Parma Family”, the auction will span centuries of European history, from the reign of Louis XVI to the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and will offer fascinating insights into the splendour of one of Europe’s most important royal dynasties. Descended from Louis XIV of France, the Holy Roman Emperors and from Pope Paul III, the Bourbon-Parma family is linked by blood to the most important ruling families of Europe - from the Bourbons to the Habsburgs. Members of the lineage include Kings of France and Spain, Emperors of Austria and the Dukes of Parma. This exceptional ancestry is evidenced in the extraordinary opulence and provenance of the pieces in the collection, led by a breath-taking group of jewels which once belonged to Marie Antoinette, ill-fated queen of France, which have not been seen in public for 200 years.

Daniela Mascetti, Deputy Chairman, Sotheby’s Jewellery Europe and Senior International Specialist: *“It is one of the most important royal jewellery collections ever to appear on the market and each and every jewel is absolutely imbued with history. Never before seen in public, this extraordinary group of jewels offers a captivating insight into the lives of its owners going back hundreds of years. What is also striking is the inherent beauty of the pieces themselves: the precious gems they are adorned with and the exceptional craftsmanship they display are stunning in their own right.”*

The Jewels of Marie-Antoinette

Never in the course of history has the destiny of a queen been so closely associated with jewels than that of Marie Antoinette. Her great love of pearls and diamonds is well-known and a number of historians have cited Napoleon’s view, that the so-called “affair of the diamond necklace” – a scandal which tarnished the queen’s reputation in 1785 – was one of the causes of the French Revolution¹.

The impressive ensemble of jewels to be offered this autumn has an extraordinary story. In March 1791, King Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette and their children began to prepare their escape from France. According to accounts written by Marie Antoinette’s lady in waiting, Madame Campan, the queen spent an entire evening in the Tuileries Palace wrapping all of her diamonds, rubies and pearls in cotton and placing them in a wooden chest. In the following days, the jewels were sent to Brussels, which was under the rule of the queen’s sister, Archduchess Marie-Christine and which was home to Count Mercy Argentauf. The count, the former Austrian Ambassador to Paris, was one of the only men who had retained the queen’s trust. It was he who took delivery of the jewels and sent them on to Vienna, into the safe keeping of the Austrian Emperor, Marie Antoinette’s nephew.



In 1792, the royal family was imprisoned in the Temple tower. Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette were executed by guillotine in 1793 and their 10-year old son, Louis XVII, died in captivity. The king and queen’s only surviving child, Marie-Thérèse de France (1778-1851), “Madame Royale”, was released in December 1795, after three years of solitary confinement. After learning of the deaths of her mother and brother, she was sent to Austria. Upon her arrival in Vienna in 1796, she was given her mother’s jewels by her cousin, the emperor. Having borne no children of her own, Madame Royale bequeathed part of her jewellery collection to her niece and adopted daughter, Louise of France (1819–1864), Duchess of Parma and grand-daughter of Charles X, King of France (1757-1836), who in turn left them to her son, Robert I (1848-1907), the last ruling Duke of Parma.

¹ Pondering on the consequences of this scandal during his exile on St Helena, Napoleon declared that “the Queen’s death must be dated from the diamond necklace trial”.

Renowned for her extravagance and the splendour and lavishness of her court, Marie-Antoinette is very often portrayed wearing pearls. A symbol of wealth and status since time immemorial because of their great beauty and rarity, natural pearls, were prized by the royal families of Europe in the 18th century.



Among the star lots of the collection is a **stunning diamond pendant, supporting a natural pearl of exceptional size** (26 mm x 18 mm) (est. \$1-2 million, pictured above). Testament to the splendour and opulence of the French court are also a **pair of natural pearl drops** (est. \$30,000 – 50,000) and a **fabulous necklace featuring 331 natural pearls** (est. \$200,000-300,000).



The collection also features a number of jewels that combine multiple royal provenances, showing how the impressive stones in the family collection were set in different designs throughout the centuries, according to the tastes of each successive generation. Made for Louise of France (1819-1864), grand-daughter of Charles X, King of France and mother of Robert I, Duke of Parma, a **breath-taking diamond parure composed of 95 diamonds** (est. \$300,000-500,000) includes **five solitaire diamonds that belonged to Marie-Antoinette**, a large number of stones which adorned the sword of the Duke of Berry, son of Charles X and father of Louise (assassinated by an anti-royal Bonapartist in 1820) and a large pear-shaped diamond from the collection of the Archduchess Isabella of Austria, Princess of Croÿ (1856 –1931).

Treasures from the Habsburgs and the Dukes of Parma

The illustrious jewels to be offered in November also bear witness to the family's connections with the House of Habsburg, one of the most influential royal dynasties of Europe. Reigning over the Austro-hungarian Empire until 1918, the Habsburgs also occupied the throne of the Holy Roman Empire and produced emperors and kings whose dominions included Germany, England, Spain, Holland and Italy.

A highlight of this group is a **diamond tiara** of foliate scroll design given by Emperor Franz Joseph (1830-1916), one of Europe's longest reigning monarchs, to his great-niece, Archduchess Maria Anna of Austria (1882-1940) for her wedding to Elias of Bourbon, Duke of Parma (1880–1959) in 1902. This opulent diadem was created by **Köchert**, the prestigious Viennese jewellery house founded in 1814 which served the Imperial House of Austria for four generations (est. \$80,000-120,000).





Boasting the same prestigious provenance are a magnificent diamond bow brooch, adorned with a 6.89-carat Burmese ruby (est. \$200,000-300,000) and a diamond ring set with an impressive fancy orangey-pink diamond of 2.44 carats (est. \$120,000-180,000) which were given to Archduchess Maria Anna of Austria by her father to mark the births of her two sons.



A diamond brooch adorned with an impressive 30.70-carat sapphire from Ceylon (est. \$150,000-250,000) was a gift from her mother on the occasion of her marriage.



Most of the jewels in the collection were given to Robert I (1848-1907), the last sovereign Duke of Parma and Piacenza, by his mother, Louise of France (1819-1864), grand-daughter of King Charles X of France and great-niece of Marie Antoinette. Robert I also received exceptional jewels from his paternal grand-mother, Maria-Teresa of Savoy, Duchess of Parma (1803-1879), including a pair of diamond girandole earrings (est. \$150,000-250,000). For her wedding to Robert I, Princess Maria Pia of Bourbon-Two Sicilies (1849-1882) received from her husband's grand-father, Charles II of Parma a large diamond pendeloque brooch (est. \$ 25,000-35,000)



NOTES TO EDITORS

Highlights of the collection will go on view in Milan next week and this will then be followed by an international tour.

MILAN

27 June 2018

MUNICH

18 September 2018

COLOGNE

21 September 2018

The jewels will also go on view in London, New York, Hong Kong and Geneva this autumn.

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*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer's premium and are net of any fees paid to the purchaser where the purchaser provided an irrevocable bid.

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