



Geza von Habsburg, Faberge: Treasures of Imperial Russia

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Published by the Link of Times Foundation, 2004, 352 pages, hardcover, dust jacket, illustrated, large format, boxed/ Languages: English, Russian. 5-9900284-1-5 Collectible out-of-print edition! This magnificent book is dedicated to Carl Faberge's life and creative work, and to the unique Easter eggs that immortalized his name. Peter Carl Faberge was a Russian jeweller, best known for the famous Faberge eggs, made in the style of genuine Easter eggs, but using precious metals and gemstones rather than more mundane materials. He was born in Saint Petersburg, Russia, to the Baltic German jeweller Gustav Faberge and his Danish wife Charlotte Jungstedt. Gustav Faberge's paternal ancestors were Huguenots, originally from La Bouteille, Picardy, who fled from France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, first to Germany near Berlin, then in 1800 to the Baltic province of Livonia, then part of Russia. The most famous eggs produced by the House were the larger ones made for Alexander III and Nicholas II of Russia; these are often referred to as the 'Imperial' Faberge eggs. Approximately 50 eggs were made; 42 have survived. The first Faberge egg was crafted for Tsar Alexander III, who decided to give his wife, the Empress Maria Fedorovna, an Easter Egg in 1885, possibly to celebrate the 20th anniversary of their betrothal. It is believed[by whom?] that the Tsar's inspiration for the piece was an egg owned by the Empress's aunt, Princess Vilhelmine Marie of Denmark, which had captivated Maria's imagination in her childhood. Known as the Hen Egg, it is crafted from gold. Its opaque white enameled 'shell' opens to reveal its first surprise, a matte yellow gold yolk. This in turn opens to reveal a multi-coloured gold hen that also opens. It contained a minute diamond replica of the Imperial Crown from which a small ruby pendant was suspended. Unfortunately, these last two surprises have been lost.

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