



Late 19th / early 20th century Russian spectacle set sapphire and gold long chain necklace by Fyodor Ruch of St. Petersburg, assayed Moscow 1898-1908, possibly formerly the property of Princess Alice of Battenberg, paternal grandmother of King Charles III, the chain spaced by twenty-four cushion, round and oval cabochon sapphires,

spectacle set and graduated larger to either side as worn, the chain of bold tracelinks, maker's mark to one end ring and '56' kokoshnik assaymark to the other terminal for assaymaster Ivan Lebedkin, testing as 14ct gold, the sapphires approximately 155cts.

Fyodor Ruch (Friederich Ruch), originally of Heidelberg, Germany, was a supplier of chains for Faberge. Mentioned from 1888 to 1910, his gold and silver workshop was located at Nevsky pr. 44 (1900) and Sadovaya str. 22 (1910).

Princess Alice of Battenberg

Princess Alice of Battenberg (1885-1969) was the mother of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, mother-in-law of Queen Elizabeth II, and paternal grandmother of King Charles III. After marrying Prince Andrew of Greece and Denmark in 1903, she adopted the style of her husband, becoming Princess Andrew of Greece and Denmark.

She was a great-granddaughter of Queen Victoria, born in Windsor Castle and brought up in the United Kingdom. Overcoming congenital deafness, she grew up learning to lip read both English and German, as well as later learning Greek.

With connections to numerous royal families throughout Europe, Princess Alice travelled several times to Russia from 1901 to 1908 to visit relatives and attend weddings, such as that of Grand Duchess Marie of Russia and Prince William of Sweden.

The Russian gold and sapphire chain, made by one of Faberge's workshops, could very well have been obtained whilst in Russia or was possibly a gift, perhaps from her aunt, Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, wife of Emperor Nicholas II. The Russian Tsar and Tsarina were very generous with their wedding gifts to Prince and Princess Andrew, giving a 'magnificent diadem of brilliants' as well as a motorcar.

It would appear that she was particularly close to her Russian relatives, influenced for instance in later life by the religious order of nurses her aunt Grand Duchess Elizabeth had established during the early 20th century. Following difficult times during the interwar period, Princess Alice set upon red cross and charity work during the second world war, hiding members of a Jewish family from the Nazis, she later founding a nursing order of Greek Orthodox nuns after that of her aunt.

Length 155cms / 61"

Links 3.2mm

The sapphires range in size approximately 14.6 x 12 x 7.5mm to 7.4 - 7.3 x 4.4mm

Weight: 72.5g