

**Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and  
Objects of  
Cultural Interest (RCEWA)**

**Expert Adviser to the Secretary of State**

**that**

**A Sapphire and Diamond Coronet commissioned for  
Queen Victoria**

**Meets the first and third Waverley criteria**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## 1. Brief Description

A coronet or tiara, terminating in two gold loops, and mounted with eleven step-cut sapphires set in gold and with diamonds set in silver, 1842.

Dimensions, as a coronet: 3.8 cm. (height) x 11.5 cm. (diameter)

The coronet is in excellent condition. The small gold loops may be a later addition.

## 2. Context

### Provenance

Queen Victoria (private account book, 1842)

King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra

King George V and Queen Mary

Given by her parents to Princess Mary (later The Princess Royal), on her marriage in 1922 to Viscount Lascelles (the Earl of Harewood from 1929)

By descent

London dealer, subsequently sold to export licence applicant

### Key References

Leslie Field, *The Queen's Jewels* (New York, 1987), pp. 145-6.

Shirley Bury, *Jewellery 1789-1910* (Woodbridge, 1991), vol. 1, pp. 313-14.

Oliver Millar, *The Victorian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty The Queen*, (Cambridge, 1992). Volume 1 (Text; portrait by Winterhalter, 1842), pp. 284-7. Volume 2 (Plates), plate 711.

*One Hundred Tiaras: An Evolution of Style 1800-1990*, exhibition at Wartski, London, 5 March – 19 March 1997 (no.8; and cover illustration of portrait by Winterhalter, 1842).

Geoffrey C. Munn, *Tiaras: A History of Splendour* (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 86-8.

Exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum in the exhibition curated by Geoffrey Munn, *Tiaras: a Collection of Sheer Brilliance*, 21 March-14 July 2002.

*Victoria & Albert Art & Love*, ed. Jonathan Marsden (Royal Collection Publications, 2010), no. 12 (Winterhalter portrait, 1842, which is also illustrated on the back flap of the dust jacket).

## 3. Waverley Criteria

This superbly-made coronet makes a major contribution to one of the most beautiful official portraits of the young Queen Victoria. Painted in 1842, the year she paid for the coronet, the portrait was the earliest by Winterhalter of the Queen. Replicas and copies of the portrait in its two variants were made in number and served as personal and official gifts. The design of the coronet, which owes much to the Saxon Rauten Krone, has been associated with Prince Albert. The use of the coronet in the portrait is a brilliant device, an affirmation of Victoria's authority as sovereign which does not detract from the charm and beauty of her as a young woman. The coronet is one of the significant jewels of her reign, part of the story of the young Victoria, who before her widowhood delighted in the coloured gemstones which after Albert's death she almost entirely forsook. In 1866 the coronet was the royal symbol she chose to wear in place of a crown at the first Opening of Parliament she attended after

Albert's death. In many people it evokes the sentiment that it is 'almost a Crown Jewel'. It is proposed that it meets at least the first and third Waverley criteria.

## DETAILED CASE

### 1. The commissioning of the coronet

The earliest record of the 'Small Coronet' of diamonds and sapphires has been found by Shirley Bury in Queen Victoria's private account book in a list headed '1842 – For Jewelry for myself'. The Queen 'cited no maker' but recorded the cost of the coronet as £415. It was purchased with a pair of diamond and sapphire earrings (of which half, £280, was paid by the Queen, and, Bury suggests, the other half by Prince Albert), and a brooch and a bracelet of sapphires and diamonds which were priced together at £360.<sup>1</sup>

The important role of the coronet in Winterhalter's first portrait of the Queen (fig.2) means that it is highly unlikely that it was made later than July 1842, when she had her last sitting, and may well have been made before 8 June, the first sitting. Its Gothic design is in the Romantic spirit, an inspiration to both Victoria and Albert who shared an admiration of Sir Walter Scott. Only three weeks earlier, on 12 May, dressed as Queen Philippa of Hainault and King Edward III, they had hosted a great costume ball for 2000 people (fig. 3). Sittings for Sir Edwin Landseer's record of the event, which took four years to complete, began on 18 May and continued while Winterhalter was painting the Queen and the Prince.

Bury noted the similarity of the sapphire coronet to the celebrated Saxon Rauten Krone, 'which points to Prince Albert as the author'. It might be added that the angle at which the crown runs diagonally across the shield in the Saxon arms (fig. 4) is half way to the vertical position it has in Winterhalter's portrait (fig. 2). Although she had never seen the coronet, Bury described it in 1991 as 'well known from Winterhalter's first portrait'. Her own discussion of it, its publication by Geoffrey Munn in 1997 and 2001, and its display at Wartski in 1997 and at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2002, have ensured that it is much illustrated and praised on internet jewellery sites.

That Prince Albert played a part in the conception of the coronet is entirely in keeping with his close interest in Victoria's jewels. When Victoria wrote in her Journal on Christmas Eve, 1842, 'Splendid indeed were the presents my beloved one gave me, amongst them the rearrangement of some of my jewels, to be worn in different ways...', Bury suggests that she may have been referring to the sapphire and diamond set for which she had recorded payment in her private account book. In February 1843 Victoria described the care Albert took over the jewels: 'We were very busy looking over various pieces of old jewelry of mine, settling to have some reset, in order to add to my fine "parures". Albert has such taste, and arranges everything for me about my jewels'.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> RA Add. T/231, fol 19, cited Bury, 1991, p. 313. Pamela Clark, Senior Archivist, Royal Archives, has kindly confirmed Shirley Bury's account. The entry does not state whether the cost of the coronet covered provision of stones as well as making. Pamela Clark has found no reference to the coronet in the Queen's Privy Purse ledgers or in the 1896 inventory of the Queen's Jewels.

<sup>2</sup> Bury, 1991, 311.

The essay which accompanied the application suggests that an influence on the decision to commission a coronet of this type was the coronet worn on the front of her head in the highly successful image by William Wyon of Victoria on the Guildhall medal of 1837 (fig. 5), which was subsequently adapted for the Penny Black issued in 1840. He notes also that the National Portrait Gallery has an anaglyptograph profile of Victoria, dated about 1837-40, in which her hair is shown as gathered in a bunch held by a coronet (fig. 6). It remains striking how close the sapphire coronet is to the Rauten Krone. The cresting is more complex in the sapphire coronet than in Albert's book plate, which has only trefoils without intervening points, but other versions of the Rauten Krone frequently have the latter.

## **2. Winterhalter's first portrait of Queen Victoria, 1842**

Recommended by Victoria's aunt, Louise, Queen of the Belgians, Winterhalter arrived in London in May 1842, six months after the birth of Victoria's second child. By the end of July he had completed his first portraits of Victoria (fig. 2) and Albert. His portraits of younger women frequently do not emphasize their jewellery, and this accords well with the use of the coronet around her chignon, rather than a dominant crown, or the diamond circlet of George IV, worn on the top of her head.

But, whether or not Winterhalter had a say in the selection of the sapphire coronet for her portrait, it was, above all, Victoria's new jewel. It matched the sapphire and diamond brooch which Albert had given her on the day before their wedding.

A miniature by George Freeman (fig. 7) shows Victoria in 1841 wearing a jewelled ornament around her chignon which can be seen as the forerunner of the coronet.<sup>3</sup> But the ornament in Freeman's miniature was less substantial and more informal. The sapphire coronet was commissioned as a deliberate statement of authority and was entirely appropriate for an official portrait.

Oliver Millar describes the portraits of Victoria and Albert as 'an immediate success. Replicas and copies were commissioned without delay'.<sup>4</sup> By 4 December the originals had been let into the walls of the White Drawing Room at Windsor and, wrote Victoria, 'look so well there'.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Less well defined ornament is shown in an engraving by Frederick Bacon published in 1841 of a miniature by Ross (NPG D35043). Shirley Bury (1991, p. 313) notes that the coronet is 'reminiscent' of one worn on the back of her head by Queen Henrietta Maria in a portrait in the National Portrait Gallery (fig. 8). The latter was given in 1899 to the National Portrait Gallery by Henry Louis Bischoffsheim, banker and philanthropist. It was from the collection of the Marquess of Normanby. Sir Charles Phipps, brother of the first Marquess of Normanby, was appointed equerry to Queen Victoria in 1846, the first of many appointments in the royal household which continued until his death in 1866, but it appears not to be proven that the Normanby portrait would have been known to Winterhalter. If a link with Henrietta Maria is sought, she is portrayed with a coronet or a small crown on the back of her head in seventeenth-century engravings which might have been more accessible (for example, fig. 9).

<sup>4</sup> Millar, 1992, vol. I, xxiv.

<sup>5</sup> Journal quoted by Millar, 1992, vol. 1, p. 286.

Winterhalter was paid the same year for copies of the Queen for Baroness Lehzen and Count Mensdorff-Pouilly, and for copies of the Queen and the Prince for Louis Philippe, King of the French. Millar's list of replicas and copies includes a pair at the Fürstenbau in Veste Coburg, copies made for the Duchess of Kent and Queen Adelaide, and those in the collection of the Earl of Hardwicke, the Examination School, Cambridge, Burghley, the National Gallery of Art Washington, D.C., Government House, Sydney, as well examples sold at auction. In the copies the Queen wears the insignia of the Garter, as in a lithograph by F. C. Lewis and an engraving by François Forster, published in 1847 (fig. 10; NPG D35047). The essay, which accompanied the application, illustrates the portraits of Victoria and Albert given in the mid-1850s to the recently founded Australian Colony of Victoria. The Garter version is used on the cover of the paperback edition of A.N. Wilson, *Victoria: A Life* (2015; fig. 11, the portrait given to King Louis Philippe). Historical Portraits, the website of Philip Mould Ltd., includes three images of Garter versions.

The copies sent to the King of the French were copied on porcelain plaques at Sèvres which were presented to Victoria by Louis Philippe in 1846 and set into the walls of the Council Room at Osborne. Millar notes that already in 1842 copies in enamel were made for the Queen to insert into bracelets. An enamel miniature copy by William Essex was given by Queen Victoria to Prince Albert on his birthday in 1843 (fig. 12).

### 3. The Coronet in other portraits

Further portraits in which the sapphire coronet is worn include (with thanks to the applicant's detailed list, and the websites of the Royal Collection, the National Portrait Gallery and the British Museum):

A. 1844-5. Painting, watercolour on ivory, a 'major work' by Robert Thorburn (Royal Collection; fig. 13). Queen Victoria is depicted in a medieval-style robe with the coronet worn on the back of her head. 'The Queen's medieval costume was intended to counterbalance Prince Albert's appearance in armour in the pendant'.<sup>6</sup>

The painting was engraved by Henry Thomas Ryall, about 1847 (fig. 14). It was copied a number of times on porcelain, one of these being a Berlin porcelain (KPM) plaque painted by Andreas Deckelmann incorporated into the royal jewel cabinet by Elkington commissioned by Prince Albert, one of the firm's most important exhibits at the Great Exhibition (fig. 15). A Meissen plaque on the back is painted with Prince Albert's arms including the Rauten Krone.<sup>7</sup>

B. 1866. Illustrated London News, vol. 48, p. 141 (fig. 16)  
Queen Victoria drove into London on 6 February for the Opening of Parliament:  
'A fine morning. Terribly nervous & agitated...Great crowds out, & so I had (for the 1<sup>st</sup> time) since my great misfortune an Escort. Dressing after luncheon, which I could hardly touch. Wore my ordinary evening dress, only trimmed with miniver & my cap with a long flowing

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/search#/2/collection/421666/queen-victoria-1819-1901-with-albert-edward-prince-of-wales-1841-1910>. Accessed 5/12/2015.

<sup>7</sup> Victoria and Albert Art & Love, 2010, no. 176 (Hugh Roberts).

tulle veil, a small diamond & sapphire coronet, rather at the back & diamonds outlining the front of the cap...'<sup>8</sup>

Without Albert Queen Victoria had found it impossible to undergo the ordeal of the ceremonial Opening of Parliament. In 1864 she said that it was 'totally out of the question', but in 1866, concerned that Parliament should grant a dowry to her daughter, Princess Helena, about to marry the impecunious Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg, as well as an annuity for Prince Alfred, she agreed to be present at the opening.<sup>9</sup> While her State Crown, which she admitted had hurt her a great deal at her Coronation, was borne on a cushion, she wore the much lighter sapphire coronet. Its role was subsequently taken over by the small diamond crown commissioned from Garrard in 1870, worn at the Opening of Parliament in 1871, and, since 1937, part of the Regalia at the Tower of London.<sup>10</sup>

C. 1871. Hand-coloured mezzotint by Samuel Cousins, after Lowes Cato Dickinson (fig. 17).

The coronet worn horizontally on top of the head over a veil (with the sapphires, hand-coloured red).

D. 1872. Wood engraving in *The Graphic* (fig. 18). The coronet worn as in the 1871 mezzotint.

E. 1874. Portrait, oil on canvas, by Henry Richard Graves (fig. 19)

Queen Victoria depicted facing right with the coronet worn as in the 1871 mezzotint.

F. An undated print of Victoria, wearing the coronet as a tiara, and Albert, both facing right (Getty Images, fig. 20). A related image from another source shows Victoria by herself (fig. 21). Neither image is convincing evidence that Victoria wore the coronet in this manner.

#### **4. Gift to the Princess Royal**

The sapphire coronet was given by King George V and Queen Mary to Princess Mary on her marriage to Viscount Lascelles in 1922. It is recorded, as a wedding present, in a photograph displayed in its own case in a manner which shows that it was not closed at the back.

Princess Mary wore it as a tiara low on her brow to suit the style of the 1920s, as well as slightly higher in later life (fig. 22). The coronet's connection with the Princess Royal, an outstanding servant to many institutions and causes, is an important further chapter in its history. Members of the family continued to wear the tiara. It served as a wedding tiara in 1992.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Queen Victoria's Journal: Shirley Bury's notes (Metalwork Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum).

<sup>9</sup> Christopher Hibbert, *Queen Victoria* (paperback edition, London, 2001), pp. 310-12.

<sup>10</sup> S. Bury, 'The Coronation from the Restoration of the Monarchy to 1953', in *The Crown Jewels*, ed. C. Blair, London, 1998, vol. I, p. 552; vol. II, pp. 164-172. The small diamond marriage crown of Queen Charlotte, which Victoria wore on the back of her head behind Queen Adelaide's diamond tiara at the opening of the Great Exhibition in 1851, might have been an alternative to the sapphire coronet, but, under the terms of the settlement, it had been returned to Hanover in 1858.

<sup>11</sup> <http://orderofsplendor.blogspot.co.uk/2011/12/readers-top-15-tiaras-15-queen.html> accessed 13/04/2014; <http://www.royal-magazin.de/england/mary-lascelles-harewood/princess-royal-mary-sapphire.htm> accessed 2/01/2016.

## 5. Significance

The sapphire coronet has a three-fold significance: its role in the portraits by Winterhalter, Thorburn and Graves; its selection by Queen Victoria for the 1866 Opening of Parliament; and its importance as a jewel from the earlier part of Queen Victoria's reign.

Major jewellery lives under constant threat of recycling to meet the demands of fashion or economy, and, if it can survive these challenges, its portability and its appeal make it an acceptable gift. Of the more substantial coloured-gem jewellery acquired by Victoria in her early years as queen, all too little is in the Royal Collection or in public institutions. The sapphire brooch given by Albert to Victoria on their wedding and the 'Timur ruby' necklace remain in the Royal Collection, as does the Oriental Tiara (1853), but the last had to yield up over 1000 diamonds in 1858 after the judgement on Queen Charlotte's jewels had been decided in favour of Hanover, and in 1901 it was reduced in size and the opals changed to rubies. The emerald tiara worn in the Winterhalter portrait of the royal family in 1846 is, like the sapphire coronet, no longer in the possession of the royal family, and is in private hands in Britain. Victoria's Coronation and State Crown made by Rundell & Bridge in 1838 underwent various changes before being stripped of its stones in 1937. Like her diamond-set Regal Circlet, it exists only as a frame.

The sapphire coronet is a rare and historic jewel intimately linked to the life of Queen Victoria and to the image which she projected in Britain, Europe, the Empire, and beyond. I submit that it meets at least the first and third Waverley criteria.

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1. Sapphire and diamond coronet, 1842