

= Marie of Romania =

Princess Marie of Edinburgh , more commonly known as Marie of Romania (Marie Alexandra Victoria ; 29 October 1875 ? 18 July 1938) , was the last Queen consort of Romania as the wife of King Ferdinand I.

Born into the British royal family , she was titled Princess Marie of Edinburgh at birth . Her parents were Prince Alfred , Duke of Edinburgh and Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna of Russia . Marie 's early years were spent in Kent , Malta and Coburg . After refusing a proposal from her cousin , the future King George V , she was chosen as the future wife of Crown Prince Ferdinand of Romania , the heir apparent of King Carol I , in 1892 . Marie was Crown Princess between 1893 and 1914 , and became immediately popular with the Romanian people . Marie had controlled her weak @-@ willed husband even before his ascension in 1914 , prompting a Canadian newspaper to state that " few royal consorts have wielded greater influence than did Queen Marie during the reign of her husband " .

After the outbreak of World War I , Marie urged Ferdinand to ally himself with the Triple Entente and declare war on Germany , which he eventually did in 1916 . During the early stages of fighting , Bucharest was occupied by the Central Powers and Marie , Ferdinand and their five children took refuge in Moldavia . There , she and her three daughters acted as nurses in military hospitals , caring for soldiers who were wounded or afflicted by cholera . On 1 December 1918 , the province of Transylvania , following Bessarabia and Bukovina , united with the Old Kingdom . Marie , now Queen consort of Greater Romania , attended the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 , where she campaigned for international recognition of the enlarged Romania . In 1922 , she and Ferdinand were crowned in a specially @-@ built cathedral in the ancient city of Alba Iulia , in an elaborate ceremony which mirrored their status as queen and king of a united state .

As queen , she was very popular , both in Romania and abroad . In 1926 , Marie and two of her children undertook a diplomatic tour of the United States . They were received enthusiastically by the people and visited several cities before returning to Romania . There , Marie found that Ferdinand was gravely ill and he died a few months later . Now queen dowager , Marie refused to be part of the regency council which reigned over the country under the minority of her grandson , King Michael . In 1930 , Marie 's eldest son Carol , who had waived his rights to succession , deposed his son and usurped the throne , becoming King Carol II . He removed Marie from the political scene and strived to crush her popularity . As a result , Marie moved away from Bucharest and spent the rest of her life either in the countryside , or at her home by the Black Sea . In 1937 , she became ill with cirrhosis and died the following year .

Following Romania 's transition to a Socialist Republic , the monarchy was excoriated by communist officials . Several biographies of the royal family described Marie either as a drunkard or as a promiscuous woman , referring to her many alleged affairs and to orgies she had supposedly organised before and during the war . In the years preceding the Romanian Revolution of 1989 , Marie 's popularity recovered and she was offered as a model of patriotism to the population . Marie is primarily remembered for her work as a nurse , but is also known for her extensive writing , including her critically acclaimed autobiography .

= = Early life (1875 ? 93) = =

= = = Birth = = =

Marie was the eldest daughter and second child of Prince Alfred , Duke of Edinburgh , and the former Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna of Russia , respectively the son of Queen Victoria and the daughter of Emperor Alexander II . She was born at her parents ' residence , Eastwell Manor in Kent , on 29 October 1875 , at 10 : 30 a.m. , in the presence of her father . Her birth was celebrated by firing the Park and Tower guns . She was named Marie Alexandra Victoria , after her mother and grandmothers , but she was informally known as " Missy " . The Duke of Edinburgh wrote that his

daughter " promises to be as fine a child as her brother and gives every evidence of finely developed lungs and did so before she was fairly in the world . " As a grandchild of the reigning British monarch in the male line , Marie was formally styled " Her Royal Highness Princess Marie of Edinburgh " from birth .

Marie 's christening took place in the private chapel of Windsor Castle on 15 December 1875 and was officiated by Arthur Stanley and Gerald Wellesley , Dean of Windsor . The baptism , " of a strictly private nature " , took place one day after the ceremony marking the anniversary of the death of her paternal grandfather , Prince Albert . Marie 's godparents were Empress Maria Alexandrovna (her maternal grandmother , for whom Queen Victoria stood proxy) , the Princess of Wales (her paternal aunt) , the Duchess of Saxe @-@ Coburg and Gotha (her great @-@ aunt , for whom Princess Helena of Schleswig @-@ Holstein stood proxy) , the Tsarevich of Russia (her maternal uncle , for whom Count Pyotr Andreyevich Shuvalov stood proxy) and the Duke of Connaught and Strathearn (her paternal uncle , for whom the Duke of Albany stood proxy) .

= = = Upbringing = = =

Marie and her siblings , Prince Alfred (b . 1874) , and Princesses Victoria Melita (b . 1876 , known as " Ducky ") , Alexandra (b . 1878 , known as " Sandra ") and Beatrice (b . 1884 , known as " Baby Bee ") , spent much of their early life at Eastwell Park , which their mother preferred instead of Clarence House , their official residence . In her memoirs , Marie would remember Eastwell fondly . The Duke of Edinburgh was largely absent from his children 's lives , due to his position in the British Royal Navy , and their life was governed by their mother . Marie would later state that she did not even know the colour of her father 's hair until she looked at later portraits of him , believing it to be much darker than it actually was . When he was at home , the Duke would often play with his children , inventing many games for them . Of all her siblings , Marie was closest to her sister Victoria Melita , who was one year younger , but whom everyone believed to be the older girl because of her stature , much to the princesses ' dismay . The Edinburgh children were all baptised and raised in the Anglican faith ; this upset their Russian Orthodox mother .

The Duchess of Edinburgh was a supporter of the idea of separating generations and Marie deeply regretted the fact that her mother never allowed chatting between the two " as if [they] were equals " . Nonetheless , the Duchess was independent @-@ minded , cultured and " the most important person " in her children 's lives . At the behest of their mother , Marie and her sisters were taught French , which they detested and rarely ever spoke . Overall , the Duchess neglected her daughters ' education , considering them not very bright or gifted . They were permitted to read aloud , but in the fields of painting and drawing , areas in which they had inherited Queen Victoria 's talent , the girls received only a " pedestrian instruction " . The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh frequently received members of the royal family at Eastwell Park , inviting them for breakfast nearly daily and in 1885 , Marie and Victoria Melita served as bridesmaids at the wedding of their aunt Beatrice and Prince Henry of Battenberg . Among Marie 's playmates were her maternal cousins , Grand Dukes Nicholas (called " Nicky ") and George (called " Georgie ") and Grand Duchess Xenia of Russia , the other two Russian cousins , Grand Duke Michael (called " Misha ") and Grand Duchess Olga being too young for the Edinburgh girls . Other playmates included the children of their maternal uncle , Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich of Russia .

In 1886 , when Marie was eleven years old , the Duke of Edinburgh was named commander @-@ in @-@ chief of the Mediterranean Fleet and the family took up residence at San Antonio Palace in Malta . Marie would remember her time in Malta as " the happiest memory of my existence " . It was in Malta that Marie found her first love , Maurice Bourke , the captain of the Duke 's ship , whom Marie called " Captain Dear " . Marie was prone to fits of jealousy when Bourke would pay more attention to one of her sisters than to her . The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh were greatly loved in Malta and San Antonio Palace was frequently full of guests . Marie and Victoria Melita received white horses from their mother and went to the local hippodrome nearly daily , apart from Saturday . During their first year in Malta , a French governess oversaw the princesses ' education , but , due to her failing health , she was replaced the following year by a much younger German woman . At San

Antonio , the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh always maintained a room ready for Prince George of Wales , the second son of the Prince of Wales , later King Edward VII , who was in the Royal Navy . George called the three elder Edinburgh girls " the three dearests " , but favoured Marie the most .

Meanwhile , the Duke of Edinburgh became heir presumptive to his childless paternal uncle , Ernest II , Duke of Saxe @-@ Coburg and Gotha , upon the Prince of Wales 's renunciation of his rights to the duchy . Consequently , the family relocated to Coburg in 1889 . Marie later came to view this moment as " truly the end of a life that had been absolute happiness and joy without clouds , of a life with no disappointments or delusions and without any discordant note . " The Duchess , who was pro @-@ German , hired a German governess for her daughters , bought them plain clothing and even had them confirmed in the Lutheran faith . The family spent their summers at Rosenau Castle . Duke Ernest was described by Marie as " having his oddities " ; his court was less strict than other German courts of the time . In Coburg , the princesses ' education was broadened : more emphasis was placed on painting and music , which were taught by Anna Messing and Mrs. Helferich , respectively . On Thursdays and Sundays , Marie and her sisters went to the Coburg Theatre , an experience which they enjoyed greatly . Marie and Victoria Melita often observed their brother 's friends and made comments on whom they liked better , an aspect which Marie believed was inevitable in the lives of girls who have brothers . Another activity which the girls enjoyed at Coburg was attending winter parties organised by their mother , during which they would ice @-@ skate and play different games , such as ice hockey .

= = = Marriage = = =

Marie grew into a " lovely young woman " with " sparkling blue eyes and silky fair hair " ; she was courted by several royal bachelors , including Prince George of Wales , who in 1892 became second in line to inherit the throne . Queen Victoria , the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Edinburgh all approved , but the Princess of Wales and the Duchess of Edinburgh did not . The Princess of Wales disliked the family 's pro @-@ German sentiment and the Duchess of Edinburgh did not wish for her daughter to remain in England , which she resented . She also disliked the fact that the Princess of Wales , whose father had been a minor German prince before being called to the Danish throne , was higher than she in the order of precedence . The Duchess of Edinburgh was also against the idea of a marriage between first cousins , which was not allowed by her native Russian Orthodox Church . Thus , when George proposed to her , Marie informed him that the marriage was impossible and that he must remain her " beloved chum " . Queen Victoria would later comment that " Georgie lost Missy by waiting & waiting " .

Around this time , King Carol I of Romania was looking for a suitable bride for Crown Prince Ferdinand , in order to secure the succession and assure the continuation of the House of Hohenzollern @-@ Sigmaringen . Possibly motivated by the prospect of removing tensions between Russia and Romania on the subject of control over Bessarabia , the Duchess of Edinburgh suggested that Marie meet Ferdinand . Marie and Ferdinand first became acquainted during a gala dinner and the pair conversed in German . She found him shy but amiable , and their second meeting went just as well . Once the pair were formally engaged , Queen Victoria wrote to another granddaughter , Princess Victoria of Hesse and by Rhine , that " [Ferdinand] is nice & the Parents are charming ? but the country is very insecure & the immorality of the Society at Bucharest quite awful . Of course the marriage will be delayed some time as Missy won 't be 17 till the end of October ! " German Empress Victoria , Marie 's aunt , wrote to her daughter , Crown Princess Sophia of Greece , that " Missy is till now quite delighted , but the poor child is so young , how can she guess what is before her ? " In late 1892 , King Carol visited London in order to meet the Duke of Edinburgh and Queen Victoria , who eventually agreed to the marriage and appointed him a Knight of the Garter .

On 10 January 1893 , Marie and Ferdinand were married at Sigmaringen Castle in three ceremonies : one civil , one Catholic (Ferdinand 's religion) and one Anglican . The civil ceremony was performed in the Red Hall of the castle by Karl von Wendel , the German Emperor being the first of the witnesses present to sign the marriage act . At four o 'clock , the Catholic ceremony took

place at the Town Church , with Marie being led to the altar by her father . The Anglican ceremony was more modest and was conducted in one of the chambers of the castle . Although King Carol granted the couple " Honigstag " (one day of honeymoon) , Marie and Ferdinand spent a few days at the Castle of Krauchenwies in Bavaria . From there , they left for the countryside , their journey being interrupted briefly by a stop at Vienna , where they visited Emperor Franz Joseph . Due to growing tensions between Austria and Romania (the visit took place during the ongoing movement of the Transylvanian Memorandum) , the couple 's visit was brief and they arrived in the border town of Predeal following a nighttime crossing of Transylvania by train . Marie was warmly welcomed by the Romanian people , who were longing for a more personal monarchy .

= = Crown Princess (1893 ? 1914) = =

= = = Domestic life = = =

The first years of Marie and Ferdinand 's marriage were not particularly easy , and Marie would later tell her husband that " it is such a shame that we had to waste so many years of our youth just to learn how to live together ! " Gradually , the couple 's relationship became based on a cordial friendship : Marie accorded Ferdinand respect she believed he was due as a man and , later , as king , and he respected her because he realised that she had a better understanding of the world than he did . Eventually , Marie came to believe that she and Ferdinand were " the best associates , the most loyal companions , but our lives intertwine only in certain matters " . Ferdinand enjoyed Marie 's presence during military marches and consequently , she was frequently invited to this sort of event .

Marie gave birth to her first child , Prince Carol , only nine months after the marriage , on 15 October 1893 . Although Marie requested the use of chloroform in order to ease the pains of labour , doctors were reluctant to do so , believing that " women must pay in agony for the sins of Eve " . After Marie 's mother and Queen Victoria insisted , King Carol eventually allowed the use of the drug on his niece @-@ in @-@ law . Marie did not derive much joy from the arrival of her firstborn , later writing that she " felt like turning [her] head to the wall " . Similarly , although Marie was constantly reminded by Carol 's wife Elisabeth that childbirth is " the most glorious moment in [Marie 's] life " , she could only feel a longing for her mother at the birth of her second child , Princess Elisabeth , in 1894 . After becoming accustomed to life in Romania , Marie began to rejoice at the births of her children , namely Princess Maria (1900 ? 61) , nicknamed " Mignon " in the family , Prince Nicholas (1903 ? 78) , nicknamed " Nicky " , Princess Ileana (1909 ? 91) and Prince Mircea (1913 ? 16) .

King Carol and Queen Elisabeth promptly removed Prince Carol and Princess Elisabeth from Marie 's care , considering it inappropriate for them to be raised by their young parents . Marie loved her children , but found it difficult to even scold them at times , thus failing to properly supervise them . Consequently , the royal children were given somewhat of an education , but were never sent to school . As the royal household could not provide what a classroom education would have , most of the children 's personalities became severely flawed as they grew older . Prime Minister Ion G. Duca would later write that " it was like [King Carol] wished to leave for Romania heirs completely unprepared for succeeding . "

= = = Life at court = = =

From the start , Marie had trouble adjusting to life in Romania . Her personality and " high spirits " frequently created controversies at the Romanian court , and she disliked the austere atmosphere of her household . She wrote that she " had not been brought down to Romania to be adored and spoilt and made much of ; she had come to be part of the machinery King Carol had wound up . She had been imported to be trimmed , educated , cut down and trained according to the great man 's conception of things . " When describing her early days in Romania , Marie wrote that " for long hours [she] would mope , whilst [her] young husband did his military service , all alone in rooms [

she] hated , heavy German rooms " . Marie 's paternal aunt , the Dowager German Empress , wrote to her daughter , the Crown Princess of Greece , that " Missy of Roumania is more to be pitied than you . The King is a great tyrant in his family , & has crushed the independence in Ferdinand so that no one cares about him , & his beautiful & gifted little wife , I fear , gets into scrapes , & like a butterfly , instead of hovering over the flowers , burns her pretty wings by going rather near the fire ! " Easily learning to speak the Romanian language , she followed her mother 's advice to dress carefully and show respect for Orthodox rituals .

Marie and Ferdinand were advised by King Carol to maintain a restricted group of friends ; thus , Marie would lament that her familial circle had been shrunk to only the King and Ferdinand , " who stood in mighty awe of the iron old man , forever trembling that any action of [hers] might displease that duty @-@ bound head of the family " . The Times Literary Supplement wrote that Marie had found herself , " from the hour of her arrival in Bucharest under the tutelage of that stern disciplinarian King Carol I " .

In 1896 , Ferdinand and Marie moved to Cotroceni Palace , which had been extended by the Romanian architect Grigore Cerchez , and to which Marie added her own designs . The following year , Ferdinand was struck down with typhoid fever . For days , he was delirious and , despite his doctor 's best efforts , came close to dying . During this time , Marie exchanged numerous letters with her family in Britain and was terrified at the prospect of losing her husband . King Carol still had an heir in Prince Carol , whose young age presented issues ; thus , the whole family desperately wished for Ferdinand to pull through . Eventually , he did , and he and Marie went to Sinaia , the site of Pele? Castle , for a period of recovery . Nonetheless , the couple was not able to attend celebrations for Queen Victoria 's diamond jubilee that summer . During Ferdinand 's convalescence , Marie spent most of her time with her two children , taking them on long walks and picking flowers with them . The winter of 1897 / 1898 was spent with the Russian Imperial family on the French Riviera , where Marie often rode horses , in spite of the low temperatures .

Around this time , Marie met Lieutenant Gheorghe Cantacuzène , a member , albeit through an illegitimate branch , of an ancient Romanian princely family and a descendant of Prince ?erban Cantacuzino . Although not very good looking , Cantacuzène stood out using his sense of humour and fashion , as well as his talent in horse @-@ riding . The two soon became romantically involved , but their affair was terminated after it became known by the public . As much as she condemned Marie 's behaviour , her mother allowed her to come to Coburg when , in 1897 , she apparently became pregnant . Historian Julia Gelardi believes that Marie gave birth to a child at Coburg ; the child may either have been stillborn or sent to an orphanage immediately following its birth . There was speculation on whether Marie 's second daughter , " Mignon " , was Cantacuzène 's daughter , and not Ferdinand 's . Over the following years , Marie was also rumoured to have been romantically linked to Grand Duke Boris Vladimirovich of Russia , Waldorf Astor , Prince Barbu ?tirbey and Joe Boyle . In 1903 , Ferdinand and Marie inaugurated Peli?or , an Art Nouveau castle in Sinaia that King Carol commissioned for the royal couple . Marie only learned of the extent of repression used to quell the 1907 Romanian Peasants ' Revolt once it was too late to intercede . She afterwards took to dressing quite often in folk costume , both at home and in public , initiating a fashion trend among young upper @-@ class women .

On 29 June 1913 , the Tsardom of Bulgaria declared war on Greece , thus starting the Second Balkan War . On 4 July , Romania entered the war , allying itself with Greece . The war , which lasted a little over a month , was worsened by a cholera epidemic . Marie would look upon her first encounter with an epidemic as a turning point in her life . With the help of Dr. Ioan Cantacuzino and Sister Pucci , a Red Cross nurse , Marie travelled between Romania and Bulgaria , lending a helping hand in hospitals . These events would prepare her for her experiences in the Great War . As a result of the war , Romania gained possession of Southern Dobrudja , including the coastal town of Balchik (Balcic) , which Marie would come to cherish in 1924 and use to host her residence . Soon after the war ended , Carol became ill .

On 28 June 1914 , at Sarajevo , Archduke Franz Ferdinand , the heir to the Austro @-@ Hungarian Empire , was assassinated . This came as a shock to Marie and her family , who were vacationing at Sinaia when the news reached them . On 28 July , Austria @-@ Hungary declared war on Serbia

and , as Marie saw it , " the world 's peace was torn to shreds " . Then , on 3 August , King Carol held a Crown Council at Sinaia , in order to decide whether Romania should enter the war . Although Carol was in favour of his country supporting Germany and the Central Powers , the council decided against it . Not long after the council , Carol 's illness worsened and he became bedridden ; the possibility of his abdication was even discussed . Eventually , he died on 10 October 1914 and Ferdinand automatically succeeded as king .

= = Queen of Romania (1914 ? 27) = =

= = = World War I = = =

On 11 October 1914 , Marie and Ferdinand were acclaimed as king and queen in the Chamber of Deputies . Princess Anne Marie Callimachi , a close friend of Marie 's , wrote that " as Crown Princess , [Marie] had been popular ; as queen , she was more loved " . Marie maintained a certain influence on her husband and the entire court , leading historian A. L. Easterman to write that " it was not [Ferdinand] , but Marie who ruled in Romania " . At the time of Ferdinand 's ascension , the government was led by the liberal prime minister Ion I. C. Brătianu . Ferdinand and Marie jointly decided to not make many changes in court and let people accept the transition from one regime to another , rather than force them . Thus , many of Carol and Elisabeth 's servants were kept in place , even the ones who were not particularly liked . With Brătianu 's help , Marie began pressuring Ferdinand into entering the war ; concurrently , she contacted various reigning relatives in Europe and bargained for the best terms for Romania , in case the country would enter the war . Marie favoured an alliance with the Triple Entente (Russia , France and Britain) , partly because of her British ancestry . Neutrality was not without perils , and entering the war with the Entente meant that Romania would act as Russia 's " buffer " against possible attacks .

Eventually , Marie demanded of Ferdinand in no uncertain terms that he enter the war , leading the French minister to Romania , Auguste Félix de Beauvoir , Count of Saint-Aulaire , to remark that Marie was twice an ally to the French : once by birth and once by heart . Ferdinand gave in to Marie 's pleas , and he signed a treaty with the Entente on 17 August 1916 . On 27 August , Romania formally declared war on Austria-Hungary . Saint-Aulaire wrote that Marie " embraced war as another might embrace religion " . After informing their children that their country had entered the war , Ferdinand and Marie dismissed their German servants , who could only remain in their service as " war prisoners " of sorts . Early on during the war , Marie was involved in aiding the Romanian Red Cross and visited hospitals daily . During the first month of war , Romania fought no less than nine battles , some on Romanian soil , such as the Battle of Turtucaia .

On 2 November 1916 , Marie 's youngest son , Prince Mircea , who had been sick with typhoid fever , died at Buftea . Marie was distraught and wrote in her journal : " Can anything ever be the same ? " After Bucharest fell to Austrian troops , the royal court was transferred to Iași , capital of the Moldavia region , in December 1916 . There , she continued to act as a nurse in military hospitals . Daily , Marie would dress as a nurse and go to the train station , where she would receive more injured soldiers ; then she would transport them to hospital .

After the conclusion of the Russian Revolution in early November 1917 and the victory of the Bolsheviks , Romania became , in the words of diplomat Frank Rattigan , " an island surrounded on all sides by the enemy , with no hope of assistance from the Allies " . Soon afterwards , Ferdinand signed the Treaty of Focșani , on 9 December 1917 . Marie considered the treaty perilous , while Brătianu and ?tirbey believed it was a necessary measure for obtaining more time . Later turns of events would prove Marie to have assumed correctly . In 1918 , Marie vehemently opposed the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest , giving rise to her description as " truly the only man in Romania " . The Armistice with Germany (11 November 1918) put an end to fighting in Europe and , thus , to the war .

In the tenth century , the Principality of Hungary had begun conquering Transylvania , which Hungarians had fully occupied by around 1200 . The idea of a " Greater Romania " had existed in

the minds of Romanians in Transylvania for some time and Br?tianu had actively supported the concept before the war . In 1918 , both Bessarabia and Bukovina voted for union with Romania . An assembly took place in the ancient city of Alba Iulia on 1 December 1918 , where Vasile Goldi? read the resolution for the union of Transylvania with the Old Kingdom . This document , supported by Romanian as well as Saxon deputies , established a High National Romanian Council (Romanian : Marele Sfat Na?ional Român) for the province 's temporary administration . Marie wrote , " the dream of România Mare seems to be becoming a reality ... it is all so incredible that I hardly dare believe it . " After the assembly , Ferdinand and Marie returned to Bucharest , where they were met by general mirth : " a day of ' wild , delirious enthusiasm ' , with the bands crashing and the troops marching and the people cheering " . Allied troops took part in the celebration and Marie was elated to see the Entente on Romanian soil for the first time .

= = = Paris Peace Conference = = =

Because Ferdinand had refused to sign the Treaty of Bucharest and because Romania had been hostile towards the Central Powers until the end of the war , its place among the winning countries during the Paris Peace Conference was guaranteed . The official delegation was led by Br?tianu , who had just begun his third term as Prime Minister . Br?tianu 's rigidity , combined with French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau 's reluctance to overlook Ferdinand 's acceptance of the Treaty of Bucharest led to open conflict and the Romanian delegation left Paris , much to the dismay of the " Big Four " . Hoping to resolve the situation , Saint @-@ Aulaire suggested that Marie should be sent to the conference instead . The Queen was delighted at the prospect .

Marie arrived in Paris on 6 March 1919 . She was immediately popular with the French people , due to her boldness during the War . Upon meeting Marie , Clemenceau abruptly told her , " I don 't like your Prime Minister " , to which she replied , " Perhaps then you 'll find me more agreeable . " He did , and president Raymond Poincaré noticed a change in Clemenceau 's attitude towards Romania after Marie 's arrival . After staying in Paris for a week , Marie accepted King George V and Queen Mary 's invitation and crossed the English Channel , lodging at Buckingham Palace . Hoping to acquire as much goodwill for Romania as possible , Marie became acquainted with many important political figures of the time , including Lord Curzon , Winston Churchill and Waldorf and Nancy Astor . She also frequently visited her son Nicky , who was then in school at Eton College . Marie was elated to have returned to England after so much time , writing that " it was a tremendous emotion to arrive in London , and to be greeted at the station by George and May . "

After the end of her visit in England , Marie returned to Paris , where the people were just as excited for her arrival as they had been a few weeks before . Crowds gathered around her frequently , waiting to see the " exotic " Queen of Romania . American President Woodrow Wilson remained unimpressed by Marie , and her comments on Russian laws dealing with sexual relations , which were considered inappropriate , did not help . Marie shocked many officials by waving all her ministers aside and leading negotiations herself . On this , she would later comment , " Never mind , you 'll all just have to get used to accepting me with the faults of my virtues . " Marie left Paris with numerous supplies for Romania 's relief and later that year , the conference resulted in the international recognition of Greater Romania , thus doubling Ferdinand and Marie 's kingdom to 295 @,@ 000 square kilometres (114 @,@ 000 sq mi) and increasing the population by ten million . This led Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna of Russia , who briefly lived in Bucharest , to conclude that " by her charm , beauty , and ready wit , [Marie] could obtain anything she desired " .

= = = Dynastic efforts = = =

In 1920 , Marie 's eldest daughter , Princess Elisabeth , was engaged to Prince George of Greece , the eldest son of the deposed King Constantine I of Greece and Marie 's cousin Sophia . After inviting George and his two sisters , the Princesses Helen and Irene , to lodge with them at Sinaia , Marie organised numerous activities for the young couple and was delighted at the prospect of marrying off her daughter , whose character was severely flawed . In October , reports of King

Alexander 's death came from Greece ; the Greek princesses needed to be returned to their parents as soon as possible . The following day , news arrived that Marie 's mother had died in her sleep in Zurich . Marie made arrangements for her departure to Switzerland , where she would take Helen and Irene to their parents and arrange her mother 's funeral . Meanwhile , George and Elisabeth would remain at Sinaia .

Soon enough , Crown Prince Carol proposed to Princess Helen and they were married the following year . Marie was delighted , as she had frowned upon Carol 's relationship with Zizi Lambrino and had been worried at the birth of their illegitimate son Carol , who , to her great relief , had been given his mother 's surname . In 1922 , Marie married her second daughter , " Mignon " , to Alexander I of Serbia (later of Yugoslavia) . She was delighted at the births of her two royal grandsons , Prince Michael of Romania (b . 1921) and Prince Peter of Yugoslavia (1923 ? 1970) ; the births of two grandchildren destined to sit on Europe 's thrones seemed to cement her ambitions . Marie 's dynastic efforts were viewed by critics as those of a manipulative mother who would sacrifice her children 's happiness in order to fulfil her ambitions ; in reality , Marie never forced any of her children to marry .

In 1924 , Ferdinand and Marie undertook a diplomatic tour of France , Switzerland , Belgium and the United Kingdom . In England , she was warmly welcomed by George V , who declared that " apart from the common aims , which we pursue , there are other and dear ties between us . Her Majesty the Queen , my dear cousin , is British born . " Similarly , Marie wrote that the day of her arrival in England was " a great day for me , one of emotions , sweet , happy and the same time glorious emotions to come back as Queen to my own country , to be received officially , in all honour and enthusiastically into the bargain ? to feel your heart swell with pride and satisfaction , to feel your heart beat and tears start into your eyes , while something gave you a lump into your throat ! " These state visits were a symbolic recognition of the prestige Romania had gained after World War I. Whilst visiting Geneva , Marie and Ferdinand became the first royals to enter the newly established headquarters of the League of Nations .

= = = Coronation = = =

The location for Marie and Ferdinand 's coronation was Alba Iulia , which had been an important fortress in the Middle Ages and where Michael the Brave had been declared Voivode of Transylvania in 1599 , thus uniting Wallachia and Transylvania for the first time . An Orthodox cathedral was built as the Coronation Cathedral in 1921 @-@ 1922 . An elaborate set of jewellery and clothing was made especially for the coronation . Marie 's crown was designed by painter Costin Petrescu and it was made in the Art Nouveau style by " Falize " , a Parisian jewelry house . The crown was inspired by that of Despina , the wife of 16th @-@ century Wallachian ruler Neagoe Basarab , and it was made entirely out of Transylvanian gold . The crown had two pendants on the sides ; one contained an image of the royal arms of Romania and the other , the arms of the Duke of Edinburgh , which Marie had used as her own arms prior to her marriage . The crown , which cost around 65 @,@ 000 francs , was paid for by the state , via a special law .

Among the guests at the royal couple 's coronation were Marie 's sister " Baby Bee " , the Duke of York and French generals Maxime Weygand and Henri Mathias Berthelot . The ceremony was conducted by the Metropolitan of All Romania , Miron Cristea , but it was not performed inside the cathedral as Ferdinand , a Roman Catholic , refused to be crowned by a member of the Eastern Orthodox Church . After placing his crown on his own head , Ferdinand crowned Marie , who had knelt before him . Immediately , cannons were fired as a sign that the first king and queen of Greater Romania had been anointed . A feast was given in the same room where the union had been proclaimed in 1918 ; there , more than 20 @,@ 000 peasants were offered roast steaks . The following day , Ferdinand and Marie triumphantly entered Bucharest . The splendour of the coronation was subsequently cited as evidence of Marie 's theatricality . Marie would be received into the Romanian Orthodox Church in 1926 , mentioning a desire to be closer to her people .

= = = Visit to America = = =

The Maryhill Museum of Art in Maryhill , Washington was initially designed as a mansion for wealthy businessman Samuel Hill . However , at Loie Fuller 's behest , the building was turned into a museum instead . Hill wished it to be dedicated in 1926 , and he conceived it as a monument to peace , to his wife Mary , and to Queen Marie herself . Marie agreed to come to America and witness the dedication , especially as Fuller was an old friend of hers . Fuller quickly put together a committee that supported Marie 's " tour " of America and arrangements were made for her departure . Marie viewed the tour as an opportunity to " see the country , meet the people and put Romania on the map " . She travelled by ship across the Atlantic Ocean and disembarked in New York , on 18 October 1926 , accompanied by Prince Nicholas and Princess Ileana .

Upon her arrival , Marie was welcomed enthusiastically by the American people , with " whistle of steamers , roar of guns in white smoke puffs against gray fog , voices cheering in a stinging rain " . She was formally greeted by Jimmy Walker , the serving Mayor of New York City . Constance Lily Morris , author of *On Tour with Queen Marie* , wrote that the people were excited for Marie 's arrival mainly because of her almost mythical allure , which had been created by papers and rumour throughout her life ; she observed that " the modest Queen of the Belgians had once come with her king for a brief visit and years ago the dusky Hawaiian ruler had honored us , but there had been no others . The time could not have been better set . " Marie was also fairly popular within suffragette circles , where she was viewed as " a woman whose wits had devised many a coup d'état , whose brains had thought out many a difficult problem for her people , who had used the gifts given her to further every good purpose " .

During their time in America , Marie , Nicholas and Ileana undertook tours of several cities , including Philadelphia . They were very popular , and were greeted with equal enthusiasm in each city they visited , so much so that " [Nicholas and Ileana] seemed fairly dazed by their tremendous ovation " . Before leaving the United States , Marie was presented with a bullet-proof armored town car by Willys Knight , which she joyfully accepted . On 24 November , Marie and her children were seen off by a delegation from Washington , D.C. , as they prepared to leave by ship from New York Harbour . Morris wrote that " our last view was of Her Majesty , her children on either side , waving back with that tear and smile of those who pass from happy scenes . " Morris accompanied the queen throughout her journey and offered a very detailed account of Marie 's time in America in her book , published in 1927 .

Marie was delighted with the visit , and wished to return to America as soon as possible . She wrote in her diaries :

" both my children and I have but one dream : to return ! To return to that stupendous New World , which makes you almost giddy [sic] because of its immensity , [sic] its noise , its striving , its fearful impetuous [sic] to get on , to do always more , always bigger , quicker , more astonishingly a restless , flaring great world , where I think everything can be realised ... I know , as long as I live , breathe and think , the love for America will beautify my life and thoughts ... Perhaps Fate will allow me one day to go back to America . "

= = Widowhood (1927 ? 38) = =

= = = 1927 ? 30 = = =

Prince Carol sparked a dynastic crisis when he officially renounced his rights to succeed Ferdinand on 5 January 1926 , simultaneously waiving all parental rights over Prince Michael , who had been proclaimed heir . A Provisional Regency Bill was passed , creating a regency council composed of Prince Nicholas ; the Orthodox Patriarch , Miron Cristea ; and Gheorghe Buzdugan , the president of the Court of Cassation . However , both Marie and Ferdinand were reluctant to leave the country in the hands of a five-year-old boy , even overseen by a regency , for fear that the lands gained during World War I would be reclaimed by neighbouring countries and that political disturbances might lead to civil unrest . Nevertheless , when Marie returned from America ,

Ferdinand 's death seemed imminent . He was suffering from intestinal cancer , and by April 1927 had come so close to death as to be given the last rites of the Catholic Church . He died on 20 July , in Marie 's arms . She later wrote : " ' I am so tired ' were his last words and when he lay so quiet in my arms one hour later , I knew that I must thank God for him at least . This was rest indeed . "

Michael automatically succeeded as king upon Ferdinand 's death and the regency council took charge of his role as monarch . In May 1928 , Carol , who had found his life abroad with Magda Lupescu unsatisfactory , attempted to return to Romania with the help of the 1st Viscount Rothermere . He was prevented from doing so by English authorities , who then proceeded to expel him from England . Infuriated , Marie sent an official apology to George V on behalf of her son , who had already begun plotting a coup d'état . Carol succeeded in divorcing Princess Helen on 21 June 1928 , on grounds of incompatibility .

Marie 's popularity was severely affected during Michael 's reign and , after refusing to be part of the regency council in 1929 , she was accused by the press , and even by Princess Helen , of plotting a coup . During this time , there were numerous rumours as to Princess Ileana 's marriage . After talk of Ileana marrying the Tsar of Bulgaria or the Prince of Asturias , she was eventually betrothed to Alexander , Count of Hochberg , a minor German prince , in early 1930 . This betrothal was , however , short @-@ lived and Marie never managed to conclude a political marriage for her youngest daughter , instead marrying her to the Italian @-@ born Archduke Anton of Austria ? Tuscany in 1931 .

= = = Carol 's reign = = =

On 6 June 1930 , Carol arrived in Bucharest and made his way into Parliament , where the Act of Succession 1927 was duly declared null . Thus , Carol usurped the throne from his son , becoming King Carol II . Upon hearing of Carol 's return , Marie , who was abroad , was relieved . She had been growing anxious with the direction in which the country was heading and viewed Carol 's return as the return of the Prodigal Son . However , as soon as she arrived in Bucharest , she became aware that things would not go well . Carol refused to accept his mother 's advice to take Helen back and never sought Marie 's counsel during his reign , thus making the already existing breach between mother and son complete .

Desolate and almost stripped of her belief , Marie turned to the religious teachings of the Bahá 'í Faith , which she found " vastly appealing " . Marie was the first member of a royal family to become a Bahá 'í . She later wrote :

" The Bahá 'í teaching brings peace and understanding . It is like a wide embrace gathering together all those who have long searched for words of hope . It accepts all great Prophets gone before , it destroys no other creeds and leaves all doors open . Saddened by the continual strife amongst believers of many confessions and wearied of their intolerance towards each other , I discovered in the Bahá 'í teaching the real spirit of Christ so often denied and misunderstood : Unity instead of strife , Hope instead of condemnation , Love instead of hate , and a great reassurance for all men . "

In 1931 , Prince Nicholas eloped with Ioana Doletti , a divorced woman . Marie strongly disapproved of her son 's actions and felt hurt by Doletti 's repeated attempts to keep Nicholas from communicating with his mother . Although she blamed the women in her sons ' lives for a while , she also came to blame herself , for failing to educate them properly . However , she stubbornly and continually refused to meet Magda Lupescu , even after Carol 's pleas . Until her last years , Marie seldom even mentioned Lupescu 's name .

With Carol 's mistress hated throughout the country , it was only a matter of time before opposition to the King emerged . This opposition most prominently came under the form of the Iron Guard , a group supported by Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler . After Carol turned to Ion Duca for help , the Iron Guard assassinated Duca in December 1933 . After Duca 's death , Carol 's popularity plummeted and there were rumours that an attempt would be made on his life at the annual independence parade . In order to avoid this , he instead had Marie attend the parade , in what would be her final public appearance .

After the parade , Carol set out to destroy his mother 's popularity among Romanians and tried to push her out of the country . Marie , however , did not comply , instead retreating to either of two locales . The first was Bran Castle . Located near Braşov in southern Transylvania and given to her as a gift in 1920 by grateful local officials , she had it restored over the next seven years . The other was Balchik , where she had built a palace and a small chapel called Stella Maris and tended to her garden . She also visited Ileana and her children in Austria . Ileana rarely received permission from Carol to visit Romania ; this irritated Marie greatly . She also spent some time in Belgrade with her daughter " Mignon " and her son @-@ in @-@ law , King Alexander . In 1934 , Marie visited England once again , meeting the Duchess of York , later Queen Elizabeth , by whom she was enchanted .

= = = Illness and death = = =

During the summer of 1937 , Marie fell ill . Her personal physician , Dr. Castellani , determined she had pancreatic cancer , although her official diagnosis was cirrhosis of the liver . Marie had not been a drinker and , upon hearing the news , she reportedly said : " then there must be a non @-@ alcoholic cirrhosis of the liver , because I have never in my life tasted alcohol . " She was prescribed a diet of cold foods , injections and bed rest . Marie was so weak at times that she could not even pick up a pen . In February 1938 , she was sent to a sanatorium in Italy , in hopes that she might recover . There , she was visited by Nicholas and his wife , whom Marie eventually forgave for her transgressions . She was also visited by Princess Helen , whom she had not seen in nearly seven years , and Waldorf Astor . Marie was eventually transferred to a sanatorium in Dresden . Growing weaker and weaker , she requested that she be taken back to Romania , in order to die there . Carol denied her a journey by aeroplane , and she declined a medical flight offered by Hitler , instead choosing to return to Romania by train . She was brought to Pelişor Castle .

Marie died on 18 July 1938 , at 5 : 38 p.m. , eight minutes after lapsing into a coma . Her two eldest children , Carol and Elisabeth , accompanied by Prince Michael , were at her deathbed . Two days later , on 20 July , Marie 's body was brought to Bucharest , where she lay in state in the white drawing room at Cotroceni Palace . Her coffin was surrounded by flowers and glowing tapers and was guarded by officers of the Fourth Hussars . Thousands of people filed by Marie 's bier during the three @-@ day lying in state and , on the third day , the palace was opened for factory workers . Marie 's funeral cortege made its way to the train station , passing under the Arch of Triumph . Her coffin was taken to Curtea de Argeş Monastery , where she was interred . Marie 's heart , according to her own wishes , was placed in a small golden casket embellished with the emblems of the Romanian provinces and interred in her Stella Maris chapel in Balchik . In 1940 , after Southern Dobruja was ceded to Bulgaria during World War II , her heart was transferred to Bran Castle . There , Ileana built a chapel to house the heart , kept in two nested boxes placed inside a marble sarcophagus .

Marie was the last Queen consort of Romania , as Princess Helen was only ever awarded the title of Queen Mother between 1940 and 1947 . She was one of Queen Victoria 's five crowned granddaughters and one of three to retain their position as consort after the conclusion of World War I , alongside the Queens of Norway and of Spain .

= = Legacy = =

According to one of her biographers , Diana Mandache , Marie published 34 books and short stories , both in Romanian and English , during her lifetime . This included her critically acclaimed autobiography , *The Story of My Life* , published by Cassell in London , in three volumes . The book was reviewed by Virginia Woolf , who felt it was too familiarizing of the royal family . She stated that " suppose that among the autumn books of 2034 is *Prometheus Unbound* , by George the Sixth , or *Wuthering Heights* , by Elizabeth the Second , what will be the effect upon their loyal subjects ? Will the British Empire survive ? Will Buckingham Palace look as solid then as it does now ? Words are dangerous things , let us remember . A republic might be brought into being by a poem . " Marie

kept a diary from December 1918 until shortly before her death , and the first volume was published in 1996 .

Even before her ascension as queen , Marie had succeeded in establishing her public image as that of " one of the best @-@ looking and richest princesses in Europe " . She was known primarily for her talent in horse @-@ riding , writing , painting , sculpting , dancing and for her beauty . Her popularity was dimmed by two slanderous campaigns : that conducted by the Central Powers during World War I ; and that led by communist officials after Romania 's transition to a Socialist Republic in 1947 .

During Romania 's 42 years under communist rule , Marie was alternately depicted as either an " agent of English capitalism " or as a devoted patriot who believed that her destiny was intertwined with that of Romania . In the 1949 *Adev?rata istorie a unei monarhii* (" The True History of a Monarchy ") , author Alexandru Gârnea?? refers to orgies that supposedly were held by Marie at Cotroceni and Balchik and claims that , in fact , her cirrhosis was caused by her heavy drinking , even offering examples of instances when a drunken Marie needed to be carried out of a yacht by her fellow drinkers . Marie 's supposed extramarital affairs were brought forward as evidence of promiscuity , which contravened communist values . In 1968 , communist officials vandalised the chapel sheltering Marie 's heart , opening the sarcophagus and taking the boxes as well as the heart into Bran Castle . In 1971 , these were transferred to Bucharest 's National Museum of Romanian History . It was not until the late period of Nicolae Ceau?escu 's regime , the last years before the Romanian Revolution , that Marie 's merits came to be acknowledged .

In Romania , Marie is known by the nickname " Mama R?ni?ilor " (Mother of the Wounded) , or simply as " Regina Maria " , while in other countries she is remembered as the " Soldier Queen " and " Mamma Regina " . Marie is also nicknamed " the mother @-@ in @-@ law of the Balkans " , due to her children 's marriages among ruling houses in the Balkans . By the time of her death , Marie 's children had ruled in three of the four Balkan countries , Bulgaria excepted , although her descendants no longer occupy any European throne . Marie was called " one of the greatest figures in Romanian history " by Constantin Argetoianu , and in her memory , the Order of the Cross of Queen Marie was established in Romania .

Prior to 2009 , many of Marie 's personal belongings were on display at Bran Castle , her residence in her later years , which functions as a museum . That year , when the castle was legally restored to Princess Ileana 's heirs , the Culture Ministry moved the collection of her items to a nearby building , Vama Medieval? , which is also open to visitors . In 2015 , the casket containing the queen 's heart was placed on a pedestal in the room at Peli?or where she died ; the display can be viewed by the public . The Maryhill Museum of Art holds a permanent exhibition titled " Marie , Queen of Romania " ; this display includes the queen 's coronation gown , a copy of the crown , silverware , gilt furniture and jewelry , among other items .

= = Issue = =

= = Titles , styles , honours and arms = =

= = = Titles and styles = = =

29 October 1875 ? 10 January 1893 : Her Royal Highness Princess Marie of Edinburgh , Princess of Saxe @-@ Coburg and Gotha , Duchess of Saxony

10 January 1893 ? 10 October 1914 : Her Royal Highness The Crown Princess of Romania

10 October 1914 ? 20 July 1927 : Her Majesty The Queen of Romania

20 July 1927 ? 18 July 1938 : Her Majesty Queen Marie of Romania

= = = British arms = = =

As a male @-@ line grandchild of a British Sovereign , Marie bore the arms of the kingdom , with an inescutcheon for Saxony , differenced by a five @-@ point label argent , the outer pair of which bore anchors azure , the inner roses gules , and the central a cross gules . In 1917 , the inescutcheon was dropped by Royal Warrant from George V.

= = = Honours = = =

Marie was a recipient of the following national and foreign honours :

Grand Cross of the Order of the Crown (Romania)

Legion d 'Honneur (France)

Médaille militaire (France)

Dame of the Order of the Crown (Italy)

Dame of the Order of the Crown (India)

Dame of the Royal Red Cross (United Kingdom)

Dame of the Royal Order of Victoria and Albert (United Kingdom)

Dame of Justice of the Venerable Order of Saint John of Jerusalem (United Kingdom)

1,007th Dame of the Royal Order of Queen Maria Luisa (Spain)

= = Ancestry = =