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Overview of the Personal Provenance Fond of the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich from the
State Archive of the Russian Federation: 1878-1918

Abstract

This article presents an overview of the personal provenance fond of the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich—member of the Russian Imperial House, younger brother of Emperor Nicholas II, a major military, state, and public figure, who held the posts of the Commander of the Savage Division, member of the State Council and the Committee of Ministers, Chairman of the Imperial Russian Historical Museum, who for a time was heir to the throne—which is stored in the State Archive of the Russian Federation. The archival fond, formed and described in the Soviet period, contains 137 storage units, including, among others, personal diaries of the fond-maker, epistolary and educational materials, business papers, official documents, photographs and drawings. The history of the fond formation is described, various groups of files are analyzed, their information potential, quantitative and qualitative characteristics of materials are assessed, source analysis of the most important documents is provided, most revealing quotes are given. Special attention is paid to the diaries of the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, his correspondence and its most voluminous part, letters to his cousin and lover, Princess Beatrice of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, and letters from the Grand Duke's tutor Ferdinand Tormeyer and from his wife Natalia Brasova. Letters and telegrams from other relatives were deposited in smaller number (his mother, Empress Maria Feodorovna, his brother, Emperor Nicholas II, his sisters, Grand Duchesses Xenia and Olga, his niece, Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna, his cousin, Princess Tyra of Denmark), as well as statesmen and courtiers: the Minister of the Imperial Court Baron Freedericksz, Lady-in-Waiting of the Imperial Court Countess Vorontsova-Dashkova, and others. The Grand Duke's diaries and correspondence reflect his personal life, official and social activities. Illustrative material is presented in the fond quite voluminously, primarily, as photographs, including those taken by the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich himself, as well as his own drawings. A significant array of storage units of the fond was introduced into scientific use, mostly, by the historian Vladimir Khrustalev; some of the materials were published (mainly diaries and correspondence of the period of the World War I); however, many documents still require scientific research to reveal little-explored aspects of the Grand Duke's life and work.

Keywords

Historical sources, Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, Russian Imperial House, heir, State Archive of the Russian Federation, personal provenance fond, diaries, letters.

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