

Carpathia - from Fictional Country to Nature Conservation

In the play “The Sleeping Prince: An Occasional Fairy Tale” the action is set in London in 1911 and is telling the story of an actress who meets the Prince Charles of Carpathia. The play written in 1953 by Terence Rattigan with the intention to coincide with the coronation of Elizabeth II in the same year. Starting from the play the author wrote also the screenplay of the adaptation film “The Prince and the Showgirl” (1957) with Marilyn Monroe and Laurence Olivier.

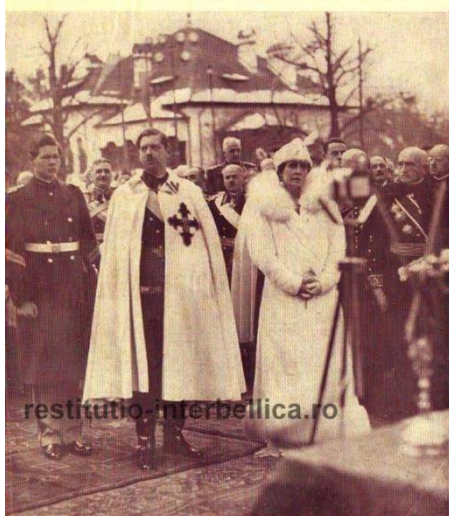
For the coronation of George V in 22 June 1911, in London arrive many royal personalities, among them 16 year old King Nicholas VIII, his father Prince Regent Charles and his grandmother the Widower Queen, all of Carpathia.

The adventures of Prince Regent Charles was considered to be inspired by visits in the Western Europe made by Milan, King of Serbia (Vesna Goldsworthy - *Inventing Ruritania, The Imperialism of the Imagination*, 1998). Even the King Milan of Serbia had connections to Romania by his mother and his wife, the triangles characters coming from Carpathia (young Nicholas, Charles and the Widower Queen) are very similar to King Michael, his father Carol II and his grandmother Queen Mary, all of Romania. Relations between them in the play are very similar to the real historical personages. Even more, the favourite colour of the Queen in the film is mauve and the favourite colour of Queen Mary was violet. Further more in the film is mentioned the last coronation attended by the Queen in Bessarabia, province which was part of Kingdom of Romania after First World War.



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Queen Mary of Romania was the niece of Queen Victoria of Great Britain and the relation between the 2 royal families is a reality even in the present. The author Terence Rattigan had a connection with the Royal House of Romania by his father Frank Rattigan a diplomat who had an affair with Princess Elisabeth, sister of Carol II. Carol II at his turn is well known with a life characterised as “playboy” (The Playboy King: Carol II of Romania, Contributions to the Study of World History, by Paul D Quinlan, 1995 Praeger). Romanian Royal family visited many times the United Kingdom, for example the first visit of King Michael as inheritor of the throne in 1937 for coronation of King George VI and together with Carol II in 1938 (in picture is welcomed by George VI in Victoria train station in London).



So, most probably Royal House of Carpathia was inspired by the Royal House of Romania more than by King Milan of Serbia.

But what about Carpathia itself ? Is presented as having “a mixed German-Slav population of 11,5 millions, the most efficient railways in the Balkans and the fourth largest army in Europe.” We are in the middle of fiction regarding the ethnic mixture. In term of magnitude of the army, Romania was to the 6th place as participant to the First World War after Russia, Great Britain, France, Italy and U.S.A.



In the films *The Prince and the Showgirl* (1957), *Ghostbusters II* (1989), and *Dragon Storm* (2004), as well as season 1, episode 14 of the television series *Fantasy Island*, Carpathia is a fictional Balkan kingdom. For geographers is very clear the distinction between Carpathian Mountains and Balkan Mountains and by consequence Carpathia can be a kingdom of Central Est Europe more than a Balkan kingdom.

Passing from fiction to nature conservation

In Romania, Foundation Conservation Carpathia (FCC) was founded in 2009 by 12 philanthropists and conservationists with the goal to stop this illegal logging, and to protect a significant surface of Carpathian forests in form of a completely protected area for future generations.

Among many conservation projects, FCC supported the realisation of a 4 episodes documentary "Wild Carpathia" by the British journalist Charlie Ottley in Romania:

Episode 1 - The original Wild Carpathia gives you a unique insight into the beauty and rich culture of Romania exploring its chequered history from the mystical ruins of the Dacians to its medieval communities, many of which survive intact to this day. Presenter Charlie Ottley goes in search of ancient villages, crossing mountains, forests and alpine meadows in his quest to understand this vital region. Along the way he encounters counts, wild bears, shepherds, artists, environmentalists, craftsmen and even a Prince.

Episode 2 - A cultural odyssey through little known parts of the southern Carpathians starting at the majestic Iron Gates and the ancient Roman Spa town of Baile Herculane. Writer and presenter Charlie Ottley explores the remote Cerna Mountains finding historic working mills, and legendary rock formations. On the journey east we stop at a boutique winery and the stunning Cosia National Park with its grottos and picturesque monasteries. Crossing Saxon Transylvania Charlie visits the birthplace of Vlad the Impaler and meets a Romanian Princess at her ancestral home, majestic Peles Castle. In the second part we leave the mountains behind and meander down to the Danube where it branches to form the largest wetland in Europe. Here Charlie explores tiny fishing communities, fragile forests and labyrinthine waterways teeming with rare bird life. We also see why this vital ecosystem is under threat and look at what is being done to preserve it.

Episode 3 takes us to Northern Romania and the Maramures - one of the most picturesque regions in Romania. Here we experience festivals and weddings and learn about the evolution of traditional folk music with renowned singer Grigore Lese and pop idol Loredana Groza. We visit historic wooden churches and villages, which have been preserved, despite the march to modernise. Presenter Charlie Ottley explores the wilderness by steam train and on foot through Caliman National Park and the mysterious Twelve Apostles. Further east we drop in on a scheme to re-wild Buffalo and visit the incredible painted monasteries of Bucovina before heading south to see what is being done to protect the ancient forests of Transylvania. En route Charlie meets a number of local and internationally acclaimed characters and looks at ways tourism is helping to preserve natural habitats. Wild Carpathia 3 finishes with some enlightened words from HRH The Prince of Wales who once again describes his passion for Romania and the urgent need to protect its rural heritage.

Episode 4 - The final episode of Wild Carpathia follows the changing seasons from the ripe glory of autumn through the depths of winter to the first flush of spring and witnesses a landscape of unparalleled beauty, a world of vivid colours and timeless tradition. From villages and communities prospering thanks to conservation and eco - tourism to ancient neolithic cave houses, from remote snow-clad mountain peaks to churches of ice the show will present a side of of Romania never seen before. Featuring stunning wildlife footage and moving interviews with a firmament of experts, his stunning 55 minute film will once again reveal the devastation caused by illegal logging. Wild Carpathia Seasons of Change will also examine how and why this needs to be stopped to avoid the wholesale destruction of Europe's last great wilderness and its most priceless treasures.





In 2 episodes of Wild Carpathia documentary appears Princess Margareta of Romania (From the Mountains to the Sea 2013, Wild Forever 2013) and also in 2 episodes (Transylvania 2011, Wild Forever 2013) appears Prince Charles of Great Britain for supporting nature conservation in Romania and coming back to the beginning of the article, we have a Prince Charles in Carpathia, Wild Carpathia.

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