

Ducal Vault Weimar

Audio Guide

As of: 03.03.2011

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Duration: approx. 28 minutes

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Overview of commentaries

Incl. second levels (2nd L) and ► quotes (various voices)

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► in AgNr. ##: 1 x Goethe

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AgNr. 281 Russian-Orthodox Chapel

with 2nd L AgNr.

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AgNr. 282 Historic Cemetery¹

¹ Trans. Note: The Weimar Klassik Stiftung uses "Historical Graveyard"; but the UNESCO World List refers to a (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/846>) "Historic Cemetery", while Weimar Kulturstadt Europas: UNESCO calls it the "Historical Cemetery": <http://www.weimar.de/en/tourism/homepage/sights/unesco-world-heritage/>. We would recommend Historic Cemetery.

AgNr. 275 Welcome and Introduction

Hallo and welcome to Ducal Vault on the Historic Cemetery.²

You are now standing in the chapel belonging to the Ducal Vault. The subterranean
5 burial vault below was used from 1824 to inter members of the ducal family of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach. The vault also includes the coffins of Goethe and Schiller, the two great writers of Weimar Classicism.

Here in the chapel, we'll be telling you why Goethe and Schiller were buried in the Ducal Vault and why Schiller's coffin is now empty. Afterwards, you can take the
10 stairs on the left of the entrance down in the vault.

While you are in the vault, out of respect for those buried there we would ask you to remain quiet and NOT use the audio guide.

When you leave the vault, you might to like to take a short walk around outside and we'll then explain why there is a Russian Orthodox Chapel built directly onto the vault
15 and why the cemetery is like an open history book of Weimar's past.

You'll find the numbers of the audio commentaries on your tour flyer. The flyer also shows where you should be standing to get the most out of the commentaries.

While you take your time to look around the chapel in peace, we'll tell you about the history of the Ducal Vault. This was where the funeral services used to be held years
20 ago. After the ceremonies, the coffins were lowered down through the oval opening in the floor to the burial vault below.

To find out more, just key in 276.

((1315 characters))

25

² We would recommend Historic Cemetery (see Trans- Note above)

AgNr. 276 History of the Ducal Vault

In 1823, Duke Carl August of Saxe-Weimar and Eisenach decided to have a Ducal Vault built as a burial place for himself and his family.

- 5 The burial vault was also intended to provide a suitably dignified last resting place for many of the Duke's long dead ancestors as well. At that time, their coffins were only 'provisionally' bricked up in an old vault in the Weimar City Palace – as they had been for nearly 50 years!

- 10 The coffins survived the devastating City Palace fire in 1774 – which not only destroyed the palace but the Baroque family vault as well.

The new city palace, completed in 1804 under Goethe's supervision, no longer included a ducal burial place. Since the Duchy was heavily in debt, it took nearly twenty years before the decision was taken to build the Ducal Vault today.

- 15 Duke Carl August was already in his mid-sixties when, in April 1823, he finally commissioned a design for the Ducal Vault from his court architect Clemens Wenzeslaus Coudray. The Duke died just five years later, in 1828 – the same year the Ducal Vault was finished.

- 20 Carl August certainly never imagined that his DUCAL Vault would be famous one day as the GOETHE and SCHILLER Vault –even though Carl August actually paved the way for that change of name.

And you can find out more, if you key in ##.

((1273 characters))

AgNr.

2nd level AgNr. 276: History of the Ducal Vault

In the course of the years, the Ducal Vault probably became the best-known POETS' memorial in Germany. The dukes buried here, together with their wives and children, were increasingly pushed into the background – and quite literally.

But why?

In 1827, Duke Carl August ordered the bones of Friedrich von Schiller, who had died 22 years before, to be interred here as their last resting place. Schiller's supposed remains had been on something of an odyssey – as you'll hear later.

When Goethe died in 1832, he was also buried in the Ducal Vault here next to his friend and fellow-writer. Afterwards, although the Ducal Vault was exclusively used to inter the members of the ducal family, it was not long before the first remembrance ceremonies were held here in honour of Goethe and Schiller.

The decisive step towards nothing less than a 'national shrine', though, was taken after the Second World War in the early years of East Germany. In 1949, the 'chapel' where you are now standing was secularised. The altar was removed, along with all the sacral, Christian elements. In their place, busts of Goethe and Schiller were set up. Down in the vault below, the coffins of the two writers were placed on an illuminated platform – while the ducal graves were left in darkness or were hidden entirely by curtains.

The view of history propagated by East Germany had room for neither Christian traditions nor the history of a ruling house. Changing the name to the Goethe and Schiller Vault unequivocally made clear that the Ducal Vault was definitively transformed into a memorial to these heroes of Weimar Classicism. The mausoleum was officially named the Goethe and Schiller Vault in 1952 – and kept that name for nearly 40 years.

After the Berlin Wall fell, the building was thoroughly renovated. In 1994, the Ducal Vault was reopened under its original name.

((1812 characters))

AgNr. 277 Chapel and Design

This hall was originally designed as a chapel for funeral services.

You can see the names of the ducal family members buried here in the vault on a

5 marble plaque next to the display case in the altar niche opposite the entrance.

Grand Duke Carl August, who commissioned the building, told his architect:

"I would like to build something very simple, merely a mausoleum designed for its purpose. We want to save the decorative for the dwellings of the living."

10

So Clemens Wenzeslaus Coudray, the court architect, based his Ducal Vault design on the austerity and geometrical simplicity of the Greek Revival style.³

Coudray created a square interior space structured by pillars, an oval opening in the floor, wall niches, and semi-circular windows. The only marked decorative element

15 was the star-studded, deep blue dome, recalling the famous mausoleum in Ravenna for the early Christian Roman Empress Galla Placidia.

All of the other decorative elements you see here were added around 40 years later – the ornate capitals on the pillars, the coats of arms and the *tondo* paintings of

20 angels in the dome, the elaborate floor pattern, the wrought-iron railings around the opening in the floor, and the colours of the interior. The refurbishment – originally

with far more opulent elements – was initiated in the early 1860s by the Prussian Queen Augusta.

You can hear why the Queen of PRUSSIA particularly wanted to make these changes and which have survived, if you key in ##.

25 ((1431 characters))

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³ See description in Grove Art Online – "his only major Greek Revival building, the Fürstengruft (1823–7)": http://www.oxfordartonline.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/art/T019867?q=coudray&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit

AgNr.

2nd level AgNr. 277: Chapel and Design

Augusta's parents were the Grand Duke Carl Friedrich and Maria Pavlovna, a
5 daughter of the Russian Tsar who married into the Weimar royal house in 1804.
Augusta married King Wilhelm of Prussia, later the first German Emperor. Maria
Pavlovna, Augusta's mother, died in 1859.

In keeping with her wishes, a traditional Russian-style mausoleum was built for Maria
Pavlovna directly next to the Ducal Vault. The mausoleum was richly furnished, with
10 paintings, icons – and a mass of gold, as you can see later for yourself!

And it was just this contrast between the simple neo-classical mausoleum for the
ducal ancestors and the brilliant opulence of her mother's new burial chapel that led
Augusta to entirely refurbish the Ducal Vault.

She had the walls decorated in warm earth colours, added an elaborate inlaid floor
15 and ornaments, coats of arms, and angels to the dome. In addition, in keeping with
the historical style popular in her day, she filled the small space with vases and wall
hangings, oil paintings, reliefs and figures of angels. The only things surviving from
that time are two pottery candelabra and two church pews. Augusta also donated a
new Bible – and it was only re-discovered in the Duchess Anna Amalia Library in
20 2010!

By the way, the Bible you can see in the display case in front of the altar niche is not
the original, but a copy dating from the same year.

So to a large extent, the impression you have of the Ducal Vault today is due to
Augusta - the granddaughter of Carl August, who commissioned the vault.

25 Augusta herself is buried in Charlottenburg Palace park in Berlin, next to her
husband Emperor Wilhelm the First.

((1559 characters))

AgNr. 278 Ducal Graves

The vault below this chapel originally held 43 coffins – 41 containing the remains of members of the Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach ducal family and two for Goethe and Schiller.

Today, though, the burial vault only contains 31 coffins. Ten coffins had to be moved and stored elsewhere for conservation reasons. When the vault was finished in 1824, the baroque coffins and an urn rescued from the City Palace fire were the first to be interred in the new mausoleum. The last funeral took place in 1905 for the Grand Duchess Caroline.

Later, when you are in the vault, the tour flyer tells you the names of those buried in the different coffins.

But we'd just like to mention THREE ducal graves now. First of all, the massive bronze sarcophagus of Carl August, shown on your tour flyer as number 27. Its neo-classical design, with its lion heads, was created by Coudray, the architect who designed the vault. Carl August's sarcophagus was originally placed to stand in line with the altar. Today, the sarcophagus has been moved slightly forwards.

The last two coffins in the same row are also rather special. Number 30, the coffin of Grand Duke Carl Friedrich, is still located INSIDE the Ducal Vault – but the coffin with his wife Maria Pavlovna, Number 32, is NOT. Maria Pavlovna's coffin actually rests in a niche under the Russian-Orthodox Chapel. After their deaths, the foundation wall was opened to allow the couple's coffins to stand next to each other and still be buried under the churches of their own faiths.

And we'll tell you more about that, when you have a look at the chapel from outside.

((1558 characters))

AgNr. 279 Goethe and Schiller

When you go down the stairs into the vault later, you'll immediately see the two oak coffins of Goethe and Schiller.

- 5 But why were these two great writers interred here – in the ducal FAMILY vault? Friedrich von Schiller was buried here in 1827 – or at least, they thought it was Schiller, but more on that later.

Schiller died in 1805, when he was only 45 years old. Since he had no family vault in Weimar, he was initially interred in the *Kassengewölbe* mausoleum, a communal
10 grave on the Jakobsfriedhof cemetery for higher-ranking citizens.

Goethe was inconsolable at Schiller's death. Goethe had enjoyed a very intensive – and productive! – friendship with Schiller, who was ten years younger. It had, though, taken some time before these two very different personalities had warmed to each other. You can discover more about their friendship and Schiller's life at Schiller's Home,
15 which is also open to the public.

In retrospect, Goethe wrote: *"I really don't know what would have become of me without Schiller's stimulus."*⁴ Very probably, we would have to make do without Goethe's great masterpiece *Faust*, since it was Schiller who constantly urged him to finish it.

- 20 Goethe survived Schiller by nearly 30 years. Before he died in 1832, he wanted to put up a joint funerary monument for himself and his great literary friend. Since that was never built, Duke Carl Friedrich also allowed Goethe to be interred here in the Ducal Vault – lying next to Schiller and surrounded by the ducal family. However, this didn't imply any blurring of the class borders between the ducal family and these two
25 writers, both normal citizens by birth and only later ennobled.

Goethe and Schiller's coffins were ALWAYS clearly separated from the ducal family, as you will see in a moment.

To hear why Schiller's remains – or what were thought to be his remains – were interred here and why his coffin is empty today, just key in ##.

- 30 ((1905 characters))

⁴ p. Quoted in The Cambridge Companion to Goethe, (2002) p. 114

AgNr.

2nd level AgNr. 279: Goethe and Schiller

On 13 March 1826, a small group of high-ranking Weimar citizens gathered on the
5 Jakobsfriedhof cemetery – including Carl Schwabe, Mayor of Weimar and the court
architect Clemens Coudray, who designed the Ducal Vault. The group then entered
the *Kassengewölbe* mausoleum where Schiller had been interred 21 years before.
These local Weimar dignitaries had gathered for one reason – to recover Schiller's
remains. There was a growing groundswell of public opinion that Schiller's internment
10 in a communal mausoleum was not a suitably worthy resting place for this great
writer.

But the mausoleum held over 60 coffins – and in what a report termed this "chaos of
decay and putrefaction", it was hardly possible to definitely identify Schiller's body.
But Mayor Schwabe, a fervent admirer of Schiller, did not give up. In several
15 nighttime operations, he had 23 skulls collected, compared them with Schiller's death
mask and then decided that the largest skull must have been Schiller's. The skull was
taken to what is today the Duchess Anna Amalia Library and deposited it there in a
solemn ceremony in the pedestal of a Schiller bust. For a while, Goethe even kept
the skull at his home. At that time, in memory of his friend, he wrote his poem *On*
20 *Contemplating Schiller's Skull*. The poem starts with the famous lines:
"Skull upon skull arranged in fit array // in solemn vault of burial I beheld // and
*thought of bygone years and times turned grey."*⁵

By the way, what was assumed to be Schiller's skeleton was collected later. It was
also stored in the library, though not together with the skull. After a visit to Weimar by
25 Ludwig 1, the king of Bavaria, who joined his voice to those amazed at the odd
circumstances under which Schiller's remains were kept, Duke Carl August finally
arranged for internment in the Ducal Vault.

Doubts were later repeatedly expressed over whether these really were Schiller's
remains. A series of DNA tests were carried out from 2006 to finally settle the matter.
30 The findings were unequivocal. The bones came from at least four people – and
none of them was Friedrich von Schiller. Today, the coffin is empty – but is kept here
as a visible reminder of the high esteem in which the Weimar ducal house held both
Schiller and Goethe.

⁵ Selected Poetry of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (Penguin Classics; Trans. David Luke), p.223

That's the end of our introduction.

You can now take your time to look at the vault.

Afterwards, we'll be glad to join you again for a short tour around the outside of the

5 Ducal Vault.

((2389 Characters))

Outside in front of the Ducal Vault:

AgNr. 280 History of the Building

In 1823, Duke Carl August decided to locate the Ducal Vault at the highest point on a cemetery established just a few years before at the edge of the old town.

5 A tree-lined avenue leads in a straight line from the entrance to the little hill literally crowned by the mausoleum. If you came down that avenue on your way here, you've experienced its effect yourself – and certainly admired the glittering golden domes directly behind the Ducal Vault. They belong to the little Russian-Orthodox Chapel, built between 1860 and 1862 as the burial chapel for Maria Pavlovna, the Russian
10 Tsar's daughter.

But first, let's take a closer look at the Ducal Vault. The simple rectangular building has an open entrance area in front – a portico with a triangular pediment set on four columns. The impression of an ancient temple is intensified by what is known as a triglyph-metope freeze running along underneath the roof. The stairs were originally
15 made of wood. The stone steps were only constructed when Princess Augusta had the Ducal Vault refurbished in the 1860s. Court architect Clemens Wenzeslaus Coudray apparently had to make do with cheaper material when the vault was built – a clear indication of the duchy's difficult financial situation at that time. He recalled:
*"In building this, a number of things got in the way of my first suggestions, and only
20 the less perfect was achieved; (...) what's more, since only 6000 thaler were granted for the entire project, I really had a hard time of it."*

But Coudray did his best and thanks to the clear lines of his Greco-Roman design, he succeeded in creating one of the leading examples of neo-classical architecture in Weimar today. The two other outstanding neo-classical buildings from this era are
25 the City Palace, which Coudray was also involved in designing, and the Roman House in the Ilm Park. Both of these are also open to the public.

By the way, Coudray is buried close to his lord and master in a grave against the long wall running to the left from here when you look down into the town.

If you now go around the Ducal Vault, you'll come to the Russian-Orthodox Chapel.

30 And while you walk there, we'll tell you more about the chapel if you key in 281!
((2275 Characters))

Outside by the chapel:

AgNr. 281 Russian-Orthodox Chapel

- 5 Since the chapel is still used today as a Russian-Orthodox Church, we would ask you to view it only AFTER you've listened to this commentary. Thank you! (*short break*)

For her last resting place, Maria Pavlovna wanted to have a piece of her Russian homeland in her adopted country. And her son Duke Carl Alexander fulfilled his
10 mother's wish after she died in 1859. Three years later in 1862, the small domed chapel, which looks so exotic here in the heart of Weimar, was finished and consecrated as a Russian-Orthodox Chapel.

Maria Pavlovna, the granddaughter of Catherine the Great, came to Weimar in 1804 after marrying Carl Friedrich, the Hereditary Grand Duke. Their marriage had
15 involved five years of negotiations. Politically, the marriage was enormously important for the small and highly indebted Duchy of Saxe-Weimar-Eisnach. The Romanovs belonged to the richest and most powerful families in Europe. Their influence offered a protection against Napoleon, whose expansionist policies were increasingly threatening other countries.

20 Maria Pavlovna, extremely wealthy thanks to her dowry, was much respected for her social and cultural involvement: She ushered in The Silver Age of Weimar, the town's second cultural heyday after the "Golden Age" of Weimar Classicism with Goethe and Schiller. It was Maria Pavlovna, for example, who brought the famous piano virtuoso Franz Liszt to Weimar. Liszt's house is quite close by, in Marienstrasse at
25 the Ilm Park, and is also open to the public.

But to go back to the Russian Orthodox Chapel, which is built directly onto the Ducal Vault. In fact, its most fascinating feature is not visible from outside, but only underneath in the vault with the coffins of the Weimar royal family. Originally, there was an opening in the foundation wall from the Russian-Orthodox Church to the
30 Ducal Vault. And you can find out why, if you key in ##.
((1846 characters))

AgNr. ##

2nd level AgNr. 281: Russian-Orthodox Chapel

Maria Pavlovna lived in Weimar for 55 years. She was 18 when she moved here and
5 she died here in 1859, aged 73. Throughout her life, she remained true to her
Russian-Orthodox beliefs – and she even secured the right to freely exercise her
faith in the marriage contract.

In Weimar, she could worship at small home churches – including one in the City
Palace. And she also had her own Russian priests with her. Her husband, Grand
10 Duke Carl Friedrich, was baptised a Protestant – the faith usually followed by the
Weimar ducal family.

In accordance with Orthodox ritual, Maria Pavlovna wanted to be - and had to be –
buried in Russian soil. But she also wanted to lie NEXT to her husband – which led to
the solution of opening the foundation wall. Several cartloads of soil from Russia
15 were brought here so that Maria Pavlovna's burial chapel could be built on the soil
from her homeland. Then the opening was made through to the Ducal Vault. The
coffins of the couple could then lie directly next to one another, with Maria Pavlovna's
coffin in the burial vault under the Russian chapel and her husband's coffin in the
Ducal Vault. The metal sheet which seals the opening today was only attached
20 recently as a conservation measure.

If you look inside the Russian Orthodox Chapel, you'll see a magnificent display of
icons, paintings and gilded work. It was hardly surprising that shortly after the
Russian Orthodox Chapel was finished, Augusta, Maria Pavlovna's daughter,
ordered the modest and simple neo-classical interior of the Ducal Vault to be
25 sumptuously refurbished.

((1595 characters))

Outside:

AgNr. 282 Historic Cemetery

Together with the Ducal Vault and the Russian-Orthodox Chapel, the Historic Cemetery has also been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1998 as part of the "Classical Weimar" ensemble. Not only are the two burial vaults especially attractive and important as a historical testimony to the past, but so is the cemetery itself. With its glorious old trees, the cemetery is almost like a park. But the single crosses on the lawns and the graves along the old enclosing walls on the right and the left are a reminder that we are walking in a cemetery. Even today, the cemetery is used for burials, though only in the area beyond the vault.

The HISTORIC cemetery's name sets off this area with the Ducal Vault down towards the town from the 'NEW cemetery', which is connected further up.

The Historic Cemetery was founded in 1818 directly at the edge of the old town, behind the Frauentor Gate in the former city wall. The old Jakobsfriedhof cemetery, in the town near the square today known as Goetheplatz, was not large enough to cope with Weimar's constantly growing population. The ducal family had always been buried at a different location. Initially, the rulers were buried in the City Church and later interred in the baroque family vault in the City Palace which burnt down in 1774. As you've already heard, Duke Carl August then had the Ducal Vault built on this public cemetery.

Many of the figures belonging to Classical Weimar's golden age are buried around the Ducal Vault and along the two old cemetery walls. For example, if you are looking towards the city, the graves along the upper section on the left-hand wall include that of Johann Nepomuk Hummel, the famous pianist. At approximately the same height as the Ducal Vault, you can find the Goethe family tomb from 1910, which is also the last resting place of Goethe's daughter-in-law. Goethe's close confidante Charlotte von Stein was buried a little further down.

Have you still got a little time? Then why not go for a stroll around the cemetery and read a few pages of this open 'history book' on Weimar's past! Please remember to return your audio guide beforehand to the Ducal Vault!

Thank you – and have a pleasant day!

((2261 characters))