



Article database

database with articles, comments and interviews about the topic



Literature database

list with more than 200 publications about the topic, mostly with a short abstract about the content and a picture of the cover



Picture database

database with more than 240 pictures in connection with of the Dark Countess and the theories about her identity



Guestbook

guestbook (online) for opinion and comments



Links on the internet

list with important resources on the internet

Newsletter-Service

The society offers a free newsletter about the topic. It will be published in irregular intervals and informs you about the latest news by email. You can subscribe the newsletter on the website or by an email to newsletter@Madame-Royale.de.

NEWSLETTER
Interessenkreis „Madame Royale“
Release 1/2008



Dear subscriber of the newsletter,
we want to inform you about the following news:

Dutch article reports about the secret of Hildburghausen

The historian and journalist Otto van der Meij reports in the December edition of the Dutch magazine "Genealogie" about the mystery of the Dark Countess. For his article "*Het geheim van Hildburghausen*" he used especially the new publication of Dr. Mark de Lannoy "*Das Geheimnis des Dunkelgrafen. War Prinzessin Marie Thérèse Charlotte de Bourbon seine Begleiterin?*" and made an interview with the researcher too.

More information on the website www.Madame-Royale.de.

Example of a newsletter by email

Contact

Mail address

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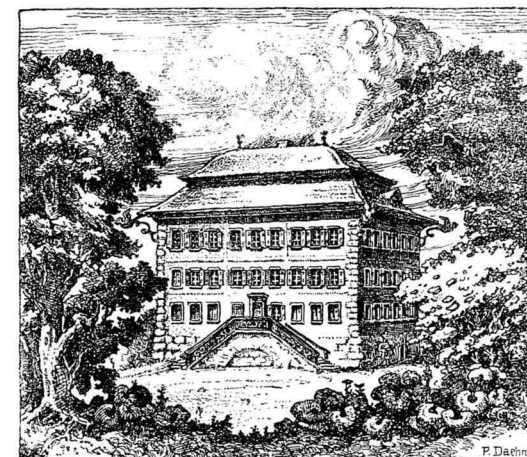
Email

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Internet

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www.Dunkelgraefin.de

Interessenkreis
MADAME ROYALE



Information
about the
“Madame Royale”
Historical Society

The Dark Countess of Hildburghausen

In 1807 a strange pair appeared in the small south-thuringian town *Hildburghausen*: a gentleman who was called Vavel de Versay and which one held for a count, and a lady which was always to be seen only deeply veiled. Both lived in complete seclusion on the public life, in particular as they moved into the *Castle Eishausen* in 1810, few kilometres away from Hildburghausen. They left the Castle only to exits in their carriage or to walks in the garden near the Castle. While the gentleman still had sporadically contact with the villagers of Eishausen, the lady was completely isolated from the outside world.

The pair led a rich household and distinguished itself by great charity in the duchy. The court of Saxony-Hildburghausen has protected the pair and has respected its wish for seclusion. The lady died after 30 years of lonesome life in 1837, the gentleman in 1845. On account of their strange life they were called later the *Dark Count* and the *Dark Countess*.

After their death turned out that the “count” was a Dutch diplomat called *Leonardus Cornelius van der Valck* in reality. The information about the “countess”, which made van der the Valck after her death, nobody believed:

Name: *Sophie(a) Botta*. State: *single*. Birthplace: *Westphalia*. Place of residence: *Eishausen*. Age: *58 years*. Single or marries: *single*. Time of the demise: *November, 25th 1837*.



Leonardus Cornelius van der Valck (1769-1845)

The theory of substitution around Madame Royale

Because of the unknown identity of the woman several enquiries were made and the people believed, the woman has been actually a Bourbon princess, the daughter of king Louis XVI and queen Marie Antoinette of France, called *Madame Royale*. She should have been substituted by another person in 1795 after her captivity in the Temple prison in Paris, caused by an unintentional pregnancy or suffered psychic damages. While the wrong princess came as a *Duchess of Angoulême* into the history, the real king's daughter should have kept herself hidden in Hildburghausen and Eishausen.

The “Madame Royale” Historical Society

The “Madame Royale” Historical Society was founded in April 2005 as an union several researchers. The aim is to identify the Dark Countess of Hildburghausen and the Duchess of Angoulême and to clarify the historical events on a scientific base. The Historical Society tries to find answers by own research and by the support of activities other researches and institutions. The members meet together regularly to evaluate new results of their work.

In detail the main task is to clearing the following points:

1. Was the so-called “Dark Countess”, which lived in Hildburghausen and Eishausen between 1807 and 1837, indeed Madame Royale, Marie Therese Charlotte of Bourbon, a daughter of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette of France (theory of substitution)?
2. If yes: Who played the official role of Madame Royale after the substitution? Who was the person the history knows as “Duchess of Angoulême”?
3. If not: Who was the “Dark Countess”?

The website www.Madame-Royale.de

The society wants to inform the public about the person Madame Royale and wants to give an easy introduction on the topic. To realise that the society offers a free website on the internet at the address www.Madame-Royale.de or the address www.Dunkelgraefin.de.



Website

The website is available in a German and an English version and offers a lot of information and materials for the research work:



News about Madame Royale
current information about the historical events, new results of the research, publications and events



Background information
short abstracts of the life of the Dark Countess and Madame Royale, chronological anthology of important events



Theories about the identity
presentation of several theories about the identity of the Dark Countess, including the theory of substitution around Madame Royale