The city of Weimar and its surroundings in the Free State of Thüringia are often referred to as the cultural soul of Germany. Though best known abroad as the birthplace of the ill-fated Weimar Republic, the city has, for the past two hundred years, been a pilgrimage site for Germans of all ages. Weimar was at the very center of Germany's Age of Enlightenment (*die Aufklarung*) when it was home to world-class literary and creative intellects such as Goethe, Wieland, Herder, Bach, Schiller, Liszt, Nietzsche and others known as Germany's *Dichter und Denker* (Poets and Thinkers).

Nearly a century later -- in January 1919 -- a National Assembly was elected to draft a democratic constitution for the newly-defeated German nation. Choosing Weimar as its place to meet and debate reflected both the city's prominence as a non-military location as well as the Assembly's fear of meeting in still-volatile, post-revolutionary Berlin. The so-called Weimar Republic, based on a parliamentary system and populated by several competing political parties, would last only fifteen years. The year 1919 also saw the founding of the Bauhaus School by modernist architect Walter Gropius. Housed on the grounds and in the buildings of a previous art and design institution, the Bauhaus would revolutionize the relationship between politics and architecture not only in Germany, but also throughout Europe and North America. It, too, would last only a short time in Weimar before moving to Dessau and then Berlin where it was finally dismantled by the Nazis in power.

Dark days for the city followed the creation of the Weimar Republic. The Nazi party held its first national party congress in Weimar in July 1926 and the agricultural and mainly blue-collar state of Thüringia was one of the first regions to elect Nazi representatives to the

national parliament in 1930 and 1932. After Hitler's rise to absolute power, the Nazis established the Buchenwald Concentration Camp in July 1937 just six miles outside of Weimar on the northern slope of the Ettersberg mountain. Ironically, or perhaps purposefully, this area of Thüringia had been frequented by Goethe and his literary colleagues. Indeed, the "Goethe Oak" was a well-known landmark in the area and it would become the center of this new camp for political detainees and criminals.

Because of Weimar's historical significance, it has generally received large grants and donations for the restoration and preservation of its many significant parks and buildings. In 1998 "Classical Weimar" was named to UNESCO's World Heritage List for the "high artistic quality of the public and private buildings and parks in and around the town" as well as the recognition that it was the "cultural centre of the Europe of the late 18th and early 19th centuries."[1] One year later, this small city was named the sole European Cultural Capital of 1999 and it continues to be one of Germany's historic and cultural centers: a place of pilgrimage for young and old from the eastern and western parts of the newly-reunified country.

The GoetheHaus (Goethe's House)

One of the most important and most visited historic sites in Weimar is the GoetheHaus: Johann Wolfgang Goethe's home from the 1770s until his death in 1832. For fifty years following this, Goethe's family and

grandchildren continuously inhabited the house until grandson Walther's death in 1885. Fortunately, Walther had already bequeathed the house, the surrounding gardens, and all of its holdings and collections to the state of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach. The GoetheHaus was opened to the public as a memorial for the first time in 1886. The GoetheMuseum and the Archive opened in 1885 and 1889, respectively, and made Weimar the center of research and scholarship for students of Goethe and Schiller.

After the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II and the rise of the new Weimar Republic in 1919, the GoetheHaus (and other related sites) became the property of the newly-created state of Thüringia. Following the end of World War II and the creation of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), the ownership changed hands in 1953 to the *Nationalen Forschungs – und Gedenkstätten der klassichen deutschen Literatur* (National Research and Memorial Institute for Classic German Literature). This institute was reorganized after Germany's reunification and in October 1991 the GoetheHaus and its related properties became the responsibility of the *Stiftung Weimarer Klassik* (Classical Weimar Foundation) where they remain at present. As part of the ensemble of historical monuments known as "Classical Weimar", the GoetheHaus was placed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1998.

Funding and Oversight

The Classical Weimar Foundation is responsible for the management and preservation of historic structures, parks, manuscripts, and photographic archives. In addition, the foundation runs a research library and facilitates scholarly research through grants to researchers. Their funding is thus a combination of federal, state, and city monies with private donations from both individuals and other foundations. It is unclear at this point whether any private monies are given to specific preservation or restoration work on the GoetheHaus, but that could be

discovered with further research into their German-language economic reports and press releases.

Indicative of how the foundation conducts its preservation and funding efforts can be found, however, in their online literature[2] on the Anna Amalia Library. Over the years, this 200-year old Rococo-style library has had problems with dampness, inadequate maintenance, and the lack of capacity for the holdings themselves. A restoration and expansion project began in 1999 and is due to be completed in 2004. The financing of this multi-million dollar project was underwritten by the federal government, the state government of Thüringia, and the city of Weimar. Even so, the foundation called on private donors to provide the much-needed additional financial assistance and an account was set up at the Dresdner Bank and tax-deductible donations were solicited online and through the German press. One may assume that future preservation efforts on the GoetheHaus may also require a combination of both public and private funds, especially given the dire state of Germany's present economic condition.

Presentation and Preservation

Issues related to the preservation of the GoetheHaus are myriad. Because the house inventory was left intact and because there had been so many visitors to the house in the 19th century who had recorded their impressions and descriptions, it was a relatively easy exercise to restore the interior decorations and furnishings to what they would have been in the later years of Goethe's life. Tragically, the most famous of the rooms – Goethe's personal study – was demolished in a bombing raid during World War II. As with so many of Germany's historic treasures, this room was rebuilt and restored to look as it had in the 1830s and was again available for viewing in 1949 for the celebration of Goethe's two-hundredth birthday.

Part and parcel of East Germany's efforts to rehabilitate their cultural heritage, the "ownership" of Goethe and his bicentennial celebration was a boon for the newly-named German Democratic Republic. While insisting that West Germany was the inheritor of Fascism and the horrors of Hitler, the GDR "appropriated the progressive traditions of German culture as represented by Goethe, and left the memory of Auschwitz... to a still culpable West German political culture."[3] This recognition of Goethe as part of the GDR cultural legacy would also mean that restoration efforts would continue in Weimar, and unlike the rest of eastern Germany, money would be readily available for preservation efforts. While the quality of the efforts in restoring paint finishes and fabrics would not necessarily match today's standards, one must be thankful that such efforts existed at all during those years.

Today the house receives thousands of visitors every year and conducts tours for both individuals and groups in various languages. Centered on the poet's life and work, the tours seek to both educate the visitor and provide an introduction to the other properties of the Goethe National Museum complex. A Visitor Information Center is part of the foundation's Museum Education Service, which provides not only the site tours, but also special programs for school children and research seminars for older students of Goethe.

The Classical Weimar Foundation appears – from its literature, its excellent guides, the condition of the property, and its scholarly bookshop – to be an excellent and far-sighted owner of these properties, taking care to preserve both the physical and philosophical histories of the various sites. The foundation's close work with government entities and agencies such as ICOMOS and the European Heritage Network have engineered their inclusion on the World Heritage List and the designation of their city as a European cultural capital. The GoetheHaus is no small part of this effort and is, indeed, the central jewel of their historic inventory.

Wartburg Castle

Like the GoetheHaus, this historic property is inextricably linked with a famous German: in this case, Martin Luther. Perched atop a cliff overlooking the small city of Eisenach (Bach's birthplace), the oldest part of the castle was built in 1067 for Duke Ludwig of Thüringia. A number of extensions were added over the centuries to form a sprawling castle complex comprised of Romanesque, Gothic, and even 19th-century architectural styles. It is considered one of the best preserved and oldest castles in Germany.

Most famously, however, it was the home of Martin Luther for ten months beginning in May 1521. In a small and starkly furnished room under the assumed name, Junker Jörg (Knight George), he took shelter from the Roman Catholic Church and translated the New Testament into vernacular German. The furnishings in the room are not original, except for the wooden stool; the desk dates back to this time period, but is not original. Only the boards on the walls and the floor itself were there in 1521; the bay window came from Nürnberg and was installed during one of the numerous restoration efforts in 1842.[4]

Funding and Oversight

Monument preservation in Thüringia has a complicated past and with a property as old as Wartburg, the concept of preservation standards, funding, or oversight is difficult to track through the past several hundred years. It is known from written archives, however, that visitors and pilgrims began coming to Wartburg as soon as 1574 to visit the "Dr. Martinus Rooms".

Indeed, their signatures, initials and dates comprise the graffiti on the wooden walls in the room and date from as early as 1603.[5] Goethe was a visitor to the castle for five weeks in 1777 and became a proponent of its continued preservation; a plaque in one of the castle rooms quotes a document written in 1815 wherein Goethe remarks positively about the "plans to equip the architectural monument in the style of a museum in the hope that the fortress would be able to count more pilgrims."[6] (The Wartburg Collection in its onsite museum now emphasizes the historical periods of the castle itself: the High Middle Ages, the Late Middle Ages, the 19th century, and the early modern period.)

In 1852, the Society for Thüringian History and Archaeology was founded to aid the state in monument preservation. Several years later in 1888, an inventory of Thüringia's historic monuments was compiled with Wartburg Castle listed among them. During this time, however, the castle was not publicly owned, but still a property of the ducal house of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach. After the end of World War I, the abolition of the monarchy, and the establishment of the free state of Thüringia, the *Wartburg-Stiftung* (Wartburg Foundation) was created in 1922 to take over the maintenance and preservation responsibilities of the castle. The Wartburg Castle is still managed by the same foundation which receives funding from both federal and state resources.[7]

Presentation and Preservation

The Wartburg has undergone numerous restorations, some of them more sympathetic to modern preservation concerns than others. In 1838, Grand Duke Carl Alexander of the house of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach ordered the reconstruction of the Wartburg to better reflect its inclusion as part of the "classical Weimar" era. The largely deteriorated castle was almost completely rebuilt in Romanesque style, while the middle portion of the castle with the "Ladies Bower" and

the armory was newly reconstructed according to an old model. Utilizing more artistic freedom than historic and accurate constraint, a fresco series was added to the first story of the original Palas and the Festival Hall was newly decorated as a medieval gathering place.[8]

After the end of World War II, Martin Luther's reputation suffered when the GDR branded him a traitor of the working class who had opposed the Peasants' War in the 1500s. Wartburg Castle had also deteriorated after the previous century's restorations, but now endured yet another extensive restoration from 1952 to 1954. During this time, the decorative column capitals were re-inscribed, paintings were "cleaned" by repainting them, and tapestries were rewoven. The Festival Hall began to be used as a ceremonial room for graduation ceremonies and political meetings. In 1967, the National Jubilees of the GDR were celebrated at the Wartburg in conjunction with its 900th anniversary.

During the years of relaxing tension between east and west during the 1970s and 1980s, the GDR "rehabilitated" a number of historic German figures. Martin Luther's rehabilitation was officially completed in 1983. Praised as a great humanist and world-renowned German cultural figure, Luther became a "media star" overnight: the Wartburg Castle became a center of numerous events; memorials were erected; and other Thüringian sites associated with Luther were restored and commemorated as one of the many "traces of Luther".[9]

After Germany's reunification, the Wartburg Castle continued to be a popular tourist and ceremonial destination. It was added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1999 as an "outstanding monument of the feudal period in central Europe" and because of its role as Martin Luther's place of exile and a "powerful symbol of German integration and unity."[10]

The problem of accurate and sympathetic restoration is a centuries-old problem at the Wartburg. By now the restorations of the 19th century can be considered historic and soon the

GDR-inspired work of the 1950s may be added to this list. It is unfortunate that the presentation of the castle as an historic site does not take more care into distinguishing between what is original and authentic and what is restoration and copy. However, one recognizes that it is more a place of visitation and commemoration, than one of scholarly research and archaeological investigation. It is a majestic ensemble of buildings that evoke the time of Luther: perhaps this is more useful to a newly-reunified Germany seeking a common cultural heritage than a truly authentic pile of castle ruins would be.

Buchenwald Concentration Camp

Established in July 1937, the Buchenwald camp was originally intended to house political opponents of the Nazi regime, criminals, and so-called social misfits -- homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc. Although it was not designed or used as a mass extermination camp (such as those further in the east), it was still a site of unmitigated horror and death: over 50,000 camp inmates or about 20% of the total population died from 1937 to 1945.

The site itself is in the middle of a beech forest on the Ettersberg Hill. As mentioned above, the Goethe Oak was a centerpiece of the camp, situated just in front of the laundry and sorting house. Only a large stump today, it was once a grand reminder of Germany's cultural heritage when Goethe led a nation of poets and thinkers.

On April 11, 1945, with the sound of approaching American forces apparent, an organized and international committee of prisoners staged an uprising over the diminishing numbers of SS guards left in the camp. Several hours after the victorious prisoners hung a white flag from the central entrance tower, the American forces arrived to "liberate" and secure the camp. On July 3, 1945, Buchenwald was turned over to the Soviets and from then until 1950, the Soviet occupation forces used the barracks and camp facilities as an interment camp for ex-Nazis and opponents of the new communist regime. Again, the death total was high: over 7,000 prisoners died as a result of malnourishment and disease.

In 1951, most of the camp buildings and all of the barracks were demolished as part of the new effort to establish Buchenwald as a national memorial to anti-Fascist resistance. Three years later, construction began about one mile outside the camp on a large-scale memorial site that would contain three mass graves, a large bell tower, and a designated path by which one would pass engraved stelae and commemorative pillars. By 1958, the camp and the new monument were opened to the public. Buchenwald now became a "National Site of Admonition and Memory" for the GDR: military officers would receive promotions in ceremonies on the grounds and numerous civic and political rallies would take place at various memorial sites in the camp. Indeed, the liberation of the camp by an international committee of anti-Fascists was often portrayed as the actual beginning (the *Null Stunde* or Zero Hour) of the East German state as it rose victorious over the "occupying" Nazi regime.[11] It is only after reunification that Buchenwald has become home to new memorials commemorating the presence of Sinti and Roma tribes, Jews, and other specific victims and ethnic groups.

Funding and Oversight

In 1955, a Curatorium for the Building of National Memorials in Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, and Ravensbrück was created to ensure ideological correctness and uniformity among the three German concentration camps in East Germany. [12] Funded entirely by the GDR government, the Buchenwald site was of national significance and commemorated as a place of victorious uprising, not a place of death and defeat. Nearly forty years later after the German reunification, a new foundation was created – the *Stiftung Gedenkstätten: Buchenwald und Mittlebau-Dora* (Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Memorials Foundation) – that now manages both sites and is responsible for continued preservation and interpretative efforts.

The foundation is more, however, than a simple preservation entity: it manages photographic exhibits, onsite museum, archaeological excavations, summer work camps, and educational seminars for visitors and researchers of all ages and nationalities. It is unclear which government entity or entities now contributes the bulk of the operating budget for the foundation, but their website (entirely in German) solicits private donations and is adamant in their assertion that the foundation needs more "friends" to cover their costs and ongoing commitment to education.[13] Even though the German economy is currently weak, it was reported earlier this year that Michael Naumann, a cultural advisor to Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, has promised that funding for memorials "at authentic locations" like Buchenwald and other concentration camps will increase from $16 million in 2000 to nearly $27 million in 2003.[14]

Presentation and Preservation

As with other concentration camps and "authentic" sites of Nazi terror, the debate rages over what to preserve and how to interpret what is both present and absent. At Buchenwald, Frau Pia Fröhwein[15] is a pedagogical expert on their staff who took great pains to explain the

details of each preservation decision both inside and outside the camp's boundaries. She began by explaining the issues surrounding the preservation of SS barracks and other related buildings.

First, one must take care not to glorify or honor the SS by taking time and money to restore their sites. Second, one must be aware that any restored SS sites might become future symbolic and ceremonial sites for neo-Nazis and others who would seek to honor the memory of these people. Third, one must include the SS sites as part of the "interpretation of the perpetrators" to ensure that Buchenwald is not only interpreted as a place of victims. In all these concerns, Fröhwein insisted that any interpretation of SS barracks or residences must present these men and their families as "normal" people who were somehow radicalized into participating in the Nazi horror. This, she says, represents a "gray" portrayal of history and not the "black and white" histories that portray the SS as inhuman animals and the other Germans as anti-fascist heroes. Only in seeing these shades of gray can one truly see the horror of this place: if human – not inhuman – beings can act this way at that time, what is to prevent human beings from doing so again?

Other preservation concerns have recently surfaced with regards to the Soviet Special Camp #2 which was run from 1945 to 1950. Thousands of prisoners, many of them ex-Nazis, died during this time and were buried in mass graves just outside the camp; commemorative wooden crosses and a forest of stainless steel rods now mark the spot of these graves. However, these memorials have now become new sites of commemoration for neo-Nazi groups or others who seek to identify the dead as victims of totalitarianism Soviet-style as opposed to perpetrators of totalitarianism in the Nazi style.

Finally, the memory landscape at Buchenwald is complex, comprising both GDR monuments to anti-Fascism as well as post-reunification monuments to specific ethnic and

religious prisoner/victim groups. From its beginning as a national GDR memorial, preservation decisions were made based on politics and ideology: The crematorium was preserved because Ernst Thälmann was shot there; the barracks were demolished as they simply had no bearing on the anti-Fascist revolt in the camp. Indeed, the "leveling" of classes among GDR citizens was symbolized in the leveling of the barracks, says Fröhwein. Ironically, the destruction of this authentic piece of the memorial took place at the same time the GDR was building their bell tower memorial outside the camp!

There is no dearth of documentation that could be used to recreate or restore any part of the camp. It is clear, however, that international preservation standards are of critical importance to the staff of the Buchenwald foundation. No part of the site is restored without ensuring that the visitor can decipher among the authentic old portion and the newly-restored portion; this is true even to the extent that different concrete color and texture is used when repairing the barbed-wire fence posts. Photographic exhibits at the site are without interpretation and purposefully minimalist in their presentation; they contain only a descriptive caption and a date to allow the visitor to "do his own work," in Fröhwein's words. It is in the camp museum where stories are told and paragraphs accompany each of the photographs; here emotion is also generated and even manipulated by survivors' and contemporary art exhibits.

Because Buchenwald was of national importance to the story of the GDR as the anti-Fascist victor over Hitler, it is difficult to imagine the loss of identity many east Germans now feel toward the memorial site. Once crowded with thousands of visitors and picnickers celebrating their national pride, the site is now a sober and thought-provoking memorial to German victims as well as German perpetrators. In the end, it is quite true that the best German

memorial to the Nazi era may not be a memorial site at all, but rather the "never-to-be-resolved debate over which kind of memory to preserve, how to do it, in whose name, and to what end."[16]

All three of these Thüringian sites have a good deal in common even though their funding structures and ownership strategies are quite different. Many of the historic sites in both Thüringia and Berlin-Brandenburg are owned and managed by foundations who receive a large bulk of their funding from public sources; this is also true of these three sites. While each of them is associated with different government entities – the GoetheHaus with the city of Weimar; the Wartburg Castle with the state of Thüringia, and Buchenwald with the federal government of Germany – they are all managed by individual foundations that receive public monies and solicit private donations. This appears to be an important management process for German historic sites and one that perhaps takes advantage of public interest and support while at the same time is able to weather the downturn in the German national economy.

Ironically each site, in its own way, is associated with Goethe -- Germany's central literary figure of the 18th and 19th centuries. But, the historic complexity of this part of Germany is inextricably bound with its reputation as the home of Germany's preeminent poets and thinkers and the home of its political and human failures – the Weimar Republic and finally, Buchenwald. It is unfortunate that so much of Germany's historic sites have had to endure unsympathetic restorations and even complete recreations after the devastation of World War II. The Wartburg Castle foundation is perhaps most keen on restoring the past glories of the site and encouraging adaptive use of it with ceremonies and pageants. But the preservation standards at the GoetheHaus and Buchenwald, both in terms of physical preservation and philosophical

pedagogy, are exemplary and show a professional thoughtfulness toward the interpretation and presentation of Germany's troubled history.

[1] United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization: World Heritage Committee. " Report: Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage" Twenty-second Session: Kyoto, Japan, 1998.

[2] www.weimar-klassik.de

[3] Koshar, Rudy. *From Monuments to Traces: Artifacts of German Memory, 1870-1990*. (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), p. 189

[4] personal journal: 17 May 2003

[5] www.routes-to-luther.org

[6] personal journal: 17 May 2003

[7] www.wartburg-eisenach.de

[8] Metzger, Paul, ed. *Luther and Melanchthon Rediscovered: a Guide to the Historical Sites of the Reformation*. (Marbach: Marbach Verlag, 1997), pp. 38-42.

[9] Koshar, p. 269.

[10] United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization: World Heritage Committee. " Report: Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage" Twenty-third Session: Marrakesh, Morocco 1999.

[11] Koshar, pp. 187-9.

[12] Koshar, p. 207

[13] www.buchenwald.de

[14] www.jewishsf.com: Jewish Bulletin of Northern California, 2003.

[15] personal journal: 18 May 2003

[16] Young, James E. *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*. (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 21