

**THE GUIDE TO THE  
REGAL GREEN  
VAULTS AT DRESDEN**

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The Guide to the Regal Green Vaults at Dresden by Dresden K. Grünes gewölbe

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## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

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The treasure of the Saxon Royal Family known by the name of the "*Green Vaults*" contains the most renowned collection of unique valuables on the continent of Europe and can for this reason only be compared with the famous Vienna Collection. It occupies eight rooms in the Western wing of the Regal Palace at Dresden. It does not only comprise the jewelry and the silver plate of the Royal Family, but also a great many specimens of the finest works of art from the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. With respect to the origin of the curious name, which has

been given to this museum, it is certain, that this name did not originate with the celebrated Green Diamond, preserved in the "Jewelry-Saloon", because this name is already mentioned in an old inventory of the year 1610. There is good authority for believing that the apartments owe their name to the original colour of the Vaults themselves.

The first stock of this choice collection of treasures was laid in the reign of Duke George the Bearded († 1539) and the Elector Maurice added several articles well worth having. But it has been ascertained, that the Elector Augustus, who reigned between the years 1553 and 1586, was the first, who deposited in these Vaults a vast collection of various rare and valuable productions of art, which he partly inherited, partly purchased, and partly received as presents from other princely personages. Several clocks and rarities, collected by him and incorporated in a second similar institute, called the Chamber of Art, are in the Green Vaults at present and that is the reason, why the Elector Augustus may be justly considered as the Founder of the Museum. What this Elector began, his Successors completed and they made

several important additions to it, but it was not till the reign of King Augustus the Strong, whose taste for the fine arts had been cultivated and refined by travel and study, that the collection was raised to its present state of excellence. Under the auspices of the illustrious Sovereign under consideration the various objects of the collection were re-arranged; in addition to which the rooms were most tastefully adorned.

Considering the immense number of works of art and value preserved in the eight rooms of the Green Vaults, which have been arranged with regard to symmetry, harmony and elegance, it would be difficult and unprofitable to describe every article minutely, we purpose dilating on such matters as require an explanation, strictly adhering to the order in which the articles have been arranged in the eight rooms. The German catalogue, intitled "Das Königliche Grüne Gewölbe zu Dresden, beschrieben von Julius und Albert Erbstein" being of a by far more voluminous character, than the English "Epitome", is intended for close study.







## THE FIRST ROOM.

### CABINET OF BRONZES.

The Cabinet of Bronzes, the first apartment of the Green Vaults, contains 115 Statues, Groups, and Models of different sizes and works of art, for the most part copies of ancient sculptures. Some of the best were purchased by the three Electors Christian I, Christian II, and John George I, or obtained in the reign of King Augustus II. from the collections of Bellori, Albani, Chigi, Kircher and at last from the museum of Count Bruehl.

We commence with the row on the right hand side.  
No. 1. A Crucifix by *Giovanni da Bologna* (1524-1608), the most renowned bronze in this room.

No. 2. A small Statue of Charles II., of England, known by the name of St. George and the Dragon.

It is worked (1667) out of a solid piece of iron (weighing 67 pounds) by *Gottfried Leygebe*, an engraver and sculptor of Nuremberg being born at Freistadt Silesia, in the year 1630, having worked at Nuremberg 1645—1668, after this time at Berlin, and died there in the year 1683. The height is 9 inches and the weight 14 pounds.

No. 3. A Dog scratching itself, said to be made by *Peter Vischer*, the famous Nuremberg sculptor († 1529) (see Figure 1).

No. 4. A reliable copy of the famous antique Group of Dirce tied to the horns of the bull, called "The Bull Farnese". This group, the largest of the remains of ancient sculpture, is the work of Apollonius and Tauriscus of Rhodes. It was conveyed to Rome in the reign of Augustus, when it was placed in front of the house of Asinius Pollio. It was discovered in the baths of Caracalla in the pontificate of Paul III. (1546 and 1547), and deposited in the porch of the Farnese palace, whence the name is derived, by which it is commonly designated. In 1788 Ferdinand IV., King of Naples, became possessor thereof, and had it transplanted to the Palace Gardens in Naples. At a later period it was placed in the Bourbon Museum, now styled the "Museo nazionale". This incomparable work has been reproduced here on a reduced scale by *Adrian de Vries*, a Flemish artist in the Hague (1660—1627).

No. 5. An equestrian Statue of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, after the original in the Capitol at Rome. This bronze was a present from Pope Clement XIII. The monogram of the founder: "*Gia. Zof. F.*" is on the saddle cloth or cover of the horse.

No. 7. A small Russian Bronze-Crucifix from the year 1721 with a legend in old Slavonic characters.