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**Die Belagerung der Burg Tannenberg bei Darmstadt 1399, Fundberichte aus Hessen 50, 2010 (2013), 707-728**

**English Summary: The siege of castle Tannenberg close to Darmstadt in 1399 – New results from old excavations**

The castle Tannenberg is situated close to the village Seeheim-Jugenheim, which lies 13 km to the South of Darmstadt and 46 km to the South of Frankfurt am Main. This fortification is one of the most important archaeological sites in Central Europe: Its siege in 1399 performed as an act of public peace has been documented well in contemporary written sources in early modern German. In 1849, its excavation took place and was published as one of the first scientific studies on a subject of medieval archaeology at all, in 1850 (*Abb. 1-2*). The recent study done by Astrid Schmitt (2008) has edited the complete material according to modern standards. This essay provides a new commentary on the only partially published written and the archaeological sources as well. Its aim is a reconstruction of the siege in the early summer of 1399. The castle Tannenberg – especially one of its owners, knight Hartmut the younger of Kronberg and his men – was accused for robber-knightdom disturbing the trade and traffic between Frankfurt and Mayence, but moreover its owners – a union of about 12 knights – were hindering the building of territorial lordship in this area. A first confederation of the later king and count palatine Ruprecht and the archbishop Johann of Mayence was too weak to combat the well fortified castle. Thus, on their initiative a broader alliance of *pax Dei* was formed including furtherly the archbishop of Trier, the bishop of Speyer, grave Philipp of Nassau-Saarbrücken and the towns of Mayence, Worms, Speyer, Frankfurt am Main, Friedberg, Gelnhausen and Wetzlar. It was very important to involve the two mighty towns of Frankfurt and Mayence owning early artillery. On the basis of this confederation the deployment of this artillery was payed by the alliance of *pax Dei*. The sources to the siege itself reveal the use of mobile wooden siege towers („*Berfryt*“) in two or three entrenchements. These had been fortified with prefabricated works („*kesten*“), which had been dug into hills close to the castle. But these entrenchements lay lower than the castle and thus were in poor positions (*Abb. 3*, reconstruction of entrenchements signed by filled 17\_Atzbach\_Umbruch.indd 17 17.08.11 11:46 18 circles). The transportation of the artillery was very difficult: Two huge, early cannons („*große Steinbüchsen*“) had been shipped on Main and probably Rhine river from Frankfurt am Main and Mayence to some place close to the foot of the hill. From there they had been carried on big waggons each drawn by about 50 horses. One written

source is mentioning a “zog” (a pull), which required very long ropes, this is one of the first references for the use of a winding tackle or a pulley block. In these entrenchments the allied battle troops, armoured with cross-bows and trebuchets, had been garrisoned. The heavy bombardment from the cannons and trebuchets broke the castle wall within one week and enabled the capture, the traces of this battle indicate the main directions of attack (*Abb. 5*). The spread of niche-tiles reveals that there was only one comfortable smokeless heated parlour (Hofstube) with a highly decorative stove in the main building (*Abb. 4b*), whereas a simpler beaker tile stove was situated in the guardroom at the main entrance (*Abb. 4a*). In consequence, the union of owners did not live on this castle at the same time. So, this common ownership is to be regarded as the material basis for a corporative organization of the imperial knights class. Only one noble man and his household resided on the Tannenberg, Hartmut the younger of Kronenberg. He was accused personally to be a robbery knight; he and his men defended the castle. After it was captured, the survivors went into imprisonment. The siege and capture of the Tannenberg castle fits into the territorial history of the middle Rhine area around 1400 AD. It is one example for the use of pax Dei by the territorial lordship against small knights' dominions. Moreover, there is no denying that the castle has been abandoned after the capture, so its material culture has a fixed terminus ante quem of 1399 and can be seen as a key inventory of everyday and noble culture for the late medieval period.