

**International conference “Lordship and Castle landscapes –  
Franconian and international studies in comparison”  
Papers**

**Introduction**

by

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The following papers were held at the conference “Lordship and Castle landscapes – Franconian and international studies in comparison” in Würzburg on the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2010. This conference on medieval Castle landscapes and their importance for the surrounding regions as well as for local identity formation was organized by the “Lehrstuhl für Fränkische Landesgeschichte” of the university of Würzburg. It was the main purpose to start an international and interdisciplinary comparison of medieval Castle landscapes and to discuss the various opportunities of combining the different research projects.

Therefore historians from Germany (Caspar Ehlers, University of Würzburg – Lorenz Kemethmüller, University of Würzburg – Harald Rosmanitz, Archäologisches Spessartprojekt), the United Kingdom (Oliver Creighton, University of Exeter – Tom James, University of Winchester – Amanda Richardson, University of Chichester) and the Netherlands (Jan van Doesburg, Afdeling Archeologie) met in Würzburg in order to get introduced in everybody’s work and to start combining the different theories and the different approach and way of working.

The papers show how different landscapes in the Netherlands, the UK and in Germany were shaped before and during the Middle Ages and how they were used by the different owners. The castles – big and small-sized – had influence on their surroundings. In many cases they came to be associated with relations or conflicts between church, kings and the aristocracy. All the papers were given in English and are published here in shorted versions. Caspar Ehlers paper is for now published in German language. The research on all the Castle landscapes is fascinating as well as for historians or archaeologists as for the local people in the different regions. It is quite evident that

an international comparison of all the Castle landscapes offers new perspectives, views, ideas and questions. The conference can be seen as the successful first move in creating a network between historians and archaeologists who are focusing on the Castle landscape in the Spessart with historians and archaeologists in Europe. All of them are focusing their research not only on big castles or palaces but also on the smaller castles which are nowadays partially non existent any more.

The conference participants owe the Bezirk Unterfranken a debt of gratitude for supporting the conference financially. Also everybody appreciated the helpfulness of the Freunde Mainfränkischer Kunst und Geschichte e.V. Würzburg, who provided a wonderful framework for the day by allowing to hold the conference in the beautiful historical site, the Pleicher Handwerkerhaus. The conference was undoubted of value. It is desirable that the discussions and the international work will be retained in the near future. The following release makes a contribution to this fruitful idea, which was affirmed in Würzburg in February 2010.

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