



Wolter v. Tiesenhausen

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Family Letter 2024

Of the v. Tiesenhausen Family

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Family Day 2025

Dear Family,

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, I would like to cordially invite you all to Family Day 2025 from 12.9.2025 to 14.9.2025.

In order to do justice to the planned reorganization of the meeting and to enable everyone to participate, Elisabeth has offered that we can celebrate the Family Day at her home at Odendorf Castle in Swisttal. This also means that anyone who can is asked to lend a helping hand. We have come up with a program that offers plenty of time for socializing and a cozy get-together.

Sept. 9th 2025 from 5pm Arrival and dinner together

Sept. 13th 2025 from 10 am Excursion to the Kommern museum
from 7 pm Reception and dinner at Odendorf Castle

Sept. 14th 2025 from 11 am Prayer at Odendorf Castle
from 11:30 am General meeting
followed by lunch and clean-up together

(subject to change)

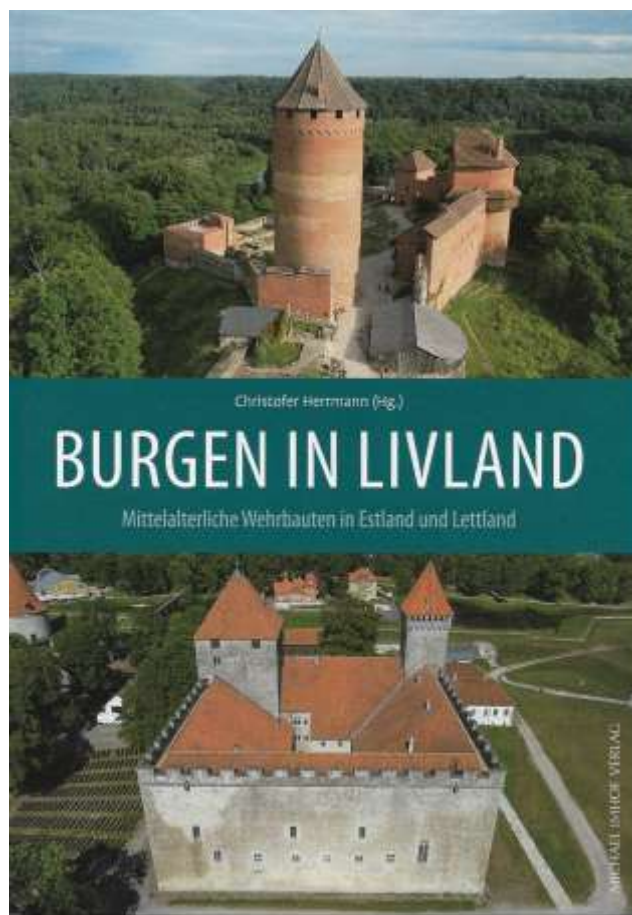
For overnight stays, we will be staying at the nearby Hotel Nord in Rheinbach, where we can also have breakfast together. We have already reserved a number of rooms there. I will send you the details of the reservation as soon as possible. Please register by April 15th 2025 at the latest at maxvdt@gmail.com and we look forward to seeing many of you again in September. A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all,

Kind regards,

Your Max

Castles and Defensive Buildings of the Tiesenhausen Family

The castles and defensive buildings built by our family in the Baltic region have played a special role in its more than 700-year history. Interesting details can be found in the recently published book “Burgen in Livland - Mittelalterliche Wehrbauten in Estland und Lettland”, edited by Christofer Herrmann in collaboration with Estonian and Latvian scholars and published by Michael Imhof Verlag.



Even the cover picture shows two castles that were not built by the Tiesenhausen family, but which played an important role in the family's history. The picture above shows the lovingly restored Treiden Castle, Turaida in Latvian. Our progenitor Engelbrechtus de Tisen-

husen was appointed bailiff of Treiden in 1210 by his brother-in-law Albert von Buxhoeveden, the Archbishop of Riga. This castle, originally built of wood by the Lieven family, was later rebuilt from fieldstone and brick under German rule. The picture below shows the bishop's castle in Arensburg, Estonian Kuressaare on the island of Ösel, Estonian Saaremaa. Georg von Tiesenhausen resided here from 1527 to 1530 as one of the last Catholic bishops of the Ösel-Wiek diocese.

It says the following about the influence and castle buildings of the Tiesenhausen family: “The Tiesenhausen family gradually acquired large estates on the right bank of the Düna. Between 1269 and 1397 they owned Kokenhusen Castle (Koknese in Latvian) and in the 14th century several castles were built inland, including Erlaa (Ergli in Latvian), Bersohn (Berzaune in Latvian), Kalzenau (Kalsnava in Latvian) and Ruschendorf (Krievciems in Latvian).”



Kokenhusen, situated on a rocky promontory at the confluence of the Düna and Perse rivers, was a key position in the conflict with the Lithuanians and an important control post for long-distance trade via the Düna. After the Düna was dammed in the 1960s to generate elec-

tricity, the ruins of the castle now lie romantically on the banks of this reservoir.

In 1269, Johann Tiesenhausen, Engelbrecht's son, was enfeoffed with half of Kokenhusen Castle. However, differences of opinion and later disputes over this fief already

arose among the subsequent archbishops of Riga. The dispute escalated under Archbishop John II of Vechta. The bishop was taken prisoner during a visit to Kokenhusen and had to return to Germany after mediation by the Teutonic Order. His successor, Count Johann III von Schwerin, was also captured by the Tiesenhausen family and their allies.

This prince of the church also had to return to Germany without having achieved anything. Johann Tiesenhausen was cursed by the Pope. Only his sons succeeded in

having this sentence lifted. In return, they had to give up Kokenhusen Castle for good in 1342.



The so-called vassal castles usually consisted of various, often wooden residential and farm buildings. Rarer were the stone residential and representative buildings of the knightly vassal family. Sometimes these were built as residential towers. Fabian Tiesenhausen had such a residential tower built in 1520 on the farm in Kida in Estonia, which was first mentioned in 1348. It has a diameter of eight meters. The first and second floors were apparently the living quarters, as they contained fireplaces and toilets.

This tower was damaged during the Livonian War (1558 - 1583) and restored in 1973. On this occasion, the wooden walkway was added, which did not originally exist. Today the tower houses a small restaurant.



Erlaa Castle (Ergli in Latvian) was built by the Tiesenhausen family in 1354. When the castle was divided between two branches of the family in 1479, it consisted of a tower and several chambers. Further buildings and extensions were added later. In 1515, a vaulted room is mentioned in which powder

and firearms were stored. A document from 1540 mentions a chapel, a parlor and a brick barn. In 1544, a letter chest was stored in the tower. The picture on the right shows a view from 1827. Today, only a few remains of the former castle buildings can still be seen.

The archbishop's vassal castle of Bersohn (Latvian Berzaune), first mentioned in 1382, is located around 120 kilometers east of Riga. It was divided up among various branches of the Tiesenhausen family, as evidenced by several deeds of division from the 15th and 16th centuries. According to these documents, the castle consisted of a remter - the living quarters - with a kitchen, a chapel, chambers, cellars, granaries, a tower at the gate, a storehouse for firearms and gunpowder and another tower, which was apparently built later. The complex was finally abandoned during the Great Northern War of 1700 - 1721. The ruins of the round tower were destroyed during the Second World

War. Today, only small remains of the walls are still visible in the wooded area.



Kalzenau (Kalsnava in Latvian) was not a castle in the true sense of the word, but rather a fortified manor house. Even the illustration from 1827 shows only the remains of walls in front of a granary built in the style of a church. The estate was probably built in the middle of the 15th century. During excavations at the end of the 19th century, it was discovered that the main house must have been quite imposing with a side length of 37 by 20 meters. The main building contained a large hall with a four-bay groined vault above a central pillar. It is also assumed that the Kalzenau estate was destroyed during the Great Northern War at the beginning of the 18th century and was not rebuilt.

Rauschendorf (Krievciems in Latvian) was first mentioned in 1354 as “villa Ruthenorum”. It was also an archiepiscopal fief in the possession of the Tiesenhausen family and is located around 130 kilometers south-east of Riga. The drawing from around 1800 only shows the remains of the walls of the former castle. It was located around six meters above the south bank of the River Ewst and had a ring wall made of dolomite and fieldstone, which covered an area of almost 600 square meters. It is no longer possible to reconstruct how the interior

of this castle was built. Today, there are no visible remains of buildings above ground.



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Family News

Justus Freiherr von Tiesenhausen was born September 29, 2024 in Gießen. He is son to Dr. Karolina Freifrau von Tiesenhausen and her husband Sebastian Junker. The family congratulates and wishes a long and healthy life for the new cousin.

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Peter Freiherr von Tiesenhausen (pictured right) from Demmitt in the Canadian province of Alberta met with Professor Ojars Sparitis (pictured left), President Emeritus of the Latvian Academy of Sciences and a friend of our family, this summer. It is thanks to his initiative that a book written by Barbara Pauli, née Freiin von Tiesenhausen, about life on her grandfather Andreas Freiherr von Delwig's Hoppenhof estate has been translated into Latvian.

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Waltraut and Wolter Tiesenhausen with their children and grandchildren in front of the family's coat of arms in Reval/Tallinn Cathedral in May this year. The occasion was the meeting of the Administrative Board of the International Johanniter Foundation in Estonia, to which Cyrill belongs as a representative of the German Johanniter and to which Matthias and Wolter were invited as guests, as well as - not unimportantly - Waltraut's 84th birthday, which was celebrated with a family dinner in the old town of Reval.

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