

RECOMMENDATION

Mark de Lannoy: The secret of the Dark Count. Was princess Marie Thérèse Charlotte de Bourbon his companion?

The fact, that the Dark Count and the Dark Countess are known not only in Thuringia, but also wake up interest and stimulate to research activities in foreign countries, a German book proves now covers with the title „*Das Geheimnis des Dunkelgrafen. War Prinzessin Marie Thérèse Charlotte de Bourbon seine Begleiterin?*“. The Dutch author Dr. Mark de Lannoy gives to the 200th return of the arrival of the pair in Hildburghausen a comprehensive book of the subject and promises more clarification about the backgrounds of the events at that time. On 324 pages he shows the present research state and complements this substantially with own investigations which he pursues for over 25 years.

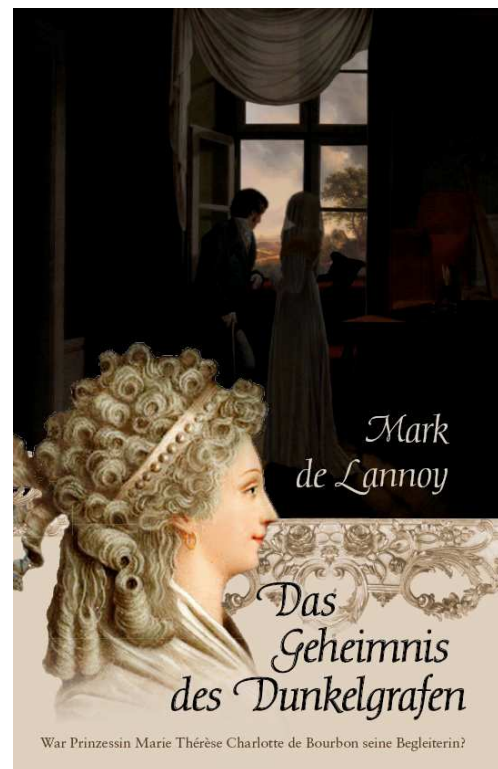
So he found out, that Leonardus Cornelius van der Valck (the Dark Count) since 1793 served as an officer in the French army in the 6. battalion of the riflemen. He was involved in activities of the French army in Mainz, Landau, Speyer and Kaiserslautern. In 1795 he became a prisoner of war of Prussia and was settled in Freiburg im Breisgau. Up to now one believed, he has got in English captivity in 1797.

Lannoy also reports about van der Valcks period of life from 1799 to 1807. Against present acceptances van der Valck went after the notice of his position at the Batavia Legation in Paris not already in the middle of 1799 to Germany, but was up to the autumn in Dutch. In October 1799 he was in Leipzig, later in Gotha, Weimar and Jena. From September 1801 to April 1802 he was a guest of Schrimpf von Berg, mayor of Schweinfurt, and refused his identity – in the same way as later in Hildburghausen. Before he came to Hildburghausen in 1807, he stayed in September 1805 on the occasion of the wedding of Paul von Württemberg and the princess Charlotte of Sachsen-Hildburghausen on Castle Solitude near Gerlingen. Afterwards he went with the Russian tsar Alexander I. to Vienna.

In the end, Lannoy can give for the first time an indication to the origin of the servant Scharre who accompanied the Dark Count and the Dark Countess up to his death in 1817.

The author used by his researches a special collection of documents: the estate of van der Valck, which was missing for over half a century. Lannoy has rediscovered, has ordered and has evaluated the estate. In it was found the list of things in Castle Eishausen which was made by the authorities of Hildburghausen in 1845 after van der Valcks death. Besides, the documents offers a comprehensive insight into the difficult probate proceedings which needs more than five years.

The book is one of the most comprehensive publications of the last years and has good chances to become one of the standard works of the topic. It is available in bookshops or can be ordered on the Internet under www.bod.de.



Mark de Lannoy (2007):
**Das Geheimnis des Dunkelgrafen.
War Prinzessin Marie Thérèse Charlotte
de Bourbon seine Begleiterin?**
Books on Demand GmbH - Norderstedt

Paperback
324 pages
29,95 EUR
ISBN 978-3-8334-6847-6