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Aachen

From the Orient to the Occident

Our Exhibitions

## International Castle Research Society

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## International Castle Research Society Aachen (ICRS)

The International Castle Research Society was established in Aachen / Aix-la-Chapelle, Germany, in April 1996, as a non-profit organisation. Its mission is to study - on an international scale - castles and their cultural environment as they developed from the 9th century Carolingian era to the late Middle Ages (appr. 800 - 1450 AD). The Society's research and public activities focus on medieval defensive and residential architecture, in close cooperation with international institutions. The ICRS's main aim is to stimulate interest in secular buildings of the European Middle Ages. It addresses itself to a wider public, in particular to young people. To achieve this aim, the ICRS hosts international guest speakers, organises exhibitions and conferences, talks and slideshows, and conducts excursions and study tours. The Society's staff creates models of medieval buildings for exhibitions and accompanying figurines in 1/25 scale. Both models and figurines are meticulously hand-made and hand-painted, in authentic detail and create a real-life atmosphere.

Each exhibition uses information boards of two types: those that provide general introductory notes, and those that highlight particular objects. In all cases the aim is to introduce to a lay public relevant academically complex) and interesting facts and issues. In this context it is worth mentioning that the ICRS offers every year internships for college students of design and handicrafts. Working together with ICRS staff, the trainees learn the art of making models of buildings and figurines. They create display boards that present their information in an attractive way so that everybody can understand and appreciate the fascinating world of the European Middle Ages. So far every exhibition by the ICRS was a great success with an enthusiastic reception from visitors, especially school kids.

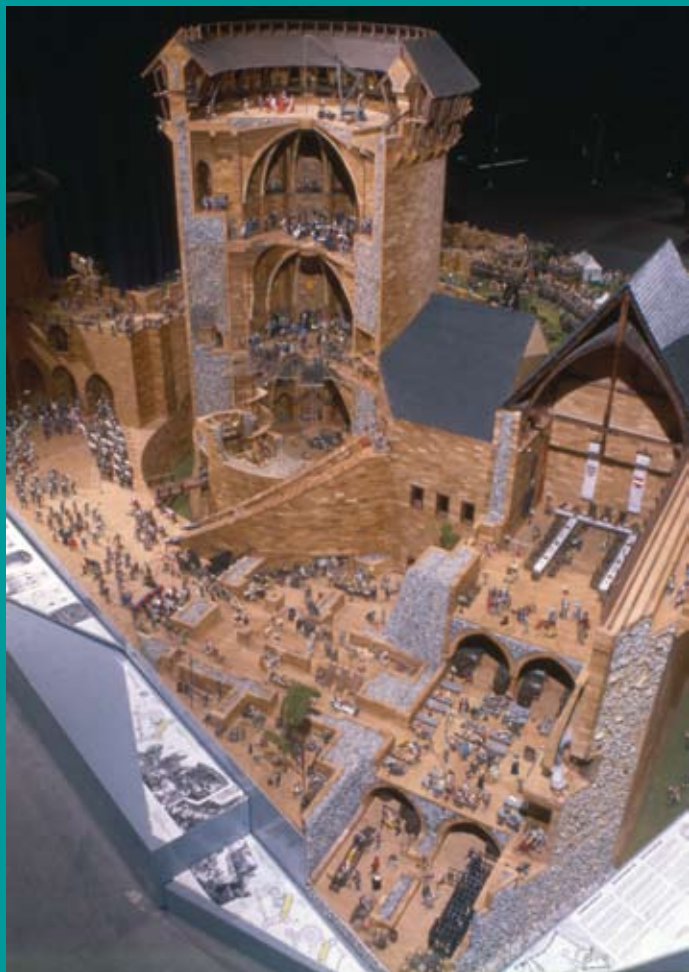
It all started in early 1998, when the Society's first public exhibition FRENCH DONJONS - THE CASTLE OF COUCY: MEDIEVAL LIFE IN MINIATURE went on its first international tour. Due to the first success, the ICRS decided to present another exhibition: The most impressive Crusader castles to be found in the Middle East. This new exhibition, CASTLES AND BAZAARS OF CRUSADER PERIOD, first presented in November 2005 at the Archaeological Museum of Frankfurt/Main (Germany), has since attracted a great number of visitors.



# Exhibition

## FRENCH DONJONS

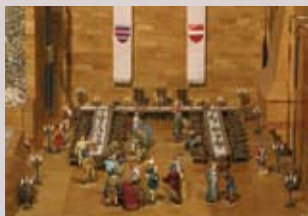
### The Castle of Coucy - French

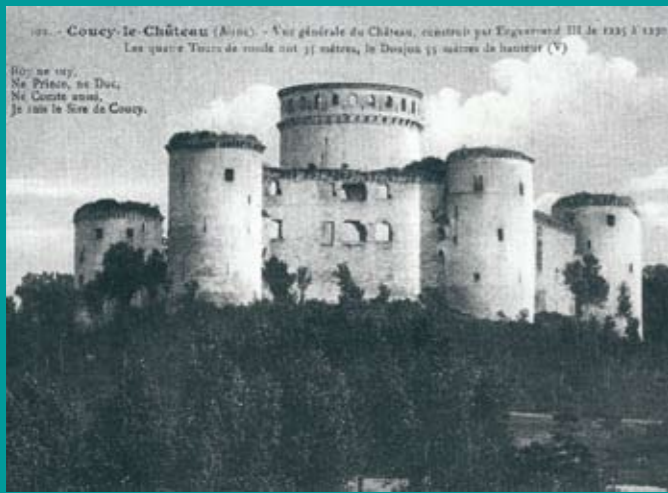


This exhibition displays medieval French castles and their keeps, or donjons, in particular. Medieval France boasted more than 1,000 such donjons. The architecture and history of some 130 donjons is shown in photos, drawings and sketches, complete with notes and explanations in English, French and German, displayed on 50 information boards. Data are based on a ten-year-long painstaking research carried out by Bernhard Siepen, architect and engineer, from Aachen.

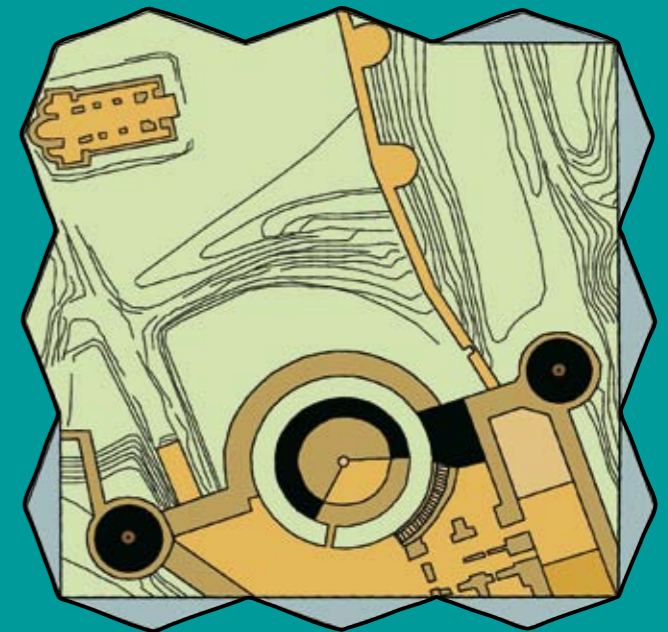
A donjon, or keep, served as a defensive structure as well as a residential building. It equally was a nobleman's residence and a symbol of his power. Kings, princes, dukes, counts, even simple country squires had their residential towers built at a prominent place within a castle. The castle of Coucy was built in the 13th century, during the Hundred Years War, a period of century-long conflicts,

fought out between France and England. American writer Barbara Tuchman in her book "A Distant Mirror" vividly describes the story of Enguerrand VII, the last baron of the Coucy family, which competed for power with the French royal dynasty for more than 300 years. It was under Enguerrand II that the most powerful castle of France was built. The exhibition by the ICRS has as its centrepiece a model of the castle of Coucy and a depiction of a French knights' tournament peopled with impressive figurines, the main one representing the Lord of Coucy.

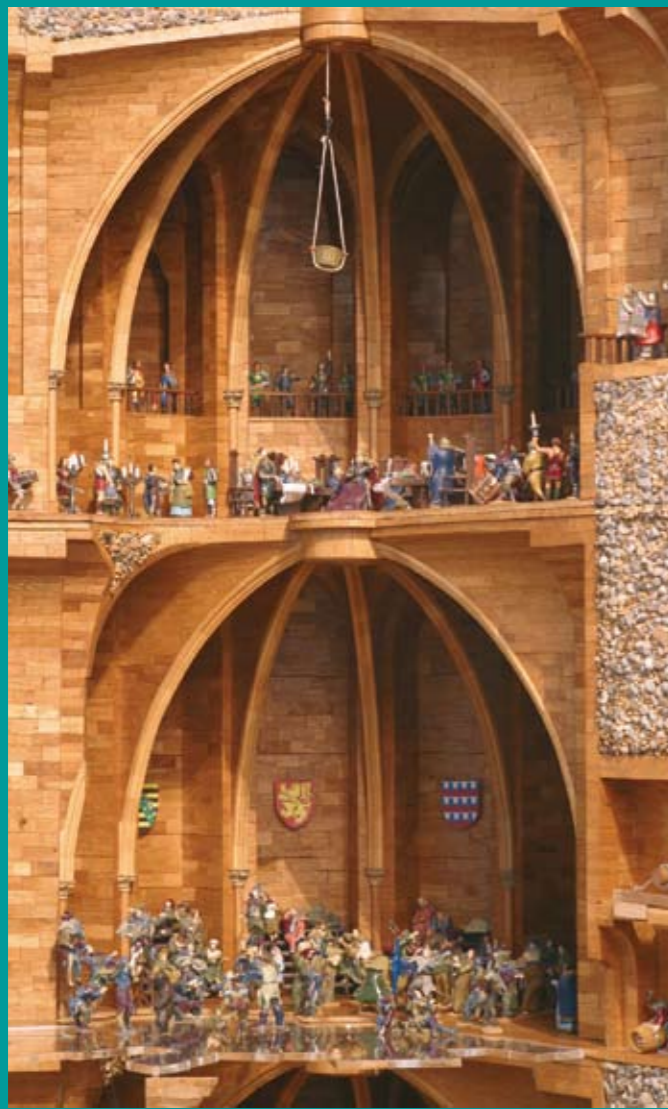




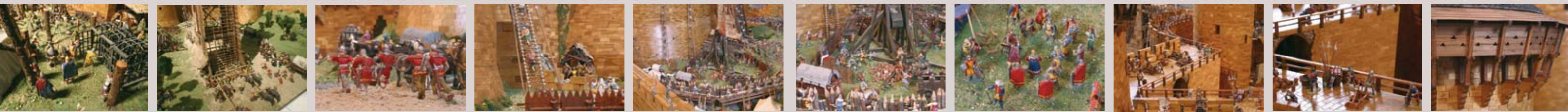
The exhibition's main attraction is the monumental authentic model of the Donjon of Coucy. It had survived from the Middle Ages but was reduced to rubble in 1917. German troops blew it up when redeploying in World War I. Constructed in three years' time only, it was the largest residential tower ever built in Europe: 54 m (177 ft) tall, 31 m (100 ft) in diameter, with walls up to 7.5 m (25ft) thick.



Scale 1 : 25  
Measurements: 6 m x 6 m  
high 2,40 m (8ft)  
ca. 2500 handcrafted figurines



The exhibition shows the castle in 1339, at the beginning of the Hundred Years' War between France and England, when it was unsuccessfully besieged by English troops. The siege is graphically brought to life with the enemy attempting to undermine the tower. Models of catapults and other missile-throwing machines as well as of assault towers and siege engines offer comprehensive information on military technology at that time. However, there are also scenes representing the court society, complete with a knights' banquet, jugglers, dancers, musicians, mountebanks, pages, cooks and artisans.



## Information boards guiding through exhibition French Donjons

### General Introductory Notes

- The ICRS, its mission, research and activities
- The ICRS, media response
- List of valued sponsors
- 118 French Donjons explained in detail
- Glimpses at 10th to 15th century history
- Power politics in France, 10th - 15th centuries
- Glossary of architectural terms
- Historical development of donjon architecture
- Development of castle building in France, England as well as in the Crusader states

- Relationships and cross-influences
- Etchings showing views of Coucy
- Drawings showing views of Coucy
- Historical documents illustrating the history
- Coucy up to 1917
- Coucy after 1917
- Record of archaeological research on Coucy
- Royal donjons built under King Philip II.

### Selected castles

Name of Castle	French Département	Name of Castle	French Département
-Aigues-Mortes	Gard	-Gisors	Eure
-Ambleny	Aisne	-Grand Fougeray	Ille-et-Vilaine
-Bassoues	Gers	-Houdan	Yvelines
-Beaucaire	Gard	-La Rochelle	Charente-Maritime
-Bonaguil	Lot-et-Garonne	-Loches	Indre-et-Loire
-Castelnaud	Dordogne	-Najac	Aveyron
-Chalucet	Haute-Vienne	-Niort	Deux-Sèvres
-Chambois	Orne	-Nogent-le-Rotrou	Eure-et-Loir
-Chateaudun	Eure-et-Loir	-Puivert	Aude
-Château-Gaillard	Eure	-Provins	Seine-et-Marne
-Chauvigny	Vienne	-Queribus/ Peyrepertuse	Aude
-Chinon	Indre-et-Loire	-Septmonts	Aisne
-Crest	Drôme	-Tours d' Elven	Morbihan
-Dinan	Côtes-du-Nord	-Tour Philippe-le-Bel	Gard
-Etampes	Essonne	-Tour Solidor	Ille-et-Vilaine
-Falaise	Calvados	-Vincennes	Val-de-Marne
-Gent	Oost-Flandre		

Please note:

Our information boards come with two holes both at the top and the bottom of the board to allow to fix them to different surfaces. Other ways of mounting the boards are also available.

Each board is approximately (B x H)  
Weight

ca. 1,50 m x 1,25 m (5 x 4.1 ft)  
ca. 4 kg

## Exhibition French DONJONS

### French knight's tournament



This exhibition presents further aspects of court life in 14th-century France: the tournament where knights of the French aristocracy sport their coats of arms and compete with each other armed and on horseback. In this scene as well, the centre stage is given to the Lord of Coucy who has invited illustrious knights to his tournament. A dance group adds to the liveliness of the display.





Scale:

1:25

Measurements:

base 2 m x 2 m (6.5 x 6.5 ft)

700 handcrafted figurines, many dressed in the heraldic colours of French aristocracy set in the authentic context of the time.



# Exhibition

## CASTLES AND BAZAARS IN THE CRUSADER PERIOD

### The Crac des Chevaliers - Syria



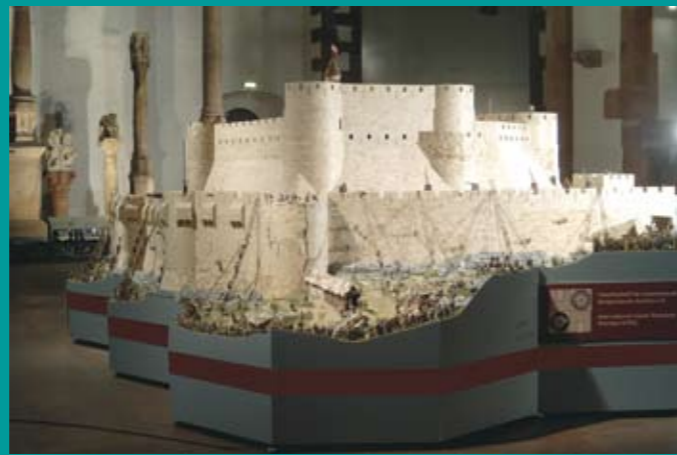
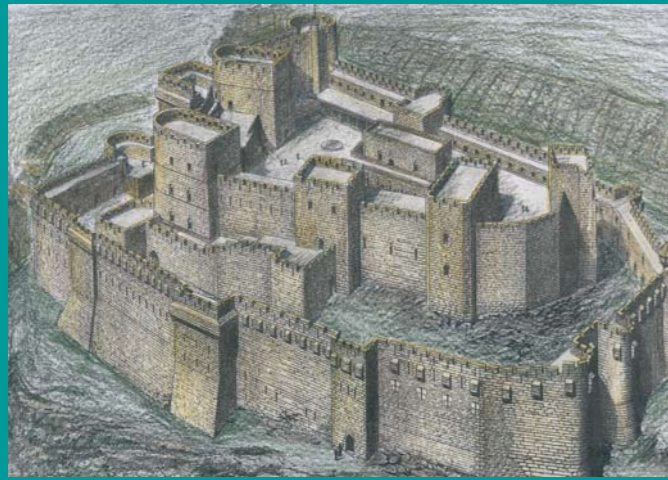
For this exhibition, an advisory Board to the ICRS with international experts in architecture and history was installed in 2000. The group produced some 60 information boards, both in English and German, and a catalogue. The multicolour boards are subdivided into two types:

- Boards providing general introductory information on historical, architectural and technological facts which characterise the Crusader period, and
- Boards with more specific information including reproductions of Christian and Muslim castles and information on towns.

The information boards provide a general survey of the state of the science and the historical context of Christian and Muslim castles in Crusader period and today.







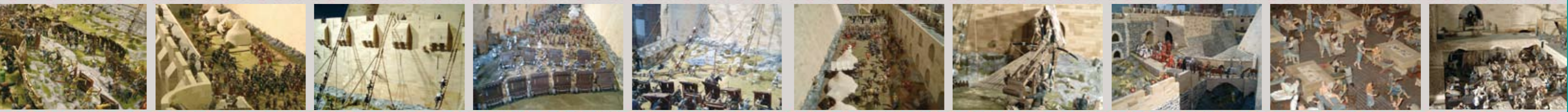
This castle held by the Knights of St. John lies in western Syria. Today it is a major tourist attraction. It was one of the most powerful of all Crusader castles. The model shows the last phase of the siege laid by Mamluk sultan Baybars in March 1271. The southwestern tower of the outer castle has been undermined and is about to collapse allowing the enemy to intrude. While Muslim attackers and Crusader defenders are set to engage in fighting, pilgrims and country people are seen fleeing into the inner castle. The model manages to present the situation in an interesting way avoiding however the depiction of any bloodshed.

Historically, at the end of one month's siege, the Knights of St. John abandoned the castle. The Muslims allowed them unhindered departure under a promise of safe conduct.

The most interesting view of the model is from the rear right into the inner castle opened up on this side, as well as into the dormitory, capable of 2,000 people, the entrance hall, the knights' great hall and the kitchen.



Scale 1:25  
 Measurements 6 m x 6 m (19x19 ft)  
 ca. 2.30 m (7.5 ft) tall  
 ca. 2000 handcrafted figurines



Information boards guiding through the exhibition

**CASTLES AND BAZAARS OF THE CRUSADER PERIOD**

General Intoductory Notes - History, architecture, technology of the period

The ICRS, its mission, research and activities

Glossary of castle terms

History of the Crusaders

Muslim rulers

Christian rulers

Historical key points

Knights Templar

Knights of St. John

Knights of the Teutonic Order

Religious architecture of the Crusader period

Ayyubid and Mamluk military architecture

Turning Points: Hittin and Ain Galut

Transmission of Science I and II

Information boards - Muslim castles and towns

Basar allgemein

Aleppo Basar	Syria	Damaskus Town Defences	Syria
Aleppo Zitadelle	Syria	Damaskus Citadel	Syria
Ajlun	Jordan	Harim	Israel
Aqaba und Pharaoneninsel	Jordan	Masyaf	Syria
Ar-Rahba	Syria	Mudiq	Syria
Baalbek	Lebanon	Palmyra	Syria
Bosra	Syria	Shaizar	Syria
Damaskus Basar	Syria	Subaiba	Israel

Informationboards - Christian castles and towns

Akkon	Israel	Kerak	Jordan
Anavarza	Turkey	Korykos	Turkey
Arsuf	Israel	Margat	Syria
Ascalon	Israel	Montfort	Israel
Bagras	Turkey	Rhodos	Greece
Beaufort	Lebanon	Rum Kale	Turkey
Belvoir	Israel	Sahyun	Syria
Castles and city on Zyper		Shawbak	Jordan
Burzaih	Israel	Sidon	Lebanon
Chastel Blanc	Syria	Sis	Turkey
Crac des Chevaliers I - III	Syria	Toron	Lebanon
Giblet	Lebanon	Tortosa	Syria
Jerusalem town walls	Israel	Tripoli	Lebanon
Jerusalem David's tower	Israel	Yilan Kale	Turkey

All information boards are fitted for securing on any kind of wall.

Measurements (B x H)

1,40 m x 1,22 m (4.6 x 4 ft)

Weight:

ca. 4 kg

**Exhibition**

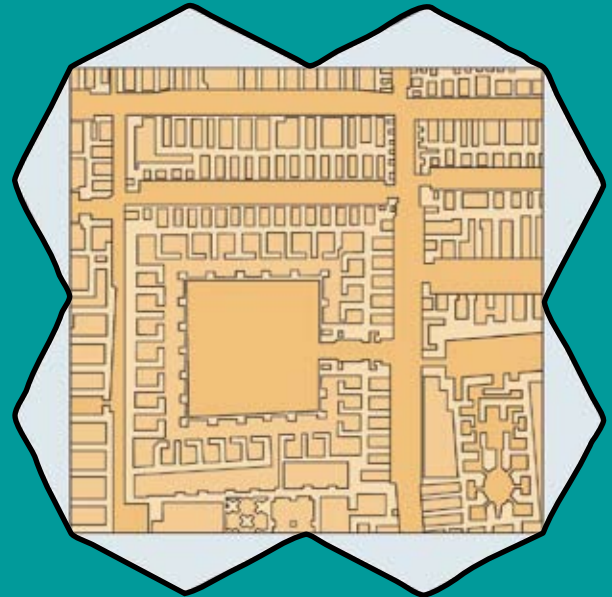
**CASTLES AND BAZAARS IN THE CRUSADER PERIOD**

**Aleppo Bazaar**



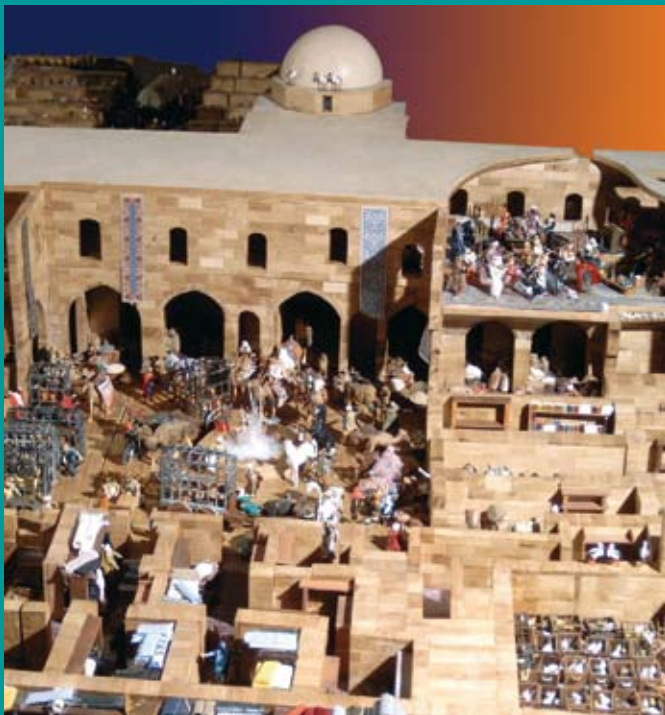
This exhibit presents a section of Aleppo's bazaar covering an actual area of 80 x 80 m (260 x 260 ft). It is the world's largest bazaar, situated near the Friday Mosque and the Citadel Hill, and still in use today. The exhibit was crafted true to detail based on a survey carried out by Syrian architects. In addition, a caravanserai, public baths from the early Ottoman era, surrounded by narrow lanes with busy market activities are shown in a real-life atmosphere.





Scale  
Measurements  
ca. 700 handcrafted figurines

1:25  
4 m X 4 m (13 x 13 ft)



# Exhibition

## CASTLES AND BAZAARS IN CRUSADER PERIOD

### Crusader Ships Anchored in Acre Harbour - Israel



The model shows a detail of Acre Harbour from the middle of the 13th century earlier than 1291. Two scientifically researched and historically documented types of ships are shown true to detail: A galley, called Tarida, which was built for the the armada of Karl of Anjon in 1274 equipped for 108 oarsmen. Moreover there is a nave from 1246, a ship for 450 pilgrims, from the armada of Ludwig IX, who was known as the Saint.





Scale 1 : 25

Measurements 3 m x 2 m (9 x 6 ft)

Approximately 650 hand-crafted Christian figurines of mariners, pilgrims,



# Exhibition

## CASTLES AND BAZAARS IN THE CRUSADER PERIOD

### Showcases

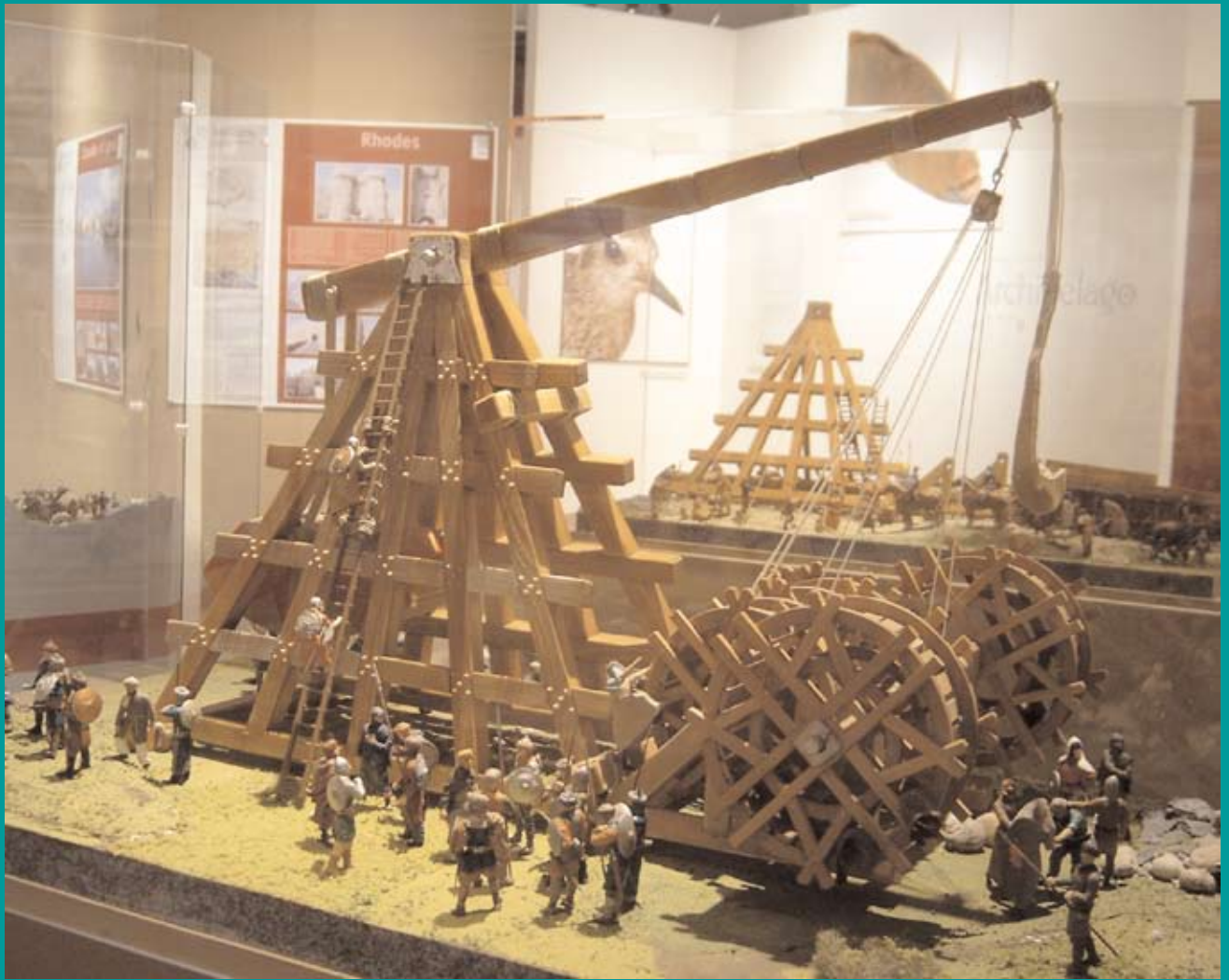


In addition to the main exhibits and the information boards, several showcases provide further informative and lively scenes.

The showcase depicted above presents typical public bath and bazaar chambers.

Scale 1:25  
Measurements 60 cm x 60 cm (2 x 2 ft)  
some 40 handcrafted figurines





These showcases present two stone-throwing catapults of the same type. Muslims most probably developed this type of counter-weight trebuchet during the Crusader period; it had an unbelievable range and could hurl very heavy missiles.

Scale 1:25  
Measurements 1x0,59m (3x1,77ft)  
ca. 60 handcrafted figurines



## Some safety hints around our exhibitions

On one side of our castle models there is a double-sided set of steel steps complete with railings leading up to a rostrum so everybody regardless of height or age can view the exhibit from a vantage point.

Measurements: base 3.50 x 1 m (11.5 x 3 ft), 0.56 m (app. 2 ft) height.



The bigger exhibits (Donjon of Coucy, Knights' Tournament, Crac des Chevaliers, Aleppo Bazaar) have all-round see-through protective shields up to 2 m high (Sekurit Planilux security glass). These panels of shatterproof glass are securely joined together so there is no danger for public or staff.

A free area of at least 9 by 9 m (some 30 ft) is recommended for the models of the Donjon of Coucy as well as the Crac des Chevaliers. The Aleppo Bazaar needs 7 by 7 m (some 23 ft) at least, the Knights' Tournament 5 by 5 m (15 ft).

ICRS staff in cooperation with staff from the exhibiting institution will mount all exhibits. Adaptation of the displays to local conditions in the museums is possible. The assembly lasts four to six days depending on circumstances.







A selection of exhibitions organised by the ICRS:

- Albrechtsburg, Meissen (D)
- Ancienne abbaye St.Léger, Soissons (F)
- Archäologisches Museum, Frankfurt (D)
- ATC, Eupen (B)
- Burg Kriebstein, Kriebstein (D)
- Burg Linn, Krefeld (D)
- Burg Mildenstein (D)
- Château de Loches, Loches (F)
- Château de Sully-sur-Loire, Orléans (F)
- Conseil Général, Strasbourg (F)
- Haus der Architekten, Düsseldorf (D)
- Hôtel du Département, Strasbourg(F)
- Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska (USA)
- National Geographic Society, Washington D.C. (USA)
- Plassenburg, Kulmbach (D)
- Runneburg, Erfurt (D)
- Schloß Burg, Solingen (D)
- Schloß Rheydt, MG-Rheydt (D)
- Veste Coburg, Coburg (D)





# GIB

International Castle Research Society



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