

Casus Belli Nr 51

El Khaf – The Castle of the Assassins (1273)

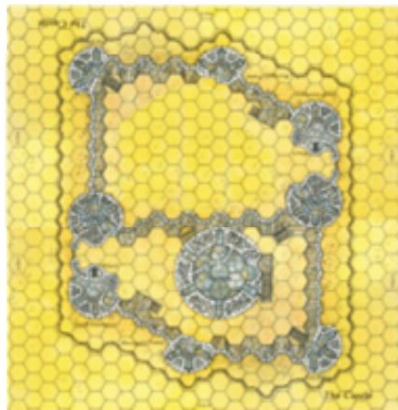
The story

In 1273, the troops of Sultan Baybars laid siege to the castle of El Kahf, the last fortress held by the Ismailis, better known as the Assassin sect.

Founded in the 11th century, this sect gained great influence in the Middle East thanks to a formidable weapon: assassination. It was in Syria that the Assassins established themselves most firmly. In the Djebel Ansarié, a strategic region located between Tripoli, Antioch and Homs, they occupied several castles from the 12th century. Feared by both Arab princes and Crusaders, they were finally defeated by the Mongols who destroyed their main fortresses.

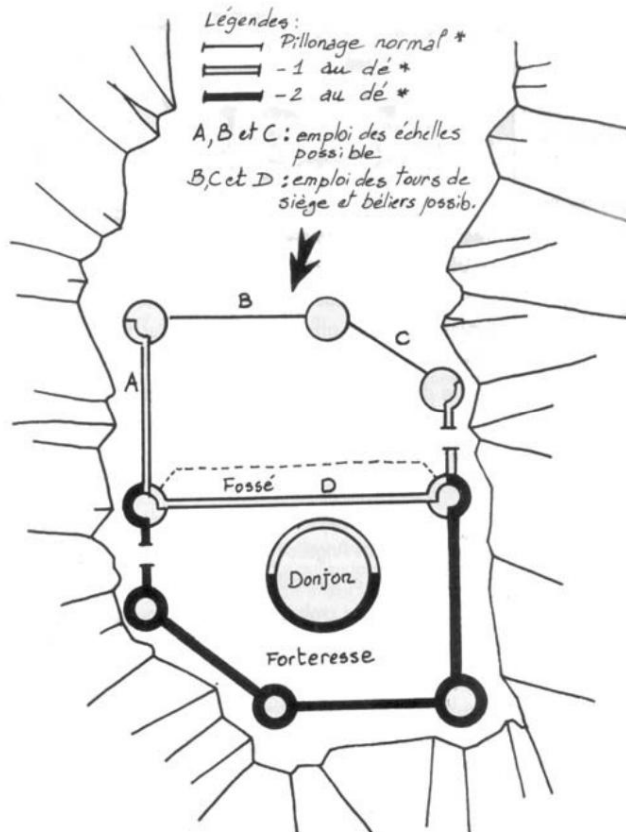
After the victory of the Egyptian armies over the Mongols at the Battle of Ain Jalout (1260), Sultan Baybars began the systematic reconquest of Crusader strongholds, some of whom had allied themselves with the invaders of the steppes. In 1271, he finally captured Crac des Chevaliers, a supposedly impregnable Crusader castle located in Djebel Ansarié. At the same time, he decided to finish off the last Assassin castles. In 1273, only El Khaf Castle, commanded by the terrible Hassan ed Din Siman, still defied the authority of the Mamluk sultan. What happened next is up to you.

Card assembly & posi




















Starting

Instructions To get this playmat, you need an additional Castle card. cut along the dotted line indicated on the sketch, then stick it on the first map (double-sided tape). In order to hide the rest of the dungeon, glue over flat ground boxes recovered from the cutting scraps. Finally, we add a staircase to access the ramparts and we make two openings (a stone staircase and a tower entrance) in both towers common to the lower courtyard and the fortress, so as to connect these. These three elements will also be found in the falls.



- > The besiegers can shell the castle from positions located outside the map. The effects of the shelling must be recorded on two siege sheets: one for the farmyard, the other for the fortress (see sketch for the pounding modifications).
- > Wall D can only be pounded if a breach has been opened in B or C. These modifications are in addition to the normal changes.
- > The days when the besiegers decide to launch a assault, we set up the game mat. The player The besieger then places the "demolished wall" pawns on the relevant squares. In the event that he has already seized the farmyard and he wants to use siege towers, he places the fascines he has on the moat squares of his choice. It is impossible to bombard the castle when a assault is given.
- > On the day an assault is launched, the Defender player places his characters anywhere inside the castle. The besiegers then enter through side H of the additional card (indicated by an arrow on the sketch).

Casus Belli Nr 51**The pawns**

				The Besiegers			
<div><div><div>12</div><div>8</div><div>8</div></div><div></div><div>Hasan</div></div> <div>Assassin</div>		The player representing the Crusader has 1300 points to build his army, which he divides into 3 groups.		<div><div><div>30</div><div>18</div><div>12</div></div><div></div><div>Al-Kamil</div></div> <div>Mamluk Royal</div>		Their leader is Al-Kamil Baybars, Sultan of Egypt and Syria	
The defending player is entitled to 200 points characters to choose from:				The Besieging player is entitled to 900 points of characters and equipment to choose from:			
<div><div><div>9</div><div>6</div><div>6</div></div><div></div><div>Mohammed</div></div> <div>Heavy Syrians</div>	<div><div><div>7</div><div>6</div><div>8</div></div><div></div><div>Bayan</div></div> <div>Infantry Syrian</div>	<div><div><div>7</div><div>4</div><div>8</div></div><div></div><div>Mohammad</div></div> <div>Infantry Seljuk</div>	<div><div><div>4</div><div>4</div><div>8</div></div><div></div><div>Qutuz</div></div> <div>Archers at foot</div>	<div><div><div>24</div><div>12</div><div>12</div></div><div></div><div>Abaga</div></div> <div>Mamluks royal</div>	<div><div><div>20</div><div>13</div><div>15</div></div><div></div><div>Taki</div></div> <div>Light Mamluks</div>	<div><div><div>16</div><div>8</div><div>12</div></div><div></div><div>As-Salih</div></div> <div>Seljuks heavy</div>	<div><div><div>12</div><div>7</div><div>15</div></div><div></div><div>Ayub</div></div> <div>Archers at horse</div>
<div><div><div>4</div><div>4</div><div>8</div></div><div></div><div>Jalil</div></div> <div>Slingers</div>	<div><div><div>6</div><div>6</div><div>8</div></div><div></div><div>Talat</div></div> <div>Assassin</div>	<div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div><div></div><div>Barrel of oil</div></div> <div></div>	12	<div><div><div>7</div><div>6</div><div>6</div></div><div></div><div>Abdur</div></div> <div>Crossbowmen</div>	<div><div><div>7</div><div>4</div><div>8</div></div><div></div><div>Murafa</div></div> <div>Archers Sudanese</div>	<div><div><div>6</div><div>4</div><div>8</div></div><div></div><div>Said</div></div> <div>Sudanese Javelins</div>	<div><div><div>5</div><div>5</div><div>8</div></div><div></div><div>Ibrahim</div></div> <div>Fatimid</div>
<p>> If desired, the player can also designate two Assassins disguised as Syrian infantry and/or Seljuk. In this case, the character's cost is that of an Assassin and not a normal soldier. It secretly write down everyone's name on a separate sheet of paper.</p> <p>> Defenders' equipment includes unlimited flaming arrows and food to last six months! Assassins are not limited in their ammunition.</p>				<p>> The cost of the equipment is as follows: Fascine: 2 pt., scale: 3 pt., screen: 3 pt., battering ram: 40 pt., siege tower: 60 pt., trebuchet: 40 pt. and mangonel: 15 pt. The equipment is operational from the first day of the siege.</p> <p>> No additional equipment can be built during the siege as there is no tree within 20 km around and the only transport of the material would take several weeks.</p>			

Special rules

> If, during an assault, all the defenders find themselves in the fortress, the besiegers have the possibility of immediately stopping the assault, thus ending the current day. On the following days, when a new assault is given, all defenders must be placed in the fortress and the besiegers inside or outside the bailey, but out of range of possible enemy shooters (in a tower or behind a wall, for example). The same principle applies if the besiegers have invaded the fortress and the defenders have taken refuge in the keep.

NB The two towers common to the lower courtyard and the fortress are considered to be part of the latter.

> Only the ditch inside the bailey is considered a ditch in the game. The ditch surrounding the castle, on the other hand, serves to indicate the limit of the rocky platform on which the castle rests (with the exception of the ditch that runs along walls B and C, see sketch, and which is considered flat ground). In other words, beyond the ditch, there is nothing: the slope falls steeply into the valley. To get around the castle, the characters are therefore obliged to pass through the squares "ditch". Any retreat outside the "ditch" squares is impossible (always except sides B and C). Drawbridges are considered to be swing gates associated with metal portcullises. They are opened normally, by the corresponding winch.

> The rules for Crusades (French version) are applied here. We advise players to reread the changes made to the Siege rules, particularly regarding shooting and movement (section 2 of the Crusades rulebook).

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Victory Conditions

The besiegers obtain: ➤ a resounding victory if they capture the entire castle (including the keep) in less than 20 days; ➤ a decisive victory if they capture the entire castle (including the keep) in 40 days.

The defenders achieve: ➤ a resounding victory if they still hold the entire castle after 40 days; ➤ a decisive victory if they still hold the fortress after 40 days; ➤ a marginal victory if they only hold the keep.

In a hurry to finish off the Crusaders first, Sultan Baybars lifted the siege after forty days, but not without having burned down and destroyed a good part of the castle.

The Assassins' Castle Site

Situated on a rocky peak at the confluence of several steep-sided valleys, El Kahf Castle occupied a formidable defensive position. Potential attackers could only reach it from one side (indicated by an arrow on the diagram). Shelling the walls was also very difficult because siege engines had to be installed on nearby heights with reduced effectiveness. The height of the fortress walls was such that it prohibited the use of ladders and, in order to bring up a siege tower, attackers had to first seize the

farmyard.