THE TEMPLARS' CASTLE

At the time of the Crusades the castle was thought to be the best weapon for holding onto territory. Over two centuries the barons of the Franks and the Religious Orders built nearly one hundred castles, with a length of walls of over 1000 kilometres, from inland Anatolia to the edge of the Red Sea. An enormous project within which we can identify the importance of particular fortresses and gain understanding of the technologies of the period, not least the difficulties of building a castle in mountains or in open desert.

By building in this way a large number of strongholds, of which some are counted among the most beautiful produced in the Middle ages, the Crusaders were not only following the medieval art of war. They were also looking for a way of compensating for their enormous numerical inferiority. A handful of men in a castle acquired, in fact, a capacity for defence worth ten times their number, and represented a constant danger to an invader who dared to ignore them. Lines of communication and supply were never certain if there was an enemy castle nearby. Also, apart from a few big battles and frequent surprise attacks and raids between neighbours, the conflicts of this period consisted above all of a succession of sieges which often ended up wearing down even the most intrepid of conquerors.

In times of war, the role of border castles was to delay the advance of the enemy so as to give time for the garrisons of towns and hinterland castles to organise their response. The role of the great fortresses was more strategic. It consisted of holding at all costs in front of an enemy which was most commonly vastly superior in number, in such a way as to create islands of resistance which would provide many points of support for the re-conquest of the invaded territory. As a consequence the baronial castles provided very elaborate systems of defence, as you can see in the description that follows.

- either give battle with all their forces while withdrawing from that part of the castle or town that they control; in that situation the besieged garrison automatically recovers control of the whole fortification;

- or divide their forces into two: one party will give battle while the other will continue the siege in the interior of the fortification; in this situation, the besieged automatically gain the initiative and can try to retake the part of the town or castle held by the besiegers.

This initiative is only applicable for the first day of the strategic siege turn during which battle takes place. If the besieged refuse to take the initiative, it will revert to the besiegers. The battle and the combats in the interior of the castle or town must be played simultaneously, each player passing from one table to the other.

If the besiegers refuse to give battle and decide to take refuge in the part of the castle or town that they control (as was notably the case at the siege of Antioch during the Crusades in 1098), they can take their siege engines there. No rule stops the besieged from trying to set these on fire during the assaults. From the supply table, the besiegers have at their disposal the rations left by the besieged garrison when they retreated to the citadel (see Action 1 of section 2.64 of the CROISADES rules), as well as those that they may have brought with them.

Concerning initiative, the roles are from now on reversed: the besieged (citadel and reinforcements) from now on become the besiegers, and those who hold the ramparts become the besieged. However, if the new besiegers choose to batter from a distance, the side that holds the ramparts can decide on an assault against the citadel, even if they have not obtained the initiative. The battle and the combats in the interior of one or the other side are suspended. Only the rules on automatic surrender are applicable (see Game Aid 2 for CROISADES).

Garrison surrender table

It is necessary to add the following bonus at the end of the Surrender Table (from Game Aid 2 of CROISADES):
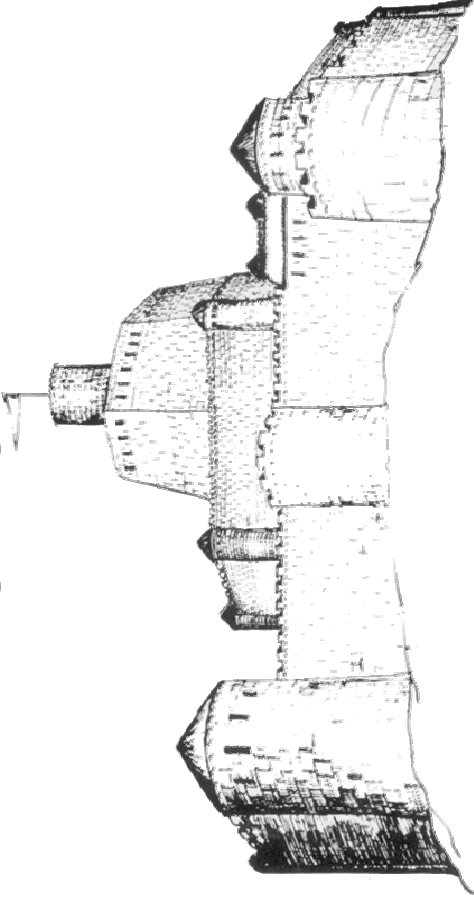
"or +4 if the besiegers control all the castle, or all the town, with the exception of the keep (this situation does not apply to the border castle)".

It will be noted that three different factors are taken into account for bonuses: the number of besiegers, the level of supply of the besieged, and the degree of progress of the siege. Only the bonuses derived from different factors are cumulative.

Movement and combat on stairways

When the start or end of a stairway coincides exactly with the side of a hexagon, only the space of the hexagon in question allows access to the stairway or combat with a character on it. In the same way, when a stairway opens onto two hexes at the same time, both hexes allow access and combat. Finally, when a stairway opens into the middle of a hex, all the hexes adjacent to that one can be used for access to the stairway or to participate in combat with a character on it.

Clarifications And Supplementary Rules Concerning Sieges

Comparative table of levels of elevation

The table below allows comparison of different levels of elevation shown on the maps for the Border Castle, the Templars' Castle and the Fortified Medieval Town, which can be found respectively in the game SIEGE and the Expansion Sets 1 and 2. The principle applied is the same for all three maps: **the level of elevation of a hex is equal to the number of stair hexes necessary to reach it from Level 0.**

On all three maps Level 0 is shown by flat terrain hexes (yellow). There are, however, two categories of flat terrain hex that are not at level 0: those that are at the bottom of a moat, and those that form the inner courtyard of the citadel of the Templars' Castle. In the second situation it is considered in reality that access through the St. James Gate includes a broad ramp and that there is a consequent change in level from one courtyard to the other.

Note: The levels shown here for the Border Castle replace those rules used in the game SIEGE.

Special details: Some arrow-slits, whose design may cause some confusion, contain a small black arrow: this has the sole purpose of showing which direction is affected by an arrow-slit. On the other hand, for aesthetic reasons, some rampart hexes are curved: as a result they do not precisely match the hexagonal grid. As a general rule the type of hex is determined by the majority terrain, in other words by the terrain which covers more than half the area of the hex.

Description of the Castle

In designing the castle represented here we were inspired by different plans of crusader castles, notably by the most famous of them all: Krak des Chevaliers which can be found in hex 3208 of the strategic map for CROISADES. As it was designed the Templars' Castle offers four successive lines of defence.

The first is, of course, made up of the outer ramparts. The main entrance is protected by a **fortified guard post** and an **uncrossable moat** that is too deep to be filled with bundles of wood. Any character falling into the moat is automatically killed by the fall. Access to the main courtyard of the castle is by means of a straight ramp, which ends in a **chicane**. This layout makes surprise attacks very difficult, even with the drawbridge lowered. Also, while they hold the Guard Post, the defenders have the possibility of making sallies, whose effect can be devastating against besiegers defending among the clumsy siege engines.

The second line of defence consists of the walls of the **citadel**, which includes the **lower inner courtyard**, the **upper court** and the **keep**. The two courtyards are open to the sky with the exception of the corner towers. It is difficult not to notice that a part of the ramparts of the citadel face directly onto the outside of the castle. The besiegers would count themselves lucky if just one major error on the part of the defenders were to ensure the success of an attack on this side.

The third line of defence is placed at the level of the **upper court**. The single stairway which leads from there can in fact be neutralised thanks to a system of pulleys which enable the top of the stairway to be raised like a drawbridge. To work the mechanism a character must be in the keep on the arrow-slit hex next to the middle of the stairway. The rules applied are the same as for drawbridges (section 1.8 of the SIEGE rules). However, if a character is on the stairway hex at the moment that the mechanism is set in motion, that character will be wounded (not stunned). To show that the stairway is not usable, place a blank counter on the upper hex. That hex is considered to be impassable. Note that a besieger cannot use a scaling ladder to reach the Upper Court unless it can be placed on a rampart hex next to the wall, or on a flat terrain hex in the inner courtyard of the citadel. The wall surrounding the Upper Court offers the same protection as a normal rampart.

The final line of defence is provided by the **keep** and on occasion the **Tower of Solomon**. A **secret passage**, marked by dotted lines on the map, connects these two parts of the castle. You enter the two ends by stone spiral staircases. The staircase hex costs two movement points. The other passageway hexes cost only one point each. Friendly characters can pass each other. Enemy characters can fight each other. To differentiate characters in the secret passage from characters on the surface, place a blank counter on top of them. The secret passage can be flooded thanks to a **sluice system**, which a character can initiate from the keep hex containing the letter "S" of Secret. The rules used are the same as those for a drawbridge (section 1.8 of the SIEGE rules). At the end of the other player's turn all characters found in the passage (except those on the staircase hexes) are considered drowned. In the same way it is possible to drain the water and make the passageway usable again.

Note: The rules of SIEGE concerning the main door to the keep are also applied here (see sections 1.54 and 1.75.

Level of elevation	Border Castle (SIEGE)	Templars' Castle (Extension 1)	Fortified Medieval Town (Extension 2)
-5		Moat at main entry.	Moat at entry to citadel
-1	Moat around the castle	St. James Gate moat; Secret passage	
0	Flat terrain hexes (excluding moat)	Guard Post at main entry; Flat terrain hexes (excluding citadel courtyard and moats)	Stables and houses; Flat terrain hexes (excluding moat)
+1	Tower and rampart hexes	Lower level of Young Ladies' Tower and rampart hexes up to tower to right of main entrance; Inner Courtyard of citadel	Outer ramparts (except the part from Great Tower to Lady Gate and the two Pilgrims Gate towers)
+2	Keep hexes.	Upper level of Young Ladies' Tower and remaining rampart hexes (including those of the citadel).	Outer ramparts from Great Tower to Lady Gate; Pilgrims Gate towers; Citadel ramparts
+3		Solomon Tower and adjoining small tower; Upper Court (in citadel)	
+5		Keep hexes	Keep hexes and linked tower
+7	Watchtower on roof of the keep	Watchtower on roof of the keep	Watchtower on the keep

Shooting from different levels

As a general rule when the shooter and the target are not on the same level and are separated by an obstruction (rampart, house, etc.), shooting is possible if the character situated on the lower level is at least as far away from the obstruction as the character on the upper level. However, a substantial difference in levels of elevation can interfere with lines of fire which do not then fit into the general framework. In that situation the players can work out the possibility of shooting by making a quick calculation drawn from Thales' Theorem:
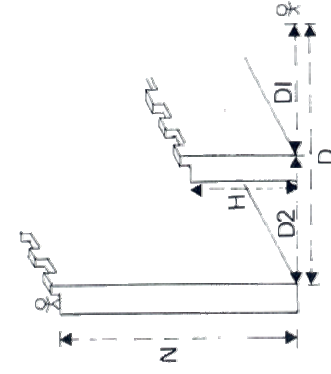
If "N" is the difference in level between the shooter and the target;

If "D" is the number of hexes between the two characters;

If "D1" is the number of hexes between the lower character and the bottom of the obstruction;

And if "H" is the difference in level between the lower character and the obstruction;

A SHOT IS POSSIBLE IF: N x D1 is greater or equal to D x H.

On the tactical plan it is often useful to know the zones of fire, and as a consequence the dead areas of a shooter on sentry duty.

For such, it is necessary to carry out one of the two following calculations:

D1 = D2 x H / (N - H)
D2 = D1 x (N - H) / H

The result must be rounded up if necessary to the next whole number. It shows the minimum distance between the obstruction and the character who may be able to shoot (see diagram).

Note: Hexes in which other characters can be found are not taken into account when making the calculation of distance. To determine the level of elevation, consider the highest point of houses and trees to represent an obstruction of level 1, without them blocking shooting from one rampart to another across the interior of a fortress. When a line of fire passes through a covered tower it is necessary to add 1 point to the level of the tower to include the height of the roof. When a shot passes over several obstacles, it is essential to check whether any one of them blocks the line of fire. Finally, each stairway hex is treated as being at the corresponding level of elevation.

Missile-fire and ramparts

A character on a rampart hex which is set back in relation to the battlements, in other words on a hex which does not touch the outer wall, cannot fire towards the outside nor can be targeted from the outside, except in two situations:

1.) If he is standing on the side of a demolished wall hex. He can then shoot or be targeted across the breach. He does not benefit in any way from any cover.

2.) If the enemy is standing on a siege tower. Shooting is then possible in both directions, from the time that the character in the siege tower is as close to the battlements as is the character on the ramparts. Here also the character on the ramparts does not receive any cover.

When the ramparts are at level 1 or level 2, houses and trees that are situated at a lower level will not block firing from one rampart to another.

Two characters, one on the lower level inside the walls, and the other on the ramparts, can shoot at each other. However, if the character above is not at the edge of the ramparts (on the interior side), shooting will only be possible under certain conditions:

- the rampart cannot be fortified on the interior side, as is the case for example with the towers either side of the Lady Gate in the Medieval Town;

- if there is one level of difference between the higher and the lower character, the latter must be **twice as far** from the edge of the rampart as the character standing on the rampart itself;

- if there are two levels of difference, the lower character must be **four times** as far from the edge of the rampart as is the upper character.

In calculating the distance separating each character from the edge of the ramparts, the character's own hex is not counted.

and at least one of the two is at the edge of the rampart. The lower hex, on which the ladder will be set up vertically (the counter will have to be changed), must be unoccupied and adjacent to one of the two carrying characters. For this operation each character spends four movement points. The ladder can be used in the same turn that it is installed.

Note: Any movement of a ladder is impossible if there is a character on it, or if an enemy character is on a hex adjacent to the bottom of the ladder.

Toppling a ladder from below: A character can attempt to topple a ladder from below in exactly the same way as if the attempt had been made from above (see rule 1.94 of SIEGE). To do this the character must be on a hex adjacent to the bottom of the ladder.

The end of an assault

An assault is treated as ended when no face-to-face combat has taken place for five turns, and all the defenders are separated from the attackers by a wall, a moat, a gate or an impassable hex. At the end of an assault, all the defenders who are isolated from the keep (i.e. unable to trace an empty line of hexes to the keep) are automatically captured.

This cutting short of the action, faithful to the reality of combat in the period, permits the attackers to regroup and the besieged troops to gain some time. It will be noted that as a consequence of this a border castle may be taken in two assaults, although it will often be necessary for four to take a baron's castle or a town.

Deployment beneath the ramparts

Representation in two dimensions limits the extent of interior spaces. In reality under the ramparts would have been found stables, living quarters, guardrooms, etc. It is therefore logical to permit a player to:

1. Stack horse counters at the bottom of a rampart, in which position they will all benefit from infinite cover;

2. Deploy attackers under the ramparts before launching the assault. This solution is obviously only possible when the besiegers have already gained control of part of the fortification. The characters are placed on the rampart hexes while recognising that they are in fact underneath. As soon as the assault starts, the attackers come out of their hiding place and the rampart hexes revert to their usual role. This type of deployment adds to and perfects the special rule used in Scenario 4 of SIEGE.

Besieging the besiegers

Once the besiegers have become the masters of the ramparts and the defenders continue to resist in the inner parts of the citadel, a troop of reinforcements may arrive to try to break the siege from outside. Faced with new arrivals, the besiegers have the choice between giving battle outside (see section 2.66 of the CROISADES rules), or alternatively to take refuge in that part of the castle or town that they control.

If they decide to give battle outside, the besiegers must choose one of the two following procedures:

Battering interior rampart hexes

A rampart hex behind the front edge of the battlements (i.e. one that is not in contact with the outer part of the wall) cannot be battered unless it is next to a demolished battlement hex. A single "D" result on the Battering Table will then be sufficient to demolish it, compared to the four hits required for a rampart hex next to the battlements.

Siege Towers

The height of the towers: Siege towers allow all heights corresponding to 1, 2 or 3 levels of elevation to be reached.

Cover: Characters on the top of the siege tower benefit from medium cover when anyone shoots at them from levels 1 or 2. When the shooter is on level 3 or above, they only receive light cover.

Angles of fire: A siege tower always tops the rampart that it attacks by one level. Consequently it is possible to shoot from the top of a siege tower into the fortification so long as the restrictions on shooting are satisfied (see above). The defenders only benefit from cover if they are immediately behind a battlement or in a covered area of the town or castle.

Movement of siege towers and battering rams:

Siege towers and battering rams can, where needed, pivot on their centre by one hex to the right or left. This manoeuvre takes one full game-turn. They can also move backwards. As a result, towers and rams can on occasion reach the inside of the castle or town so long as their movement is over flat terrain, drawbridge or filled moat.

Ladders and ramparts

The height of the ladders: Scaling ladders allow all heights corresponding to 1 or 2 levels of elevation to be reached. It is impossible to achieve heights of more than 2 levels with a ladder.

Movement: Climbing up or down a scaling ladder costs 3 movement points. If the ladder covers 1 level of elevation it is possible for a character with 8 movement points to climb a ladder and move onto a rampart hex [which costs 4] during the same game turn, so long as the ladder had been raised on a previous turn. On the other hand, if the ladder covers 2 levels of elevation, the character who climbs up or down it must end his turn **on** the ladder, however many movement points he has remaining. This rule replaces the one in section 2.69 of CROISADES.

Special rules on carrying ladders: Two characters on a rampart can lift up a ladder so long as it is currently in a vertical position and both are adjacent to the ladder without either being adjacent to an enemy who is in a position to attack. For this operation, each character spends 4 movement points. A "horizontal ladder" counter must then replace the "vertical ladder" counter. This counter is placed on the hexes occupied by the two characters.

Similarly, two characters carrying a ladder on a rampart can slide it to one side or the other at any time so long as they are not adjacent to an enemy in a position to attack