

## Welcome Address for the Symposium from 27. through 29.1.2006

Ladies and gentlemen.

It is indeed an auspicious day for me in my capacity as chairman of the *International Castle Research Society (ICRS)*.

You will certainly agree to it after I have outlined the achievements of our Society. For further details may I refer your attention to our internet website [www.burgenkunde.de](http://www.burgenkunde.de), where you will find information in four languages - German, English, French and Arabic.

The purpose of the Society is to research the castle culture from the Carolinian era to the end of the mediaeval period. We study mediaeval defence and civil buildings and follow up the current research work and network with institutions, which have similar objectives, like the *Deutsche Burgenvereinigung* here on the Marksburg.

The target group of our Society is the greater public. We would like to get people interested in medieval profane buildings. For this purpose replicas in a reduced scale of relevant buildings are made and are displayed in travelling exhibitions, together with supporting information material on wall charts and in catalogues.

As an example: The exhibition *French Donjons* with a replica of the *Donjon of Coucy* attracted 750.000 visitors in 18 cities in Europe and in Washington D.C. We do hope that our engagement for the cause will eventually result in a scientific study of the site of this unique building, which has been destroyed in 1917 during a relocation of the battle lines. The Donjon of Coucy was the most powerful castle of the 13th century.

On Saturday next week a further exhibition on the French Donjons will open in the world renowned *Joslyn Art Museum* in **Omaha / Nebraska**.

Information materials like wall charts and the various replicas were made with the help of about 24 students from the 'College of Fine Arts' in Aachen. Each student worked for one year on a project assigned to him or her. It took them in all eight years to draft the concepts and produce the information material and replicas. This way the students were introduced into the working methods of historians.

We thank Mr. **John Zimmer** from Luxembourg and our client, the architecture firm **Suradec** in Aleppo, that contributed newest research results. This made the design of the replicas of the **Crac des Chevaliers** and the **Bazaar of Aleppo** possible. The replicas can be seen in the exhibition 'Castles and Bazaars in the Crusader Period' in the Archaeological Museum in Frankfurt from the 4th of November 2005 onwards.

Master carpenter **Andranik Melikjan** helped a lot with his creative expertise to realise my plans as the architect in charge of the replica projects.

Many thanks go also to **Dr. Burger**, an expert in the materia. His valuable advice and his sketches to illustrate the situation during the **siege of the Crac du Chevalier in 1271** made a realistic replica of the castle and the ongoing battle possible. We are able to visualise two different assumptions in this replica.

To our delight the Primeminister of the State of North Rhine Westphalia has kindly agreed that both exhibitions will be under his patronage.

The American and Canadian members of the *Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East* were informed in advance of our presence on the *Annual Meeting & Museum EXPO 2004* in New Orleans. In our exhibition booth we also took care of the interests of the *Deutschen Burgenvereinigung*

In the year 2000 our Society installed a **scientific advisory board**. The group of experts supported our scientific work for the preparation of the exhibition in the *Archaeological Museum* in **Frankfurt**, which was launched on **4th of November 2005**. The expert's findings were presented on sixty wall charts, in an elaborate catalogue and - in extended versions - as contributions for discussion during a

colloquium. Furthermore a book with the sixty topics of the exhibition will be published.

The Society was lucky to get valuable assistance from Dr. Piana, a member and expert in our advisory body. Dr. Piana agreed - at first together with a colleague, than from the beginning of last year alone - to edit the contributions, to draw up the program of the *symposium* and to finalise the publication.

When searching for an appropriate location for the *symposium* we were lucky again. We enjoy a good relationship with the *Deutsche Burgenvereinigung*, which was founded 10 years ago. I like to recall the enthusiastic speech of Dr. **Busso von der Dollen**, at that time chairman of the founding session in Aachen. The smooth co-operation continued with the chairmen **Dr. Tragbar** and **Mr. Wagner**. The good relationship between **Prof. Meckseper** and **Prof. Hofrichter** as representatives of our Society and **Dr. Friedrich** and the always helpful ladies of the *Deutsche Burgenvereinigung* and of the *Europaeisches Burgeninstitut* led to the selection of a perfect place for the colloquium **The Marksburg**.

Dr. Piana co-ordinated papers and looked for contributions following the guidelines of the scientific advisory board. And - I presume - that you as experts in your field and interested public were happy to follow the invitation of the *Europaeisches Burgeninstitut*. No way seemed to be too long and the time well used. Our Society is very grateful to you and hopes that your expectations will be fulfilled.

In the premises of the former *Carmelite cloister* in Frankfurt we address the wider public with our exhibition *Castles and Bazaars in the Crusader Period*. And we aim specifically for the young to open up to them the unique world of the crusader states in the 12th and 13th centuries. The success is evident: On one day alone we counted 13 school classes as visitors.

We expect a similar large number of interested visitors during the travelling exhibition's stay at the *National Geographic Society* in **Washington D.C.**, which will be open for five months.

Ladies and gentlemen, I do hope that here on the Marksburg you as scientists or scientifically interested participants will be equally successful. This is what I wish you, the contributors and the participants.

And finally a question or perhaps even a request: With all your connections here in Germany and abroad, would you please assist our Society in continuing our two travelling expositions, *Castles and Bazaars in the Crusader Period* and *French Donjons*, which will soon be simultaneously in America.

Thank you

Bernhard Siepen

- Chairman -