



TOURS ET REMPARTS D'AIGUES-MORTES



• VISITOR
GUIDE

IN THE HEART OF THE CAMARGUE, SURROUNDED BY AN EXCEPTIONAL NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE, THE TOWERS AND RAMPARTS OF AIGUES-MORTES BEAR WITNESS TO NEARLY 800 YEARS OF HISTORY.

In the 13th century, Louis IX ordered the construction of Aigues-Mortes, a unique port city built among the lagoons. It reflected the Capetian kings' determination to establish their presence along the Mediterranean coast.

Its remarkably well-preserved ramparts and the famous Tour de Constance are today an exceptional example of Gothic military architecture. Although their primary purpose was defensive, they also display an artistic dimension, visible in the carved decorations, keystones and corbels that adorn some of the interior spaces.

Under the reign of Philip III the Bold, Aigues-Mortes was the only port of the Kingdom of France and played a strategic role in commercial trade. The surrounding lagoons, providing extensive waterways, welcomed merchant ships and galleys carrying precious goods from the East, such as silk and spices. The port was also the departure point for crusaders and pilgrims travelling to the Holy Land.

Protected by its powerful fortifications, the city developed rapidly. Over time, the gradual silting-up of the lagoons led to the decline of maritime activity, but paved the way for a new and essential resource: salt production.

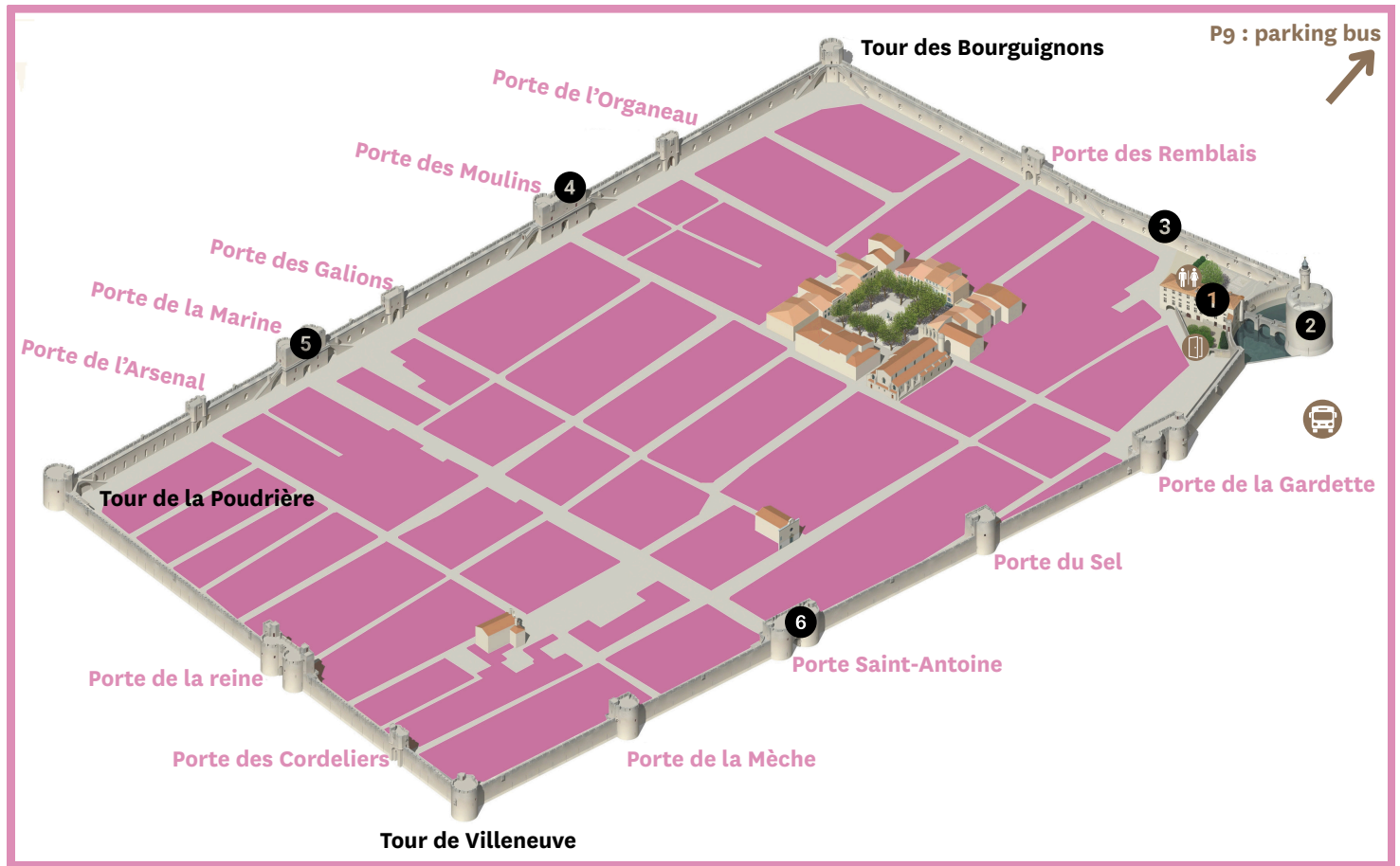
Religious conflicts later left their mark on the fortifications, which became a harsh prison for Protestant men and women until the 18th century.



01. View of the Porte des Remblais and the Tour de Constance from the curtain wall



WELCOME AND ENJOY YOUR VISIT!



1 - GOVERNOR'S LODGE

2 - TOUR DE CONSTANCE

3 - RAMPARTS

4 - PORTE DES MOULINS

5 - PORTE DE LA MARINE

6 - PORTE SAINT-ANTOINE

 **ENTRANCE – EXIT**

 **TOILETS**

 **DEPOSE BUS**



BEFORE EXPLORING THE RAMPARTS, THE GOVERNOR'S LODGE PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH ALL THE KEY INFORMATION THEY NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE SITE. THIS IMMERSIVE INTERPRETATION SPACE OFFERS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CITY'S HISTORY, FROM ITS FOUNDATION BY THE KING TO ITS COMMERCIAL AND STRATEGIC ROLE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

Acces conditions

Access to the Governor's Lodge is subject to specific conditions:

- The visit must take place under the responsibility of a teacher.
- Visitor capacity is limited in the interpretation rooms.
- Access arrangements must be planned in advance and approved by the site.

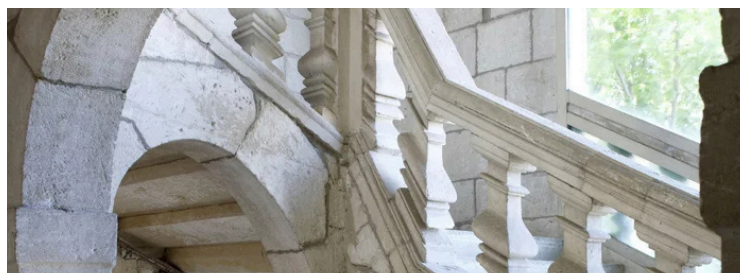
If necessary, groups are advised to be divided into smaller sections, with another area of the monument visited simultaneously.

Start of the visit

The interpretation area is accessed via a monumental staircase opening onto the main courtyard.

Things to observe with students:

- The lodge was built on the site of Louis IX's first castle, which was demolished in the 15th century;
- Medieval building materials and construction techniques;
- The symbolic function of the building: expressing the importance of the site.



02. Grand Staircase of the Governor's Lodge

As space is limited, groups may not exceed 20 students in the interpretation area.

The presence of an accompanying adult is mandatory in the interpretation area.

✧Lagoon / lagoon environment

A body of water with varying salinity, separated from the sea by a coastal barrier and connected to it by an opening known as a grau, formed by the enclosure of submerged bays.

Room 1 - The foundation of Aigues-Mortes

The first room focuses on the foundation of Aigues-Mortes in the 13th century by King Louis IX, also known as Saint Louis.

Through an immersive projection, students discover the geopolitical context of southern France at the time. The Capetian kingdom had no direct access to the Mediterranean Sea. The creation of Aigues-Mortes in this **lagoon environment** therefore met a strategic need: to establish a royal port.

This section helps students understand that the city did not emerge spontaneously, but was the result of a deliberate political decision shaped by military, economic and religious considerations.

Things to observe with students:

- Film about the foundation of Aigues-Mortes;
- Cast of the statue of Saint Louis of Mainneville (a painted plaster reproduction dating from the 20th century; the original sculpture was created around 1307).



03. Detail of Room 1 - Interpretation Area, Governor's Lodge



Room 2 - The port, trade and the crusades

In this room, Aigues-Mortes emerges as a major 13th-century port, open to the Mediterranean and frequented by numerous merchants, particularly from Italy.

Boat models help visitors identify the different types of vessels used at the time, such as the **galley** and the **cog/nef**. A projection brings the bustling activity of the port and bay to life, while an interactive touchscreen explores the major expeditions led by Louis IX, particularly the **Crusades**.

The role of King Philip III the Bold is also highlighted: in 1278, he made Aigues-Mortes the kingdom's principal port for maritime trade, further strengthening its economic importance.

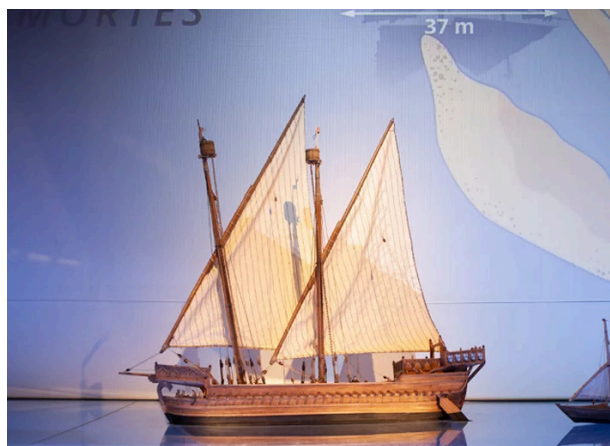
This room shows how Aigues-Mortes was both a departure point for the Crusades and a crossroads for commercial and cultural exchange.

Things to observe with students:

- Six boat models;
- A projection depicting boats in the Bay of Aigues-Mortes and its port system;
- An interactive touchscreen presenting the Seventh and Eighth Crusades.



05. Detail of Room 3 – Interpretation Area, Governor's Lodge



04. Detail of Room 2 – Interpretation Area, Governor's Lodge

Room 3 - The evolution of the city

The third room explores the transformations the city underwent over time. A video-mapping installation projected onto a model allows visitors to visualise the urban development of Aigues-Mortes.

An animated film highlights the importance of salt, an essential resource whose trade expanded considerably from the 14th century onwards, thanks to the numerous saltworks in the region.

Finally, a timeline traces key events in the history of religion in the region. Aigues-Mortes became an important Protestant stronghold before later being used as a place of confinement for **Huguenots**.

This room invites visitors to understand how a city can evolve, change its function and adapt to major political, economic and religious upheavals.

Things to observe with students:

- Film and model showing the evolution of the city;
- An interactive activity about salt production;
- A timeline of religious conflicts in the region.

✱Crusades

The name given to military expeditions undertaken by Western Christians from the 11th to the 13th centuries at the instigation of the papacy, with the stated aim of reclaiming the Holy Land from Muslim rule.

✱Galley

A small warship, generally propelled by oars and sails.

✱Cog / Nef

In the Middle Ages, a large sailing vessel.

✱Huguenots

A term originally used pejoratively by Catholics to refer to French Calvinist Protestants from the 16th to the 18th century.

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Room 4 - architecture and archeology

Before continuing the visit along the ramparts, this final room introduces visitors to the city's military architecture.

A 3D model helps explain the structure of the fortifications, while a tactile model provides a more tangible understanding of the defensive system.

Students can identify the different elements that make up the enclosure: towers, curtain walls and gates, and consider their respective functions.

The room also displays several archaeological objects discovered during excavations of the towers and ramparts.

Things to observe with students:

- A 3D digital model of the fortifications;
- A tactile model of the defensive system;
- A fragment of a **gargoyle** (made of limestone and dating from the second half of the 13th century, it was discovered in 2011 during archaeological excavations at the foot of the Queen's Gate).

The fragment depicts the head of a fantastic animal, with bulging eyes, prominent eyebrows and pointed ears flattened backwards. Its wide-open mouth extends the channel through which rainwater was discharged.

An interpretation experience accessible to all

The visitor experience has been designed to be accessible to as many people as possible:

- The content is available in several languages;
- Audiovisual displays are available in French Sign Language;
- Audio descriptions and tactile models help visitors with visual impairments understand the site.



o6. Detail of Room 4 - Interpretation Area, Governor's Lodge



o7. Interpretation Area in the Governor's Lodge - Video showing the evolution of the city

} When leaving the interpretation area, turn left to go down into the main courtyard.

From the courtyard, you can access the toilets, the ramparts and the Tour de Constance.

*Gargoyle

An opening through which water drains freely from a roof gutter or fountain, often decorated with a mask or shaped as a fantastic animal figure.



DOMINATING THE CITY OF AIGUES-MORTES, THE TOUR DE CONSTANCE EMBODIES ROYAL POWER, ARCHITECTURAL ACHIEVEMENT AND A PLACE OF REMEMBRANCE SHAPED BY THE HISTORY OF THE PROTESTANTS.

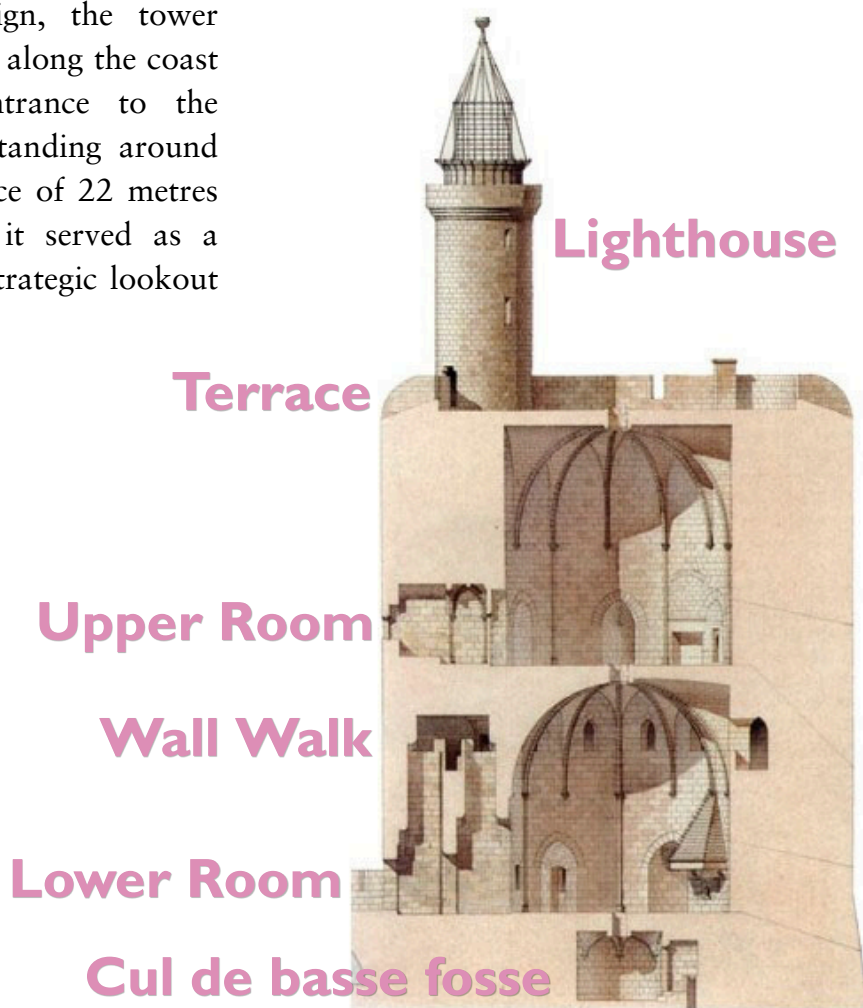
Built in the 13th century, between 1240 and 1248, during the reign of Louis IX, the Tour de Constance, also known as the King's Great Tower, is the centrepiece of the royal castle, which has since disappeared.

With its perfectly cylindrical design, the tower asserted the presence of royal power along the coast and symbolically marked the entrance to the kingdom. Massive and imposing, standing around 30 metres high, with a circumference of 22 metres and walls up to 6 metres thick, it served as a defensive tower, a residence and a strategic lookout point.

The visit is organised across several interconnected spaces, allowing visitors to understand both its military role and its history as a prison.

The visit begins in the Lower Room, followed by an ascent by lift to the terrace (Level 3). Visitors then descend via the spiral staircase, which leads to the Upper Room and then to the wall walk.

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o8. Plan de coupe de la Tour de Constance

} The visit begins in the Lower Room.

} Take the lift to the terrace, then descend to Levels 2 and 1 via the stairs.



The cul-de-basse-fosse and the lower room

The Lower Room forms the defensive heart of the tower. Circular in plan, it is covered by an impressive **vault** divided into twelve **ribbed sections**, resting on sculpted **small columns**.

At the centre, an oculus opens onto the cul-de-basse-fosse, a space that could otherwise only be reached by ladder. This lower level was probably used for storage — food, firewood and weapons — essential in the event of a **siege**.

The six-metre-thick walls demonstrate the building's formidable defensive strength. They contain **arrow slits** for firing and incorporate several essential features: a well, an oven and the **spiral staircase** used to move between levels.

The northern and southern entrances are particularly well protected by **portcullises** and **murder holes**, allowing defenders to control any attempt to enter.

✱ Vault

A curved or arched structure, generally made of masonry or assembled elements, used to cover a built space.

✱ Ribs

Projecting structural arches or moulded ribs, typically arranged diagonally within a Gothic vault.

✱ Small columns

Small columns, often attached to walls or pillars, supporting the springing of the vault ribs.

✱ Oculus

A small circular opening made in a wall or at the top of a dome or vault.

✱ Siege

A series of military operations undertaken to capture a fortified place.

✱ Arrow slit

A narrow opening in the walls or doors of a fortified structure, designed to allow defenders to fire projectiles at attackers.

✱ Spiral staircase

A staircase made entirely of wedge-shaped steps arranged around a central axis.

✱ Portcullis

A movable, heavily reinforced gate with strong spikes along its lower edge, used to defend the entrance to a fortified castle or building.

✱ Murder hole

An opening in a vault, ceiling or wall walk through which defenders could drop objects or other materials onto attackers below.

Things to observe with students:

- The vault divided into 12 ribbed sections;
- The central oculus, opening both upwards and downwards, which allowed stored supplies to be moved between the lower level and the upper floors;
- The 11 openings of the wall walk visible above;
- The murder holes above the entrances;
- The portcullis and locking mechanisms;
- The exceptional thickness of the walls.

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09. Lower Room of the Tour de Constance



The terrace and lighthouse

Located approximately 26 metres above ground level, the terrace offers an exceptional panoramic view across the surrounding landscape.

It is also home to a lighthouse, whose light, visible from a considerable distance, guided ships towards the port.

From this elevated viewpoint, visitors can read the landscape and understand the city's strategic location.

To the north:

- Several canals connect the commercial city with Montpellier and the Rhône. Originally, only one land route connected Aigues-Mortes to Nîmes: it passed through the Tour Carbonnière, a fortified outpost that also served as a strategic toll point.
- In the distance, the city of Nîmes and Mont Ventoux.

To the south, (towards the sea) :

- The city of Aigues-Mortes and its ramparts, built under Philip III and Philip IV and completed in 1300;
- Place Saint-Louis, the heart of the city;
- Around twenty metres from the southern rampart, the site of the medieval port of Aigues-Mortes;
- Lagoons and the 10,000-hectare **saltworks**, including the **camelle**, a large mound of harvested salt;
- In the distance, the modern towns of Le Grau-du-Roi and La Grande-Motte, founded respectively in 1879 and 1960.

Things to observe with students:

- The Camargue and its lagoon landscapes;
- The saltworks and salt production;
- The city of Aigues-Mortes and its regular street plan;
- The ramparts and their layout;
- The canals and transport routes.

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10. Terrace and Lighthouse of the Tour de Constance

✧ Rampart

A strong defensive wall forming part of a fortified enclosure.

✧ Saltworks

An area where salt is produced, typically by evaporating seawater or saline water.

✧ Camelle

A mound or pile of salt produced in a salt marsh or saltworks.



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The upper room - from noble chamber to prison

The Upper Room has architecture similar to that of the Lower Room, with a **ribbed vault** and a spacious circular interior.

It is accessed through a decorated **vestibule**, where visitors can see **graffiti** depicting ships, bearing witness to the maritime activity of Aigues-Mortes. These include a galley and two nefs with lateen sails. The room, however, is particularly associated with its later use as a prison for **Protestants** following the Revocation of the **Edict of Nantes** under the reign of **Louis XIV**.

Among the women imprisoned here, **Marie Durand** has become particularly well known. She is traditionally said to have carved the word "REGISTER" ("resist") into the **stone rim** of the oculus, which has since become a symbol of resistance.

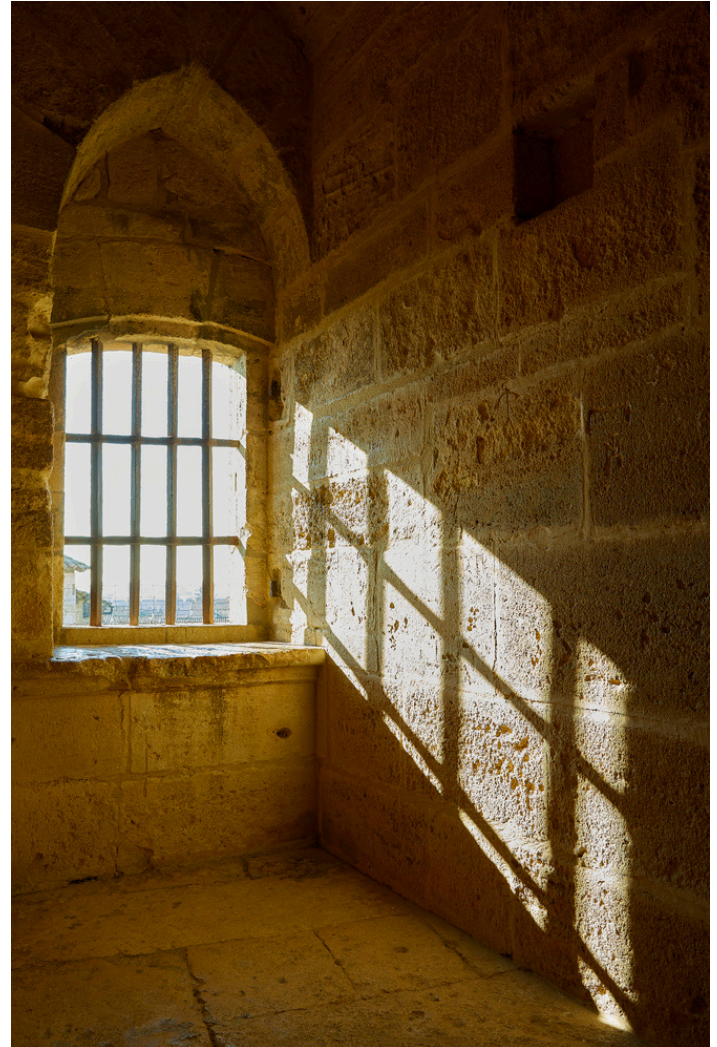
The walls also bear numerous inscriptions and drawings left by prisoners, providing evidence of their living conditions and identities.



11. "Register" graffiti in the Upper Room of the Tour de Constance

Things to observe with students:

- Ship graffiti in the access corridor;
- Prisoners' graffiti on the walls;
- The inscription "REGISTER";
- The ribbed vault;
- The organisation of the room as a space of confinement.



12. Upper Room of the Tour de Constance – Vestibule

} The **graffiti** found throughout the tower are fragile historical testimonies. It is essential to remind students **not to touch, rub against or scratch them**, in order to ensure their preservation and prevent irreversible damage.

*Vestibule

An entrance room or passage leading to other rooms. Here, it was a place where a guard stood to control access to the Upper Room.

*Graffiti

Writing, drawings or marks scratched, drawn or written on a wall.

*Stone rim

A raised stone edge forming a border around an opening. Here, the rim of the oculus.

*Protestant

A member of a Christian movement originating in the Reformation that separated from the Roman Catholic Church.



WITH ITS 1,640 METRES OF DEFENSIVE WALLS, THE FORTIFIED ENCLOSURE OF AIGUES-MORTES IS ONE OF THE BEST-PRESERVED MEDIEVAL FORTIFIED COMPLEXES IN EUROPE. WALKING ALONG THE RAMPARTS HELPS VISITORS UNDERSTAND HOW A CITY PROTECTS ITSELF, ORGANISES ITS SPACE AND ASSERTS THE POWER OF THE KINGDOM.

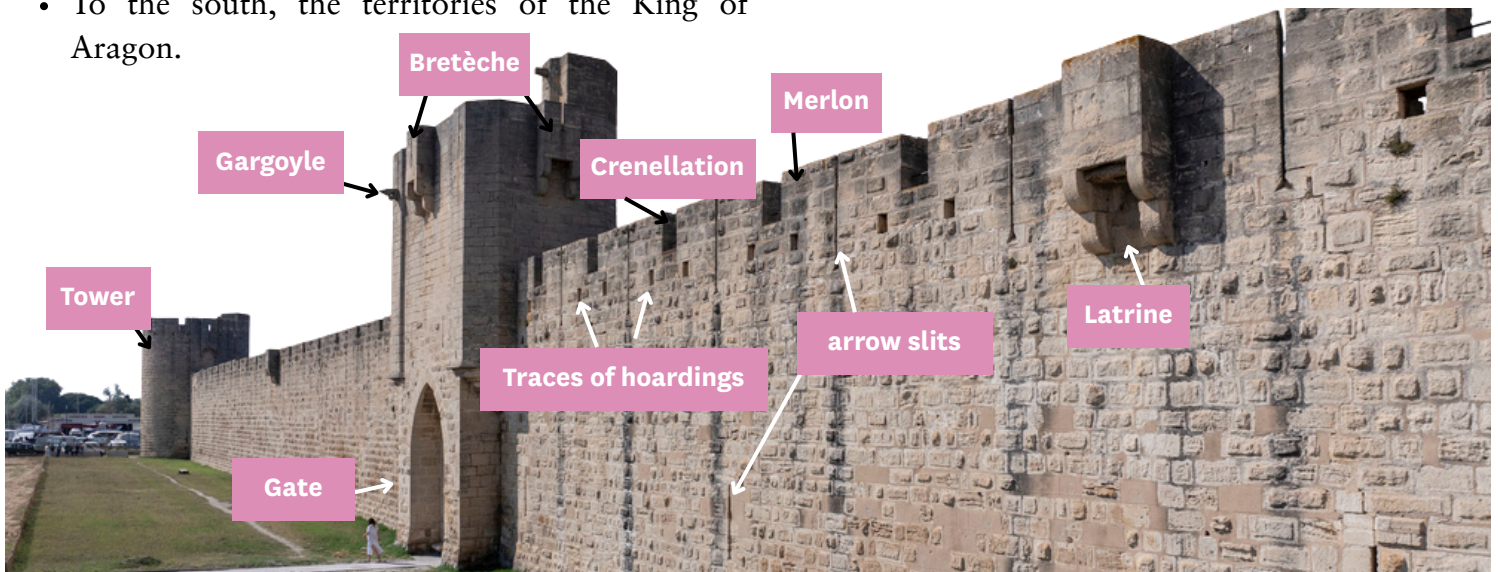
Built at the end of the 13th century following the death of **Louis IX**, the **ramparts** were completed during the reigns of **Philip III the Bold** and **Philip IV the Fair**. Stretching for 1,640 metres, the enclosure completely surrounds the city and provides a remarkable example of medieval military architecture.

At the time, the surrounding territory was bordered by competing spheres of influence:

- To the east, the lands of the Holy Roman Empire;
- To the west, territories associated with the Counts of Toulouse;
- To the south, the territories of the King of Aragon.

The defensive system was based on an efficient organisation of **curtain walls**, the **wall walk** and numerous defensive features. Students can observe **arrow slits**, **crenellations** and **merlons**, as well as the remains of **hoardings** — wooden structures, now disappeared, that strengthened the defences at the top of the walls. These structures left holes in the masonry where their supporting beams were once inserted.

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13. Southern rampart

The complete circuit of the ramparts is approximately 1,600 metres long and takes around 1 to 1 ½ hours.

There are no toilets or drinking-water facilities on the ramparts.

After leaving the interpretation area, the start of the ramparts is on your right.

*Curtain wall

A defensive wall connecting two neighbouring towers or fortified structures.

*Wall walk

A passage running along the top of a fortified wall, allowing defenders to move around the fortifications

*Hoarding

In the Middle Ages, a projecting wooden gallery built along the top of a defensive wall, allowing

defenders to fire or drop objects onto attackers at the foot of the wall.

*Crenellation

A series of openings or gaps in a parapet, allowing defenders to observe or fire at an enemy while remaining protected.

*Merlon

The solid section of a fortified parapet between two crenellations.





The route also reveals how the function of the ramparts varied according to their orientation. To the south, facing the sea and commercial routes, several gates provided access to the port. To the north, which was more exposed to attack, the defensive system was reinforced, particularly around the main gate, which was preceded by a **barbican** and a former **drawbridge**.



14. View of the Tour des Bourguignons and the western rampart



15. Decorated vault keystone in the Tour du Sel

Beyond their military function, the ramparts also demonstrate attention to comfort and aesthetics. They include practical features such as fireplaces and **latrines**, as well as carefully crafted decorative elements: gargoyles, pointed arches, sculptures and ornamental motifs showing that even defensive architecture could be designed with considerable care.

Some areas were also converted into prisons during the early modern period.

Today, the ramparts and their towers host exhibitions. These provide opportunities to explore specific themes in greater depth, including wood, the Crusades and Protestantism, among others.

Things to observe with students:

- Defensive features visible from the curtain walls and gates;
- Five gates to the south, two to the north, two to the east and one to the west, as well as three corner towers;
- Military staircases;
- The city of Aigues-Mortes and its rectangular street plan.

✱ **Drawbridge**

A movable bridge that could be lowered to provide access to a gate and raised to prevent entry, spanning a fixed section of bridge or the edge of a defensive ditch.

✱ **Barbacane**

In the Middle Ages, a defensive structure, often semi-circular, protecting the entrance to a fortified town or castle.

✱ **Latrines**

Toilets or sanitary facilities within a fortified building



OVERLOOKING THE LAGOON LANDSCAPES, THE PORTE DES MOULINS OFFERS A PRIVILEGED VIEWPOINT FOR UNDERSTANDING THE LINKS BETWEEN AIGUES-MORTES, ITS NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND ITS HISTORY AS A PORT. HERE, STUDENTS DISCOVER HOW THE TOWN WAS PART OF A TERRITORY THAT WAS AT ONCE ECONOMIC, STRATEGIC AND ECOLOGICAL.

Located on the southern section of the city walls, the Porte des Moulins provides an exceptional viewpoint over the surrounding landscape. This gate once housed **windmills**. From its terrace, students can admire the vast salt marshes, which bear witness to a major economic activity: salt production, which has been practiced here since the Middle Ages. On the side of the medieval port, it was one of the five main gates through which spices, fabrics and goods from Italy and the East entered the city.



16. View of the Porte des Moulins from the salt marshes

This viewpoint is also an opportunity to explore the area's natural heritage. The marshes, ponds and lagoons visible from the city walls form a rich and fragile **ecosystem**, characteristic of this territory between land and sea. Students can therefore observe a landscape shaped by both human activity and nature.

On the town side, students can observe the highly structured layout of the city, inherited from its medieval planning.

The upper rooms of the gate now host contemporary art exhibitions. The current exhibition can be found on the website's homepage.

What to observe with students:

- *The decorated keystones, including an angel holding a crown and a grimacing figure;*
- *The terrace, offering an unobstructed view of the town of Aigues-Mortes, the ponds and the salt marshes of the Camargue;*
- *The salt economy;*
- *The natural heritage surrounding the city walls.*

✿ **Windmill**

A building equipped with movable sails that transmit wind energy to a rotating mechanism, generally used to grind flour or press oil.

✿ **Ecosystem**

A basic ecological unit made up of an environment and the organisms that live in it.



FROM THE TERRACE OF THE PORTE DE LA MARINE, STUDENTS DISCOVER THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF AIGUES-MORTES IN MEDITERRANEAN TRADE DURING THE MIDDLE AGES. THIS VIEWPOINT PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THE TOWN'S PORT HISTORY, MARITIME ROUTES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDITERRANEAN TRADE IN THE 13TH AND 14TH CENTURIES.

Today, Aigues-Mortes is located approximately 5 km from the Mediterranean Sea, but in the Middle Ages the town had a direct connection to the sea. The medieval port was only about twenty metres from the city walls. A first, shallow pond was used by flat-bottomed boats to unload goods from the large sailing ships and galleys anchored farther offshore, in a deeper pond connected to the sea by a system of canals.

To facilitate the mooring of boats and port activities, a stone jetty known as La Peyrade was also built. These developments demonstrate the commercial and strategic importance of Aigues-Mortes during the reign of Louis IX.



17. View of the Porte de la Marine and the salt marshes

From the end of the Middle Ages onwards, the port activity of Aigues-Mortes gradually declined. The incorporation of Marseille into the Kingdom of France in 1487 strengthened the importance of this major Mediterranean port, at the expense of Aigues-Mortes. In addition, the regular **silting-up** of the ponds and canals made maintaining access to the sea particularly costly and difficult, gradually limiting the town's commercial activity.

The upper rooms of the gate now host contemporary art exhibitions (see the website for the current programme). The central murder hole is a reminder of the defensive function of this fortified gate, which originally had a portcullis.

What to observe with students:

- *Identify the different areas connected with port activity around the town;*
- *Observe the defensive features of the gate (murder hole, fortified passage);*
- *Understand why Aigues-Mortes occupied a strategic position for trade and the Crusades.*

✱Silting-up

The accumulation of sand carried by water or wind; the condition of a place filled or obstructed by sand.



AT THE PORTE SAINT-ANTOINE, STUDENTS STEP INTO THE HEART OF MEDIEVAL WARFARE. THROUGH RECONSTRUCTIONS, OBJECTS AND VISUAL MATERIALS, THIS SPACE PROVIDES A CONCRETE UNDERSTANDING OF HOW A TOWN SUCH AS AIGUES-MORTES DEFENDED ITSELF AGAINST ATTACKS.

Located on the northern section of the city walls, the Porte Saint-Antoine was a strategic point in the town's defensive system. Today, it houses an educational exhibition that helps students understand how medieval fortifications worked, using diagrams and reconstructions.

What to observe with students:

- Display cases featuring weapons and armour;
- Reconstructions of medieval defensive systems;
- A reconstruction of a siege presented by historian Nicolas Faucherre.

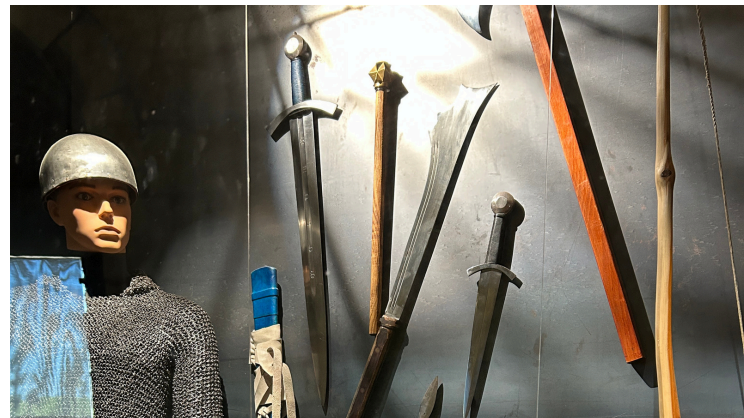
A short film immerses visitors in a simulated siege, showing the different stages of an attack on a fortified town. This resource helps students visualise military strategies and the role of the defenders, directly linking them to the features observed on the city walls.

The exhibition also presents models of war machines, such as the **trebuchet**, helping students understand the techniques used to attack walls. These devices complement the explanations of defensive systems and illustrate the ingenuity of medieval armies.

Finally, students can discover different types of military equipment: sword, shield, **great helm**, **hauberk**, armour and archery equipment. This hands-on approach makes it possible to identify the protective equipment and weapons used and to better understand the conditions of combat in the Middle Ages.



18. Porte Saint-Antoine Exhibition



19. Porte Saint-Antoine Exhibition

✱ **Trebuchet**

A counterweight-powered siege engine used to hurl stones at the walls of castles and towns.

✱ **Great helm**

In the Middle Ages, a large helmet worn by men-at-arms that covered the entire head and face.

✱ **Hauberk**

A long coat of chain mail worn by men-at-arms in the Middle Ages.



✱ **Arrow slit**

A narrow opening in the walls or doors of a fortified structure, designed to allow defenders to fire projectiles at attackers.

✱ **Barbacane**

In the Middle Ages, a defensive structure, often semi-circular, protecting the entrance to a fortified town or castle.

✱ **Camelle**

A mound or pile of salt produced in a salt marsh or saltworks.

✱ **Cog / Nef**

In the Middle Ages, a large sailing vessel.

✱ **Courtine**

Mur joignant les flancs de deux bastions voisins.

✱ **Crenellation**

A series of openings or gaps in a parapet, allowing defenders to observe or fire at an enemy while remaining protected.

✱ **Crusades**

The name given to military expeditions undertaken by Western Christians from the 11th to the 13th centuries at the instigation of the papacy, with the stated aim of reclaiming the Holy Land from Muslim rule.

✱ **Curtain wall**

A defensive wall connecting two neighbouring towers or fortified structures.

✱ **Drawbridge**

A movable bridge that could be lowered to provide access to a gate and raised to prevent entry, spanning a fixed section of bridge or the edge of a defensive ditch.

✱ **Ecosysteme**

A basic ecological unit made up of an environment and the organisms that live in it.

✱ **Galley**

A small warship, generally propelled by oars and sails.

✱ **Gargoyle**

An opening through which water drains freely from a roof gutter or fountain, often decorated with a mask or shaped as a fantastic animal figure.

✱ **Graffiti**

Writing, drawings or marks scratched, drawn or written on a wall.

✱ **Great helm**

In the Middle Ages, a large helmet worn by men-at-arms that covered the entire head and face.

✱ **Hauberk**

A long coat of chain mail worn by men-at-arms in the Middle Ages.

✱ **Hoarding**

In the Middle Ages, a projecting wooden gallery built along the top of a defensive wall, allowing defenders to fire or drop objects onto attackers at the foot of the wall.

✱ **Huguenots**

A term originally used pejoratively by Catholics to refer to French Calvinist Protestants from the 16th to the 18th century.

✱ **Lagoon / lagoon environment**

A body of water with varying salinity, separated from the sea by a coastal barrier and connected to it by an opening known as a grau, formed by the enclosure of submerged bays.

✱ **Latrines**

Toilets or sanitary facilities within a fortified building

✱ **Merlon**

The solid section of a fortified parapet between two crenellations.

✱ **Murder hole**

An opening in a vault, ceiling or wall through which defenders could drop objects or other materials onto attackers below.

✱ **Oculus**

A small circular opening made in a wall or at the top of a dome or vault.

✱ **Portcullis**

A movable, heavily reinforced gate with strong spikes along its lower edge, used to defend the entrance to a fortified castle or building.

✱ **Protestant**

A member of a Christian movement originating in the Reformation that separated from the Roman Catholic Church.



✱ **Rampart**

A strong defensive wall forming part of a fortified enclosure.

✱ **Ribs**

Projecting structural arches or moulded ribs, typically arranged diagonally within a Gothic vault.

✱ **Saltworks**

An area where salt is produced, typically by evaporating seawater or saline water.

✱ **Siege**

A series of military operations undertaken to capture a fortified place.

✱ **Silting-up**

The accumulation of sand carried by water or wind; the condition of a place filled or obstructed by sand.

✱ **Small columns**

Small columns, often attached to walls or pillars, supporting the springing of the vault ribs.

✱ **Spiral staircase**

A staircase made entirely of wedge-shaped steps arranged around a central axis.

✱ **Stone rim**

A raised stone edge forming a border around an opening. Here, the rim of the oculus.

✱ **Trebuchet**

A counterweight-powered siege engine used to hurl stones at the walls of castles and towns.

✱ **Vault**

A curved or arched structure, generally made of masonry or assembled elements, used to cover a built space.

✱ **Vestibule**

An entrance room or passage leading to other rooms. Here, it was a place where a guard stood to control access to the Upper Room.

✱ **Wall walk**

A passage running along the top of a fortified wall, allowing defenders to move around the fortifications

✱ **Windmill**

A building equipped with movable sails that transmit wind energy to a rotating mechanism, generally used to grind flour or press oil.



§ **Louis IX, known as Saint-Louis** (1214-1270)

Born in 1214, Louis IX became King of France in 1226. A deeply religious Christian, he was known for his sense of justice, his concern for the most vulnerable and his role as a reformer of the kingdom. He strengthened royal authority. After his death in 1270 during the Eighth Crusade, he was canonised in 1297 and became Saint Louis, an emblematic figure of medieval kingship.

Louis IX departed from Aigues-Mortes for his two major expeditions: the Seventh Crusade in 1248 and the Eighth Crusade in 1270. The second departure was his last: the king died that same year in Tunis. Aigues-Mortes therefore remains closely associated with his reign and his ambition to open the kingdom to the Mediterranean.

§ **Philippe III, known as “the Bold”** (1245-1285)

Born in 1245, Philippe III was the son of Louis IX. He became King of France in 1270 and belonged to the Capetian dynasty. Nicknamed “the Bold” because of his bravery in battle, he was a pious sovereign who remained faithful to the legacy of Saint Louis, although his temperament was more reserved.

His reign was marked by the strengthening of royal power and the expansion of the royal domain.

His connection with Aigues-Mortes is significant: he continued and completed major projects initiated by Saint Louis, particularly the construction of the town's city walls.

§ **Philippe IV, dit Le Bel** (1268-1314)

Born in 1268 at the Château de Fontainebleau, Philippe IV, known as “the Fair” or “the Iron King,” was the grandson of Louis IX and the son of Philippe III the Bold. He became King of France in 1285, at the age of only 17. His reign lasted until 1314 and was marked by a strong assertion of royal power.

An authoritative and organised ruler, he considerably strengthened the French monarchy. He relied on legal experts and increasingly structured administrations to assert his authority over the nobility and the Church. His reign is often associated with the image of a centralised and highly organised royal government.

§ **Marie Durand** (1711-1776)

Born in 1711 into a Protestant family in the Cévennes, Marie Durand was arrested in 1730 because of her faith and her links with clandestine Protestant gatherings. She was imprisoned in the Tour de Constance in Aigues-Mortes, where she remained detained for 38 years.

Her long captivity illustrates the repression of Protestants following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Despite the difficult conditions, she became a symbol of resistance and faithfulness to her beliefs.

She is associated with the word “REGISTER”, engraved in the tower and often interpreted as an appeal for spiritual resistance. Released in 1768, she returned to her home region, where she died in 1776.



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