



**ARN - The Knight Templar** is an adaptation of Swedish author Jan Guillou's best-selling crusades trilogy and, at \$30.3 million, Scandinavia's highest budget feature. Hans Gunnarsson, scriptwriter of Mikael Hafström's Oscar-nominated film *Evil*, wrote the screenplay and Academy Award-winning production designer Anna Asp (*Fanny and Alexander*) created the remarkable 13th century settings.

# The Knight

*ARN - The Knight Templar* is set in a medieval world of strong beliefs in which lovers Arn (Joakim Nätterqvist), son of a Swedish nobleman, and Cecilia (Sofia Helin) are forced apart by the church. Arn is banished to the Holy Land as a Knight Templar and Cecilia is imprisoned in a remote northern convent. This emotional drama depicts the couple's fight for survival.

Director Peter Flinth chose director of photography Eric Kress, a fellow Dane and Asp's creative partner, for their fourth feature collaboration. Before the principal shoot, Kress over- and under-exposed different Kodak stocks in a variety of lighting conditions. "We wanted as little grain as possible, so for daylight exteriors we held on as long as we could with KODAK VISION2 50D 5201 rated at 50 ASA and, when necessary, switched to KODAK VISION2 250D 5205 rated at 200 ASA," says Kress. He also chose KODAK VISION2 200T 5217 rated at 200 ASA and

KODAK VISION2 500T 5218 rated at 400ASA for interiors. "I would like to have avoided 500T, but we could never have accomplished such an impressive look in some of the demanding night scenes and complicated interiors with a higher lighting level," adds Flinth.

Kress was very pleased with the consistency of the stocks throughout the seven-month/three-country shoot, which took place in a variety of weather and lighting conditions. He exposed in excess of 715,220 feet of stock; the largest quantity Kodak has supplied to a production.

The DP and his large supporting 2nd unit utilised two Super 35mm ARRICAM LTs, an ARRI 435 and an ARRI 535, principally mounted on a crane with remote head, with two sets of Zeiss Ultra Primes, a 24-290mm Angenieux zoom and a Canon 400mm for daylight exteriors. He used a Tiffen Coral 1 filter to accentuate the warm tones as a contrast to the cold and mainly overcast north.

## 715,220 feet of stock



**1 and 2** Cinesite UK recreated convincing medieval exterior establishing shots.

"The camera work is classical but dynamic and emphasises the landscapes that surround our two main characters" explains Kress, whose breathtaking panoramas and smooth camera moves shift to hectic close-ups of the separated lovers. "I stayed close to them with relatively short lenses of 40mm, 50mm and 65mm so that I could capture their emotional and physical battles."

Sweden and Scotland provided locations for the northern scenes, while Morocco doubled as the Holy Land. Kress shot in Morocco during January and February and achieved "nice low sunlight" throughout the day. "It was my ambition to shoot backlit as much as possible, so I was specific to our 1st AD about the times of day we could shoot at different locations and the position of the actors relative to the sun," he notes.

"I was very pleased with the high level of professionalism amongst the Swedish, Danish, British and Moroccan film crew. I believe in creating an atmosphere in which each crew member feels trusted and believes they are making a difference. I have to give a big credit to key/dolly grip Martin Bergenström, focus-puller Daniel Wannberg, gaffer Ville Pentillä and



# Templar

**Camera and Lenses** Two Super 35mm ARRICAM LTs, an ARRI 435 and an ARRI 535

**Film stocks** KODAK VISION2 50D 5201, KODAK VISION2 250D 5205, KODAK VISION2 200T 5217, KODAK VISION2 500T 5218

**Director of photography** Eric Kress

**Visual effects** Cinesite UK, supervisor David Early

Steadicam/B-camera operator Karsten Jacobsen."

Kress and Flinth have known each other since film school. "Eric is a genuine camera operator with a unique framing skill who always chooses the right style and technique for every film. *ARN - The Knight Templar* demanded an epic style with a crisp and contrasty look and gave us the opportunity to paint on a large canvas, but it required enormous logistical skills," says Flinth. "We had to make the whole backdrop totally credible and, at the same time, paint a bigger-than-life version to give the audience a visually intriguing experience. With plenty of extras and horses for the large battle screens, my concept was to place large numbers of people and horses in narrow locations. For scenes with only a few riders, we used a vast landscape for a full breathtaking impression that makes the characters appear small under God's eye."

"As usual, Eric undertook solid research," he continues. "The locations, circumstances and script changed radically up to the last minute of shooting, but he impressed me with his ability to adapt our original vision to the actual conditions. This has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I felt like a boy walking into a toy store every morning to play with my best friends!"

Kress worked closely with visual effects supervisor Tor-Bjorn Olsson in the construction of CGI buildings and wide shots of medieval Jerusalem. "Molinaire did the DI colour grading on the software-based Baselight system, which was a very pleasant experience," he says. "After editing, the original negative was scanned from the EDL lists and we worked directly from the hard disk. Even though I wasn't counting on creating the look in post-production, I found it very helpful to shape windows exactly the way I wanted and use the tracking devices. I was fortunate to work with Tim Waller, a very skilful and talented colourist."

Olsson and visual effects art director Henrik Tamm tirelessly researched and created numerous visual references such as photographs, textures and 3D models which proved invaluable as visual references for Cinesite. The company was tasked with digital matte painting and environment work to recreate convincing medieval exterior establishing shots and an epic sense of scale and panorama.

Cinesite public relations/marketing co-ordinator Helen Arnold, explains: "The Gudhem convent where Cecilia is imprisoned was clearly laid out with three models in the pre-visualisation stage. The entrance and a small adjoining wall - the only real

constructions - were filmed against a small blue screen. The moving camera foreground action of men with a cart and horses was painstakingly rotoscoped off the background and repositioned in front of the 3D convent. Cinesite rebuilt the model supplied by production and matched it with the live action footage to create a photo-realistic result on a cinematic scale. The traditional, multi-layered 2.5D matte painting approach gives a realistic sense of depth and parallax to the establishing shot of a group of men and horses on a hillside overlooking Jerusalem."

## 2D, 3D, digital matte painting

"Henrik provided Cinesite visual effects supervisor David Early (*The Golden Compass*) with a library of style guide material for the layout and design of the city, including 2D artwork, photographs, illustrations and texture references. The visual effects team replicated tents, mountains and dust to give a realistic sense of scale and atmosphere to the shot of Saladin's camp and also created a distinctive sky."

David Early comments, "Tor and Henrik were incredibly organised and provided us with well documented briefs for each shot. Most of the early decisions about layout and style were clearly defined and signed off by the director, which meant we could spend time concentrating on making everything as photo-real as possible. *ARN - The Knight Templar* was a nice change for us, compared to the longer and more complex Hollywood productions, that can take over a year to complete. Tor knew exactly what he was looking for in a shot, enabling us to respond quickly to feedback and nail the director's vision in an efficient, timely manner. The whole process worked really well!"

*ARN - The Knight Templar* and *ARN - The Kingdom at Road's End*, the second part of the medieval trilogy which was shot concurrently, were filmed in 3-perf, 1:2.35 aspect ratio for theatrical release and 16:9 for television.

A production of AB Svensk Filmindustri, *ARN - The Knight Templar* was launched in the Nordic countries on Christmas Day. *ARN - The Kingdom at Road's End* is due for theatrical release in autumn 2008, followed by a combined version with a concentrated storyline, a television adaptation and a DVD.