

THE HORNS OF HATTIN

Edited by B.Z. Kedar



YAD IZHAK BEN-ZVI



ISRAEL EXPLORATION SOCIETY

JERUSALEM



VARIORUM • LONDON

Saladin's Dome of Victory at the Horns of Ḥaṭṭīn

ZVI GAL

Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem

A survey and excavation I carried out in 1976 and 1981 at the Horns of Ḥaṭṭīn (Tel Qarney Ḥiṭṭīn) revealed a Late Bronze wall of the 14th-13th centuries B.C.E. on the southern horn, or summit, and a massive Iron Age wall of the 9th-8th centuries B.C.E. enclosing both horns (fig. 1).

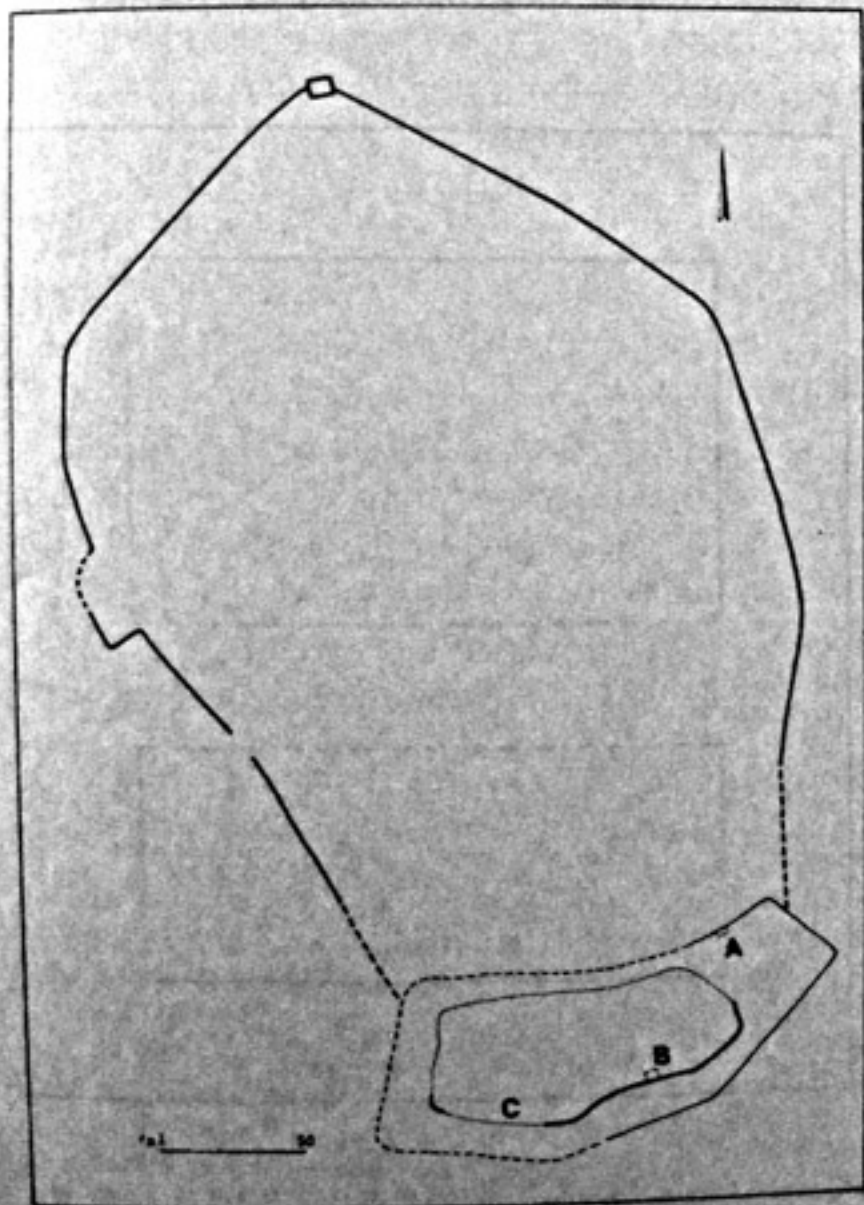


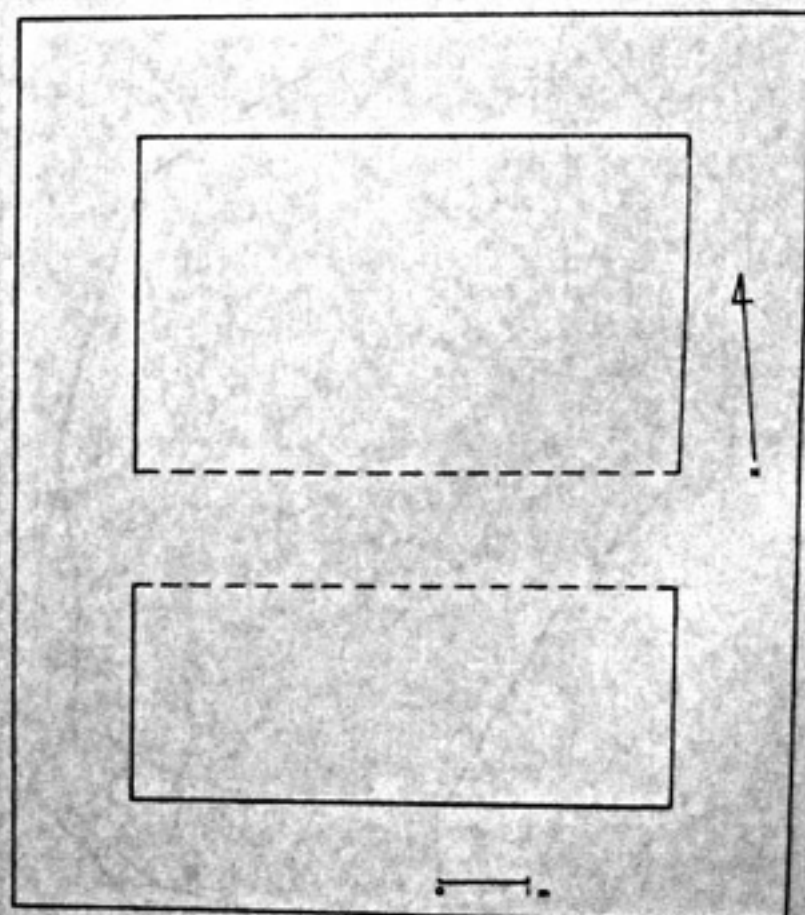
Fig. 1. Tel Qarney Ḥiṭṭīn (A. Sounding at Late Bronze wall; B. Sounding at Iron Age wall; C. Saladin's monument)

Remains of habitation were found on both horns, with the main settlement on the southern one, the higher and the larger of the two, as well as on the volcanic crater which dominates the tell. At first I followed Y. Aharoni's suggestion of identifying the site with Canaanite Shemesh-Edom and Israelite Adama (Joshua 19.36), but later I came to the conclusion that it should be identified with biblical Madon/Marom (Joshua 11.1).¹

Most of the field work concentrated on the southern horn, which overlooks the rocky plateau to the south and the west. At the highest point of this horn there was uncovered a ruined building of which only the lowest foundation layers have been preserved. Architectural characteristics such as comb-dressed masonry and plaster indicate that the building dates from the crusader-to-Mamlūk period. It is the only medieval structure on the Horns of Ḥaṭṭīn.

The building (fig. 2) measures 8.6×10 meters and consists of local basalt stones along with some limestone dressed in a number of instances with a comb-chisel. The external walls, 1.3 meters wide, are made of large stones with a fill of field stones between them. The building has two rooms, measuring 3.75×6 and 2.5×6 meters respectively. Since they are situated below the rocky surface and their walls are plastered, it is possible that they functioned as cisterns.

Fig. 2. Saladin's Dome of Victory



1. Z. Gal, "Tel Rekhes and Tel Qarney Ḥiṭṭīn," *Eretz-Israel* 15 (1981), 213-221 (in Hebrew); idem, *The Iron Age in Lower Galilee* (Unpubl. diss., Tel Aviv University, 1983), p. 33 and Pl. 6 (in Hebrew).

In my study of the ancient settlements on the horns I mentioned this building only briefly, suggesting that it might have been a Mamlūk fort overlooking the road to Tiberias.² More recently it was brought to my attention that al-Dimashqī Ḥaṭṭīn wrote in about 1300 that Saladin erected a Dome of Victory on the Horns of Ḥaṭṭīn; that his testimony is corroborated by two thirteenth-century occidental writers, the Old French continuator of William of Tyre and the German pilgrim Thietmar; and that in 1914 Gustaf Dalman found "vaults" on the southern horn and assumed that they belonged to the monument mentioned by al-Dimashqī and Thietmar.³ Consequently it is quite certain that the above-described medieval remains on the southern horn do belong to Saladin's Dome of Victory.

2 Gal, "Tel Rekhes," p. 218.

3 See notes 59-61 and 63 in B.Z. Kedar's article, above p. 207. I would like to thank B.Z. Kedar for having brought this literature to my attention.