

THE HORNS OF HITTIN

A Visitor's Guide



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The Purpose of this Booklet

History happened on the fields of Kibbutz Lavi.

The story begins on the morning of July 3, 1187:

The fate of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem is in the hands of the leaders, knights, and soldiers moving east from the Springs of Sephoris towards Tiberias. Saladin and his Moslem army force the Crusaders to stop for the night on fields to the west of the Horns of Hattin, near today's Golani Junction.

It ends on the afternoon of July 4, 1187:

Exhausted and thirsty, the Crusaders attempt to make their way to the nearby springs at Hattin Village, due east of the Horns of Hattin. The Moslem army attacks in full force, and in the battle on the fields surrounding the Horns of Hittin, the Crusaders suffer a stunning defeat at the hand of Saladin and his Moslem army. Nearly the entire Crusader army in the Land of Israel is destroyed, and the Crusader kingdom falls within a short time.

The story of this battle is a drama of epic proportions, told time and again by Christian and Moslem chroniclers. This booklet is designed to help the visitor understand the battle and its significance in the history of the Galilee and the Land of Israel.

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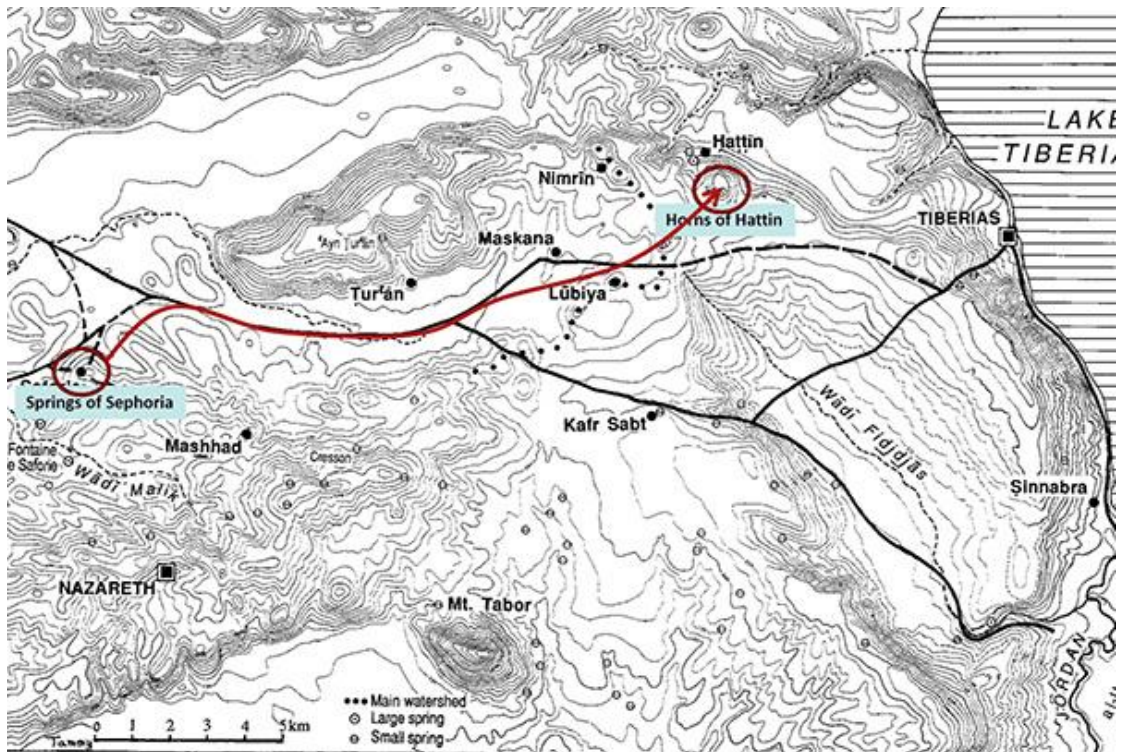
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- 2) A Description of the Battle by Edward Robinson published in 1841
- 3) A Description of the Site and Battle by Mark Twain from 1867
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Historical Timeline of the Crusader Period

- 1096-1099 First Crusade, culminating in the capture of Jerusalem and the founding of the Latin Kingdom.
- 1147-1149 Second Crusade initiated by the loss of Edessa, a Byzantine city, to the Moslems. This Crusade was failure.
- 1187 The Battle of the Horns of Hattin and the loss of the entire kingdom, except for the city of Tyre in Lebanon.
- 1189-1192 Third Crusade led by Richard the Lion Hearted. While they fail to regain Jerusalem, the Crusaders sign a treaty with Saladin assuring Christian access to the holy places.
- 1202-1204 Fourth Crusade and the capture of the Byzantine city of Constantinople.
- 1212 The Children's Crusade. A tragic march of thousands of children resulting in many deaths.
- 1217-1221 Fifth Crusade. This Crusade is focused against Egypt, leading to defeat.
- 1228-1229 Sixth Crusade led by German King Frederick II. They sign a truce with the Moslems, which does not endure.
- 1248-1254 Seventh Crusade led by King Louis IX of France. He is captured and ransomed.
- 1270 Eighth Crusade led by Louis IX who dies in Tunis.



Outline of the Battle of The Horns of Hittin

Major Leaders:

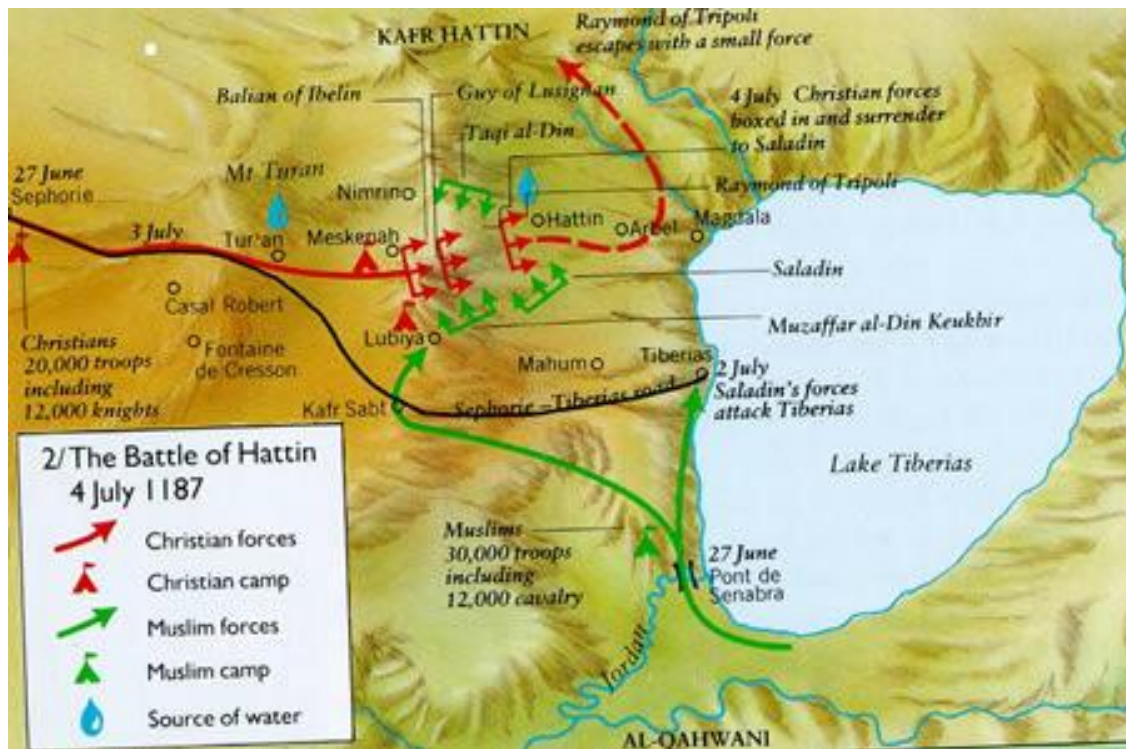
Crusaders:

Guy of Lusignan	King of Jerusalem
Reynald of Chatillon	Lord of Kerak
Gerard of Ridefort	Master of the Templars
Raymond of Tripoli	Lord of the Galilee
Eschive	Princess of the Galilee, wife of Raymond of Tripoli
Balian d'Ibelin	Lord of Ramle

Moslems:

Saladin	Ruler of Egypt and Syria
Taki a Din	Nephew of Saladin and military commander
Muzaffar a Din Gokburi	Brother in Law of Saladan and military commander

Major Events



1177, 1183, 1184 Repeated attempts by Saladin to engage the Crusader forces in a major battle with no success.

1186 Reynald of Chatillon attacks a Moslem caravan near Karak. Saladin swears to kill him. There are reports that Saladin's sister was in the caravan.

April 30, 1187 A Moslem force enters the Galilee with the permission of Raymond of Tripoli.

May 1 The Knights Templar attack the Moslems despite Raymond, and the Moslems are victorious.

May-July Massive draft of Crusader forces throughout the land. Almost all of the Crusader forces available in the country are gathered by the Springs of Sepphoris by July 2. At the same time, Saladin gathers and consolidates additional forces on the east of the Jordan.

July 2 Saladin crosses the Jordan to the south of the Sea of Galilee. They take Tiberias and lay siege to the city tower in which Eshive is hiding. She calls to the Crusaders in Sepphoris for help. The Crusader leadership meets during the night and decides to set out for Tiberias, against the wise council of Raymond.

July 3 At about 0400, the Crusaders begin to make their way towards Tiberias in three forces, marching together in the open fields. Small but potent Moslem forces attack from the surrounding hills and slow the Crusaders down. Although the 30 Kilometer march to Tiberias should take one day, the Crusaders stop for the night after passing only the half way point near Miskina (Golani Junction).

July 4 Sunrise
In the early morning, as a result of a severe lack of water, the Crusaders decide to move towards the springs in the Hattin village, rather than march straight to Tiberias. At about 0900, when passing between the hills of Nimrin and Lavi (Hill 311), the Crusaders are attacked with the full force of the Moslem armies.

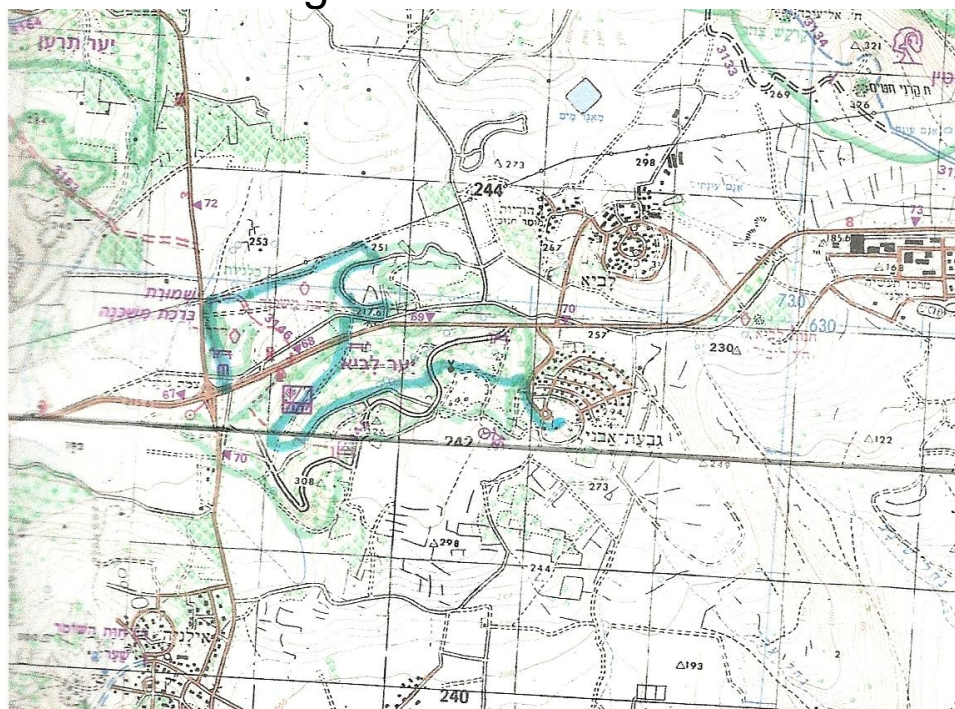
1200 Noon
Raymond charges down a northern pass into Wadi Hamam with 2000 of the best Cavalry, after the Moslem forces separate to allow them through. Raymond continues either to Acco or to Belvoir, depending on the version of each Chronicler.

Early Afternoon
Belian of Ibelin escapes the slaughter by returning west with a force of cavalry. King Guy sets up his bright red tent on the southern horn. The relics of the "True Cross" are guarded there.

Late Afternoon
The Crusader infantry runs from the battle to take refuge on the northern horn, leaving the Knights and Cavalry alone in battle to the west. The battle now shifts to the horns, as the Crusaders take up positions there. The Moslems attack a number of times and eventually capture the Crusader encampment, along with most of the leadership of the Latin Kingdom. The king kills Reynold by his own hand.

The battle is over and the Latin Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem sits almost unguarded before the Moslems. Jerusalem falls to the Moslems on October 2, 1187.

Walking Tour of the Battlefield



Before beginning the walking tour, it is suggested that you familiarize yourself with the basic timelines of the Crusader period, as well as the details of the battle as presented in this booklet and the sources included in the appendix.

On the walk you must take:

Water, Hat, Map, and a Compass. If you want some beautiful photographs, bring a camera. There are no bathroom facilities on the Horns of Hittin.

The Walk:

We begin our walk by leaving the entrance of Lavi Hotel turning left, until you reach the Lavi Furniture Industries, a walk of about 500 meters. Continue around the right side of the factory and take the dirt road north. As you walk, the citrus grove should be on your left.

After the orchard, continue until you reach the high-tension electric lines, about 500 meters past the furniture factory.

Standing on the south side of the electric lines, look west in the direction they run. It just so happens that this electric line runs along part of the Zippori-Horns of Hittin route of the Crusader army on July 3rd 1187.

In the distance, towards the west, the electric lines run past the south-eastern corner of a large mountain, upon which is a large white tower. This is the Turan Mountain. At the point on the horizon where the electric line passes the mountain is the approximate location of Miskena, a distance of about 3 kilometers to the west of your present location. Miskena is the place the Crusaders spent the night between July 3 and 4. The large valley to the west

of Miskena, south of Mount Turan (the large valley to the left of the Mount Turan) is the dry valley which the Crusaders crossed on July 3.

The March of the Crusaders:

The Crusaders started out for Tiberias from Zippori, situated 19 Kilometers to the east of where you are standing.

The decision to march on Tiberias was taken in the middle of the night of July 3rd. Ernoul the Frank, a chronicler, records the speech of Raymond of Tripoli to King Guy, imploring him not to make the march:

“Tiberias is mine, and the Lady of Tiberias is my wife, and our children are in the castle together with all our possessions, and if it falls, no one will lose as much as I. I know that if the Saracens take it, they cannot hold it, and if they raze the walls, I shall build them up again. If they take my wife and my children and my possessions, I can ransom them back again. If they attack my city, I shall in time make it strong again. And to me there is more advantage that Tiberias be taken and destroyed and my wife and children and my possessions in enemy hands than that this entire land should be lost to us. For I know that if you go to the help of Tiberias, you will all be taken or killed, you and all your army. I shall tell you why. Between here and Tiberias there is no water except only a little spring...which cannot water a whole army. Your men and your horses will be dead of thirst before the multitudes of the Moslems have hemmed you in!”

The other leaders of the Crusaders were sure of victory and suspected Raymond because of his friendly relationship with Saladin and the other Moslem leaders. They succeeded in swaying the weak willed King to march and attack the Moslems holding Tiberias.

As the Crusaders departed from Zippori and the Zippori Springs on the morning of July 3rd, they used the inner roads in the Nazareth ridge to the south west, until they joined the main road in this valley at Kfar Kana. This ancient Acco-Damascus road was known as Darb el Hawarna, and the modern Tiberias-Haifa road runs along this same route.

As you look west from here, you can see how the Crusaders fell into a great trap. The Moslems forces were light and on horseback. They were easily able to swoop down on the large, bulky, Crusader forces, and quickly retreat to the hills. Because of the geography of the region, once they left Zippori, the Crusaders had very few options other than move east, and the Moslems were easily in a position to close up the passes in the mountains along the way.

On the morning of July 3rd, most of the Moslem forces were stationed 4 Kilometers south of here in Kfar Sabt, today's Sde Ilan. Throughout the day of July 3, Saladin brought more and more forces northward to the area surrounding Lubia, including the hill on which Kibbutz Lavi sits today, and to Nimrin, the low, wooded hill about 1.5 kilometers to your west (north of the electric cables). In this way, Saladin was prepared to engage the Crusaders from all sides of the battlefield.

Looking towards the village of Turan to the west, which hugs the south side of Mount Turan, you must imagine the hot day of July 3, and the small spring in Turan at which some of the Crusaders may have drunk. Most continued on with little or no water. As chronicler Ernoul the Frank notes:

“Now I shall tell you about King Guy and his host. They left the Springs of Saffuriya to go to the relief of Tiberias. As soon as they had left the water behind, Saladin came before them and ordered his skirmishers to harass them from morning to midday. The heat was so great that they could not go on as to reach water. The king and all his men were too spread out and did not know what to do. They could not turn back for the losses would have been too great. He sent to the count of Tripoli (Raymond), who led the vanguard, to ask his advice. The message came back that he should pitch his tent and make camp. The king gladly accepted this bad advice, though when he gave him good advice he would never take it. Some people of the host said that if the Christians had pressed on to meet the Saracens, Saladin would have been defeated.” (Lyon Eracles as quoted in Edbury’s *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*)

The Terrible Night:

The Crusaders spent the night between July 3-4 at Miskena, less than a Kilometer from today’s Golani Junction. Raymond’s advice to make camp here was based upon the fact that the road to Tiberias (south of Lavi Hill), was blocked by Moslem forces. In addition, the Moslems succeeded in slowing down the Crusaders so much that they reached the half way point of their journey at the approximate time they had hoped to reach Tiberias (late afternoon).

So, after covering only half of the 30 Kilometers from Zippori to Tiberias, Raymond, at the head of the first column, decided to make camp. Since the Crusaders took enough water for a march of less than a day, they now found themselves without water, only half way towards their goal. Both soldiers and horses were very thirsty by the evening of July 3.

During this night, the Crusader army spent a miserable night at Miskena in earshot of Moslem forces. The forces were so close that before dark, the Moslems poured out jugs of water on the ground to torture the thirsty Crusaders, who easily saw the Moslem encampment.

During the night, some of the fields you are standing on, were burned by the Moslems in order to exacerbate the thirst of the Crusaders. Chroniclers record that the screams of the Moslems throughout the night helped to unnerve the Crusaders who understood that they were in a grave situation. As a French Chronicler records:

“(The Moslems)...camped around the Christian host so close that they could talk to one another, and if a cat had fled from the Christian host it would not have escaped...That night the Christians were in great discomfort. Great

harm befell the host since there was not a man or a horse that had anything to drink that night. “ (Edbury p.159)

The Fateful Morning:

We resume our walk along the dirt road to the north, and passing the cattle barns on the left, leave the northern kibbutz gate, about 700 meters beyond our starting point at the furniture factory. Looking west, we can now easily see the strategy of Saladin. To the north of this field is the hill of Nimrin. To the south is the hill of Lavi. By forcing the Crusaders to move their army between these two hills, Saladin had the pearl of the Crusader army exactly where you are standing now. When the Crusaders reached this spot in the late morning of July 4th, Saladin attacked from all directions and the bulk of the battle was fought at the very spot you are now standing. Even the climate and time of day was to Saladin's advantage, as the heat was already overwhelming and the sun was in the eyes of the Crusaders marching eastward.

“The following day...the Saracens held off and did not want to engage in fighting until the heat got up. Let me tell you what they did. There was a big swathe of grass in the plain of Barof [the valley to your west], and the wind got up strongly from that direction: the Saracens came and set fire to it all around so that the fire would cause as much harm as the sun...(Edbury p.160)

The importance of the topography to the development of the battle is also apparent if you look towards the north. This field is a basalt plateau with a steep decline along the entire northern end of the field from Nimrin to the Horns. Along most of the northern edge of the field, the drop to the Hamam valley is steep and impassable.

Continue along the road to the north, being careful not to turn off this road to the left (west) at the black and white sign of the Nature Authority path, (100 meters after the main gate). Continue straight. After walking 15 minutes (700 meters past the main gate), you reach a point where the road turns sharply to south (to the right), at this spot, there is a gate with a black and white trail marker on a gate pole.

At this point, face east towards the horns. To your left (north), you can see the drop down to Wadi Hamam between two small bluffs on the north side of the field. It is at this place, the only path leading down the valley to the north, that Raymond of Tripoli charged down to the valley and out of the battle. You can see why Raymond could not have returned to the battle because of the incline of the path. Saladin was wise to let this part of the Crusader army out of the battlefield, as he knew that once they started down the incline, they could never come back again. Some historians believe that Raymond's intention was to engage the Moslems in battle in order to open up a northern escape route for the entire army. He did not plan on the Moslem lines opening and quickly closing once his forces were past.

This incident is recorded:

“The count of Tripoli (Raymond) charged at the Saracens. He thundered down the slope into the valley, and as soon as they saw him and his men advancing towards them the Saracens parted and made a way for them as was their custom. So the count passed through, and the Saracens closed ranks as soon as he had passed and attacked the king who had stayed where he was. Thus did they take him and all who were with him , except only those who were in the rearguard and escaped.” (Edbury p. 160)

Continue walking along the road as it loops towards the south and east, until you reach the next gate (1 kilometer from the main gate), where the road turns due east, directly towards the horns. Continue along the road, and pass through another gate, following the road to the point that it turns south along the northern horn.

As we approach the foot of the northern horn, we can imagine the thousands of foot soldiers sitting on the slope, refusing to join the battle below. As a French source describes:

“The infantry banded together in a single wedged shaped formation, clambered at full speed to the very summit of a high mountain, leaving the army to its fate. The King, the Bishop, and others sent word, begging them to return to defend the Lord’s cross...They replied ‘We are not coming down because we are dying of thirst and we will not fight.’” (JA Brundge The Crusades: A Documentary Survey p.157))

The End of The Battle:

Saladin himself describes the events leading to the end of the battle:
“There now became clear to the king, may God curse him, what falsehood had concealed from him and the battle showed him what his foolish judgement had concealed from him. He and his companions dismounted from horseback and mounted a hill [southern ridge of the Horns of Hattin], hoping that it would save them from the heat of the sharp swords. They set up a red tent for the King...Their men undertook to guard its ropes, but became its pegs...The King was captured, and this was a hard day for the unbelievers.” (Saladin’s Hattin Letter - trans. C.P. Melville and M.C. Lyons in B.Z.Kedar The Horns of Hattin)

We look towards the southern horn upon which the red tent of King Guy stood. Obviously, the tent of the king was very symbolic for the Crusader soldiers, as it housed the relics of the True Cross, as well as the king and his personal guard. As long as the tent stood, the battle was not lost. The last moments of the battle are immortalized in the words of Al Afdal, Saladin’s son:

“...we saw the tent come down; then my father dismounted, prostrated himself to the earth in thanks to Alla, and wept tears of joy.” (Payne p. 205)

Once the tent fell, the Crusader army soon collapsed.

We now continue the walk, following the road southward, turning to the left when you reach the boulders and gate leading to the top of the horns. You can climb through the fence to the right side of the gate in order to reach the road on the other side.

(The distance between the exit gate from Kibbutz Lavi and the gate leading up to the horns is about 1500 Meters, a leisurely ½ hour walk.)

Continue up the road which enters the mount into the crater between the horns. Climb to the eastern side of the northern horn (follow the road up to the right at the east side of crater). At the top, look east to see the Hattin valley, the Golan Heights and the Sea of Galilee. From here, it is not difficult to understand the predicament of the Crusaders, as they were dying of thirst while looking over at the clear blue waters of the Sea of Galilee which seem close enough to touch. Even worse for the Crusaders, the Spring of Hattin sits less than a kilometer from here at the eastern foot of the horns.

Now walk across to the western side of the northern horn. From here the topography of the land helps us understand the course of the battle. Zippori is due west, a seemingly small hill on the horizon at the northern foot of the Nazareth range. Use this diagram to identify the site of Zippori and the landmarks to the west:

Look towards the wide, dry, and once desolate valley that the Crusaders marched through on that fateful day of July 3rd. From here you can also identify the site of Miskena, 1 Kilometer to the east of the quarry at the foot of Mount Turan. With the road to Tiberias (passing through Lubia to the south west of us) closed to them, the northern ridge of the field blocking them, the Crusaders had no choice but to come up on this plateau towards the water of Hattin Spring.

At the end of the battle, almost the entire leadership of the Crusaders sat at Saladin's feet. At this point we recall the last moments in the life of Reynold of Chatillon, as told by David Nicolle in his book "Hattin 1187"

"Among those taken captive were King Guy, his brother Geoffrey de Lusignan, Amalric de Lusignan, Marquis William de Montferrat, Reynold of Chatillon, Humphrey de Toron, the Master of the Templars, the Master of the Hospitalers, the bishop of Lidde and many other leading barons... Obviously feeling generous after his staggering victory, the Sultan offered a cup of cooled sweetened water to King Guy, but after he drank Guy passed the cup to Reynold of Chatillon whom Saladin had sworn to kill. According to Arab custom a man who had taken food or drink from his captor was thereafter safe from harm. 'This criminal was given water without my consent,' observed the Sultan, 'and as such my safe conduct does not extend to him.'"

Ernoul the Frank recounts that at this moment Saladin:

“...took a sword in his hand and thrust it right through Reynold’ body. The Mamluks who were standing by rushed at him and cut off his head. Saladin took some of the blood and sprinkled it on his head in recognition that he had taken vengeance on him. Then he ordered that they carry the head to Damascus and it was dragged along the ground...”

After Saladin killed Reynold:

“Guy was terrified, but Saladin comforted him saying, ‘Do not tremble, a king does not kill a king.’” (Munro p. 164)

Look around you and identify the ruins of a building. This was the Dome of Victory built by Saladin which is mentioned by a number of Medieval writers. It was excavated in 1976 and 1981 by Archaeologist Zvi Gal (see B.Z. Kedar “Battle of Hattin Revisited p. 206)

The gruesome scene following the battle is described by a Moslem chronicler, Ibn Al-Athir:

“The plain was covered with prisoners and corpses, disclosed by the dust as it settled and victory became clear. The prisoners, with beating hearts, were bound in chains. The dead were scattered over the mountains and valleys, lying immobile on their sides...I passed by them and saw the limbs of the fallen cast naked on the field of battle, scattered in pieces over the site of the encounter, lacerated and disjointed...The field of battle had become a sea of blood...”

This battle marked the end of the Crusader kingdom, as in the words of historian Robert Payne:

Saladin had won more than a battle; he had triumphed over the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Thereafter, people might speak of the kingdom, but the kingdom no longer existed. Kings and queens of Jerusalem would continue to be crowned while the kingdom itself became a mirage, a ghostly shape which continued to haunt the imaginations of the Crusaders. They remained in the Holy Land for another hundred years, but the kingdom and Jerusalem itself were lost to them. At the Horns of Hattin, on a midsummer day, among the lava rocks and the creeping grass fires, the heart had gone out of them. (Payne p. 205)

Before leaving the horns we read how the power of this site is recorded by Mark Twain in 1867, recalling his feelings as he stood on this very spot:

“It was hard to realize that this silent plain had once resounded with martial music and trembled to the tramp of armed men. It was hard to people this solitude with rushing columns of cavalry, and stir its torpid pulses with the shouts of victors, the shrieks of the wounded, and the flash of banner and steel above the surging billows of war, A desolation is here that not even imagination can grace with the pomp of life and action.” (The Innocents Abroad)

Take this opportunity to look towards the south and north.

We can now walk back to Lavi along the same route we came, using the road cutting through the crater between the horns.

Some hikers may want to walk down the southern horn along the marked path leading to the south. This path reaches a monument set up by a Christian group marking a tradition that this is the Mount of Beatitudes. At the bottom of this trail, take the road to the right along the western side of the horns and retrace the route back to Lavi.



APPENDIX

- 1) The Horns of Hittin as the Mount of Beatitudes-A short explanation
- 2) Battle of Hattin as recorded by Enoul, a Frank
- 3) Battle of Hattin as recorded by Edward Robinson in his book
Biblical Researches in Palestine
- 4) Excerpts from The Innocents Abroad by Mark Twain
- 5) Descriptions of the Horns of Hattin as recorded by 10 visitors during the 19th century.

The Horns of Hittin as the Mount of Beatitudes

Of special note is the fact that almost every visitor in the 19th century records the tradition that the Horns of Hattin are identified as the Mount of Beatitudes.

In the Catholic Encyclopedia (1913 addition), under the heading “Mount of Beatitudes” we read that the mount is “Traditionally located on Karn Hattin, the Horns of Hittin. It lies 1816 feet above the lake and 1135 feet above sea level...This mountain, rising above the hills that skirt the lake, is the only height to the west that can be seen from its shores. It consists of a low ridge about one-quarter of a mile long extending east and west, and rising at each extremity into a cone or horn. The horn which is taller, is only sixty feet above the ridge. Between the horns lies an uneven platform which could easily accommodate the crowd...The tradition regarding the scene...though usually received with a certain degree of favor by scriptural scholars, apparently does not go back beyond the Crusaders.”

The Catholic Church does not adhere to this tradition today. The present-day Church of Beatitudes sits to the north of the Sea of Galilee, not far from the ruins of a Byzantine church assumed to be built on a traditional site of the Mount of Beatitudes. Even so, a number of Protestant churches revere the Horns of Hittin as the Mount of Beatitudes.

Sources:

The Tent and the Khan: A Journey to Sinai and Palestine
Robert Walter Stewart 1857

At 3:30 we were abreast of the mountain called Karun Hattin, from its double peaks resembling the horns of a buffalo. Tradition points to it as the Mountain of Beatitudes. The town of Safed is situated on the side of a much larger hill...so nothing could be more striking than the similitude drawn from the city set so conspicuously on a hill.

(Brocardus (1283) places the mount within a stone's throw of the Sea of Galilee, 3 leagues from Safed)

Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia, Petraea, and the Holy Land
John Lloyd Stevens 1836

In about two hours, leaving Mount Hermon and Mount Tabor on our right, we passed the field where the disciples plucked the corn on the Sabbath. About half an hour further on is the Mountain of Beatitude...whether the tradition be true or no, it was just the place where...such an event might have taken place...

In Bible Lands
Rev. Richard Newton 1870

We passed along the base of a saddle shaped hill on our left, which the Arabs call Kurin Hattin. This is the traditional "Mount of Beatitudes"...It is a smooth, green mount, easy of ascent, and very eligible for such a purpose...There is a level space of about one quarter of a mile in extent on the top of the mount; so there would have been plenty of room there for the disciples and others who gathered round....

Palestine Notes and Other Papers
John Wilhelm Towntree 1895

We...rode over bare uplands, rolling and featureless except for the somewhat striking top of Kurn Hattin, marking Saladin's great victory over the Crusaders-the death blow of all the Crusades...At last the lake of Galilee comes into sight.

Robinson's Palestine and Syria
George Robinson 1837

On an upper level, stands a hill of oblong shape, with two projecting summits, on one of the extremities. The natives have given it the appellation of the Mons Beatitudinis. About the middle of this mount, on a ground somewhat more level than the rest, are the foundations of a small church, erected to commemorate the spot...of the memorable "Sermon on the Mount."

Notes of a Clerical Furlough Spent Chiefly in the Holy Land
Robert Buchanan 1857

Some miles to the west of the lake, a conspicuous hill with two peaks, one at each end, rose above the green waving country to the south of it. It was the traditional Mount of Beatitudes, known by the name of the Horns of Hattin.

Pilgrims in Palestine
Violet Hodgkin 1891

The furthest peak of all was one of the "Horns of Hattin," the supposed Mount of Beatitudes. Certainly it looks just like one's idea of what that should be, and from our camp afterwards over the plain of Gennesaret, it was very striking to see how, while all the other hills seem to stand round, as if guarding the lake, this one lifts itself up grandly behind them all and is just "the Mountain."

The Lord's Land: Travels in Sinai and Palestine
Henry B. Ridgaway 1876

Just before us stood Kurn Hattin, the "two horns," so named by the Arabs from some fancied resemblance which the two peaks bear to a camel's saddle. This is the traditional "Mount of Beatitudes" ...The tradition cannot be traced further back than the 4th Century. The mountain is very centrally located, directly on the highway between the Sea of Galilee and Nazareth, Tabor and Samaria. Mount Tabor can be distinctly seen from it, as can also Safed "the city set on a hill." It is of easy access, with a summit sufficiently level and broad to be an inviting place of rest...the view from it is exceedingly tranquilizing. Every object around, in whatever direction you look, is of a rather pleasing kind...

The approach to the top of the mount from the north and east is easy, but the descent on the south is steep and difficult. After reaching its foot there is quite a level stretch of cultivated land as far as to the ruins of Arbela. Among the ruins are several broken columns strewn around. We were now at the commencement of Wady Hamam...

Travels in Syria and the Holy Land
John Lewis Burckhardt 1810

...Upon the same level, stands a hill of oblong shape, with two projecting summits on one of its extremities, the natives call it Keroun Hottein, the Horns of Hottein. The Christians here have given it the appellation, of Mons Beatitudinis...we travel over an uneven, uncultivated ground, until we arrive at Kefer Kenna.

Biblical Researches in Palestine
Edward Robinson 1838

As seen from this side [south] the Tell or mountain is merely a low ridge, some 30 or 40 feet in height...At its eastern end is an elevated point or horn...and at the western end another not so high, these give the ridge at a distance the appearance of a saddle, and are called Karun Hattin, "Horns of Hittin." But the singularity of this ridge is, that on reaching the top, you find that it lies along the very border of the great southern plain, where this latter sinks at once, by a precipitous offset, to the lower plain of Hattin; from which the northern side of the Tell rises very steeply, not much less than four hundred feet.

The summit of the eastern horn is a little circular plain; and the top of the lower ridge between the two horns, is also flattened to a plain. On the eastern horn are the remains of a small building...with a few rough ruins of no import, yet the natives now dignify the spot with the name el-Medineh. This point commands a near view of the great plain over which we had passed; north of Tabor, and also the basin of Ard el Hamma; the latter lying spread out before us with fields of varied hues, like a carpet. On the other side, the eye takes in, even here, only the northern part of the lake of Tiberias, and on its western shore the little plain of Gennesareth; while in the N and N.W. Safed and a few

other villages are seen upon the hills. The prospect is in itself pleasing; but bears no comparison with that which we had just enjoyed from Mount Tabor.

[In a footnote, Robinson quotes from the memoirs of Dr Clarke who writes of the view from Karnei Hittin, "a view was presented, which for its grandeur, independently of the interest excited by the different objects contained in it, has no parallel in the Holy Land!" Robinson calls this assessment "excessively overcharged and exaggerated."]

The Kurun Hattin are held by the Latins to be the Mount of Beatitudes... There is nothing in the form or circumstances of the hill itself to contradict this supposition; but the sacred writers do not specify any particular height by name; and there are in the vicinity of the lake perhaps a dozen other mountains, which would answer just as well...

It might therefore be difficult to say, why this spot should have been selected as the scene... Further this tradition is found only in the Latin church; the Greeks know nothing of it...

The Lands of the Bible: Visited and Described
John Wilson 1847

Striking off the Damascus road, we approached a rocky ridge of no great height towards the south, called the Karun Hattin, or the Horns of Hattin. This was the seat of the disastrous and decisive battle fought between the Christians and the Muhammadans in the year 1187... It is also the Mountain of Beatitudes, according to the Monks... It is a rocky range of no great height, but we did not ascend the summits. It is steep and precipitous on its northern side...

The Innocents Abroad
Mark Twain 1867

We jogged along peacefully over the great caravan route from Damascus to Jerusalem and Egypt, past Lubia and other Syrian hamlets, perched, in the unvarying style, upon the summit of steep mounds and hills and fenced round about with giant cactuses (the sign of worthless land) and prickly pears upon them like hams, and came at last to the battlefield of Hattin.

It is a grand, irregular plateau and looks as if it might have been created for a battlefield. Here the peerless Saladin met the Christian host some seven hundred years ago and broke their power in Palestine for all time to come. There had long been a truce between the opposing forces, but according to the guidebook, Raynauld of Chatillon, Lord of Kerak, broke it by plundering a Damascus caravan and refusing to give up either the merchants or their goods when Saladin demanded them. This conduct of an insolent petty chieftain stung the Sultan to the quick, and he swore that he would slaughter Raynauld with his own hand, no matter how or when or where he found him. Both armies prepared for war. Under the weak King of Jerusalem was the very flower of the Christian chivalry. He foolishly compelled them to undergo a long, exhausting march, in the scorching sun and then, without water or other

refreshment, ordered them to encamp in this open plain. The splendidly mounted masses of Muslim soldiers swept round the north end of Gennesaret, burning and destroying as they came, and pitched their camp in from of the opposing lines. At dawn, the terrific fight began. Surrounded on all sides by the Sultan's swarming battalions, the Christian knights fought on without a hope for their lives. They fought with desperate valor, but to no purpose; the odds of hear and numbers and consuming thirst were too great against them. Toward the middle of the day the bravest of their band cut their way through the Muslim ranks and gained the summit of a little hill, and there, hour after hour, they closed around the banner of the Cross and beat back the charging squadrons of the enemy.

But the doom of the Christian power was sealed, Sunset found Saladin lord of Palestine, the Christian chivalry strewn in heaps upon the field, and the King of Jerusalem, the Grand Master of the Templars, and Raynald of Chatillon captives in the Sultan's tent. Saladin treated two of the prisoners with princely courtesy and ordered refreshments to be set before them. When the King handed an iced sherbet to Chatillon, the Sultan said, "It is thou that givest it to him, not I." He remembered his oath and slaughtered the hapless knight of Chatillon with his own hand.

It was hard to realize that this silent plain had once resounded with martial music and trembled to the tramp of armed men. It was hard to people this solitude with rushing columns of cavalry, and stir its torpid pulses with the shouts of victors, the shrieks of the wounded, and the flash of banner and steel above the surging billows of war. A desolation is here that not even imagination can grace with the pomp of life and action.

I hope this booklet is helpful.

In compiling the illustrations for this project, I used maps and photos that are available online from:

<https://about-history.com/battle-of-the-horns-of-hattin-the-decisive-battle-between-saladin-and-guy-de-lusigan/>

<https://www.themaparchive.com/battle-of-hattin-1187.html>

<https://www.military-history.us/2014/09/the-hattin-campaign-and-the-triumph-of-saladin-in-1187/>

Thank you!