

RURAL SETTLEMENTS ON MOUNT CARMEL IN ANTIQUITY

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Archaeopress Archaeology

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This book is dedicated to the members of the Mt. Carmel Expedition
following a project of many years of field research

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Sources of Illustrations

It is a privilege to thank the authors and the various bodies who allowed me the use of illustrations from their publications. Illustrations from Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) publications:

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Preface and Acknowledgements

From the time I was a boy, I have had an emotional connection to the sites of Mount Carmel. I first reached the foot of this mountain in my youth when, along with other teenage boys, we made bicycle trips from Kibbutz Ma'abarot to the south Carmel and back – a not-so-easy undertaking for fourteen-year-old boys.

The first archaeological work on the Carmel began in 1983, when Hava Lahav, from the field school of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, called upon the members of the Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology of Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, to come to Sumaqa in order to aid in the efforts to save the remains of an ancient synagogue. At the time, the building served soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces for target practice while they were training in the area. From then until this very day, Mount Carmel has been the focus of my archaeological and research activities.

This book describes ten rural mountain sites through which we, together with the Carmel expedition of Bar-Ilan University, have sought to reconstruct the character of all the settlements on the mountain and at its foot, from the Persian through the Byzantine periods. The expedition members, surveyors and photographers are each acknowledged personally in the introductory description of each and every site. We were also aided by Hava Lahav, Yosi Kost, Malka and Yoram Weinberg, Ariel Berman and Lea De Segni, each in their particular area of professional expertise – our heartfelt thanks are offered to them. Special thanks go to the late Azriel Siegelmann, ז"ל, one

of the veterans of the Israel Department of Antiquities. Azriel participated in the survey and measurements of many of the sites and his professional knowledge added much to the preparation of the plans.

Judith Ben-Michael of the IAA allowed us to use those pottery plates and plans of the sites that had been previously published, for which we offer our thanks. Lina Dar transcribed and improved the style of the original manuscript; Sapir Haad drew and prepared the graphics and typescript for publications. My heartfelt thanks go to both of them.

The Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology of Bar-Ilan University supported this research enterprise of the Carmel, which was aided by funds from the Koschitzki and Krauthammer foundations.

Zeev Safrai kindly read the manuscript, and offered important comments and criticisms – he, too, is worthy of our thanks. Rafi Kitron and Yigael Ben-Ephraim, both veteran members of the Carmel expedition, assisted with proofreading. Amit Shadman, Ellen Porat and Orli Shapira also proofread. All have our unending thanks.

The Hebrew version of this book was first published in 2012 by the Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem. The English version was updated and newly excavated sites were added.

Shimon Dar, Bar-Ilan University, Israel

Geographical Outline of the Survey Sites

Mount Carmel is 30 km long and has a total area estimated to be between 220 and 232 km². The mountain is typically divided into four principal landscape units, which are often called “the high Carmel,” “the intermediate Carmel,” “the low Carmel” and “the Zichron ridge of the Carmel.” The division between units is according to elevation above sea level (Nir, 1980). The highest peak in the Carmel reaches 546 m at Rom Carmel, near ‘Isfiya. From north to south the mountain slopes towards the Menashe heights (Marcus, 1997, 9-18).

Most of the mountain is composed of calcareous sedimentary rocks (calcium carbonate) of the Cretaceous age, such as limestone, dolomite, chalk, marly chalk. In addition, there also igneous rocks: volcanic tuff and basalt (Ilani and Minster, 2011, 134). The east Carmel is characterized by a huge, sharp escarpment (the Yagur fault), whereas in the west the Carmel slopes down to the coastal plain and includes cliffs that are the result of barrier and patch reefs.

The route of the “Haifa–‘Isfiya–Elyakim junction” road largely follows the Carmel watershed. There are fifteen streams in the east drainage basin, most of which are short and steep, and ten in the west one, which are longer and more moderately sloped (Marcus, 1997, 22-24). The Carmel enjoys a respectable amount of precipitation (700-750 mm per annum), but the springs in the mountainous Carmel have poor output and are dependent on the annual

rainfall. The ancients relied on the collection of runoff and rain in plastered cisterns and unroofed reservoirs. Apparently, the springs served as back-ups in times of drought (see below).

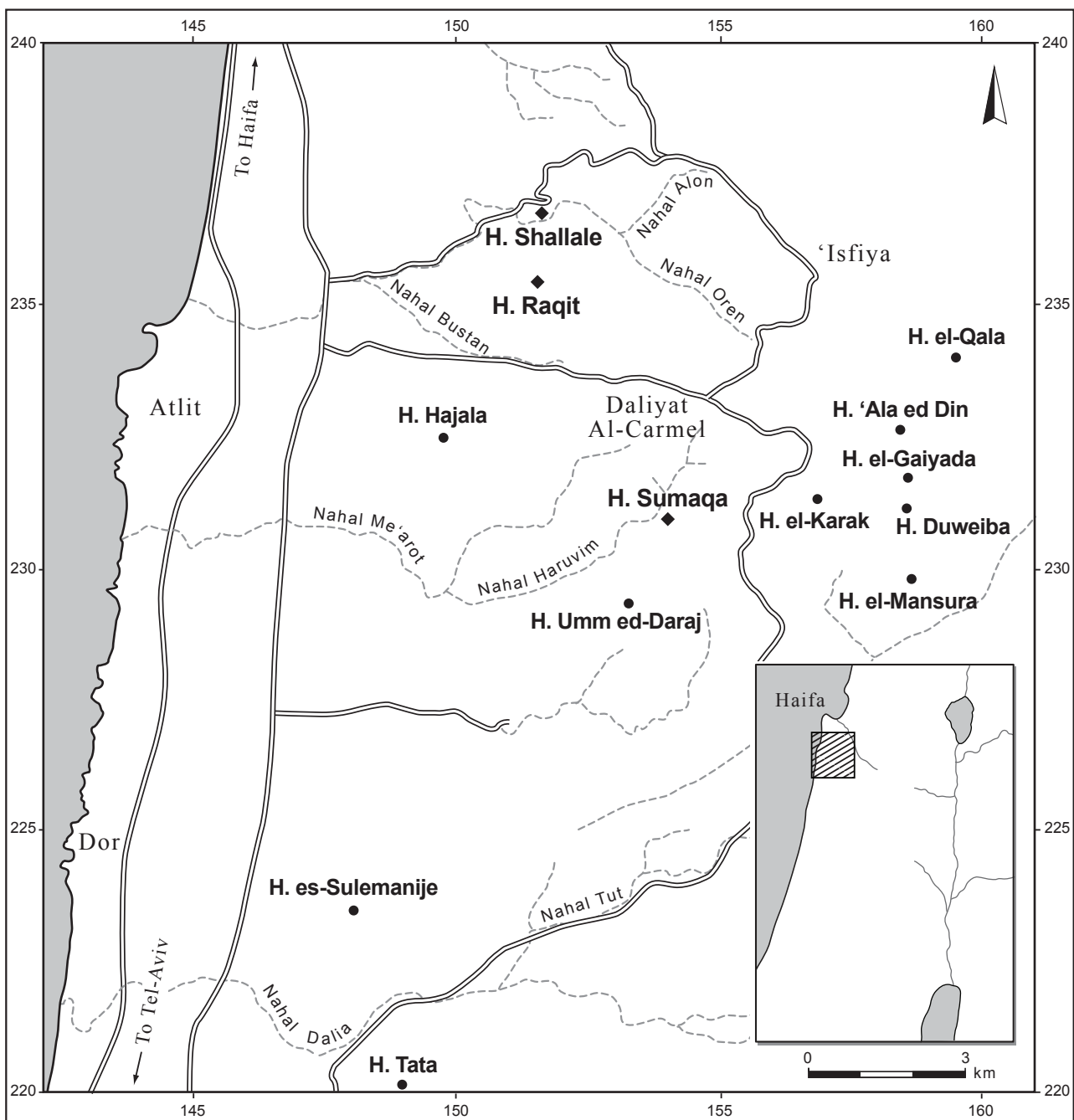
The natural vegetation of the Carmel has not disappeared, surviving even into modern times. However, there are archaeo-botanical finds collected at various sites, which date from the Upper Palaeolithic through the Byzantine periods. The following species were identified: Kermes oak (*Quercus calliprinos*), Mt. Tabor oak (*Quercus ithaburensis*), terebinth (*Pistacia Palaestina*), lentisk (*Pistacia lentiscus*), carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*), olive (*Olea europaea*), hawthorn (*Crataegus aronia*), willow (*Salix*), elm (*Ulmus*) and myrtle (*Myrtus communis*). Where there was human intervention some changes in the range of species have occurred (Liphschitz, 2007, 37). Willow and Elm grow today on the Carmel’s margin. Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) and Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*) were imported to the Carmel and planted extensively. Lebanese cedar was imported from neighboring countries. Today, the Carmel is one of the main national parks in northern Israel. In 1971, 80,000 dunams (1 dunam = 1000 square meters) were incorporated into the park’s domain, some forest and maquis, all of which have suffered from forest fires such as the one that occurred at the end of 2010 when 20,000 dunams went up in flames.

Survey and Excavations by the Bar-Ilan Expedition to the Mountainous Carmel

In the years 1983-2013, an archaeological expedition under the auspices of the Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology of Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, was active on Mount Carmel. The expedition comprised archaeologists, team members, students and other professionals, as well as pupils from schools in the Sharon and Daliyat el-Carmel. Volunteers from near and far also took part in the surveys and excavations.

Three main sites were investigated by the expedition:
 Horvat Sumaqa (1983-1995)
 Horvat Raqit (1996-2002)
 Horvat Shallale (2002-2013)

The two first sites were published in Hebrew and English, while the last was published solely in English.



1. Map of surveyed sites

Horvat Sumaqa is located in an army firing range and we were often required to cease excavation and evacuate the area at the request of the army. These periods were utilized for carrying out architectural surveys at other sites on the Carmel with the blessing of the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) directors. These sites were not excavated by us and in some instances we relied on excavations carried out by others.

In the eastern Carmel, we investigated and surveyed the following sites (from north to south): Qelia (the *Bamah* Citadel), 'Ala ed-Din, 'Ada, Dubba, Kerak and Mansura. In the center Heglun and Derag were surveyed, as were Talimon and Tata in the south (Fig. 1).

It should be noted that nearly all of the sites were surveyed and published by the teams of the Archaeological Survey of Israel; the work of Ya'aqov Olami and Avraham Ronen stands out in particular. Sometimes, we relied on the conclusions of other expeditions that excavated on the Carmel.

The Bar-Ilan expedition received the manuscript of the survey from Ya'aqov Olami and consulted him many times during his lifetime. However, as these sites were not measured and were published by Olami without plans, the Bar-Ilan expedition carried out this task and prepared detailed plans of those sites. These were surveyed and measured by professional surveyors. As noted above, these measurements and surveys were carried out during the Sumaqa excavations and the participants included archaeologists, students and volunteers. In 2009-2010, we carried out tests and updated the plans, some of which had waited 20 years to be published.

In the last few years a number of important excavations on the Carmel were published including Ramat Hanadiv, Nahal Haggit and Nahal Tut. Together with those of the Carmel expedition at Sumaqa, Raqit and Shallale, they allow a reconstruction and better understanding of the settlement pattern on Mount Carmel from the Persian to the Byzantine periods. The goal of the present work is to detail the structure of the rural settlement on the Carmel and attempt to study and understand the history of this special region.

Settlements of the Eastern Carmel

In antiquity, ten settlements were located on the Carmel east of the watershed, between 'Isfiya in the north and the Keren Ha-Carmel (Carmel peak, Muhraqa) in the south. Here, rural settlements existed in the rocky areas and harsh topography along an approximately 7 km long narrow mountain platform whose eastern slope was steep and deep. Ten short and steep streams, some 1-3 km long, are located in this area and drain into the Nahal Kishon and its tributaries. Owing to the steep east escarpment, there were few main paths in area of 'Isfiya in the north and the Keren Ha-Carmel (Muhraqa) in the south that led in the direction of the Jezreel Valley. Other local paths, some quite steep, led from these settlements to the valley and overcame the escarpment in a circuitous fashion.

The ancient settlements were established on the mountain platform, which has a relatively moderate topography, or to its east on the ledge just before the eastern escarpment.

A small parcel of quality land that has been cleared of field stones may be discerned around each settlement. The size of these land tracts varies from a few tens to several hundreds of dunams. These tracts served as the initial core of the settlement's subsistence. After these sites were well-established, additional terraced land was built over a much larger area.

The distance between sites is approximately 1.0-1.5 km. Thus, even at the apex of their development and size, the available land at their disposal was relatively small. Springs and wells are known only in the area of 'Isfiya in the north, Horvat Dubba and near the Keren Ha-Carmel in the south (Bir al Mansura). Most of the rural settlements lacked a permanent source of water and were forced to subsist on the collection of runoff. A salient question is, how did these people and their flocks and herds survive during periods of drought?