

# Demographic, Socio-Economic and Architectural Structure of Tibnīn in the Age of the Crusades



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## ABSTRACT

*Tibnīn was an important small Crusader fief and a fortified castle. It was vital for the Kingdom of Jerusalem, because it included fertile agricultural lands, was a tax collection centre, and because it controlled the Damascus-to-Tyre commercial route. Additionally, its castle played defensive and offensive role in the north of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and upper Galilee, and its rulers of Tibnīn played a major role in forming the history of the Latin East. When the Crusaders invaded the Levant at the end of the eleventh century, it was given rise to new demographic, cultural, socio-economic, and architectural features. The present Paper aims at removing some of the mystery concerning the fief of Tibnīn and its castle in the Latin East. This paper thus is a study of the demographic structure of Tibnīn and discusses the socio-economic role of Tibnīn in the Latin east. Moreover, the role of Tibnīn in influencing the relations between Muslims and the Crusaders in the Levant and the architecture of the castle of Tibnīn and its importance in the age of the Crusade will be examined.*

### Keywords:

*Tibnīn, The Crusades, Crusader Castles, The Latin East, Crusader soldiers*

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## 1- Introduction

The Crusade movement is one of the most important occurrences of medieval history. It took place throughout two centuries in the Levant and affected both Muslims and Crusaders and in turn changed the way in which West and East related to one another.<sup>(1)</sup> To understand the history of the Crusades, it is important to study not only the military aspects but also the socio-economic and political relationships. When the Crusaders took control of the Holy Land and many Islamic cities in the Levant, they transferred their feudal European system there. They established four main fiefdoms or lordships, Jerusalem, Edessa, Antioch and Tripoli. In addition, there were

another twelve secondary fiefdoms,<sup>(2)</sup> of which Tibnīn was one. Tibnīn was called "Toron" by the Crusaders. Once the Crusaders had captured Tibnīn, they began building its fortified castle, from which the fief of Tibnīn gained its importance throughout the period of the Crusades.

## 2- The Study Area and the Historical Background

Tibnīn lies on "Jabal 'Amil" and was strategically located on the trade route between Damascus and Tyre, in the south of present-day Lebanon.<sup>(3)</sup> This area was known as Jabal 'Amilah, and later as Jabal 'Amil. Most historians have thought that the naming of this

land goes back to the tribe of Banu 'Amilah " بنو عاملة", which emigrated from Yemen to the Levant in pre-Islamic times and settled in these lands, because of a flood caused by the destruction of the Maārib Dam "سد مأرب".<sup>(4)</sup> It was also named Jabil al-Jālil and Jabal al-Khalil. Jabil 'Āmil included several mountains and areas: Jabil Tibnīn, Jabil Hunin, the coast of Tyre, Shaqif Arnun and others.<sup>(3)</sup>

Geographically and historically, Lebanon was part of Greater Syria. The natural borders of Jabal 'Amil were the Horn River "al-Qarn" near of Ṭīr-Shiḥah "طيرشحا" south of Acre, Jordan and part of the Lebanese mountains to the east, the al-Āwali River "نهر الأولي" on the north, and the Mediterranean Sea on the west. The region of Jabal 'Āmil became part of the Islamic State from the seventh Gregorian century. When the Crusaders invaded the Levant, they advanced to control the cities and villages of Jabal 'Āmil because of this area's importance, geographically, strategically, and economically, as will be illustrated. The area of Jabil 'Amil included many villages which were divided into several fiefdoms; Tibnīn was one of these fiefdoms in the south part of Jabal 'Amil.<sup>(5)</sup>



Map 1: Jabal 'Amil and Southern Lebanon<sup>(6)</sup>

Once the castle of Tibnīn was built by Hugh of Saint-Omer in AD 1103-05 / AH 496-99, it became a base from which the Crusaders could launch invasions in the area of Galilee in the northern part of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. It thus played an important military, political and economic role in the north of the Kingdom of Jerusalem throughout the period of the Crusades. Owing to this, the Muslims constantly attempted to regain it and did so in 1187. However, the Emperor Frederick II succeeded in recapturing it in 1129, so that it resumed its political, military and economic role under the Latin rule until it fell eventually and forever to the Muslims in 1266.

Tibnīn was an important Crusader fief and castle. It played a pivotal role in capturing the city of Tyre, which had received military reinforcements from Damascus before its fall to the Crusaders' in 1124. From that time, Tibnīn and Tyre became important military and economic Crusader settlements. The fief of Tibnīn was vital for the Kingdom of Jerusalem, because it included fertile agricultural lands, was a tax collection centre, and because it controlled the Damascus-to-Tyre commercial route. Militarily, it controlled the area north of Galilee, which was a very important region for the Crusader States and the Kingdom of Jerusalem, because in addition to the importance of the defensive and offensive role of its castle in the north of the Kingdom of Jerusalem,<sup>(7)</sup> the rulers of Tibnīn played a major role in forming the history of the Latin East. They were key figures in the political and military events of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, as will be discussed throughout this work.

The arrival of the Crusaders to the Near East area at the end of the eleventh century gave rise to new demographic, cultural, socio-economic, and architectural features. New inhabitants, new traditions and new languages came with the European inhabitants. Islam and Christendom, Arabs and Franks, East and West met face to face in the Levant.<sup>(8)</sup> The present article aims at removing some of the mystery concerning the fief of Tibnīn and its castle and illustrates the importance of this relatively unknown fiefdom, its subjects and rulers in the formation of the history of the Latin East. This paper thus discusses the demographic and socio-economic role of Tibnīn in the Latin east. Moreover, the role of Tibnīn in influencing the relations between Muslims and the Crusaders in the Levant and discusses the architecture of

the castle of Tibnīn and its importance in the age of the Crusade will be examined.

Tibnīn was an ancient city and a castle was built there by the Aramaic King Hazael (842-805 B.C) when his conquests reached Palestine. The castle was built to dominate the commercial roads that linked Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula. It was named Tibnīn, which in Aramaic means “constructed and fortified building”. The castle was destroyed by the hands of the Assyrians and the Chaldeans and was rebuilt in the Greco-Roman period, when it was garrisoned to protect the commercial caravans.<sup>(9)</sup>

Tibnīn Castle lies on top of Jabal ‘Amil, between Damascus and Tyre,<sup>(10)</sup> at a distance of 25 kilometers southeast of the city of Tyre. Geographically, it belonged to Upper Galilee (الجليل: *Galil*).<sup>(11)</sup> Tibnīn is the Arabic equivalent of the Crusader name “Toron”. Hugh Saint-Omer, the first lord of Tibnīn in the age of the Crusades, built the castle of Tibnīn, which he called Toron, on the highest ridge of the mountain between 1103 and 1105/496-499.<sup>(12)</sup> It looked down on the Wadi al‘Ain, and the largest part of the city of Tibnīn was on a lower ridge and south west of the castle.<sup>(13)</sup> Western historiographical sources and Latin charters mention it under the name of Toron. It is called Tibnīn, the original name, in the Arabic sources. This study often uses and mentions the original name, Tibnīn.

### 3- Populations of Tibnīn

The human factor had a great influence on the Crusade movement and on its outcome. The overpopulation in Europe was one of the factors that led to conquest of the Near East in 1095. Moreover, the Islamic world was badly divided at that time. The Syrian climatic conditions were more favorable than those in Europe, and the Europeans would find sufficient food by cultivating the arable lands in the Levant. The growth in numbers of younger sons of the noble and royal houses of Europe motivated them to discover new lands for their own. The Crusade movement was also an opportunity for soldiers, seculars, knights and others to acquire new possessions in the Levant.<sup>(14)</sup> The population increase of European areas that participated in the Crusades can be estimated as follows (in millions):

European Areas	A.D. 1000	A.D. 1200
France and the Low Countries	6	10
Germany and Scandinavia	4	7
British Isles	1.7	2.8
Italy	5	7.8
Iberia	7	8
Total	23.7	35.6
Russell, “The Population of the Crusader States,” p. 298		

Although there were big urban cities in the Levant, the majority of the Latin population settled in villages and combined European agricultural experience with the local farming practices.<sup>(15)</sup> Tibnīn was commercial-agricultural and one of the most suitable areas to settle. It was a place where taxes were collected from the commercial caravans traveling between Damascus and Tyre.<sup>(16)</sup>

Throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it is estimated that the average population density of cities in general was about 125 persons to the hectare and that population of Syria was estimated at about 2.7 million people.<sup>(17)</sup> The average size of the villages near Tyre was about 120 villages with in 450 km<sup>(2)</sup> and their size was about 3.75 km<sup>(2)</sup> per village.<sup>(18)</sup> This means that we can expect the villages of Tibnīn to also be about 3.75 km<sup>(2)</sup> in size, because they were located near Tyre and some of the villages near Tyre actually belonged to the fief of Tibnīn. Although it is difficult to estimate the population of inhabited Syrian areas because of its mountainous character and extended desert, the villages were estimated to have about 200-210 persons.<sup>(19)</sup>

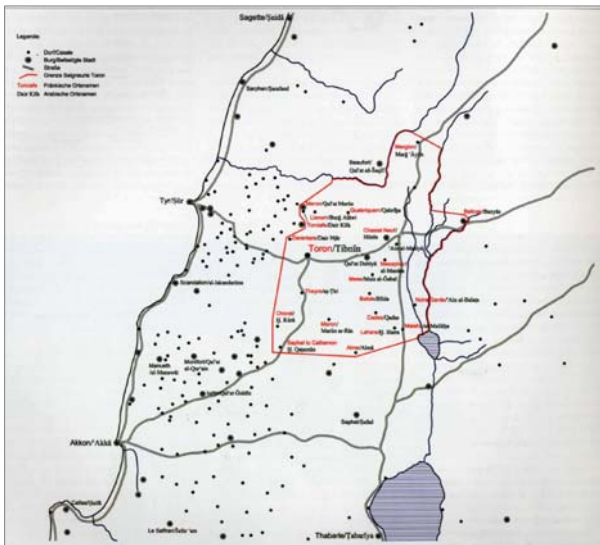
It is difficult to define the borders of the fief of Tibnīn throughout the period of the Crusades. It is estimated that there were about 120-133 villages in the extended region between Tibnīn and Tyre.<sup>(20)</sup> The fief of Tibnīn included some villages in the vicinity of Tyre, as can be derived from a description by Willam of Tyre, who mentions that Humphrey I of Tibnīn held the hilly county around the city of Tyre, which extended almost to Lebanon and that he held both strongholds and fields in peace.<sup>(21)</sup>

The demography of the Crusader States varied from the north to the south and from the

east to the west. In general, there were more Muslim inhabitants in the north of the Kingdom of Jerusalem than in the south, because of the fear that had spread among them in the first ten years of the Crusade conquests. They left their homes and lands, going to more secure cities in the north that the Crusaders had not captured. The Muslims and Arabic inhabitants formed ethnic and linguistic blocks in the Crusader fiefdoms, at least throughout twelfth century.<sup>(22)</sup>

The inhabitants of Jabal 'Amil were from a variety of Arabic tribes, and were the descendants of a population that had lived there since time immemorial.<sup>(23)</sup> From the beginning of the eleventh century, the areas of Transjordan and north of Palestine were mostly Shi'ite. The native Christians of Syria shared a common faith with the Franks, but they were closely linked to their Muslim neighbors by language, customs and history. Sometimes they suffered under the Crusaders and sometimes some helped the Crusaders against the Muslims. "They gave the Franks no trouble, but they could regard the prospect of Muslim rule with equanimity." Both the Crusaders and the Muslims preferred who were loyal to them.<sup>(24)</sup>

Edward Robinson was one of the first modern travelers to Tibnīn in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>(25)</sup> He reported that "the village of Tibnīn has 380 male inhabitants, of whom 250 were Metāwilech and 130 were Christians."<sup>(26)</sup> Thus there were Christian inhabitants in Tibnīn in the mid-1800s, but the majority during the period of the Crusades were Shi'ite Muslims.



**Map 2:** The fiefdom of Tibnīn at the time of their greatest expansion in the middle of the twelfth century.<sup>(27)</sup>

Crusader society was a mixture of Eastern and European culture. There were numerous languages, cultures and traditions. Inhabitants of the Levant shared each other's' celebrations, festivals and special occasions. Although the most widely spoken language between the Crusaders was French and the language of the churches and monasteries was Latin, many of the Crusaders learned and spoke Arabic.<sup>(28)</sup> It was mentioned that Humphrey IV of Tibnīn was the interpreter in the negotiations between the Muslims and the Crusaders in 1192, and it was said that Humphrey IV learned the Arabic language during his two years of captivity, 1187-89.<sup>(29)</sup> This indicates that daily life between the Crusader and Muslim inhabitants was completely different from the life of war between the Muslim and Crusader leaders. There not was only warfare but also mutual cultural and social relationships.

In the time when Tibnīn and the area of Jabal 'Amil were captured, the Franks committed many atrocities. However, the villages did not suffer much torture or murder, because the Crusaders needed the villagers to cultivate the lands to provide sufficient food.<sup>(30)</sup> In 1113, during the war between Ṭughtikīn of Damascus and the Crusaders in the area of Tibnīn and Galilee, the Muslims raided Tibnīn and Galilee, which led to a rebellion of the Muslim inhabitants against the Latin rule in these areas. To counter this, King Baldwin settled Syriac Christians in this region, but he also kept the Muslim inhabitants because of their experience in cultivating the land.<sup>(31)</sup>

The Muslim peasants paid the usual taxes they were accustomed to pay after the Crusaders conquered an area and controlled it.<sup>(32)</sup> When Ibn Jubair visited the area of Tibnīn and its neighboring villages in 1184, he reported that most of the inhabitants of Tibnīn and the neighboring area were from Muslim tribes. They cultivated the lands and lived a pastoral and rural life. Both Latin and Muslim inhabitants enjoyed a stable life under Frankish rule in Tibnīn. The crops and livestock were divided between the Franks and Muslims and they lived together in peace.<sup>(33)</sup>

Although the situation of the Muslim peasants and inhabitants was bad under Crusader rule in general, there were some exceptions such as the peasants of Tibnīn, whose situation was better than others in neighboring Crusader areas. The Crusader lords of Tibnīn and the Kingdom of Jerusalem

needed them to cultivate the land of Tibnīn, which was an important crop-growing area that provided food for the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.<sup>(34)</sup>

After the battle of Hattin in 1187, the Muslim forces recovered Tibnīn on Sunday, July 29<sup>(th)</sup>, 1187 / 18<sup>(th)</sup> Jumada II 583.<sup>(35)</sup> The Crusaders lost their lands in Galilee, Tibnīn and other areas, and were replaced by some Muslims tribe who were loyal to the Sultan, Ṣalaḥal-Dīn, but the Eastern Christians remained living alongside the Muslims.<sup>(36)</sup> With this reconquest, the Muslims controlled Tibnīn and dominated the commercial road. In addition, Tibnīn became the headquarters of the Muslim army for its military operations against the Crusaders in the city of Tyre.<sup>(37)</sup> Owing to the importance of Tibnīn economically and strategically for the Crusaders, they constantly attempted to regain it. They laid siege to it by helping the German troops in 1197-98, but they did not recapture it.<sup>(38)</sup>

Ibn-al-Āthīr mentions that when German troops surrounded Tibnīn in 1197-98/ 593, the Muslims wanted to surrender the city to the Crusaders in exchange for their safety. Some Frankish inhabitants warned the Muslims at Tibnīn, saying that, "If you give the castle to the Germans, they will take you captive." The Muslims therefore defended the castle and did not leave it.<sup>(39)</sup> This appears to show that the relations between the local Crusader and Muslim inhabitants were close and friendly, and that they were socio-economically related.

On February 18<sup>(th)</sup>, 1229/ 638, Emperor Frederick II formed a treaty at Jaffa with Sultan al-Kāmil, under which the Crusaders regained Tibnīn and the extended region from Jerusalem to Jaffa. They maintained a truce for ten years, which will be discussed in further chapters.<sup>(40)</sup> Tibnīn was ruled by the Franks from 1229 until Sultan Bībars took control the city of Tibnīn and its castle in 1266/664.<sup>(41)</sup> During this period, there were socio-economic ties between the Latin and Muslim inhabitants of Tibnīn.

#### 4- Agriculture

Agriculture played a significant role in the Crusader States and was the basis on which the Crusader economy and Crusader settlements in the Levant were built. However, historical sources fail to mention agricultural aspects in their narratives. The agricultural characteristics of the mountains of Amil, in

Tibnīn, the south of Lebanon and the north of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, were somewhat similar to those in the south. This mountainous area, Tibnīn, included cultivable soil and had the necessary water sources to irrigate the land, and the coastal plain was a narrow area with large cultivations and got water from some conduits cut in the mountains.<sup>(42)</sup>

The lands of Tibnīn as well as the area of Jabal 'Amil were known to be arable,<sup>(43)</sup> because the mountainsides were formed as terraces, which kept the arable soil in place and retained the abundant rainfall, thus assuring the moisture needed for crops.<sup>(44)</sup> William of Tyre described the environment, soil and climate of Tibnīn as "famed for its salubrious air and delightful climate, [it] lies in the tribe of Asher between the sea and Mt. Lebanon and is about equally distant from the two cities, Tyre and Banyas." The soil of Tibnīn was fertile and well suited to the cultivation of vines and trees, producing abundant crops worked by the peasants. He describes the advantages of the site of Tibnīn, which was able to provide the needs of the Crusaders and its founder, Hugh of Saint-Omer, because of its fertile soil. Moreover, it was a very fortified place, which was important for capturing the city of Tyre, and thus important for the whole area at that time.<sup>(45)</sup>

The waters of the Litany River originate in the plains of Baalbek and the Bekaa, and the al-Zahrani River stems from east of the Mountain Niha, heading south-west and flowing into the sea, a distance of seven kilometers south of the city of Sidon.<sup>(46)</sup> The lands of Tibnīn got water from the nearby springs and watercourses. The nearest valley was Wadi' Ain al-Mizrāb, which had great springs to irrigate the fields, and from Wadi al'Ain, north of the castle.<sup>(47)</sup> This increased the agrarian importance of Tibnīn, in addition to its being a fortified fortress.

The army of the Kingdom of Jerusalem under the leadership of King Baldwin I attacked the city of Tyre in November 1111 / Jumada I 505. Ṭughtikīn of Damascus immediately dispatched some of his forces to attack the Crusader-held lands in Tibnīn and north.<sup>(48)</sup> King Baldwin ordered his army to return,<sup>(49)</sup> because he was afraid that the Muslims would take control of their wheat and vineyards crops cultivated in this area.<sup>(50)</sup> This demonstrates the economic and agricultural importance of the area of Tibnīn as a source of food, which

increased its strategic, political and military importance as well.

The village was the basic unit of rural life in the Crusader States in the Levant.<sup>(51)</sup> This underlines the importance of agriculture for both the Crusaders and Muslims. Most inhabitants of Tibnīn and Jabal 'Amil were skilful farmers and peasants, who represented an economic necessity for the Latin fiefdoms.<sup>(52)</sup> This fact was illustrated when the Muslim inhabitants rebelled against Latin rule in these areas; King Baldwin I moved Syriac Christians from near the Kingdom of Jerusalem to settle in this region, Jabal 'Amil, Tibnīn and Galilee. However, King Baldwin ordered the Crusader rulers to treat the Muslim peasants well, because they needed their experience in farming the land in this area.<sup>(53)</sup>

The area of Jabal 'Amil and the fief of Tibnīn comprised flat plains, mountainous and plateaus, both highlands and lowlands. The first was suitable to cultivate lemon, banana and palm trees, while the soil of the mountain land was good for producing timber and some kind of fruit trees.<sup>(54)</sup> This was confirmed by Ibn-Jubair in his travels in 1184; he said that there were roads through land full of trees and forests between Tibnīn and Hunīn, the neighboring castle to Tibnīn.<sup>(55)</sup>

The land in northern Syria and the fief of Tibnīn had important vineyards and plantations of olive trees at the period of the Crusades. Vegetables and legumes, such as beans, lentils, peas, were important in the diet of the Muslims and the Franks, and were grown in the same soil. The lords of every fief held the villages with their arable lands under his own control. Nevertheless, there was a waste of potential farmland in this area as the other areas at that time.<sup>(56)</sup>

Sugarcane and cotton were important crops that had been planted in the Levant since the tenth century, and both of these crops were exported to southern Europe. Cotton and sugarcane require large amounts of water, which came from the local springs and rivers.<sup>(57)</sup> These crops and also grapes were grown in the interior valleys in the area around Tyre and in Galilee territory. It was said that the vineyards became more widespread after the beginning of the Crusades, which might mean that they were cultivated by the Crusader settlers. The most suitable lands for conversion to vineyards were around and near Tyre.<sup>(58)</sup> All of these sources confirm that these crops and

fruits were planted in the lands of Tibnīn and Jabal 'Amil in the north of Galilee and around Tyre, and that there were watercourses and springs for irrigation.

Throughout the twelfth century, when the Kingdom of Jerusalem was at its height, the Crusaders benefitted considerably from their control of the fertile agricultural areas, receiving payment for and taxes on the harvests from the Muslims. There was also agricultural cooperation between the Crusaders and Muslims. For instance, in 1185, Raymond III of Tripoli made an agreement with Ṣalaḥal-Dīn, by which he brought much wheat into the Frankish lands.<sup>(59)</sup> After 1187, the Franks lost much of their lands, including Tibnīn, and their Kingdom was limited to the coast. However, the region of the fertile coast could not provide sufficient food.<sup>(60)</sup>

### 5- Trade, Taxes and Currency

The mainstay of the Crusader economy was trade. The Crusader kings were therefore eager to develop the commercial structure of the Levant. There were several factors that helped the Crusaders to develop trade in the Crusader States. The most prominent factor was the existence of several internal commercial roads in the Levant, which increased their commercial activities and their commercial relations with Muslims and European merchants.<sup>(61)</sup>

The Crusaders had the castle of Tibnīn built in 1105, by which they controlled the commercial road from Tyre to Damascus and threatened the Muslim trade caravans that went along the Transjordan road and south of Hebron. The latter route posed a lot of difficulties,<sup>(62)</sup> so traders turned to the Damascus-to-Tyre route. The castle overlooked the road between Tyre and both Damascus and Banyas and controlled the commercial movement between Tyre and the Muslims in the inland cities.<sup>(63)</sup>

The commercial caravans came from Damascus and went through Tibnīn to Tyre in particular and to the south in general. Ibn Jubair wrote that the Crusaders collected taxes "المكوس: al-Mūkūūs" from the commercial caravans at Tibnīn, saying "we reached to a big fortified Crusader fortress called Tibnīn, which was a place where taxes were collected from the caravans, موضع تمكيس القوافل, and it was under the hand of the Pig, mother of the Pig King." The taxes were "Dinar and carats of Tyrian dinars on the head (per person), الضريبة فيه دينار وقيراط من

الدنانير السورية على الراس". He mentions that the Crusaders forced the Moroccans in Tibnīn, who merchants were possibly living in Tibnīn, to pay the above-mentioned taxes, because they had joined in the wars of Nūr al-Dīn against them.<sup>(64)</sup>

The description of Queen Agnes and her son King Baldwin IV by Ibn-Jubair as "Pigs", the meat of which Muslims are forbidden to eat, reflects the attitudes of this time, where both Muslims and Crusaders were enemies and each described the other with the worst attributes. Nevertheless, there were many of socio-economic interrelationships between the Muslim and Crusader inhabitants of the Levant, regardless of the warfare between them. Trade was important for both the Crusaders and Muslims, because it was the main source of revenue for both in the Levant. Both were eager to maintain their commercial relationships and were strongly motivated to encourage the merchants and help them to carry out their business of buying and selling.<sup>(65)</sup>

The peasants of Tibnīn and other Crusader States, some of whom were free and others who were bound subjects, had to pay taxes to the Crusader overlords. Some of these were paid as part of the harvest "Kharāj" and others as rents "redditus". They also paid some form of tax on livestock.<sup>(66)</sup> Ibn Jubair mentions that the Muslim inhabitants of Tibnīn and the neighboring area lived in peace with other Latin inhabitants. However, they paid half of their yields "غلة: ghallat" and paid a poll tax "جزية: Jizīah", which was about "one dinar and one dinar five carats". They had to pay small taxes on the fruits tress as well.<sup>(67)</sup>

The nineteenth century traveler, Edward Robinson, reported that the inhabitants of Tibnīn were still paying taxes. "They pay a land tax of 12,000 piastres. There is also a poll tax of 2,100 piastres. Another tax of 2.300 piastres had been remitted by the Sultan, not long ago."<sup>(68)</sup> This confirms that Tibnīn was a commercial centre and agricultural village that provided its rulers with significant taxes and payments.

There were other taxes paid in the Crusader ports and fiefs in general. These taxes varied from fief to fief and from one commodity to another. Indeed, the feudal system of the Crusaders in the Latin East largely depended on the local peasants, who paid a huge number of the taxes. In addition to the taxes they paid on their crops, livestock and themselves, they had

to pay the tax of Xenia, which was in eggs, chicken, cheese and timber. This was paid three times a year, at Christmas, Easter, and Lent.<sup>(69)</sup>

The crops grown in Tibnīn contributed to the prosperity of trade in the Latin East in general. Specifically, sugarcane and cotton were the most important crops and were exported to Europe.<sup>(70)</sup> This means that Tibnīn was an important economic fief. It controlled the commercial routes, was tax collection centre and itself also produced some of the crops that were exported to Europe. This increased in general the revenue of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and gave Tibnīn much political and military importance as well.

Although the coinage was a royal monopoly, some fiefdoms and barons, including Tibnīn, Beirut, Sidon and Tyre, had the right to strike currency.<sup>(71)</sup> The lords of Tibnīn struck a feudal currency, but they did not put their names on the coins. The crusader name of Tibnīn, i.e. Toron, was on the face of this currency.<sup>(72)</sup> When Tibnīn and Tyre were united under the rule of Philip of Montfort in the middle of thirteenth century, he founded a powerful commercial fief at Tyre and Tibnīn and struck a copper currency.<sup>(73)</sup> The name Philip of Montfort is on the face and the name of Tyre on the back.<sup>(74)</sup>

The use of feudal currency in the Latin East was limited in general, because these coins were low-value, used mainly in simple and domestic daily transactions. It seems that the minting of this sort of currency meant political independence from the Kingdom of Jerusalem.<sup>(75)</sup>

In 1256, the conflicts between the Venetians and Genoese escalated. Philip of Montfort Lord of Tibnīn and Tyre supported the Genoese and expelled the Venetians from their properties in Tyre and in the area between Tyre and Tibnīn.<sup>(76)</sup> The Genoese were given the confiscated property by Philip of Montfort in order to gain their support.<sup>(77)</sup> This was part of a political-economic conflict between Philip of Montfort and his rivals in Acre. This means that the economic role of Tibnīn was exploited by its lords to play an important political role in the latin east.

## 6- The Castle of Tibnīn

**6.1 The location and the reasons of construction:** The castle of Tibnīn was an important offensive base and defensive bastion in the period of the Crusades and gave the fief of Tibnīn and its lords a significant political and

military role. It was built high on a steep mountain in 1103-05 and was given the name of Toron by its builder, Hugh of Saint-Omer.<sup>(78)</sup> It is located about 25 kilometers southeast of the city of Tyre,<sup>(79)</sup> on the highest hill of a ridge ranging in altitude from 700m to 800m above sea level.<sup>(80)</sup>

Conder and Kitchener, conducting a comprehensive survey of western Palestine, reported that "the castle was situated on a small round hill to the north-east of the village of Tibnīn. The hill itself is on a ridge, which is separated on the north and south from the surrounding country by deep valleys with steep sides." It stands at a great height above the neighboring counties and dominates the area as far as the River of al-Kāsīmiyeh. It defended the area between Safed and Tyre and protected the routes between Tiberias and Banyas to Tyre.<sup>(81)</sup> This indicates that the castle controlled Tibnīn to the south and its dependencies.<sup>(82)</sup> Moreover, the castle overlooked the coastal and mountains towns of Jabal 'Amil, Safad, Golan, Wadi al-Tīm, and it included water wells which were sufficient for the people in the case of siege and war. At the foot of the castle, in the plain to the East, there was a "Khan" or inn, to provide food and lodging for the travelers and for the storage of goods.<sup>(83)</sup>

There were several reasons for building the castle of Tibnīn and the Crusader castles in the Latin East in general. The main reason for construction of the castle of Tibnīn was to control the Damascus-to-Tyre route, defend the northwest of Galilee in the west, and to also defend the north of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The Castle of Tibnīn was strategically located for attacking the Muslims in the upper Galilee region and the city of Tyre.<sup>(84)</sup> It was also built to overcome the problem of the deficiency in the number of Crusader soldiers.<sup>(85)</sup>

The castle was the administrative base of the fiefdom and was the place where the taxes were collected, being a military fortified centre. It played a religious role in defending the Christian pilgrims and protected the merchants. There was a socio-economic life inside the castle. Knights, lords, senior employees and clerks lived inside the castle, forming a social and civilian society alongside the military life of the castle's soldiers.<sup>(86)</sup> The castle was a significant element of the feudal system, but its architecture has been more studied than its social functions. The leader or master of the castle imposed his authority over

the neighboring district, and the castle was the centre of feudal governance from which judicial and administrative authority was exercised over the inhabitants.<sup>(87)</sup>

The castle of Tibnīn frequently played these roles and its lords, such as Humphrey II, controlled several neighboring areas and cities, including Banyas and Hunīn. But Humphrey II was also the Constable of the Kingdom of Jerusalem,<sup>(88)</sup> which shows the importance of the castle in the Latin East, in particular, the significance of the castle of Tibnīn economically, politically and military. This will be discussed further in the other papers.

**6.2 The Architectural Structure of the Castle:** The style of the castles and buildings in the Latin East in the period of the Crusades falls into two main categories, Romanesque and Gothic. The first was the prevalent style used in the middle of the twelfth century and the second replaced it. The Crusaders in the Latin East built their fortresses and castles in a style to distinguish them from the local architecture. The Frankish establishments in the Levant sometimes displayed features not found in Europe at that time.<sup>(89)</sup>

It is not always possible to determine chronologically the building phases of medieval constructions. Nevertheless, it is estimated that the layout of Tibnīn Castle was completed in the first half of the twelfth century. It is similar to contemporary buildings such as Saône (Şahyūn; Qal'at Şalaḥ al-Dīn) and Giblet (Jbail), especially with regard to the design of the towers. It is believed that the major building phase was finished at the end of 1120. Most of the towers were destroyed in the siege of 1197-98, when German troops laid siege to the castle and destroyed its walls. There were some repairs during the Ayyubid period. It is estimated that there was wide rebuilding in the thirteenth century.<sup>(90)</sup> al-Mu'azzam-Isa of Damascus destroyed some parts of the castle, when the Crusaders attacked Egypt in 1218-21.<sup>(91)</sup> When al-Mu'azzam learned of the departure of Frederick II from Europe heading for the East in 1227, he destroyed the castle of Tibnīn.<sup>(92)</sup> His aim was to defortify the Castle in case it fell into the Crusaders' hands, which it did in 1229.

The castle of Tibnīn was designed to play both an offensive and defensive role. It was built to fit its location on top of a hill, "and is roughly circular, with round and square towers to flank the sides. The slopes of the hill were



faced with smooth-dressed stones." The walls were about six feet thick, and formed an irregular rectangular space.<sup>(93)</sup> The entrance of the castle could be reached by a steep ascent in the southwest (A), and in this entrance was a gothic portal, which included vaulted passages. In the southwest is a projecting window or balcony which overlooked the country to the northeast. There were made of stones on the inside as well as on the outside.<sup>(94)</sup> There were great towers (A, F, M, I and L) surrounding the castle.<sup>(95)</sup>

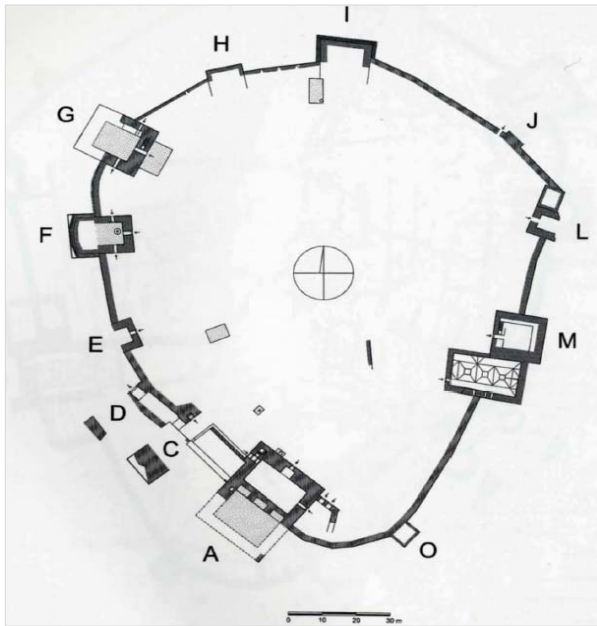


Figure 1: Plan of the castle. <sup>(96)</sup>



Figure 2: The gate of the Castle. <sup>(97)</sup>

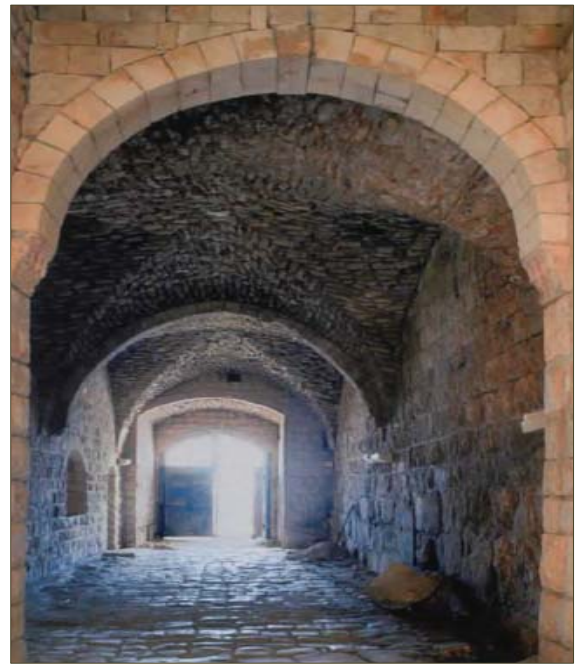


Figure 3: The entrance looking north-west. <sup>(98)</sup>

Mathias Piana considers that the fortress of Tibnīn was the largest of the Crusader donjons built. It was one of the most symmetrical western types, which was derived from north-western France and was a type known as early as the tenth century. "The characteristic features are the rectangular outline, the elevated entrance, the cross-wall, the water-supply installation, and the massive walls with mural stairs." <sup>(99)</sup> This all points to the castle of Tibnīn having played a major role in the period of the Crusades, and indicates that it and its rulers were of significant political and military importance in the Latin East.

### 7- Conclusion

This study has dealt with the socio-economic and demographic structure of Tibnīn and its area, Jabal 'Amil. The majority of its inhabitants were Muslim Shi'ites and the importance of its population and its peasants in cultivating the lands has been shown. The area produced abundant crops, which were important in feeding both the Crusaders and Muslims in the Levant. Some crops were also exported to Europe. Tibnīn was a strategic economic location in upper Galilee and controlled the commercial road from Tyre to Damascus. It was the place where the taxes were collected. It occupied a significant position in the Latin East and played a substantial role in the economic events of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. This in turn was linked to its prominent military and political role of

this castle, which will be dealt in next further researches.

Features of the architecture of the Castle of Tibnīn have been described. The castle was designed to fulfill an offensive and defensive role. It was a fortified castle, strategically placed to play a key position in the defence of the north of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and Galilee. It played a crucial military role against the Muslims in the cities of Tyre and Damascus, among others. Tibnīn was a base from which to mount attacks against the Muslims in the north and sometimes in the south of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The castle gave the fief of Tibnīn and its rulers an even more prominent role during the period of the crusade.

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## المظاهر الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والديمقراطية والمعمارية لإقطاعية تبين

## في عصر الحرب الصليبية

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## ملخص:

هذا المقال يتناول دراسة المظاهر الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والديمقراطية والمعمارية لإقطاعية تبين في عصر الحرب الصليبية، والذي يكون جزء من أطروحتي للماجستير بقسم تاريخ العصور الوسطى والحديثة في جامعة جوتنجن ألمانيا، يناير 2014. تبين هي إحدى الإقطاعيات الأثني عشر الصغرى في مملكة بيت المقدس، وقد بدأ ميلادها كإقطاعية صليبية (1103-1105م/99-496 هـ) على يد "هيو سانت أومر" والتي منحها أسم تورون. تبين تقع في منطقة جبل عامل جنوب لبنان في منطقة الجليل الأعلى على الطريق التجاري بين دمشق وصور، الذي بدوره جعلها تلعب دوراً هاماً في الصراع الصليبي الإسلامي لتحكمها في هذا الطرق التجاري الهام بين دمشق وصور. ساهمت تبين بدور أساسي في إسقاط مدينة صور 1124 في يد الصليبيين وظلت قاعدة هامة لمحاربة المسلمين في شمال مملكة بيت المقدس.

لمعرفة أهمية الدور السياسي والعسكري لهذه الإقطاعية، وما العوامل التي جعلتها ذات مكان هامة رغم أنها إقطاعية صليبية صغيرة، كان لابد من دراسة البنية الاجتماعية والسكانية الدعامتين الأساسيتين لكافة المستوطنات الصليبية. وبيان أهمية قلعتها في عصر الحروب الصليبية، ودراسة أهميتها الزراعية والاقتصادية لمملكة بيت المقدس، وهذا بدوره منحها أهمية عسكرية وسياسية هامة. وبالتالي فهذه الورقة تتناول دراسة أهميتها الزراعية والاقتصادية ومعرفة تركيبها السكانية علاوة على أهمية قلعتها وطرازها المعماري الذي يبين مدى قوتها وحصانها وأهميتها العسكرية في الشرق اللاتيني عصر الحروب الصليبية.