Al-Tall

Al-Tall – Depopulated Palestinian Village in Acre Subdistrict

Al-Tall was a Palestinian village in the Acre subdistrict, situated on a low sandy mound in the eastern part of the coastal plain in Galilee, approximately 14 kilometers from Acre and at an average elevation of about 50 meters above sea level. Al-Tall was closely connected with the neighboring village of al-Nahr, to the extent that some British Mandate population records grouped the two villages together or did not clearly distinguish between them.

The main road linking Tarshiha, Nahariyya, and Acre passed through the village. Al-

Tall's inhabitants depended principally on agriculture and animal husbandry, cultivating olives, pomegranates, and mulberries. They also used a nearby water-powered grain mill.

During the Nakba and the events surrounding the 1948 occupation of Palestine, Al-Tall was occupied during the second phase of Operation Ben-Ami on 20–21 May 1948. Walid Khalidi associates its capture with Carmeli Brigade operations against villages in western Galilee. Most of the village was subsequently destroyed.

Key Facts about Al-Tall

Field	Information
Name	Al-Tall
Subdistrict	Acre
Status	Depopulated Palestinian village
Distance from Acre	Approximately 14 km
Average elevation	Approximately 50 m above sea level
Twin village	Al-Nahr
Population, 1944/45	Approximately 300 according to an estimate cited by Walid Khalidi from Nakhla Makhul; not a separate official census count
Estimated population, 1948	348 according to Palestine Remembered; a later estimate, not an official census
Date of occupation	20–21 May 1948; Palestine Remembered lists 21 May as the single summary date
Military operation	Second phase of Operation Ben-Ami
Military unit	Carmeli Brigade in the context of Operation Ben-Ami; Khalidi connects Al-Tall's fate with the brigade's attacks in the area in qualified terms
Cause of depopulation	Military assault and occupation during Operation Ben-Ami
Destruction	Most village structures were destroyed; one stone house remained in Khalidi's field description

Field	Information
Israeli settlements on village lands	No Israeli settlement is documented as having been established directly on Al-Tall's lands

Location of Al-Tall

Al-Tall stood on a low sandy mound in the eastern part of the coastal plain in Galilee, approximately 14 kilometers from Acre. The main road connecting Tarshiha, Nahariyya, and Acre passed through the village, linking it with the principal transportation network of western Galilee.

Al-Tall was the twin village of nearby al-Nahr. Their geographical and social proximity was so close that British Mandate statistical records sometimes treated the two together or failed to distinguish clearly between them.

The Name Al-Tall

The Arabic name “al-Tall” literally denotes a mound or low hill and corresponds with the village's physical location on a raised sandy mound. The name recorded by Walid Khalidi and PalQuest is Al-Tall.

Al-Tall before the Nakba

Al-Tall and al-Nahr were built over the remains of an ancient settlement whose archaeological sequence, according to material cited by Walid Khalidi, extends back to the eighteenth century BCE. Extensive ruins enclosed by the remains of a wall were also found at the nearby site known as Zahrat al-Tall.

In the late nineteenth century, Al-Tall's population was estimated at approximately 200. The village had a rectangular layout extending from southeast to northwest, and its closely grouped houses were built from various materials, including stone, cement, mud brick, and reinforced concrete.

Most residents were Muslims. Agriculture and animal husbandry constituted their

principal sources of livelihood.

Population and the Statistical Problem of Al-Tall

Population figures for Al-Tall require particular caution because British Mandate records did not consistently distinguish it from neighboring al-Nahr.

Year	Population	Nature of Figure and Notes
Late nineteenth century	About 200	Historical estimate recorded in the Survey of Western Palestine
1922	422	Official census figure for the combined unit “Al-Nahr wa Tall”; not Al-Tall alone
1931	522	Official figure recorded under al-Nahr in 120 houses; whether it also included Al-Tall is uncertain, so it cannot be assigned to Al-Tall alone
1944/45	610	Official figure recorded under al-Nahr; its possible inclusion of both villages is disputed and it is not used here as an independent count for Al-Tall
1944/45	About 300	Independent estimate for Al-Tall cited by Walid Khalidi from Nakhla Makhul; not a separate official census count
1948	348	Later estimate reported by Palestine Remembered, not an official census
1998	2,137 refugees	Later refugee-descendant estimate reported by Palestine Remembered

Walid Khalidi discusses this statistical problem in connection with Al-Nahr and Al-Tall. The two villages were explicitly combined in the 1922 census, while only al-Nahr appeared by name in later records. Khalidi notes that treating the 1931 and 1945 figures as the combined population of both villages would imply unusually low population growth compared with neighboring communities. He therefore presents Nakhla Makhul's estimate of approximately 600 inhabitants for al-Nahr and 300 for Al-Tall.

The figure of 300 should consequently not be described as an official 1945 census count, while the official al-Nahr figures should not automatically be reassigned to Al-Tall.

Number of Houses

Walid Khalidi's entry does not provide a separate documented number of houses for Al-Tall in the 1931 census and records this field as unavailable. The figure of 120 houses in 1931 belongs to the official entry recorded under al-Nahr and cannot automatically be assigned to Al-Tall.

Land of Al-Tall

Walid Khalidi's entry for Al-Tall does not provide a separate 1944/45 land-ownership or land-use table, and these fields are recorded as unavailable. PalQuest likewise does not display a separate land table for Al-Tall.

Because of Al-Tall's close relationship with al-Nahr and the ambiguity surrounding the statistical units used for the two villages, this article does not reproduce an independent land-area or ownership figure that cannot be verified in the principal sources. Accuracy is preferable to filling the table with an uncertain figure circulated in secondary sources.

Economic Life in Al-Tall

Agriculture and animal husbandry were the main sources of livelihood. Villagers cultivated olives, pomegranates, and mulberries, crops suited to the agricultural conditions and water resources of the surrounding area.

The inhabitants also ground grain at a nearby water-powered mill, demonstrating the importance of local water resources to both agriculture and everyday food production.

Water and the Mill

A water source near Al-Tall supplied sufficient flow to operate a grain mill, while water also supported nearby orchards. The PalQuest entry for Al-Tall, however, does not provide a separate detailed list of named village springs or wells; consequently, unverified water-source names have not been added here.

Education and Institutions

The principal sources reviewed do not provide sufficient documented information about an independent school in Al-Tall, its founding date, or student numbers. Such details should not be inferred from neighboring al-Nahr or from unsupported local accounts.

Archaeological Remains

The Al-Tall area is archaeologically significant. Al-Tall and al-Nahr stood over the remains of an ancient settlement with layers extending back to the eighteenth century BCE. Extensive ruins surrounded by the remains of a wall were also identified at nearby Zahrat al-Tall.

In the cemetery on the site's northern slopes, Walid Khalidi's field description identified four Roman and Byzantine graves. Archaeological excavations also uncovered additional ancient burials, and part of the location became an archaeological site.

Operation Ben-Ami

Operation Ben-Ami began on 13 May 1948 and ended on 21 May. It was carried out by the Carmeli Brigade and aimed at extending military control over western Galilee and the coastal villages north of Acre toward the Lebanese border.

Al-Tall was occupied during the operation's second phase, together with a group of western Galilee villages north of Acre, including al-Nahr, Umm al-Faraj, al-Kabri,

and al-Ghabisiyya.

Occupation and Depopulation of Al-Tall

Walid Khalidi places the occupation of Al-Tall during the second phase of Operation Ben-Ami on 20–21 May 1948. Palestine Remembered gives 21 May 1948 as the village's single summary occupation date.

Khalidi connects Al-Tall's fate with that of other western Galilee villages attacked by the Carmeli Brigade, but he uses qualified language and does not provide a separate detailed battle narrative for Al-Tall itself. Specific details of resistance or combat inside the village should therefore not be invented in the absence of independent documentation.

Khalidi's account states that Haganah engineering units destroyed most of the villages captured during this stage soon after their occupation as part of measures intended to prevent residents from returning. The later condition of Al-Tall confirms that most of the village's structures were ultimately reduced to rubble.

Palestine Remembered classifies the cause of depopulation as a direct military assault and describes the complete removal of the Palestinian community as ethnic cleansing. In directly descriptive historical terms supported by the sources, Al-Tall lost its Palestinian population in the context of military attack and occupation during Operation Ben-Ami, and most of its built fabric was subsequently destroyed.

Occupation Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
Beginning of Operation Ben-Ami	13 May 1948	The Carmeli Brigade began the wider operation in western Galilee north of Acre.

Stage	Date	Details
Second phase of the operation	20–21 May 1948	A group of villages in the region was attacked and occupied; Al-Tall was among the villages captured during this phase.
Occupation of Al-Tall	20–21 May 1948	Walid Khalidi places the village's capture within this period, while Palestine Remembered uses 21 May as the single summary date.
Depopulation	During the occupation, May 1948	The village lost its Palestinian population amid the military attack and occupation; Khalidi's entry does not provide an independent detailed account of exactly how Al-Tall's residents left.
Destruction	After its capture	Khalidi connects Al-Tall with the destruction of villages following their occupation, while the later field description confirms that most buildings had become rubble.

Israeli Settlements on Al-Tall's Lands

According to Walid Khalidi and PalQuest, no Israeli settlement is documented as having been established directly on Al-Tall's village lands.

Public installations belonging to the Mekorot water company are located near the site, but these installations should not be treated as a residential settlement established on village land.

Al-Tall Today

According to Walid Khalidi's field description, the village site was covered with the rubble of stone houses and overgrown with wild vegetation. One stone house remained standing, although its façade was missing and the structure was in a precarious condition.

Cactus plants and fig trees grew on the southern slopes. On the northern slopes

was the cemetery, where four Roman and Byzantine graves could still be identified, while archaeological excavations had uncovered additional ancient burials.

This description derives from fieldwork undertaken before the publication of Walid Khalidi's *All That Remains* in 1992. It is therefore a documented historical description of the site's condition at that time rather than a comprehensive direct field verification of Al-Tall in 2026.

Sources

- PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Al-Tall
- PalQuest – Operation Ben-Ami
- Palestine Remembered – Al-Tall, Acre District
- Walid Khalidi – All That Remains: Al-Tall
- Institute for Palestine Studies – All That Remains, Walid Khalidi