

Dayr 'Amr



Dayr 'Amr - Depopulated Palestinian Village of Jerusalem

Dayr 'Amr was a very small Palestinian village in the Jerusalem Subdistrict, situated on a flat mountain summit approximately 12.5 kilometers west of Jerusalem and about 750 meters above sea level.

Although the permanent village population was extremely small, Dayr 'Amr became nationally important because of the agricultural boarding school and orphan project established there by the Arab Orphans Committee.

Population

Year	Population	Note
1922	5	Independent official census; all Muslims
1931	434	Combined figure for Suba and Dayr 'Amr; 110 houses for both localities
1944/45	10	Independent official Dayr 'Amr figure

The later figure of 719 inhabitants for 1948 should not be treated as a reliable estimate of Dayr 'Amr's permanent village population.

The approximately sixty boarding students present at the agricultural farm in 1946 belonged to an educational institution serving families from across Palestine and should be kept separate from the permanent resident population.

Land Ownership, 1944/45

Total	3,072
Category	Dunums
Palestinian	3,072
Transferred to Zionists	0
Public	0

Land Use

Six hundred and fifty dunums were devoted to cereals, eighteen dunums to plantations or irrigable cultivation, and 2,404 dunums were classified as non-cultivable. Olive cultivation covered approximately five dunums as a subcategory of cultivated land.

The Arab Orphans Committee Agricultural Farm

In 1942, the Jerusalem-based **Arab Orphans Committee** established a model boys' farm at Dayr 'Amr combining regular secondary education with agricultural training.

Students were selected from rural families whose breadwinners had died during the 1936–1939 revolt. The purpose was to equip them with academic and agricultural skills so they could return to their villages and contribute to rural development.

By 1946 the farm accommodated approximately sixty boarding students. Construction of a parallel girls' farm began in 1947.

The Palestinian educator Ahmad Samih Khalidi headed the committee.

Name and Shrine

The village took its name from a local holy man known as **al-Sa'i 'Amr**, whose shrine stood in the village. His historical identity has not been established.

Operation Dani and Occupation

Operation Dani ran from 9 to 18 July 1948. Dayr 'Amr was occupied during its second phase, when Israeli forces pushed toward the Latrun and Jerusalem approaches.

The History of the War of Independence, as cited by Khalidi, states that the **Fourth Battalion of the Har'el Brigade** carried out a clearing operation at Dayr 'Amr on 16 July.

Contemporary reporting also places Palmach forces on the strategic heights that day, while another chronology dates final occupation to 17–18 July.

The most precise sequence is therefore: **initial seizure of strategic positions**

and clearing on 16 July, followed by completion of occupation on 17-18 July 1948.

Depopulation

Communities affected during this phase of Operation Dani experienced several forms of displacement: some inhabitants left before the offensive, others fled under shelling and assault, and some were expelled.

At Dayr 'Amr specifically, Khalidi documents that the director of the boys' farm and his deputy were **expelled while shots were fired behind them.**

The available evidence therefore does not justify reducing the entire village experience either to voluntary flight or to an identical form of direct expulsion for everyone present.

Occupation Chronology

Date	Event
9 July 1948	Operation Dani begins.
13 July 1948	Second phase begins toward the Latrun-Jerusalem approaches.
16 July 1948	Har'el's Fourth Battalion operates at Dayr 'Amr and strategic heights are seized.
17-18 July 1948	Occupation is completed according to the alternative chronology cited by Khalidi.
1952	The main boys' farm buildings are converted into Eitanim psychiatric hospital.

Destruction and Post-1948 Use

Some secondary summary fields state that most village houses were destroyed, but Khalidi's direct field description records that **all village houses were still standing** and that additions had been built onto some of them.

The principal buildings of the Palestinian boys' farm were converted in 1952 into the Israeli psychiatric hospital known as **Eitanim**.

Dayr 'Amr Today

Khalidi's pre-1992 field description records the site as fenced and guarded. All houses were standing, with some enlarged.

Large cypress and carob trees grew among the buildings, and an olive grove occupied the southern edge.

A large telecommunications facility with radar equipment had been erected at the southern end, while Eitanim psychiatric hospital stood nearby.

This is historical field documentation and not a comprehensive direct survey of the site in 2026.

Sources

- [PalQuest – Dayr 'Amr](#)
- [PalQuest – Operation Dani](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Dayr 'Amr](#)
- [Walid Khalidi – Dayr 'Amr in All That Remains](#)
- [Palestine Encyclopedia – Dayr 'Amr](#)