

Mughallis



Mughallis - Depopulated Palestinian Village of the Hebron District

Mughallis was a depopulated Palestinian village in the Hebron District, located in the extreme northwestern part of the subdistrict approximately 30.5 kilometers northwest of Hebron, at an average elevation of about 200 meters above sea level.

The village stood on the summit of a long east-west hill surrounded by a shallow wadi. It overlooked the coastal plain to the west and faced the broad range of the Jerusalem hills to the east.

The Giv'ati Brigade occupied Mughallis on 9–10 July 1948 during the first stage of Operation An-Far, the offensive that targeted villages around the junction of the Hebron, Ramla, and Gaza districts and displaced the inhabitants of a large number of communities.

Location and Geography

Mughallis stood on an elongated hill running east to west and surrounded by rolling land and a shallow wadi.

It lay approximately 30.5 kilometers northwest of Hebron at an average elevation of about 200 meters above sea level.

The village overlooked the coastal plain to the west and faced the western slopes of the Jerusalem hills to the east, placing it in a transitional zone between the Palestinian highlands and the coastal plain.

A secondary road passed near Mughallis. It had formerly formed part of the caravan route between Bayt Jibrin and Ramla and gave the village access to both centers.

Nearby lands and villages included 'Ajjur and Tall al-Safi in the Hebron District and Idnibba and Jilya in the Ramla District, along with Qazaza and other rural localities in the surrounding area.

Name

The historical origin of the name Mughallis is not securely established.

Palestinian oral tradition relates the name to *ghalas*, the darkness at the end of the night as dawn begins, and associates it with a story about the army of 'Amr ibn al-'As passing through the site.

This account is a local oral tradition and is not independently established by historical evidence.

Supporting Palestinian documentation cites historian Mustafa Murad al-Dabbagh as stating that Mughallis is a proper name whose precise origin could not be determined. This article therefore retains the more cautious formulation rather than presenting the oral tradition as established fact.

Ottoman Period

In 1596, Mughallis belonged to the nahiya of Gaza in the liwa' of Gaza and had an estimated population of approximately 424.

The inhabitants paid taxes on wheat, barley, fruit, goats, beehives, and other forms of agricultural production.

In the later nineteenth century, Mughallis was described as a moderately sized village approached by an old road, with houses constructed largely of stone.

Built Environment

The houses of Mughallis extended across the elongated hill in a pattern adapted to its east-west axis.

The official 1944/45 statistics classified approximately 23 dunams as built-up land.

The village itself stood on an archaeological site, and older stone material was incorporated into the built landscape over time.

Population and Houses

The inhabitants of Mughallis were Muslims.

Year	Population	Note
1596	About 424	Historical estimate based on Ottoman records
1922	311	Official Mandate census; all inhabitants were Muslims
1931	447	Official census; all inhabitants were Muslims

Year	Population	Note
1945	540	Official statistics; all inhabitants were Palestinian Arab Muslims
1948	About 626	Later demographic estimate, not an official Mandate census
1998	About 3,847 refugees and descendants	Later estimate published by Palestine Remembered

The official 1931 census recorded 93 houses in Mughallis.

The estimate of approximately 130 houses for 1948 is a later calculation rather than an official Government of Palestine census figure.

Mosque and Shrines

Walid Khalidi's short village entry does not detail the religious buildings, but Palestinian local documentation records one mosque in the center of the village known as the Mosque of Shaykh Mansur.

The mosque was described as a large single room without a minaret. Daily prayers, Friday prayers, and the two Eid prayers were held there, and the building was also used at various times for elementary religious instruction and communal gatherings.

The same local documentation records several shrines: Shaykh Mansur, associated with the mosque; Shaykh Dawud northwest of the village near Idnibba; Shaykh 'Abd Allah west of the village; Shaykh Muhammad al-Asmar; and Shaykh 'Ammar, described as a cave shrine.

These details are presented as supporting Palestinian community documentation because they are not described in the same detail in Khalidi's principal entry.

Education

According to Palestinian local documentation, the villagers established a school at

their own expense in 1925 near the mosque. It initially developed from the traditional *kuttab* system.

In 1940, the school became associated with the Department of Education in Hebron. It was subsequently closed in 1942.

The local account states that teaching resumed in 1945 and that instruction reached the fourth elementary grade. A small number of girls were also taught at the school.

Pupils wishing to continue beyond the fourth grade reportedly attended the school in Tall al-Safi.

Because these details derive from local Palestinian documentation rather than Khalidi's short statistical entry, they are identified as supporting community evidence rather than as an independent official statistical series.

Water Resources

Mughallis was known for a well that supplied water to the village and attracted residents of neighboring communities.

Walid Khalidi records that local people believed the well's water helped dissolve kidney stones and consequently came to Mughallis to obtain it.

This is documented as a historical local belief and is not presented as a medically established property of the water.

Economic Life and Agriculture

The economy of Mughallis was based primarily on rainfed agriculture.

Cereals were the principal crop, while villagers also cultivated vegetables, fruit, and olives.

Goat raising and beekeeping were recorded as early as the Ottoman period, and

Palestinian community documentation indicates that beekeeping, honey production, butter, and clarified butter remained part of village life in later periods.

The village's location near the old caravan road and routes toward Ramla and Bayt Jibrin facilitated contact with surrounding markets.

Land Ownership, 1944/45

The total land area of Mughallis was 11,459 dunams. Under the official Government of Palestine classification, ownership was distributed as follows:

Total	11,459
Ownership Category	Area in Dunams
Arab	11,286
Jewish	0
Public	173

The figures balance exactly: $11,286 + 173 = 11,459$ dunams.

Palestine Remembered presents the same ownership totals using its simplified terminology: 11,286 dunams “Palestinian,” 0 dunams “Transferred to Zionists,” and 173 dunams “Communal/Public.”

The phrase “Transferred to Zionists” should be preserved when reproducing that source's terminology.

Land Use, 1944/45

Grand Total	11,286	173	11,459
Land Use	Arab	Public	Total
Cereals	7,277	0	7,277
Plantations and irrigable land	88	0	88
Total cultivable/cultivated land	7,365	0	7,365

Grand Total	11,286	173	11,459
Land Use	Arab	Public	Total
Non-cultivable land	3,898	173	4,071
Built-up land	23	0	23
Total non-cultivable and built-up	3,921	173	4,094

The official table balances exactly: 7,365 dunams of cultivated or cultivable land plus 4,094 dunams of built-up and non-cultivable land equal the total village area of 11,459 dunams.

Of the 88 dunams classified as plantations and irrigable land, approximately 55 dunams were planted with olives. This is a crop-specific subset and should not be added again to the total land-use figure.

Palestine Remembered's simplified “non-arable” figure of 4,071 dunams should also be read carefully: the official table divides it into 3,898 Arab dunams and 173 Public dunams.

Archaeological Sites

Mughallis itself stood on an archaeological site.

Walid Khalidi also specifically identifies two additional archaeological localities, **Khirbat Ghallus** and **Khirbat Samra**, both of which contained archaeological artifacts.

Palestinian local documentation lists additional khirbas and sites, but the principal sources reviewed do not provide enough specialist evidence to date or classify all of them securely.

Operation An-Far

Operation An-Far began on 8 July and officially ended on 15 July 1948.

The Giv'ati Brigade launched the offensive on the southern front during the Ten Days between the two truces.

The operation was intended to expand Giv'ati's area of control eastward and southward, connect Israeli-held coastal territory with Jewish settlements in the Negev, and remove Palestinian civilian communities from the brigade's rear area.

The First Battalion of the Giv'ati Brigade served as the spearhead of Operation An-Far at the operation-wide level.

PalQuest explicitly lists Mughallis among the villages affected by the operation.

Occupation and Depopulation

According to Walid Khalidi, citing Benny Morris through his own account, Mughallis was occupied on **9-10 July 1948** during the first phase of Operation An-Far.

Palestine Remembered and WAFA index **9 July** as the village's depopulation date, consistent with Khalidi's broader 9-10 July dating.

Palestine Remembered identifies the collapse or depopulation of neighboring communities as an important factor in the villagers' departure as Israeli forces advanced across the area.

The Palestinian Villages Encyclopedia and Our Palestine instead index 17 July. That date falls after the official end of Operation An-Far on 15 July and conflicts with Khalidi's village-specific chronology.

This article therefore uses **9-10 July 1948** as the best-supported occupation date, while recording 17 July as a conflicting date found in later Palestinian secondary indexes.

Military Unit

The military formation associated with the occupation of Mughallis was the **Giv'ati Brigade** during Operation An-Far.

The operation page identifies Giv'ati's First Battalion as the principal spearhead of Operation An-Far as a whole.

The Mughallis village entry itself does not explicitly state that the First Battalion was the unit that physically entered the village. The distinction between operation-level participation and village-level attribution is therefore retained.

Occupation Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
End of the First Truce	8 July 1948	Large-scale fighting resumed on the southern front.
Beginning of Operation An-Far	8 July 1948	The Giv'ati Brigade began its eastward and southward offensive, with its First Battalion spearheading the operation.
Occupation of Mughallis	9–10 July 1948	Khalidi, citing Morris, places the village's capture during the first stage of Operation An-Far.
Palestinian indexed depopulation date	9 July 1948	Used by Palestine Remembered and WAFA.
Continuation of Operation An-Far	Until 15 July 1948	Giv'ati continued occupying and depopulating other Palestinian villages in the area.
Conflicting secondary date	17 July 1948	Used by the Palestinian Villages Encyclopedia and Our Palestine, but it falls after An-Far's official end date and conflicts with the principal village account.
Destruction of the village	After occupation; exact date not documented	The houses were subsequently demolished and the rubble leveled, although some structural remains remained visible.

Israeli Settlements on Village Lands

Gefen was established in 1955 on Mughallis village land, north of the former village site.

Some later Palestinian secondary sources also list Tirosh as having been established on Mughallis land.

Walid Khalidi and PalQuest, however, list only Gefen in the Mughallis entry, while their entry for neighboring 'Ajjur identifies **Tirosh, established in 1955, as a settlement on 'Ajjur's lands.**

Tirosh is therefore not listed here as an Israeli settlement established on Mughallis village land.

Mughallis Today

According to the field description published in Walid Khalidi's *All That Remains*, the village site and surrounding area were fenced.

The rubble of the houses had been leveled, although some building components remained visible.

On the eastern side, the remains of one house were surrounded by stone markers that had once defined the boundaries of its garden.

Olive, carob, and other trees grew throughout the site, while cactuses were found along its northern and southern edges.

PalQuest includes field photographs of Mughallis dated June 1990. This description therefore derives from the 1987–1990 fieldwork associated with *All That Remains* and should not be treated as a comprehensive field verification of conditions in 2026.

Sources

- [PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Mughallis](#)
- [PalQuest – Operation An-Far](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Mughallis, Hebron District](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Walid Khalidi's account of Mughallis](#)

- [Palestinian Villages Encyclopedia – Mughallis; supporting Palestinian local documentation on education, mosque, and shrines](#)
- [WAFA – Palestinian towns and villages occupied and depopulated in 1948](#)
- [PalQuest – 'Ajjur; used to distinguish Tirosh as a settlement established on 'Ajjur's lands](#)
- [Government of Palestine – Census of Palestine 1922](#)
- [Institute for Palestine Studies – Walid Khalidi, All That Remains](#)
- [PalQuest – All That Remains: Methodology](#)