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**Palestinian Rural History Project: Golan/Jawlan Oral History Corpus (PRHP-GJ):
Corpus Description and Methodology, Version 1.0**

The Golan/Jawlan Oral History Corpus (PRHP-GJ) is a developing component of the Palestinian Rural History Project (PRHP) devoted to documenting the historical geography, settlement history, society, landholding, migration, material culture, and collective memory of the Syrian Jawlan/Golan. Particular emphasis is placed on rural society before the displacement of most of the region's inhabitants in 1967 and on the subsequent histories of displaced communities in Syria and beyond (Jordan, Turkey, the European Union).

The PRHP includes comparative documentation of adjacent rural societies in the southern Levant. Within this broader framework, the corpus was established to preserve historical knowledge that is poorly represented in conventional archival collections. Much of this knowledge concerns local settlement histories, family and tribal geography, land use, agricultural practices, water resources, inter-village relations, religious sites, seasonal movement, migration, administrative affiliations, and the local terminology through which inhabitants understood the landscape. The project also records memories of displacement and the subsequent trajectories of former Golan communities outside their places of origin.

As of August 2026, the corpus contains approximately 500 oral-history interviews concerning the Golan/Jawlan and represents over 140 Golan villages and localities. Coverage varies considerably between localities. Some settlements are represented by numerous independent testimonies and extensive supplementary documentation, whereas others are presently represented by only one or several informants. The corpus remains an expanding research collection rather than a closed or exhaustive survey.

Geographical and Chronological Scope

The principal geographical focus is the Syrian Jawlan/Golan, including villages, hamlets, pastoral settlements, agricultural sites, seasonal occupations, archaeological localities reused in the modern period, water sources, shrines, cemeteries, and other named landscape features.

The corpus is not limited to communities located within the territory presently administered by Israel. Because the majority of the pre-1967 population was displaced, documentation necessarily extends beyond the Golan itself. Interviews therefore also record the histories of displaced Golan communities and families in Syria, Jordan, and other places of resettlement and migration.

Chronologically, the testimonies concentrate primarily on the late Ottoman period, the French Mandate, the period of the Syrian Republic, the 1967 war and displacement, and the subsequent histories of displaced communities. Oral traditions and genealogical accounts sometimes preserve information attributed to earlier periods, although such retrospective material is evaluated separately from first-hand recollection.

Methodology

The corpus is based principally on oral-history interviews and correspondence with former inhabitants of the Golan, and to a more limited extent, with their descendants. Interviews document both individual experience and locally transmitted historical knowledge.

Oral testimony is treated as historical evidence requiring contextualization, comparison, and source criticism. Statements are therefore evaluated through comparison with other interviews from the same locality and neighbouring communities and, where possible, against independent documentary and material evidence. Relevant comparative sources include historical maps, administrative records, published geographical and ethnographic literature, archaeological surveys, aerial and satellite imagery, field observations, genealogical information, and other archival materials.

Where multiple independent testimonies are available, the scale of the corpus permits recurrent claims to be compared across informants, families, communities, and geographical areas. Agreement between independent testimonies can help establish patterns of settlement, land use, migration, social affiliation, and local nomenclature. Where testimonies conflict over factual matters, discrepancies are evaluated, where possible, against independent documentary, cartographic, material, and geographical evidence. Where the available evidence does not permit resolution, competing accounts are retained and identified as such.

The corpus distinguishes, where possible, between direct autobiographical recollection, information transmitted within families or communities, and broader oral tradition. Such distinctions are particularly significant when testimony concerns periods preceding the informant's own lifetime.

Relationship to the Gazetteer

The accompanying Golan/Jawlan Gazetteer provides a spatial and documentary index to localities represented in the wider corpus. It is intended primarily as a research finding aid.

The Gazetteer is not a complete historical inventory of all settlements that existed in the Golan at any particular date. Inclusion indicates that a locality has been identified or documented within PRHP research materials according to the criteria employed in the relevant version of the dataset.

Similarly, the Gazetteer does not reproduce the full evidentiary content of the underlying interviews. Rather, it provides a structured geographical framework through which the larger oral-history and documentary corpus may be understood and consulted.

Ethics and Access

The PRHP distinguishes between documentation, preservation, and public access. The existence of an interview or its use in compiling the Gazetteer does not necessarily imply that the complete interview is available at the current time.

Access conditions may vary according to the circumstances of collection, the wishes of informants, the sensitivity of the material, and applicable ethical considerations. Materials

may therefore be publicly accessible, restricted, anonymized, or subject to delayed release. These access conditions may temporarily limit independent verification of some underlying testimonies.

Corpus Development and Versioning

The Golan/Jawlan Oral History Corpus is an evolving scholarly endeavour. Interview totals, locality coverage, identifications, transliterations, geographical coordinates, and documentary references may be revised as further fieldwork is completed and additional evidence becomes available.

Each publicly released version of the Gazetteer or related dataset should therefore be cited according to its individual publication date, version, and DOI. Later versions may expand or correct earlier releases without altering the historical record of what each deposited version contained.

Project Context

The Golan/Jawlan Corpus forms part of the Palestinian Rural History Project, a broader research initiative concerned with the historical documentation of rural communities, landscapes, settlement systems, and displaced populations in Palestine and the wider southern Levant.

Within this framework, the Golan corpus seeks both to preserve endangered historical knowledge and to provide a source base for comparative research on rural society, settlement, migration, displacement, historical geography, and the transformation of the southern Syrian countryside during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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Appendix: Coverage of the Golan/Jawlan corpus (PRHP-GJ) on 18 August 2026

