Al-Mansura (Safed)

al-Mansura: A Depopulated Palestinian Village in the Safad District

al-Mansura was a Palestinian village in the Safad District, located approximately 31 km northeast of Safad on flat terrain near the western bank of the Banyas River, close to the Palestine–Syria frontier, at an average elevation of about 100 metres above sea level. Its inhabitants were displaced during the Nakba and the occupation of Palestine in 1948. The village was depopulated on 25 May 1948, at the end of Operation Yiftach, through a combination of psychological warfare, pressure, and direct military assault.

Item	Information
Subdistrict	Safad

Item	Information
Distance from district center	31 km northeast of Safad
Average Elevation	100 m above sea level
Population in 1931	89
Number of Houses in 1931	18
Population in 1944/1945	360
Estimated Population in 1948	About 418 – a later demographic estimate, not an official census
Total Land Area in 1945	1,544 dunams – 1,254 Arab-owned, 175 Jewish-owned and 115 public land
Attack and Depopulation	The village saw clashes in the early months of the war, among them the arrival of a fifteen-man Haganah platoon at its outskirts on 5 March 1948, when one villager was wounded in the brief clash that followed. It was then depopulated on 25 May 1948, at the end of Operation Yiftach, as a result of psychological warfare and direct military assault according to Khalidi, and its inhabitants went to Syria according to an Israeli intelligence report published by PalQuest.
Final Israeli Control	25 May 1948, the day the village was depopulated, the last day of Operation Yiftach, which occupied the whole area; the available sources give no other date for the entry of Israeli occupation forces into the village
Military Operation	Operation Yiftach
Military Unit	The available sources do not identify the unit that entered the village; PalQuest names the Yiftach Brigade as the unit that carried out Operation Yiftach, spearheaded by the Palmach's First Battalion
Cause of Depopulation	Psychological warfare (the 'whispering campaign') and direct military assault by Israeli occupation forces at the end of Operation Yiftach
Settlements Documented on Village Lands	She'ar Yashuv, established in 1940, before the Nakba, about 1 km northeast of the village site; Khalidi lists it under Israeli settlements on village lands

Location of al-Mansura

al-Mansura stood on flat terrain close to the western bank of the Banyas River in the northeastern part of the Safad District, not far from the Palestine–Syria frontier.

The village was approximately 31 km northeast of Safad and had an average elevation of about 100 metres above sea level.

Agricultural land surrounded the village in a water-rich area close to tributaries feeding the Jordan River system.

Palestine Remembered's maps place nearby Palestinian localities including al-Shawka al-Tahta, al-Khisas, al-'Abisiyya, and Qaytiyya, with the Syrian frontier to the east.

The Name al-Mansura

The Arabic name al-Mansura derives linguistically from the root associated with victory and may be translated broadly as “the victorious” or “the one granted victory.”

Walid Khalidi and PalQuest, however, do not provide a documented historical explanation for why this particular village bore the name. The linguistic meaning should therefore not be presented as a confirmed account of the village's naming.

al-Mansura before the Nakba

Travellers who passed through the area in the late nineteenth century described al-Mansura as a settlement of stone-and-mud houses on a plain near a river and surrounded by agricultural land.

One contemporary description estimated its population at approximately seventy Muslims.

In the modern period immediately before the Nakba, the village population was

entirely Muslim.

Architecture of al-Mansura

The village houses were described in the late nineteenth century as being built of stone and mud.

The built-up area amounted to only 5 dunums in the 1944/45 statistics, reflecting the small size of the residential core in comparison with the surrounding agricultural land.

The principal approved sources do not provide a detailed description of the village street pattern or internal quarters immediately before the Nakba.

Education and Public Services

Khalidi's PalQuest entry and Palestine Remembered's principal village file do not provide sufficiently documented information concerning an independent school, mosque, clinic, or other specific public institution in al-Mansura before the Nakba.

No such institution is therefore asserted without clearer evidence from the approved sources.

Economic Life in al-Mansura

Agriculture is the principal economic activity clearly documented in the approved village sources.

In 1944/45, a total of 1,424 dunums was classified as irrigated or used for plantations.

Of this land, 1,249 dunums were Palestinian and 175 dunums belonged to the category represented here as “Transferred to Zionists.”

The official village table used here does not separately list cereal, citrus, or olive

acreage. Specific crops and acreages are therefore not added without stronger documentation.

Land Ownership in al-Mansura

The total registered land area of al-Mansura was 1,544 dunums in the 1944/45 statistics.

Total	1,544
Ownership category	**Area in dunums**
Palestinian	1,254
Transferred to Zionists	175
Communal	115

Palestinian land represented approximately 81.2 percent of the total, land in the category “Transferred to Zionists” approximately 11.3 percent, and communal/public land approximately 7.4 percent.

Land Use in al-Mansura, 1944/45

Total	1,254	175	115	1,544
Land use	**Palestinian**	**Transferred to Zionists**	**Communal/Public**	**Total**
Plantations and irrigable land	1,249	175	0	1,424
Built-up area	5	0	0	5
Non-cultivable land	0	0	115	115

A total of 1,424 dunums, approximately 92 percent of the village lands, was cultivated or cultivable.

Built-up and non-cultivable land together amounted to 120 dunums, approximately 8 percent of the total.

Palestine Remembered places 115 dunums of non-arable land in its Palestinian column, while PalQuest's detailed table classifies all 115 dunums as public land. The communal/public category is therefore shown separately above.

Population of al-Mansura

Population of al-Mansura in selected years

Year	Population	Nature of figure
Late nineteenth century	Approximately 70	Historical traveller's estimate
1922	41	Official Government of Palestine census; all Muslim
1931	89	Official British Mandate census
1944/45	360	Official statistics; all inhabitants recorded as Muslim
1948	418	Later estimate published by Palestine Remembered
Estimated refugees in 1998	2,565	Later estimate published by Palestine Remembered
The years 1923 and 1937 found in some secondary material are incorrect; the official censuses were conducted in 1922 and 1931. The 1948 and 1998 figures are later estimates rather than official Mandate statistics.		

Number of Houses in al-Mansura

Number of houses in al-Mansura

Year	Number of houses	Nature of figure
1931	18	Official British Mandate census
1948	84	Later estimate published by Palestine Remembered
The 1948 house count is a later estimate and should not be treated as an official census figure.		

Archaeological Sites around al-Mansura

Walid Khalidi records the presence of several khirbas and archaeological tells in the vicinity of al-Mansura without naming all of them individually.

Palestine Remembered provides a more detailed list:

- Tall al-Turmus, east of the village.
- al-Nabi Huda, east of the village.
- Khirbat al-Buhayrat, east of the village.
- Khirbat al-'Umayri, east of the village.
- Tall al-Mun'atifa, northeast of the village.

These detailed place names are attributed specifically to Palestine Remembered because Khalidi's principal entry refers only generally to nearby khirbas and archaeological tells.

Clashes near al-Mansura before its Depopulation

Several clashes occurred near al-Mansura during the early months of 1948.

On the afternoon of 12 February, a British patrol engaged an Arab force near the village that contemporary press reports described as numerically superior. Khalidi considers it most likely to have been a unit of the Arab Liberation Army.

One British soldier was killed. The press report did not state whether the Arab force suffered casualties.

On the afternoon of 5 March 1948, a Haganah platoon of approximately fifteen men reached the outskirts of al-Mansura, according to the Palestinian newspaper *Filastin* as reproduced by Khalidi.

A brief clash followed in which one villager was wounded.

Operation Yiftach and the Depopulation of al-Mansura

al-Mansura was depopulated during the final stage of Operation Yiftach, which ran from 15 April to 25 May 1948 and aimed to secure eastern Galilee.

At the broader operational level, the Yiftach Brigade and Palmach forces conducted the operation, with the Palmach's First Battalion spearheading substantial parts of the offensive.

PalQuest's account of Operation Yiftach describes the use of both direct military assaults and psychological warfare to drive Palestinian inhabitants from eastern Galilee. Palestinians who remained in a number of localities after their capture were expelled.

The dedicated al-Mansura entry does not identify which battalion entered the village itself. No specific battalion is therefore assigned to the village without direct evidence.

Depopulation of al-Mansura on 25 May 1948

al-Mansura was depopulated on 25 May 1948, the final day of Operation Yiftach.

Walid Khalidi describes the cause as a combination of psychological warfare and direct military assault, the same pattern that affected other Palestinian villages in eastern Galilee during the closing phase of the operation.

Psychological warfare was especially important in this region. Operation Yiftach included a “whispering campaign” designed to spread fear and persuade Palestinian inhabitants to leave before advancing forces reached their villages.

PalQuest also publishes an Israeli intelligence report dated 30 June 1948 that records al-Mansura's depopulation on 25 May, attributes it to the “whispering operation,” and states that the villagers went to Syria.

The same report states that the departure of al-Mansura's inhabitants influenced the residents of neighboring al-'Abisiyya, who also left on 25 May.

This Israeli intelligence document is not used here independently. Its information is included because it is preserved and published within PalQuest and is read alongside Khalidi's Palestinian reference work.

- Date of depopulation: 25 May 1948.
- Military operation: Operation Yiftach.
- Principal force in the broader operation: Yiftach Brigade / Palmach forces.
- Village-specific occupying battalion: not identified in the principal source.
- Mechanisms of displacement: psychological warfare and the whispering campaign, together with military pressure and direct assault.
- Destination recorded in the PalQuest-published intelligence report: Syria.
- Regional effect: al-Mansura's evacuation contributed to the departure of inhabitants of neighboring al-'Abisiyya.

Occupation and Depopulation Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
Clash near the village	12 February 1948	The New York Times reported a skirmish near the village that afternoon between a British patrol and a 'superior' Arab force, which Khalidi considers most probably an Arab Liberation Army unit; the patrol lost one soldier, and the report did not mention Arab casualties.

Stage	Date	Details
Arrival of a Haganah force at the village outskirts and a clash	5 March 1948	A platoon of fifteen Haganah men arrived at the outskirts of the village in the afternoon, according to the Palestinian newspaper Filastin as cited by Khalidi; a brief clash ensued, in which one villager was wounded.
Beginning of the military operation	15 April 1948	Operation Yiftach, masterminded by Palmach commander Yigal Allon to gain control of eastern Galilee, began, spearheaded by the Palmach's First Battalion; PalQuest lists al-Mansura among the villages affected by the operation.
Depopulation of the village	25 May 1948	The village was depopulated at the end of Operation Yiftach as a result of the same combination of psychological warfare and direct military assault that had caused the depopulation of the other villages in the area, according to Khalidi. An Israeli intelligence report dated 30 June 1948, published by PalQuest, records that its inhabitants fled to Syria on 25 May as a result of the Israeli 'whispering operation'.

Settlement Associated with al-Mansura's Lands

Khalidi lists She'ar Yashuv in the section concerning Israeli settlements associated with al-Mansura's village lands.

- She'ar Yashuv: established in 1940, before the Nakba, approximately 1 km northeast of the village site.

She'ar Yashuv should therefore not be described as a settlement founded after al-Mansura's 1948 depopulation; it had already been established in 1940.

al-Mansura Today

According to the field description published by Walid Khalidi in *All That Remains*, al-Mansura's buildings had been almost completely obliterated, making traces of the

former village difficult to identify.

The village site had been converted into a fish hatchery containing a series of fish-breeding pools.

A narrow strip of thorny vegetation and trees remained between some of the pools.

Palestine Remembered preserves historical photographs, maps, and oral-history materials relating to al-Mansura, its lands, and the Banyas River, but the available material does not constitute a comprehensive independent contemporary field survey of the entire site.

The principal field description therefore comes from research published in Khalidi's 1992 volume and should not be presented as a direct field verification of the site's condition in 2026.

The approved sources used here do not provide a sufficiently comprehensive and independent recent survey to establish the precise condition of every part of al-Mansura today.

Sources

- PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: al-Mansura, Safad District
- PalQuest – Operation Yiftach
- PalQuest – Israeli Intelligence Report on the Depopulation of Palestine, 30 June 1948
- Palestine Remembered – al-Mansura, Safad District
- Palestine Remembered – al-Mansura entry from All That Remains
- Government of Palestine – Census of Palestine, 1922
- Institute for Palestine Studies – All That Remains, Walid Khalidi