Al-Kabri



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Basic Information

| Item | Information |
|---|---|
| Subdistrict | Akka (Acre) |
| Distance from district center | 12.5 km Northeast of Acre |
| Average Elevation | 80 meters above sea level |
| Population in 1931 | 728 inhabitants - Official census |
| Number of Houses in 1931 | 173 houses - Official census |
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Item	Information
Population in 1944/1945	1,520 inhabitants - Government of Palestine statistics
Estimated Population in 1948	About 1,770 inhabitants - a later demographic estimate, not an official census
Total Land Area in 1945	47,428 dunams
Attack and Depopulation	Al-Kabri witnessed armed confrontations before its final occupation in May 1948. Its location on the road leading to the Yehi'am settlement gave it military importance during this period.
Final Israeli Control	21 May 1948
Military Operation	Operation Ben-Ami
Military Unit	Carmeli Brigade
Cause of Depopulation	Military assault by Zionist troops
Settlements Documented on Village Lands	Kibbutz Kabri

Al-Kabri: A Depopulated Palestinian Village in the Acre District

Al-Kabri was a Palestinian village in the Acre District, located about 12.5 kilometres northeast of the city of Acre, where the western slopes of the Galilee hills meet the Acre Plain, at an average elevation of approximately 80 metres above sea level. It was occupied by forces of the Carmeli Brigade on 21 May 1948 during the second phase of Operation Ben-Ami, and its inhabitants were displaced during the Nakba and the occupation of Palestine in 1948.

Location and Name

Al-Kabri stood at the western foothills of the Galilee, where they meet the Acre Plain. A main road connected the village with Nahariya to the west and, from there,

with the coastal road leading south to Acre.

Walid Khalidi suggests that the name al-Kabri may derive from the Syriac word “Kabiraya,” meaning “large” or “rich.” The historian and geographer al-Maqrizi referred to it as “al-Kabira” and recorded that in 1291 the Mamluk Sultan al-Ashraf Khalil assigned its tax revenues to a charitable endowment in Cairo. The Crusaders knew the locality as “Cabra.”

Nearby Villages and Towns

Al-Kabri stood within a closely connected network of villages in western Galilee. Among the most prominent nearby localities were al-Bassa to the north, al-Zib to the west, Mi'ilya to the east, and Umm al-Faraj and al-Nahr to the south and southwest.

Al-Kabri Before the Nakba

In the late nineteenth century, al-Kabri was described as a stone-built village with a population of about 400. Its inhabitants planted the surrounding lands with fig, olive, pomegranate, mulberry, and apple trees.

During the British Mandate period, village houses were built of stone and cement, stone and mud, or reinforced concrete. The inhabitants of al-Kabri were Muslims, and the village had a mosque and an elementary school for boys.

The village economy depended primarily on agriculture and animal husbandry. Fruit trees, citrus, olives, and other crops were cultivated, while some residents also raised livestock during the latter half of the Mandate period.

Population

The population of al-Kabri was 553 in the 1922 census and rose to 728 in the 1931 census, when 173 houses were recorded. In the 1944/1945 Village Statistics, the population stood at 1,520.

A historical study by Dr. Muhammad Aqel published on Palestine Remembered estimates the village population in 1948 at approximately 1,770. This figure is treated as an estimate rather than an official census.

The figure of 6,218 inhabitants for 1948 that appears in one automated table on Palestine Remembered clearly conflicts with the 1945 population and with the historical study published on the same website. It has therefore not been adopted here. The related figures for houses and refugees have likewise not been used.

Population of al-Kabri

Year	Population	Nature of Figure
Late nineteenth century	About 400	Historical estimate
1922	553	Official census
1931	728	Official census
1944/1945	1,520	Government of Palestine statistics
1948	About 1,770	Estimate published by Palestine Remembered
The 1948 figure is an estimate and not an official British Mandate census.		

Number of Houses

Documented number of houses in al-Kabri

Year	Number of Houses	Nature of Figure
1931	173	Official census
The 1948 estimate was not included because the published figure is inconsistent with the documented population data.		

Land and the 1944/1945 Statistics

The land statistics for al-Kabri require particular care because the official tables published by PalQuest combine al-Kabri and Tarshiha into a single statistical unit. The total of 47,428 dunams should therefore not be presented as the land area of

al-Kabri alone.

According to the 1944/1945 statistics for the combined al-Kabri–Tarshiha unit, the total land area was 47,428 dunams, of which 37,308 dunams were Arab-owned, 90 dunams were Jewish-owned, and 10,030 dunams were classified as public land.

Total	**47,428**
Ownership Category	**Area in Dunams**
Arab ownership	37,308
Jewish ownership	90
Public land	10,030

These figures include both al-Kabri and Tarshiha and should not be used as if they referred to al-Kabri alone.

Agriculture and Land Use

Al-Kabri depended primarily on agriculture and animal husbandry. Olive, fig, pomegranate, mulberry, and apple trees were cultivated in the area, along with citrus fruits, bananas, and cereals.

For the combined al-Kabri–Tarshiha statistical unit, PalQuest records 14,123 dunams devoted to cereals in 1944/1945, including 14,056 dunams of Arab-owned land and 67 dunams of Jewish-owned land. A further 5,301 dunams were irrigated or used for plantations, including 5,278 Arab-owned dunams and 23 Jewish-owned dunams. The total area devoted to citrus and bananas was 743 dunams.

Walid Khalidi also records that 540 dunams were planted with olive trees. However, because the official tables combine al-Kabri and Tarshiha for a number of land-use categories, the total figures should not be presented as if they applied to al-Kabri alone.

Land use in the combined al-Kabri–Tarshiha statistical unit in 1944/1945

Type of Use	Arab	Jewish	Total
Cereals	14,056	67	14,123
Irrigated and plantation land	5,278	23	5,301
Citrus and bananas	743	0	743
The figures in this table apply to the combined al-Kabri–Tarshiha unit as classified by PalQuest for the 1944/1945 statistics.			

The Springs of Al-Kabri and Its Aqueducts

Al-Kabri was renowned for its abundant springs, including Ayn al-Mafshuh, Ayn al-Fawwar, Ayn al-Asal, and Ayn al-Kabri. Sources indicate that their combined flow reached approximately 8.6 million cubic metres per year, making them among the most important freshwater sources in the region and a principal source of water for the Acre District.

The waters of al-Kabri's springs had been used since antiquity to supply the city of Acre. Remains of water channels dating to the Hellenistic period have been documented in the area.

Aqueducts were also constructed during the Ottoman period to carry water to Acre. Sources mention a channel associated with Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The date of Sulayman Pasha's aqueduct differs between Palestinian sources: the PalQuest page gives 1841, while a detailed study published by Palestine Remembered dates its construction to 1814–1815. Neither date is therefore presented here as universally agreed upon.

Education and Social Life

Al-Kabri had a mosque and an elementary school for boys. A historical study published on Palestine Remembered indicates that the school was operating in 1942–1943 and that education there extended to the fourth elementary grade.

Agriculture and animal husbandry remained the principal economic activities of the population, along with work connected to orchards, springs, and the surrounding agricultural lands.

Archaeology in Al-Kabri

Al-Kabri stood on part of an extensive archaeological site that extended southwest toward the villages of al-Nahr and al-Tall. Sources indicate that the area had been inhabited since approximately 3200 BCE and remained densely settled until around 500 BCE, when the region came under Persian rule.

Building foundations, mosaic fragments, and rock-cut tombs were found at the site. A nearby khirba also contained the remains of a square structure built of dressed stone, along with water cisterns carved into the rock.

Al-Kabri During the Nakba

Al-Kabri witnessed armed confrontations before its final occupation in May 1948. Its location on the road leading to the Yehi'am settlement gave it military importance during this period.

The Convoy Battle in March 1948

On 28 March 1948, fighters from al-Kabri ambushed a Haganah military convoy passing near the village on its way to Yehi'am. A force from the Arab Liberation Army later joined the battle.

The sources differ regarding the number of casualties in the convoy. Testimonies collected by Palestinian historian Nafez Nazzal from villagers gave a figure of 74 Haganah dead, while PalQuest cites a lower figure from a contemporary press report, and another Palestinian study published by Palestine Remembered gives 47 soldiers killed. No single number should therefore be presented without noting the discrepancy between the sources.

Operation Ben-Ami and the Occupation of Al-Kabri

Operation Ben-Ami began on 13 May 1948 and was carried out by the Carmeli Brigade of the Haganah. Its objective was to seize Palestinian villages and coastal areas in western Galilee north of Acre up to the Lebanese border.

Orders for the Attack

PalQuest reports that orders issued to the Carmeli Brigade on 19 May 1948 instructed its forces to attack and occupy al-Kabri, Umm al-Faraj, and al-Nahr, to kill the men, and to destroy and burn the villages. This information is included on the basis of the documentation reproduced by PalQuest and Walid Khalidi, rather than through direct reliance here on an Israeli source.

Date of Occupation and Displacement

Forces of the Carmeli Brigade occupied al-Kabri during the night of 20–21 May 1948 in the second phase of Operation Ben-Ami. The date 21 May 1948 is used as the date of the village's occupation.

Many inhabitants had already left the village before the final assault because of the fighting, shelling, fear of attacks, and the withdrawal of Arab Liberation Army forces from the area.

Fate of the Remaining Inhabitants

Walid Khalidi, drawing on interviews conducted by Palestinian historian Nafez Nazzal with former residents of al-Kabri, records that an unspecified number of villagers were captured during the final assault and that some were killed. Witnesses also reported that people from al-Kabri were later killed while displaced in Galilee after Zionist forces learned that they came from the village.

A Palestinian study published on Palestine Remembered reports that seven or eight

residents of al-Kabri were executed by shooting after the occupation. Because the casualty figures differ between sources, this number is presented as a documented account in that study rather than as a universally agreed final figure.

Fate of the Population and Buildings

The Palestinian inhabitants of al-Kabri were displaced during the Nakba and scattered outside their village. Palestinian sources indicate that many refugees from al-Kabri later settled in Lebanon and Syria.

Most of the village buildings were destroyed after the occupation. Only deteriorating walls, piles of stone, and limited remains covered by weeds and wild vegetation survived from the original built-up area.

Occupation and Depopulation Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
The Convoy Battle in March 1948	March 1948	On 28 March 1948, fighters from al-Kabri ambushed a Haganah military convoy passing near the village on its way to Yehi'am. A force from the Arab Liberation Army later joined the battle.
Operation Ben-Ami and the Occupation of Al-Kabri	13 May 1948	Operation Ben-Ami began on 13 May 1948 and was carried out by the Carmeli Brigade of the Haganah. Its objective was to seize Palestinian villages and coastal areas in western Galilee north of Acre up to the Lebanese border.
Orders for the Attack	19 May 1948	PalQuest reports that orders issued to the Carmeli Brigade on 19 May 1948 instructed its forces to attack and occupy al-Kabri, Umm al-Faraj, and al-Nahr, to kill the men, and to destroy and burn the villages. This information is included on the basis of the documentation reproduced by PalQuest and Walid Khalidi, rather than through direct reliance here on an Israeli source.

Stage	Date	Details
Date of Occupation and Displacement	21 May 1948	Forces of the Carmeli Brigade occupied al-Kabri during the night of 20–21 May 1948 in the second phase of Operation Ben-Ami. The date 21 May 1948 is used as the date of the village's occupation.

Israeli Settlements Established on the Lands of Al-Kabri

Kabri

Kibbutz Kabri began to be established on 18 January 1949 in the northwestern part of the destroyed village site. It is the most prominent settlement established directly on the site of al-Kabri.

Kfar Vradim

Walid Khalidi states in *All That Remains* that Kfar Vradim was established on the lands of al-Kabri in 1984. The current Arabic version of the PalQuest page displays the year 1948, while the English text reproduced from Khalidi gives 1984. The year 1984 has therefore been adopted here.

Settlements on the Lands of Al-Kabri or Tarshiha

Ga'aton, established in 1948; Me'ona, established in 1949; Ein Ya'akov, established in 1950; and Ma'alot, established in 1957, lie east of the al-Kabri site on lands that belonged either to al-Kabri or to Tarshiha.

Walid Khalidi notes that it is not possible to determine conclusively which of the two villages each of these four settlements was built on, because the last British Mandate land-ownership map combined the lands of al-Kabri and Tarshiha.

- Kabri, established in 1949 on the village site.
- Kfar Vradim, established in 1984 on the lands of al-Kabri.

- Ga'aton, established in 1948 on land belonging to al-Kabri or Tarshiha.
- Me'ona, established in 1949 on land belonging to al-Kabri or Tarshiha.
- Ein Ya'akov, established in 1950 on land belonging to al-Kabri or Tarshiha.
- Ma'alot, established in 1957 on land belonging to al-Kabri or Tarshiha.

The Site of Al-Kabri Today

According to the field documentation published by Walid Khalidi, only a number of deteriorating walls and piles of stone covered by thorns, grasses, and shrubs remained from the village. Kibbutz Kabri uses nearby lands for agriculture and grazing.

This description reflects the period in which the original field documentation was conducted and should not necessarily be interpreted as a field survey of the site in 2026.

Sources

- PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Al-Kabri.
- PalQuest: Operation Ben-Ami.
- Palestine Remembered: Al-Kabri, Acre District.
- Palestine Remembered: The Depopulated Village of Al-Kabri, Dr. Muhammad Aqel.
- Institute for Palestine Studies: Nafez Nazzal, *The Zionist Occupation of Western Galilee, 1948*.
- Walid Khalidi, *All That Remains*, entry on al-Kabri, as reproduced by PalQuest and Palestine Remembered.
- Nafez Nazzal, *The Palestinian Exodus from Galilee, 1948*, Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, 1978.
- Government of Palestine, Department of Statistics, *Village Statistics, 1945*, with the note that the published land data combine al-Kabri and

Tarshiha.