

(Al-'Abbasiyya (Yahudiyya



Subdistrict: Jaffa

Estimated population of al-'Abbasiyya in 1948: Approximately 6,554 within the statistical locality, including an estimated 6,404 Palestinian Arabs and 150 Jewish residents

Date of final occupation: 10 July 1948; the village had previously been occupied by the Irgun on 4 May and retaken by Palestinian Arab forces around 11 June

Military units: Irgun (IZL/Etzel) forces during the May occupation and Israeli Home Guard units during the final occupation in Operation Dani

Israeli settlements established on the village's lands before 1948: None documented

Israeli settlements established on the village site or lands after 1948: Yehud, Magshimim, Ganei Yehuda, Ganei Tikva, and Savyon

Al-‘Abbasiyya was located 13 km east of Yafa.

Al-‘Abbasiyya was a Palestinian village in the Jaffa Subdistrict. Zionist forces occupied it more than once during 1948, and it was finally captured by Israeli forces during Operation Dani on 10 July. Yehud was subsequently established on the village site, while Magshimim, Ganei Yehuda, Ganei Tikva, Savyon, and parts of Ben-Gurion Airport were built on lands belonging to al-‘Abbasiyya.

The village stood on flat terrain in Palestine’s central coastal plain. Several roads connected it with Yafa, al-Lydd, and al-Ramla. The Yafa–al-Lydd railway passed immediately south of the village, while al-Lydd Airport was situated approximately 4 km to the south.

Boundaries of al-‘Abbasiyya

Al-‘Abbasiyya was situated among the following villages and localities:

- North and northwest: The Qabbaniyyat area.
- West: [Kafr ‘Ana](#).
- Southwest and south: al-Lydd Airport.
- Southeast: [Dayr Tarif](#).
- East: Wilhelma.
- Northeast: [Rantiya](#).

Al-‘Abbasiyya: Origin of the Name

The village was previously known as al-Yahudiyya. In 1932, its Palestinian inhabitants renamed it al-‘Abbasiyya, principally in memory of a local religious figure named Shaykh al-‘Abbas, who was buried there. The new name also alluded to the Abbasid period of Arab-

At that time, the population was predominantly Muslim, with approximately twenty Christian residents. Earlier historical traditions associated the locality with a place called Yehud and with the Roman-period name Iudaea, but the precise continuity between these historical sites and the modern village should be treated cautiously.

Mosques in al-‘Abbasiyya

Al-‘Abbasiyya had two mosques. The larger mosque was constructed of stone and had a minaret approximately 21 metres high. It originally stood near the centre of the village. A smaller mosque was located in the northwestern section.

Religious Shrines in al-‘Abbasiyya

The village contained the stone-built shrine of al-Nabi Huda, which was surmounted by a dome. The shrine survived the occupation and partial destruction of al-‘Abbasiyya and remained standing when the site was documented.

Education in al-‘Abbasiyya

Al-‘Abbasiyya had two schools, one for boys and another for girls. The boys’ school was founded in 1919 and became a junior secondary school in 1941. At that time, it had 14 teachers and 293 pupils, making it the largest village school in the Jaffa Subdistrict. The school also held 27 dunams of land used for agricultural training.

The girls’ school opened in 1943 and initially enrolled 101 pupils.

Public Facilities in al-‘Abbasiyya

The inhabitants established a social and cultural association known as al-Nadi al-‘Abbasi. It maintained a library and sponsored a football team.

In 1945, the British Mandate authorities established a local council and appointed several village residents to serve as members. The council was responsible for improving social services and paving village roads.

Inhabitants of al-‘Abbasiyya

The 1922 census conducted by the British Mandate authorities recorded 2,437 inhabitants, all classified as Muslims. By 1931, the population had increased to 3,258, comprising 3,253 Muslims and five Christians living in 772 houses.

In 1945, the wider statistical locality had 5,800 residents: 5,650 Palestinian Arabs and 150 Jewish residents. The Jewish population recorded in these statistics should be distinguished from the Palestinian population of the village’s built-up centre.

Population of al-‘Abbasiyya

Year	Population*
1596	Approximately 693
Late nineteenth century	Approximately 800–1,000
1922	2,437
1931	3,258
1945	5,800: 5,650 Palestinian Arabs and 150 Jewish residents
1948	Approximately 6,554: an estimated 6,404 Palestinian Arabs and 150 Jewish residents

Year	Population*
Estimated number of Palestinian refugees descended from the village population in 1998	40,249

* The 1948 and 1998 figures are later demographic estimates rather than contemporaneous census counts. The 1945 and estimated 1948 totals include 150 Jewish residents recorded within the wider statistical locality.

Number of Houses in al-‘Abbasiyya

Year	Number of houses
1931	772
1948	Approximately 1,553

* The 1931 figure comes from the British Mandate census. The figure for 1948 is a later estimate rather than a contemporaneous house count.

Economic Life in al-‘Abbasiyya

The inhabitants earned their living primarily from agriculture and from weaving mats made with papyrus brought from the marshes of Lake al-Hula. During the Second World War, they also began raising Holstein cattle.

In 1944/45, 3,879 dunams of Palestinian-owned land were devoted to citrus and banana cultivation, 12,348 dunams to cereals, and 1,019 dunams to irrigated agriculture or orchards. Water for irrigation was drawn from numerous artesian wells.

Al-‘Abbasiyya hosted a weekly market on Saturdays. Residents of neighbouring villages attended the market to buy and sell agricultural produce, livestock, and textiles.

Land Ownership in al-‘Abbasiyya

Ownership category	Land area (dunams)*
Palestinian ownership	17,499
Jewish ownership	1,135
Public land	1,906
Total	20,540

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Land Use in al-‘Abbasiyya in 1944/45

Land-use category	Palestinian ownership (dunams)*	Jewish ownership (dunams)*	Public land (dunams)*	Total (dunams)*
Citrus and banana cultivation	3,879	220	0	4,099
Irrigated land and orchards	1,019	0	0	1,019
Olive cultivation*	450	0	0	450
Cereal cultivation	12,348	915	1,202	14,465
Built-up area	101	0	0	101
Total cultivable land	17,246	1,135	1,202	19,583
Uncultivated land	152	0	704	856

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres. The olive-growing figure is a subsidiary agricultural figure and should not be added separately to the total cultivable area.

Occupation and Depopulation of al-‘Abbasiyya

Al-‘Abbasiyya was subjected to several Zionist attacks before its final occupation. On 13

December 1947, an Irgun force entered the village in vehicles while reportedly disguised as British soldiers. Explosive charges were placed near houses, grenades were thrown, and villagers near a café were fired upon.

Contemporary reports initially recorded seven Palestinians killed and seven seriously wounded; two of the wounded—a five-year-old child and a twenty-year-old woman—later died. Other casualty reports appeared in the following days, and totals vary between sources. On 24 February 1948, another Zionist attack killed two villagers when a grenade was thrown from a vehicle belonging to the Jewish Settlement Police.

On 25 April 1948, the Irgun launched a frontal assault against Yafa. Four days later, during Operation Hametz, the Haganah's Alexandroni Brigade took control of the area surrounding al-‘Abbasiyya. This operation sought to isolate Yafa from the Palestinian villages to its east and south and facilitate the city's occupation.

The Irgun attacked al-‘Abbasiyya on the night of 3 May and occupied it by the morning of 4 May. The village remained under Irgun control for approximately five weeks. Available historical evidence indicates that most of its Palestinian inhabitants were displaced during or shortly after this attack.

On the eve of the first truce, around 11 June, a Palestinian Arab counterattack forced the Irgun to withdraw. Fighting continued intermittently around al-‘Abbasiyya and nearby Kafr ‘Ana during the first days of the truce. The village then remained in Palestinian Arab hands for approximately one month.

When the truce ended, Israeli forces attacked al-‘Abbasiyya during Operation Dani. Units of the Israeli Home Guard finally occupied the village on 10 July 1948. According to the *History of the Haganah*, the village fell with little fighting. This attack formed part of a broader encircling operation coordinated with the Israeli assault on al-Lydd and al-Ramla.

On 13 September 1948, Israeli prime minister David Ben-Gurion requested cabinet authorization to destroy al-‘Abbasiyya. The available record does not establish whether the request was implemented in full. A recommendation issued ten days later proposed settling Jewish immigrants in the village, apparently in some of the houses that remained standing.

Israeli Settlements Established on the Lands of al-‘Abbasiyya

Yehud was established on the village site in 1948. Magshimim was established east of the site in 1949. Ganei Yehuda, Ganei Tikva, and Savyon were subsequently built on lands belonging to al-‘Abbasiyya.

Walid Khalidi’s village account dates Ganei Yehuda to 1951, Ganei Tikva to 1953, and Savyon to 1954. Other administrative sources give 1950 for Ganei Yehuda and 1955 for Savyon; dates therefore vary slightly according to whether preliminary establishment or formal recognition is used.

Parts of Ben-Gurion Airport—the expanded airport formerly known as al-Lydd Airport—were also constructed on land belonging to al-‘Abbasiyya. Yehud later became part of the municipality of Yehud-Monosson.

Al-‘Abbasiyya Today

The village’s main mosque and the shrine of al-Nabi Huda remained standing when the site was documented. The abandoned mosque had begun to develop cracks in several places, while the shrine was a stone structure surmounted by a dome.

An Israeli café identified in the historical account as the Tehr café stood at the entrance to a principal street formerly known as Ziqaq al-Raml, meaning “Sand Lane.” Several Palestinian houses also survived and were either occupied by residents of Yehud or adapted to other uses.

One surviving concrete house had a sloping roof and rectangular doors and windows, with corrugated metal sheets covering its porch. Another two-storey concrete house, with a tiled tent-shaped roof, had been converted into a commercial building. Parts of the surrounding land that had not been built over were left uncultivated and became overgrown with pine and Christ’s-thorn trees.

Sources

- [Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: “al-‘Abbasiyya”](#), Institute for Palestine Studies.
 - [Palestine Remembered: “al-‘Abbasiyya, Jaffa”](#).
- [Walid Khalidi, ed., *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*](#), Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992.
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 - [Government of Palestine, *Village Statistics, April 1945*](#).
 - [Our Palestine: “The Depopulated Village of al-‘Abbasiyya”](#).