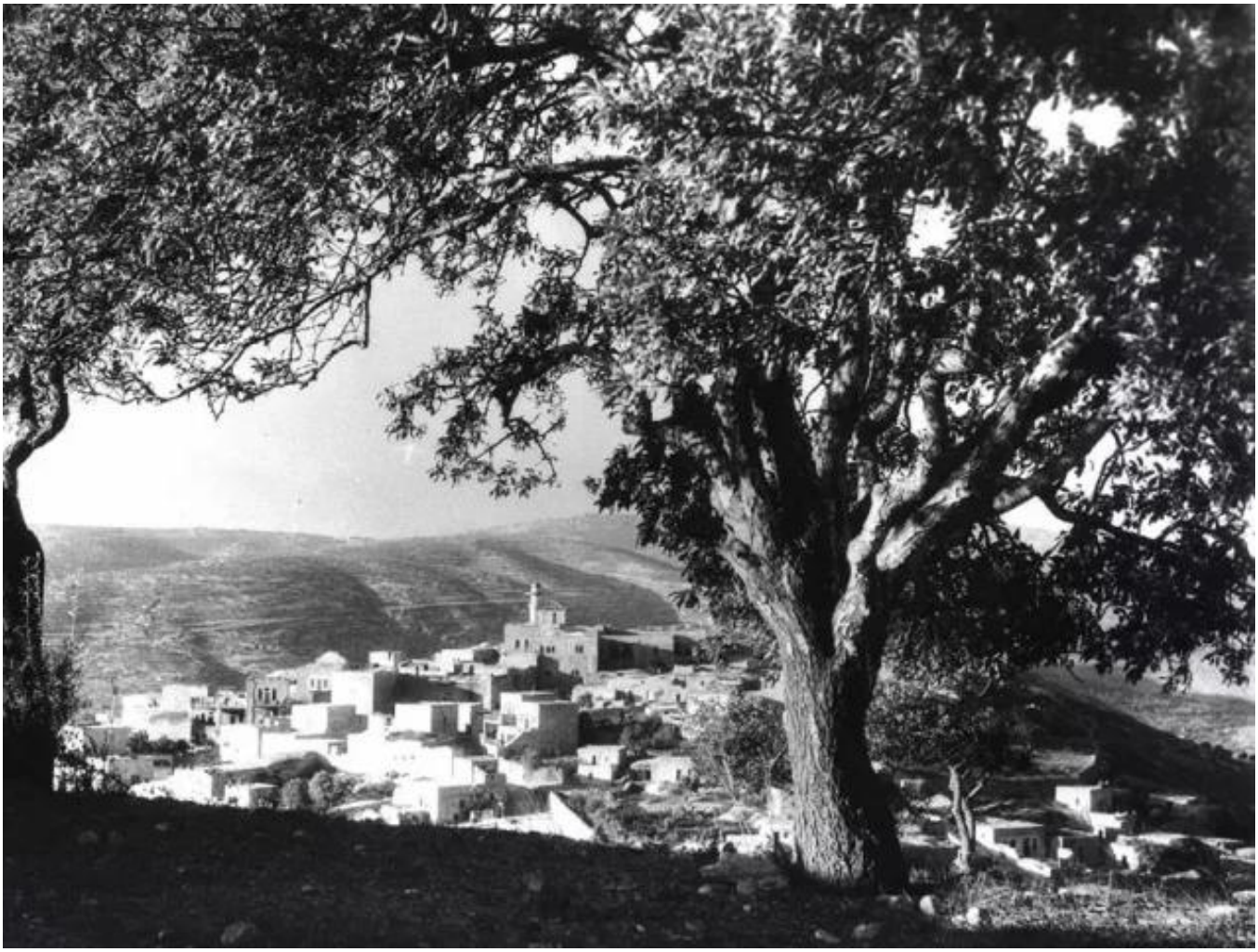
Al-Maliha



Al-Maliha was a Palestinian village situated southwest of Jerusalem. Its residents were displaced in 1948, and the village was gradually absorbed into the expanding urban area of Jerusalem. It stood approximately 5.5 kilometres from the city.

Basic Information

Item	Information
Subdistrict	Al-Quds (Jerusalem)
Distance from district center	5.5 km West of Jerusalem
Average Elevation	750 meters above sea level

Item	Information
Population in 1931	1,410 inhabitants
Population in 1944/1945	1,940 inhabitants
Estimated Population in 1948	Approximately 2,250 inhabitants - a later demographic estimate, not an official census
Attack and Depopulation	A report published by the Jaffa-based Palestinian newspaper Filastin dated the first recorded attack on al-Maliha to 6 March 1948, when a Jewish unit entered the village outskirts and clashed with its defenders. Israeli historian Benny Morris describes the evacuation as occurring in two stages.
Final Israeli Control	15-16 July 1948
Military Operation	Dani
Military Unit	Irgun, backed by two platoons of the Gadna's Yonatan Company
Cause of Depopulation	Military assault by Zionist troops
Settlements Documented on Village Lands	Manahat was established on the site in 1949. Later Jerusalem neighbourhoods developed on or around former village lands include Ramat Daniya, Ir Ganim, Givat Massua, parts of Gonen (the Katamonim), and Givat Mordechai.

Information about al-Maliha

- Al-Maliha stood on a high mountain slope. Bayt Safafa and the Qatamon area lay to the east; Ayn Karim and al-Jura to the west; the lands of Lifta and Deir Yasin to the north; and the lands of Bayt Jala and Sharafat to the south.
- The village was approximately 5.5 kilometres southwest of Jerusalem.
- Al-Maliha stood on a plateau overlooking a wide area in every direction except the north. A newer section was constructed on the southeastern slope of a neighbouring hill. A short secondary road connected the village to the main road leading to Jerusalem, while other secondary roads and dirt tracks linked it with neighbouring villages.
- The village had a rectangular plan.

- Most houses were constructed of stone, and the population was predominantly Muslim. In 1945, the official total was 1,940 residents: 1,930 Muslims and 10 Christians.

Economic Life in al-Maliha

Most residents depended on rainfed agriculture and livestock raising, while others worked in crafts, commerce, and services. Village lands produced cereals, vegetables, and fruit. In 1944/45, 1,013 dunams of Palestinian-owned land were devoted to cereal cultivation, while 2,613 dunams were irrigated or used for orchards, including 1,370 dunams planted with olive trees. Wild vegetation covered the neighbouring mountain slopes, which were used for grazing.

Land Ownership in al-Maliha

Ownership category	Area (dunams)*
Palestinian ownership	5,798
Jewish ownership	922
Public land	108
Total	**6,828**

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Land Use in al-Maliha, 1944/45

Land-use category	Palestinian ownership (dunams)*	Jewish ownership (dunams)*	Public land (dunams)*	Total (dunams)*
Irrigated land and orchards	2,613	5	0	2,618

Land-use category	Palestinian ownership (dunams)*	Jewish ownership (dunams)*	Public land (dunams)*	Total (dunams)*
Olive cultivation**	1,370	0	0	1,370
Cereal cultivation	1,013	246	0	1,259
Cultivable land	**3,626**	**251**	**0**	**3,877**
Built-up area	86	242	0	328
Uncultivated land	2,086	429	108	2,623
Total land area	**5,798**	**922**	**108**	**6,828**

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

** Olive acreage is included within the broader plantation and irrigable category and must not be added again to the cultivable-land total.

Population Figures for al-Maliha

Year	Population*
1596 estimate	286
1922	1,038
1931	1,410
1945	1,940
1948 estimate	Approximately 2,250
Estimated refugees and descendants, 1998	13,820

* The 1922 and 1931 figures derive from British Mandate censuses, while the 1945 figure comes from the official Village Statistics. The 1948 and 1998 figures are later estimates. The 1931 figure includes Ayn Yalu.

Public Facilities in al-Maliha

Al-Maliha had the following public institutions:

- A government elementary school.
- A medical clinic.
- A large mosque named after Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second caliph.
- A small number of shops and a village council.

Archaeological Remains in al-Maliha

Numerous rock-cut tombs were found in and around the village, and a ruined tower stood near the mosque. These remains, together with other archaeological evidence at the site, indicate that the area had been inhabited since antiquity.

Occupation and Depopulation of al-Maliha

A report published by the Jaffa-based Palestinian newspaper *Filastin* dated the first recorded attack on al-Maliha to 6 March 1948, when a Jewish unit entered the village outskirts and clashed with its defenders. Israeli historian Benny Morris describes the evacuation as occurring in two stages. The first wave took place in April following the massacre in neighbouring Deir Yasin on 9 April.

Al-Maliha was not completely depopulated until mid-July, when it came under direct attack after the first truce. On the night of 13–14 July, a company of the Irgun Zvai Leumi and two platoons of the Gadna's Yonatan Company entered the village and established positions there. Arab forces counterattacked on 15 July and temporarily forced the Irgun to withdraw from its most advanced position, but Israeli reinforcements retook it. Further fighting continued on 16 July, after which al-Maliha remained under Israeli control. Sources commonly use 14 July as the occupation and depopulation date, although the battle extended over several days.

Occupation and Depopulation Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
Occupation and Depopulation of al-Maliha	15-16 July 1948	A report published by the Jaffa-based Palestinian newspaper Filastin dated the first recorded attack on al-Maliha to 6 March 1948, when a Jewish unit entered the village outskirts and clashed with its defenders. Al-Maliha was not completely depopulated until mid-July, when it came under direct attack after the first truce.

Israeli Development on al-Maliha's Lands

The Israeli suburb of Manahat was established on the village site in 1949. The site was later incorporated into Jerusalem's expanding southern and southwestern urban area. PalQuest specifically notes that parts of the Ramat Daniya neighbourhood surround the village on the west and north. Other Palestinian compilations also attribute areas occupied by Ir Ganim, Givat Massua, Gonen, and Givat Mordechai to al-Maliha's former lands; exact boundary attributions vary between sources.

Al-Maliha Today

Many of the village houses remain standing and are occupied by Jewish families, although several houses in the southern part of the village were demolished. The inhabited limestone houses are generally two-storey structures with arched doors and windows; some have balconies whose roofs are supported by columns and rounded arches. The mosque and its tall, round minaret remain in the village centre, while the former school building has been abandoned. The village cemetery survives on the southern edge of the site, and orchards grow on the southern and southeastern slopes and in the valleys.

Sources

- Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question (PalQuest): al-Maliha.
- Palestine Open Maps: al-Maliha.
- Palestine Remembered: al-Maliha statistics.
- National Library of Israel catalogue: Village Statistics, April 1945.