Al-Wayziyya

al-Wayziyya – Depopulated Palestinian Village of Safad

Al-Wayziyya was a depopulated Palestinian village in the Safad Subdistrict, situated northeast of Safad on volcanic terrain sloping toward the al-Hula Plain. Walid Khalidi and PalQuest place the village approximately 8.5 kilometers northeast of Safad at an average elevation of about 250 meters above sea level.

Most of al-Wayziyya's inhabitants were settled or semi-settled Bedouins who depended primarily on livestock raising and limited cultivation. A shrine dedicated to Shaykh al-Wayzi stood about half a kilometer from the village, with a stone quarry immediately to its west.

Basic Information

Field	Information
Name	al-Wayziyya
Arabic name	الوَيْزِيَّة
Alternative spelling	Weiziya
Subdistrict	Safad
Region	Eastern Galilee – edge of the al-Hula Plain
Distance from Safad	Approximately 8.5 km northeast
Elevation	Approximately 250 m above sea level
Palestine Grid	204/267
Total village land	3,826 dunums
Population in 1922	30, all Muslims
Population in 1931	No independently recorded figure; al-Wayziyya was statistically associated with Rosh Pinna in the census table
1945 statistics	A total of 100 appears for a combined statistical unit that included al-Wayziyya and several other localities; it should not be treated as a conclusively independent village figure
1948 estimate	116 – later estimate, not an official census
Occupation and depopulation	April or early May 1948; 1 May is widely cited by Palestinian secondary sources, while Khalidi does not establish a precise day
Military operation	Operation Yiftach

Field	Information
Military unit	Palestine Remembered attributes the attack to the Palmach's First Battalion; Khalidi does not independently identify the village-specific assault unit
Cause of depopulation	Palestine Remembered: direct military assault; Khalidi presents a broader context of military advance and flight in anticipation of attack
Israeli settlements on village lands	None according to Walid Khalidi

Name and Etymology

The village name is associated with Shaykh al-Wayzi, whose shrine and grave stood approximately half a kilometer from the village site. Palestinian sources identify the shrine as one of the locality's principal landmarks and, ultimately, as the only substantial village landmark to survive the destruction.

Location and Geography

Al-Wayziyya stood on volcanic terrain that sloped northward toward the al-Hula Plain. The surrounding landscape contained steep slopes and watercourses draining toward the Jordan Valley.

Wadi al-Mushayrifa passed roughly a quarter of a kilometer south, southeast, and east of the village. Its southern section was locally known as Wadi Abu al-Hayyat, while Wadi al-Hajj Ayyub lay toward the northeast.

A secondary road connected al-Wayziyya with a main highway leading toward Safad and Tiberias.

Neighboring Villages

Al-Husayniyya lay to the north; Kirad al-Ghannama and Kirad al-Baqqara to the northeast; Yarda to the east; Khirbat al-Muntar to the south; Farr'im to the

southwest; Qabba'a to the west; and Marus to the northwest.

Shaykh al-Wayzi Shrine and Quarry

The shrine of Shaykh al-Wayzi stood approximately half a kilometer from the village. Immediately west of it was a stone quarry. The shrine became the principal surviving landmark of al-Wayziyya after the destruction of the village.

Population

Al-Wayziyya's population figures require particular care because the village was statistically grouped with other localities in parts of the Mandate-period records.

Year	Population	Status of Figure
1922	30	Independent official census figure; all inhabitants were recorded as Muslims
1931	No separate figure available	The census table lists Weiziya without an independent total immediately after Rosh Pinna; Palestinian reference works state that its population was included with Rosh Pinna
1945	100	Figure for a combined statistical unit that included al-Wayziyya together with Mazari' al-Daraja, Dardara, Dureijat, 'Ayn al-Tina, and Jalabina; it is not treated here as a confirmed independent village total
1948	116	Later estimate, not an official census
1998	712	Later estimate of refugees and descendants, not an official census

The current PalQuest page displays 100 under the year 1931, but this conflicts with the official 1931 census table, which does not give al-Wayziyya an independent figure. This article therefore does not use 100 as the village's 1931 population.

Number of Houses

No independently documented number of houses for al-Wayziyya is available from

the 1931 census because of its statistical grouping, and no reliable independent official house total for 1948 was located. A house count should therefore not be inferred from population estimates.

Land Ownership, 1944/45

Total	3,826
Ownership Category	**Dunums**
Palestinian	0
Transferred to Zionists	3,673
Public	153

The original Government of Palestine categories were Arab, Jewish, and Public. The official table classified 3,673 dunums under Jewish ownership and 153 dunums as public land, with no land recorded under the Arab ownership column. In accordance with the terminology used in this project, the second category is rendered here as “Transferred to Zionists.”

The ownership figures balance exactly: 3,673 + 153 = 3,826 dunums.

Land Use, 1944/45

Total	3,673	153	3,826
Land Use	**Transferred to Zionists**	**Public**	**Total**
Cereals	3,611	0	3,611
Plantations and irrigable land	62	0	62
Non-cultivable land	0	153	153

The land-use figures balance exactly: 3,611 + 62 + 153 = 3,826 dunums.

The PalQuest table does not provide a separate built-up-area figure, so no unsupported built-up figure is added.

Economy

Most villagers were Bedouins who depended on livestock raising and limited agriculture. Cereal cultivation dominated the recorded agricultural land, with a smaller area devoted to plantations or irrigable cultivation.

A stone quarry immediately west of the Shaykh al-Wayzi shrine was another economic feature of the village area.

Education and Services

Neither Khalidi nor the principal Palestinian sources consulted provide documentation of a school in al-Wayziyya. A Palestinian village reference project states that the inhabitants had few or no local public services. No school, clinic, or administrative facility is therefore asserted without further evidence.

Operation Yiftach

Al-Wayziyya was depopulated within the context of Operation Yiftach, carried out by Palmach forces in eastern Galilee between 15 April and 25 May 1948 under the broader framework of Plan Dalet.

The Palmach's First Battalion spearheaded Operation Yiftach as a whole, whose objectives included securing Safad and the surrounding villages and controlling eastern Galilee before the end of the British Mandate.

Occupation and Depopulation

The exact day on which al-Wayziyya fell is not firmly established across the sources.

Palestine Remembered and a Palestinian village encyclopedia give 1 May 1948 and attribute the action to the Palmach's First Battalion. A Palestinian register of depopulated localities gives 30 April while also marking May 1948 as an estimated

date.

Walid Khalidi's account is more cautious. As reproduced by PalQuest, it states that al-Wayziyya was occupied in April or May 1948 and probably fell before the final assault on Safad on 10 May, during the advance into villages surrounding the city.

The most defensible formulation is therefore that al-Wayziyya was occupied in late April or early May 1948 during Operation Yiftach. The frequently cited date of 1 May should be retained as an attributed date rather than presented as conclusively established by Khalidi.

Military Unit

Palestine Remembered identifies the Palmach's First Battalion as the attacking unit. The First Battalion did indeed spearhead Operation Yiftach.

Khalidi's village-specific narrative, however, does not independently name the unit that entered al-Wayziyya. Participation in the wider operation should therefore not be converted into definitive proof of a separate First Battalion assault on the village without qualification.

Cause of Depopulation

Palestine Remembered classifies the cause as a direct military assault.

Khalidi provides a more cautious context: villages to the north had begun to empty in late April in anticipation of a Haganah attack, while nearby Mughr al-Khayt was struck by mortar fire on 2 May. He considers it likely that al-Wayziyya fell during the military advance against villages surrounding Safad before the final assault on the city.

It can therefore be established that al-Wayziyya was depopulated amid Operation Yiftach and escalating military pressure around Safad, but Khalidi's narrative alone does not determine whether all residents fled after a direct assault on their homes or whether some left before the forces entered because of fear generated by the

surrounding attacks.

Destruction

Al-Wayziyya was subsequently destroyed. Khalidi does not provide a precise date for the demolition of its buildings, so the occupation date should not automatically be treated as the destruction date.

In his later field description, the shrine of Shaykh al-Wayzi was the only substantial village landmark still standing, while rubble from destroyed houses was scattered across the site.

Ethnic Cleansing in Source Classification

Palestine Remembered classifies al-Wayziyya using the term “complete ethnic cleansing.” The directly documented facts are that the village was emptied of its Palestinian population in the context of Operation Yiftach during spring 1948, the inhabitants did not return to permanent residence there, and the village buildings were later destroyed except for the shrine of Shaykh al-Wayzi.

Occupation Chronology

Date	Event
15 April 1948	Operation Yiftach began in eastern Galilee.
Late April 1948	Residents of villages north of the area began leaving in anticipation of Haganah attacks as military pressure around Safad intensified.
30 April–1 May 1948	Period given by several Palestinian sources for the fall of al-Wayziyya; Palestine Remembered uses 1 May, while another Palestinian register gives 30 April and marks May as approximate.
2 May 1948	Nearby Mughr al-Khayt was struck by mortar fire, illustrating the intensity of operations in the surrounding area.

Date	Event
Before 10 May 1948	Khalidi considers it likely that al-Wayziyya had fallen during the advance on villages surrounding Safad.
10–11 May 1948	The final assault on Safad took place and the city fell during Operation Yiftach.
After occupation	Most village buildings were destroyed; the precise demolition date is not documented.

Israeli Settlements on al-Wayziyya's Lands

According to Walid Khalidi and PalQuest, no Israeli settlement was established on al-Wayziyya's village lands.

Mahanayim had been established in 1939, before the Nakba, approximately 1.5 kilometers southeast of the village site. It should therefore not be described as a post-1948 settlement established on the ruins of al-Wayziyya.

A later Palestinian village reference states that portions of al-Wayziyya's land were incorporated into Mahanayim. This concerns subsequent land use and should be distinguished from Khalidi's more specific statement about the location on which the settlement itself was established.

al-Wayziyya Today

According to the field description used by Walid Khalidi, the shrine of Shaykh al-Wayzi was the only substantial village landmark still standing. Rubble from the destroyed houses was scattered throughout the site.

Grass, Christ's-thorn, eucalyptus, and pine trees grew in the surrounding area, while much of the land was being used as pasture.

PalQuest identifies a photograph of the Shaykh al-Wayzi shrine as dating to August 1987. Khalidi's description likewise derives from fieldwork conducted before the publication of All That Remains in 1992. It should therefore be treated as a documented historical description rather than a comprehensive direct field

verification of the site's condition in 2026.

Sources

- PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: al-Wayziyya
- PalQuest – Operation Yiftach
- Palestine Remembered – al-Wayziyya, Safad Subdistrict
- Palestine Remembered – al-Wayziyya entry from Walid Khalidi's All That Remains
- Palestinian Villages Encyclopedia – al-Wayziyya
- Palestine Land Society – Atlas of Palestine 1917–1966
- Government of Palestine – Census of Palestine 1931
- Palestine Land Society – Register of Depopulated Localities in Palestine