Bayt Naqquba

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[بيت نقوبا]

Bayt Naqquba – A Depopulated Palestinian Village in the Jerusalem Subdistrict

Bayt Naqquba, also transliterated Bayt Naquba or Bayt Naqouba, was a Palestinian village in the Jerusalem Subdistrict, located approximately 9.5 km west of Jerusalem on a long north–south hill, at an average elevation of about 660 meters above sea level.

Wadis surrounded the village on nearly every side except the north. It faced the village of Suba to the south and stood north of the main Jerusalem–Jaffa road. Secondary roads linked Bayt Naqquba with several neighboring villages, including Bayt Surik, al-Qastal, Abu Ghosh, and Suba.

An important distinction must be made between **historic Bayt Naqquba**, which was depopulated in 1948, and **'Ayn Naqquba**, a later Palestinian village established south of the original site in 1962 for some of Bayt Naqquba's displaced inhabitants.

Item	Information
Subdistrict	Jerusalem
Historical village name	Bayt Naqquba / Bayt Naquba
Later Palestinian village	'Ayn Naqquba, established south of the old site in 1962
Distance from Jerusalem	Approximately 9.5 km west
Average elevation	Approximately 660 m above sea level
Population, 1944/45	240 Arabs
Estimated population, 1948	278
Total land area	2,979 dunums
Occupation and depopulation	Early April 1948; precise day uncertain in the principal source
Military operation	Operation Nachshon
Military force	Haganah/Palmach within Operation Nachshon; the village-specific assault unit is not securely identified
Israeli settlement on the old village site	Beit Nekofa, established in 1949

Bayt Naqquba and 'Ayn Naqquba: The Distinction

Bayt Naqquba was the historical Palestinian village that existed until the Nakba and its depopulation in 1948.

'Ayn Naqquba, by contrast, is a later Palestinian village established south of the old site in 1962, where some refugees from historic Bayt Naqquba were permitted to live.

The combined label “Bayt Naqquba / Naquba / 'Ayn Naqquba” used in some Palestinian village documentation therefore reflects historical and community continuity, not an identical pre- and post-1948 built-up location.

Location and Geography

Bayt Naqquba stood on a long hill extending from north to south and was surrounded by wadis on virtually all sides except the north.

The village stood north of the Jerusalem–Jaffa highway and faced Suba to the south.

Its position close to the main road gave it relatively easy access to Jerusalem and neighboring western Jerusalem villages.

Neighboring Villages

Palestinian maps and local documentation indicate the following approximate geographical relationships:

- Northwest: Qatanna.
- Northeast: Bayt Surik.
- West: Abu Ghosh / Qaryat al-'Inab.
- South: Suba.
- Southeast: al-Qastal.
- South of the old site in the post-1948 period: the later Palestinian village of 'Ayn Naqquba.

These relationships are approximate and do not substitute for historical cadastral boundary maps.

Name and Terminology

The historical village appears in Arabic and English sources under several spellings, including **Bayt Naqquba**, Bayt Naquba, and Beit Nakuba.

The name **'Ayn Naqquba** refers to the later Palestinian village established by members of the displaced community south of the old village site.

Khalidi's principal village entry does not provide a definitive etymology of Naqquba, so this article does not adopt an unsupported linguistic derivation.

Bayt Naqquba in the Nineteenth Century

Edward Robinson recorded Bayt Naqquba in 1838 as a Muslim village in the Bani Malik district west of Jerusalem.

In 1863, French traveler Victor Guérin estimated the population at about 200 and described the village as standing among cultivated slopes.

The Survey of Western Palestine later described Bayt Naqquba as a village built on a slope, with a spring to the south.

Built Form

The village had a rectangular plan and most houses and small shops were built of stone.

The 1944/45 Village Statistics classified 9 dunums as Arab built-up land.

The official statistical unit also contained 296 dunums classified as Jewish built-up land. This should not be confused with Beit Nekofa, which was established only after the Nakba in 1949.

Population of Bayt Naqquba

The official 1922 Census of Palestine recorded 120 inhabitants in Bayt Naqquba, all Muslims.

In the 1931 census, the population had increased to 177 Muslims living in 41 occupied houses.

The 1944/45 Village Statistics recorded 240 Arabs.

Palestine Remembered later estimated the population at 278 in 1948 and the number of refugees and their descendants at 1,710 in 1998. These are retrospective estimates rather than official British Mandate census counts.

Year	Population	Nature of Figure / Notes
1863	Approximately 200	Victor Guérin's estimate
1922	120	Official census; all Muslims
1931	177	Official census; all Muslims
1944/45	240	Official Village Statistics; all Arabs
1948	278	Later estimate, not an official census
1998	1,710 refugees	Later estimate of refugees and their descendants

Number of Houses

Year	Houses	Nature of Figure
1931	41	Occupied houses recorded in the official census
1948	64	Later Palestine Remembered estimate, not an official census count

Education and Public Institutions

Khalidi's principal village entry and the core PalQuest data do not document a separate formal school in Bayt Naqquba before the Nakba.

The same core sources do not provide sufficient documentation for a village mosque or a formal educational institution. This article therefore does not add such institutions without a secure source.

Khalidi does, however, record the presence of small shops within the village.

Land Ownership

The total land area recorded for Bayt Naqquba in the 1944/45 Village Statistics was 2,979 dunums.

Using Palestine Remembered's simplified terminology:

Ownership Category	Area in Dunums
Palestinian	1,958
Transferred to Zionists	951
Communal/Public	70
Total	**2,979**

The official Village Statistics use the original categories Arab, Jewish, and Public: 1,958 dunums were Arab, 951 Jewish, and 70 public.

Some English versions of Palestine Remembered display only 3 dunums of public land. That figure is arithmetically inconsistent with the 2,979-dunum total; the official statistics, PalQuest, and the Arabic Palestine Remembered page give 70 dunums, which is the figure used here.

Land Use in 1944/45

Use	Arab	Jewish	Public	Total
Cereals	515	238	0	753
Plantations and irrigable land	303	31	0	334
Built-up land	9	296	0	305
Non-cultivable land	1,131	386	70	1,587
Total	**1,958**	**951**	**70**	**2,979**

Cultivable land totaled 1,087 dunums, approximately 36 percent of the statistical unit: 818 Arab and 269 Jewish dunums.

Built-up and non-cultivable land totaled 1,892 dunums, approximately 64 percent.

Approximately 194 Arab dunums were planted with olive trees. This was a crop-specific subset of the 303 Arab dunums classified as plantations and irrigable land and should not be added separately.

Economic Life

Agriculture was the principal basis of village life.

Olive trees and vineyards were among the most important crops and were concentrated west of the village and on the valley floors.

The inhabitants also cultivated cereals, while some orchards were irrigated from local springs.

In 1944/45, 515 Arab dunums were devoted to cereals and 303 Arab dunums to plantations and irrigable land, including approximately 194 dunums of olives.

Water and Springs

Local springs supplied both drinking and irrigation water.

Khalidi records a spring on the eastern edge of the village as the principal drinking-water source, while the Survey of Western Palestine also described a spring south of the settlement.

Later Palestinian community documentation identifies additional springs in the wider village landscape, including 'Ayn Jamil and 'Ayn Hamad / 'Ayn Mahraj in the Wadi Kaslun area.

These later names are presented as local geographical documentation; the principal source securely establishes the general importance of village springs.

Archaeological Sites

Khirbat al-Khanazir and **Khirbat al-Ra's** lay near Bayt Naqquba.

The wider village landscape also contained historical routes and built remains associated with the old Jaffa–Jerusalem corridor.

Khalidi does not provide a detailed archaeological chronology for the two khirbas, so no specific historical period has been assigned without independent archaeological evidence.

Operation Nachshon

Operation Nachshon ran from 3 to 15 April 1948.

It was the Haganah's first large-scale offensive under Plan Dalet and aimed to open and secure the Tel Aviv–Jerusalem road and seize Palestinian villages along the route.

Approximately 1,500 Haganah and Palmach troops were mobilized. PalQuest lists the Har'el and Giv'ati brigades among the Zionist formations participating at the operation level.

PalQuest explicitly lists Bayt Naqquba among the villages affected by Operation Nachshon.

Occupation and Depopulation

Khalidi states that available information about Bayt Naqquba's capture is limited and that the village was occupied in **early April 1948**.

Its location indicates that its occupation occurred in the context of Operation Nachshon, probably around the same general period in which al-Qastal and Qalunya were captured.

Palestine Remembered's statistical header gives 1 April as the occupation date. Since PalQuest dates the opening of Operation Nachshon to 3 April, this article does not treat 1 April as a securely established village-specific date.

The most careful formulation is: **Haganah forces occupied Bayt Naqquba in**

early April 1948 in the context of Operation Nachshon; the principal source does not establish the exact day or a village-specific assault unit.

Stage	Date	Details
Beginning of Operation Nachshon	3 April 1948	Large-scale Haganah offensive begins along the Tel Aviv–Jerusalem corridor
Occupation of Bayt Naqquba	Early April 1948	Precise day remains uncertain in Khalidi's principal account
General military force	April 1948	Haganah and Palmach within Operation Nachshon
Operation-level brigades	3–15 April 1948	Har'el and Giv'ati; no village-specific assault brigade securely established
End of Operation Nachshon	15 April 1948	End of the principal offensive along the Jerusalem road

Israeli Settlement on the Old Village Site

Beit Nekofa: Established in 1949 on the remains and site of historic Bayt Naqquba.

The Israeli settlement should not be confused with the original Palestinian village despite the direct similarity in name and location.

Establishment of the Palestinian Village of 'Ayn Naqquba

In **1962**, a new Palestinian village was established south of the original Bayt Naqquba site.

The later village became known as **'Ayn Naqquba**.

Some refugees from historic Bayt Naqquba were permitted to settle there, in a case Khalidi describes as possibly unique among the Palestinian villages occupied and depopulated in 1948.

The present Palestinian community therefore represents social and family continuity with historic Bayt Naqquba, but 'Ayn Naqquba is not built on precisely

the same village center that existed before the Nakba.

Bayt Naqquba Today

According to Walid Khalidi's field description in *All That Remains*, a few Palestinian houses survived at the old village site and were being used either as dwellings or as livestock shelters.

The surviving structures were built of stone, and many had vaulted or domed roofs.

Stones taken from the ruins of Palestinian houses had been reused as entrance steps for newer houses.

Almond and olive trees and cactus continued to grow across parts of the site.

The old Palestinian cemetery lies approximately half a kilometer south of the historic village site and was being maintained by residents of the later Palestinian village.

This description derives from fieldwork conducted before the publication of *All That Remains* in 1992. A published photograph of stone walls at the village site is dated 1986. It should therefore not be treated as direct field verification of every surviving structure in 2026.

Palestine Remembered contains later community documentation of the area, including material on springs and historical sites uploaded in 2025, some of which identifies earlier photography dates. Upload dates therefore should not automatically be treated as dates of field observation, and this material does not constitute a comprehensive current archaeological or architectural survey.

Sources

- PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Bayt Naqquba
- PalQuest – Operation Nachshon
- Palestine Remembered – Bayt Naqquba, Jerusalem

- Institute for Palestine Studies – Walid Khalidi, All That Remains
- Government of Palestine – Census of Palestine 1922
- Government of Palestine – Census of Palestine 1931: Jerusalem Sub-District
- Government of Palestine – Village Statistics 1945: Jerusalem Sub-District
- Palestinian Villages Encyclopedia – Bayt Naqquba / Naquba / 'Ayn Naqquba