

Al-Khunayzir



Al-Khunayzir - Depopulated Palestinian Village in Baysan Subdistrict

Al-Khunayzir was a Palestinian village in the Baysan subdistrict of Galilee. It is also rendered in Arabic as al-Khunayzar and was known as 'Arab al-Khunayzir.

The village stood on flat terrain approximately 10 kilometers south of Baysan, at an average elevation of about 200 meters below sea level, on the western side of the lands of al-Zarra'a. A secondary road linked it with the Baysan-Jericho highway, while other local roads connected it with neighboring communities.

Al-Khunayzir began as a seasonal Bedouin campsite before its residents settled there permanently. Its official population reached 260 in 1944/45, and its registered land area totaled 3,107 dunums.

Walid Khalidi does not provide a specific occupation date, military operation, or attacking unit for Al-Khunayzir. Palestine Remembered gives 20 May 1948 and associates the depopulation with Operation Gideon and the Golani Brigade. Since PalQuest formally dates Operation Gideon to 10–15 May, the most careful formulation is that Al-Khunayzir was depopulated in the aftermath of the Golani campaign in the Baysan Valley, while the village-specific military circumstances remain undocumented in Khalidi's entry.

Key Facts about Al-Khunayzir

Field	Information
Name	Al-Khunayzir
Alternative Arabic rendering	Al-Khunayzar / الخنيزر
Alternative name	'Arab al-Khunayzir
Subdistrict	Baysan
Distance from Baysan	Approximately 10 km south
Average elevation	Approximately 200 m below sea level
Population, 1931	200 in 47 houses
Population, 1944/45	260 – all Arab Muslims
Registered land area	3,107 dunums
Occupation / depopulation date	Not available in Khalidi; Palestine Remembered gives 20 May 1948
Military operation	Not identified by Khalidi; Palestine Remembered associates it with Operation Gideon
Military unit	Not independently documented for the village; Palestine Remembered identifies the Golani Brigade
Cause of depopulation	Not detailed by Khalidi; Palestine Remembered attributes it to the influence of the fall or exodus of a neighboring locality
Extent of destruction	The built-up village disappeared; Khalidi records only the cemetery as a surviving landmark

Field	Information
Settlement on village land	Tirat Zvi – established in 1937 on lands of Al-Khunayzir and al-Zarra'a

Name of the Village

PalQuest uses the Arabic form al-Khunayzir, while Palestine Remembered commonly displays al-Khunayzar. The locality was also known as 'Arab al-Khunayzir.

Nineteenth-century survey material recorded nearby Tall al-Khanazir and 'Ayn al-Khanazir. The Arabic name is linguistically related to the word for swine, but the principal Palestinian sources used here do not provide a separate historical explanation establishing why the settlement itself received the name.

Location

Al-Khunayzir stood on level ground in the southern Baysan Valley, west of the village of al-Zarra'a.

A secondary road connected it with the Baysan-Jericho highway, while local roads linked it with neighboring communities.

Nearby localities included 'Arab al-'Arida, 'Arab al-Safa, al-Hamra, and al-Fatur, while the Jordan Valley and Jordan River lay farther east.

Al-Khunayzir before the Nakba

Al-Khunayzir originated as a seasonal Bedouin campsite and gradually developed into a permanent settlement.

Dwellings were widely dispersed. Some were constructed of adobe while some families continued to live in tents.

All of the villagers were Muslims.

Population

Year	Population	Nature of Figure
1922	83	Official census: 54 males and 29 females, all Muslims
1931	200	Official census; all Muslims
1944/45	260	Official Village Statistics; all Arab Muslims
1948	302	Later Palestine Remembered estimate, not an official census
1998	1,852 refugees	Later estimate of refugees and descendants reported by Palestine Remembered

Number of Houses

Year	Houses	Nature of Figure
1931	47	Official census figure
1948	70	Later Palestine Remembered estimate, not an official census count

Land Ownership in Al-Khunayzir

The total registered land area in 1944/45 was 3,107 dunums.

Ownership Category	Dunums
Palestinian	1,966
Transferred to Zionists	1,000
Communal/Public	141
Total	3,107

The figures balance exactly: $1,966 + 1,000 + 141 = 3,107$ dunums.

The original official categories were 1,966 Arab dunums, 1,000 Jewish dunums, and 141 Public dunums.

Land Use in 1944/45

Land Use	Arab	Jewish	Public	Total
Citrus and bananas	18	0	0	18
Plantations and irrigable land	1,658	701	0	2,359
Cereals	256	299	0	555
Non-cultivable land	34	0	141	175
Total	1,966	1,000	141	3,107

The land-use table balances exactly.

Palestine Remembered's simplified display places all 175 dunums of non-arable land under the Palestinian column. The official breakdown, however, consists of only 34 Arab dunums plus 141 Public dunums. The Public category has therefore been retained separately.

The reliable figure for citrus and bananas is 18 dunums, as recorded by PalQuest, Khalidi, and Palestine Remembered. It also reconciles the Arab land-use total exactly: $18 + 1,658 + 256 + 34 = 1,966$ dunums.

Economic Life

Agriculture became the foundation of the village economy after the community developed from a seasonal encampment into a permanent settlement.

Villagers cultivated fruit, vegetables, and cereals and made extensive use of nearby springs for irrigation.

In 1944/45, 1,658 Arab dunums were irrigated or used for orchards, representing most of the cultivable Arab-held land.

A further 256 Arab dunums were devoted to cereals and 18 dunums to citrus and bananas.

Water Resources

Residents drew water from springs north and southeast of the settlement for domestic use and irrigation.

Among the water sources that remained identifiable in the later site description were 'Uyun Umm al-Faraj and 'Ayn al-Khanazir.

The availability of spring water explains the unusually large proportion of village land classified as irrigated or orchard land.

Education and Public Institutions

Khalidi and PalQuest do not independently document a school in Al-Khunayzir and provide no founding year or enrollment figure.

The principal village sources likewise do not identify a specific mosque, marketplace, or other public institution. Such institutions have therefore not been inferred from neighboring villages.

Tall Abu al-Faraj and the Cemetery

Tall Abu al-Faraj stood north of the village site and was used by the villagers as a cemetery.

In Khalidi's field description, the cemetery was the only remaining physical landmark associated with the village.

'Uyun Umm al-Faraj and 'Ayn al-Khanazir lay to the north and west, while palm trees covered most of the former village site and surrounding lands.

Operation Gideon and the Military Context

The Haganah's Golani Brigade carried out Operation Gideon between 10 and 15 May 1948 as part of the conquest of Baysan and the Baysan Valley.

Baysan fell on 12 May, after which Palestinian communities throughout the valley experienced rapid collapse and displacement.

Khalidi's Al-Khunayzir entry, however, gives no independent village-specific occupation or depopulation account and records the relevant information as unavailable.

Occupation and Depopulation

Palestine Remembered gives 20 May 1948 as Al-Khunayzir's occupation or depopulation date, associates it with Operation Gideon and the Golani Brigade, and classifies the cause of exodus as the influence of the fall or departure of a neighboring locality.

The stated date comes five days after PalQuest's formal end date for Operation Gideon, 15 May.

Khalidi provides no independent occupation date, attacking unit, or village-specific military narrative.

The most careful conclusion is therefore that Al-Khunayzir was depopulated amid the collapse that followed the occupation of Baysan and the Golani campaign in the valley during May 1948. The specific 20 May date and the classification of the direct attacking force as Golani remain Palestine Remembered's attribution rather than details independently established by Khalidi.

Ethnic Cleansing

Palestine Remembered characterizes the final outcome at Al-Khunayzir as complete ethnic cleansing.

Khalidi does not provide a village-specific expulsion account. What is directly established is that Al-Khunayzir's Palestinian community disappeared from the site during the Nakba. The term “ethnic cleansing” is therefore retained as an attributed characterization used by Palestine Remembered rather than as an

independently assigned label.

Occupation Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
Beginning of Operation Gideon	10 May 1948	The Golani Brigade began its campaign for Baysan and the Baysan Valley.
Fall of Baysan	12 May 1948	The fall of the subdistrict center accelerated displacement throughout the valley.
Formal end of Operation Gideon	15 May 1948	This is the end date given by PalQuest.
Date given by Palestine Remembered for Al-Khunayzir	20 May 1948	The site associates the event with Operation Gideon and the Golani Brigade.
Khalidi's village-specific information	Not available	All That Remains provides no specific date, operation, or attacking unit for Al-Khunayzir.
Depopulation	May 1948, probably in the aftermath of the fall of Baysan	Palestine Remembered attributes the exodus to the influence of a neighboring locality's fall or departure.
Destruction	Precise date not documented	The village's built environment disappeared; Khalidi later recorded only the cemetery as a surviving landmark.

Israeli Settlement on Al-Khunayzir's Lands

Settlement	Established	Relationship to Al-Khunayzir
Tirat Zvi	1937	Established before the Nakba on lands belonging jointly to Al-Khunayzir and al-Zarra'a

Tirat Zvi was therefore a pre-1948 settlement rather than a post-Nakba locality established after the village's depopulation.

Al-Khunayzir Today

According to Walid Khalidi's field description, the only remaining landmark of Al-Khunayzir was the cemetery on Tall Abu al-Faraj north of the village site.

The springs of 'Uyun Umm al-Faraj and 'Ayn al-Khanazir remained to the north and west.

Palm trees covered most of the former village site and the surrounding lands.

PalQuest dates Hassan Hawari's field photograph of the site to May 1990. Khalidi's description therefore represents conditions documented before the publication of *All That Remains* in 1992 and should not be treated as a comprehensive direct field verification of conditions in 2026.

Palestine Remembered also contains later community documentation, including photographs dated 2007 of the former village site, springs, and surrounding lands. These images are useful later documentation but do not constitute a comprehensive independent present-day survey.

Sources

- [PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Al-Khunayzir](#)
- [PalQuest – Operation Gideon](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Al-Khunayzir, Baysan District](#)
- [Walid Khalidi – All That Remains: Al-Khunayzir](#)
- [Government of Palestine – Census of Palestine 1922](#)
- [WAFA – Encyclopedia of Depopulated Palestinian Villages: Al-Khunayzir](#)
- [Institute for Palestine Studies – All That Remains, Walid Khalidi](#)