Our Palestine — Depopulated village — Ramla — 12 July 1948

Al-Muzayri'a

Al-Muzayri'a – Depopulated Palestinian Village in Ramla Subdistrict

Al-Muzayri'a was a Palestinian village in the Ramla subdistrict of the Lydda district. It stood on a limestone hill at the western end of the Ramallah highlands overlooking the coastal plain, approximately 15 kilometers northeast of Ramla, at an average elevation of about 110 meters above sea level.

The village had 1,160 inhabitants in the official 1944/45 statistics and a registered land area of 10,822 dunums. Agriculture remained the main economic activity, especially cereals, citrus, and irrigated orchards, alongside several crafts practiced

by some villagers in earlier decades.

Walid Khalidi's account places the occupation of Al-Muzayri'a on 12 July 1948 during the first stage of Operation Dani and the assault on Ramla. The force that occupied the village was described as the formation advancing on Ramla from the north, but the village-specific source does not independently identify the brigade or battalion that entered Al-Muzayri'a.

Key Facts about Al-Muzayri'a

Field	Information
Name	Al-Muzayri'a
Subdistrict	Ramla
Status	Depopulated Palestinian village
Distance from Ramla	Approximately 15 km northeast
Average elevation	Approximately 110 m above sea level
Population, 1931	780 in 186 houses
Population, 1944/45	1,160
Registered land area	10,822 dunums
Occupation date	12 July 1948
Military operation	Operation Dani
Village-specific attacking unit	A force advancing on Ramla from the north; the village entry does not independently identify the brigade or battalion
Cause of depopulation	Palestine Remembered classifies it as direct military assault
Extent of destruction	Most village buildings were destroyed, while a small number of houses and other remains survived
Settlements on village land	Nehalim and Mazor, both established in 1949

Location of Al-Muzayri'a

Al-Muzayri'a stood on a limestone hill at the western edge of the Ramallah highlands overlooking the coastal plain.

A wadi ran along the village's southern boundary, separating it from Qula. Al-Muzayri'a stood east of the main road running from Ramla toward Jaffa and Tel Aviv through Majdal Yaba and approximately one kilometer east of the Ramla–Haifa railway.

Its lands adjoined those of Qula, Rantiya, Majdal Yaba, Dayr Ballut, and other communities at the transition between the coastal plain and the inland hills.

Al-Muzayri'a in the Ottoman Period

In 1596, Al-Muzayri'a was a village in the nahiya of Jabal Qubal in the liwa' of Nablus, with a recorded population of approximately 39.

Villagers paid taxes on wheat, barley, olives, goats, beehives, and other forms of production.

Khalidi records that the village appears to have been abandoned during the seventeenth century and reoccupied during the eighteenth century by the al-Rumayh family, originally from Dayr Ghassana.

Al-Muzayri'a in the Nineteenth Century

The journalist and traveler A. Mansell recorded passing Al-Muzayri'a during the 1860s.

By the late nineteenth century, the Survey of Western Palestine described it as an adobe village on the edge of the hills near Qula.

Village Layout and Buildings

Al-Muzayri'a developed a star-like layout as houses extended along the network of roads connecting the village to surrounding rural communities.

Most houses were constructed of adobe. The village center contained its mosque, school, and local services.

The official 1944/45 statistics classified approximately 25 dunums as built-up land.

Population of Al-Muzayri'a

Year	Population	Nature of Figure
1596	39	Historical Ottoman-era figure
1922	578	Official British Mandate census; all Muslims
1931	780	Official census; all Muslims
1944/45	1,160	Official Village Statistics; all Arabs
1948	1,346	Later estimate reported by Palestine Remembered, not an official census
1998	8,263 refugees	Later estimate of refugees and descendants reported by Palestine Remembered

The population was predominantly Muslim. The 1948 and 1998 figures are later estimates and should not be attributed to British Mandatory Village Statistics.

Number of Houses

Year	Houses	Nature of Figure
1931	186	Official census figure
1948	320	Later Palestine Remembered estimate, not an official census count

Land Ownership in Al-Muzayri'a

The registered land area of Al-Muzayri'a in 1944/45 totaled 10,822 dunums.

Ownership Category	Dunums
Palestinian	9,042
Transferred to Zionists	1,450
Communal/Public	330
Total	**10,822**

The figures balance correctly: 9,042 + 1,450 + 330 = 10,822 dunums.

The original official categories were 9,042 Arab dunums, 1,450 Jewish dunums, and 330 Public dunums.

Land Use in 1944/45

Land Use	Arab	Jewish	Public	Total
Cereals	5,895	1,057	0	6,952
Plantations and irrigable land	35	10	0	45
Citrus and bananas	953	383	0	1,336
Built-up land	25	0	0	25
Non-cultivable land	2,134	0	330	2,464
Total	**9,042**	**1,450**	**330**	**10,822**

The figures balance exactly: 6,952 + 45 + 1,336 + 25 + 2,464 = 10,822 dunums.

Some simplified Palestine Remembered displays treat all 2,464 dunums of non-cultivable land as Arab/Palestinian. The official breakdown shows that 2,134 dunums were Arab and 330 Public, and the Public category is therefore kept separate here.

Economic Life

Agriculture remained the principal economic activity until the Nakba.

Rain-fed cereals were particularly important. In 1944/45, cereals occupied 6,952 dunums within the village's statistical boundaries, including 5,895 Arab dunums and 1,057 Jewish dunums.

Citrus and bananas occupied 1,336 dunums, of which 953 were Arab and 383 Jewish. Another 45 dunums were irrigated or used for plantations.

Earlier in the twentieth century, some villagers made cloaks and horse saddles, although these crafts gradually declined and disappeared.

Education in Al-Muzayri'a

A boys' school was founded in 1919 and became a full elementary school in 1945.

The school served children from Al-Muzayri'a and nearby villages and had approximately 207 pupils in the mid-1940s.

A plot of 35 dunums was attached to the school.

A girls' school opened in 1945 with an initial enrollment of 78 pupils.

Mosques and the Shrine of al-Nabi Yahya

Al-Muzayri'a had a mosque in the center of the village.

A nearby Roman mausoleum had long before been converted into a mosque dedicated to al-Nabi Yahya, or John the Baptist, and became one of the area's principal religious and archaeological landmarks.

Palestine Remembered's automated page displays a church entry, but Khalidi's detailed account does not document a church. It describes the villagers as predominantly Muslim and specifically records the central mosque and the al-Nabi

Yahya mosque. The church entry has therefore not been treated as independently verified.

Archaeological Sites

Several archaeological ruins lay in the vicinity in addition to the Roman mausoleum converted into a mosque.

Khirbat Zikhrin, approximately one kilometer northeast of the village, was a Roman-Byzantine site that was also inhabited during the Mamluk and Ottoman periods.

Khalidi records that archaeological excavation there had been continuing since 1982 at the time of his documentation.

Operation Dani

Operation Dani began on 9 July 1948 and continued until 18 July. It was the largest Israeli offensive launched during the “Ten Days” between the two truces.

The operation had two stages. The first, from 9 to 12 July, targeted Lydda, Ramla, and surrounding villages. The second, from 13 to 18 July, extended eastward toward the Jerusalem corridor and the Ramallah–Latrun road.

The first stage involved the Har'el, Yiftach, and Eighth Armored brigades, together with infantry formations from Kiryati and Alexandroni. Other formations participated during the broader operation.

Yiftach approached Lydda and Ramla from the south, while other forces advanced from the north, occupying villages along their axes.

Occupation and Depopulation of Al-Muzayri'a

Walid Khalidi states that Al-Muzayri'a was almost certainly occupied during Operation Dani.

He cites Egyptian writer Muhammad 'Abd al-Mun'im as dating the occupation to 12 July 1948, when Israeli forces launched a three-pronged attack on Ramla.

According to this account, the formation attacking Ramla from the north swept through Al-Muzayri'a and neighboring Qula before reaching the city.

The Al-Muzayri'a village entry does not independently identify the brigade or battalion making up this formation. Since several brigades participated in Operation Dani, participation at the operational level should not automatically be converted into a village-specific attribution.

Palestine Remembered classifies the cause of depopulation as direct military assault and describes the village's Palestinian community as completely removed.

Khalidi does not provide a separate detailed account of a village-specific expulsion order or the precise route taken by the inhabitants. The occupation and depopulation are therefore firmly placed within the military assault, while a specific direct-expulsion mechanism remains attributed to the source that uses that classification.

Occupation Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
Beginning of Operation Dani	9 July 1948	The large offensive began against the Lydda-Ramla area and the Jerusalem corridor.
Capture of villages south of Al-Muzayri'a	10 July 1948	The History of the War of Independence places the occupation of Qula, Rantiya, and Wilhelma two days before Al-Muzayri'a.
Occupation of Al-Muzayri'a	12 July 1948	According to Muhammad 'Abd al-Mun'im as cited by Khalidi, the force advancing on Ramla from the north swept through Al-Muzayri'a and Qula.
Occupation of Ramla	12 July 1948	Ramla fell during the same first stage of Operation Dani.

Stage	Date	Details
Depopulation	In the course of military attack and occupation	Palestine Remembered classifies the cause as direct military assault; Khalidi does not provide a separate village-specific expulsion order.
End of Operation Dani	18 July 1948	The operation ended after extending eastward into the Jerusalem corridor.
Destruction	Precise date not documented	Most village houses were reduced to rubble, while a limited number of structures survived.

Israeli Settlements on Al-Muzayri'a's Lands

Settlement	Established	Relationship to Al-Muzayri'a
Nehalim	1949	Established on the northwestern part of the village lands
Mazor	1949	Established on the western side of the village lands

More recent community material has claimed that parts of the later built-up area of El'ad extend onto former Al-Muzayri'a lands. Khalidi and PalQuest do not list El'ad among the original settlements established on the village lands, so it has not been added to the table without independent cadastral verification.

Al-Muzayri'a Today

In Walid Khalidi's field description, most of the site had been planted with forest trees. Most village houses had been reduced to rubble, although a small number remained standing.

Stone terraces and cactus clusters were also still visible.

This description derives from fieldwork undertaken before the publication of *All That Remains* in 1992 and is therefore not a comprehensive direct verification of conditions in 2026.

Palestine Remembered contains later community documentation, including 2002 photographs of the destroyed village and the al-Nabi Yahya structure as well as later contributions.

Community submissions published in August 2026 also alleged damage and theft affecting graves in Al-Muzayri'a's cemetery. These are recent community reports rather than independently verified archaeological or field assessments and should therefore be treated cautiously pending independent confirmation.

Sources

- PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Al-Muzayri'a
- PalQuest – Operation Dani
- Palestine Remembered – Al-Muzayri'a, Ramla District
- Walid Khalidi – All That Remains: Al-Muzayri'a
- Institute for Palestine Studies – All That Remains, Walid Khalidi