

Rantiya



Rantiya - A Depopulated Palestinian Village in the Jaffa Subdistrict

Rantiya was a Palestinian village in the Jaffa Subdistrict, located approximately 16 km east of Jaffa on a level portion of the central coastal plain, at an average elevation of about 50 meters above sea level.

A secondary road linked the village to the nearby highway leading to Jaffa and Lydda, while the Lydda-Haifa railway passed approximately 1.5 km east of Rantiya. Its location between Jaffa and Lydda and its proximity to major transport routes

supported a productive agricultural economy.

Rantiya was first attacked on 28 April 1948, but Zionist forces apparently failed to maintain control of the village. The final occupation occurred before dawn on 10 July 1948 during Operation Dani, when a composite force from the Palmach's Eighth Armored Brigade and the Third Infantry Battalion of the Alexandroni Brigade overran the village.

Item	Information
Subdistrict	Jaffa
Distance from Jaffa	Approximately 16 km east
Average elevation	Approximately 50 m above sea level
Population, 1944/45	590 Arabs
Estimated population, 1948	684
Total land area	4,389 dunums
First attack	28 April 1948; it did not result in permanent control
Final occupation	10 July 1948
Military operation	Operation Dani
Village-specific attacking units	Palmach Eighth Armored Brigade and Third Infantry Battalion, Alexandroni Brigade
Israeli settlements established on village land	Mazor, Nofekh, and Rinnatya, all established in 1949

Location and Geography of Rantiya

Rantiya stood on level ground in Palestine's central coastal plain, an area characterized by fertile agricultural soils and abundant groundwater.

A main road passed close to the village, while a secondary road connected it with the highway between Jaffa and Lydda.

The Lydda–Haifa railway line ran approximately 1.5 km to the east, placing Rantiya

near one of the principal transport corridors of Mandate Palestine.

Neighboring Villages and Localities

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

- North: Fajja.
- Northeast: Majdal Yaba / Majdal al-Sadiq in the Ramla Subdistrict.
- East: al-Muzayri'a in the Ramla Subdistrict.
- Southeast: Qula in the Ramla Subdistrict.
- South: Wilhelma.
- Southwest and west: al-'Abbasiyya and the extension of its lands.

These directions describe approximate geographical relationships and should not be treated as substitutes for historical cadastral boundaries.

Name and Historical Background

During the Roman period the locality was known as **Rantia**, while Crusader sources later referred to it as **Rentie**.

Khalidi does not provide a definitive linguistic explanation for the modern name, but the survival of similar forms across historical periods suggests that “Rantiya” developed from the older place-name.

Rantiya should not be confused with Antipatris / Ras al-'Ayn; it was an independent village in the plain between Jaffa and Lydda, although both belonged to the same wider historical region.

Rantiya under Ottoman Rule

In 1596, Rantiya was recorded as a village in the nahiya of Ramla in the liwa' of Gaza, with an estimated population of approximately 132.

The inhabitants paid taxes on wheat, barley, fruit, and sesame, as well as goats,

beehives, and other forms of production.

Rantiya remained a small agricultural village during the nineteenth century. The Survey of Western Palestine described it in the late nineteenth century as a small village built largely of adobe brick, with a main road passing immediately nearby.

Built Form

During the British Mandate, Rantiya had a rectangular plan extending along a north-south axis.

Its houses were built of stone and adobe, while the built-up area remained comparatively compact. In 1944/45, only 13 dunums were classified as built-up land.

The village contained a mosque, an elementary school, and several small shops.

Population of Rantiya

The official 1922 Census of Palestine recorded 351 inhabitants in Rantiya, all Muslims.

By the 1931 census, the population had risen to 411, again all Muslims, living in 105 occupied houses.

The 1944/45 Village Statistics recorded 590 Arabs.

Palestine Remembered later estimated the population at 684 in 1948 and the number of refugees and their descendants at 4,203 in 1998. These are retrospective estimates rather than official British Mandate census counts.

Year	Population	Nature of Figure / Notes
1596	Approximately 132	Estimate derived from Ottoman tax records
1922	351	Official census; all Muslims
1931	411	Official census; all Muslims

Year	Population	Nature of Figure / Notes
1944/45	590	Official statistics; all Arabs
1948	684	Later estimate, not an official census
1998	4,203 refugees	Later estimate of refugees and their descendants

Number of Houses

Year	Houses	Nature of Figure
1931	105	Occupied houses recorded in the official census
1948	174	Later Palestine Remembered estimate, not an official Mandate census count

Education in Rantiya

Formal schooling in Rantiya began in 1931 when a teacher opened a private elementary school in the village.

In 1947, the school became an official public school and had approximately 45 pupils.

The villagers continued to contribute to its financing, reflecting the direct role of the community in supporting education.

Thus, 1947 should not be treated as the founding date of education in Rantiya; it was the year in which the private school established in 1931 acquired official status.

The Mosque and Public Services

Rantiya had one mosque serving its Muslim population, as well as several small shops.

The village did not possess all of the services required by its inhabitants, who relied principally on nearby al-'Abbasiyya in the Jaffa Subdistrict and al-Muzayri'a in

the Ramla Subdistrict for some services and for marketing agricultural produce.

Land Ownership in Rantiya

The total land area recorded for Rantiya in the 1944/45 Village Statistics was 4,389 dunums.

Palestine Remembered presents the simplified ownership categories as follows:

Ownership Category	Area in Dunums
Palestinian	4,155
Transferred to Zionists	142
Communal/Public	92
Total	4,389

The official Village Statistics use the original categories Arab, Jewish, and Public: 4,155 dunums were classified as Arab land, 142 as Jewish land, and 92 as public land.

Land Use in 1944/45

Use	Arab	Jewish	Public	Total
Citrus and bananas	505	0	0	505
Plantations and irrigable land	99	120	0	219
Cereals	3,518	22	0	3,540
Built-up land	13	0	0	13
Non-cultivable land	20	0	92	112
Total	4,155	142	92	4,389

Cultivable land totaled 4,264 dunums, approximately 97 percent of the village area: 4,122 Arab and 142 Jewish dunums.

Built-up and non-cultivable land totaled 125 dunums: 33 Arab and 92 public.

This detailed breakdown corrects simplified tables that assign all 112 dunums of non-cultivable land to Palestinians. The official breakdown is 20 Arab and 92 public dunums.

Palestine Remembered also records approximately 20 dunums of olive trees. This is a crop-specific subset of the agricultural land categories above and should not be added again to the total area.

Economic Life

Agriculture formed the principal basis of Rantiya's economy, alongside livestock raising, small-scale trade, crafts, and employment in Jaffa.

Cereals, vegetables, and fruit were important crops, with citrus playing a major commercial role.

In 1944/45, 505 Arab dunums were devoted to citrus and bananas, 3,518 to cereals, and 99 to irrigated land and orchards.

Villagers also cultivated olives, grapes, figs, pomegranates, and seasonal fruits and vegetables.

Water and Artesian Wells

Rantiya benefited from abundant groundwater, and the inhabitants dug dozens of artesian wells to irrigate fields and orchards.

Khalidi's English entry places these wells mainly east and south of the village. Some Arabic reproductions use "east and north," but the English PalQuest and Palestine Remembered versions support east and south.

These water resources were essential to the development of citrus groves and irrigated agriculture.

The First Attack - 28 April 1948

Rantiya experienced its first major documented attack on **28 April 1948**.

The assault occurred in the wake of Irgun attacks on Jaffa and amid Zionist attempts to clear Palestinian communities from the surrounding coastal region.

Khalidi, citing Benny Morris, implies that the attacking forces did not establish a lasting foothold in Rantiya, since the village remained to be assaulted and captured again more than two months later.

The source does not establish that the Irgun itself was the village-specific attacking force on 28 April. It states that the Rantiya attack occurred following the Irgun offensive against Jaffa. The first assault should therefore not be attributed conclusively to the Irgun.

Operation Dani

Operation Dani began on 9 July 1948 and continued until 18 July during the “Ten Days” between the two truces.

It was one of the largest Israeli offensives of that period. Its first stage aimed to encircle and capture Lydda and Ramla, while its later stage extended toward the Ramallah–Latrun road.

The first stage involved a large composite force that included Har'el, Yiftach, and the Eighth Armored Brigade, together with infantry units from Kiryati and Alexandroni.

PalQuest explicitly lists Rantiya among the villages affected by Operation Dani.

Final Occupation and Depopulation

Before dawn on **10 July 1948**, Israeli occupation forces attacked Rantiya during the first stage of Operation Dani.

According to the *New York Times* and the military account reproduced by Khalidi, the attacking force pushed deep into the northern approaches to Lydda and Ramla as part of the attempt to encircle the two cities.

Rantiya was overrun by a composite force of jeeps and armored vehicles from the **Palmach's Eighth Armored Brigade** and the **Third Infantry Battalion of the Alexandroni Brigade**.

The two units captured Rantiya along with a string of other Palestinian villages on the northern approaches to Lydda and Ramla.

It is therefore incomplete to attribute the capture simply to the Alexandroni Brigade: the village-specific source documents the direct participation of both the Eighth Armored Brigade and Alexandroni's Third Battalion.

Stage	Date	Details
First attack	28 April 1948	Attack following the Irgun offensive against Jaffa; it did not result in lasting Zionist control of Rantiya
Beginning of Operation Dani	9 July 1948	Major offensive designed initially to encircle Lydda and Ramla
Final attack on Rantiya	Before dawn, 10 July 1948	Composite force attacks from the northern axis of the operation
Attacking units	10 July 1948	Palmach Eighth Armored Brigade and Third Infantry Battalion of the Alexandroni Brigade
Final occupation and depopulation	10 July 1948	Village captured and its Palestinian population displaced during Operation Dani

Israeli Settlements on Rantiya's Lands

Three Israeli settlements were established on Rantiya's lands in 1949:

- **Rinnatya:** Established in 1949 on village land and associated in local documentation with the former village site or its immediate vicinity.
- **Nofekh:** Established in 1949 on Rantiya's land.
- **Mazor:** Established in 1949 on the village's lands.

Be'erot Yitzchaq, established in 1948 southwest of Rantiya, was not built on the

village's lands according to Khalidi.

Rantiya Today

According to Walid Khalidi's field description in *All That Remains*, only three deserted houses remained at the village site when his survey was carried out, standing amid weeds and tall wild grasses together with the rubble of other houses.

Two of the surviving houses were built of stone and the third of concrete. Their doors and windows were rectangular. Two had flat roofs, while the third may originally have had a gabled roof.

Cactus, castor-oil plants, eucalyptus, cypress, and fig trees also marked the former village site.

Buildings belonging to the Israeli settlements occupied part of the surrounding land, while other areas were under cultivation.

This description derives from fieldwork carried out before the publication of *All That Remains* in 1992 and should not be treated as direct verification of the condition of every surviving structure in 2026.

Palestine Remembered contains later community documentation, including photographs attributed to 2006 showing old houses, site visits in September 2012, and maps and materials uploaded in 2025.

These later materials are useful evidence that parts of the village landscape and some buildings continued to be identifiable after Khalidi's survey. They do not, however, constitute a comprehensive independent archaeological or architectural survey of Rantiya in 2026, and the date on which material was uploaded does not necessarily establish the date on which it was photographed.

Sources

- [PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Rantiya](#)

- [PalQuest – Operation Dani](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Rantiya, Jaffa](#)
- [Palestine Remembered – Rantiya entry from All That Remains](#)
- [Institute for Palestine Studies – Walid Khalidi, All That Remains](#)
- [Government of Palestine – Census of Palestine 1922](#)
- [Birzeit University Repository – Census of Palestine 1931](#)
- [Government of Palestine – Village Statistics 1945: Jaffa Sub-District, Population and Land Ownership](#)
- [Palestinian Villages Encyclopedia – Rantiya: local boundaries, families, education, and later documentation](#)
- [Palestinian Encyclopedia – Rantiya](#)