

= Lajjun =

Lajjun ( Arabic : لاجون , al @-@ Lajjûn ) was a Palestinian Arab village located 16 kilometers ( 9 @.@ 9 mi ) in Mandatory Palestine , northwest of Jenin and 1 kilometre ( 0 @.@ 62 mi ) south of the remains of the biblical city of Megiddo . Named after an early Roman legion camp in Syria Palaestina province called " Legio " , located at the village site , Lajjun 's history of habitation spanned some 2 @,@ 000 years . Under Abbasid rule it was the capital of a subdistrict , during Mamluk rule , it served as an important station in the postal route and during Ottoman rule , it was the capital of a district that bore its name . After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire towards the end of World War I , Lajjun and all of Palestine was placed under the administration of the British Mandate . The village was depopulated during the 1948 Arab @-@ Israeli War , when it was captured by Israel . Most of its residents subsequently fled and settled in the nearby city of Umm al @-@ Fahm .

= = Etymology = =

The name Lajjun derives from the Roman name Legio , referring to the Roman legion stationed there . In the 3rd century , the town was renamed Maximianopolis ( " City of Maximian " ) by Diocletian in honor of Maximian , his co @-@ emperor , but the inhabitants continued to use the old name . Under the Caliphate , the name was Arabicized into al @-@ Lajjûn or el @-@ Lejjûn , which was used until the Crusaders conquered Palestine in 1099 . The Crusaders restored the Roman name " Legio " , and introduced new names such as Ligum and le Lyon , but after the town was reconquered by the Muslims in 1187 , " al @-@ Lajjun " once again became its name .

= = History = =

= = = Antiquity = = =

Lajjun is about 1 kilometer ( 0 @.@ 62 mi ) south of Tel Megiddo , also called Tell al @-@ Mutasallim , which is identified with ancient Megiddo . During the rule of the Canaanites and then the Israelites , Megiddo , located on the military road leading from Asia to Egypt and in a commanding situation , was heavily fortified by both peoples . After the Bar Kochba Revolt ? a Jewish uprising against the Roman ? had been suppressed in 135 CE , the Roman emperor Hadrian ordered a second Roman legion , Legio VI Ferrata , ( " Ironclad " ) , to be stationed in the north of the country to guard the Wadi Ara region , a crucial line of communication between the coastal plain of Palestine and the Jezreel Valley . The place where it established its camp was known as Legio . Then in the 3rd century CE , when the army was removed , Legio became a city and its name was augmented with the adjectival Maximianopolis .

= = = Early Muslim period = = =

Some Muslim historians believe the site of the Battle of Ajnadayn between the Muslim Arabs and the Byzantines in 634 CE was at Lajjun . Following the Muslim victory , Lajjun , along with most of Palestine , and southern Syria were incorporated into the Caliphate . According to medieval geographers Estakhri and Ibn Hawqal , Lajjun was the northernmost town of Jund Filastin ( military district of Palestine ) .

The 10th @-@ century Persian geographer Ibn al @-@ Faqih wrote of a local legend related by the people of Lajjun regarding the source of the abundant spring used as the town 's primary water source over the ages :

there is just outside al @-@ Lajjun a large stone of round form , over which is built a dome , which they call the Mosque of Abraham . A copious stream of water flows from under the stone and it is reported that Abraham struck the stone with his staff , and there immediately flowed from it water

enough to suffice for the supply of the people of the town , and also to water their lands . The spring continues to flow down to the present day .

In 940 , Ibn Ra 'iq , during his conflict over control of Syria with the Ikhshidids of Egypt , fought against them in an indecisive battle at Lajjun . During the battle , Abu Nasr al @-@ Husayn ? the Ikhshidid general and brother of the Ikhshidid ruler , Muhammad ibn Tughj ? was killed . Ibn Ra 'iq was remorseful at the sight of Husayn 's dead body and offered his seventeen @-@ year @-@ old son , Abu 'l @-@ Fath Muzahim , to Ibn Tughj " to do with him whatever they saw fit " . Ibn Tughj was honored by Ibn Ra 'iq 's gesture ; instead of executing Muzahim , he gave the latter several gifts and robes , then married him to his daughter Fatima .

In 945 , the Hamdanids of Aleppo and the Ikhshidids fought a battle in Lajjun . It resulted in an Ikhshidid victory putting a halt to Hamdanid expansion southward under the leadership of Sayf al @-@ Dawla . The Jerusalemite geographer , al @-@ Muqaddasi , wrote in 985 that Lajjun was " a city on the frontier of Palestine , and in the mountain country ... it is well situated and is a pleasant place " . Moreover , it was the center of a nahiya ( subdistrict ) of Jund al @-@ Urdunn , which also included the towns of Nazareth and Jenin .

= = = Crusader , Ayyubid and Mamluk periods = = =

When the Crusaders invaded and conquered the Levant from the Fatimids in 1099 , al @-@ Lajjun 's Roman name , " Legio " , was restored and the town formed a part of the lordship of Caesarea . During this time , Christian settlement in Legio grew significantly . John of Ibelin records that the community " owed the service of 100 sergeants " . Bernard , the archbishop of Nazareth granted some of the tithes of Legio to the hospital of the monastery of St. Mary in 1115 , then in 1121 , he extended the grant to include all of Legio , including its church as well as the nearby village of Ti 'inik . By 1147 , the de Lyon family controlled Legio , but by 1168 , the town was held by Payen , the lord of Haifa . Legio had markets , a town oven and held other economic activities during this era . In 1182 , the Ayyubids raided Legio , and in 1187 , it was captured by them under the leadership of Saladin 's nephew Husam ad @-@ Din ' Amr and consequently its Arabic name was restored .

In 1226 , Arab geographer Yaqut al @-@ Hamawi writes of the Mosque of Abraham in Lajjun , the town 's " copious stream " , and that it was a " part of the Jordan Province " . A number of Muslim kings and prominent persons passed through the village , including Ayyubid sultan al @-@ Kamil , who gave his daughter ' Ashura ' in marriage to his nephew while visiting the town in 1231 . The Ayyubids ceded Lajjun to the Crusaders in 1241 , but it fell to the Mamluks under Baibars in 1263 . A year later , a party of Templars and Hospitallers raided Lajjun and took 300 men and women captives to Acre . In the treaty between Sultan Qalawun and the Crusaders on 4 June 1283 , Lajjun was listed as the Mamluk territory .

By 1300 , the the Levant was entirely in Mamluk hands and divided into several provinces . Lajjun became the center of a nahiya ( subdistrict ) in the province of Safad , encompassing the villages of al @-@ Ashir , Kawkab al @-@ Hawa , and Jenin . The Mamluks fortified it in the 15th century and the town became a major staging post on the postal route ( braid ) between Egypt and Damascus .

= = = Ottoman era = = =

= = = = Early rule and the Tarabay family = = = =

The Ottoman Empire conquered most of Palestine from the Mamluks after the Battle of Marj Dabiq in 1517 . As the army of Sultan Selim I moved south towards Egypt , Tarabay ibn Qaraja , chieftain of the Bani Hareth , a Bedouin tribe from the Hejaz , supported them by contributing guides and scouts . When the Mamluks were completely uprooted and Selim returned to Istanbul , the Tarabays were granted the territory of Lajjun . The town eventually became the capital of the Sanjak ( " District " ) of Lajjun , which was a part of the province of Damascus , and encompassed the Jezreel Valley , northern Samaria , and a part of the north @-@ central coastline of Palestine as its territory . It was

composed of four nahiyas ( " sub @-@ districts " ) ( Jinin , Sahel Atlit , Sa 'ra , and Shafa ) , and encompassed a total of 55 villages , including Haifa , Jenin , and Baysan .

After a short period in which the Tarabays were in a state of rebellion , tensions suddenly died down and the Ottomans appointed Ali ibn Tarabay as the governor of Lajjun in 1559 . His son Assaf Tarabay ruled Lajjun from 1571 to 1583 . During his reign , he extended Tarabay power and influence to Sanjak Nablus . In 1579 , Assaf , referred to as the " Sanjaqbey of al @-@ Lajjun , " is mentioned as the builder of a mosque in the nearby village of al @-@ Tira . Assaf was deposed and banished in 1583 to the island of Rhodes . Six years later , in 1589 , he was pardoned and resettled in the town . At the time , an impostor also named Assaf , had attempted to seize control of Sanjak Lajjun . Known later as Assaf al @-@ Kadhab ( " Assaf the Liar " ) , he was arrested and executed in Damascus where he traveled in attempt to confirm his appointment as governor of the district . In 1596 , Lajjun was a part of the nahiya of Sha 'ra and paid taxes on a number of crops , including wheat , barley , as well as goats , beehives and water buffaloes .

Assaf Tarabay was not reinstated as governor , but Lajjun remained in Tarabay hands , under the rule of Governor Tarabay ibn Ali who was succeeded upon his death by his son Ahmad in 1601 , who also ruled until his death in 1657 . Ahmad , known for his courage and hospitality , helped the Ottomans defeat the rebel Janbulad and gave shelter to Yusuf Sayfa ? Janbulad 's principal rival . Ahmad , in coordination with the governors of Gaza ( the Ridwan family ) and Jerusalem ( the Farrukh family ) , also fought against Fakhr ad @-@ Din II in a prolonged series of battles , which ended with the victory of the Tarabay @-@ Ridwan @-@ Farrukh alliance after their forces routed Fakhr ad @-@ Din 's army at the al @-@ Auja river in central Palestine in 1623 .

The Ottoman authorities of Damascus expanded Ahmad 's fief as a token of gratitude . Ahmad 's son Zayn Tarabay ruled Lajjun for a brief period until his death in 1660 . He was succeeded by Ahmad 's brother Muhammad Tarabay , who ? according to his French secretary ? had good intentions for governing Lajjun , but was addicted to opium and as a result had been a weak leader . After his death in 1671 , other members of the Tarabay family ruled Lajjun until 1677 when the Ottomans replaced them with a government officer . The main reason behind the Ottoman abandonment of the Tarabays was that their larger tribe , the Bani Hareth , migrated east of Lajjun to the eastern banks of the Jordan River . Later during this century , Sheikh Ziben , ancestor to the Arrabah @-@ based Abd al @-@ Hadi clan , became the leader of Sanjak Lajjun . When Henry Maundrell visited in 1697 , he described the place as " an old village near which was a good khan .

= = = = Later Ottoman rule = = = =

By the 18th @-@ century , Lajjun was replaced by Jenin as the administrative capital of the sanjak which now included the Sanjak of Ajlun . By the 19th @-@ century it was renamed Sanjak Jenin , although Ajlun was separated from it . Zahir al @-@ Umar , who became the effective ruler of the Galilee for a short period during the second half of the 18th @-@ century , was reported to have used cannons against Lajjun in the course of his campaign between 1771 @-@ 1773 to capture Nablus . It is possible that this attack led to the village 's decline in the years that followed . By that time , Lajjun 's influence was diminished by the increasing strength of Acre 's political power and Nablus 's economic muscle .

Edward Robinson visited in 1838 , and noted that the khan , which Maundrell commented on , was for the accommodation of the caravans passing on the great road between Egypt and Damascus which Lajjun comes over the hills from the western plain along the coast and enters that of Esdraelon . When the British consul James Finn visited the area in the mid @-@ 19th century , he did not see a village . The authors of the Survey of Western Palestine also noticed a khan , however , south of the ruins of Lajjun in the early 1880s .

In the late 19th @-@ century , Arabs from Umm al @-@ Fahm migrated to al @-@ Lajjun to make use of its farmland . Gradually , they settled in the village , building their houses around the springs , especially next to the khan . When the massive mound at nearby Tall al @-@ Mutasallim ( ancient Megiddo ) was excavated by German archaeologists in 1903 , some of the inhabitants of Lajjun reused stones from the ancient structure that had been unearthed to build new housing .

= = = British Mandate period = = =

More people moved to Lajjun during the British mandate period , particularly in the late thirties , due to the British crackdown on participants in the 1936 ? 1939 Arab revolt in Palestine . The tomb of Yusuf Hamdan , a local leader of the revolt , is located in the village . Lajjun 's economy grew rapidly as a result of the influx of the additional population . As the village expanded , it was divided into three quarters , one to the east , one to the west , and another known as Khirbat al @-@ Khan . Each quarter was inhabited by one or more hamulas ( " clans " ) ; the al @-@ Mahajina al @-@ Tahta and al @-@ Ghubariyya clans , the al @-@ Jabbarin and al @-@ Mahamid clans , and the al @-@ Mahajina al @-@ Fawqa clan .

Lajjun had a school that was founded in 1937 and that had an enrollment of 83 in 1944 . It was located in the quarter belonging to the al @-@ Mahajina al @-@ Fawqa clan , that is , in Khirbat al @-@ Khan . In 1943 one of the large landowners in the village financed the construction of a mosque , built of white stone , in the al @-@ Ghubariyya ( eastern ) quarter . Another mosque was also established in the al @-@ Mahamid quarter during the same period , and was financed by the residents themselves .

There was a small market place in the village , as well as six grain mills ( powered by the numerous springs and wadis in the vicinity ) , and a health center . The various quarters of Lajjun had many shops . A bus company was established in Lajjun by a villager from Umm al @-@ Fahm ; the bus line served Umm al @-@ Fahm , Haifa , and a number of villages , such as Zir 'in . In 1937 , the line had seven buses . Subsequently , the company was licensed to serve Jenin also , and acquired the name of " al @-@ Lajjun Bus Company " .

= = = 1948 War = = =

Lajjun was allotted to the Arab state in the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan . The village was defended by the Arab Liberation Army ( ALA ) . It was first assaulted by the Haganah on April 13 , during the battle around kibbutz Mishmar HaEmek . ALA commander Fawzi al @-@ Qawuqji claimed Jewish forces ( " Haganah " ) had attempted to reach the crossroads at Lajjun in an outflanking operation , but the attack failed . The New York Times reported that twelve Arabs were killed and fifteen wounded during that Haganah offensive . Palmach units of the Haganah raided and blew up most of Lajjun on the night of April 15 ? 16 .

On April 17 , it was occupied by the Haganah . According to the newspaper , Lajjun was the " most important place taken by the Jews , whose offensive has carried them through ten villages south and east of Mishmar Ha 'emek . " The report added that women and children had been removed from the village and that 27 buildings in the village were blown up by the Haganah . However , al @-@ Qawuqji states that attacks resumed on May 6 , when ALA positions in the area of Lajjun were attacked by Haganah forces . The ALA 's Yarmouk Battalion and other ALA units drove back their forces , but two days later , the ALA commander reported that the Haganah was " trying to cut off the Lajjun area from Tulkarm in preparation of seizing Lajjun and Jenin ... "

On May 30 , 1948 , in the first stage of the 1948 Arab @-@ Israeli War , Lajjun was captured by Israel 's Golani Brigade in Operation Gideon . The capture was particularly important for the Israelis because of its strategic location at the entrance of the Wadi Ara , which thus , brought their forces closer to Jenin . During the second truce between Israel and the Arab coalition , in early September , a United Nations official fixed the permanent truce line in the area of Lajjun , according to press reports . A 500 @-@ yard strip was established on both sides of the line in which Arabs and Jews were allowed to harvest their crops . Lajjun was used as transit place by the Israel Defense Forces to transfer 1 @-@ 400 Arab women , children and elderly from Ijzim , who then were sent on foot to Jenin .

Walid Khalidi describes the remains of Lajjun :

Only the white stone mosque , one village mill , the village health center , and a few partially destroyed houses remain on the site . The mosque has been converted into a carpentry workshop

and one of the houses has been made into a chicken coop . The health center and grain mill are deserted , and the school is gone . The cemetery remains , but it is in a neglected state ; the tomb of Yusuf al @-@ Hamdan , a prominent nationalist who fell in the 1936 revolt , is clearly visible . The surrounding lands are planted with almond trees , wheat , and barley ; they also contain animal sheds , a fodder plant , and a pump installed on the spring of ' Ayn al @-@ Hajja . The site is tightly fenced in and entry is blocked .

= = = Post @-@ 1948 = = =

Kibbutz Megiddo was built on some of Lajjun 's village lands . A few of the buildings from Lajjun still stand within the kibbutz grounds , including the mosque known as the " White " which was built in 1943 . Today the building is a carpentry shop . Andrew Petersen , inspecting the place in 1993 , noted that the principal extant buildings at the site are the khan and a bridge . The bridge , which crosses a major tributary of the Kishon River , is approximately 4 meters ( 13 ft ) wide and 16 meters ( 52 ft ) to 20 meters ( 66 ft ) long . It is carried on three arches , the north side has been robbed of its outer face , while the south side is heavily overgrown with vegetation . According to Petersen , the bridge was already in ruins when drawn by William Charles Wilson in the 1870s . The khan is located on a low hill 150 meters ( 490 ft ) to the southwest of the bridge . It is a square enclosure measuring approximately 30 meters ( 98 ft ) per side with a central courtyard . The ruins are covered with vegetation , and only the remains of one room is visible .

= = Geography = =

Lajjun is situated on an elevated hill with an altitude of 150 meters above sea level , located on the southwestern edge of the Jezreel Valley ( Marj ibn Amer ) . The village is located on both the banks of Wadi al @-@ Lajjun , with Jenin and the entire valley visible from it . It is bordered by Tall al @-@ Mutsallem to the northeast , and by Tall al @-@ Asmar to the northwest . Lajjun , which was linked by secondary roads to the Jenin @-@ Haifa road , and the road that led southwest to the town of Umm al @-@ Fahm , laid close to the junctions of the two highways . The main spring that supplied the village with water was Ayn al @-@ Hajja .

Lajjun was located 16 kilometers ( 9 @.@ 9 mi ) northwest of Jenin and according to al @-@ Hamawi , roughly 32 kilometers ( 20 mi ) southwest of Tabariyyah and 64 kilometers ( 40 mi ) north of Ramla . Nearby localities included , the destroyed village of Ayn al @-@ Mansi to the northwest , and the surviving villages of Zalafa to the south , Baiada and Musheirifa to the southwest , and Zububa ( part of the Palestinian territories ) to the southeast . The largest town near al @-@ Lajjun was Umm al @-@ Fahm , to the south .

Lajjun , Umm al @-@ Fahm and seven hamlets had a total land area of 77 @.@ 24 square kilometres ( 29 @.@ 82 sq mi ) , of which 68 @.@ 3 square kilometres ( 26 @.@ 4 sq mi ) was Arab @-@ owned , and the remainder being public property . There was a total of 50 km<sup>2</sup> ( 12 @, @ 000 acres ) of land that was cultivated ; 4 @.@ 3 km<sup>2</sup> ( 1 @, @ 100 acres ) were used for plantations and irrigated , and 44 @.@ 6 km<sup>2</sup> ( 11 @, @ 000 acres ) were planted with cereals ( wheat and barley ) . The built @-@ up area of the villages was 0 @.@ 128 km<sup>2</sup> ( 32 acres ) , most of it being in Umm al @-@ Fahm and Lajjun .

= = Demographics = =

During early Ottoman rule , in 1596 , Lajjun had a population of 226 people . In the British Mandate census in 1922 , there were 417 inhabitants . In the 1931 census of Palestine , the population had more than doubled to 857 , of which 829 were Muslims , 26 were Christians , as well as two Jews . In that year , there were 162 houses in the village . At the end of 1940 , Lajjun had 1 @, @ 103 inhabitants .

The prominent families of al @-@ Lajjun were the Jabbarin , Ghubayriyya , Mahamid and the Mahajina . Around 80 % of its inhabitants fled to Umm al @-@ Fahm , where they currently live as

Arab citizens of Israel and internally displaced Palestinians .

= = Culture = =

Local tradition centered on Ayn al @-@ Hajja , the spring of Lajjun , date back to the 10th century CE when the village was under Islamic rule . According to geographers of that century , as well as the 12th century , the legend was that under the Mosque of Abraham , a " copious stream flowed " which formed immediately after the prophet Abraham struck the stone with his staff . Abraham had entered the town with his flock of sheep on his way towards Egypt , and the people of the village informed him that the village possessed only small quantities of water , thus Abraham should pass on the village to another . According to the legend , Abraham was commanded to strike the rock , resulting in water " bursting out copiously " . From then , the village orchards and crops were well @-@ irrigated and the people satisfied with a surplus of drinking water from the spring .

In Lajjun there are tombs for two Mamluk @-@ era Muslim relics who were from the village . The holy men were Ali Shafi 'i who died in 1310 and Ali ibn Jalal who died in 1400 .