Judaism before Islam, thus It's a Jewish Land!



It’s proclaimed that it's a sufficient premise to say that Judaism came before Islam, thus, it's a Jewish land.

For us to proceed with this claim, both parties within this conflict, have to have a religious and only a religious cause behind their opposing view. Now, here, this isn’t the case. While it may seem like it is a religious conflict, It's not, at least on the Palestinians' side; as there are Christian Palestinians, whom used to live and prosper alongside with Jews and Muslims.

But for the sake of argument, let's assume that on that premise, it might be okay to say that Israel has the right to land.

First off, not all of Israel was Jewish land first. In fact, if we correctly don't consider periods of Judean military expansionism in the Hasmonean and Herodian periods, or the period when Judea was an enlarged Roman province with that name applied to the entire area, Judea, deriving from the Kingdom of Judah, was a portion of present-day Israel and where the ethnocultural roots emerged (not necessarily where the majority of their genetic roots was 2000–2500 years ago). Samaria, descending from the actual Kingdom of Israel, was inhabited, obviously, by the Samaritans of biblical fame, clearly depicted as at best a bunch of misguided heretics. The majority of the coast of Israel was not Judean for most of the time of Judah and Judea. There were Philistines, Phoenicians (“Kenaan '' in their own language), etc. There were also Bedouin Arabians in the Negev, the Edomites, the Moabites, and so on and so forth. It was a pretty diverse area, though all those populations basically shared the same majority ancestry and had a lot of cultural similarities.

Modern Jews are not the ancient Judeans, far less the ancient Israelite tribes. Likewise, modern Bulgarians are not the ancient Thracians, nor are the modern Turks the ancient Hittites. Genetic studies have conclusively debunked the old notion that Jews never accepted converts and remained endogamous for millennia wherever they went. In fact, some Jewish communities barely have any clear Iron Age Levantine admixture, such as the Ethiopian Beta Israel, descending mostly from ancient converts. The current majority of Jews (Ashkenazim plus Sephardim) tend to have 40–55% admixture from the Iron Age Southern Levant plus 45–60% admixture from other sources, most of which hail from Southern Europe and Central Europe. I must say, though, I have personally seen DNA ancestry tests of Ashkenazim Jews who had just 30% Levantine admixture. Probably the offspring of mixed couples, but raised as Jews. Time passed for all populations of the world. Focusing too much on the matter of “indigenousness” - which is just a variation, in this case, of the argument of “racial/ethnic purity” - can be detrimental even to Jews and Israeli Jews in particular.

The modern Jews may derive partly from them and have strong religious and cultural links to them, but are not the same people coming back to reclaim their

own land. Genetics, customs, tastes, political values, social practices, artistic achievements, even religious practice (Rabbinical Judaism postdates the Jewish-Roman wars), it's all quite different. History didn't stop when they were expelled and remained immobile until the early 20th century.

The modern state of Israel defines as a Jew, in order to give him or her the right to Aliyah, that is, to migrate to Israel and settle in it as a full citizen, anyone who descends from Jews OR who converted to Judaism. Therefore, it clearly is NOT a simple matter of a native people claiming its historical land back from the people who had been living in it for centuries (or millennia). If a person from Ireland is a daughter of a couple that converted to Judaism, does that person have a better entitlement to have citizenship, a land and a state than a Muslim woman whose great-great-grandparents were all living in, say, Haifa a long time ago? Come on! Then it's a matter of religious belief, nothing to do with the already debatable notion of nativism as a criterion to decide that Palestinians have no right to complain about giving Israel as much land as it wants.

You can't decolonize a land by expelling the people that were living in it millennia later, instead of expelling the colonisers, who were the Romans (mind you, Palestinians are not Romans nor in any quantifiable way descended from them). Judeans/Jews were NOT displaced by the Palestinians nor even by the Arabs as a whole. By the time the Arabian armies arrived, Jews had become a small minority in what is now Israel since centuries before (the majority was Christian) — and many Jews initially welcomed them, as they thought they'd be better than the Eastern Romans (Byzantines), which they were for several centuries. At best, you could claim Palestinians indirectly benefited from Roman colonialism, but even that is not certain. Unfortunately, modern Jews can't correct nor avenge a historical injustice by colonial conquerors that happened 1850–2000 years ago. The Romans are gone.

In fact, the emergence and growth of the Jewish diaspora predates the mass expulsion by the Romans, which happened mainly during and in the aftermath of the extremely violent Bar Kokhba Revolt. By around 50–100 A.D., there were

already large Jewish communities living all over the coast of North Africa, much of Italy, Mesopotamia, Iran, Cyprus, the rest of the Levant, and the Aegean zone (Greece and Anatolia). Most of them were immigrants (chiefly merchants) and slaves. In the so-called Kitos War, Jewish minorities living in Cyrenaica (modern Eastern Libya), Egypt and Cyprus rebelled and murdered hundreds of thousands of local people, targeting mainly Romans and Greeks. So, clearly, not all the Jewish diaspora can be owed to the depopulation that followed the Jewish-Roman wars. Many people had already left before, either forced, or willingly.

It's at best debatable that the ancestors of Palestinians arrived many centuries later, though I get that the point of those who are sometimes to stress that Palestinians and even the overwhelming majority of their long gone forebears have nothing to do with the expulsion of Judeans (Jews).

It's somewhat inconclusive whether the Palestinians did really arrive much later because Samaritans and Palestinian Christians are by far the closest modern proxies to the ancient DNA samples from what is now Israel, and it's well known that many Jews and Samaritans were slowly Christianized until the Arabs conquered the region. Even Muslim Palestinians usually score more than 70% Canaanite-like admixture (Israelites and Judeans were basically just like Canaanites, in fact a branch of them despite what the Old Testament may induce us to believe).

If the ancestors of Palestinians did come from elsewhere centuries after the Judean dispersal, they certainly came from regions very close to Judea and populated by people very much like the Judeans, so surely from the same demographic/ethnogeographic stock (obviously that can't account for such a cultural construct as religious belief).

Probably old accounts, as always in ancient sources, exaggerated quite a lot, and in fact many Judeans and Samaritans remained in scattered villages, farms and pastures, and centuries later they became mostly Christians and finally mostly Muslims. Most Palestinians thus must have at least some ancestry derived straight from those that didn't leave Palestine/Israel and were consequently under the

influence of centuries of cultural changes brought by the Romans, Byzantines, Arabs and Turks. People change a lot over time even if they don't mix much, let alone get replaced by other people.

The very close genetic similarity between Samaritans (descendants of the Israelites) and Palestinian Christians is telling. Samaritans, though very diminished in numbers, remained throughout the millennia and practically plot right together with the ancient DNA samples from the southern Levant, keeping their very distinctive faith. If Palestinian Christians are very similar to them, then they probably derive from local peoples — probably including Samaritans themselves and Jews — that didn't go away.

As for the more mixed Muslims, they just seem to be like their Christian Arab brethren, but with a little Subsaharan African, a tiny bit of Arabian and some broadly Iranian/Mesopotamian input. Certainly not what one would expect from a recent population of foreigners with little or no deep connection to Palestine/Israel.

Palestinians, like various Jewish diaspora groups, have mixed over the time with other populations, some very similar to the inhabitants of Palestine/Israel (e.g. those in what are now Jordan, Lebanon and parts of Syria), some others much more distant genetically and geographically. But it would still be ridiculous to present those people as “occupiers”, even worse as “colonizers' '. This would be even more ridiculous than a Native American tribe expelled from California centuries ago campaigning against the Hispanic and Southeast Asian immigrants that arrive now in the USA with the battle cry that “we need to decolonize our lands from these occupiers who are colonising our territory!” They aren't colonising nor occupying anything. When they arrived, the conquest of territory and its settlement and profound cultural transformation by other people was already complete. They didn't even witness that process of dispossessing and expelling the natives.

I said this situation would be less ridiculous than claiming that Israel is “decolonizing the land from the Arab occupiers” because, while the bulk of the losses experienced by the Native Americans from California happened in the last

200 years, the bulk of the losses experienced by Jews in Palestine/Israel happened between roughly 60 and 140 d.C., that is, “just” over 1800 years ago.

In conclusion, the past must be allowed to remain in the past. Trying to forcibly and inflexibly change history is always bound to create catastrophic waves as a consequence of that irredentism. So, if you really wish to know who has the right to the land, simply ask yourself one question: Who is building settlements, and who isn't? Who came over in ships, and whose port was it that the ships arrived at?

This article was written by Ygor Coelho - a Brazilian man who's an avid reader on history of peoples and population genetics.