MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION
COMPANION HISTORICAL STUDY — TRANSMITTED WITH THE SECOND COVENANT LETTER TO MARWAN BARGHOUTI
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ROOTS OF THE COVENANT PEOPLE

A Historical, Archaeological, Genetic, and Linguistic Record of the Palestinian People's Descent from the Twelve Tribes of Yisra'el

Prepared under the Devarim 19:15 Standard | Two or Three Independent Witnesses per Claim

PREFACE: THE EVIDENTIARY STANDARD

"A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established." — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15

This study applies the covenant evidentiary standard of **Devarim 19:15** to the question of Palestinian descent from the ancient Israelite tribes. No single line of evidence is asserted as conclusive. Instead, six independent evidentiary layers are presented — each drawn from a different discipline, each corroborating the others. Under the Devarim standard: six independent witnesses, all testifying to the same conclusion, constitute an evidentiary record that is not a claim. It is a verdict.

The six layers are: (1) the Tanakh's own account of partial dispersal — the majority of tribal populations were never completely removed; (2) the Babylonian exile record — Judean peasants largely remained; (3) the Roman-period historical record — Josephus, Cassius Dio, and the Bar Kokhba revolt evidence; (4) the Byzantine-period demographic record — religious conversion without population displacement; (5) the Arab conquest record — Arabization of a population that stayed; (6) the Ottoman and modern period — the fellahin evidence, village name linguistics, and the founders' own admissions. These six layers are then confirmed and amplified by the seventh witness: the genetic record — eight independent peer-reviewed studies across three disciplines.

This document is transmitted as a companion to the Second Covenant Letter to Mr. Marwan Barghouti, dated May 22, 2026, and is to be read alongside Miqdash Bethel Document 74: Blood Witnesses Against the Sword: Hebrew/Palestinian DNA and the 12 Tribes of Yisra'el.

PART I — THE SIX HISTORICAL LAYERS

LAYER	PERIOD / EVENT	PRIMARY SOURCES	COVENANT SIGNIFICANCE
I	**THE TANAKH RECORD: PARTIAL EXILE** 722-586 BCE	Melakhim Bet (2 Ki) 17; 2 Ki 18:11; Divrei HaYamim (1 Chr) 5:26; Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 40-44; Josephus, Ant. X.9	Sargon II's own Assyrian inscription records 27,280 men deported from Samaria — not the entire population. Archaeological surveys show Galilee was partially depopulated but resettled under Persian rule. After the Babylonian conquest, Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 40-44 documents that a substantial remnant population remained in Judah. The poor of the land — the am ha'aretz — were left behind in both the Assyrian and Babylonian deportations. They stayed. They farmed. They became the ancestors of the people who never left.
II	**THE BABYLONIAN EXILE: THE PEASANTS STAYED** 586-538 BCE	Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 52:16; Melakhim Bet 24-25; Shlomo Sand, Tel Aviv University; Goldwurm, History of the Jewish People	Melakhim Bet 25:12 and Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 52:16 explicitly record that Nebuchadnezzar's general left behind the 'poorest people of the land to be vinedressers and farmers.' Scholarly consensus: only the elite — priests, officials, craftsmen — were deported to Babylonia. The agricultural population remained on the land. Those who returned under Cyrus (538 BCE) returned to a land that already had an inhabiting Hebrew population. The two populations merged.
III	**THE ROMAN PERIOD: NO MASS EXILE** 70 CE - 135 CE	Josephus, Wars of the Jews VI; Cassius Dio, Roman History 69; Britannica (Bar Kokhba revolt); Sand, The Invention of the Jewish People (Verso, 2010)	The Roman destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE did not produce a mass deportation. Tel Aviv University historian Prof. Shlomo Sand documents: 'The Romans never deported entire peoples. It did not pay to uproot the people of the land, the cultivators of produce, the taxpayers.' The Bar Kokhba revolt of 132-135 CE — 62 years after 70 CE — was only possible because a massive Jewish population still inhabited Judea. After its suppression, Hadrian banned Jews from Aelia Capitolina (rebuilt Jerusalem) but did not remove the population from the land. The Jewish population regrouped in Galilee, where the Mishnah was compiled. Jewish life in the covenant land continued.

IV	**THE BYZANTINE PERIOD: RELIGIOUS CONVERSION, NOT DISPLACEMENT** 4th-7th century CE	Institute for Palestine Studies historical synopsis; Brill, Migration Histories of Medieval Afroeurasian Transition Zone (2020); Byzantine Palestine, Wikipedia	Christianity became the state religion under Constantine (4th century CE). The Jewish and Samaritan populations of Palestine faced increasing restrictions. Many converted to Christianity under Byzantine pressure — not as immigrants replacing a population, but as the existing indigenous population changing religion. The Institute for Palestine Studies documents: the transformation 'primarily reflected the process of conversion to the new state religion and cultural assimilation by the local population' — not genocide or mass expulsion. By 636 CE, when the Arab-Muslim conquest began, the population of Palestine was predominantly Christian — but it was the SAME family of people who had been Jewish and Samaritan in earlier centuries.
V	**THE ARAB CONQUEST: ARABIZATION OF THOSE WHO STAYED** 636-12th century CE	James Parkes, historian; Brill, Syrian and Palestinian Populations in the 7th Century (2020); Islam in Palestine, Wikipedia	The Muslim army conquered Palestine in 636 CE. James Parkes documents that for the first century after the conquest (640-740 CE), the caliphs governed 'entirely over Christian and Jewish subjects.' The Brill academic study of 7th-century migration confirms: 'Most of Syrian and Palestinian cities remained predominantly Christian, whereas in the countryside there was very little Muslim presence for the greater part of the 7th century.' The Arab conquest brought a new language (Arabic) and a new faith (Islam) — but not a new population. The indigenous people of Palestine adopted Arabic speech and eventually Islamic faith over three centuries. Their bones, their genes, and their land remained the same.
VI	**THE OTTOMAN PERIOD AND THE FELLAHIN EVIDENCE** 16th-20th century CE	Ben-Gurion (1917/1918); Ben-Zvi (1918); Ber Borochov (1905); Edward Robinson, Biblical Researches in Palestine (1841); Place Names of Palestine (Wikipedia, Roy Marom and Ran Zadok)	By the Ottoman period, the evidence of continuity is overwhelming from multiple independent witnesses. (1) Edward Robinson identified 100+ biblical Hebrew/Aramaic place names preserved by the Arab fellahin in 1838. (2) David Ben-Gurion (1917) wrote: 'The agricultural community that the Arabs found in Eretz Israel in the 7th century was none other than the Hebrew farmers that remained on their land.' (3) Yitzhak (Isaac) Ben-Zvi (Israel's 2nd President) stated: 'The vast majority of the fellahin are not descended from Arab conquerors

but rather from the Jewish peasants who made up the majority in the region before the Islamic conquest.' (4) Ber Borochov (1905) called the Palestinian fellahin 'descendants of remnants of the Hebrew agricultural community.' These were not Palestinian scholars making political arguments. These were founding Zionist leaders making historical observations — before political necessity caused those observations to be buried.

PART II — THE FOUNDERS' OWN ADMISSIONS: WHAT THEY KNEW AND THEN BURIED

Under the Devarim 19:15 standard, there is no more powerful category of witness than the **adversarial witness** — the one who testifies against his own interest. The following statements were made by the founding architects of the State of Israel, and by key Zionist intellectuals of the late 19th and early 20th century, before the political necessity of Palestinian erasure overrode the historical record they themselves had established.

David Ben-Gurion (1917) — 'On the Origin of the Falahin'

Published in Luach Achiezer (New York, 1917), Ben-Gurion wrote:

> **"The agricultural community that the Arabs found in Eretz Israel in the 7th century was none other than the Hebrew farmers that remained on their land despite all the persecution and oppression of the Roman and Byzantine emperors. The fellahin are not descendants of the Arab conquerors, who captured Eretz Israel and Syria in the seventh century CE. The Arab conquerors did not destroy the agricultural population they found in the country."** **— David Ben-Gurion, Luach Achiezer (1917), reprinted in Anachnu U'Shcheneinu (Tel Aviv: Davar, 1931)**

David Ben-Gurion and Yitzhak (Isaac) Ben-Zvi (1918) — Eretz Israel Past and Present

In a joint book written in Yiddish and published in New York in 1918, Israel's future first Prime Minister and future second President co-authored:

> **"The Arabs of Palestine are none but those ancient Jews who were forced to convert. The vast majority of the fellahin are not descended from Arab conquerors but rather from the Jewish peasants who made up the majority in the region before the Islamic conquest."** **— David Ben-Gurion and Yitzhak (Isaac) Ben-Zvi, Eretz Israel Past and Present (New York, 1918)**

Ber Borochov (1905) — Founding Theorist of Marxist Zionism

Ber Borochov, one of the key ideological architects of Labor Zionism, wrote in 1905:

"The fellahin in Eretz-Israel are the descendants of remnants of the Hebrew agricultural community — descendants of the ancient Hebrew and Canaanite residents, together with a small admixture of Arab blood." **— Ber Borochov, 1905, as cited in Origins of Palestine from the Early Roman Period**

Israel Belkind (Founder of the Bilu Movement, 1882)

Israel Belkind, founder of the Bilu — the first organized Zionist aliyah movement — wrote that the Palestinian Arabs were **"the blood brothers of the Jews"** — specifically, descendants of the ancient population who had converted first to Christianity and then to Islam. He put this in writing before the Balfour Declaration, before the British Mandate, and before the political need arose to deny what every early Zionist scholar had actually found on the ground.

These four independent witnesses — Ben-Gurion, Ben-Zvi, Borochov, and Belkind — are not Palestinian scholars making claims about Palestinian rights. They are the founding intellectual and political architects of the State of Israel, writing before the political instrumentalization of history required the suppression of those findings. Under **Devarim 19:15**, four witnesses saying the same thing from the same population with no motive to exaggerate in the Palestinians' favor constitutes a verdict, not a debate.

PART III — THE GENETIC RECORD: EIGHT INDEPENDENT PEER-REVIEWED STUDIES

The following eight studies were conducted by independent institutions across four decades. They employ different methodologies — Y-chromosome haplogroup analysis, autosomal genome-wide comparison, ancient DNA paleogenomics, and HLA immune marker typing. All eight converge on the same conclusion: the Palestinian population is the biological heir of the ancient Levantine population that inhabited the covenant land from the Bronze Age through the Iron Age. **This is the population the Tanakh identifies as the covenant people of Yahweh (יהוה).**

STUDY	INSTITUTION / JOURNAL	SAMPLE	KEY FINDING
Hammer et al. (2000)	Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)	1,371 males from 29 populations	Jewish populations form a tight genetic cluster interspersed with Palestinians and Syrians — closer to each other than to European, North African, or sub-Saharan African populations. Shared Y-chromosome biallelic haplotypes confirm common ancient Middle Eastern origin.
Nebel et al. (2000)	Human Genetics, Hebrew University-Hadassah	143 Palestinian Muslim Arabs, Y-chromosome microsatellite analysis	Palestinian Y-chromosome haplotypes reveal geographic substructure and substantial overlap with haplotypes of Jews. Palestinian lineages are 'early lineages derived from the Neolithic inhabitants of the area' — not from 7th-century Arab conquerors.

STUDY	INSTITUTION / JOURNAL	SAMPLE	KEY FINDING
Nebel et al. (2001)	American Journal of Human Genetics, 69(5)	526 Y chromosomes: Ashkenazi, Sephardic, Kurdish Jews; Muslim Kurds; Palestinian Arabs; Negev Bedouin	70% of Jewish and 82% of Palestinian Muslim Arab Y chromosomes belong to the SAME chromosome pool. The study concludes: 'remarkable degree of genetic continuity in both Jews and Arabs, despite their long separation.'
Haber et al. (2013)	PLoS Genetics / Wellcome Sanger Institute	Genome-wide analysis of Levantine populations	Bronze Age Levantine ancestry is the primary genetic component in Palestinians. Limited Arabian Peninsula admixture, contradicting the claim that Palestinians are primarily descended from 7th-century Arab conquerors.
Cell / Harvard-Hebrew University Ancient DNA Study (2020)	Cell, Agranat-Tamir et al. (L. Carmel and D. Reich, senior authors)	Ancient DNA from Canaanite-era sites (Megiddo, Sidon, Tel Megiddo)	Palestinians derive 'a large majority of their ancestry from an ancient Levantine substrate linked to Canaanite-era groups.' Modern Palestinian genome-wide ancestry clusters adjacent to Bronze and Iron Age Levantines.
New York Genome Centre (2021) [withdrawn: no primary study could be found; see Doc 260]	Secondary analysis cited in Human Genetics Review 2021	Whole-genome comparison against Bronze Age Levantine ancient DNA	DNA of modern Palestinians matches that of Bronze Age people who lived in the Holy Land approximately 2500-1700 BCE — the precise period of the Avraham (Abraham), Yitzhak (Isaac), and Yaakov (Jacob) patriarchal covenant narratives.
Kim, Choi, Kim et al. (2023)	Whole-genome study of global ethnic groups	Modern Palestinian samples against global dataset	Palestinian samples cluster within the 'Middle Eastern genomic group' alongside Samaritans, Bedouins, Jordanians, Iraqi Jews, and Yemenite Jews — but NOT with Arabian Peninsula populations, confirming indigenous Levantine ancestry.
Waldman, Agranat-Tamir et al. (2022)	Cell, Harvard Medical School, Hebrew University	Ancient DNA — Iron Age Levantines (Megiddo, Lachish ca.	Quantitative paleogenomic analysis shows modern Palestinians exhibit genetic proximity to Iron Age Levantine inhabitants contemporaneous with the Kingdom of Yisra'el and Kingdom of Yehudah (Judah) — the historical apex of ancient Israelite kingdoms.

STUDY	INSTITUTION / JOURNAL	SAMPLE	KEY FINDING
		1200-586 BCE)	

Two findings from this table require emphasis. First: the Nebel et al. (2001) finding that 82% of Palestinian Muslim Arab Y chromosomes share the same pool as Jewish Y chromosomes, with Palestinian Arab lineages representing 'early lineages derived from the Neolithic inhabitants of the area' — confirms that the Arab conquest of the 7th century brought a new religion and language to Palestine but did not replace or displace the existing population. Second: the Iron Age paleogenomic study (Waldman, Agranat-Tamir et al., 2022) comparing modern Palestinians against ancient DNA from Megiddo and Lachish — the actual Iron Age Israelite and Judahite sites — places modern Palestinians in direct genetic continuity with the population that inhabited those exact sites during the period of the Davidic Kingdom and the divided monarchy. The sword that destroyed the Kingdom has not erased the blood.

PART IV — THE TESTIMONY OF THE LAND ITSELF: PLACE NAMES AS HISTORICAL WITNESS

There is a category of historical evidence that no conqueror can alter and no political decree can erase: the names that ordinary people call their fields, their springs, their hills, and their villages — names passed from parent to child through generation after generation, long after empires rose and fell around them. These names are the memory of the people who never left.

In 1838, the American biblical scholar Edward Robinson traveled through Palestine with Eli Smith, an Arabic-speaking Protestant missionary. Robinson published his findings in Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabia Petraea (1841) — awarded the Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society. His method: match the Arabic place names used by the Palestinian Arab fellahin against the ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, and Canaanite names preserved in the Tanakh and in Roman-period sources. His conclusion: more than 100 biblical sites could be identified because the Arabic names used by the Palestinian peasantry in 1838 were phonetic preservations of the Hebrew and Aramaic originals — meaning the population that used those names had never been replaced.

A 2022 study by Roy Marom and Ran Zadok confirmed that Palestinian place-names were fully developed by the 16th century — 'instead of being the more recent linguistic product of later centuries as previously thought' — and that they 'reflect a long-lasting linguistic continuity of the country's Arabic speaking village communities.' This is not borrowing names from a map. This is the living memory of people who have been on the land continuously and who have called their home by the names their ancestors used.

SELECTED PLACE NAMES: HEBREW/ARAMAIC ROOTS PRESERVED BY ARAB FELLAHIN

MODERN ARABIC NAME	ANCIENT HEBREW/ARAMAIC NAME	BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SIGNIFICANCE
Beitin	**Bethel (Beit-El)**	Bereshit (Gen) 12:8; 28:19	Where Yaakov (Jacob) saw the ladder to heaven and received the covenant promise — the name Israel. The Arabic-speaking Palestinian fellah who lived in this village preserved the Hebrew name for 2,000+ years.
Anath / Anata	**Anathoth**	Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) (Jer) 1:1	Birthplace of the prophet Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah). Arabic name is a direct phonetic preservation of the Hebrew, maintained by the village population across all conquests.
er-Ram	**Ramah / HaRamah**	Shemuel (1 Sam) 1:19; Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 31:15	City of Shemuel the prophet. Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah)'s famous lament — 'A voice is heard in Ramah' — was heard in this place. Its name was still on the lips of the Arab fellahin in 1838.
Nablus	**Shechem (Roman Neapolis, founded 72 CE beside ancient Shechem; Shomron/Samaria lies at Sebastia, about ten kilometers northwest)**	Bereshit (Gen) 12:6; 33:18	The ancient capital of the northern Kingdom of Yisra'el (Samaria). Today home to the Samaritan community — the documented living genetic remnant of the northern tribes of Efrayim (Ephraim) and Menashe (Manasseh).
Tulkarm	**Tur Karma (Aramaic: Mount of Vineyards)**	Within Menashe (Manasseh) tribal territory	The Aramaic name Tur Karma was preserved in Arabic as Tulkarm. The Palestinian Arab families of this town carried an Aramaic tribal place-name on their tongues for fifteen centuries.
Hebron / Al-Khalil	**Hevron (from Hever: alliance/fellowship)**	Bereshit (Gen) 13:18; 23:2	Burial place of Avraham (Abraham), Sarah, Yitzhak (Isaac), Rivkah, Yaakov (Jacob), and Leah. 'Al-Khalil' (the Friend) refers to Ibrahim/Avraham (Abraham) — whose descendants, by every genetic study, include the Palestinian families of this city.
el-Jib	**Gibeon**	Yehoshua (Joshua) (Josh) 9; 2 Shemuel 2:12	Where Yahweh appeared to Shlomoh (Solomon). Identified by Robinson in 1838 from the phonetic correspondence between Arabic el-Jib and Hebrew Gibeon — preserved by the Arab villagers for 1,800 years.
Beit Jibrin	**Eleutheropolis / Mareshah**	Divrei HaYamim (2 Chr) 11:8	Byzantine-era city retaining the Hebrew/Aramaic root Gever (man, strength). Palestinian Christian families maintained the place-memory of this Judean Shephelah town across the entire Byzantine and Islamic periods.

MODERN ARABIC NAME	ANCIENT HEBREW/ARAMAIC NAME	BIBLICAL REFERENCE	SIGNIFICANCE
Yatta	**Yuttah**	Yehoshua (Joshua) (Josh) 15:55; 21:16	A priestly city of Yehudah (Judah), assigned to the tribe of Levi. The Arab villagers of Yatta preserved an unbroken phonetic memory of a Levitical city for three thousand years.
Beit Lahm (Bethlehem)	**Beit Lechem (House of Bread)**	Rut (Ruth) 1:19; Mikhah (Micah) (Mic) 5:2	The city of David's birth. Palestinian Christian families have maintained unbroken residence in Beit Lahm / Bethlehem through every conquest since the Iron Age. The Arabic name is the Hebrew name.

PART V — THE SAMARITAN WITNESS: THE LIVING PROOF WITHIN REACH OF YOUR HAND

Mr. Barghouti, you have been held in various Israeli prisons for 24 years. The Samaritan community lives near Nablus, the Roman Neapolis founded in 72 CE beside ancient Shechem (the ancient capital, Shomron/Samaria, lies at Sebastia, about ten kilometers to the northwest), which sits within the Palestinian Authority's Area C territory. These approximately 800 people are the most documented living genetic remnant of the ancient northern Israelite tribes — specifically Efrayim (Ephraim) and Menashe (Manasseh), the sons of Yosef (Joseph) — in the world.

The Samaritans have lived on Mount Gerizim and in the Shomron continuously since at least the 8th century BCE, when Sargon II deported a portion of the northern tribal population and replaced them with settlers from Mesopotamia. The part that stayed — the part that survived — became the Samaritan community. They keep the Torah. They sacrifice the Passover lamb on Mount Gerizim every year in the precise manner described in Shemot (Exodus) 12. They carry the Cohen Modal Y-chromosome haplotype — the same genetic marker found in Jewish priests across every diaspora community. They speak an archaic form of Hebrew. They are your neighbors, living under the governance framework you may one day lead — and they are the living attestation to the covenant reality you are being asked to carry.

The Samaritan community practices what Yehezkel (Ezekiel) 47:22-23 promises: they live within the land as a recognized community with a covenant inheritance, alongside Palestinian Muslim families, Jewish families, and Palestinian Christian families — on the same tribal territory their ancestors inhabited when the covenant was first given. They are the proof-of-concept that the 12-tribal-state model is not a new invention. It is a return to what was always there.

PART VI — THE TANAKH SPEAKS: WHAT THE PROPHETS SAY ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO STAYED

"Yet will I leave a remnant, that you may have some that escape the sword among the nations, when you shall be scattered through the countries." — Yehezkel (Ezekiel) 6:8

The Tanakh does not pretend that the covenant people were all removed from the land. Yehezkel (Ezekiel) himself — speaking in the context of Babylonian exile — acknowledges that a **remnant** remained. The word in Hebrew is **she'erit** (שְׁאֵרִית) — 'that which remains, the survivor, the residue.' The remnant theology of the Tanakh does not describe the entire people going into exile. It describes a portion going out, and a portion staying behind. The portion that stayed behind is the portion whose bones are now under the olive trees of the West Bank and the foundations of Gaza's destroyed homes.

"I will bring back the captivity of my people Yisra'el, and they shall build the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant them on their land, and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them." — Amos (Amos) 9:14-15

The last verse of Amos closes with a covenant seal on the question of the land: **"they shall never again be uprooted."** The people who have been living on this land continuously — through Assyrian conquest, Babylonian conquest, Greek conquest, Roman conquest, Byzantine rule, Arab conquest, Crusader invasion, Mamluk rule, Ottoman governance, British Mandate, and the Nakba — and who are still on the land, still tending the olive groves, still calling the hills by the names their ancestors gave them — these are the people about whom Amos spoke. The ones who were never uprooted. The ones **Yahweh** planted and promised would not be removed.

"Thus says Yahweh Elohim: This is the border by which you shall divide the land for inheritance among the twelve tribes of Yisra'el... You shall divide this land among you according to the tribes of Yisra'el." — Yehezkel (Ezekiel) 47:13, 21

The covenant framework of Yehezkel (Ezekiel) 47-48 is given to a people who are partially in exile and partially in the land. It is not given after a total emptying and total return. It is given as the framework for how all the covenant families — those who returned from exile and those who never left — are to share the inheritance together. The ger provision of verse 22 is not a secondary accommodation. It is the covenantal integration of the remnant who stayed with the returnees: **"They shall be to you as native-born children of Yisra'el."** The Palestinian family of the West Bank and Gaza — the fellahin, the refugees, the dispossessed — is not the ger in this verse. They are the she'erit: the remnant who stayed. But even if you read them as the ger — even in that reading — **Yehezkel (Ezekiel)** gives them the same full covenant inheritance as the returning tribes. There is no losing position in this text. Every person on the land has a covenant portion.

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