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Wrestling Without God

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6 An Etymological & Ethnographic History of the Israeli and
7 Palestinian People

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17 Author: "An Unknown Soldier"

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1 Introduction

2

3 I cannot claim to be the first scholar to reveal the Greek word “Palaistine” is a Greek adaptation of
4 the Aramaic “Ysra’El”. I am just the first to state the facts without ambiguity.

5 This introduction is my thesis. All which follows this introduction is exhaustive documentation of
6 every possible interpretation of the word “Palestine”.

7 Modern confusion over the meaning and origins of the term “Palestine” is attributable to first century
8 historian, Josephus. In his histories, Josephus alludes to the Philistines for the origins of the word
9 “Palestine”. This is likely due to over-reliance on the Septuagint by Roman librarians for
10 ethnographic and historical narratives on the region.

11 In truth, it was the Greek historian, Herodotus who first labelled the Levant “Palaistine”, and
12 Herodotus’ choice of roots leaves no ambiguity for interpretation.

13 Palais means wrestler.

14 That much is obvious for all to see, and no scholar refutes it. Disagreement arises from a glaring
15 omission. Israel is not a name of a Patriarch, you see, but an epithet describing the character of a
16 Patriarch. Israel means “Wrestles With God”. Jacob was the given name of the Patriarch
17 remembered by posterity as Israel.

18 Critics of attributing Palaistine to the wrestlers of which Israel speaks make a valid observation. Why
19 omit god?

20 I counter that Herodotus, himself being pantheistic in his religious traditions, was studying the history
21 and ethnographic composition of the Levant from the city of Tyre. Tyre, in Herodotus’ age, remained
22 true to the Canaanite pantheon, with Tyre’s chief deity being Melqart. So, both the author of the
23 original term “Palaistine” and the scholars of the city which hosted him were biased in favor of
24 pantheistic traditions.

25 More emphatically, Tyrians, who had been marginalized, if not politically emasculated, due to their
26 Canaanite status, had an axe to grind against the reforms which saw the advent of monotheism in
27 Arabia.

28 We needn’t get into the details of mutually exclusive traditions to realize the emotional centers from
29 which pantheists and monotheists were motivated. Pantheists appreciated the monotheists as
30 nihilistic, if not atheistic. Monotheists appreciated pantheists as charlatans and frauds, the fidelity
31 of whom was subject to whim and circumstance.

32 Herodotus does not record his thoughts on monotheism per se in his histories and only makes passing
33 references to Greek gods and Tyrian gods. In the rare cases where Herodotus does reference religion,
34 he commits a predictable, narcissistic foot fault in drawing unsubstantiated parallels to Greek gods
35 in the menagerie of Canaanite deities.

1 In other words, Herodotus was implying that Canaanite traditions were derivative of his own, Greek
2 traditions.

3 What scholars today must account for is how Herodotus would have reacted to the nameless, faceless
4 god of the monotheists, these people who claim to be “Wrestling With God”.

5 The religion of the Israelites of Herodotus’ age, in contrast with Greek religious traditions, featured
6 no images whatsoever of their one and only god, nor was his name even acknowledged openly. To
7 speak the name of God was considered blasphemous by the Israelites, so there was no one in Tyre to
8 guide Herodotus on his interpretations.

9 So, when I assert Herodotus would have regarded the god of the Israelites as nameless and faceless,
10 I mean that quite literally.

11 There is no doubt whatsoever that Herodotus was acquainted with the epithet Ysra’El, for there is
12 no other people in all of Arabia known as the “wrestlers”. Lacking a Theonym, Herodotus merely
13 obliged posterity with a patronym instead: Palaistine.

14 In Herodotus’ defense, he was writing an ethnographic history, not a religious history of the region.
15 There was no evidence of this alleged god of the Israelites, and they certainly did not respect their
16 god enough to give him, or her, a name, nor did they even have a single monument depicting their
17 one and only god.

18 Herodotus may have chosen to sidestep a controversial subject by reducing “Wrestlers With God” to
19 just “Wrestles”.

20 The personal bias of Herodotus would so incline him to demote rather than promote a monotheistic
21 tradition.

22 This is casting Herodotus in the best light. But what if I am too forgiving? What if Herodotus was
23 interjecting commentary in his choice? Does not reducing “Wrestles With God” to just “Wrestles”
24 equate to “Wrestles Without God”?

25 It certainly does so in the contrast between a full and true translation of “Ysra’El” and the resulting
26 “Palaistine”. The implications of this possibility in the modern world are immediate and compelling,
27 for it appears the people presently identifying as “Palestinians” are doing so in ignorance of the
28 original Greek.

29 I am writing this article to warn the Muslims of the Levant against adopting the term Palestine when
30 their independence from Israel is eventually secured. There will now be no avoiding the origins of
31 the brand they cling to and, since past is prologue, all reasonable interpretations of “Palaistine” will
32 become operative in international discourse.

33 The children who today call themselves “Palestinians” are assuming a burden they have yet to
34 measure in full.

35 I have here documented two interpretations, one strict and literal, the other an obvious allusion.
36 But there is a third, one which is a characterization, and adjective, more than a noun.

1 Conflicted.

2 That is correct. It is possible that Herodotus, having travelled to the Levant and made a valid attempt
3 to understand its ethnic and political makeup, concluded that the entire region was composed of
4 peoples wrestling with each other, with their competing gods, and lacking in any semblance of
5 cohesive governance.

6 Conflicted is possible in the unconventional suffix “tine” Herodotus applied to the root “Palais”.
7 Palais means wrestles. “Tine”, a feminine suffix, imparts descriptive not definitive authority to the
8 resulting term “Palaistine”.

9 Why? For many reasons. First and foremost, the Israelites of the region were split into two, major
10 factions. In 454 BC there were the Samaritans, who themselves are just the descendants of Israelites
11 who rebelled against King Solomon’s successor, and the Judeans and Benjaminites, who themselves
12 had just been restored from the Babylonian exile by Cyrus the Great.

13 Neither the Samaritans nor the Judeans and Benjaminites had a functioning government, certainly
14 no sovereign authority to which Greece’s polity could negotiate treaties or alliances. As for Tyre,
15 Tyre and her sister cities in the Levant were political outcasts since Abraham’s day.

16 In Herodotus’ day, the Levant was politically ambiguous.

17 To a pantheist seeking to understand why invasions of his native Greece originated from the Levant,
18 the choices Herodotus made in terminology are compelling.

19 Tyre, you see, had a massive mariner fleet with which it dominated trade across the mediterranean.
20 In Herodotus’ lifetime, Persia had twice invaded his motherland, with Tyrian fleets playing the
21 decisive role in both invasions.

22 In modern terms, Herodotus was on an intelligence mission. Palaistine was the conclusion he
23 returned to Athens.

24 This region of the world was complicated mire of rival factions, with no apparent government beyond
25 the few city walls and simultaneously subservient to foreign sovereigns.

26 The dominant demographic group referred to themselves as “Wrestles With God”, but in truth they
27 only appeared to be wrestling with each other, the Samaritan Israelites and Judean Israelites building
28 rival temples to a single, nameless, faceless god.

29 An outside observer, especially if they were pantheistic in their religious frame of reference, would
30 understandably conclude the Israelites weren’t wrestling with god at all, just the consequences of
31 their religious nihilism.

32 And don’t think for a moment all three possible interpretations do not matter. Rarely is any academic
33 debate settled in consensus, but rather several factions of opinion. For every scholar who favors
34 “Palaistine” as an adaptation of the patronym “Israel”, there will be just as many or more who insist
35 it is a play on words meaning “Wrestles Without God”.

36 Herodotus, after all, omitted god from the original epithet.

1 If the ramifications are not obvious for all to see, allow me to be perfectly blunt. The people calling
2 themselves Palestinians are doing so after subscribing to faulty scholarship. Nobody referred to the
3 region as “Palestine” before the Balfour Declaration of 1917. And nobody referred to themselves as
4 “Palestinians” until a Soviet agent provocateur, Palmiro Togliatti, a prominent Italian Socialist and
5 Stalin stooge, proclaimed the “Palestinians” as an ethnic group in 1935.

6 Regrettably, the Muslims of the Levant, seeking a foothold of legitimacy on the world stage, accepted
7 the Soviet assertion without considering the ramifications of their choice. Anything but Israel was
8 the sentiment which prevailed.

9 So here we all are, contemplating the legitimization of a “Palestinian” state as the truth comes to
10 light. Palestine means Israel.

11 The irony is tragic in ways no Greek playwright, nor even the Bard himself, could have encapsulated
12 so neatly in words. The Muslims of the Levant are literally chanting “From the River to the Sea,
13 Israel Will Be Free!” as the Israelis are literally swearing “There Will Never Be An Israelite State!”.

14 Ignorance on ethnic origins in the Levant is replete. And it is dangerous.

15 The only plausible alternative to Palaistine meaning Israel, is that it means “Wrestles Without God”

16 I implore the world’s leaders to truly consider if the modern push to declare Palestine a state is wise
17 counsel, or capitulation under diplomatic exhaustion. Does anyone, especially the “Palestinian
18 Authority”, have the right to make such a tragic mistake?

19 Do the Palestinians want to be known as “Wrestles Without God” in contrast to their neighbor
20 “Wrestles With God”?

21 I caution the Palestinian Authority, and all of its supporters, be careful what you wish for, you may
22 get it. If Palestine is declared a state under the proposed name, “Palestinian” children will pay a
23 price for generations to come.

24 At this juncture, in my introduction, I am obligated to site the work of earlier scholars who, like
25 myself, acknowledge the Greek root “palais” as the cornerstone of the term “Palestine”. I am not
26 the first, though I did arrive at my own conclusions before being made aware of Martin Noth and
27 David Jacobsen

28 It was, ominously, in 1939 Germany, where Martin Noth originally observed, albeit in a footnote
29 published in *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, Volume 62, page 133, that Herodotus’
30 “Palaistine” was nearly identical to the Greek word for “wrestler” (*palaistēs*).

31 But Noth never investigated beyond this footnote, owing to his induction into the army of the Third
32 Reich. Noth’s work in near eastern studies was never ideological, and it was likely a saving grace his
33 discovery came too late to be fully realized. Lending origins Bonifides to the Jewish people would
34 have reduced Noth to a persona non grata in the eyes of the National Socialist Worker’s Party.

35 After the war, it is apparent a preliminary notion had escaped Noth’s mind. Who could blame him?

1 Much later, in 2001, British historian David Jacobson noticed Noth's footnote and investigated further.
2 In his article "When Palestine Meant Israel" published in [Biblical Archaeology Review, Volume 27, Issue 3 \(May/June 2001\)](#), Jacobson provides a halfway decent summary analysis, which documents
3 the shared Greek root, before concluding the Greek root, "palais", was being evoked as a pun which
4 included both Israelites and Philistines.
5

6 Not true. Not true at all.

7 Jacobson dismisses "Palaistine" as a direct translation of "Israel" for the obvious reason: "Palaistine"
8 directly translates to the "Wrestler-place" whereas Israel would translate to "Wrestles with God".
9 In the absence of God in the translation, Jacobson concludes, we must regard Herodotus' choice as
10 a casual characterization, a pun.

11 I don't accept Jacobson's conclusion and wish he had done a better job philologically.

12 All which follows this introduction is an exhaustive analysis of every linguistic possibility, and
13 documentation of the root origins for all ethnic groups of the Levant.

14

15 Herodotus Redux

16

17 The Second Temple Period, which lasted from 516 BC until 70 AD, is the stage on which all modern
18 controversies originate. A glance at any history of the period will confirm that the "Jews" suffering
19 under the Babylonian exile had only just returned to the Levant following a decree from Cyrus the
20 Great of Persia.

21 My point is that, while Israelites had lived in the Levant for thousands of years, the "Jews" of Judea
22 were only just recently repatriated. It is also essential to remember, while all Judeans are Jews, not
23 all Jews are Judeans. This is just as true during the Second Temple period, for Benjaminites entered
24 the Babylonian Exile with Judeans, and returned with them as well. Sixty-two years after their
25 return, a Greek scholar named Herodotus visited Tyre to study the geography and cultures of the
26 Levant.

27 Herodotus is the man responsible for naming the Levant "Palaistine".

28 The region was then still under the control of Persia, but the Greeks offered everyone in the Levant
29 a secular savior in the form of intellectualism, in the rationalism both implicit and explicit in the
30 Greek philosophies.

31 Putting Herodotus' arrival in Tyre into context requires a trip down memory lane, a trip made
32 necessary when assessing Herodotus' personal bias. Herodotus was attempting to wrap his mind
33 around Greece's bogeyman: Persia.

1 Herodotus was born in 484 BC, meaning Persia had been trying to conquer Greece during three
2 successive dynasties by the time Herodotus was born. Cyrus the Great, Darius I and Xerxes I were
3 the Persian despots who started the Greco-Persian war which define the Greek Classical period.

4 Compounding the menace which Persia posed in the minds of every Greek, Persian despots were
5 dependent on the fleets of Phoenician cities for his naval support. Without a navy, Persia's armies
6 had only one choice, to march across Anatolia and attempt a crossing of the Dardanelle Straight, a
7 crossing destined to be opposed by Greek armies en masse.

8 With the fleets that Phoenician cities provided, Greek forces were forced to disburse more widely to
9 guard against a sea landing. Tyre, Sidon and Byblos were the Phoenician cities providing naval support
10 to Persia's invasion forces. That doesn't necessarily mean Greeks regarded Tyre, Sidon and Byblos
11 as enemies, owing to their status as city states subject to Persian dictate. Had Tyre, Sido or Byblos
12 refused to supply the critically needed fleets, Persia would have crushed them for their refusal.

13 Herodotus was on a fact-finding mission, I believe, in support of, if not under the direction of
14 Greece's leadership. With respect to Herodotus' ports of call, his writings only confirm he was
15 physically present in Tyre and in Memphis, Egypt, but most scholars infer he travelled more
16 extensively owing to the detailed knowledge he offered on Babylon and Cyprus.

17 Since Herodotus was conducting a socio-cultural survey, the information Herodotus gathered reveals
18 all we need to know about the people he met in his travels. One ethnic group, the Philistines, we
19 can dismiss entirely, regardless of what later scholars assert. Although Herodotus's histories do
20 mention city states associated with the Philistines in earlier periods of history, Herodotus never
21 mentions the "Philistines" by that name.

22 All arguments being made by modern revisionists hinge on the assumption Herodotus' "Palaistine"
23 was a transliteration of the word "Philistine".

24 Martin Noth of 1939 Germany alluded to this fallacy in a footnote in his pre-War research, but David
25 Jacobson compounds the fallacy when he concluded "Palaistine" was a "pun" coined by Herodotus
26 which included both Israelites and the Philistines.

27 With the historical context and personal interest of Herodotus established, my goal is to assess the
28 demographic realities of 454 BC and document the fallacy to your satisfaction.

29 What all scholars are required to factor into the equation are two contending factions of Israelites
30 in the region when Herodotus studied from Tyre. In that age the Samaritans, who claimed to be the
31 authentic Israelites, and the recently returned Judeans and Benjaminites, had just completed
32 construction of their competing temples.

33 I realize few are aware there was just such a contest between Israelites, so consistently have both
34 factions dismissed their rivals, but it is true. Google it. No sooner had the Judean faction
35 consecrated the Second Temple in Jerusalem, the Samaritan Israelites consecrated their temple at
36 Mount Gerizim.

1 Don't inflate the conflict. Just recognize anyone studying the region's demography would be
2 confronted with a schism which, while ancient and less relevant in modern memory, was the
3 controversy of the hour.

4 Additionally, there was then, still no formal government, and certainly no king, in either Israelite
5 faction. It was at this point in time, and in this ambiguous context that Herodotus documented and
6 named an ethnic group living in a place he called "Palaistine".

7 David Jacobson asserts Herodotus could only be talking about the Israelites because Herodotus
8 records the "Palaistine" people practiced circumcision. The assumption that only Jews practice
9 circumcision is an anti-Semitic trope, but don't mistake me for accusing Jacobson of anti-Semitism.
10 I am accusing Jacobson of being lazy.

11 Herodotus addresses circumcision most directly in *Histories* Book 2, sections 104-105 when he wrote:

12 "I myself guessed it, partly because they [the Colchians] are dark-skinned and woolly-
13 haired... But my better proof was that the Colchians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians are the
14 only peoples that have practiced circumcision from the beginning. The Phoenicians and
15 the Syrians of Palestine themselves acknowledge that they learned the custom from the
16 Egyptians... These are the only ones that circumcise, and it is seen that they do even
17 as the Egyptians."

18

19 Herodotus continues:

20 "As to the Egyptians and Ethiopians themselves, I cannot say who learned it from the
21 other. For it is clearly a very ancient custom."

22 The practice of circumcision, as you can see, was not exclusive to the Israelites, certainly not
23 according to Herodotus. I still applaud Jacobson for attempting such authentication for it at least
24 draws our attention to the above passages from Herodotus.

25 The gold in the passage is found in the phrase "Syrians of Palaistine".

26 Full stop. The danger in this translation is conflating Herodotus' use of Συρία (Syria) with the
27 modern state of Syria. Clearly that is impossible since Syria did not exist until the 20th century.
28 Herodotus is referring to Assurian-Palaistine.

29 Who then were the Assurian Palaistine to which Herodotus refers? That can only be a reference to
30 the Samaritans, since it was the northern territories of the original Kingdom of Israel which revolted
31 and, as a consequence, became vassals of the Assurian King.

32 In terms of my analysis, resolving the compounding qualifier Συρία (Assuria) before resolving the
33 subject "Palaistine" is a foot fault. The tangent, while premature, illustrates how research leads to
34 discovery, and discovery to confirmation.

35 The object we seek is Herodotus' intent behind his choice in the root "Palais".

1 Before turning to the root “Palais”, allow me to complete my assessment of Herodotus’ biases, for
2 they are not limited to language and demographics.

3 Herodotus was religious. And Herodotus was not just religious, he was a polytheist. That is attested
4 to by Herodotus’s stated interest in Tyre, a city which housed what Herodotus took to be temples
5 dedicated to the Greek God Heracles. Just don’t tell that to the Tyrians. According to the Tyrians
6 their temple was dedicated to Melqart, a Canaanite god more ancient than the nameless god of the
7 Sarmatians and Judeans.

8 Full stop.

9 Modern priests and rabbis neglect the fact that the Israelites were often taken to be atheists due to
10 their orthodox insistence on a single Creator. Compounding and amplifying this perception was
11 Israelite prohibitions against uttering the name of their singular Creator. Israelite prohibition against
12 the use of God’s name was so strict one could not even write the name of their Creator without
13 excluding its vowels.

14 The orthodoxy may require explaining. You see it was the extremes of the Abramic Age, when
15 polytheism led to human sacrifice, that all other gods were retired. Human sacrifice wasn’t the only
16 sin. Fierce and often violent rivalries between religious factions erupted at the mere mention of a
17 rival god, and so we arrive at a universal prohibition. The Abramic clergy concluded mankind was
18 too spiritually immature to tolerate even slight differences in pronunciations.

19 The rule adopted was to prohibit everyone from speaking the name of god.

20 Try explaining that to Herodotus. Herodotus came from a patriarchal culture rich with gods, both
21 great and small, all of whom had distinct names, individual identities and, in the great cosmic play
22 which is life, discrete roles to play in their relationship with the human species.

23 Herodotus could not have failed to hear the tail of the Israelites and their origins. Tyrian priests with
24 whom he consulted so intimately on the temple of Melqart’s origins, would serve as Herodotus’ first
25 point of reference on the people beyond Tyre’s gates.

26 Tyrians doubtlessly knew what the Aramaic phrase “Y’sra El” meant. We can all imagine a Priest of
27 Melqart, a hold-out Canaanite religious sect, informing Herodotus “Y’sra El means ‘wrestles with
28 God’, emphasis singular”.

29 A single god. The two had a good laugh together, then another goblet of Tyrean wine. Inevitably,
30 Herodotus would ask, “What is this God’s name, and his purpose?”, a question which only sent the
31 priest of Melqart into another fit of laughter.

32 “They don’t know.” The priest would say once he regained his composure.

33 Herodotus must have sat there, his mouth agape.

34 Perhaps I take liberties no scholar should take, but we all know the conversations scholars have bear
35 no resemblance to the books they eventually write. If not from a priest in Tyre, Herodotus could
36 only have learned who the “Wrestlers” (Palais) were by asking them himself.

1 But which group of wrestlers?

2 The Judeans were in Jerusalem, along the Sea of Galilea, the Dead Sea and the plains leading to the
3 coast just south of Tyre. With no ports until Gaza, it is unlikely that Herodotus would encounter
4 Judeans by sea.

5 But Herodotus would not have had to leave Tyre to learn the lay of the land between Tyre, Sidon and
6 Byblos, the three “Phoenician” cities he came to study in the first place. The lands between,
7 Herodotus was informed, had all been answerable to Assur, until the Persians took over. And this is
8 no trivial detail. Tyrians were trying to explain to a Greek visitor why they were forced to join in
9 Persia's war against Caesar.

10 In case you missed the inference, Tyre, Sidon and Byblos were all city states within the geopolitical
11 jurisdiction of Assur. Among the Judeans, that same region was known as Samaria, and its residence,
12 the Samaritan Israelites. Herodotus chose to name the Samaritan region of Palaistine “Assur-
13 Palaistine”, a name which refuted, if not refused, Persian sovereignty over the region. In his choice
14 of words, Herodotus was reinforcing the Phoenicians against any charge of complicity in Persia's sins.

15 That matters when assessing motive and bias. Herodotus was clearly and understandably biased
16 against Persia.

17 Once again, full stop.

18 Assuming that Herodotus did travel to Jerusalem and study the Judean Israelites, which again has
19 never been asserted by any scholar, nor is now asserted by me, Herodotus will have learned that
20 Judean Israelites in that age regarded Cyrus the Great as a Messiah.

21 Not just a messianic figure, mind you, Cyrus the Great was regarded by Judeans of Herodotus' age
22 as a Messiah, a Prince anointed by YHWH to deliver the Judean Israelites from bondage in Babylon.
23 In the Judean Torah, **Isaiah 45:1** famously calls Cyrus “God's anointed” (מָשִׁיחַ), a title otherwise
24 reserved for Israelite kings and priests. This elevated Cyrus to a **messianic role**, suggesting that **God**
25 could work through **Gentile rulers** to fulfill covenantal promises.

26 Do not think for a moment that this extension of the Abrahamic Covenant was acceptable to the
27 Samaritan Israelites. If anything, the Babylonian Exile of the Judeans came as a relief to the
28 Samaritan Israelites who had, for generations, been regarded by both Judeans and their Assurian
29 overlords as regional instigators, as outcasts.

30 Cyrus the Great's decree allowing Judeans and Benjaminites to return and rebuild the Temple (**Ezra**
31 1:1-4) was seen by Judeans as **fulfilling Jeremiah's prophecy** of restoration after 70 years of exile.
32 There should be little doubt why Samaritan Israelites disregard the “prophets” of their Judean
33 cousins.

34 Sarmatian Israelites had gotten along just fine with the Assurians, once they realized they could
35 operate as an autonomous region. Remember, the far flung Phoenician mariner empire was only
36 possible because Assur turned a blind eye to what Tyre, Sidon, Byblos and the Samaritan Israelites
37 were doing with their free time. As long as they paid their tribute, the “Phoenician” city states of
38 Samaria were allowed free reign.

1 To the Samarian Israelites and the “Phoenician” city states along her coast, the defeat of the
2 Babylonian king by Cyrus the Great was a catastrophe. Not only did Cyrus the Great repatriate the
3 much loathed Judeans and Benjaminites, but he ordered Phoenician fleets to be turned against a
4 chief trading partner, the Greeks!

5 My point, at this juncture, is just to identify the factional bias of those Herodotus would have direct
6 contact with while in Tyre. Herodotus’ personal religious beliefs would have inclined him to be
7 dismissive of monotheists in favor of the long-established polytheists in the region. If Herodotus had
8 learned the more apologetic version of monotheism as practiced by both Israelite factions, that will
9 only have compelled him to recoil defensively in favor of his preferred pantheon of gods.

10
11 And, mind you, we are talking about gods with individual names and individual domains, a pantheon
12 which made sense. But Herodotus was there to catalogue the people and their places, not play
13 divine mediator.

14
15 Forced to adopt a name for these strange people and their only god, Herodotus relied on Greek
16 naming conventions. Unable to characterize much less name this Israelite god, Herodotus chose to
17 identify the people of this region by their patriarch: Wrestler. The wrestler in the riddle is, of course,
18 Jacob. David Jacobson, who carries the Patriarch’s original name, was destined to make the
19 connection. He just did so in a frail outline.

20
21 Jacobson did not delve into the reasons Herodotus omitted the word “god” from the epithet
22 “Wrestles with God”.

23
24 Realizing now where Jacobson’s research led, if Herodotus chose to omit the word God from the
25 epithet “Wrestles with God”, and chose instead to identify the Israelites by their Patriarch alone,
26 who could blame him? But I, like Jacobson, agree double, or even triple entendre may be in play in
27 Herodotus’ choice.

28
29 Not pun. Entendre.

30
31 The difference is important, for pun obscures meaning. Double or triple entendre compounds and
32 deepens meaning. Allow me to illustrate. It is more than just plausible but probable that Herodotus
33 stripped “god” from the epithet since epithets were not a common naming convention in Greece as
34 they were in the Levant.

35
36 You try formulating a proper noun from the phrase “Wrestles with a god”. It’s work in any tradition
37 and any age. I have a hard enough time explaining this to my Jewish brothers and sister who, despite
38 their provenance, too often remain ignorant of the etymology of the name “Israel”.

39
40 I may not be correct about Herodotus intentionally parsing out the word “god” to arrive at
41 “Palaistine”, but none can deny what Herodotus formulated was a word meaning “Wrester-land”.

1 I just insist we cast Herodotus in the best light we can, for if Herodotus can be indicted in the best
2 light, why cast him in the worst light? It is a good rule to live by. It safeguards one from making
3 more caustic allegations.

4

5 So, what is the best light?

6

7 The best light we can cast Herodotus in recognizes he was a guest in a foreign land and chose to
8 eliminate the word “god” from the epithet because he wanted to side-step insult to any party. If we
9 are being honest with ourselves, the entire region could have been characterized as “Wrestler-land”,
10 so conflicted did all factions appeared to be.

11

12 If we are truly honest with ourselves, the entire region could be characterized as “Wrestler-land”
13 today.

14

15 The only thing that bothers me about my own analysis, to this stage, is that Herodotus then chose a
16 feminine suffix in Greek to formulate a place name based on a male patriarch. Place names in Greek
17 are regarded as feminine, except in cases where the place is being named after a male patriarch,
18 hero or god.

19

20 The Greek suffix “tine” is feminine.

21

22 Why?

23

24 Why did the leading scholar of the age choose to emasculate “Wrestler” by appending the suffix
25 “tine”?

26

27 Jacobson correctly points out that Greeks would have been chauvinistic toward this claim, perhaps
28 to the point of ridiculing the Israelites by emasculating their “Wrestler” patriarch. But, again, I insist
29 we cast Herodotus in the best light possible.

30

31 Could it be that Herodotus did Yeoman’s work? Could it be that Herodotus made an efficacious study
32 of these strange “wrestlers” and learned the Israelites considered their home dominion to be
33 feminine? Could it be Herodotus also learned the Israelites communicated their familial identity
34 through the maternal line?

35

36 Could it not be we are projecting our sins on history’s greatest historian? Cast in the best light,
37 Herodotus would have to be acquitted.

38

39 I will allow you to be the judge.

40

41 To a thorough morphology of the word “Palestine” and its many possible suffixes we correctly turn.

1 Morphology of Palestine

2
3 Words mean things. Words require conventional meanings, or they have no value. When words lose
4 their conventional meanings, communication break down and coherent conversations are no longer
5 possible. When words lose their conventional meanings, we are no longer conversing with each other,
6 we are conversing at each other.

7 No better example could be found of where communication breakdowns lead than in the example of
8 “Palestine”.

9 We all subscribe to a meaning of the word “Palestine” and are convinced we are correct where others
10 are wrong but, my research proves, we are all wrong.

11 Palestine means Israel. Israel means Palestine.

12 Just don’t try convincing anyone of the Jewish persuasion this is fact. The same will be true of the
13 people who today call themselves “Palestinians”.

14 If you expect my claim is based on rhetorical gymnastics, that I will be stretching the concept of
15 “conventional meaning” to aggravate opinions on all sides, you are ill-prepared for all that follows.

16 Below I employ only authoritative sources, sources upon which accredited academia has relied, some
17 for millennia, most for centuries, to document the origins and morphology of the word “Palestine”
18 over time.

19 In that process I am obligated to draw distinctions between translations and transliterations, for the
20 true meaning of the word “Palestine” has been lost in translation. That fact is only obscured because
21 the word “Palestine” has been confused as a transliteration of the ancient Egyptian word “Peleset”.

22 If your only complaint, after reading the following morphology, is that I am condescending, you will
23 be obligated to explain why I, not others, made this discovery.

24 To ancient Egypt we now return.

25

26 Peleset

27

28 In ancient Egypt, the first use of the term “Peleset” first appears in 1150 BC: *Peleset* (פְּלֵשֶׁת) appears in inscriptions from Ramses III’s records describing “invaders” as “sea peoples”. And yes, we are obligated to return to ancient Egypt because nearly every academic authority insists that the word “Palestine” derives from ancient Egyptian references to the “Philistine” people.

32 Full stop.

33 We have already encountered our first problem. The word “Philistine” itself is a Romanized version of an earlier Greek term, so nobody could plausibly assert that the ancient Egyptian word, “Peleset”, is a derivative of the word “Philistine”.

1 The distance in years between the first use of “Peleset” and the first use of the word “Philistine” is
2 just over 1,600 years. As wise as Egyptian scholars were, none were that prescient. Of that you may
3 be sure.

4 When accredited academia asserts that “Peleset” refers to the “Philistines”, what accredited
5 academia is saying is that ancient Egyptians were referring to “invaders”, who they further
6 characterized as “sea peoples”, and it is believed by most that the “Peleset” were referred to as the
7 “Philistines” by future generations.

8 Don’t mistake me for being a contrarian, for I also believe that the “Peleset” and the “Philistines”
9 refer to the same people. What I object to is the allusion to a direct translation of “Peleset” to
10 “Philistine”.

11 Nothing could be further from the truth.

12 In order to understand the origins of words and their meanings, and in order to follow the
13 modification of words and their meanings over time, one cannot rely on retrospective analysis, only
14 prospective analysis.

15 In the prospective analysis our point of departure is the ancient Egyptian word “Peleset”, and that
16 word originally meant “invader”.

17 I assure you, no matter who the “invaders” truly were, or where they came from, they did not self-
18 identify as “invaders”. I could be wrong. It is possible that an ancient culture prided itself on
19 barbarism and force. Skeptics of my research will go so far as to suggest that the “Vikings” are an
20 example of just such a culture, but do your own research when they do. Even the “Vikings” did not
21 identify themselves as “Vikings”.

22 No. Both “Peleset” and “Viking” are exonyms, names given to a group by others outside that group,
23 not names by which that group identified themselves. Both “Peleset” and “Viking” are also
24 pejorative, terms which convey negative connotations, terms which would be regarded as insults by
25 those to whom these terms were applied.

26 The importance of exonyms grounded in pejorative are not just important to both an etymological
27 and ethnographic understanding, but to an evaluation of the socio-political argument being made by
28 the “Palestinian People” as they are understood to be today.

29 Because the “Palestinian People” are asserting a claim of historical sovereignty in the Levant base
30 on an exonym grounded in pejorative, their claim is immediately undermined by the original meaning
31 of the term “Peleset”.

32 I assure you, at no time, and in no place in history, were “invaders” ever recognized as asserting a
33 legitimate claim to sovereignty in the regions which they invaded.

34 Mind you, I will also make no attempt to identify who the “Peleset” truly were, or where they came
35 from. My research focuses exclusively on the origins and meaning of words. But, in the course of
36 my research, I expose where scholars, both ancient and modern, failed in their vocation and led us
37 all toward an impending, rhetorical catastrophe.

1 What the “Palestinian People” are asserting in full is 1.) there once was a people called the “Peleset”,
2 and 2.) there once were many references to a place called “Palestine”, and 3.) that these two
3 references refer to the same ethnic group originally, 4.) that ethnic group once exercised sovereignty
4 over the Israelites, 5.) they are that ethnic group.

5 “Ergo”, say advocates for the Palestinian People, “the Palestinians once exercised political
6 sovereignty in a place called Palestine”. It is a simple enough argument, an argument reinforced by
7 a flawed academic consensus, that which accepts that “Palestine” originally refers to the
8 “Philistines”.

9 Academic consensus, as I am about to prove, is catastrophically wrong.

10 To Peleshet were turn.

11

12 Peleshet

13
14 Immediately after the first use of the Egyptian term “Peleset” referring to new arrivals in the Levant,
15 ancient Aramaic records begin employing the term “Peleshet” which, predictably, is a transliteration
16 of the Egyptian term into Aramaic grammatical aesthetics.

17 In other words, the ancient Hebrews, who then spoke Aramaic, borrowed the term directly from their
18 neighbors without changing it significantly. The only functional modification was an aspirated S. For
19 those new to linguistics, an aspirated phoneme is one which appends an “h” to its root.

20
21 Hebrew references are found in the Torah in both Hebrew (פְּלֶשֶׁת) and Aramaic, in Judges, Samuel,
22 and Psalms. In Hebrew examples, the original Egyptian “Peleset” was formulated as a proper noun
23 for an ethnic group - the “Pelesh’tim”. It is at this juncture, where an adjective was contorted into
24 a proper noun, that a good measure of the confusion begins.

25
26 You can be descended from a noun. You cannot be descended from an adjective.

27 Phoinikes

28
29 I revisit the arrival of Phoenicia in etymological contexts, not as a tangent to distract, but as a
30 necessary reiteration which illustrates how names and their meanings become convoluted, even by
31 the greatest historians of that age.

32
33 As previously discussed, among the numerous groups Herodotus described, the Phoenicians hold a
34 notable place. The specific word used by Herodotus in Classical Greek to describe the “Phoenicians”
35 is “Φοίνικες” (Phoinikes). The term “Phoinikes” (Φοίνικες) used by Herodotus derives from the Greek
36 word “phoinix” (φοῖνιξ), which means “purple” or “crimson.”

1 This etymology is acknowledged by all as originating in the famous Tyrian purple dye produced by
2 the Phoenicians from the murex snail. The dye's deep, rich color became synonymous with royalty
3 and luxury, cementing the association between the term "Phoinikes" and the people who crafted it.
4

5 In other words, the term "Phoinikes" is an exonym invented by Greek merchant mariners who traded
6 with the merchants of Tyre. Herodotus just gave it authority by including it as a proper noun in his
7 histories.
8

9 The correct and true ethnonym for the people Herodotus studied would be Tyrians when Romanized,
10 or "תְּרִים" (Turiim) in Aramaic.
11

12 Obviously, Romanizations were impossible in Herodotus' age, since neither the Romans nor their
13 alphabet existed. For this reason, when we are speaking of the morphology of words, all roman
14 derivatives must be discarded. "Philistine" and "Palestine" are both Romanized words.
15

"Tyrians" and "Phoenicians" are also Romanized words.
16

In classical Greek, the city of Tyre would be referred to as "Τύπος" (Tyros). The people of Tyre would
17 be called "Τύριοι" (Tyrioi). This specific terminology would have provided a clearer and more localized
18 understanding of the Tyrian people, emphasizing their distinct identity and cultural contributions
19 separate from what came to be regarded as the Phoenicians.
20

The term Tyrioi (Τύριοι) appears nowhere in Herodotus' histories. Their nickname, Phoinikes, does.
21

This linguistic resonance of an exonym reflects the scope of the Phoenicians' reputation, and their
22 legacy as masterful merchants and navigators. But mistake it not, there never was a place or a
23 people who self-identified as "The Purples".
24

Modern scholars have the responsibility to sort fact from fiction.
25

Mind you, I don't blame Herodotus for his misperceptions. The "Purples" had, by Herodotus' day,
26 become an epithet used throughout the Mediterranean world. Everyone knew Tyrian merchant
27 mariners as "Phoenicians". In fact, to this day, though you may know it not, the "Phoenicians" still
28 govern all our lives through the information technology they invented to manage their far-flung
29 merchant enterprise.
30

That is correct. The "phonetic alphabet" was invented by the Tyrian merchant mariners who
31 established trading colonies all along the Mediterranean Sea.
32

According to Herodotus' interpretation of Egyptian records, the Phoenicians originated from the
33 region near the Red Sea and migrated to the coastal areas of the Levant. That reference is more
34 consistent with the Israelites than with Tyrians, since Tyre had been a major coastal city for thousands
35 of years before Abram arrived. Even ancient Egyptian scholars can be wrong.
36

Herodotus further credits the Phoenicians with introducing important goods and commodities to the
37 Greek world. They were known for their skill in navigation and their extensive trade routes, which
38 spanned from the Levant to the far reaches of the Mediterranean.
39

1 But the Phoenicians are particularly associated with the trade of luxury items such as purple dye,
2 which was highly prized in antiquity by the Nobility. The reason is because, under the chromatic
3 protocols of the Nobility, purple was designated as a color identifying Royalty. Because the Tyrians
4 made the richest and most durable purple dye in the ancient world, there was not a ruler in existence
5 for centuries who did not acknowledge the contribution the “Phoenicians” made in the governance
6 of their realms.

7 This fame would come back to haunt the city states of the Levant two centuries later after the
8 “Phoenicians” of Carthage started a war of annihilation against an obscure city on the Etruscan
9 Peninsula: Rome.

10 Of course, Herodotus correctly records how the “Phoenicians” employed their fleet in support of the
11 Persian king Xerxes during his invasion of Greece. Don’t think for a moment that Alexander did not
12 remember this historical betrayal.

13 This report is another juncture at which I insist Herodotus must be corrected. Granted, to Herodotus,
14 it may have appeared that “Phoenicia” had allied itself with Persia. But, in fact, during the reign of
15 Xerxes I, who ruled Persia from 486 to 465 BCE, the Levant was under Persian control following the
16 conquests of Cyrus the Great and his successors. “Phoenician” city-states, including Tyre and Sidon,
17 became tributary clients of the Achaemenid Empire, offering naval support and tribute to Persia as
18 required.

19 Just don’t think that distinction swayed Alexander. Alexander was a man of priorities. The fact
20 Alexander besieged and defeated Tyre before taking on Darius’ army stands as testament to this more
21 ancient grudge. Alexnder was settling historical scores, and Tyre topped his list. To eliminate the
22 fleets Persia might use to outflank him, Alexander relied on Herodotus’ histories.

23 As for Persia’s understanding of the players? The term “Phoenicia”, as such, does not appear in that
24 form in Achaemenid records. Instead, the cities of Tyre, Sidon and Byblos were referred to specifically
25 as key tributary states within the Achaemenid Empire. The records focus on their contributions and
26 their roles but do not use the collective term “Phoenicia.”

27 The Achaemenid records refer to the Levant by specifically mentioning key tributary city-states such
28 as Tyre, Sidon and Byblos, along with the wider region, as “Beyond the River”, as “Eber-Nari”. This
29 name has also been Romanized as “Eber-Nahara”. In both cases, the “river” being referenced was
30 not the Jordan, but the Euphrates. The Levant is, in fact, defined by the river catchment just beyond
31 the Euphrates catchment.

32 The word “Phoenicia” does not appear in any form, either translated or transliterated, in Achaemenid
33 records. The absence of any reference to the “Phoenicians” by the administrative incumbents of this
34 region requires we conclude that “Phoenicia”, and therefore the “Phoenicians”, only existed in the
35 imaginations of the mariner subculture.

36 Eliminating the Phoinikes as a possible source for Herodotus’ “Palaistine” is important because a
37 later historian, Josephus, was the first scholar to use the aspirated “Ph” when spelling “Philistines”.
38 In so doing, Josephus would also make a grave error, associating Herodotus’ original “Palaistine” with
39 the “Philistines” in his own *Antiquities of the Jews*.

1 But Josephus must wait since Herodotus's "Palaistinē" is next in the morphology.

2

3 Palaistinē

4

5 I insist accredit academia must bring Herodotus back down to earth, because it was Herodotus who
6 used both Palaistinē (Παλαιστίνη) and Phoenicia in common context. Because Herodotus confused
7 his own understanding of the region as having both Phoenicians, Assurian-Palaistinē, and Arabian
8 components ethnographically, there can be no confusion he thought of each as distinct regions or
9 groups.

10

To what degree Herodotus saw "Palaistinē" as an ethnic group is the matter I will deconstruct in this
11 section. In so doing, the case of the Phoenicians shall not be allowed to rest.

12

And, yes, it is necessary to include original Cyrillic spellings since classical Greek was the lingua
13 franca of scholarship on this region, both then and now. At the Greco-Romano transition, therefor,
14 all subsequent understanding depends on how scholars translated "Palaistinē" from the original
15 Greek to arrive at "Palestine".

16

Herodotus's accounts are filled with detailed descriptions of places, peoples, and events, suggesting
17 he traveled extensively, including to the Levant. His narratives include specific geographical and
18 cultural details that would be difficult to acquire without firsthand experience. By the time
19 Herodotus put pen to paper, the existence of the "Phoenicians" was accepted as a gospel truth, no
20 matter how fictional the "Phoenicians" were. It was enough for all interested parties that the
21 "Phoenicians" were a rhetorical fact.

22

Unlike his predecessors, who often mixed myth with historical facts, Herodotus aimed to provide a
24 systematic and investigative narrative. His magnum opus, "Histories," is a comprehensive chronicle
25 of the Greco-Persian Wars, enriched with cultural, geographical, and ethnographic observations on
26 this region of the world.

27

Herodotus's method of inquiry, critical examination of sources, and effort to differentiate between
28 hearsay and verified events, laid the groundwork for the discipline of history as we know it today.

29

Herodotus erred in his inclusion of the "Phoenicians" primarily because Tyre's "brand" had gained
30 such currency with merchant mariners throughout the Mediterranean world. The "Phoenicians" were
31 using their newly invented alphabet to communicate with their trading colonies across the
32 Mediterranean. But "Phoenician" records were too narrow in scope to interest the likes of Herodotus.
33 Herodotus did not risk his life crossing the Mediterranean Sea to hear mariner's tales, read receipts
34 or record pub stories.

35

Herodotus made directly for the source of all knowledge in the ancient world, the extensive archives
36 of Memphis. Tyre was just a stop along the way to Memphis. While in Memphis, Herodotus applied
37 his meticulous method to document the geology and ethnography of Egypt's immediate neighbors.

1 It was there, in Memphis, that Herodotus learned that the “Phoenicians” originated from the Nile
2 Delta region, along the Red Sea coast of the Sinai. And it was there that Herodotus learned of a
3 people he recorded in Greek as “Palaistine”.

4 The people calling themselves “Palestinians” today argue “Palaistine” is a transliteration of the
5 ancient Egyptian word “Peleset”. To quote Inigo Montoya, “I do not think that word means what you
6 think that word means”.

7 In Ancient Greek, suffixes were applied to ethnic group names. Two of the most common suffixes
8 used to denote ethnic groups were:

- 9 • “-οι” (-oi): This suffix was used to create plural forms of masculine nouns, often indicating the
10 people of a certain place. For example, “Ελληνες (Héllēnes) means “Greeks,” and Ἀχαιοι
11 (Achaioi) means “Achaeans.”
- 12 • “-ίδης” (-ídēs) or “-άδης” (-ádēs): This suffix indicated descent or belonging to a specific group
13 or tribe. For example, Ἀχαιάδες (Achaídes) could mean “descendants of the Achaeans.”

14 These suffixes helped to identify and categorize people from different regions or ethnic backgrounds
15 in ancient Greek texts. If Herodotus was identifying the “Peleset” using a transliteration of a foreign
16 term, Herodotus would not have appended an “oi” or an “ides” onto the term.

17 Proof of that can be found in the formulation of the word “Phulistieim” in the Septuagint. This
18 transliteration from Aramaic to Greek preserved the Aramaic suffix “im”. **Ergo, Herodotus did not
19 employ a transliteration because the suffix “tine” is classical Greek.**

20 So, I wondered if Herodotus was identifying a place not an ethnic group.

21 Classical Greek did employ suffixes to identify place names, including cities. These suffixes often
22 provided information about the location or characteristics of the place. Here are a few common
23 suffixes used in place names:

- 24 • “-ίς” (-is): Often used for cities. For example, “Θήβη” (Thēbē) refers to Thebes.
- 25 • “-αί” (-ai): Used for places and regions, such as “Μακεδονία” (Makedonía) for Macedonia.
- 26 • “-ον” (-on): Sometimes used for place names, such as “Ἐρέχθειον” (Erechteion), referring to a
27 famous temple on the Acropolis in Athens.
- 28 • “-ος” (-os): This suffix was also common in place names, for example, “Ἄργος” (Argos).

29 These suffixes helped to denote different types of locations and their characteristics in ancient Greek
30 texts.

31 Herodotus, regrettably, only mentions one of the five cities associated with the Philistines: Ashdod.
32 In Herodotus' works, Ashdod is spelled as “Azotus” (Αζωτος). This is the Greek form of the name, used
33 in Book II, Chapter 157 of Histories, when Herodotus described the prolonged siege of the city by the
34 Egyptian King Psammitic. Even the name of the king was rendered in Greek as Psammeticus.

1 In the cases of place names, Herodotus asserted classical Greek conventions for Patriarchs and cities
2 named after them. Ashdod Herodotus presumed, was named after a patriarch, so it was rendered in
3 Greek fashion.

4 We may be grateful that Herodotus included examples of place name conventions used by Greek
5 scholars, and one that was associated with the “Philistines” of old. The siege of Ashdod took place
6 around 655 BC and lasted for 29 years! This prolonged siege is noted by Herodotus as one of the
7 longest in history.

8 In the way of observation, the Egyptians of that period were still firmly of the opinion that “Peleset”
9 meant “invaders”, so cordoned their invader’s principal city off for nearly a generation.

10 My point? If the word “Palaistinē” employed by Herodotus was a transliteration of the Egyptian
11 “Peleset”, just with a Greek placename suffix appended to it, the term Herodotus would have used
12 would be “Pelestos”.

13 Herodotus did not. Transliterations do NOT modify the foreign root. Transliterations adopt the
14 foreign root.

15 But Herodotus chose “Palaistinē”, so to “Palaistinē” I correctly turn.

16

17 Tinē as Suffix

18

19 Herodotus was inventing a term, so he had academic license to choose the suffix he preferred. The
20 suffix “tinē” is a typical suffix in classical Greek used to form feminine toponyms.

21 Full stop. Before continuing, underline “feminine” toponym.

22 Continuing, in classical Greek, many feminine toponyms belong to the first declension and end in -η
23 (long eta) in the nominative singular, built on an underlying stem -ην-. When these names passed
24 into Latin and then into modern European languages, that Greek -ην- was frequently rendered as -ine
25 (or sometimes -ene / -one). Examples include Μεσσήνη (Messēnē) → Messene, Ἑρμιόνη (Hermionē) →
26 Hermione, and Ἀρενή (Arenē) → Arene. The suffix -ην- sets these feminine place-names apart from
27 masculine counterparts in -ος (-os) and from regions formed with -ία (-ia), such as Ἀχαΐα (Achaia),
28 and often reflects archaic or dialectal formations preserved in local cults and myths.

29 In morphology, the stem -ην- underlies all case-forms of the noun (genitive Μεσσηνῆς, dative
30 Μεσσηνῆ, etc.), and it feeds directly into related ethnic adjectives and demonym (e.g. Μεσσηνοί
31 “the people of Messene”). Throughout classical authors—from Herodotus and Xenophon to Strabo—
32 these -ην- place-names remain remarkably consistent, marking out a stable class of feminine
33 geographic names alongside other patterns in -ίς and -ία.

34 In classical Greek, the grammatical gender of a place-name is determined primarily by its
35 declensional class. Most feminine toponyms belong to the first declension and end in -η or -ά in the
36 nominative singular (e.g. Μεσσήνη “Messene,” Κρήτη “Crete,” Λύσυρα “Lysura”). These endings

1 signal an underlying stem in *-ην-* or *-αν-*, and they automatically carry feminine agreement for
2 articles, adjectives, and participles. By contrast, masculine place-names typically fall into the
3 second declension ending in *-ος* (e.g. Πάρος “Paros,” Μάγνησις “Magnesia”) or the third declension
4 with a consonantal stem, and they pattern with masculine noun-inflection throughout their case-
5 forms.

6 Beyond morphology, writers often personified certain categories of geography as feminine or
7 masculine. Cities (πόλεις) and islands (νῆσοι)—both feminine nouns—almost always bear feminine
8 names, reflecting the speaker’s mental model of “the city” or “the island” as a singular, nurturing
9 entity.

10 In contrast, mountains (ὄρη) and rivers (ποταμοί) are grammatically masculine, so their names
11 conform to masculine forms. Occasionally, a founder or deity’s gender will override these
12 generalizations; a city named for a goddess (e.g. Ἀρτεμισία “Artemisia”) remains feminine even if its
13 suffix might otherwise suggest another class. Thus, a place is feminine when its declensional ending,
14 default noun-class (πόλις, νῆσος, χώρα), or personified origin aligns with first-declension (-η/-α)
15 morphology.

16 In geography, *polis* (полис) named the city-state itself, but writers routinely spoke of its broader
17 territory as *chora* (хора) “country, land”—for example *Attike chora* (Аттикэ хора) “the land of Attica”
18 or *Beotike chora* (Беотикэ хора) “the Boeotian plain.” Inscriptions and historians also use *periferia*
19 (периферия) “periphery, surrounding district” and *chorion* (хорион) “small region, district” for lands
20 under a city’s sway. On a still larger scale, the term *oikoumene* (оикумэнэ) “the inhabited world”
21 could encompass the known Mediterranean and Near East, while specific regions bore names like
22 *Epeiros* (Эпэйрос), *Kriti* (Крити), or *Mikra Asia* (Микра Азия).

23 Obviously, Herodotus was not lacking options in how to define the Levant.

24 For demographic and political collectives beyond the individual *polis* (полис), Greeks distinguished
25 between *ethnos* (этнос) “tribe, nation, people” and *genos* (генос) “race, clan, stock,” terms
26 Herodotus and Thucydides apply to groups like the *Medoi* (Мэдои) or *Paiones* (Паионес). When a king
27 ruled, his realm is called *basileia* (басиляя) “kingship, kingdom,” and *basileion* (басилюон)
28 sometimes denotes the royal estate or palace but by extension the kingdom itself. Thus, classical
29 authors move smoothly from *polis* (полис) through *chora* (хора) and *periferia* (периферия) out to
30 *ethnos* (этнос) and *basileia* (басиляя), mapping a fully tiered world of city, countryside, people, and
31 crown.

32 But Herodotus had a problem. “Wrestlers” is a vocational noun, an “agent” noun.

33 *Palētēs* (палетес) “wrestler” is grammatically masculine. It belongs to the class of agent-nouns
34 formed with the masculine suffix *-tēs* (-της), so any form representing “Palais” as a wrestler is male.

35 The challenge for Herodotus was to formulate a place name using a masculine root. In classical
36 Greek masculine place names were not typical, but exceptions were found for cities that were named
37 after a patriarch or male god. But these were exceptions. Even if Herodotus would have been within
38 grammatical conventions if he had translated the complete phrase “Wrestles with God”, which he
39 was not, “god” is too generic to be regarded as either a patronym or a theonym.

1 In classical Greek the word for “god” itself is theos (theos, θεός), a second-declension common noun
2 meaning simply “a god” or “divinity.” As a generic term it marks the class of divine beings rather
3 than labeling any one deity, so it would not be treated as a theōnymon in classical usage.

4 It is here, within the conventions of Classical Greek, that Herodotus struggled to formulate a proper
5 term to identify the Levant.

6 The irony could not have been lost on Herodotus. Herodotus found himself struggling to understand
7 the very concept of “god” as the people of the Levant understood it. And because Herodotus was
8 complete in including the Canaanite gods, and descriptions of their temples, the result cannot be
9 attributed to any other any other faction than the Samaritans, Judeans and Benjaminites. All other
10 factions were well defined religiously.

11 Herodotus even related to the older, Canaanite gods as derivatives of his own, familiar Greek gods.
12 At the risk of being repetitive, there is no record of the “Philistine” religion surviving to Herodotus’
13 age in any form. Nor is there any mention of the Philistines by that name in Herodotus’ works.

14 Do not mistake me for being pedantic. Gender matters in classical Greek. Without knowing the
15 identity of the God with which the wrestlers wrestled, there was no way to determine the gender.
16 And even if Herodotus learned the Israelite God was the Divine Patriarch, the duality of the epithet
17 “Wrestles with God” results in a compound toponym employing two masculine nouns.

18 Why then, did Herodotus choose a feminine form?

19 The corresponding feminine of “wrestler” is palētria (палетрия) “female wrestler,” built on the same
20 stem plus the first-declension suffix -tria (-τρια). Whenever you see palētria (палетрия), you know
21 the referent is female.

22 Instead, Herodotus chose a male root (Palais) and a feminine suffix (ine).

23 An obvious choice for Herodotus would have been to name the region “Palaistra”, or wrestling
24 ground. Ancient Greece was filled with Palaistra. More conveniently, Palaistra was also
25 grammatically feminine, which anticipates comfortable adoption as a place name expected to be
26 feminine.

27 Why not?

28 Because Herodotus learned and understood that Israelites were not evoking any wrestler, but a
29 particular wrestler, a Patriarch.

30 Palaistinē (Палайстинэ) is grammatically a noun, not an adjective. Although it ends in the adjectival
31 suffix -īnē (-ίνη), in classical usage it functions as a first-declension feminine toponym (“Palestine”)
32 and declines like any other feminine noun:

33 • Nominative singular: Palaistinē (Палайстинэ)
34 • Genitive singular: Palaistinēs (Палайстинэс)
35 • Dative singular: Palaistinēi (Палайстинэи)

1 • Accusative singular: Palaistinēn (Палайстинэн)

2 Because it bears feminine noun-endings and takes articles and adjective-agreement like any noun,
3 Palaistinē is never treated simply as an adjective in classical Greek, but as the name of a region.

4 But Palaistinē is, at its core, more descriptive than definitive.

5 I assert that, because the Levant was effectively a vassal province of Persia, with no functional
6 government of its own, it was only proper to characterize the region rather than identify the region.
7 Persians were referring to the Levant as “Beyond the River”, and that would have come across as
8 lazy to a Greek scholar like Herodotus.

9 That fairly summarizes all we can learn about the suffix “inē”, so to the root “Palais” we properly
10 turn.

11 Palais as Root

12
13 The following excerpt is taken directly from [“Vocabulary of the Attic Language”, by Sidney Chawner](#)
14 [Woodhouse \(1910\)](#), chosen because it is an authoritative, pre-war source for classical Greek
15 vernacular.

16 Page 993 (ibid):

17 **Wrestle**, v. intrans. P. and V. [palaiō]. Contend: P. and V. [agōnizesthai],
18 [phyllo-macheō]. Wrestle with: P. [prosathlaō] (dat.); see contend with. Wrestle with
19 (perils): P. and V. [machesthai] (acc.) (Plat.). Strong is wine and hard to wrestle with:
20 V. [deinós gár oīnos kai palaíesthai barýs] (Bur., Odes. 678).

21 **Wrestler**, subs. P. and V. [palaiōtēs]. Wrestling, subs. P. and V. [palē], [palaistē].
22 Wrestling match: V. [palaisma]. Wrestling school, subs. P. and V. [palaistra].

23 Without ambiguation, the Greek root “Palais” means wrestles. Applied to an individual, the root
24 means “wrestler”. Applied to a group of individuals, the word means “wrestlers”. Affixed to the
25 place name suffix “inē”, the result is “Wrestlers-place”. Lastly, there is one and only one ethnic
26 group in all of Arabia known as “Wrestlers”, and one and only one which is descended from a
27 patriarchal Wrestler: the Israelites.

28 So why did Jacobson conflate a properly formulated place name with a pun inclusive of the
29 “Philistines”? There is no mention whatsoever of the Philistines by Herodotus. That answer, I expect,
30 is that the text of the Septuagint was too firmly affixed in Jacobson’s mind.

32 To the Septuagint we correctly turn.

34 The Septuagint

36 The Septuagint is the first, formal translation of the Hebrew Torah into Greek.

1
2 The name “Septuagint” comes from the Latin *Vetus Testamentum ex versione Septuaginta*
3 *Interpretum*, meaning “Old Testament from the version of the Seventy Translators.” In Greek it’s
4 known as *hē metáphrasis tōn Hebdomékonta* (ἡ μετάφρασις τῶν ἑβδομήκοντα), literally “the
5 translation of the seventy”.

6
7 According to the Letter of Aristeas, Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BC) commissioned seventy-two
8 Jewish scholars—six from each tribe of Israel—to render the Torah into Koine Greek for Alexandria’s
9 library, a tradition that gave rise to the Roman numeral abbreviation LXX (seventy).

10 Full stop.

11 At the risk of distracting from the objective, I insist we all register the fact that enough leading
12 Israelite scholars from each Israelite tribe were not just present, but institutionally employed, to
13 translate the Torah into Greek in 246 BC. Because this work continued for the next two centuries,
14 let no one claim the “Lost Tribes of Israel” were anything less than pejorative, a hold-over from
15 Israel’s Civil War centuries earlier.

16 Judeans, therefore, have every right, indeed the obligation, to be ethnically representative of all
17 twelve tribes of B’nai Israel.

18 It was Rehoboam’s harsh fiscal policies and refusal to lighten the heavy burdens imposed by Solomon
19 which led the ten northern tribes to rebel under the leadership of Jeroboam. This fracture resulted
20 in the division of the kingdom into Judah (under Rehoboam) and Israel (under Jeroboam).

21
22 The civil war sparked by Jeroboam’s revolt was effectively decided at the Battle of Mount Zemaraim
23 around 913 BCE, when Abijah, son of Rehoboam, crushed the forces of the northern kingdom and
24 captured key northern centers. Although the secession of the ten northern tribes had already been
25 secured by 931 BCE, it was this decisive engagement at Zemaraim that ended major hostilities—
26 Jeroboam’s armies were routed, and the balance of power firmly shifted in favor of Judah, even as
27 the two kingdoms remained politically separate thereafter.

28
29 It is necessary to acknowledge that this earlier Civil War resulted in a house divided. Israelites of all
30 tribes abandoned the revolting tribes’ leadership to side with King Rehoboam. So, in all earnestness,
31 from 931 BC forward, the Kingdom of Judah could not be considered homogeneous ethnically.

32
33 But Jacobson did not fail in his ethnography, he failed in conflating his sources. Because the Hebrew
34 Torah does in fact mention the Philistines, this more ancient reference was translated into Greek,
35 and Jacobson failed to grasp Herodotus did not have access to the Hebrew Torah in his day.

36
37 In Herodotus’ day, the Torah was maintained exclusively by oral tradition, in a volume of knowledge
38 known as the “Living Torah”. And while it is certainly plausible that Herodotus could have been

1 enlightened by Israelite Priests in Jerusalem, just as he was enlightened by Canaanite Priests in Tyre,
2 Herodotus makes no mention that he visited Jerusalem.

3
4 Because Herodotus knew nothing of the “Philistines” or the “Samaritans”, we are forced to
5 acknowledge Herodotus’ local sources were limited to Tyre and the Assurian-Palaistine people nearby.
6 Herodotus was, if nothing else, meticulous, and therefore not prone to either omission or puns. In
7 the best light, where we forgive the Father of History for side-stepping religious strife among the
8 Wrestlers, his omission of god from the epithet “Wrestles with God” must be forgiven.

9
10 If Herodotus had chosen a vindictive double entendre, he would have chosen “Wrestles Without God”,
11 for that is how all cultures have regarded fratricidal conflict.

12
13 What Herodotus neglected to mention, the Philistines, the Septuagint includes.

14 In the first translation into Greek, and the only translation available to Josephus centuries later, the
15 Septuagint spells “Philistine” as “Phulistieim”. This choice of words is critical in understanding since
16 it is a transliteration, proof of which is found in the Aramaic suffix “im”.

17
18 Case closed. Palaistine was not regarded, either by Greeks or by Hellenistic Jews, as meaning
19 Philistines for otherwise they would have used the word “Phulestieim”.

20
21 David Jacobson was tragically close to confirming in 2001 what I here confirm in 2025. Palaistine
22 means Israel. Israel means Palaistine.

23
24 But because the Septuagint was translated into Koine Greek, not Classical Greek, skeptics might
25 resort to vernacular drift to render Herodotus’ “Palaistine” inert. Since we are already here, let’s
26 shake the skeptics out of the bushes.

27
28 To Koine suffixes we turn.

29

30 Koine Suffixes

31
32 Skeptics of my findings will argue that, because Herodotus’ works are no longer in evidence, and
33 Koine Greek was the vernacular employed by scholars making copies in Alexander’s day, I am
34 obligated to adjust my analysis to accommodate possibilities attributable to vernacular drift.

35 To the degree that observation is valid, it is only valid for the suffix, since the root, “Palais”, did not
36 change.

37 But fine. Let’s do it.

38 First, Koine Greek is just classical Greek that adapted more rapidly under the Seleucids. Greek
39 merchants, warriors and scholars ranged far from Greece and, in the same period, many ethnic
40 Greeks were born outside of Greece proper, but Greeks they remained. The vernacular, naturally,

1 drifted under these wider, regional influences. Beyond vernacular drift, increasing number of foreign
2 terms and concepts were assimilated into the Greek language. Still, it was all Greek.

3
4 The classical suffix "-ina" was "-aină" in Koine Greek.

5
6 Both forms were used in Koine Greek. This suffix was added to masculine or neuter nouns, to form
7 their feminine counterparts. For example: "léōn" meaning "lion" becomes "léaina" meaning
8 "lioness". Another example: "drákōn" meaning "dragon" becomes "drákaina" meaning "she-dragon".
9 This suffix was quite productive and helped create feminine forms of many nouns.

10
11 So, yes, while there is a degree of grammatical drift across the centuries, it only introduces one
12 possible variation on the "ine" suffix, and that is "ina". At this juncture we encounter arguments
13 over the "phonetic root" of the suffixes "ine" and "ina".

14
15 **"ina" vs "ine"**

16
17 While I admit that a distinction exists between the classical Greek suffixes "ine" and "ina", the
18 difference is purely phonetic. What I believe is more likely in evidence in the case of "ina" is a
19 transcriptive error.

20 You see, ancient scholars, just like scholars today, were specialists, especially when it comes to
21 spoken languages. Translating a copy of Herodotus' original work across nearly five centuries
22 required a LOT of copies be made across the intervening years.

23 To ensure the accuracy of translations, scholars often compare multiple sources and translations,
24 consult original texts, and consider the historical and linguistic context. In the case of Herodotus'
25 works, examining the original Greek manuscripts and comparing them with various translations can
26 help identify any discrepancies or modifications.

27 Teams were the norm, not the exception. An individual fluent when reading Greek may not
28 necessarily be fluent in spoken Greek, and so native speakers were regularly sought to read a text
29 aloud as it was being translated. It is during these dictation sessions that drift in the vernacular is
30 introduced, and subtle variations like "e" and "a" result.

31 But that can't be the case with Palaistine since it retained the classical "e". This terminal epsilon
32 is evidence of archival integrity.

33 But let's continue, if only to learn what may be learned.

34 Why continue? Because the skeptics could argue all known copies of Herodotus' works are in Latin
35 texts not Cyrillic texts. The challenge becomes more complicated when we are talking about two
36 contrasting alphabets. Adjusting between ancient Cyrillic and ancient Roman alphabets was certain
37 to be demanding.

1 But let's make the analysis simple. Let's just compare the Greek letters that convey the sounds "e"
2 and "a":

3 E (epsilon): Pronounced like the "e" in "met" or "bed".

4
5 H (eta): Pronounced like the "ay" in "say" in Classical Greek, but
6 later evolved to be pronounced like the "ee" in "see".

7
8 A (alpha): Pronounced like the "a" in "father" or "car".

9
10 So, in ancient Greek, three letters are employed in the Cyrillic to convey all the sounds made by "e"
11 and "a". In contrast, the Roman alphabet employs only two letters.

12 But the appearance of the two are identical between the two alphabets.

13 E (epsilon): Looks like the Latin "E".

14 A (alpha): Looks like the Latin "A".

15 The Greek letter "eta" (H) we can discard as the phoneme is not in play in the terms being analyzed.
16 Given that both the Greek letters for "a" (α) and "e" (ε) have distinct and identical counterparts in
17 both the Greek and Roman alphabets, it is unlikely that someone translating the written Greek
18 "Palaistine" could mistake "tine" for "tina" or vice versa.

19 **"Palaistine" is what Herodotus wrote. "Palaistine" is what Herodotus meant.**

20 The only conclusion we can reach employing exclusively classical Greek roots and classical Greek
21 suffixes, was that Herodotus was characterizing the Levant as a region whose inhabitants were known
22 far and wide as "Wrestlers".

23 **As I stated in my introduction, Israel means Palaistine and Palaistine means Israel.**

24 A catastrophic failure of accredited academia will be found in the assumption that Herodotus'
25 "Palaistine" is a transliteration of the Egyptian "Peleset". That cannot be the case, for Herodotus
26 would never have appended the proper, classical Greek suffix "tine" to a transliterated ethnonym.

27 **More importantly, the literal deconstruction of the classical Greek "Palaistine" forms a perfect parity
28 with the translated Aramaic "Wrestler", the Patrronym within the epithet "Y'sra El".**

29
30 Herodotus just made a judgment call. Herodotus parsed "Jacob's" patronym out of the epithet,
31 "Wrestles with God". Herodotus' call was guided, in part by a desire to remain neutral in the contest
32 between Samaritans and the Judeans, and in part by the fact there was then no government, either
33 in Samaria or in Judea.

34 If Herodotus' decision to omit god from the name has more relevant connotations, perhaps to re-
35 render the Samaritans and Judeans as "Wrestling Without God", there is no evidence that is the case.
36 We are left to speculate why Herodotus chose to translate just "Wrestler" instead of the full epithet
37 "Wrestles With God".

1 I will not guide you toward a conclusion. I can only state without ambiguation that “Palaistine” is
2 not a pun in any sense.

3 If the grand irony is lost on my audience, allow me to point out the true catastrophe. In the modern
4 world, the people currently claiming to be “Palestinian” are actually claiming they are Israelites.
5 From the River to the Sea, the Muslims of the Levant declare, Israel will be free. Modern Israelis, in
6 turn, decry the possibility of an “Israelite” state.

7 **If that isn’t the very definition of irony, irony does not exist.**

8 Herodotus’ original meaning exposes the catastrophe at hand. When I say all parties are lost in
9 translation, I mean precisely that.

10 From Herodotus forward, all I must do is document how “Palaistine” morphs from Herodotus’
11 translation of “Israelites” into Josephus’s “Phulisticieim”. But the next term in the morphology was
12 invented by the Seleucids, the Greeks who consolidated Alexander’s conquests following his death.

13

1 Coele-Syria

2
3 Coele-Syria is the next term. It was used to describe the Levant after Alexander the Great conquered
4 Darius III and made off with all of Persia's royal archives. "Coele" is the Seleucid word for "valley".
5 "Syria" derives from a poor Greek transliteration of the Aramaic word "Assyria".

6 The Greek were likely borrowing the term from Herodotus himself. Persian archives regarded the
7 northern cities of the Levant as vassals of Assyria. In the context of Persian records, the term fails
8 to accomplish its task, for this would include only Samaria not Judea.

9 But my objection is not limited to an oversight in demographic inclusion.

10 Even in the archaic this Coele-Syria would be discarded as a misnomer, since the Syrian Valley is in
11 the headwaters of the Euphrates. In contrast, the Levant is defined by the broader Jordan River
12 catchment. Nowhere in Assyrian contexts is the Levant referred to as contiguous to Assyria.

13 In fact, if truth be told, the Assyrians never referred to themselves as either Assyria or as an empire.
14 Many, if not most of the historical "nation states" found in modern textbooks are artefacts of 19th
15 century scholarship, a genre of the discipline which placed a premium on the discovery of ancient
16 "civilizations".

17 On the altar of the Ivory Tower's Super Ego were the Realms of the archaic world recast in fantastic
18 proportions.

19 The "Assyrians" were nothing more than a city state on the Euphrates: Assur. The people of Assur
20 called their dominion "mat Assur", meaning land of Assur. All other regions they controlled were
21 tributaries, vassal city-states who maintained their own identity and culture, but paid levies to Assur
22 to ensure against occupation.

23 Had Assur not been an absentee landlord, Tyre's merchant mariners may never have threatened
24 distant Mediterranean realms. In the way of a side bar, let the world's leaders look to the havoc
25 caused by Tyrian traders when contemplating accommodation of separatists in "autonomous regions"
26 of their own.

27 There is only one thing more dangerous than a snake with a head, and that is a snake with no head.

28 By the time Alexander's scholars reached Assur on their long march to Memphis, scholars had already
29 done major damage. Defining and redefining Arabia from without has led to perpetual conflict within
30 the region largely because books resonate more convincingly than oral tradition.

31 Who are you going to believe? Kurdish folklore or Oxford University's encyclopedia of ancient
32 civilizations?

33 "Syria" never existed. "Syria" was a Seleucid construct, borrowing on Herodotus' histories, until
34 Arab nationalists adopted the noun in the early twentieth century. But Palaistine did exist, just not
35 by that name. Palaistine means Israel in classical Greek. I only include Coele-Syria in the interests

1 of being complete, but also to illustrate exonyms for the Levant are both very rare when they occur,
2 and notoriously inaccurate when they do.

3 Like the records of the Achaemenids, the records of the Seleucids do not specifically mention
4 "Phoenicia" or the "Phoenicians." Instead, they referred to the region by the names of its principal
5 cities, such as Tyre and Sidon. While the term "Coele-Syria" was used to describe the broader area
6 encompassing the coastal plains and inland territories, the collective term "Phoenicia" was not
7 employed in their administrative documents.

8 The Achaemenid Empire referred to the Levant as "Beyond the River", which transliterates as "Eber-
9 Nari", also spelled "Eber-Nahara". No root, suffix or phonetic similarity to "Philistine" or "Palestine"
10 is found there, so we can scratch "Beyond the River" off the list.

11 I insist we recognize that all ancient powers and principals of the region recognized the Levant as
12 just beyond the periphery of their interests. Nowhere in any context has any power or principality
13 claimed the Levant as their sovereign territory. Enemy territory, yes. Conquered territory, yes.
14 Vassal territory, yes. But no power or principality has ever claimed the Levant was their sovereign
15 territory.

16 This fact alone confirms only the indigenous people of the Levant have any documented claim of
17 sovereignty in the Levant. Those indigenous peoples are the regions inhabitants once branded zealots
18 (Canaanites), and the Hebrew people known to posterity as the Moabites, the Ishmaelites, the
19 Israelites, the Edomites and the Midianites.

20 Perhaps one day genetic research will identify who the Philistines truly were, and where they live
21 today, but I suspect that those results will confirm the "invaders" eventually did marry with the
22 Moabites, Ishmaelites, Israelites, Edomites and Midianites.

23 The invaders eventually became family, and the invaders were heard of no more.

24 At this juncture in history, and in my analysis, ethnic Hebrews remained in the Levant throughout all
25 periods of history, with only the urbanites, clergy and aristocracy taken into captivity periodically.
26 This is not an "interpretation" but documented fact. It is a fact which has been subject to critique
27 based on historical, biblical, and archaeological evidence, evidence which paints a more complex
28 picture of displacement and return.

29 These facts have withstood all scrutiny.

30 One of the main critiques of my argument lies in the comprehensive descriptions of the Babylonian
31 conquest found in biblical texts, such as 2 Kings 24-25 and 2 Chronicles 36. These accounts emphasize
32 widespread deportations and the destruction of Jerusalem, including the Temple, suggesting that the
33 exile involved more than just the elite.

34 While it is true that the Babylonian strategy prioritized exiling leaders, skilled workers, and the
35 educated class, ordinary citizens likely faced displacement as well. Furthermore, the prophets of the
36 exile, such as Ezekiel, address a diverse exilic community, not exclusively aristocratic members. This
37 broader exile undermines the claim that the majority of Hebrews remained in the Levant, untouched
38 by captivity.

1 Archaeological evidence adds another layer of complexity. The Babylonian destruction of urban
2 centers, including Jerusalem and other settlements in Judah, indicates significant population
3 disruption. Excavations reveal signs of reduced habitation in the region during the exilic period,
4 consistent with widespread exile or displacement.

5 While rural populations remained in Judah, they lived under Babylonian control with limited
6 autonomy. But remain they did. In fact, a proper assessment of urban logistics of the age will confirm
7 the majority of the region's population had to live outside of the cities, owing to limits on essential
8 resources like water and the presence of disease.

9 Although the narrative of modern jews emphasize periods of diaspora, these narratives erode the
10 Bonifides of the Israelites in the Levant by painting a false picture of total displacement, total exile
11 and, finally, Aliya. That has never been the case. In fact, episodes of mass exile are episodic and
12 limited to the urban populations, but more over, these episodes oscillate from Samaritan Israelites
13 to Judean Israelites, and never both at the same time.

14 Further, any claim that return from exile was entirely peaceful and lacked conflicts or opposition
15 overlooks the challenges faced by returnees. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah describe resistance
16 from local populations, including Samaritans and others who had settled in the region during the
17 exile.

18 But scholarship along these lines neglects the fact that the Samaritans were asserting they were the
19 legitimate Israelites, in contrast to those returning from diaspora. The friction experienced during
20 the Judean Aliya mirrors that witnessed during the current Aliya. Jews returning to Israel face
21 friction, both from Israelites and from Arabs in the region.

22 The Judean Aliya was not merely a logistical return of a dislocated elite, but a collective act of
23 restoration tied to covenantal and religious identity. The rebuilding of the Temple and the resumption
24 of liturgical rites during the Judean Aliya confirm a communal effort to renew the relationship
25 between the God of Abraham and the Hebrew people, the Judeans being just one caste of Hebrews
26 in the region.

27 To the kingdom of Judah as a government we turn.

28

29 The Kingdom of Judah

30
31 The Kingdom of Judah, despite what its name implies, was not limited to the Judean descendants of
32 Israel. Judeans and Benjaminites dominated the Kingdom of Judah's demographics, as reflected in
33 religious records of the early Roman period, but representatives of all twelve tribes were present.
34 The Septuagint proves this as fact.

35 The infamous census ordered by Caesar Augustus, though, neglected to record tribal affiliations, and
36 it was in this census that the "Jews" were born. At the risk of sounding pedantic, it was Quirinius,
37 not Caesar Augustus who ordered the infamous census. Historians agree there is no evidence of an

1 empire-wide census ordered centrally from Rome. Quirinius, like all of Rome's officers, was acting
2 as plenipotentiary so, for intents and purposes, it was Caesar Augustus who ordered the census.

3 Theologians will likely say I am being pedantic, but since the offending census was designed
4 specifically for, and targeted the Kingdom of Judah, I believe accuracy is more than just relevant.
5 Roman officers were attempting to wrap their heads around this strange ethnic group, attempting to
6 quantify them, in order to control them.

7 In the immediate pre-Roman period, historians argue, the Kingdom of Judah exercised "limited
8 autonomy" and so could not be considered a sovereign entity. This is revisionism, or absenteeism at
9 its worst, for in the absence of any discernable overlord, the Kingdom of Judah must be acknowledged
10 as a sovereign nation.

11 What cannot be argued is that Judeans, Benjaminites, and all their many and varied Hebrew
12 neighbors, were an ethnic group commonly known to all as Israelites. They may have also been
13 arguing to what degree they were each "Israelites", but "Israelite" remained the binding association
14 between all factions.

15 In the earliest Roman documents, the Kingdom of Judah was referred to as "Iudea," a Latinized
16 version of the name derived from the ancient Kingdom of Judah. Initially, the Romans recognized the
17 Kingdom of Judah as a client kingdom under the practical rule of the Herodian dynasty. Herod the
18 Great, realizing Caesar's Armies were on the march, and were unstoppable in their search for the
19 Phoenician's capital, chose to get ahead of the problem.

20 Herod the Great concluded, if he couldn't beat Rome, he might as well join Rome. If Herod was
21 allied with Rome before Caesar discovered who the "Phoenicians" truly were, perhaps he'd accept
22 the Judeans were not the "Phoenicians" Rome sought.

23 What I find compelling about this period, and accredited academia has utterly neglected, is that no
24 faction in the Kingdom Judah revealed Tyre was the head of the snake. As tempting as that narrative
25 is, it is not the purpose of this discussion. We are here to assess where legitimate ethnic identities
26 are found in the Levant, identify where foreign labels have muddied the waters, and reveal where
27 modern aspirations go too far.

28 Just let the record reflect no Judean, either Herodian or Nazarene, divulged Tyre's role in the
29 "Phoenician" empire.

30 For our immediate purposes, we need only accept that the Kingdom of Judah existed as a sovereign
31 nation because Caesar acknowledged it did. We know Caesar recognized the Kingdom of Judah
32 because Caezar counted the Kingdom of Judah, and her King, as allies, at least until he could
33 subordinate Judah under his apartheid regime.

34 Throughout the Roman period, there is no mention of the "Philistines", at least not until Josephus
35 summoned that ancient invader.

36 As for the word "Palestine", this was merely the Romanized translation of the earlier Greek term,
37 "Palaistine". Caesar, for all his faults, had no dog in this hunt. Caesar couldn't give a damn about

1 the Philistines. Caesar didn't march his armies around the Mediterranean in search of the Philistines.
2 Caesar was searching for the Phoenicians.
3 Caesar wanted to cut off the head of the snake.
4 During the Roman period, the Kingdom of Judah maintained a degree of autonomy despite being
5 subordinate to Roman authority. Herod the Great, for example, was appointed "King of the Jews" by
6 the Roman Senate, reflecting this semi-independent status.
7
8 However, after the deposition of Herod Archelaus in 6 AD due to misrule, the Kingdom of Judah was
9 formally annexed as a Roman province subsequently named Judea. This transition marked the end of
10 Judah's recognition as a sovereign kingdom, and its integration into the Roman administrative system.
11 All Israelites, no matter what their tribal affiliation, were dubbed "Iudei", a term which forms the
12 Latin root for the modern word "Jew". "In other words, "Jews" are an artefact of the Caesarean
13 occupation of the Kingdom of Judah.
14

15 Canaanites Redux

16
17 Before continuing into the Common Era, remember that "Canaanite" originally meant "zealots".
18 There never was a place called "Canaan" nor an ethnic group called "Canaanites", regardless of
19 what hack interpretations of the Torah insist. Epithets were employed instead of names, and epithets
20 were frequently modified over time.
21 But "canaan" always meant "zealots".
22 It was early in the Roman period that the "Canaanites" return to the pages of recorded history.
23 Do not mistake me for making a literary allusion. The Judean militants the New Testament documents
24 as conspiring to overthrow Roman rule called themselves the Kana'im, the Canaanites! Why? Because
25 that is who they were. They were a religious sect dedicated to the Rule of Divine Law, not Caesar's
26 law.
27 I kid you not.
28 The term **Kana'im** is used in both **Hebrew and Aramaic** texts of that age to describe the **Zealots**, the
29 militant Judean faction that resisted Roman rule. The word derives from the same Aramaic root
30 "qana", meaning **zealous or fervent**, and was applied to those who were passionately committed to
31 Jewish sovereignty.
32 Josephus, in his *Jewish War*, also describes the Zealots as calling themselves **Kana'im**, emphasizing
33 their ideological and militant stance against Rome. Additionally, linguistic analysis suggests that the
34 Greek term **Zelotes** used in the New Testament is a direct translation of **Kana'im**, reinforcing its
35 historical usage.

1 There is, therefore, no excuse for mistaking the “Canaanites” of Abram’s day with an ethnic group
2 or nation. Nor could “Canaan” be misconstrued as a geographical region, even where a region’s
3 people could be characterized as ‘zealous’.

4 If Jews can be regarded as “Canaanites”, clearly I have made my case.

5 It is in the histories of Josephus that the real damage to ethnic identity in this region was done. For
6 it was Josephus who insinuated that “Palestine” meant “Philistine”. Personally, I believe the burden
7 of insinuation falls more heavily on the shoulders of the interpreter than it does the author, but it is
8 what it is. Academic consensus has, for two thousand years, favored the insinuation Josephus
9 histories appear to make.

10 Josephus, as I am about to prove, was more than wrong about the Philistines, he was intentionally
11 misdirecting Caesar’s ire away from the Levant. But because Christian theologians rely on Josephus
12 to authenticate the life and ministry of Jesus, none now dare to expose Josephus’ fraud.

13 Perhaps it was not fraud. Perhaps it was. I’ll allow you to be the judge.

14 Before exposing Josephus, it is best I establish who Josephus was as the destruction of the Second
15 Temple in Jerusalem approached.

16 Josephus was a leader of the Great Jewish Revolt!

17

18 The Great Jewish Revolt

19

20 The First Romano-Jewish War, also known as the Great Jewish Revolt, was a significant conflict
21 between the Jewish population of Judea and the Roman Empire, lasting from 66 to 73 AD. This war
22 marked the first of three major Jewish uprisings against Roman rule and had profound consequences
23 for the Jewish people and their homeland.

24 The war involved several key factions. On one side was the Roman Empire, represented by its legions
25 and local allies, including Herod Agrippa II, a client king loyal to Rome. The Roman forces were
26 initially led by Cestius Gallus, the legate of Syria, and later by the future emperors Vespasian and his
27 son Titus.

28 On the opposing side were various Jewish factions, including the Zealots, who were fervent
29 nationalists advocating for independence from Rome, and the Sicarii, a radical splinter group known
30 for their guerrilla tactics and assassinations. The Jewish provisional government, formed in
31 Jerusalem, also played a role, though internal divisions among Jewish groups often weakened their
32 efforts.

33 The conflict began in 66 AD when tensions between the Jewish population and Roman authorities
34 escalated due to heavy taxation, religious desecration, and economic disparities. The immediate
35 trigger was the seizure of funds from the Temple treasury by the Roman governor Gessius Florus,
36 which led to widespread unrest.

1 Jewish rebels expelled Roman forces from Jerusalem and established a provisional government. The
2 Romans initially suffered a humiliating defeat at the Battle of Beth Horon, where an entire legion
3 was destroyed.
4 In response, Emperor Nero dispatched Vespasian to suppress the revolt.
5 Vespasian systematically conquered rebel strongholds in Galilee and Judea, employing brutal tactics
6 to crush resistance. After Nero's death in 68 AD, Vespasian returned to Rome to become emperor,
7 leaving his son Titus to complete the campaign.
8 The war culminated in 70 AD with the Siege of Jerusalem, during which Roman forces breached the
9 city's defenses, destroyed the Second Temple, and massacred or enslaved much of the population.
10 The final stronghold of Jewish resistance, Masada, fell in 73 AD after a prolonged siege.

11
12 **Josephus In Rome**
13

14 The First Romano-Jewish War ended in a decisive Roman victory, resulting in the destruction of
15 Jerusalem and its Temple, the displacement of the Jewish population, and the dissolution of Jewish
16 political autonomy. The war also marked the beginning of the Caesarean Diaspora and the emergence
17 of Rabbinic Judaism as the dominant form of Jewish religious practice. But, it must be noted, the
18 Samaritan Israelites remained, as did the rural population in Judah proper.
19 One Jew in particular, a rebel named Josephus, played a critical role in both the Great Jewish Revolt,
20 its resolution and, oddly, redirecting Rome's gaze from the Levant to Crete.
21 Christian theologians, historians and apologists applaud the works of Josephus the Historian owing to
22 the fact his text, "Antiquities of the Jews" provides one of the earliest, if not the earliest secular
23 acknowledgement of a lay preacher named Jesus of Nazareth.
24 In "Antiquities of the Jews", Josephus provides a brief but historically significant account of Jesus
25 of Nazareth, referring to Jesus as a wise man and a teacher who performed extraordinary deeds,
26 who attracted a following among Jews and Gentiles alike. "Antiquities of the Jews" acknowledges
27 Jesus' crucifixion under Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, and mentions the continued existence of
28 the group that followed him, known as Christians.
29 Josephus's account, despite its brevity, is considered one of the earliest non-Christian references to
30 Jesus, adding a layer of historical context to the biblical narratives and providing an external
31 validation of Jesus' impact on the people of the time. His writings have been subject to extensive
32 scholarly analysis and debate, particularly regarding their authenticity and the extent of later
33 Christian interpolations, but they remain a crucial point of reference for understanding the historical
34 Jesus and the early Christian movement.
35 Christian scholars conclude, "He is risen indeed!" and go no further.

36 I think not. I think Josephus deserves to be turned on his spit. Christians are reluctant to do so, for
37 to undermine any part of "Antiquities of the Jews" risks subverting the veracity of what little he

1 does say about the life, ministry and crucifixion of an innocent man. In neglecting to hold Josephus
2 to the highest academic standards, Christian scholars have allowed a dangerous delusion to persist,
3 one which both Jewish and Christian imprimatur lends credibility in the modern world.

4 I am, of course, talking about the “Philistines”.

5 Note the spelling, because it is in Josephus’ “Antiquities of the Jews” that Christendom, and thereby
6 the whole world, acquires the aspirated “Ph” by which a long obscured ethnic group is known.

7

8 Phulistieim

9

10 The aspirated “Ph” in “Philistines” matters. Before revealing why, allow me remind you that the
11 Greek word “Phulistieim” first occurs in the Septuagint, the Torah as translated into Greek by
12 Israelite scholars. Note the name ends in the suffix “im”, an Aramaic suffix, not a Greek suffix. That
13 requires we acknowledge that Phulistieim is a transliteration of an Aramaic word into a Greek
14 spelling.

15 More importantly, the scholars of that day did not employ the term “Palaistine”. Nor did any
16 subsequent Greek Scholar.

17 To place Josephus in proper, historical contexts, Josephus was a Herodian loyalist who became a
18 turncoat and collaborated with the Roman General who accepted his surrender: Vespasian.
19 Vespasian, I assure you, was not a philanthropist.

20 Josephus turned his back on the cause of Judah’s liberation from Rome and chose to serve his captor
21 rather than meet the same fate as Jesus of Nazareth. For all intents and purposes, in modern terms,
22 Josephus became an intelligence agent for Caesar, spilling his guts on all he knew about the people
23 who lived in the region Herodotus labeled “Palaistine”.

24 Born in 37 AD in Jerusalem, Josephus, originally named Yosef ben Matityahu. His father, Matthias,
25 was a member of the Jewish priesthood, and his mother claimed royal lineage. This prestigious
26 lineage granted Josephus access to the elite circles of Jewish society from an early age, providing
27 him with a rich education in both Jewish traditions and Hellenistic culture.

28 The salient point: Josephus was multi-lingual, being fluent in Aramaic, likely conversant in Ancient
29 Egyptian, could read and write in classical Greek, and could speak, read and write the Latin
30 contemporary to his age. These were all survival skills, not academic achievements.

31 Vespasian found Josephus absolutely invaluable during the Jewish-Roman War and, further, as a
32 source of invaluable information later in life as he advanced toward the seat of all power in Rome.

33 None of this is intended to suggest Josephus was all bad, just a highly educated survivalist trying to
34 save his life in an age when the cross was his only other choice. It has been remarked that Caesar
35 ruled with an iron fist but, in fact, Caesar ruled with iron nails. Josephus is credited as having
36 “predicted” Vespasian’s rise and so grabbed a Roman oar and began rowing.

1 All I am attempting to establish is that Josephus was operating under duress from the moment he
2 was captured fighting on the wrong side of Caesar's histories. Born a mere few years after the
3 crucifixion of Jesus Christ, Josephus lived during a time when the nascent Christian movement was
4 beginning to spread throughout the Roman Empire. His life spanned a period of profound change and
5 upheaval, as the impact of Christ's life and teachings began to permeate Jewish and Roman societies.

6 As we all know, the Christians were, like their Rabbi, pacifists unto death. As much as Josephus
7 respected and admired Christ for his integrity, ministry and many accomplishments, Josephus
8 modelled himself after Barrabas and chose to lead in the revolt against Rome's authority as a man.

9 But Josephus' temporal proximity to the crucifixion of Christ, and the rage it unleashed among those
10 prone to violence, provided Josephus with a unique vantage point from which to observe and
11 document the religious and political transformations of his era.

12 For frame of reference, it is believed the Temple was destroyed in 70 AD. Therefore, Josephus was
13 33 years old when the Temple was destroyed, and Jerusalem was sacked. Josephus's life was
14 profoundly shaped by the tumultuous events of the First Jewish-Roman War (66-73 AD).

15 As the conflict erupted, Josephus was appointed the military governor of Galilee, where he led
16 Jewish forces against the Romans. However, his military career was marked by controversy,
17 particularly his surrender to the Roman general Vespasian in 67 AD.

18 Josephus turned.

19 He served as an advisor and translator for Vespasian and his son, Titus. His experience during the war
20 and his subsequent role under Roman patronage provided him with unique insights into both the
21 Jewish and Roman worlds.

22 None of this would be of any interest to anyone if Josephus had not published. His major works
23 include "The Jewish War," which provides a detailed account of the First Jewish-Roman War, and
24 "Antiquities of the Jews," a comprehensive history of the Jewish people from creation to the outbreak
25 of the war.

26 Josephus's writings preserve a wealth of information about Jewish customs, laws, and the socio-
27 political landscape of the time, making him an essential source for historians and scholars studying
28 the ancient world.

29 Despite his extensive bibliography and clearly advantageous vantage point in history, none of this
30 made Josephus an authoritative author. In most respects, Josephus merely recorded what he was
31 taught, or what he had read.

32 The deficit in Josephus' scholarship is laid bare for all to see in his account of the "Philistines".

33 In "Antiquities of the Jews," Josephus provides an account of the Philistines, an ancient people who
34 were significant adversaries of the Israelites. He describes their origins as being from the island of
35 Crete and their settlement in the coastal regions of Canaan.

36 Josephus details various conflicts between the Philistines and the Israelites, emphasizing the
37 Philistines' role in the biblical narratives, including the famous stories of Samson and David. His
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1 writings help to contextualize the Philistine presence and their interactions with the Israelites,
2 offering a valuable perspective on this ancient civilization.

3 The account of the Philistines can be found in Book I of "Antiquities of the Jews."

4 It is noteworthy that in the surviving manuscripts of "Antiquities of the Jews," Josephus spells the
5 word "Philistines" as Φυλιστείμ (Phulistieim) in Greek. Phulistieím, as I have previously documented,
6 was a word distinct from "Palaistine" in classical Greek. Josephus' use confirms he was taught
7 classical Greek. For the record, Josephus will have known from birth the Aramaic word for the
8 Philistines was Pəlîštîm, a word which did not employ an aspirated "Ph".

9 Like I said, the aspirated "Ph" matters more than anything in determining Josephus' motives. Why
10 did a native-born Aramaic speaker resort to a Greek noun to misdirect Vespasian's gaze?

11 Because it sounded closer to the word "Phoenician".

12 Because there are no known instances where Greek sources prior to or contemporary with Josephus
13 use an aspirated "Ph" when referring to the region "Palaistine", and Josephus substituted the Greek
14 term "Phulistieim", motive must be inferred.

15 Rather than sacrifice Tyre to this strange new god named Caesar, Josephus associated Rome's
16 bogeyman, the "Phoenicians", with Israel's bogeyman, the "Phulistieim"!

17 What harm could that possibly do? There had not been anyone called a "Philistine" for hundreds of
18 years. Indeed, by Josephus' day it may have already been suspected that the original invaders came
19 from Crete, so ambiguity served as a fig leaf for Josephus' conscience.

20 I suspect this is not ignorance or mistake, but spin.

21 The aspirated "Ph", I warrant, is the smoking gun but, in *Antiquities of the Jews*, there are shell
22 casings all over the floor. The dead giveaway is Josephus' association of Philistine kings with Abraham
23 and Isaac. This gambit is found in *Antiquities* 1.12.1 (1.162) and *Antiquities* 1.12.2 (1.164).

24 Full stop.

25 According to Egyptian records, which record contemporary events during the reigns of Pharaohs
26 Merneptah then Ramesses II, the "Peleset" did not arrive on the coast of the Levant until 1190 BC at
27 the earliest.

28 Secular scholars believe Abraham lived and died no later than 1600 BC. Biblical scholars assert an
29 earlier date of no later than 1800 BC. Under the best-case scenario, Josephus has a deficit of 410
30 years for which to account.

31 I am forgiving, to a fault, but that's a wide gap. I am also prepared to accept that Josephus was just
32 shooting from the hip in his chronologies of a long-obsured people. He was, after all, trying to save
33 his precious neck, and Vespasian was thirsty for any advantage he could find in the theater.

34 Josephus could, in fact, say anything he wished about the "Phulistieim", or nothing at all. Truly,
35 why even discuss them? Except as filler to inflate his own manuscripts and, thereby, his own worth
36 as a scholar, there is no other apparent purpose for introducing the "Phulistieim".

1 I just don't believe Josephus was guided only by his desire to survive. The aspirated "Ph" reveals
2 much more. Why contort what was clearly "Palaistine" in classical Greek, and "Pelištîm" in his native
3 Aramaic?

4 Why his choice of "Phulistieim"?

5 I offer the contortion was necessary to create a diversion. "Palaistine" was not close enough to
6 "Phoinikes" to indict, but "Phulistieim" was!

7 My logic follows a purple course:

8 Greek mariners lend Tyre the nickname "Phoenicia" owing to their much-lauded Royal Purple dye.
9 The Tyrians, in turn, ride the wave of their export wealth to become the first documented
10 transnational organization in history. As all histories will attest, the Tyrians abused the influence
11 they acquired, converted it to military power, then marched an army across the alps to overrun
12 Rome.

13 Julius Caesar said, "Never again!".

14 From that point forward in history, the Arch Nemesis of Rome was the "Phoenicians", the "Purples".
15 Except, though everyone knew who they were, nobody had a clear idea where they were from.
16 Caesar was not a fool, and likely knew he was up against a network, but he didn't know where the
17 head of the snake was to be found.

18 In Phoenicia, presumably.

19 Rome concluded the head of the snake was Carthage but, in fact, it was Tyre. Proper historians will
20 blanche at my claim for, I admit, even Tyre could not be confused with the head of what became the
21 "Phoenician" snake, for Tyre never issued orders, just collected revenues. Tyre, in turn, was paying
22 most of that as tribute to Assur.

23 Carthage was just a Tyrian forward operating base, a coastal city Tyrean mariners overran and
24 claimed as an autonomous enclave. The Pax Romana Caesar promised to impose, unto the limits of
25 the known world, was proposed from the first to stop the Phoenician juggernaut.

26 By the time Caesar embraced the Kingdom of Judah as a "client", an ancient grudge match had likely
27 resolved to a persistent paranoia, a nagging ache which all who reigned as Caesar could not relieve.
28 Imagined threats captured Caesar's attention, so the mere stink of "Phoenicia" was enough for
29 Vespasian to sit up and take notice.

30 Clearly Caesar did not suspect the Judaeans were the elusive "Phoenicians", they had no port cities
31 to speak of, and no navy whatsoever. The majority of ships employed by Judeans were fishing boats
32 on the Sea of Galilea. It was certain that nobody in Rome knew just how close they were to the
33 source of their nightmare.

34 We all know what happened next: Herod the Great, sensing doom at his doorstep, chose to flatter
35 the beast, ordered the Slaughter of the Innocents to silence an initiative to depose him, and watched
36 as his corruption consumed him body and soul. Herod's son ascended to Herod the Great's throne,
37 and he too was called Herod.

1 The Jews would likely never have revolted, had Pilate not exposed the Pax Romana as a fraud.
2 Rumors circulated that one of Caesar's innocent victims had risen from the dead, but few would hear
3 those reports. Fewer still believed them, over the roar for Barabas. The resurrection of Christ was
4 missed by all who enraged at his crucifixion. And enrage they did.

5 What I find compelling, is the pragmatism of the Herodians, who, after disposing of the Boy Who
6 Lived, rehabilitated his memory, a prime example of which is found in the witness of Josephus
7 himself.

8 I am willing to bet Josephus' father and mother were staunch loyalists during the persecution of
9 Christ, but who knows for certain? A nut rarely falls far from its tree, so Josephus' leadership in the
10 rebellion against Rome predicts the position of his father, and they, their faction. Josephus saw a
11 savior in Barabas, but just a kind and decent man in Christ.

12 Vespasian, for reasons which have never been explained, redeemed Josephus despite his role leading
13 the Great Jewish Revolt. Josephus was captured by Vespasian in 67 AD during the siege of Jotapata.
14 Recognizing his intelligence, and potential usefulness, Vespasian spared his life, a decision influenced
15 by a prophecy Josephus made about Vespasian's destiny to become Emperor.

16 Let it not be said Josephus couldn't flatter a dragon. And flatter he did. But he flattered Vespasian
17 in a direction which drew the dragon's gaze far from Judea.

18 Josephus was captured by Vespasian in the year 67 AD.

19 Vespasian became Emperor of Rome on July 1, 69 AD.

20 A meager two years after Josephus "prophesied" Vespasian would rise to god-like status, Vespasian
21 did. This fact alone requires we acknowledge Vespasian acted on Josephus' prophecy immediately,
22 and without delay.

23 Josephus would not publish "Antiquities of the Jews" until 93 or 94 AD, but he was filling Vespasian's
24 head with useful intel every step along the way. Josephus had to. Josephus' histories, and his
25 prophecy compelling Vespasian to seize his own laurels, was all that was keeping Josephus alive.

26 One can almost hear Vespasian exhorting Josephus at the end of a long day of study, "Good work,
27 Josephus. Now, get some rest. I'll most likely kill you in the morning."

28 It was Josephus who whispered "Phulisticem" into Vespasian's ear, then pointed to Crete.

29 Presto, we are all off to the Cretan War.

30

31 The Cretan War

32

33 The island of Crete, located in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, has long been recognized as a crucial
34 hub in ancient maritime trade routes. Crete held a key position due to its strategic location between
35 the Greek mainland, Egypt, and the Levant.

1 Crete's central location in the Mediterranean provided a perfect staging ground for Phoenician
2 traders. The island's proximity to major civilizations such as Egypt, Greece, and the Near East allowed
3 for the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultures. This advantageous position enabled the Phoenicians
4 to dominate trade routes and maintain their economic and cultural influence.

5 In fact, it was the Phoenician's attempts to dominate Sicily and control the stepping-stone to the
6 Etruscan Peninsula that led to conflict with Rome in the first place. Carthage was the port from
7 which the Phoenicians sought to control Sicily. In the same manner, the Phoenicians dominated Crete.

8 Archaeological findings on Crete provide substantial evidence of Phoenician presence and trade.
9 Artifacts such as pottery, inscriptions, and remnants of trade goods underscore the island's role as a
10 major port in the Phoenician trade network. Sites like Knossos and Phaistos reveal the extent of
11 Cretan interaction with the wider Mediterranean world.

12 Josephus was certain to have known all about Tyre's reach and influence, for Galilee was within
13 walking distance of Tyre, and that famous city was a strategic interest to everyone looking to replace
14 King Herod, Rome or, optimally, both. Jesus of Nazareth famously attended a wedding in Tyre to
15 invite the Tyrians back into the Covenant of Abraham.

16 In Jesus' day, Pontius Pilate clearly did not know Tyre's significance. Had he, Rome's ambitious
17 general would have marched on Tyre at once and destroyed it to the last spec. Imagine the fame
18 Pilate would have achieved in Rome had he returned in triumph after having destroyed, once and for
19 all, the "Phoenicians"!

20 Josephus whispered "Phulisticem" in Vespasian's ear, then pointed the would-be Caesar toward Crete.

21 One is required to ask "Why?".

22 Why was Crete the first place Vespasian conquered after becoming Caesar? Because his Prophet,
23 Josephus, informed him the source of Rome's nightmare was to be found on that remote island in
24 the Aegean. Of this I am absolutely certain.

25 Can I prove it? No. But what we know is that, after Vespasian became Emperor on July 1, 69 AD,
26 Josephus continued to serve him in several capacities:

27 Josephus served as an advisor to Vespasian, using his knowledge of Jewish culture and language to
28 assist in the administration and understanding of the Jewish territories and people. His role as an
29 intermediary helped ease tensions between the Romans and the Jews.

30
31 Josephus was tasked with writing the history of the Jewish War and other works, including "Antiquities
32 of the Jews," which he completed around 93 to 94 AD. This was no small task, mind you. Vespasian's
33 glory rested on the documentation Josephus could and did provide.

34
35 Josephus' dragon craved to be flattered, and Josephus filled Caesar's every wish. Josephus' works
36 provided a detailed account of Jewish history, culture, and the recent conflicts, serving both as
37 historical documents and as tools for Roman propaganda.

1 I offer the “Phulisticieim” were conjured up by Josephus to serve as a villain in common.

2
3 Josephus enjoyed a close physical and institutional relationship with Vespasian and his family.
4 Josephus lived in Rome under the patronage of Vespasian and his successors, Titus and Domitian.
5 Josephus was even provided Roman citizenship and a pension, allowing him to reside comfortably
6 in the city of Rome proper. This physical proximity facilitated regular interactions with the Emperor,
7 and his court.

8
9 Josephus was integrated into the Roman institutional framework. His status as a Roman citizen and
10 his role as a historian placed him within the intellectual elite of Rome. He had access to the inner
11 circles of power and was able to influence and document key events.

12
13 Josephus was accomplishing what Herod could only have dreamed of in his lifetime. Josephus's
14 relationship with Emperor Vespasian was multifaceted and deeply intertwined.

15
16 As an advisor, interpreter, and historian, Josephus served Vespasian with loyalty and diligence. Their
17 physical proximity in Rome, and Josephus's integration into Roman institutions, highlight the trust
18 and value Vespasian placed in him. This relationship not only shaped the course of Josephus's life,
19 but Vespasian's as well.

20
21 But, if I am correct about Josephus' conflation of the Greek “Phoinikes”, and all subsequent events
22 predict that I am, Josephus captured Rome after Vespasian captured Josephus. Josephus was, if
23 nothing else, an extraordinary operator who evoked Rome's Bogeyman, the Phoenicians, and married
24 them to Judea's ancient Bogeyman, the Philistines.

25
26 Why? Perhaps at first, just to remain alive. But once his life was secure, only ambition could compel
27 Josephus. I argue, Josephus redirected a tyrant from his beloved homeland to the land of a recent
28 enemy. Josephus was, after all, a Maccabean at heart.

29
30 Who could complain? Neither the “Phoenicians” nor the “Philistines” existed, and Josephus knew it.
31 Granted, Josephus was in fact referring to the Philistines when he chose the name “Phulisticieim”, and
32 it seems Josephus may even have been ignorant about what the Greek “Palaistine” meant originally.

33
34 Josephus himself may have assumed “Palaistine” was a transliteration of the Aramaic “Pəlištîm”, so
35 close are the two in pronunciation.. By the time Josephus studied Greek histories, which could not
36 exclude Herodotus, this assumption may have become universal.

37
38 If I am correct, and my findings pass peer review, we're talking about the worst case of blowback in
39 human history.

40
41 So, who do we blame for the current state of affairs?

42
43 Don't leap to conclusions.

1
2 I have more witnesses to call to the stand in the case of Israel vs. Palaistine. Next, I call to the
3 witness stand, the Emperor Hadrian.
4
5

1 **Palaestina**

2
3 Our next stop is Hadrian's Rome where Herodotus' "Palaistine" was Romanized as *Palaestina*. Hadrian
4 next ordered that name to be changed to Syria-Palaestina to erase all references to Judea from all
5 maps.

6 As you can see, there isn't much more to tell. Hadrian borrowed directly from Herodotus when
7 evoking "Palaestina" and applied it, as the Achaemenid's had when they coined the term "Coele-
8 Syria".

9 Hadrian was heaping irony on top of irony, for in his attempt to cancel Judah, he renamed the entire
10 region "Palaestina", which we all now know means Israel. If there are angels in heaven, they can
11 only be weeping.

12 From Hadrian forward, most documentary references to the region use the term "Palaestina", a
13 literary tradition which, predictably, continued in the Byzantine Era. We need not delve any further,
14 for Hadrian's Palaestina was immortalized in every Christian Bible in existence.

15 Gratefully, Islam sheds additional light on the subject.

16

17 **Filastin**

18
19 It was in the Islamic Era, in the 10th century AD by Christian reckoning, that the aspirated "Ph" in
20 "Philistines" was incorporated into Arabic references to the same, long assimilated ethnic group. Al-
21 Maqdisi and other scholars used Filastin (فَلَسْطِين) instead of the now antiquated "Peleset".

22 I attribute the vernacular drift to literary diffusion. Islamic scholars were not making things up.
23 Islamic scholars were, frankly, more efficacious than the best that European scholarship had, at least
24 until the Carolingian Age.

25 That did not render Islamic scholars immune to mistakes, but in the case of the borrowed word
26 "Filastin", there was no mistake. By the time Islamic scholars penned the term in Arabic, they were
27 merely transliterating what had become, by then, a proper noun. The aspirated "Ph" in "Phulisticieim"
28 is Romanized by Islamic scholars as "F".

29 Just let the record reflect that, in origins, Filastin could only mean "invaders".

30 Back to Rome we turn.

31

32

1 **Palestina**

2
3 I am obligated to return to the Romanized “Palaestina” in the 11th to 16th centuries in Europe, just
4 to establish that the vernacular drift which led to the current catastrophe had stopped.

5 Palaestina became Palestina from the 11th to the 16th centuries because the Holy Roman Catholic
6 Church standardized the canon. In contrast, the Eastern Orthodox Church continues to use the
7 original Greek “Palaistine”.

8

9 The term “Palestina” was not further contorted until the 17th century when the Latinized “Palestina”
10 was Anglicized as “Palestine”, predictably returning the terminal suffix to its original Greek “tine”.
11 I say predictably since it was Lord Tyndall who translated the original Greek and Aramaic when
12 publishing the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

13 In all sincerity, then, we can hardly call the term “Palestine” Anglicized, can we? The only difference
14 between the Anglicized “Palestine” and the original Greek was in substituting the “ai” for “e” in the
15 romanization of the word.

16 At this point in our study of the morphology of “Palaistine”, and all its variations, we could correctly
17 stop, if we were only concerned about the spelling of the word.

18 We are not.

19 We are just as concerned, if not more concerned with the word’s meaning. As of the end of the 19th
20 century, however, there is not one instance of the word “Palaistine” or any of its variants as referring
21 to an ethnic group, just a region.

22 It was The Balfour Declaration of 1919 which primed socialists in the early twentieth century to grab
23 the term “Palestine” and apply it to an ethnic group.

24 Tragically, socialist scholarship never reached the standards of Daruis II, Alexander the Great,
25 Herodotus, Plutarch, Josephus, Strabo or the multitude of Priests who evoked the term “Palaistine”
26 throughout history.

27 The meaning of words and their origins matter not one wit to the liars of the Communist International
28 who co-opted “Palestine” in propagandizing for Arabia’s Proletariat.

29 The first official use of the modern word “Palestine” in the 20th century is found in the Balfour
30 Declaration of 1917. But I insist we turn our attention to the Ottoman Empire which had just then
31 dissolved, for in this, the last Caliphate of modern Islam, we find no mention of “Palestine” at all.

32

33 To the Promise of the Caliphate we turn.

34

1 The Promise of the Caliphate

2

3 Western scholars struggle to this day to qualify the advent of Islam in historical context. I attribute
4 that to both academic chauvinism and xenophobia. It never occurred to western scholars that
5 Europeans and Arabs were both confronting the same problem from different vantage points.

6 What were leaders to do when Caesarean Apartheid collapsed?

7 The answer to that question is complicated by the fact that Caesar's sadistic empire collapsed in the
8 same way it rose; from within. Rome and the Italian peninsula were liberated long before the
9 periphery of the empire saw freedom. The fall of Caesarean Apartheid was also long. It took
10 centuries for the process to complete.

11 Europeans conclude their interest in the region with the Apostles and regard the advent of Islam as
12 a form of "copy-cat" religion, the worst concluding Islam plagiarized Judaic texts and values. No
13 serious academic effort has ever attempted to contextualize the advent of Christianity and Islam to
14 the fall of Caesarean Apartheid.

15 Christianity is derived from Arabian efforts to reform Caesar's apartheid state. Islam is derived from
16 Arabian efforts to openly oppose and defeat it. One could correctly say that Christ was the prophet
17 who offered Caesar the easy way out, while Mohammed was the prophet who escorted Caesarean
18 Apartheid off the premises.

19 In the hour of Mohammed's death, the immediate concern of his followers was consolidating the
20 progress made in liberating the region from Caesarean hedonism, then reconciling the liberated
21 territories to the community of the faithful at large.

22 The community of the faithful at large is called the Umma in Arabic. Christians have a corollary in
23 the Body of Christ, commonly regarded as Christendom. My observation, at this juncture, is that both
24 Christians and Muslims were employing the same proscription to address Caesar's hedonistic legacy.

25 Christians called the state they built to govern Christendom the "Holy Roman Empire". Muslims
26 called the state they built to govern the Umma the Caliphate. Both the Holy Roman Empire, and the
27 Caliphate forming on the other side of Caesar's divide, aimed for the same goal, a society grounded
28 in fidelity to the God of Abraham, and the eventual establishment of a Divine Kingdom on earth.

29 There is, in fact, no distinction between the beliefs or goals of either Christendom or the Umma.
30 Doctrines naturally diverged, and along doctrinal lines has all conflict arisen between Christians and
31 Muslims.

32 One correctly questions why Christians ever came into conflict with Muslims in the first place. I
33 attribute that to xenophobia on the part of both parties. When Christians made their way east around
34 the Mediterranean, they fell victims to their own ethnic and doctrinal attitudes, then concluded
35 Islam was a false religion. When Muslims made their way west and crossed into Iberia, they fell
36 victim to their own ethnic and doctrinal attitudes, then concluded Christianity was a false religion.

1 I will make no attempt to reconcile the doctrinal differences between Christianity and Islam beyond
2 this simple observation: Nobody fights like brothers. And fight, Christians and Muslims did. Both
3 fought, I argue, as ferociously as they did because a return to Caesarean Apartheid drove the fears
4 of all leaders in that age.

5 Accredited academia today places the “Roman Empire” on a pedestal, but the truth is that Caesar’s
6 sadistic empire had nothing to do with Rome. Rome itself attempted to overthrow Caesar a number
7 of times and, eventually, was first to successfully do so. The history of the 5th to 7th centuries is, for
8 all intents and purposes, a mop-up operation.

9 With the Age of Islam properly prefaced, let’s appreciate how Arabia’s history unfolded from the
10 Muslim perspective.

11 The Promise of all Caliphates was the unification of all kingdoms under the banner of Islam and, in
12 fruition, the obsolescence of individual kingdoms entirely, followed by the establishment of God’s
13 Kingdom on earth. One certainly can’t argue with the goal, but one is obligated to observe, as a
14 practical matter, all Caliphates were destined to fail because individual sin remains operative in the
15 world of men. The Holy Roman Empire failed time and again for the identical reason.

16 The proposal at the center of the Caliphate was the founding of a meta-nation, governed by the Laws
17 of Islam. Laudable as that goal may be, achieving it in reality hinges entirely on the conformity of
18 believers (and non-believers) to Islamic Law.

19 A **caliphate** is an Islamic state led by a caliph, who is considered a political and religious successor
20 to the Prophet Muhammed. The Caliph under Islam is identical to the Pope under Christianity. The
21 caliphate embodies the Islamic concept of governance and leadership, integrating both spiritual
22 authority and temporal power.

23
24 Because the Islamic world was reorganizing itself as an Ummah, the pre-Islamic kingdoms of Arabia
25 were obscured and, for all intents and purposes, invisible to western academics as the Ottoman
26 empire faded and finally dissolved.

27 In every respect, the pseudo-histories which burden bookshelves in western universities are actually
28 the legacy of the best intentions of Islam’s leaders. All Caliphates did an excellent job of obscuring
29 the aboriginal kingdoms of Arabia, except one: Judah.

30 The appearance of post-Ottoman Arabia as a region governed by loosely affiliated “tribes” of
31 illiterate Arabs, that is the residue of lazy and racist scholarship by western universities. On this
32 quagmire of sophomoric regional histories is conflict in the region grounded. No actor was motivated
33 more to exploit the ambiguities of post-Ottoman Arabia than the Soviet Union.

34 Before continuing to the Soviet Union’s interference in Arabia’s post-Ottoman reconstitution, I am
35 obligated to identify three periods in Arabia’s recent past when no Caliphate governed the region.

36 The first was the **early Umayyad Period, 750AD to 1258 AD by European reckoning**. After the
37 Umayyad Caliphate was overthrown by the Abbasids in 750, the Abbasid Caliphate became the

1 dominant power. During the early years of the Abbasid rule, some regions were not fully under
2 caliphal authority, especially as local dynasties reasserted their authority.

3 The second period was from the 9th to the 11th centuries by European reckoning. The Islamic world,
4 like the Christian world, experienced significant fragmentation during this period. Various regional
5 powers emerged, such as the Fatimids in North Africa and the Almoravids and Almohads in Spain and
6 North Africa, each with their own leadership structures. This period saw the rise of local sultans and
7 emirs, leading to a decline in the central authority of the caliphate.

8 The third and final period occurred between 1250 and 1517 by European reckoning. It was during
9 this period that a group of “slave soldiers”, called “mamluks”, were converted to Islam before seizing
10 power and establishing a caliphate of their own.

11 It was the Mamluks who fought and defeated both the Mongols and the Crusaders. It’s tragic how
12 much damage poor scholarship has done to European and Arabic perceptions. I doubt you will find a
13 single Christian who is aware the Crusaders were not defeated by Arabs, but were fighting recently
14 free slaves.

15 After the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate to the Mongols in 1258, the caliphate was not effectively
16 asserted in the same way. The Mamluks in Egypt continued to claim some level of legitimacy but did
17 not function as a caliphate.

18 Mamluk-era sources and administrative practices did refer to the Levant—often using the Arabic term
19 **Filastin**—as a distinct geographic and administrative region, though not as an independent political
20 entity in the modern sense.

21 Under the Mamluk Sultanate the region we now call Palestine was part of **Bilād al-Shām**, which is
22 Greater Syria. Greater Syria was subdivided into administrative districts called **niyābat** or
23 **mamlakahs**. Notably, **Gaza** and Jerusalem were designated as separate administrative units.

24 Mamluk sources recognized “Filastin” as a **central corridor** between Egypt and Syria, with cities like
25 **Jerusalem, Gaza, and Safed** playing key roles in religious, economic, and military affairs. These
26 cities were often described as part of a coherent region with shared characteristics and strategic
27 value.

28 So, while the Mamluks didn’t establish a “Filastin” state, their records and governance structures
29 did treat “Filastin” as a **meaningful sub-region** within the broader imperial framework. In other
30 words, there was no “Palestine” in the time or the records of the Mamluks. Muslims centuries later
31 just recall the Mamluk administrative nomenclature and conflate “Filastin” with “Palestine”.
32 Josephus did, so why can’t the Mamluks?

33 At long last we arrive at the last Caliphate, that established and administered by the Ottomans.
34 Osman Ghazi was the warrior responsible for defeating the Byzantines in Anatolia and establishing a
35 dynasty of Islamic rulers which would last until just after World War I.

36 While the Ottomans claimed the title of caliph starting in 1517, there were periods of weakened
37 authority, particularly in the 19th century, when the empire was challenged by nationalist movements
38 from within, and colonial pressures from without.

1 It is likely that the Ottoman Empire would survive to this day if they had remained neutral during
2 World War I. But hindsight is twenty-twenty. Here, that is irrelevant. The Ottoman's joined the
3 fight and lost. That is all that matters.

4 The Treaty of Sèvres in 1920 carved up Ottoman lands among the victors, leaving the empire a shadow
5 of its former self. It was never fully implemented due to the outbreak of the Turkish War of
6 Independence. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, leading the Turkish nationalists, rejected the Sèvres terms
7 and fought to reclaim sovereignty. From 1919 to 1923 the battle for control of Anatolia raged on.

8 When the smoke cleared, Ataturk and his nationalists had won. On November 1, 1922, the Grand
9 National Assembly in Ankara formally abolished the Ottoman Sultanate, ending over 600 years of
10 dynastic rule.

11 Because all national movements, including that of Israel, were precipitated by the dissolution of the
12 Ottoman Caliphate, we are required to look within, not without, for evidence of ethnonyms carried
13 forward into the 21st century.

14 Into the Ottoman archives we now delve.

15

16 The Ottoman Caliphate

17

18 Historically, the caliphate served as a unifying force for the Muslim community and functioned as a
19 meta-state called the Ummah. The Ummah is defined as a socio-political order grounded on Sharia
20 Law and the spread of Islamic teachings.

21 The Ottoman Empire, which lasted from 1299 to 1922, officially assumed the title of caliphate in
22 1517 after the conquest of Egypt. This is historical fact, not retrospective assertion. Everything from
23 official correspondence to coinage, to printed materials on Friday prayers acknowledge the Ottoman
24 Caliphate from 1517 forward.

25 The Ottoman caliphs claimed religious authority over Muslims worldwide, which elevated their status
26 beyond mere political rulers. They were seen as protectors of the faith and custodians of holy sites,
27 including Mecca and Medina.

28 The caliphate under the Ottomans played a crucial role in promoting Sunni Islam and ensuring
29 adherence to Islamic laws and practices.

30 The Ottomans utilized the caliphate to project their authority and influence across the Muslim world,
31 often intervening in regional disputes and asserting leadership in Islamic matters.

32 During periods designated as caliphates, individual kingdoms, emirates, and city-states often found
33 their political status obscured by the overarching authority of the caliphate. Local rulers were
34 sometimes allowed autonomy but were ultimately subordinate to the caliph's authority. This led to
35 a sense of unity among diverse Muslim regions, but it also meant that local identities and political
36 structures were overshadowed by the central caliphal authority.

1 Despite the nominal authority of the caliphate, many regions operated with considerable autonomy,
2 particularly during times of fragmentation or weak central control. Local rulers, emirs and beys,
3 would often retain power and govern their territories independently while recognizing the caliph's
4 symbolic & spiritual leadership.

5 This duality created a complex political landscape where local interests and governance structures
6 persisted, even as they were nominally under the caliphate's jurisdiction.

7 As the Ottoman Empire weakened in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the caliphate's influence
8 diminished, leading to a resurgence of nationalist movements and a revival of individual state
9 identities within the former Ottoman territories.

10 The abolition of the caliphate in 1924 marked a significant shift in Islamic governance, leading to the
11 necessity of formal, nation-states made possible by the Nobility which persisted throughout the
12 region during each Caliphate.

13 On the authority of the Ottoman Caliphate did all subsequent claims to nationhood rest, so to the
14 Ottoman Archives we turn.

15

16 The Ottoman New Order Atlas

17

18 I regard the Ottoman "New Order Atlas" as, not just "an authoritative source" on the ethnic and
19 administrative makeup of the Ottoman Empire, but "the authoritative source" on the ethnic and
20 administrative makeup of the Ottoman Empire. Why? Because the Ottomans and all their subjects
21 did.

22 The "Atlas of the Ottoman New Order" is a notable publication produced during the early 19th century,
23 specifically around 1218 AH (1803-1804 AD), in Istanbul. It was published by the Tab'hane-yi Hümayun,
24 the Ottoman Military Engineering School Press, a publication which adds official credibility to all
25 geographical findings.

26 The atlas was created by a collective of Ottoman cartographers and scholars associated with the
27 military and engineering sectors. While specific individual authors may not be widely recognized, the
28 collaboration of experts reflects the state's investment in scientific and geographic knowledge.

29 The atlas includes 25 hand-colored maps and an 80-page geographic treatise, providing detailed
30 representations of the Ottoman Empire's territories, administrative divisions, and geographical
31 features. It illustrates the empire's commitment to modernization and reform during the era known
32 as the Nizam-ı Cedid (the New Order), aimed at revitalizing the state's military and administrative
33 structures.

34 Being published by an official government press lends the atlas significant authority and authenticity.
35 The involvement of the military engineering school indicates that the maps were produced with

1 precision and were intended for both educational and practical use within the Ottoman
2 administration.

3 The "Atlas of the Ottoman New Order" serves as an essential historical document, reflecting the
4 Ottoman Empire's geographical understanding and its administrative evolution during a time of
5 reform. Its official endorsement by the Ottoman government marks it as a reliable source for
6 researchers seeking to establish the socio-cultural status quo *Ante Bellum*.

7 The "bellum" in question is, of course, World War I.

8 An examination of the "Atlas of the Ottoman New Order" establishes who was and who was not a
9 principal in the hour the Ottoman Empire dissolved.

10 To the administrative structure of the Ottoman Empire we necessarily turn.

12 Ottoman Administrative Hierarchy

14 The ottoman State, like all states, was composed of administrative units arranged in hierarchical
15 order. The orders recorded in the "Atlas of the Ottoman New Order" are as follows:

1. Empire (Devlet)	Sultan	The supreme ruler of the Ottoman Empire, with ultimate authority over all administrative matters.
2. Province (Vilayet)	Governor (Vali)	Appointed by the Sultan, responsible for the administration of a province, overseeing law and order, taxes, and infrastructure.
3. District (Sanjak)	District Governor (Mutasarrif or Kaymakam)	Oversees a district within a province, reporting to the governor and managing local affairs.
4. Sub-District (Kaza)	Sub-District Judge (Kadı)	Responsible for local judicial matters and administration, overseeing civil and religious law.
5. Village/Town (Nahiye)	Village Chief (Muhtar)	Elected or appointed local leader responsible for the administration of a village or town, acting as a liaison between the local population and the district authorities.

16 The Sultan exercised executive authority and made all key decisions regarding governance and
17 administration. Beneath the Sultan were Vali who administered the Vilayets, or Provinces, on the
18 Sultan's behalf. Beneath the Vali were Mutasarrif or Kaymakam who administered the Sanjaks, or
19 districts. Within each Sanjak were even smaller divisions called Kaza, or sub-districts. Kaza were
20 administered by Kadi, or judges.

1 Finally, the most local administrative division was the Nahiye, or village. Muhtars, or chiefs ,
2 administered villages.

3 With the structure and function of Ottoman administrative divisions defined, let's take a look at
4 the rolls in each division.

5 **Vilayets (Provinces)**

6

7 Here's a table listing the main Vilayets (provinces) of the Ottoman Empire, along with their
8 historical names, and significant cities or regions within each:

9

1. Vilayet of Istanbul	İstanbul Vilayeti	İstanbul
2. Vilayet of Edirne	Edirne Vilayeti	Edirne, Tekirdağ
3. Vilayet of Bursa	Bursa Vilayeti	Bursa, Yalova
4. Vilayet of Salonica	Selanik Vilayeti	Salonica (Thessaloniki), Kavala
5. Vilayet of Manisa	Manisa Vilayeti	Manisa, İzmir (Smyrna)
6. Vilayet of Ankara	Ankara Vilayeti	Ankara
7. Vilayet of Konya	Konya Vilayeti	Konya, Karaman
8. Vilayet of Aleppo	Halep Vilayeti	Aleppo, Idlib
9. Vilayet of Damascus	Şam Vilayeti	Damascus, Homs
10. Vilayet of Beirut	Beyrut Vilayeti	Beirut, Tripoli
11. Vilayet of Jerusalem	Kudüs Vilayeti	Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Gaza
12. Vilayet of Tripoli	Trablus Vilayeti	Tripoli (Lebanon)
13. Vilayet of Baghdad	Bağdat Vilayeti	Baghdad, Mosul
14. Vilayet of Basra	Basra Vilayeti	Basra, Al-Qurna
15. Vilayet of Yemen	Yemen Vilayeti	Sana'a, Aden
16. Vilayet of Cyprus	Kıbrıs Vilayeti	Nicosia, Famagusta
17. Vilayet of Crete	Girit Vilayeti	Heraklion, Chania
18. Vilayet of Adana	Adana Vilayeti	Adana, Mersin

1

2

1 **Sanjaks (Provincial Regions) of the Vilayet of Jerusalem**

2

3 Here's a table listing the **sanjaks** within the **Vilayet of Jerusalem** during the Ottoman Empire:

1. **Sanjak of Jerusalem** Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Abu Dis

2. **Sanjak of Hebron** Hebron, Bethlehem

3. **Sanjak of Jaffa** Jaffa, Tel Aviv, Ramla

4. **Sanjak of Gaza** Gaza, Khan Yunis, Rafah

5. **Sanjak of Nablus** Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarm

6. **Sanjak of Akka** Acre (Akka), Haifa

7. **Sanjak of Safad** Safad, Tiberias

4

5 As you can see, the Vilayet of Jerusalem documents that the Ottomans acknowledged that the Levant
6 was in fact a contiguous region with distinct administrative concerns of its own.

7 But the Jerusalem Vilayet was established in the late 19th century, incorporating various sanjaks to
8 better manage the administrative needs of the Ottomans, not necessarily a reflection of historical
9 dominion. Nevertheless, the record establishes what Muslim leaders of the day regarded as the
10 legitimate socio-political status quo.

11 The significant cities listed above are all key towns within each sanjak, reflecting the historical and
12 administrative importance of these areas during the Ottoman period. The organization and
13 boundaries of these sanjaks did change over time, reflecting the administrative reforms within the
14 Ottoman Empire.

15 Note there is no reference to Palestine anywhere in Ottoman records.

16

17

1 Ottoman “Palestine”

2

3 “Palestine” was not listed as a sanjak by that name in the administrative hierarchy of the Ottoman
4 Empire. Instead, the regions commonly associated with Palestine were divided among various sanjaks
5 within larger administrative units, such as the **Sanjak of Jerusalem, Sanjak of Jaffa, Sanjak of Gaza**,
6 and others.

7 The term “Palestine” itself was not used officially in the Ottoman administrative context; instead,
8 the area was referred to through its individual administrative districts. These sanjaks were all part
9 of the Vilayet of Jerusalem.

10 Because the Ottomans organized the sociopolitical hierarchy inherited by the victors of World War I,
11 none can now say that the “Palestine Mandate” was an order imposed from without by the alleged
12 “Imperial powers of Europe”. The League of Nations merely employed a term they were familiar
13 with instead of the Ottoman nomenclature.

14 And do allow me a conclusive observation: The Islamic Caliphate subordinated Gaza and Khan Yunis
15 and Rafah to Jerusalem, not the other way around.

16 Why?

17 Why did Muslim leaders across the ages subordinate the “Filastin” cities of Gaza, Khan Yunis and
18 Rafah to Jerusalem? Because that was the historical Order of Deference in the region. Upsetting
19 this Order of Deference would have been anathema to both Muslim and Jew, so the historical order
20 of Deference prevailed even under each Caliphate.

21 The Ottomans have been accused of many things, but they have never been accused of being fools.

22 The Ottoman administration utilized specific city and district names for administrative purposes
23 rather than the broader geographic label of “Palestine.” “Palestine” was regarded by Muslim
24 administrators and scholars as an exonym, inappropriate to describe anyone in the Levant or Arabia.

25 If anything can be said, the Caliphates decision to exclude any reference to “Palestine” or to
26 “Filastin” only serves to reinforce the lack of legitimacy these pseudo-ethnicities had in regional
27 politics. Gaza, Khan Yunis and Rafah were recognized far and wide as “Filastin” cities, yet they are
28 only afforded the lowest administrative status within the Ottoman Empire, and then only by their
29 city names.

30 Read into this glaring omission what you wish. Nowhere in Ottoman rolls do the “Filastin” or
31 “Palestinians” exist.

32 For all intents and purposes, the Ottoman Empire was administratively organized according to city-
33 state logic, not on the basis of “nationality” or ethnicity. During the Ottoman period, Palestine was
34 not recognized in any official way within the administrative state.

1 Even if Muslim scholars knew the etymological root of Herodotus' "Palaistine", which they clearly
2 did not, "Palaistine" would still have been excluded, for the Children of Israel did not assert a
3 government any time since the destruction of the Second Temple.
4 In the Levant of 1924, Jews were a religious group, not an ethnic group or a state.
5 Because the **Atlas of the Ottoman New Order** does not specifically reference "Palestine" by that
6 name, either in its maps or in its accompanying texts, no scholar may now assert an historical
7 "Palestine", not without evoking the Wrestlers of which Herodotus originally spoke.
8 In my research, the first explicit use of the term of a "Palestinian people" was by Soviet propagandists
9 at the COMINTERN convention of 1935. Palmiro Togliatti proclaimed to the world's proletariat, "The
10 struggle for the rights of the Palestinian people under the British Mandate is inseparable from the
11 wider anti-imperialist fight."
12 From Togliatti's speech forward, the Promised Lands were cast into Perdition.
13 More could and should be said, but I'll save that for a book on the subject. For the time being, I'll
14 close with a bit of advice to the people currently claiming to be "Palestinians". When you chant
15 "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!", be careful what you wish for: I do not think that
16 word means what you think that word means.
17 So, if Herodotus were alive to correct his nomenclature today, what phrase would he choose in
18 classical Greek to properly translate "Wrestles With God" as a place name?
19 Synagonia Theo.
20 Expect an etymology of synagogue in the future.
21 For the time being, pray for the Palestinians, whoever you believe them to be.
22

23 Conclusion

24
25 This conclusion is my thesis. All which preceded this conclusion is exhaustive documentation of every
26 possible interpretation of the word "Palestine".
27 Modern confusion over the meaning and origins of the term "Palestine" is attributable to first century
28 historian, Josephus. In his histories, Josephus alludes to the Philistines for the origins of the word
29 "Palestine". This is likely due to over-reliance on the Septuagint by Roman librarians for
30 ethnographic and historical narratives on the region.
31 In truth, it was the Greek historian, Herodotus, who first labelled the Levant "Palaistine", and
32 Herodotus' choice of roots leaves no ambiguity for interpretation.
33 Palais means wrestler.

1 That much is obvious for all to see, and no scholar refutes it. Disagreement arises from a glaring
2 omission. Israel is not a name of a Patriarch, you see, but an epithet describing the character of a
3 Patriarch. Israel means “Wrestles With God”. Jacob was the given name of the Patriarch
4 remembered by posterity as Israel.

5 Critics of attributing Palaistine to the wrestlers of which Israel speaks make a valid observation. Why
6 did Herodotus omit god if he was translating “Ysra ‘El”?

7 I counter that Herodotus, himself being pantheistic in his religious traditions, was studying the history
8 and ethnographic composition of the Levant from the city of Tyre. Tyre, in Herodotus’ age, remained
9 true to the Canaanite pantheon, with Tyre’s chief deity being Melqart. So, both the author of the
10 original term “Palaistine”, and the scholars of the city which hosted him, were biased in favor of
11 pantheistic traditions.

12 More emphatically, Tyrians, who had been marginalized, if not politically emasculated, due to their
13 Canaanite status, had an axe to grind against the reforms which saw the advent of monotheism in
14 Arabia.

15 We needn’t get into the details of mutually exclusive traditions to realize the emotional centers from
16 which pantheists and monotheists were motivated. Pantheists appreciated the monotheists as
17 nihilistic, if not atheistic. Monotheists appreciated pantheists as charlatans and frauds, the fidelity
18 of whom was subject to whim and circumstance.

19 Herodotus does not record his thoughts on monotheism, per se, in his histories and only makes passing
20 references to Greek gods and Tyrian gods. In the rare cases where Herodotus does reference religion,
21 he commits a predictable, narcissistic foot fault in drawing unsubstantiated parallels to Greek gods
22 in the menagerie of Canaanite deities.

23 In other words, Herodotus was implying that Canaanite traditions were derivative of his own, Greek
24 traditions.

25 What scholars today must account for is how Herodotus would have reacted to the nameless, faceless
26 god of the monotheists, these people who claim to be “Wrestling With God”.

27 The religion of the Israelites of Herodotus’ age, in contrast with Greek religious traditions, featured
28 no images whatsoever of their one and only god, nor was his name even acknowledged openly. To
29 speak the name of God was considered blasphemous by the Israelites, so there was no one in Tyre to
30 guide Herodotus on his interpretations.

31 So, when I assert Herodotus would have regarded the god of the Israelites as nameless and faceless,
32 I mean that quite literally.

33 There is no doubt whatsoever that Herodotus was acquainted with the epithet Ysra’El, for there is
34 no other people in all of Arabia known as the “wrestlers”. Lacking a Theonym, Herodotus merely
35 obliged posterity with a Patronym instead: Palaistine.

36 In Herodotus’ defense, he was writing an ethnographic history, not a religious history of the region.
37 There was no evidence of this alleged god of the Israelites, and they certainly did not respect their

1 god enough to give him, or her, a name, nor did they even have a single monument depicting their
2 one and only god.

3 Herodotus may have chosen to sidestep a controversial subject by reducing “Wrestlers With God” to
4 just “Wrestles”.

5 The personal bias of Herodotus would so incline him to demote rather than promote a monotheistic
6 tradition.

7 This is casting Herodotus in the best light. But what if I am too forgiving? What if Herodotus was
8 interjecting commentary in his choice? Does not reducing “Wrestlers With God” to just “Wrestles”
9 equate to “Wrestles Without God”?

10 It certainly does so in the contrast between a full and true translation of “Ysra’El” and the resulting
11 “Palaistine”. The implications of this possibility in the modern world are immediate and compelling,
12 for it appears the people presently identifying as “Palestinians” are doing so in ignorance of the
13 original Greek.

14 I am writing this article to warn the Muslims of the Levant against adopting the term Palestine when
15 their independence from Israel is eventually secured. There will now be no avoiding the origins of
16 the brand they cling to and, since past is prologue, all reasonable interpretations of “Palaistine” will
17 become operative in international discourse.

18 The children who today call themselves “Palestinians” are assuming a burden they have yet to
19 measure in full.

20 I have here documented two interpretations, one strict and literal, the other an obvious allusion.
21 But there is a third, one which is a characterization, an adjective, more than a noun.

22 Conflicted.

23 That is correct. It is possible that Herodotus, having travelled to the Levant and made a valid attempt
24 to understand its ethnic and political makeup, concluded that the entire region was composed of
25 peoples wrestling with each other, with their competing gods, and lacking in any semblance of
26 cohesive governance.

27 Conflicted is possible in the unconventional suffix “tine” Herodotus applied to the root “Palais”.
28 Palais means wrestles. “Tine”, a feminine suffix, imparts descriptive not definitive authority to the
29 resulting term “Palaistine”.

30 Why? For many reasons. First and foremost, the Israelites of the region were split into two, major
31 factions. In 454 BC there were the Samaritans, who themselves are just the descendants of Israelites
32 who rebelled against King Solomon’s successor, and the Judeans and Benjaminites, who themselves
33 had just been restored from the Babylonian exile by Cyrus the Great.

34 Neither the Samaritans nor the Judeans and Benjaminites had a functioning government, certainly
35 no sovereign authority to which Greece’s polity could negotiate treaties or alliances. As for Tyre,
36 Tyre and her sister cities in the Levant were political outcasts since Abraham’s day.

1 In Herodotus' day, the Levant was politically ambiguous.

2 To a pantheist seeking to understand why invasions of his native Greece originated from the Levant,

3 the choices Herodotus made in terminology are compelling.

4 Tyre, you see, had a massive mariner fleet with which it dominated trade across the mediterranean.

5 In Herodotus' lifetime, Persia had twice invaded his motherland, with Tyrian fleets playing the

6 decisive role in both invasions.

7 In modern terms, Herodotus was on an intelligence mission. Palaistine was the conclusion he

8 returned to Athens.

9 This region of the world was complicated mire of rival factions, with no apparent government beyond

10 the few city walls and simultaneously subservient to foreign sovereigns.

11 The dominant demographic group referred to themselves as "Wrestles With God", but in truth they

12 only appeared to be wrestling with each other, the Samaritan Israelites and Judean Israelites building

13 rival temples to a single, nameless, faceless god.

14 An outside observer, especially if they were pantheistic in their religious frame of reference, would

15 understandably conclude the Israelites weren't wrestling with god at all, just the consequences of

16 their religious nihilism.

17 And don't think for a moment all three possible interpretations do not matter. Rarely is any academic

18 debate settled in consensus, but rather several factions of opinion. For every scholar who favors

19 "Palaistine" as an adaptation of the patronym "Israel", there will be just as many or more who insist

20 it is a play on words meaning "Wrestles Without God".

21 Herodotus, after all, omitted god from the original epithet.

22 If the ramifications are not obvious for all to see, allow me to be perfectly blunt. The people calling

23 themselves Palestinians are doing so after subscribing to faulty scholarship.

24 Nobody referred to the region as "Palestine" before the Balfour Declaration of 1917. And nobody

25 referred to themselves as "Palestinians" until a Soviet agent provocateur, Palmiro Togliatti, a

26 prominent Italian Socialist and Stalin stooge, proclaimed the "Palestinians" as an ethnic group in

27 1935.

28 Regrettably, the Muslims of the Levant, seeking a foothold of legitimacy on the world stage, accepted

29 the Soviet assertion without considering the ramifications of the choice. Anything but Israel was the

30 sentiment which prevailed.

31 So here we all are, contemplating the legitimization of a "Palestinian" state as the truth comes to

32 light. Palestine means Israel.

33 The irony is tragic in ways no Greek playwright, nor even the Bard himself, could have encapsulated

34 so neatly in words. The Muslims of the Levant are literally chanting "From the River to the Sea,

35 Israel Will Be Free!" as the Israelis are literally swearing "There Will Never Be An Israelite State!".

36 Ignorance on ethnic origins in the Levant is replete. And it is dangerous.

1 The only plausible alternative to Palaistine meaning Israel, is that it means “Wrestles Without God”.
2 I implore the world’s leaders to truly consider if the modern push to declare Palestine a state is wise
3 counsel, or capitulation under diplomatic exhaustion. Does anyone, especially the “Palestinian
4 Authority”, have the right to make such a tragic mistake?
5 Do the Palestinians want to be known as “Wrestles Without God” in contrast to their neighbor
6 “Wrestles With God”?
7 I caution the Palestinian Authority, and all of its supporters, be careful what you wish for, you may
8 get it. If Palestine is declared a state under the proposed name, “Palestinian” children will pay a
9 price for generations to come.
10 I pray the righteous among Arabia’s Nobility reason with the Palestinian Authority and lead them
11 back to familial fealty to Abraham. The time has come to lay Soviet rhetoric to rest and adopt the
12 mantle of legitimacy only the Abrahamic Covenant will provide.
13 I offer Midian will serve the Muslims of the Levant far better than “Wrestles Without God”.
14 Thank you for your consideration.
15
16 Respectfully,
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18 An Unknown Soldier
19