



The Tetragrammaton at the ceiling of the Saints Peter and Paul Garrison Church, founded by Jesuits Church in Lviv, Ukraine (1610-1630).

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Jesus, the New Testament, and the Sacred Tetragrammaton

The biblical name of God was used widely among the Israelites since the days of Moses.¹ The Bible record extends this practice back to the days of the patriarchs, even to the early days of humanity. It is a historical fact that this divine name was also known by peoples at lands outside Israel—like in Egypt probably since the late 15th century BCE and the land of Moab since the ninth century BCE. It became more widely known among the nations around the Mediterranean Sea during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. In the late Second Temple period Greek philosophical trends influenced decisively the prevailing Jewish understanding of God. The name of God was gradually attempted to be silenced inside the Judaism and eventually became a verbal taboo.

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The teachings of Jesus from Nazareth and their diffusion by his followers presupposed a re-interpretation of the Old Testament theology. This effort to describe anew the notion of God was written down in the canonical Christian scriptures. In this article it is attempted to explore the understanding of the notion of God among the Hellenistic Jews and early Christians as shown in the use of the divine names and especially the sacred Tetragrammaton.

Five essential questions will be examined in brief: (a) Who is actually the God of the Bible, (b) which is the name of the God of the Bible, (c) when did the name of God cease to be pronounced publicly, (d) whether Jesus and early Christians pronounced the name of God, and (e) where the name of God may be found within the New Testament texts. A thrilling story of the use and the pronunciation of the Biblical name of the Supreme Being came to be interwoven with a long series of historical twists and turns.

01. Who is the God of the Bible?

John of Damascus (c. 676–749), aiming to emphasize the unity of the Christian Bible, stated about God: “It is *one and the same* God whom both the Old and the New Testament proclaim, who is praised and glorified in the Trinity.”² Both Jews and Christians believe in the same God; both of them address Him in common as ‘Lord.’

As a matter of fact, “there is no treatise on God in the OT;” instead He is described as “a God who one experiences.”³ The message of the NT, based on this rich OT record of divine dealings with mankind, consists of “the proclamation of what God has accomplished through Jesus Christ.”⁴ As was the case with the OT, the NT authors were not concerned with questions of ontology the way Greek philosophers were striving to define.

The “Trinitarian paradox of the coexistence of the Father, Son, and Spirit within a divine unity, the mystery of the three in one” is not

² “Εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ Θεὸς ὑπὸ τε Παλαιᾶς Διαθήκης καὶ Καινῆς κηρυττόμενος, ὁ ἐν Τριάδι ὑμνούμενός τε καὶ δοξαζόμενος” (John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa* 4:17 (90) [PG 94:1176A]).

³ Scullion (1992) 1041.

⁴ Bassler (1992) 1049; Conzelmann (1975) 54.

found in the NT writings.⁵ By the later part of the Second Temple period (roughly 200 BCE–70 CE) the Jewish strict monotheism came to be blended with terms and schemata found in Hellenistic philosophy. As John of Damascus observed, the Trinity doctrine adopted “from the Jewish opinion the unity of nature and from Hellenism the unique distinction according to persons.”⁶ Consequently, the development of the trinitarian dogma formed a new theological frame. Now, “if one speaks of God it is always, for the Eastern Church, in the concrete: ‘The God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob; the God of Jesus Christ’—“it is always the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”⁷ This broad definition would be also acceptable to both the Roman Catholic and the majority of the Protestant Christianity. For Unitarian and non-Trinitarian Christians any kind of trinitarian presuppositions for describing the God of the Bible is rejectable.

02. Which is the name of the God of the Bible?

According to the book of Exodus, when God revealed Himself to Moses, He introduced Himself by a Hebrew quadriliteral name, known as *Tetragrammaton*. This name is transliterated in English as *yhwh* and occurs some 6,823 times in the Hebrew Bible. It is also found in inscriptions of the biblical period. The Mesha Stele (Moabite Stone) of the 10th century BCE, the Kuntillet Ajrud inscriptions of the ninth to eighth centuries BCE, and the Lachish and Arad ostraca of the seventh and sixth centuries BCE are witnesses to a centuries-long use of this name inside and outside of the land of Israel.⁸ Actually, the Tetragrammaton is probably inscribed in an Egyptian hieroglyphic list

⁵ Bassler (1992) 1055. Similarly, Lohse notes: “As far as the New Testament is concerned, one does not find in it an actual doctrine of the Trinity” (1966, p. 38).

⁶ “Ἐκατέρας τε αἰρέσεως παραμένει τὸ χρήσιμον, ἐκ μὲν τῆς Ἰουδαϊκῆς ὑπολήψεως ἡ τῆς φύσεως ἐνότης, ἐκ δὲ τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ ἡ κατὰ τὰς ὑποστάσεις διάκρισις μόνῃ” (John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa* 1:7 [PG 94:808A]).

⁷ Lossky (1976) 64. Concerning the Trinity and the vision of the union the Churches, La Due wrote: “For some Eastern scholars (e.g., Vladimir Lossky), the divide in trinitarian doctrine renders mute the whole question of union between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church until this issue is settled. For others (e.g., Sergius Bulgakov), these trinitarian differences are significant but do not constitute an absolute impediment to reunion” (2003, p. 31).

⁸ Meyers (2005) 57–58.

at the temple of Soleb at Nubia (Sudan), built by Amenhotep III in the 14th century BCE.⁹

The Tetragrammaton, commonly pronounced Yahweh (Heb. יהוה) or Jehovah (Heb. יהוה), “has always been regarded as the most sacred and the most distinctive name of God,” it is “His proper name par excellence.”¹⁰ While the Bible mentions several names and epithets of God, “it also speaks of the name of God in the singular.” Moreover, in accordance to the Bible record, “the names of God are not of human invention, but of divine origin, though they are all borrowed from human language, and derived from human and earthly relations.” God Himself made them known to mankind as “they contain in a measure a revelation of the Divine Being.”¹¹

Regarding the Alexandrian LXX tradition, the eventual surrogation of the divine proper name with an adjective that was used as a proper noun—that is, “an anonymous epithet”¹²—meant to cause many theological implications. The view that the translators of the Pentateuch rendered the Tetragrammaton in Greek as *κύριος* and *θεός* has been held for centuries long. As a matter of fact, this might be true for books translated after the Pentateuch: the cosmopolitan Hellenistic environment of the Alexandrian Jewry would not use any more a name that they felt represented a tribal, anthropomorphic god. Despite the popular Greek religiosity that demanded names for the local and foreign deities, the influence of the current philosophical trends caused a major theological shift.

However, the Greek term *κύριος* “does not have exactly the same connotation as *Yahweh*,” states L. Berkhof.¹³ “In the Old Testament God has a personal name” but “God in the Septuagint has no name,”

⁹ “Il est évident que le nom sur l’écusson de Soleb dont nous discutons correspond au “tétragramme” du Dieu de la Bible «YHWH»” (Leclant (1991) 215–219). D. B. Redford notes that “we have here the tetragrammaton, the name of the Israelite god” (1992, pp. 272–273).

¹⁰ Berkhof (1941) 49.

¹¹ Berkhof (1941) 47. Motyer adds: “It is worth remarking that the Bible knows nothing of different ‘names’ of God. God has only one ‘name’—Yahweh. Apart from this, all the others are titles, or descriptions. This fact is often imperfectly grasped” (1959, p. 7, fn. 18).

¹² Bickerman (2007) 958.

¹³ Berkhof (1941) 50.

adds A. Walls.¹⁴ Actually, the Greek rendering of the יהוה as κύριος (or, respectively, the English LORD) “is neither a translation of the Tetragrammaton, nor a transliteration of it, but a *surrogate* used in its place, in token of reverence for the name itself.”¹⁵ This implies that the personal God of the patriarchs, Moses, David, and the prophets was replaced by an abstract and remote transcendent entity. The communicative God of the HB record was not transformed to one of the numerous popular Greek deities but to the Supreme Being of the Platonic philosophers.

This stream of view that was solidified by Philo and later by philosophizing Church Fathers and writers prevailed to such a degree that the primal OT notion of the “name of God” came to sound mere Judaization. For the Hellenistic Jews and later Christian intellectuals the God of the Bible and the Platonic ὁ παντὸς Ὄν seemed to be much alike.¹⁶ According to the second century CE Greek philosopher Celsus, “it makes no difference whether the God who is over all things be called by the name of Zeus, which is current among the Greeks, or by that, e.g., which is in use among the Indians or Egyptians” (transl. Fr.

¹⁴ Walls (1990) 32. This Hellenization of the Bible text combined with trinitarian hermeneutics and the “theology of the Name” proposed in the Ps-Dionysian corpus have led scholars to reach flimsy conclusions like this one by D. Cunningham: “Clearly, some biblical authors are especially endeared to certain names; but any claim that one of these is “the one-and-only scripturally authorized name of God” simply cannot be sustained. [...] We have gained no consensus as to whether we can even speak of ‘the’ name of God, and if so, what that name might be” (1995, pp. 419, 440).

¹⁵ Soulen (2011) 10. In fact, the surrogates themselves became gradually divine names. For instance, an early Christian said to a pagan friend whom he wished to convert: “Seek not a name for God: his name is God” (Lat. “Nec nomen Deo quaeres. Deus nomen est,” Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 18:10 [PL 3:440C]).

¹⁶ As a matter of fact, this biblical-philosophical intimation was not altogether accepted. For instance, in his book *Kuzari* the medieval Jewish philosopher Judah Halevi makes the king of the Khazars to conclude: “Now I understand the difference between Elohim and Adonai, and I see how far the God of Abraham is different from that of Aristotle” (*Kuzari* 4:16, transl. H. Hirschfeld). The same antithesis is expressed in Blaise Pascal’s *Mémorial*: “«Dieu d’Abraham, Dieu d’Isaac, Dieu de Jacob» non des philosophes et des savants” (see Runia (1995) pp. 206–207).

Crombie).¹⁷ God was thought as being the one and only God, meaning that he did not need a name in order to be distinguished among others.¹⁸

This literary and cultural encounter was not always smooth—first within Judaism and then among Christians. For instance, the different stands of the Jews during the bloody Maccabean Revolt (167–160 BCE) reflected a different degree of acceptance of the Hellenistic assimilation. Near the end of the last century BCE, rabbinic oral paraphrases, explanations, and expansions of the Jewish scriptures appeared. Some of them were written down as early as the middle of the first century CE. It is noteworthy that “all the Targumim in fact increase the actual usage of the Tetragrammaton” aiming obviously “to emphasize the unique nature of Y [*yhwh*] and avoid confusion, with humans, angels or otherwise.”¹⁹

On the other hand, Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BCE–c. 50 CE), ‘in his thinking and writing about God he had decided to appropriate ideas from Greek philosophical theology’ and as a result ‘God had to be unnameable and named at the same time.’²⁰ As Philo was virtually unknown to Jesus and early Christian writers, in the following centuries Christian cognition faced similar dilemmas. “The doctrine of divine anonymity entered the sphere of biblically oriented thought with Philo,” who “may well have known of the Tetragrammaton and the written and oral conventions surrounding its use,” remarks K. Soulen. Then, he adds: “In any case, what seems clear is that mainstream Christian theology incorporated the belief without much attendant knowledge of or reverence for the divine name.”²¹

In the middle of the second century CE, Justin the Philosopher and Martyr declared: “No one can utter the name of (or, “can give a name to,” transl. B. D. Ehrman) the ineffable God; and if any one dare to say

¹⁷ “Μηδὲν διαφέρειν τῷ παρ’ Ἑλλήσι φερομένῳ ὀνόματι τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεὸν καλεῖν Δία ἢ τῷ δεῖνα, φέρ’ εἰπεῖν, παρ’ Ἰνδοῖς ἢ τῷ δεῖνα παρ’ Αἰγυπτίοις” (Origen, *Against Celsus* 1:24 [PG 11:701B]). Cf. Van Kooten (2006) pp. 133–135, 169–183.

¹⁸ “Christianity accepted the belief of the parent-religion, that God is nameless because he is one alone” (Bickerman (2007) 960).

¹⁹ Chester (1986) 325–326, 384.

²⁰ Runia (1988) 89. For example, he says: “Μήτ’ οὖν διαπόρει, εἰ τὸ τῶν ὄντων πρεσβύτατον ἄρρητον, ὅποτε καὶ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ κυρίῳ ὀνόματι οὐ ῥητὸς ἡμῖν· καὶ μὴν εἰ ἄρρητον, καὶ ἀπερινόητον καὶ ἀκατάληπτον” (Philo, *De mutatione nominum* 15).

²¹ Soulen (2011) 50.

that there is a name, he raves with a hopeless madness” (transl. Roberts-Donaldson).²² For Justin and other early Apologists “the doctrine that God is ineffable and nameless, but has made himself known under many names or appellations” is a prominent theological position.²³ This position is echoed by many others after him.²⁴

Despite the fact that it was well known (and probably in deliberate contrast with) that “anyone wishing to implore the response of a deity ought to know to whom he addresses his supplication,”²⁵ an early Christian said to a pagan friend whom he wished to convert: “Seek not a name for God: his name *is* God.”²⁶ “By the 4th century,” Soulen continues, “many Christian theologians regarded God’s namelessness as virtually self-evident, inherent in the very idea of God” but “still, the doctrine did not move to theological center stage until the latter fourth century, when the three Cappadocians (Gregory of Nyssa, Basil the

²² “Ὄνομα γὰρ τῷ ἀρρήτῳ θεῷ οὐδεὶς ἔχει εἰπεῖν· εἰ δέ τις τολμήσειεν εἶναι λέγειν, μέμνηται τὴν ἄσωτον μανίαν” (1 *Apol.* 61:12 [PG 6:421B]). Also, “οὐδὲν γὰρ ὄνομα ἐπὶ θεοῦ κυριολογεῖσθαι δυνατόν· τὰ γὰρ ὀνόματα εἰς δῆλωσιν καὶ διάγνωσιν τῶν ὑποκειμένων κεῖται πραγμάτων, πολλῶν καὶ διαφόρων ὄντων. θεῷ δὲ οὔτε ὁ τιθεὶς ὄνομα προῦπηρχεν, οὔτε αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν ὀνομάζειν ᾗθη δεῖν, εἷς καὶ μόνος ὑπάρχων” (Ps-Justine, *Cohortatio ad Gentiles* 21 [Otto 3:74]).

²³ Runia (1988) 86.

²⁴ For instance, Clement of Alexandria said: “Ἀδιαίρετον γὰρ τὸ ἓν, διὰ τοῦτο δὲ καὶ ἄπειρον, οὐ κατὰ τὸ ἀδιεξίτητον νοούμενον, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ ἀδιάστατον καὶ μὴ ἔχον πέρας, καὶ τοίνυν ἀσχημάτιστον καὶ ἀνωνόμαστον. κἂν ὀνομάζωμεν αὐτό ποτε, οὐ κυρίως καλοῦντες ἦτοι «ἓν» ἢ «τάγαθόν» ἢ «νοῦν» ἢ αὐτὸ τὸ «ὄν» ἢ «πατέρα» ἢ «θεόν» ἢ «δημιουργόν» ἢ «κύριον», οὐχ ὥς ὄνομα αὐτοῦ προφερόμενοι λέγομεν, ὑπὸ δὲ ἀπορίας ὀνόμασι καλοῖς προσχρόμεθα, ἵν' ἔχη ἡ διάνοια, μὴ περὶ ἄλλα πλανωμένη, ἐπεριδεσθαι τούτοις. οὐ γὰρ τὸ καθ' ἑκάστον μηνυτικὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ ἀθρόως ἅπαντα ἐνδεικτικὰ τῆς τοῦ παντοκράτορος δυνάμεως· τὰ γὰρ λεγόμενα ἢ ἐκ τῶν προσόντων αὐτοῖς ρητὰ ἐστὶν ἢ ἐκ τῆς πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσεως, οὐδὲν δὲ τούτων λαβεῖν οἶόν τε περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ” (*Stromata* 5:12.82 [PG 9:121B–124A]). Translation (W. Wilson): “For the One is indivisible; wherefore also it is infinite, not considered with reference to inscrutability, but with reference to its being without dimensions, and not having a limit. And therefore it is without form and name. And if we name it, we do not do so properly, terming it either the One, or the Good, or Mind, or Absolute Being, or Father, or God, or Creator or Lord. We speak not as supplying His name; but for want, we use good names, in order that the mind may have these as points of support, so as not to err in other respects. For each one by itself does not express God; but all together are indicative of the power of the Omnipotent. For predicates are expressed either from what belongs to things themselves, or from their mutual relation.”

²⁵ “Omnis enim qui quaerit alicuius numinis impetrare responsum, debet necessario scire, cui supplicet” (Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes* 3:42 [CSEL 3:140]).

²⁶ “Nec nomen Deo quaeres. Deus nomen est” (Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 18:10 [PL 3:440C]).

Great, and Gregory Nazianzus) championed it in their battle against the intellectually resurgent Arianism of their day.”²⁷

A major negative factor had been the “striking ignorance of Hebrew” and the subsequent “ignorance of the Hebrew Bible.” Such a case was Irenaeus of Lyon who could not distinguish inside the Bible text between “God the Lord” and “Christ the Lord.” An example of this confusion can be seen in the interpretation of Luke 2:11 where the human birth of “God the LORD [*yhwh*]” is to be understood in this way.²⁸ Similar was the case for Tertullian and Augustine.²⁹ “This unbiblical doctrine of late antiquity that God has no name has found champions up to the modern period,” notes H. Beitenhard.³⁰

The author of the pseudo-Dionysian corpus, dated in the early sixth century CE, consolidated and brought in its zenith the apophatic theology that branded once and for all the subsequent Christian reflection on the unnameability of God. For him, God was ‘ἀκατονόμαστος θεότης,’ the “unnameable Deity,” as well as ‘ἀνώνυμος καὶ πολυώνυμος’ (*innominabile et omninominabile*).³¹ The

²⁷ Soulen (2011) 50.

²⁸ Wansbrough (2010) 26–27.

²⁹ “But I find in Scripture the name Lord also applied to them both: “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit on my right hand”” (Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* 13 [PL 2:169A]). “In Augustine’s doctrine Jesus Christ is absolute Deity, the whole of God. He is the Jehovah of the Old Testament” (Paine (1900) 82).

³⁰ Hans Beitenhard, “ὄνομα,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 5:268–269.

³¹ “Ἀνώνυμον μὲν, ὡς ὅταν φασὶ τὴν θεαρχίαν αὐτὴν ἐν μιᾷ τῶν μυστικῶν τῆς συμβολικῆς θεοφανείας ὁράσεων ἐπιπληξαι τῷ φήσαντι· Τί «τὸ ὄνομά σου»; καὶ ὥσπερ ἀπὸ πάσης αὐτὸν θεωνυμικῆς γνώσεως ἀπάγουσαν φάναι καί· «Ἵνα τί ἐρωτᾷς τὸ ὄνομά μου»; καί· Τοῦτο «ἔστι θαυμαστόν». Ἡ οὐχὶ τοῦτο ὄντως ἐστὶ τὸ θαυμαστὸν ὄνομα, «τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὄνομα», τὸ ἀνώνυμον, τὸ «παντὸς» ὑπεριδρυμένον «ὀνόματος ὀνομαζομένου», εἴτε «ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ», εἴτε «ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι»; Πολυώνυμον δέ, ὡς ὅταν αὐτὴς αὐτὴν εἰσάγουσι φάσκουσιν· «Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ὢν», «ἡ ζωὴ», «τὸ φῶς», «ὁ θεός», «ἡ ἀλήθεια», καὶ ὅταν αὐτοὶ τὸν πάντων αἴτιον οἱ θεόσοφοι πολυωνύμως ἐκ πάντων τῶν αἰτιατῶν ὑμνοῦσιν ὡς ἀγαθόν, ὡς καλόν, ὡς σοφόν, ὡς ἀγαπητόν, ὡς θεόν, ὡς κύριον κυρίων, ὡς «ἅγιον ἁγίων», ὡς αἰώνιον, ὡς ὄντα καὶ ὡς αἰώνων αἴτιον, ὡς ζωῆς χορηγόν, ὡς «σοφίαν», ὡς «νοῦν», ὡς λόγον, ὡς γνώστην, ὡς προέχοντα πάντα τοὺς θησαυροὺς ἀπάσης γνώσεως, ὡς «δύναμιν», ὡς δυνάστην, ὡς βασιλέα τῶν βασιλευόντων, ὡς παλαιὸν ἡμερῶν, ὡς ἀγήρω καὶ ἀναλλοίωτον, ὡς «σωτηρίαν», ὡς «δικαιοσύνην», ὡς ἁγιασμόν, ὡς ἀπολύτρωσιν, ὡς μεγέθει πάντων ὑπερέχοντα καὶ ὡς ἐν αὐρᾷ λεπτῇ. Καί γε καὶ ἐν νόοις αὐτὸν εἶναι φασὶ καὶ ἐν ψυχαῖς καὶ ἐν σώμασι καὶ ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐν γῇ καὶ ἅμα ἐν ταῦτά τὸν αὐτόν, ἐγκόσμιον, περικόσμιον, ὑπερκόσμιον, ὑπερουράνιον, ὑπερούσιον, ἥλιον, ἀστέρα, «πῦρ», «ὑδωρ», «πνεῦμα», δρόσον, νεφέλην, αὐτολίθον καὶ «πέτραν», πάντα τὰ ὄντα καὶ οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων. [...] Οὕτω καὶ «ἀόρατόν» φησὶ τὰ λόγια τὸ παμφαῆς φῶς καὶ τὸν πολυῦμνητον καὶ πολυώνυμον ἄρρητον

Fathers of the Eastern Christian tradition ‘remained faithful to this apophatic principle of theology.’³²

For the theology of the Cappadocian Fathers, John of Damascus, Gregory Palamas, Maximus the Confessor and others the unnameable essence, the nameable energies and the names themselves are notions distinguished from each other. They understood the names of God as referring mainly to his energies (but not as being himself those energies) and as inventions of men. In some cases, though, the name of God refers, not to his energies, but to one or more of the three divine persons or hypostases. Terms used as proper names like *ho On* (“the Existing”), *Elohim* and even *Jesus* are included among these personal names of God. The word “God” is understood sometimes to refer to his energies, sometimes (“economically”) to his unnameable essence, and very often to one or other of the three hypostases of the heavenly Trinity. That means, for example, that the name “God” in “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son” refers exclusively to the Father, but in “God was manifested in the flesh” refers exclusively to the Son.³³ Moreover, the names of God cannot refer simultaneously to the energies and the hypostases of God. This is because, on the one hand, all the energies of God belong to all three of the hypostases (and do not each of the energies have their own hypostasis) and, on the other hand, some of the actions of individual persons of the Trinity can be ascribed only to one of those persons, as for example, the incarnation of the Son, or the descent of the holy Spirit at Pentecost.³⁴

In the literature produced by Church Fathers and other Christian writers for reference to the Tetragrammaton prevailed a translated Greek form of אהיה אשר אהיה (lit. “I shall [prove to] be what I shall

καὶ ἀνώνυμον καὶ τὸν πᾶσι παρόντα καὶ ἐκ πάντων εὗρισκόμενον ἀκατάληπτον καὶ ἀνεξίτητον” (Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite, *On Divine Names* 1:6; 7:1 [PG 3:596A–C, 865C]).

³² Lossky (1976) 42.

³³ John 3:16, *KJV*; 1 Timothy 3:16, *KJV*, but according to the Greek text it is “he who” instead of “God.”

³⁴ For an overview of this apophatic trinitarian theology, see Lossky (1974) pp. 13–30 and Trempeles (1997) pp. 299–310.

[prove to] be")—not of the Tetragrammaton (יהוה) itself.³⁵ The LXX translation of Exodus 3:14 as *Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν* ("I am He That Is," "I am the Existing" or "I am the Existent") is an outstanding example of interpretation made under the influence of Hellenistic Judaism and diffused by Christian theologians.³⁶ Despite that long established exegetical view, in the Christian literature of both East and West the reference to the Tetragrammaton was still made peripherally in various ways.³⁷

As regards the mainstream Jewish understanding, in refusing to name their God and seeking to emphasize the unbridgeable ontological chasm between Him and the idols all around, they "paradoxically prepared the way for to the growth of divine Hypostases, carrying God's forms and God's name," as G. Stroumsa notices and explains interestingly:

"A divine hypostasis permitted some concrete perception of an overly abstract God, some kind of direct contact with the Deity. Esoteric patterns of religious thought were quite widespread in ancient societies. In Israel, the unpronounceable name of God offered a particularly favorable terrain for the development of esotericism.

One of these divine hypostases, Jesus Christ, succeeded particularly well. God the Father had lost His name. This name eventually became another divine figure, sometimes called God's Son. This son, then, took His Father's name: as if the history of religions reflected some Oedipal processes. In that sense, those Jews who believed (perhaps somewhat prematurely) that the Messiah had come and

³⁵ It has been constantly repeated the erroneous view that the Tetragrammaton was *rendered* by the LXX as *ὁ ὢν*. For instance, cf. Metrop. Ieremias Fountas, *Exodus*, Athens: Apostoliki Diakonia tis Ekklisias tis Ellados, 2005, pp. 31–32, 332–335.

³⁶ "So, although no reflection of the Tetragrammaton itself appears in the New Testament, and that name seems to have been of no interest to the early Christians, the explanation of the divine name in Exodus 3 with the first-person verb "to be" was used as one of several ways Christians tried to express their conviction that Jesus had been more than a prophet, teacher, or martyr, and had to be in some way identified with the presence of God on earth" (Gowan (1994) 93–95).

³⁷ For a more detailed collation of the patristic sources regarding the various forms of the divine name(s) and the notion of God, see Vasileiadis (2010, pp. 11–16). For an overview of the longstanding efforts to render the Tetragrammaton in Greek, see Vasileiadis (2013) and Gertoux (2002, pp. 125–136).

that the history of human suffering and injustice was about to end, launched a process which they could not carry to its end: the Gnostics, who built, as we have seen, upon the stones provided by the Jewish-Christians, sought to bring it to its logical end by murdering, or at least demoting, the Father of Jesus Christ.”³⁸

This major shift in the “theology of the Name” was reflected in the transmission of the Bible text and also in Bible translations. As will become clear in the following, the Bible copies underwent numerous changes reflecting these theological transitions. For example, even today most Bible translations continue the practice of substituting “Lord” for the divine name in the OT. Translations into other languages, as early as the Latin *Vulgate*, followed the example of the later LXX codices. The Catholic *Douay Version* (1609–1610) in English, based on the Latin *Vulgate*, does not contain the divine name, while the *King James Version* (1611) uses LORD or GOD to represent the Tetragrammaton in the Hebrew Scriptures, except in four cases where “Jehovah” is employed. “While this practice is respectful,” Meyers points out, “it also is problematic” in various aspects.³⁹

Despite these philosophical implications that branded the Jewish and Christian theologies, the acceptance of this notion was not unanimous. For example, Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), following Maimonides, contended that “even more appropriate [than *qui est*] is the Tetragrammaton which is used to signify the incommunicable [or, unshareable] and, if we could say such a thing, individual substance of God.” And again: “If, however, a name were given to God, not as signifying his nature but referring to him as this thing, regarding him as an individual, such a proper name would be altogether incommunicable and in no way applicable to others perhaps the Hebrew name of God, the Tetragrammaton was used in this way.”⁴⁰ In a wider perspective, Archbishop Theophan (Bystrov, 1875–1940), wrote: “In the first pages of the Bible the tetragram has the widest significance, meaning the God of Revelation generally in distinction from His purely cosmic

³⁸ Stroumsa (2003) 243.

³⁹ Meyers (2005) 58.

⁴⁰ *Summa Theologiae* Ia.13:9, 11 (transl. H. McCabe, 2006/¹1964, vol. 3, Cambridge University Press). Cf. Cunningham (1995) 423; Trempeles (1997) 164–174, 228–238.

providence over the rest of the world” but “then it is narrowed to a strictly theocratic name,” and “finally, it is again broadened to include traits of universality and super-universality.”⁴¹

Furthermore, using transliterated or transcribed forms of the proper name of God never ceased one way or another.⁴² For example, there have been more than 120 renderings of the sacred Tetragrammaton in Greek during the previous two millennia.⁴³ The monopoly of the longstanding and wide “official” substitution practice ended in the Latin-speaking world at the beginning of the first millennium CE. Renaissance humanism and especially the studies on the Hebrew language started enabling the *Hebraica veritas* to be rediscovered by Christians. First Roman Catholics, then Protestants, and later the Orthodox Christianity got acquainted with the proper name of God to different degrees. Gradually the name was used more widely among the Spanish, German, French, and English speaking peoples and later on among the Greeks and the Slavs.

For instance, based on the Latin common form of the name (*Iehova/Iehovah*), the exact Grecized form *Ἰεχωβά* (/iexɔ:vá/ or /iexová/) appeared—probably for the first time in printed form—in the text of the *Orthodox Confession of Faith of the Catholic and Apostolic Church of the East*,⁴⁴ which was drawn up by Peter Mogila (1596–

⁴¹ “На первых страницах Библии тетраграмма имеет самое широкое значение, означает Бога Откровения вообще в отличие от чисто космического Его промышленія надъ остальнымъ міромъ. Затемъ она суживается до строго теократическаго имени и, наконецъ, вновь расширяется чертами всемірности и премірности” (Theophan (1905) 214).

⁴² Giving the basic definition of “proper name,” W. Van Langendonck states: “[It is] a noun that denotes a unique entity at the level of ‘established linguistic convention’ to make it psychosocially salient within a given basic level category [pragmatic]. The meaning of the name, if any, does not (or not any longer) determine its denotation [semantic]” (Van Langendonck (2007) 6). D. Cunningham observes: “There is a particular class of words which, by definition, cannot be translated: pure proper names. [...] Pure proper names are transliterated. [...] Pure proper names, by definition, have no semantic equivalents. [...] In this third, “hybrid” category, we find names for God. The Tetragrammaton, for example, often appears as YHWH in languages which use a Roman lettering system, but may also appear as ο κύριος or qui est or “I am who I am.” [...] To translate is to interpret, and one never translates without remainder” (Cunningham (1995) 425–426).

⁴³ These renderings include among others *Ἰαῶ*, *Ἰαού*, *Ἰενώ*, *Ἰεωά*, *Ἰηουά*, *Ἰαβά*, *Ἰωβά*, *Ἰεωβά*, *Ἰεοβάχ*, *Γεχαβά*, *Γεχωβά*, *Γεοβά*, and *Ἰαχωβά* (Vasileiadis, 2013; idem, 2014).

⁴⁴ *Ορθόδοξος Ομολογία της καθολικής και αποστολικής Εκκλησίας της Ανατολικής*. The text in Greek: “Τὸ μαρτυρᾷ ὁ αὐτὸς Θεὸς, ὀνομαζόμενος Ἰεχωβά”; in Latin: “Deus ipsemet, cui

1647) in 1638, and translated by the Cretan theologian Meletios Syrigos (1585–1664) and the Phanariot Great Dragoman Panagiotis Nikousios (1613–1673), and then printed at Amsterdam in 1667.⁴⁵ At that time, it appears that this form of the divine name was already in use by the Artan Bible scholar and Metropolitan Zacharias Gerganos (d. 1631) in his *Exegesis of John the Supreme Theologian's Book of Revelation*, composed in 1622/1623 (see Appendix 02).

During a period of hard struggles for the Greek translation of the Bible from the Hebrew text and the wider circulation among the pauperized common people, the Greek Orthodox Archimandrite Neophytos Vamvas (1770–1856) with the assistance of the Englishman Hebraist Isaac Lowndes (c. 1791–c. 1873), based on the Hebrew text, reconstructed in his edition of the Psalms the Tetragrammaton in Greek as *Ἰεοβὰ* (/ieová/) (see Appendix 02).⁴⁶ Such Greek transcriptions are more accurate rendering approaches of vocalizations of the Hebrew term as most of them are three-syllable and employ consonants according to their contemporary “softer” pronunciation, in contrast to the older transcriptions that used almost exclusively vowels.⁴⁷

03. When did the divine name stop to be uttered publicly?

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits that “it would be hard to determine at what time this reverence for the Divine name originated among the Hebrews.”⁴⁸ Whatever the case may be, it would be much wiser to try investigating *when different groups* stopped using it, instead of

Jehovæ nomen est”; and, in English: “As God, whose name is Jehovah, doth himself testify” (transl. Ph. Lodvill, 1762, p. 17).

⁴⁵ Karmiris (1952) vol. 2, pp. 582–592, 597; Maloney (1976) 34; Vasileiadis (2013); idem (2014).

⁴⁶ Neophytos Vamvas, *Ψαλτήριον ἢ Βίβλος των Ψαλμῶν, μεταφρασθεῖσα εκ του Εβραϊκού πρωτοτύπου*, London: R. Watts, British and Foreign Bible Society, 1831. The Greek divine name is found in Psalms 83:18 (p. 156). Also, the similar form *Ἰεοβὰ* (/ieo:vá/) is attested by the 17th century in Sixtinus Amama's *De nomine tetragrammato* (1628, p. 549).

⁴⁷ For an overview of the major phonological changes which mark the shift from classical to Koiné and Byzantine Greek, see Morpurgo Davies (2012) 1218.

⁴⁸ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York: Appleton, 1950, vol. 8, p. 329. Also, McDonough (1999) pp. 111, 115. It is very enlightening Meyer's (2017) attempt to trace the different developments that followed the oral and the written use of the Tetragrammaton.

inquiring *when* the Tetragrammaton stopped to be used *in general*.⁴⁹ In this way we would avoid groundless generalization and unfounded extrapolation. More specifically, (a) if it is testified that one Jewish socio-religious group (or, “sect”) did not utter or surrogate the Tetragrammaton this does not mean that the whole Jewish people or the totality of the groups were not using it in one way or another. Additionally, (b) the presence of a term that was later used as a surrogate does not necessarily mean that it is a substitute. For example, the term *adonai* אֲדֹנָי (Gr. *ἄδωναϊ*, *κύριος*) is sometimes used in the HB with reference to Almighty God but this does not mean that it is a substitute for the Tetragrammaton per se—it is a legitimate way of referring to God.⁵⁰

As seen in Appendix 01, few fragments of the OG/LXX-tradition texts dated from BCE have been found, and in all of these fragments the Tetragrammaton is present—either in old Hebrew and Aramaic characters, or by using the transcription *Ἰαώ*. Thus, the raw evidence we have available today shows that the divine name was included within the Greek LXX text as late as the middle of the first century CE.

However, in LXX manuscripts dated from the second century CE we find the nomina sacra κc (contraction of *κύριος*), and in some cases θc (for *θεός*) where the Hebrew text has the sacred Tetragrammaton.⁵¹ Obviously this “Christian scribal convention”⁵² was not the work of the original LXX translators (that is to write κc with a supralinear stroke), but it represents a later change of the text. Hence, we can safely conclude that sometime between the middle of the first century and the middle of the second century CE the text of the LXX was changed regarding the handling of the name of God, while abbreviations for other “sacred” terms were also introduced. The widespread use of this

⁴⁹ “It is clear that there was a wide diversity, however, in the usage of the Tetragrammaton among different groups at the time of the Second Temple” (Dacy (2001) 12, 14–15).

⁵⁰ This may probably be the case for the canonical books of the HB that make a limited use or even eliminate the use of the Tetragrammaton. Cf. Tov (1979) 229.

⁵¹ For instance, in P.Oxy.LXV 4443, an LXX Esther fragment dated from the first 1st–2nd century CE, the word *θεός* is found in a non-contracted form (De Troyer (2008) 158).

⁵² Hurtado (2006) 121.

Christian scribal practice “attests to some degree of organization or even standardization in manuscript production.”⁵³

It seems that according to the dominating practice among the members of the Qumran society pronouncing (but not writing) the Tetragrammaton was not permitted.⁵⁴ The supporting evidence comes from *The Rule of the Community*⁵⁵ and from the fact that in many manuscripts the Tetragrammaton is substituted for *el* אֵל (and not אֱלֹהִים—there is no evidence that this term was used as a *substitute* for the Tetragrammaton before the Christian era). However, not all of the Dead Sea Scrolls were written or/and copied at Qumran, while others were imported. In several of the imported manuscripts the Tetragrammaton is included in Aramaic script, and this would suggest that other contemporary groups continued to use the name of God.⁵⁶ So, it is evident from the available information that during at least the last century BCE the Qumran community was the only group which did not

⁵³ Blumell (2019) 18.

⁵⁴ E. Tov (2008, p. 119) notes: “The Qumran scribes had a special approach towards the writing of divine names, especially the Tetragrammaton. In texts written in square characters, especially in texts probably produced by the Qumran scribal school [...], the use of the Tetragrammaton was usually avoided, but when it was used, it was copied in the paleo-Hebrew script, also in some biblical scrolls. Likewise, אֵל, אֱלֹהִים, and הַבְּאוּרָה were sometimes written in that script. There are indications that in some scrolls these divine names were written after the scribe of the manuscript completed his task, possibly by a scribe belonging to a higher echelon. In several other texts, four or five dots were used to indicate the Tetragrammaton.” Furthermore, he adds: “While it is tacitly assumed by most scholars that with the revival of the paleo-Hebrew script in the Hasmonean period, texts were transformed from the square to the paleo-Hebrew script, it would be more natural to assume that the habit of writing in the paleo-Hebrew script had never ceased through the centuries. Possibly the paleo-Hebrew texts from Qumran derived from the circles of the Sadducees; the major argument for this assumption is the fact that most paleo-Hebrew texts reflect MT, although writing in this script was forbidden by the Pharisees. One of the special characteristics of the paleo-Hebrew texts is that they display virtually no scribal intervention. It is possible that the Qumran scribes were influenced by this Sadducean tradition when writing the Tetragrammaton and other divine names in paleo-Hebrew characters in biblical and nonbiblical texts, in order that these words, whose sanctity was determined by the writing in this script, would not be erased” (p. 142).

⁵⁵ “Whoever enunciates the Name (which is) honoured above all ... [...] whether blaspheming, or suddenly overtaken by misfortune or for any reason, [...] or reading a book, or blessing, will be excluded and shall not go back ever to the Community council” (1QS vi,27–vii,1–2). Transl. F. G. Martinez & E. J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Study Edition*, vol. 1 (1Q1–4Q273), Leiden-New York-Köln: Brill, 1997, pp. 84–87.

⁵⁶ Meyer (2017) 299.

use the Tetragrammaton. This case may show a tendency, but it is not the whole picture.

There is evidence that at least two Jewish groups, that is the so-called “Morning Bathers”⁵⁷ and the Pharisees, used the divine name when the Qumran community refrained from using it,⁵⁸ and while אֲדֹנָי was used by some, this practice was criticized by others.⁵⁹ Moreover, as will become clear in the following paragraphs, the *minim* (sectarian groups, a reference mainly to early Christians) continued using the Tetragrammaton within their sacred texts and this provoked their explicit banishment.

As seen in Appendix 01, the Greek translations of Aquila (c. 130 CE), Theodotion and Symmachus (second century CE) included the Tetragrammaton in square Aramaic script. In their extant copies (as found in the fragments of Origen’s *Hexapla*) the four Hebrew letters יהוה were copied in a way resembling the Greek characters πιπι (/pipi/, if read). Additionally, the text and marginal notes in old *Hexapla* and *Syro-Hexapla* manuscripts provide evidence that manuscripts of the sacred scriptures that contained the Tetragrammaton (both in Old Hebrew and Aramaic script) were used by the translators—and this may be an indication for the originality of a distinct form(s) for rendering the Tetragrammaton in the earlier Syriac Bible translations as well. In the light of all this, the conclusion concerning the total disuse of the sacred Name at this period is unwarranted.

It is assumed that the earliest clear attestation of the interdiction according to which the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton constituted a capital offense is found in Leviticus 24:16 (*LES*) as translated-interpreted by the Alexandrian LXX in the late third century BCE: “And the one who *names* the Name of the Lord, let him be put to death.”⁶⁰ But the underlying Hebrew passage has a totally different meaning. It reads instead: “Whoever *blasphemes* the name of the Lord

⁵⁷ Also known as “Hemerobaptists,” Heb. *Tovelei Shaḥarit*.

⁵⁸ *Tos. Ber.* 6(7):20.

⁵⁹ Finkelstein (1969) 9–10.

⁶⁰ “Ὁνομάζων δὲ τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου θανάτῳ θανατούσθω· λίθοις λιθοβολεῖται αὐτὸν πᾶσα συναγωγή Ἰσραὴλ· ἐάν τε προσήλυτος ἐάν τε αὐτόχθων, ἐν τῷ ὀνομάσαι αὐτὸν τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου τελευτάτω” (Leviticus 24:16, *LXX*). “Whoever names the name of the Lord—by death let him be put to death” (*NETS*).

shall surely be put to death” (*ESV*).⁶¹ As the gloss in *T^{Ps-J}* makes clear, נִקֵּב ‘the one who blasphemes’ the Tetragrammaton—that is unfavorably, as in casting a spell or pronouncing a curse⁶²—is the one ‘who pronounces and maligns’⁶³ the Tetragrammaton. It is interesting that later on, the translators of the LXX book of Jeremiah (20:9, 10) used the phrase “to name the name of the Lord” (ὀνομάσω τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου) with a positive sense, with none of the meanings of the verb נִקֵּב.⁶⁴ Furthermore, the sages⁶⁵ explained and Rashi (1040–1105)⁶⁶ clarified that the penalty is incurred for the “one who *blasphemously* pronounces the Name.”

Written in the second or first century CE, the Greek *Wisdom of Solomon* (14:21) mentions that people “bestowed on objects of stone and wood the *incommunicable* name” (*NETS*), or “assigned the *unshareable* name to stone and wood” (*LES*).⁶⁷ Such a superstitious (in fact, it ended up as irreverent) attitude towards the Tetragrammaton appears in the words of the Jewish historian Josephus, coming from a priestly family in the first century CE, who stated: “Then God revealed to him His name, which ere then had not come to men’s ears, and of which *I am* forbidden to speak.”⁶⁸ By projecting his special capacity—that is, his priestly origin—that did not allow him to utter the divine name, Josephus may imply that this was not the case for the rest of the people.

⁶¹ נִקֵּב שֵׁם יְהוָה מוֹת יָרֵמָת. The verb נִקֵּב means: “1. to pierce, perforate, bore, appoint, a. (Qal) 1. to pierce, bore, 2. to prick off, designate, b. (Niphal) to be pricked off, be designated, be specified. 2. (Qal) to curse, blaspheme” (*Brown-Driver-Briggs’ Hebrew Definitions*).

⁶² Cf. Job 3:8; Proverbs 11:26. The verb is also attested with a positive sense in Isaiah 62:2.

⁶³ דַּמְפַּרְשׁ וּמַחֲרֵף.

⁶⁴ The same is the case in the NT where the phrase “ὁ ὀνομάζων τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου” (“every one who names the name of the Lord,” *ESV*) has a positive meaning (2 Timothy 2:19).

⁶⁵ *m. Sanh.* 7:5; *Sifra Emor*, par. 14:2; *b. Sanh.* 55b–56a.

⁶⁶ Rashi, *Commentary* on Leviticus 24:10–11, 16.

⁶⁷ “Τὸ ἀκοινώνητον ὄνομα λίθοις καὶ ξύλοις περιέθεσαν.” The term ἀκοινώνητος is defined as: “a) not shared with [...], b) not to be communicated, “ὄνομα” LXX Wi.14.21; not to be shared, incommunicable” (Liddell, Scott & Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940). Therefore, here it is not meant that the Tetragrammaton is the name that no one can get it as his own name, but rather that the Tetragrammaton is a name that cannot be uttered among the pious.

⁶⁸ *Jewish Antiquities* 2:276, transl. Thackeray.

Regarding the official worship, Reisel notes that “in its cultic pronunciation, rich in vowels, the Tetragrammaton was apparently used during the some fifteen centuries from Moses and Aaron (about 1450 BCE) to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.”⁶⁹ Even during the recent centuries the degree of the prohibition against pronouncing God's name among the rabbis was quite equivocal. For instance, “Sasportas and Joseph ha-Levi accused the believers [i.e. the followers of R. Sabbatai Şevi] of rebelling against the authority of the Talmud and of blaspheming the ancient rabbis by suggesting that the latter did not fully understand the sense of the prohibition of pronouncing the Tetragrammaton,” following Sabbatai’s practice who ‘pronounced the holy name of God in public.’⁷⁰ According to R. Jacob Emden (1697–1776), one should not only utter the actual name of God when it appears in the text as he is reading Biblical verses, but also when he is studying the Talmud or Halakhic writings.⁷¹ According to R. Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev (1740–1809), the Tetragrammaton *is* possible to “be pronounced as written” even today.⁷²

Regarding the common use of the divine proper name by the Jewish people, the Mishnaic exhortation to use the Tetragrammaton in every day salutations⁷³ according to M. Reisel “refers apparently to the period when the Maccabaeans had curbed the power of the Seleucids,” that is from 164 BCE to 63 BCE.⁷⁴ According to the same source, “the Tetragrammaton was used in daily intercourse over a long period”—obviously, as late as the first century CE.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Reisel (1957) 71.

⁷⁰ Scholem (1975) 142–143, 691.

⁷¹ *She'eilat Ya'avetz* 1:81. See, also, *MB* 215:14 and *Iggerot Moshe*, *OC* 2:56; *Yechave Da'at* 3:13.

⁷² Lamm (1999) 152–153.

⁷³ “It was also laid down that greetings should be given in the name [of God], in the same way as it says, ‘And behold Boaz came from Bethlehem and said unto the reapers, ‘The Lord be with you;’ and they answered him, ‘the Lord bless you’” (*b. Ber.* 54a; also, 63a).

⁷⁴ Reisel (1957) 68.

⁷⁵ “And yet obviously this practice was not generally accepted in Judaism, as the later replacement by the Hebrew tetragrammaton shows. From even later sources we also know that there were circles that pronounced the name of God as *Iaō*, and that not merely for magical reasons. This custom must have been considered extremely unusual, if not heretical,

In connection with the annual Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), the Mishnah mentions: “And when the priests and the people which stood in the Temple Court heard the Expressed Name come forth from the mouth of the High Priest, they used to kneel and bow themselves and fall down on their faces and say, ‘Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom for ever and ever!’” (*b. Yoma* 6:2, transl. Danby). Concerning the daily priestly blessings, tractate *b. Sot* (7:6) states: “In the Temple they pronounced the Name as it was written, but in the provinces by a substituted word.” According to *b. Sanh.* (7:5), a blasphemer was not guilty ‘unless he pronounced the Name,’ and that in a trial for the charge of blasphemy a substitute name was used until all the evidence had been heard; then the chief witness was asked privately to ‘say expressly what he had heard,’ presumably by the utterance of the Tetragrammaton. Tractate *b. Sanh.* (10:1), mentioning those “that have no share in the world to come,” says: “Abba Saul says: Also he that pronounces the Name with its proper letters.” Nevertheless, despite these negative positions, positive admonitions are included like the one in tractate *b. Ber.* (9:5): “A man should salute his fellow with [the use of] the Name [of God],” followed by the citing of the biblical example of Boaz.⁷⁶ All this evidence tends to show that the legitimate pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton—as it was still audible to the common people at least during the worship at the Temple—was freely made by them in their everyday transactions.

As a result of the scholarly repetition of the same old arguments, the common edifice usually dates this development as a full-blown phenomenon by the third or second century BCE. On the contrary, it seems highly probable that some free use of the Tetragrammaton continued up to the early second century CE.⁷⁷ Until the early fifth century, Jerome came to write that in his days the Tetragrammaton was not pronounced—it was “considered ανεκφώνητον, that is,

in the eyes of those Jews and Christians who were used to calling upon God using the title ‘Lord’” (Rösel (2007) 423).

⁷⁶ “And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, “The LORD be with you!” And they answered, “The LORD bless you!”” (Ruth 2:4, *ESV*).

⁷⁷ Cf. Vasileiadis (2014) 57; Puech (1992) 80–88; Stegemann (1978) 200; Pennington (2007) 20.

unspeakable.”⁷⁸ The Masoretes obviously heard אֲדֹנֵי pronounced in the synagogue where the text reads יהוה. As already mentioned, this had also been the case for the Qumran community until its end in 68 CE.

The spreading of this “contradiction”⁷⁹ was the result of several factors. In the last centuries BCE, various influences dynamically affected Jews at Palestine and in the Diaspora. The Hellenistic influence proved to be extremely powerful and so was especially the old Platonic thought that “the One” is nameless.⁸⁰ Philo was highly influenced by Plato, believing that ‘no name at all can properly be used of Him, to Whom alone existence belongs’ (transl. Colson).⁸¹ R. A. Marmorstein, in his famous *The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God* (vol. 1), supported that the Greek influence was the basic reason for the name to cease from being pronounced.

Another reason was the wide expansion of magical arts and the magical notion of getting special powers by using divine names. The idea of “the concealed name,” indicating magical influence, is found in the book of *1 Enoch* (69:13–25) composed probably during the first century CE.⁸² It was thought, therefore, that refraining from using the Tetragrammaton would prevent its use in magical arts—a practice that obviously had the exact opposite effects.

⁷⁸ “The ninth, τετράγραμμα [Tetragram], which they considered ανεκφώνητον, that is, unspeakable, and it is written with these letters, Iod, He, Vau, He. Certain ignorant ones, because of the similarity of the characters, when they would find it in Greek books, were accustomed to read ΠΙΠΙ.” Latin text: “Nonum τετράγραμμα, quod ανεκφώνητον, id est ineffabile putaverunt, quod his litteris scribitur, jod, he, vav, he. Quod quidam non intellegentes propter elementorum similitudinem, cum in Graecis libris reppererint, ΠΙΠΙ legere consueverunt” (Jerome, *Letter 25* “To Marcella” [PL 22:428–429]).

⁷⁹ b. *Pes.* 50a.

⁸⁰ For example, in Plato’s *Parmenides* is mentioned that the One “has no name, nor is there any description or knowledge or perception or opinion of it” and is “neither named nor described nor thought of nor known, nor does any existing thing perceive it” (transl. H.N. Fowler). Greek text: “Οὐδ’ ἄρα ὄνομα ἔστιν αὐτῷ οὐδὲ λόγος οὐδὲ τις ἐπιστήμη οὐδὲ αἴσθησις οὐδὲ δόξα. [...] Οὐδ’ ὀνομάζεται ἄρα οὐδὲ λέγεται οὐδὲ δοξάζεται οὐδὲ γινώσκεται, οὐδὲ τι τῶν ὄντων αὐτοῦ αἰσθάνεται” (J. Burnet, *Platonis opera*, vol. 2, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967/¹1901). For the reception of Greek philosophical ideas about God in Christian philosophy, see Osborn (1981) pp. 31–78.

⁸¹ “Οὐδὲν ὄνομα τὸ παράπαν ἐπ’ ἐμοῦ κυριολογεῖται, ᾧ μόνῳ πρόσεστι τὸ εἶναι” (Philo, *De Vita Moses* 1:75).

⁸² Hannah (1999) 51–54; McDonough (1999) 128–131.

Additionally, the excessive care against the explicit utterance of the Name may reveal a lowering in the moral standards of the priesthood. The Talmud recounts: ‘At first the High Priest used to proclaim the Name in a loud voice; but when dissolute men multiplied, he proclaimed it in a low tone’ (y. *Yoma* 40d). Instead of the Tetragrammaton, the divine name was pronounced יהוה in the synagogue service.⁸³ Furthermore, ‘there was a tradition that the original pronunciation was transmitted by the Sages to their disciples periodically—once or twice every seven years’ (*b. Kid.* 71a). According to A. Cohen, “even that practice ceased after a while, and the method of pronouncing the Name is no longer known with certainty.”⁸⁴

04. Did Jesus and the early Christians pronounce the name of God?

As aforementioned, the banishment for uttering the Tetragrammaton during the first century CE was not as completely imposed as it has been previously thought. If this is actually the case, there is internal evidence in the NT itself for the unhindered use of the Tetragrammaton during the first century CE.⁸⁵

The extant copies of the OG/LXX-tradition show that the divine name was available inside the Greek Bible copies and is testified that it was written also in a pronounceable, effable Greek form. Also, it was mentioned that the Targums multiplied the use of the Tetragrammata inside the biblical text. In contrast to the widely held opinion of strict non-pronunciation of the name, it seems that a Jew could read the sacred name explicitly (“according to its letters”) in biblical passages and even

⁸³ R. W. Allen notices: “By the fourth century of the Common Era, hesitancy in pronouncing the four-letter Name of God is more robust. Thus, Rabbi Avina, commenting on Exodus 3:15, imagines God as saying “I am not read as I am written. I am written with ‘yod’ ‘hey’ and pronounced with ‘alef’ ‘dalet’” (Allen (2009) 131). This is a quotation from *b. Pes.* 50a, translated by M. Rodkinson as: “I am written Yahveh and am pronounced Adonai.” As it is dated by the fourth century CE, it reaffirms the position of a later imposed prohibition against pronouncing the divine name.

⁸⁴ Cohen (1949) 24–25.

⁸⁵ For example, Jesus, Mary, Elizabeth, Zechariah, the shepherds at Bethlehem, Stephen, and James—even the angel Gabriel—are among the ones recorded *in direct speech* inside the NT using freely the divine name (cf. Matthew 4:4, 7, 10; 22:44; Luke 1:15-17, 28, 32, 38, 45–46, [49], 68, 76; 2:15; 4:16-21; Acts 7:31, 33, 49, 60; 15:[14], 17, *S-GHNT*, *DHNT*, *HNC*).

more to greet his fellows using the divine name, according to the old custom. Besides, then commonly used proper names like *John* and *Jesus*,⁸⁶ being themselves theophoric names, included the uttering of the first half of the Tetragrammaton.

When the young Jesus came to the synagogue of Nazareth, he stood up to read a portion from the book of Isaiah (61:1–2). The Greek text of Luke (4:18–19) says that he read:

| Luke 4:18–19, ²⁸ NA | Isaiah 61:1–2, LXX | Isaiah 61:1–2, MT |
|--|---|---|
| Πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ’ ἐμέ οὐ εἶνεκεν ἔχρισέν με εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς, ἀπέσταλκέν με, κηρύξαι αἰχμαλώτοις ἄφεσιν καὶ τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν, ἀποστεῖλαι τεθραυσμένους ἐν ἀφέσει, κηρύξαι ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτόν. | Πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ’ ἐμέ, οὐ εἶνεκεν ἔχρισέν με· εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς ἀπέσταλκέν με, ἰάσασθαι τοὺς συντετριμμένους τῇ καρδίᾳ, κηρύξαι αἰχμαλώτοις ἄφεσιν καὶ τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν, καλέσαι ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτόν καὶ ἡμέραν ἀνταποδόσεως, παρακαλέσαι πάντας τοὺς πενθοῦντας. | רִשְׁמָה אֱלֹהִי יְהוָה עָלַי לְעֹ מִשְׁחָה יְהוָה אֱתִי לְבָשָׁר עֲנִיִּים שְׁלֹחֲנִי לְחַבֵּשׁ לְנַפְשֵׁי בְרִיָּה לְקַרְא לְשִׁבּוּיִם דְּרוּר וְלְאַסְוִירִים פְּקֻד־קֻדִּים: לְקַרְא שְׁנַת־רִצּוֹן לַיהוָה וְיוֹם נָקָם לְאַלְהֵינוּ לְנַחֵם כָּל־אֲבֵלִים: |

What did Jesus actually read publicly? Although Aramaic appears to have been the common language and there was some familiarity with the Greek, the reading of the sacred Scriptures was made exclusively in Hebrew.⁸⁷ In the NT citation from the HB are included two Tetragrammata. Did he read the Name “according to its letters” or followed the novel rabbinical tradition?

Jesus taught his followers to pray to God: “Let your name be sanctified” (Matthew 6:9). He preached to the audiences that he had come and he was acting in his “Father's name” (John 5:43; 10:25). Furthermore, at the end of his public activity, he himself prayed to his heavenly Father: “I have made your name manifest to the men you gave

⁸⁶ The name *Jesus* in Hebrew, יְהוֹשֻׁעַ and יֵשׁוּעַ (later on, יֵשׁוּעַ) as compared to יְהוָה (*Brown-Driver-Briggs' Hebrew Definitions*).

⁸⁷ Green & McDonald (2013) 416.

me out of the world” (John 17:6). All these statements would sound hamstrung if the Tetragrammaton itself was not used.

Moreover, Jesus fiercely attacked rabbinical traditions that altered both the letter and the spirit of the Scriptures. He shouted that Pharisees and scribes ‘were transgressing the commandment of God’ and “made void the word of God” because of their paradox biblical interpretations (Matthew 15:1-9). Indeed, the messianic Jesus—even more the Son or Word of God who descended from heaven—would have no valid reason to abide by such a “man-made” rule and thus to restrict his mission “to bear witness about the light” (John 1:7).⁸⁸ He declared that he represented the Light and the Life, and his sound understanding and application of the Word of God was not to be compromised.

What about Jesus’ followers? Did they feel bound to conform to this rabbinical tradition? As already mentioned, the phrase “the one who is naming the name of the Lord” (ὁ ὀνομάζων τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου) has a positive meaning in the Christian scriptures (2 Timothy 2:19). Not even a hint of the rabbinical traditions of non-pronouncement—that were formulated and written down after the second, or even the third centuries CE—is found in the NT. Although an expanded theology came into light, the oneness and the experienced character of God found in the OT remained an untouchable testimony. As a matter of fact, if their Master used his heavenly Father’s name it is then expected that his disciples followed the same pattern. And since some of them were to a greater or lesser degree among the authors of the NT books, this view ought to be found in their writings.

Despite the bold claims of some scholars regarding the divine nature of Jesus before, during and after his incarnation as a human, the *title* “Lord” and the *divine name* rendered “Lord” were carefully distinguished in early Christian writings. For instance, according to P. Nagel, “Paul is, for the most part, conceptually consistent in his use

⁸⁸ According to late Judaism, during the messianic era the name of God would be pronounced according to its letters freely. R. Nahman ben Isaac (*b. Pes.* 50a) says that “in the [messianic] future world it [i.e. the Name of God] shall all be one: it shall be written with yod he [i.e. יהוה] and read as yod he” [i.e. יהוה, not substituted by אדני]” (Lamm (1999) 153; McDonough (1999) 115; Scholem (1975) 142–143). Furthermore, as Case points in similar context, “it is not certain that Jesus and his followers would have felt so much restraint along these lines as did the Rabbis” (1907, p. 157).

of the term θεός, which principally refers to the monotheistic Hebrew deity, while the term κύριος is used ambiguously as a reference for the Tetragram and Jesus as the κύριος.”⁸⁹ Indeed, “the New Testament writers show an unmistakable tendency to reserve Κύριος for Christ and Θεός for God.”⁹⁰ If it is not for a quotation from the HB, when Paul speaks about “the Lord” he means most of the times Jesus Christ. But Luke, as notes J. D. Dunn, “writing later, observes no such rule of practice” as it was still natural for him (or his speaking characters) to speak of “the Lord” and to denote God.⁹¹

For the Christian communities was clear that “the lordship of Jesus was a derivative lordship, but as derived from the Lord God it was in effect an expression of God’s lordship.” The use of “Κύριος does not imply that Christ is elevated to the place of Yahweh, but is descriptive of his heavenly authority over the community in the spiritual sphere.”⁹² Concerning the Gospel of Matthew, D. A. Carson observes that κύριος “is not a technical term” and “cannot be assumed to bear the weight of deity.”⁹³ In the Gospel of John “there is a subtle distinction between *Kyrios* and God the Father,” R. Roukema timidly admits.⁹⁴ Regarding the letter of James, ‘at least some of his references to “Lord” (κύριος) refer to God rather than to Jesus.’⁹⁵

The scriptural simplicity in describing the relations between the divine Persons was meant to end very soon. “After the nomina sacra are introduced, however, both [i.e. YHWH and Christ] may be represented as κς (i.e. κύριος, “Lord”) and may be interpreted as synonyms by the

⁸⁹ Nagel (2012) 188; Hill (2012) 106.

⁹⁰ Case (1907) 158.

⁹¹ Dunn (1997) 376–378. J. Dunn (p. 377) explains that Luke did not “thought of them (that is, (i) the one God and Father and (ii) the one Lord Jesus Christ) as two equal κύριοι, or casually mixed them up, or saw them in some sophisticated pre-Trinitarian way as expressions of the one θεός και κύριος.” It is interesting that according to Luke’s (2:11) record, the angel said that “ἐτέχθη ὑμῖν σήμερον σωτήρ ὃς ἐστὶν χριστὸς κύριος ἐν πόλει Δαβὶδ,” that is “for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ *the Lord*” (*RSV*), the phrase rendered “יהוה נִשְׁמַח בְּךָ” in *S-GHNT*, in *DHNT*, as well as in the *HNC*.

⁹² Case (1907) 160.

⁹³ Carson (1982) 109.

⁹⁴ Riemer Roukema, “Jesus and the divine name in the Gospel of John,” in Van Kooten (2006) pp. 207–223.

⁹⁵ Johnson (2013) 457. At James 3:9 where the Greek text has “κύριον καὶ πατέρα” the *S-GHNT* renders it “יהוה אֵלֵינוּ”, and the Tetragrammaton is also used in this verse by the *HNC*.

readers,” notes D. Trobisch. He adds that “the meaning of the passage may thus change considerably” and considers that “the effect on Christian readers—that Jesus and JHWH become synonyms—was probably intended.”⁹⁶ Consequently, the Greek term *κύριος* is used in the NT with two basic meanings: (a) “as a proper name” that is, it “has the sense of 'Jehovah,’” and (b) “for a title of Christ, who as man has the place of Lordship over all things.”⁹⁷

Some have concluded that “across the New Testament, then, in the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, we find writers calling Jesus “Lord” in contexts that identify or equate him with the Lord YHWH” and even that “the crucified man, Jesus of Nazareth, was Jehovah.”⁹⁸ However, this would be a blatant blasphemy for any Jew (or even any pious God-fearer) both in the light of the OT experience of God and in the light of Jesus teachings and his followers’ writings.⁹⁹

How then Jesus could be understood by the early Christian communities as “Lord” and “God”? J. Fitzmyer explains:

“Early Christians regarded Jesus as sharing in some sense in the transcendence of Yahweh, that he was somehow on a par with him. This, however, is meant in an egalitarian sense, not in an identifying sense [...] By “transcendence” here is meant that Jesus was somehow regarded as other than a mere human being; but the otherness is not spelled out in the NT with the clarity that would emerge in the Councils of Nicaea or Chalcedon, when the NT data were

⁹⁶ Trobisch (2000) 66–67. For further examination of the nomina sacra and especially whether they were a result of “some kind of centralized, or institutionalized, control,” see Haines-Eitzen (2000) pp. 19–20, 91–95.

⁹⁷ John Nelson Darby, *The Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and book of Revelation, commonly called the New Testament* (1872), “Notes and Corrections” [the original French edition: *Le Nouveau Testament* (1859), “Preface”].

⁹⁸ Bowman & Komoszewski (2007) 170.

⁹⁹ Concerning Philippians 2:8–11, it is interesting R. Bauckham’s note: “But there is also a possibility that seems not to have been noticed. The name Jesus, like many Jewish names, contains the divine name. It means: “YHWH is salvation” (the full form of the name יהוהישע = יהושע). The name is peculiarly appropriate to the context of the allusion to Isa. 45:23 in Phil. 2:10–11 (Isa. 45:21–22: “a righteous God and a Savior . . . Turn to me and be saved”). It could be that the name Jesus is regarded as a new kind of substitute for or even form of the divine name, so that Phil. 2:10–11 means: “at the name YHWH-is-Salvation every knee should bend, . . . and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (i.e., YHWH)” (Bauckham (1998) 138).

not only reformulated, but even reconceived in terms of other modes of philosophical thinking.”¹⁰⁰

05. Where is the name of God in the New Testament?

It is well known that, (a) there are no NT autographs extant in our days, and (b) the Tetragrammaton is not included in any of the surviving NT copies. Nonetheless, Kendall Soulen, in his enlightening work, finds the “spirit” of the Tetragrammaton in the NT and outlines the result of its extinction from within the NT text:

“By one estimate, the New Testament contains well over two thousand forms of speech shaped in one way or another by the practice of avoiding the direct use of the Tetragrammaton. Allowing for differences of length, this means that the density of allusion to the Tetragrammaton is about the same in the New Testament as in the Old, if not greater still. Even so, Christians gradually lost touch with this particular divine name, due in large part to the parting of ways between Judaism and Christianity over the first several centuries of the Common Era. The result was a marked impoverishment of the church's treasury of trinitarian names and patterns of naming.”¹⁰¹

How was it possible to take place such an extensive alteration in the text of the Christian scriptures? Actually, it wasn't originally a deliberate attempt to twist the content of the sacred text itself. Rather, it resulted from a scribal convention adopted as a functional means for translating-transferring the divine name(s) from the Jewish soil of the HB to the Greek speaking literature. This practice appeared very early in the transmission history of the NT.

More than four decades ago, G. Howard proposed the groundbreaking thesis that the original texts of the NT preserved the Tetragrammaton (either in Hebrew characters or in a Greek transliteration) in citations from the OT. Howard based his theory on an analogy to the transmission of the LXX: several OG/LXX manuscripts dated from the pre-Christian and Christian times preserve the Tetragrammaton where later Christian LXX codices read κύριος. He

¹⁰⁰ Fitzmyer (1979) 130.

¹⁰¹ Soulen (2011) 12, 14.

argues that it was the original practice of LXX translators to preserve the Tetragrammaton in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, and that the familiar practice of employing κύριος as a translation for יהוה only developed later when the LXX became a specifically Christian text.¹⁰² A. Pietersma proposed the reverse, that the original Alexandrian text of the LXX read κύριος while the observed occurrence of the Tetragrammaton in pre-Christian LXX manuscripts represents an archaizing tendency within Palestinian Judaism.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, Pietersma's supposition concerning the original rendering of the Tetragrammaton—however repeated may be—has not proved convincing.¹⁰⁴

As to be expected, Howard's position was not bloodlessly accepted because, as R. Shedinger notes, "in an aside, Howard draw out the revolutionary theological ramifications of this thesis." Why so? "By not employing κύριος for the Tetragrammaton in Old Testament quotations, but preserving the divine name, the functional identity between God and Christ would have been much less in the original New Testament writings than was the case later when κύριος, already a title for Christ, became also a surrogate for the divine name."¹⁰⁵ J. McRay explains:

"This whole issue becomes even more intriguing when we consider the possibility that the New Testament autographs, written almost entirely by Jewish Christians (the possible exception being Luke-Acts), may have

¹⁰² "Recent discoveries in Egypt and the Judean Desert allow us to see first-hand the use of God's name in pre-Christian times. These discoveries are significant for NT studies in that they form a literary analogy with the earliest Christian documents and may explain how NT authors used the divine name. In the following pages we will set forth a theory that the divine name, יהוה (and possibly abbreviations of it), was originally written in the NT quotations of and allusions to the OT and that in the course of time it was replaced mainly with the surrogate κς. This removal of the Tetragram, in our view, created a confusion in the minds of early Gentile Christians about the relationship between the 'Lord God' and the 'Lord Christ' which is reflected in the MS tradition of the NT text itself" (Howard (1977) 63). Cf. Howard (1978; 1992).

¹⁰³ Pietersma (1984) 85–101.

¹⁰⁴ For example, see G. D. Kilpatrick's "Book Review of A. Pietersma's 'Kyrios or Tetragram'" (*Novum Testamentum*, vol. 27, no. 1–4 (1985), pp. 380–382) and M. Epstein's, "On the 'original' Septuagint" (*The Bible translator*, United Bible Societies, vol. 45, no. 3 (July 1994), pp. 327–329).

¹⁰⁵ Shedinger (2001) 138.

preserved the Jewish custom and retained the divine name in Aramaic script in quotations from the Old Testament. Thus they may have followed the lead of some Jewish authors who used one script for the divine name when they quoted Scripture and another when they themselves referred to God. Similarly, it was customary at Qumran to use the Tetragram freely when one was either copying or introducing Scripture quotations into a commentary, but to use *El* ("God") in original material written for a commentary.

Having references to Yahweh clearly indicated would be of enormous help, for any verses that refer to "the Lord" are unclear as to whether Christ or God (Yahweh) is meant. For example, Peter's quotation (in Acts 2:34) of David, "The Lord said to my Lord," is unclear until the Hebrew original (Ps. 110:1) is read: "Yahweh says to my Adonai." Such verses that quote the Old Testament would be clearer if YHWH (the Tetragram) were used in the New Testament."¹⁰⁶

Although the use of the Tetragrammaton in the Christian worship would seem to be a Judaizing characteristic, in reality exactly the opposite has been supported to be the case. K. Soulen observes: "The nonpronunciation of the Tetragrammaton in Christian worship testifies to the continuing presence and influence of Jewish practice at the heart of the church's liturgical life."¹⁰⁷

For the discerning studier of the Bible it is clear that "the writers of the NT all share the view of God which is seen in the OT."¹⁰⁸ The biblical notion of the divine name plays a major role in the OT and the case is similar in the NT. Why, then, is the name missing from the extant NT manuscripts?

Probably by the third century CE, the existing copies of the original text of the Christian scriptures had been altered as regards the way that divine names were written down. The terms "Lord" and "God"

¹⁰⁶ McRay (2009) 371. A prolific Greek Orthodox theologian, Ioannis Kolitsaras, explained this verse based on his literal translation of the Hebrew text in Greek: "Ἔειπεν ὁ Γεχωβὰ πρὸς τὸν Ἀδωνάι" (Kolitsaras (1960) 149).

¹⁰⁷ Soulen (2011) 13.

¹⁰⁸ Guthrie (1981) 75.

were inserted to the text in the form of *nomina sacra*, probably as a practice resembling the distinguishing use of the Tetragrammaton in the Jewish scriptures. Kr. De Troyer remarks that “*Kurios*, in its truncated form, seems to be the dominant name of God in at least the documents from the fourth century onwards, although already in use at the end of the second, beginning of the third century.”¹⁰⁹

Truly, the hard evidence of the surviving LXX manuscripts supports an analogous and simultaneous development in the transmission of the OG/LXX-tradition. Dr. P. Kahle states: “We now know that the Greek Bible text as far as it was written by Jews for Jews did not translate the Divine name by *kyrios*, but the Tetragrammaton written with Hebrew or Greek letters was retained in such MSS. It was the Christians who replaced the Tetragrammaton by *kyrios*, when the divine name written in Hebrew letters was not understood anymore.”¹¹⁰

As seen in Appendix 01, this change took place early in the Christian era. Non-Jewish Christians increased in great numbers among the Christian communities and their knowledge of the sacredness of the Tetragrammaton—discernible also in the Hebrew substratum of the NT—was not self-evident anymore.¹¹¹ This possibility is mentioned by

¹⁰⁹ De Troyer (2008) 155. For a detailed presentation of the available manuscript evidence, see Meyer (2017) pp. 246–248 and the analysis that follows.

¹¹⁰ Kahle (1959) 222.

¹¹¹ “Whence did NT writers derive this Greek appellation for Yahweh? Use of absolute ὁ Κύριος for Yahweh has been thought to be derived from the LXX, in the great parchment codices of which Heb. Yhwh is translated by κύριος (so Cullmann, Hahn, et al.). But this tr[anslation] is found only in fourth- and fifth-century Christian copies of the LXX, not in those prepared for Greek-speaking Jews in pre-Christian times (e.g., Pap. Fuad 266 [from Egypt] and 8HevXII gr [from Palestine]). In these versions of the OT Yhwh is inserted in Hebrew or palaeo-Hebrew characters into the Greek text, and both Origen and Jerome knew of such copies in their days. Moreover, at least since W. Bousset it has been maintained that it was “unthinkable” that a Palestinian Jew would call God absolutely “the Lord” (see Bultmann, *Theology I*, 51f.). Yet there was clearly a custom beginning among Palestinian Jews of the last two centuries B.C. of referring to God as “(the) Lord,” in Aramaic as *marêh* (indefinite, 11QtgJob 24:6–7; 1QapGen 20:12–13) or *marya* (definite, 4QEnb 1, iv.5), in Hebrew as *ʾadôn* (even without the controversial suffix -ay, Ps 114:7; 11QPsa 28:7–8), and in Greek as κύριος (Josephus *Ant.* xx.4.90; xiii.68 [quoting Isa 19:19]; T. Levi 18:2 [ku,rioj]; 1 Enoch [Greek] 10:9 [ὁ κύριος]). Even though none of these examples indicates that Yhwh was translated by κύριος, they at least show that it was not “unthinkable” for Palestinian Jews to call “God” (ʿel) or “the Almighty” (šadday) “Lord.” The direct line has not yet been traced from this pre-Christian Jewish custom to the NT writers, but its influence on these writers is not unimaginable” (*Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, Horst Balz & Gerhard

S. McDonough who observes: “As for the NT, we must first note the fact that there is no known evidence of the tetragrammaton in any surviving MS of the NT. If it were ever there, it has vanished without a trace.” He adds: “While Jewish Christians could possibly have used the name YHWH when (and if) they spoke Hebrew, when they wrote (and presumably spoke) in Greek, they used κύριος.”¹¹²

Even then though, “the Septuagintal readers certainly knew that Κύριος was not itself the actual name of Yahweh but was merely an expedient of the translator,”¹¹³ and thus it is highly improbable that the title *Kyrios* was transferred to Jesus by the early Christians under the influence of the Septuagintal *Kyrios* in place of the Tetragrammaton.¹¹⁴ Concerning the dating, E. J. Bickerman notes that “there was about 200 CE a standard text of the Greek version from which the three recensions mentioned by Jerome¹¹⁵ and our great uncials¹¹⁶ derive.”¹¹⁷

The fact remains that the oldest extant fragments of the Greek LXX that were in use in Jesus’ days contain the divine name written in Hebrew scripts and do not use the term κύριος.¹¹⁸ The extant pre-Christian copies of the Greek OT that include passages which in Hebrew incorporate the divine name, also preserve inside the Greek text the name in distinct Hebrew script or in Greek transcription. These copies (samples are found in Appendix 01) are:

(1) **P. Fouad Inv. 266^b (Rahlfs 848)**, dated in the mid 1st century BCE, containing a passage from the book of

Schneider (eds.), William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004, “3078. κύριος, -ου, ὁ κύριος owner, master, lord; Lord”).

¹¹² McDonough (1999) 61, 98.

¹¹³ Case (1907) 160.

¹¹⁴ Witherington III & Yamazaki-Ransom (2014) 528.

¹¹⁵ That is, Eusebius’ edition of Origen’s revision and the recensions of Hesychius and Lucian.

¹¹⁶ That is, Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus, Codex Alexandrinus, and Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus.

¹¹⁷ Bickerman (2007) 158.

¹¹⁸ “Recent textual discoveries cast doubt on the idea that the compilers of the LXX translated the Tetragrammaton YHWH by kyrios. The oldest LXX MSS (fragments) now available to us have the tetragrammaton written in Heb. characters in the Gk. text. This custom was retained by later Jewish translators of the OT in the first centuries A.D.” (Bietenhard (1976) 512).

Deuteronomy with more than 30 Tetragrammata in Aramaic script;

(2) **4QpapLXXLev^b (Rahlfs 802)**, dated in the 1st century BCE, containing a passage from the book of Leviticus with three occurrences of the Tetragrammaton in Greek as *Ἰαώ* (/iaō:/);¹¹⁹

(3) **8HevXII (Rahlfs 943)**, a fragmentary scroll of the Twelve Prophets in Greek from Wād Khabra (W.Khabra XII Kaige), dated 50 BCE–50 CE, in which the Tetragrammaton occurs in paleo-Hebrew letters 28 times;

(4) **P.Oxy.L 3522 (Rahlfs 857)**, dated in the early 1st century CE, containing small passage from the book of Job with two occurrences of the Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew script;

(5) **P.Oxy.LXXVII 5101 (Rahlfs 2227)**, dated 50–150 CE and is probably the earliest extant copy of the OG Psalms, which contains at least three Tetragrammata in paleo-Hebrew script and also uncontracted *θεός*; and

(6) **P.Oxy.VII.1007 (Rahlfs 907)**, late 3rd century CE, a papyrus fragment of Genesis, in which the Tetragrammaton is abbreviated as a double yod (י), enlarged so as looking like a double Greek zeta (Ζ); this abbreviation has been “standard in the later rabbinic tradition.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Additionally, 4QpapParaExod gr (4Q127) “appears to have two occurrences of *ιαω*,” so that in these two manuscripts “the total number of occurrences of *ιαω* is probably four, maybe five” (Meyer (2017) 223). Concerning the Greek transliteration of the Tetragrammaton found in 4QpapLXXLev^b, Kr. De Troyer (2008, p.153) wonders: “Is it proof that the Tetragrammaton was still pronounced in the first century BCE?” According to the aforementioned, the answer should be affirmative—De Troyer admits that is probable, as well (p. 163). Keeping in mind the conclusions reached by F. Shaw, pagan writers mention that the Jews pronounced the name of God as *Ἰαώ*. That means that there were Jews that not only wrote but read the divine name as well. The Greek *Ἰαώ* obviously is the transcription of the four Hebrew letters in the form I-æH-oW-[aH], having no equivalent in Greek the Semitic letter *h*. Some consider it as a transliteration of the trilateral יהו [Yahu] (De Troyer (2008) 153). For a more detailed study on the identity of *Ἰαώ*, see Vasileiadis (2017).

¹²⁰ De Troyer (2008) 159.

The Tetragrammaton within the Greek text is also found in Aquila's Greek version, dating as early as the second century CE. This version survived in Origen's *Hexapla*, composed in the middle of the third century CE, where six columns represent (1) the original Hebrew and Aramaic text, (2) a transliteration of the Hebrew text into Greek, the Greek versions of (3) Aquila, (4) Symmachus, (5) the *LXX*, and (6) Theodotion. On the evidence of the fragmentary copies now known, Professor W. G. Waddell states: "In Origen's *Hexapla* [...] the Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and *LXX* all represented *JHWH* by ΠΙΠΙ; in the second column of the *Hexapla* the Tetragrammaton was written in Hebrew characters."¹²¹ This means that the Greek versions of Aquila, Theodotion,¹²² and Symmachus continued the Jewish practice of writing the Hebrew Tetragrammaton within the Greek text.

In the early sixth century, the Emperor Justinian actually assisted in the wider circulation of Aquila's version all over the Byzantine Empire. In his novel *De Hebraeis* (n. 146) orders: "We permit also the use of the translation of Aquila, although he was a gentile and in some readings differs not a little from the Septuagint."¹²³ In the middle of the ninth century, the Thessalonian missionary Constantine (Cyril) is referred to have used Aquila's rendering of verses from Exodus (19:16; 34:6, 9), that actually included a reference to the "merciful Yahweh" (יְהוָה רַחוּם).¹²⁴ Since Aquila's translation "was still being read publicly in the sixth century and maybe much later" and became "Jew's Greek

¹²¹ Waddell (1944) 158–159. As is evident in the palimpsest Ms. O 39 sup. of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana at Milan, *all* five columns of *Hexapla* included the Tetragrammaton in Hebrew script at least in some of the Bible books.

¹²² The author of the book of Revelation may have in front of him the Tetragrammaton found in the HB, in the Greek OT/*LXX* and in a Greek OT revision used later in Theodotion's OT version. R.H. Charles supported that the author of the Book of Revelation "translated directly from the Hebrew or Aramaic of the Biblical text, although he was sometimes influenced by the Old Greek and by another, later Greek version," that was 'a revision of the Old Greek which was later revised and incorporated into his version by Theodotion' (Yarbro Collins (1996) 161).

¹²³ "Ἀδειαν δίδομεν καὶ τῇ Ἀκύλᾳ [ἐρμηνείαν] κεχρησθαι, καὶ ἀλλόφυλος ἐκεῖνος καὶ οὐ μετρίαν ἐπὶ τινὸν λέξεων ἔχῃ πρὸς τοὺς ἐβδομήκοντα τὴν διαφωνίαν" (Krueger & Mommsen (eds.), *Corpus iuriscivilis*, vol. 3 (Novellae), 1892, pp. 714, 716).

¹²⁴ *The vita of Constantine* 9 (Marvin Kantor & Richard Stephen White (transl.), Dept. of Slavic Languages and Literature, University of Michigan, 1976, p. 27). For a translation in Modern Greek, see Antonios-Aimilios Tachiaos, *Cyril and Methodius*, Thessaloniki: University Press, 2008, pp. 65, 117.

Bible,”¹²⁵ the use of the Tetragrammaton continued its dissemination among Jews and Christians of the Byzantine Empire. Given that late copies of Aquila’s translation dated from the sixth to the ninth centuries CE were still using the divine name in Hebrew script, Constantine probably read in his Greek Bible copies the Tetragrammaton. Furthermore, obviously under Aquila’s influence, the Greek Bible translation *Graecus Venetus* (MS Marcianus Graecus VII), dated in the end of the 14th century, rendered all the instances of the Tetragrammaton as Ὀντωτῆς (few times Ὀντουργὸς and Οὐσιωτῆς), that mean “the One that Gives the Existence,” “the One that Provides the Essence,” or “the One that Produces the Creatures.”¹²⁶

However scant may be the available evidence, it shows that the original text of the *Hexapla* used the Tetragrammaton in Hebrew script in all its translation columns. Origen’s experience with Greek manuscripts that included the Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew script was also shared by Jerome, who states that “in the most accurate manuscripts the Name occurs in Hebrew characters, yet not in today’s Hebrew [script], but in the most ancient ones.”¹²⁷

In addition, G. Quispel observed that “Tertullian knew that the Greek Bible sometimes contains Ἰαὼ. In *Adversus Valentinianos* 14, 4 he writes: “Inde invenitur Iao in scripturis.” For this there is no equivalent in his source, Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* I, 21, 3. Scripture

¹²⁵ De Lange (2010) 39–54.

¹²⁶ Marcos (2000) 178–179 [174–187]. *Graecus Venetus* is the Greek version of the Pentateuch, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and Daniel, according to a unique manuscript in the Library of St. Mark’s, Venice. It was last edited by Oscar von Gebhardt at Leipzig in 1875. This Greek translation of the Tetragrammaton probably comes from the hiphil (causative verb form) of the root הוה/יהוה, meaning “He Who Brings into Being,” “He Who Creates.” For the latest review of the opinions concerning the identity of its author, see Cyril Aslanov, “Homer within the Bible: Homerisms in the *Graecus Venetus*,” in Niehoff (2012), pp. 209–218.

¹²⁷ “Ἐν τοῖς ἀκριβεστέροις δὲ τῶν ἀντιγράφων Ἑβραίοις χαρακτηῖται κεῖται τὸ ὄνομα, Ἑβραϊκοῖς δὲ οὐτοῖς νῦν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀρχαιοτάτοις” (Origen, *In Psalms* 2:2 [PG 12:1104]). “Et nomen Domini tetragrammaton in quibusdam graecis voluminibus usque hodie antiquis expressum litteris invenimus” (Jerome, *Prologus in the books of Samuel and Malachi* [PL 28:550]; also, *Ep.* 25 [PL 22:429]). E. J. Bickerman notes: “For the sake of modern theories, this [Origen’s] statement was disregarded. But it is rather hazardous to contradict a testimony of Origen” (2007, pp. 155–156).

must mean here: Holy Writ. Does this mean that his Greek copy of the Septuagint still contained Ἰαώ?"¹²⁸ The answer seems to be positive.

Furthermore, Howard's approach adds to the probability that Tatian's Gospel harmony called *Diatessaron* (composed in the second part of the second century CE) was based in NT copies that testify the original use of the Tetragrammaton in their texts.¹²⁹ As a matter of fact, the distinction among the two "Lords" is clearly distinguishable in the Syriac *Peshitta* as well.¹³⁰

The question of the Tetragrammaton in the NT text had been faced anew in the Hebrew translations of the Greek text. For example, a Hebrew translation of the Gospel of Matthew is included in the polemical treatise of Shem-Tov ibn Shaprut named *Even Bochan* ("Discerning Stone," mid-14th century).¹³¹ It has been proposed that this work may be connected with the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew mentioned

¹²⁸ Quispel (2008) 400.

¹²⁹ Shedinger (2001) 127–140.

¹³⁰ Two examples of recorded direct speech display clearly enough this point. First, in Luke 1:28, 32 is written: "Καὶ εἰσελθὼν πρὸς αὐτὴν εἶπεν· χαῖρε, κεχαριτωμένη, ὁ κύριος μετὰ σοῦ. [...] οὗτος ἔσται μέγας καὶ υἱὸς ὑψίστου κληθήσεται καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ κύριος ὁ θεὸς τὸν θρόνον Δαυὶδ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ" (²⁸*NA*). "So Gabriel went into the house and said to her, "Joy be to you, favoure done! the Lord is with you." [...] He will be great and He will be called 'Son of the Most High.' And the Lord God will give Him the throne of His forefather David" (*Weymouth NT*). "And he came to her and said, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" [...] He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David" (*RSV*). The second example is found in John 21:7: "Ἀλέγει οὖν ὁ μαθητὴς ἐκεῖνος ὃν ἠγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ Πέτρῳ· ὁ κύριός ἐστιν" (²⁸*NA*). "This made the disciple whom Jesus loved say to Peter, "It is the Master"" (*Weymouth NT*). "That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!"" (*RSV*). It is noticeable that the Syriac *Peshitta* presents this distinction and renders the Greek term κύριος as ܡܪܝܬܐ (*marya*, a term used in cases that the term "lord" refers to the God and signifies the Tetragrammaton) in Luke 1:32 and ܡܪܢܐ (*maran*) in John 21:7.

¹³¹ "The complete text of Matthew in Hebrew is preserved in a lengthy, polemical treatise composed in the fourteenth century by Shem Tob ben Isaac (sometimes called Ibn Shaprut). Shem Tob's purpose was to refute the Christian Gospel story, point by point. Although disputed, Shem Tob may actually preserve an independent textual tradition of Matthew, possibly related to a "Gospel in Hebrew letters," mentioned by the second-century church father Papias. [...] Shem Tob's Hebrew Matthew is based upon neither the Vulgate nor Byzantine Greek, which, if it had been translated in the fourteenth century, it would have been. It is an important witness to a much earlier tradition, possibly one that is in some way related to a Hebrew version of Matthew that early Church Fathers discuss" (Evans (2003) 71–72). Cf. Howard (1987).

in early Christian sources.¹³² This translation used the Tetragrammaton (in the abbreviated form "יה" within the extant copies) in all the quotations from the HB. This practice has since been followed by many Hebrew NT translations as well as by many OT and NT translations made mainly by Bible Societies, as seen in samples in the Appendix 02.¹³³ It is of special notice that the 1539 edition of Martin Luther's Bible translation "visibly signals the special status of the Tetragrammaton in both Testaments, from one end of the canon to the other," using "capital typescript for HERR" inside the NT text as well.¹³⁴

¹³² Papias: "Matthew composed the oracles (λόγια) in the Hebrew dialect, and everyone interpreted them as he was able." Irenaeus: "Matthew among the Hebrews did also publish a Gospel in writing in their own language." Pantaeus is said to have gone to India, where he found "the writing of Matthew in Hebrew letters." Origen: "The first Gospel was written by Matthew [...] who delivered it to the Jewish believers, composed in the Hebrew language." Eusebius: "For Matthew, having first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to other people, delivered to them in their own language the Gospel written by himself." Jerome: "Matthew wrote a Gospel of Jesus Christ in Judea in the Hebrew language and letters for the benefit of those of the circumcision who believed. Who afterwards translated it into Greek, is uncertain." Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius, Ebedjesu [Abdisho bar Berika] and Chrysostom also repeated this information.

¹³³ For the problematics concerning the "restoration" of the Tetragrammaton inside the NT, see Robert B. Gilderstone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament: Their bearing on Christian faith and practice*, London: Longmans, Green, & Co, 1871, pp. 62–73; Joseph Priestley, "Rules of translating" for "A plan to procure a continually improving translation of the Scriptures," in John T. Rutt, *The theological and miscellaneous works of Joseph Priestley*, London: G. Smallfield, 1797, vol. 17, p. 532.

¹³⁴ Before this reference, Soulen (2011, pp. 92, 93) wrote: "Beginning with his first translation of portions of the Old Testament in 1523, Luther consistently rendered the Tetragrammaton in German as HERR, printed in large capital type, with the explanation (in the foreword) that the name is applied exclusively "to the real true God," while other names are often ascribed also "to angels and saints." Thus far, our story is fairly well known, not least because other European translations have followed a similar practice down to the present day, including subsequent German editions of *Die Lutherbibel*. Less well known, however, is that Luther later followed the same procedure in his translations of the New Testament. In 1539, Luther directed the printer of his now completed translation of the Bible to use capital typescript for HERR in cases where Luther believed *kyrios* in the Greek New Testament served as a surrogate for the Hebrew Tetragrammaton. Luther adopted this practice not only for citations of the Old Testament in the New, but also when he believed the New Testament writers alluded to the Tetragrammaton in free composition, as, for example, in Matthew 1:20 ("an angel of the LORD") and 11:25 ("I praise you, Father and Lord of heaven and earth"). [...] After Luther's death, subsequent editions of *Die Lutherbibel* deleted the capitalized HERR from the New Testament and retained it only in the Old Testament." It must be noted that although Luther makes distinct use of the divine "Lord" and of the common noun "lord," he uses few times the term "HERR" in capitals in references to Jesus' lordship (cf. Matthew 9:38; 21:3, 9; Luke 7:31; John 1:23; 4:1; 11:2). The same practice was implemented in the first printed translation of the Bible in English, the Coverdale Bible, published in 1535.

A famous rabbinic passage,¹³⁵ dated at the end of the first to early second century CE, discusses the problem of destroying circulating texts of the “heretics” (Heb. *minim*), that is Jewish Christians.¹³⁶ The Tannaim “still regarded the Jewish Christians they knew as Jews even as late as the end of the first century CE.”¹³⁷ These books included quotations from the Hebrew scriptures and early recensions of the Gospels and the Epistles. According to the rabbinic writer, these heretical texts contained the divine name, and their complete destruction would result to the destruction of the divine name as well. When “the Tetragrammaton, the name YHWH, appeared in Christian books” it “was arguably entitled to the same reverence there” as was in the Jewish books.¹³⁸ Some Rabbis proposed that unlike Jewish books, Christian books ought not to be saved from a fire on the Sabbath, even though they contained Tetragrammata. On a weekday, the Tetragrammata could be cut out and the remainder of the book destroyed.¹³⁹ Others contended more severely that the books should be destroyed with their Tetragrammata included. The “Rabbinic threatenings against the pronounciation of the tetragrammaton in the second century A.D.” show that “so far the true pronounciation was not

Similarly, the *New Living Translation* started recently to use the term LORD “wherever the New Testament text explicitly quotes from the Old Testament” (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004/2007, pp. A50–A51, 735).

¹³⁵ *Tos. Shab.* 13.5; *b. Shab.* 13:1b (116a–b), 5a.

¹³⁶ Tepler (2007) 29, 251–275; Katz (2006) 278–279, 287–293; Cohen (1991) 444–449; Schiffman (1985) 62–64, 110. The Gospels were not considered canonical neither possessed any holiness by themselves (*Tos. Yad.* 2:13). But the use of the Tetragrammaton within them needed special treatment. The term translated “Gospels” is *gilyohnim*, that is literally “the blank spaces,” and it has two possible meanings. They could be either the blank margins of a scroll or even blank scrolls or—in an ironic application of the word—they could be the writings of the *minim*, as if to say that these writings are as worthless as blank scrolls, mainly the Jewish Christian “Gospels.” The sentence that appears in the Talmud before the above quotation reads: “The books of *minim* are like blank spaces [*gilyohnim*],” supporting this view.

¹³⁷ Schiffman (1991) 449.

¹³⁸ Nicholls (1995) 159.

¹³⁹ “R. Jose the Galilean enjoins the quaint device of cutting out and keeping the divine Name wherever it occurred, and burning the rest. What was to be done with the collected scraps is not said” (Herford (1903) 157).

uncustomary.”¹⁴⁰ This policy became official and was reinforced by the Jewish authorities “by the fourth century.”¹⁴¹

Based on this rabbinic text two important remarks ought to be made: (a) the Jewish Christians kept untranslated (or in a distinguishable text form) the Tetragrammaton in their sacred writings during at least the first century CE, and (b) these strictures may explain to a large degree why texts of Christian origin (or rather Jewish Christian origin, as was the case at the very dawn of the “the sect of the Nazarenes”¹⁴²) that probably included the Tetragrammata un-supplanted did not survive down to us as they underwent a series of harsh Jewish, pagan but later also Christian attacks.

According to the Talmud, not only books were burnt but humans as well for the reason of uttering the proper name of God. Tanna Hanina ben Teradion who lived in the second century CE was a victim of the non-pronouncement prohibition. He was known for teaching publicly from the Sefer Torah (i.e. the Law, containing 1,818 times the Tetragrammaton). He was doing so without replacing the Tetragrammaton with surrogates. As recorded, “he was sentenced to be burned to death, for he had pronounced the Divine Name as it is spelled out” and “he repeated the Divine Name in public” (transl. J. Neusner).¹⁴³ When executed, Ben Teradion was wrapped in his

¹⁴⁰ Battersby Harford (1935) 144.

¹⁴¹ Edwards (2009) 191.

¹⁴² Acts 24:5.

¹⁴³ “The punishment of being burnt came upon him because he pronounced the Name in its full spelling. But how could he do so? Have we not learnt: The following have no portion in the world to come: He who says that the Torah is not from Heaven, or that the resurrection of the dead is not taught in the Torah. Abba Saul says: Also he who pronounces the Name in its full spelling? — He did it in the course of practicing, as we have learnt: Thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations, but thou mayest learn [about them] in order to understand and to teach. Why then was he punished? — Because he was pronouncing the Name in public. His wife was punished by being slain, because she did not prevent him [from doing it]. From this it was deduced: Any one who has the power to prevent [one from doing wrong] and does not prevent, is punished for him. His daughter was consigned to a brothel, for R. Johanan related that once that daughter of his was walking in front of some great men of Rome who remarked, 'How beautiful are the steps of this maiden!' Whereupon she took particular care of her step” (b. A.Z. 17b, 18a [Rabbi Dr. I. Epstein, *Soncino Babylonian Talmud*, 1935, p. 91]).

“Hanina b[en] Teradion was then brought before them and questioned why he occupied himself with the Torah, and he answered: Because I am so commanded by the Lord my God. The decree was then rendered that he should be burned, his wife killed, and his daughter to be

scriptural scroll and then was burned at the stake with a prolonged death. Moreover, his wife was also executed, and his daughter sold to a brothel. The punishment for this crime against the rabbinic law was executed by the Roman authorities.¹⁴⁴

06. Conclusions

The God of the Bible is the same who is described in the HB and the NT, the same God who is worshipped by both Jews and Christians. Trinitarian Christianity comprehends anew and re-interprets the biblical notion of God under Hellenistic philosophical influences. Biblical and extra-biblical sources converge at the oneness of the divine name, the Tetragrammaton. The shift of the notion of God inside Hellenistic Judaism is reflected in the LXX rendering of the Tetragrammaton: the personal God of the Bible is understood as a transcendent and unnameable Divine Being and is described in terms of the Greek philosophy.

Other reasons like the magical arts and the moral debasement especially of the priesthood at the Jerusalem Temple contributed to this silencing of the Tetragrammaton. The earliest indications of non-pronouncement of the divine name appear by the third century BCE; by the third century CE the utterance of the Tetragrammaton became a capital offence. Contrary to the rabbinical ordinances, Jesus and early Jewish Christianity were probably among the Jews that used freely the biblical name of God, at least within their close circles.

The NT implies the use of the Tetragrammaton—although there is silence on this from the earliest available NT manuscripts—and makes clear distinction between the God, who is the source of the

taken to the house of prostitutes. [He to be burned, because he used to express the name Jehovah as it is written (and not Adonai as it is to be read instead), but why did he so? Did not Aba Shaul say (Sanhedrin, p. 265) that he who does so has no share in the world to come? He did so to learn which is allowed privately, but he did it also publicly. His wife to be killed, because she has not prevented his doing so by protesting; from this it is to be inferred that he who feels that his protests would effect and does not protest, is punished therefor. And his daughter to prostitution; because, according to R. Johanan, it happened once that she walked in the presence of the great people of Rome, and they exclaimed: How nice are the steps of this girl! And from that time she took care of her steps to please the spectators.]” (Michael L. Rodkinson, *Talmud, New Edition*, 1903, vol. 10 (18), pp. 30–31).

¹⁴⁴ For current biographical information, see *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Detroit: Macmillan Reference, ²2007, vol. 8, p. 316.

Name, and the Son, the Logos, who is given a unique name and acts in the name of God. The identity of the “Lord” attested in the Christian writings had been further blurred by the trinitarian interpretative perspective. An increasing number of contemporary NT studies attempt to explore this inherent characteristic of the NT texts.¹⁴⁵ The overview presented in this article aims to designate the major parameters of this multifaceted subject and to abet a renewed inquiry into it.


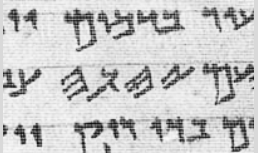
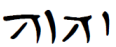
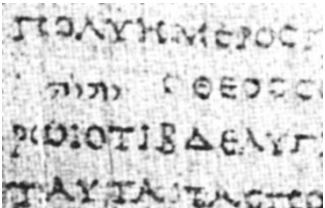

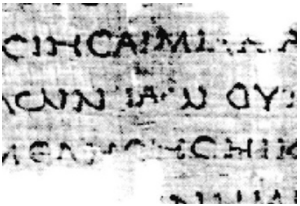
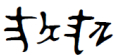
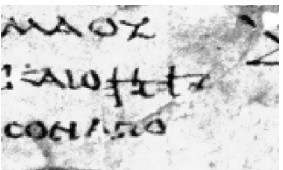
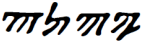
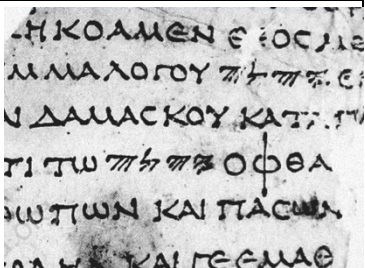
¹⁴⁵ Authors “who have enriched our understanding of this dimension of the New Testament” include among others Larry W. Hurtado, Richard Bauckham, Gilles Quispel, Jean Daniélou, George Howard, Richard Longenecker, Alan Segal, Christopher Rowland, Jarl E. Fossum, Charles A. Gieschen, Martin Hengel, Sean McDonough, C. Kavin Rowe, Dale C. Allison Jr., Christopher Seitz, Scot McKnight, Markus Bockmuehl, and Carl Judson Davis (Soulén (2011) 11, 258 n. 7).

APPENDIX

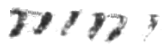
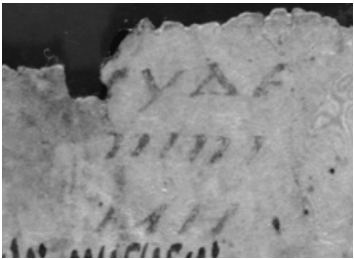

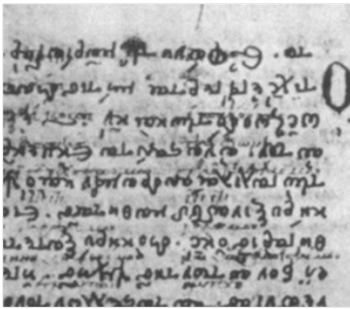



John Foxe, *The Ecclesiasticall historie* (1641).

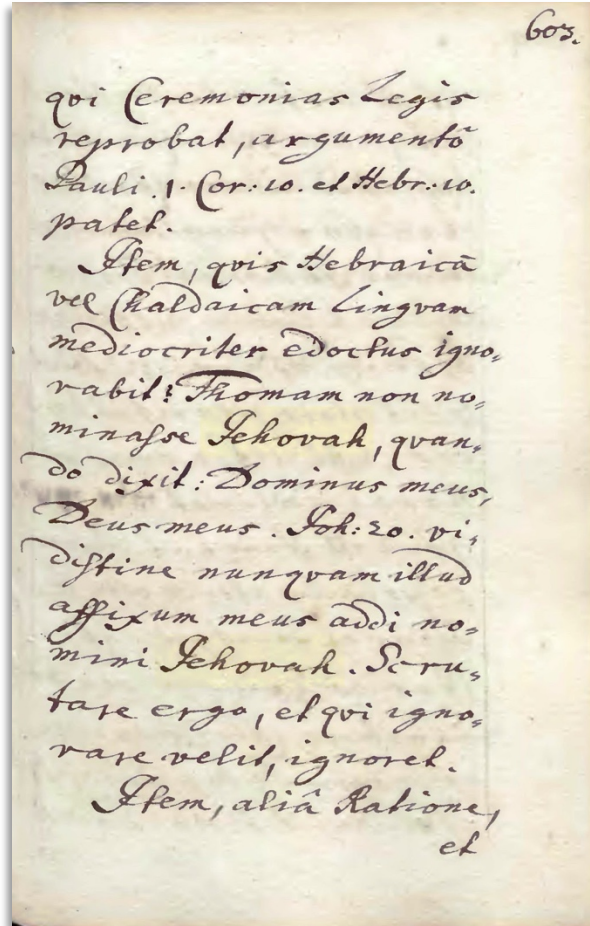
01. The sacred Tetragrammaton in the extant OG/LXX copies

| Ref. No. | Date | Tetra-grammaton | Manuscript sample |
|--|--------------------------------|---|--|
| 1QpHab (Commentary on Habakkuk Scroll) | 1 st century BCE |  |  |
| P.Fouad Inv. 266 (Rahlfs 848) | 1 st century BCE |  |  |
| 4QpapLXXLev^b (4Q120; Rahlfs 802) | 1 st century BCE |  |  |
| 8HevXII (Rahlfs 943) | 50 BCE–50 CE |  |  |
| | |  |  |

| | | | |
|--|--|--------------|--|
| P.Oxy.LXXVII 5101 (Rahlfs 2227) | 50–150 CE | ΞξΞξ |  |
| P.Oxy. L 3522 (Rahlfs 857) | early 1 st century CE | ϣϣϣϣ |  |
| pap. Chester Beatty VI codex (P.Mich.inv. 5554) | 2 nd –3 rd century CE | ΚC |  |
| P.Oxy. 7.1007 (PLit.Lond. 199; Rahlfs 907) | 3 rd century CE | ϣϣ |  |
| Sym.P.Vindob.G.397 77 (Stud.Pal. 11.114; Rahlfs oS-3) | 3 rd –4 th century CE | ΞξΞξ ϣϣϣϣ |  |
| Aq.Taylor (Cairo Genizah Palimpsests; Cambridge: UL, T-S 12.186 & UL, T-S 12.187 & UL, T-S 12.188; Rahlfs oS-2 [2005]) | 5 th –6 th century CE | ΞλΞλ |  |
| Aq.Burkitt (Cairo Genizah Palimpsests; Cambridge: UL, T-S 12.184 & UL, T-S 20.50; Rahlfs oS-1 [2005]) | 6 th century CE | λλλλ |  |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>Aq. Taylor (Cairo Genizah Palimpsest; Cambridge: UL, T-S 12.182; Rahlfs 2005)</p> | <p>7th century CE</p> |  |  |
| <p>Ambrosian Library O 39 sup. (Milan Palimpsest/Codex; S.P. 11.251; Rahlfs 1098)</p> | <p>end of the 9th/10th century CE</p> |  |  |
| <p>Codex Marcianus gr. 7 (Graecus Venetus)</p> | <p>end of the 14th century CE</p> | <p>ὄντως</p> |  |

02. Samples of use of the Tetragrammaton in NT translations, Bible dictionaries and exegetical works



Michael Servetus (c. 1511–1553) used the Latin form *Iehovah* in the autograph of *De trinitatis erroribus libri septem* (On the Errors of the Trinity in seven books) written in 1531 (autograph (p. 603): <https://hos.ou.edu/galleries/16thCentury/Servetus/nd/>).¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Servetus explains that “my Lord” in John 20:28 would be taken to mean “my Jehovah” only by an ignorant of Hebrew—a possessive pronoun is never used with the proper name of God.

Euangelium.

bis auff die Babylonischen gefengnis/ sind vierzehn gelieb. Von der Babylonischen gefengnis/ bis auff Christum sind vierzehn gelieb.

Die Geburt Christi war aber also geschehen. Als Maria seine Mutter dem Joseph vertrawet war/ ehe er sie heim holte/ erfand sich/ das sie schwanger war von dem heiligen Geist. Joseph aber jr Man war from/ und wolt sie nicht rügen/ Gedachte aber sie heimlich zu verlassen. In dem er aber also gedachte/ Siehe/ da erschein im ein engel des **HERRN** im Traum/ und sprach/ Joseph/ du son David/ fürchte dich nicht/ Mariam dein gemalh zu dir zu nemen. Denn das in jr geboren ist/ das ist von dem heiligen Geist. Und sie wird einen Son geben/ des namen solen Ihesus heißen/ Denn er wird sein Volk selig machen von iren Sünden.

Das ist aber alles geschehen/ Auff das erfüllet würde/ das der **HERR** durch den Propheten gesagt hat/ der da spricht/ Siehe/ Eine Jungfrau wird schwanger sein/ und einen Son geben/ und sie werden seinen namen Emmanuel heißen/ Das ist verdolmetschet/ Gott mit uns.

Da nu Joseph vom schlaff erwachte/ ehet er/ wie im des **HERRN** engel befohlen hatte/ und nam sein Gemalh zu sich/ und erkennet sie nicht/ bis sie ihren ersten Son gebat/ und hies seinen namen Ihesus.

1. (1518) Das nicht verstanden werden/ das Joseph Maria heimlich erkennen hat/ sondern es ist eher weiß zu erben in der Schrift. Als Gen. 2. das Reb sy nicht wider kommen hat/ so ist es auch in der Schrift nicht/ das der Reb erwacht/ Fomen sy/ Also auch hier/ folgen nicht/ das Joseph Maria heimlich erkennen hat.

II.

Die Ihesus geboren war zu Bethlehem/ im Jüdischenlande zur zeit des Königes Herodis/ Siehe/ da kamen die Weisen vom Morgenland gen Jerusalem/ und sprachen/ Wo ist der newgebome König der Jüden/ Wir haben seinen Sterne gesehen im Morgenland/ und sind komen in an zubeten.

1. (1518) Die Ch. Matthei Magos nennt/ sind also auf Fingern und Dinsten gewesen.

Da das der König Herodis hörte/ erschrock er/ und mit im das ganze Jerusalem/ und lies versamen alle Hofe-

priester und Schriftgelehrten unter dem Volk/ und ersochete von ihnen/ Wo Christus solle geboren werden/ Und sie sagten ihm/ Zu Bethlehem im Jüdischenlande. Denn also steht geschrieben durch den Propheten/ Und du Bethlehem im Jüdischenlande/ bist mit mir nicht die kleinste unter den Fürsten Juda/ Denn aus dir sol mir komen/ der Herrgog/ der vber mein volck Israel ein Herr sey.

1. (1518) (1518) Bethlehem war klein an sich/ darumb auch Mithras ist ihm namen. Aber der Euangelist hat/ das nicht Mithras geboren darumb/ das sie Ihesus gebet war/ da Christus geboren war.

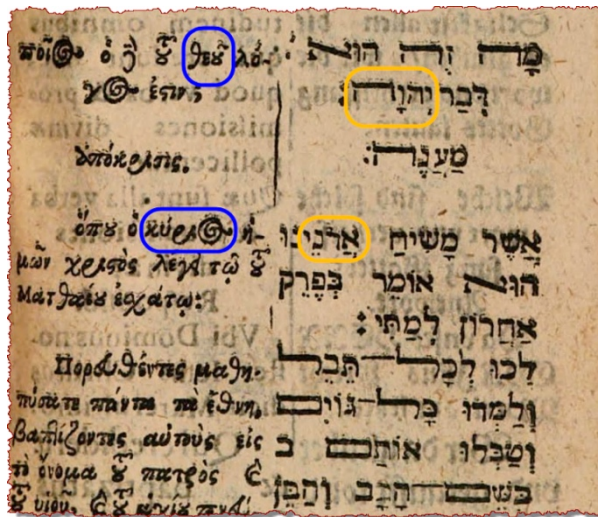
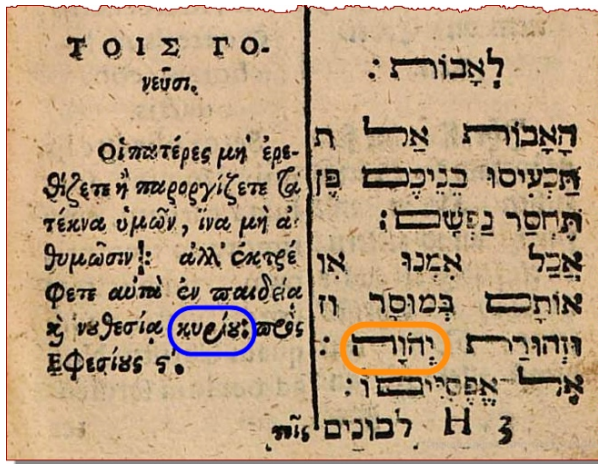
Da betriff Herodis die Weisen heimlich/ und erkernet mit vles von ihnen/ wenn der Stern erschienen were/ und wiesete sie gen Bethlehem/ und sprach/ Ziehet hin/ und forschet vlessig nach dem Kindlin/ Und wenn ire sinde/ sager mir wider/ Das ich auch komme/ und es anbere.

Als sie nu den König gebort hatten/ zogen sie hin. Und sie/ der Stern den sie im Morgenland gesehen hatten/ gieng fur ihnen bis/ bis das er kam/ und stand oben vber/ da das Kindlin war. Da sie den Stern sahen/ wurden sie hoch erfreuet/ und giengen in das haus/ und funden das Kindlin mit Maria seiner mutter/ und fielen nieder/ und beten es an. Und ehten ire Schenke auff/ und schenckten im Gold/ Weirach/ und Myrrhen. Und Gott befohl ihnen im Traum/ das sie sich nicht solten wider zu Herodis lencken/ und zogen durch einen andern weg wider in ir Land.

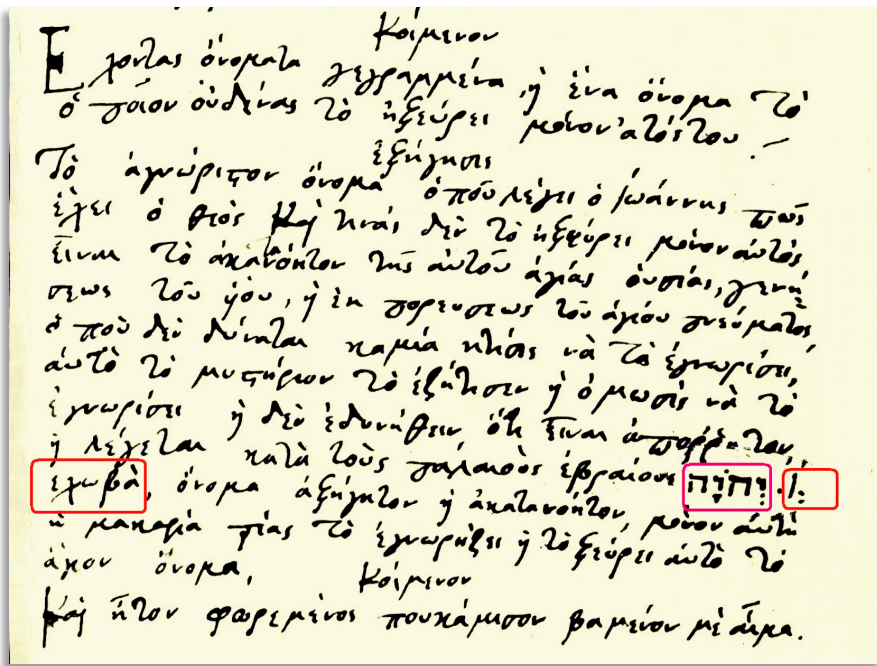
Da sie aber hinweg gezogen waren/ **HERR** dem Joseph im Traum und sprach/ Stehe auff/ und nim das Kindlin und seine Mutter zu dir/ und fleuch in Egyptenland/ und bleib alda/ bis ich dir sage. Denn es ist furhanden/ das Herodis das Kindlin suchte/ daselb vmb zu bringen. Und er stand auff/ und nam das Kindlin und seine Mutter zu sich/ bey der nacht/ und entwich in Egyptenland/ und bleib alda/ bis nach dem tod Herodis. Auff das erfüllet werde/ das der **HERR** durch den Propheten gesagt hat/ der da spricht/ Aus Egypten hab ich meinen Son geruffen.

Da Herodis nu sahe/ das er von den Weisen betrogen war/ ward er sehr zornig/ und schickte aus/ und lies alle Kinder zu Bethlehem/ und den umgebenen Grenzen/ die da zweylerig und drunter waren/ nach der zeit/ die er mit vles von den Weisen

The term “HERR” (with capital letters) is used in the German NT wherever Luther believed that *κύριος* served as a surrogate for the Hebrew Tetragrammaton (Matthew chapters 1 & 2). Martin Luther, *Biblia, das ist die gantze Heilige Schrift Deudsch*, Hans Lufft (1548).

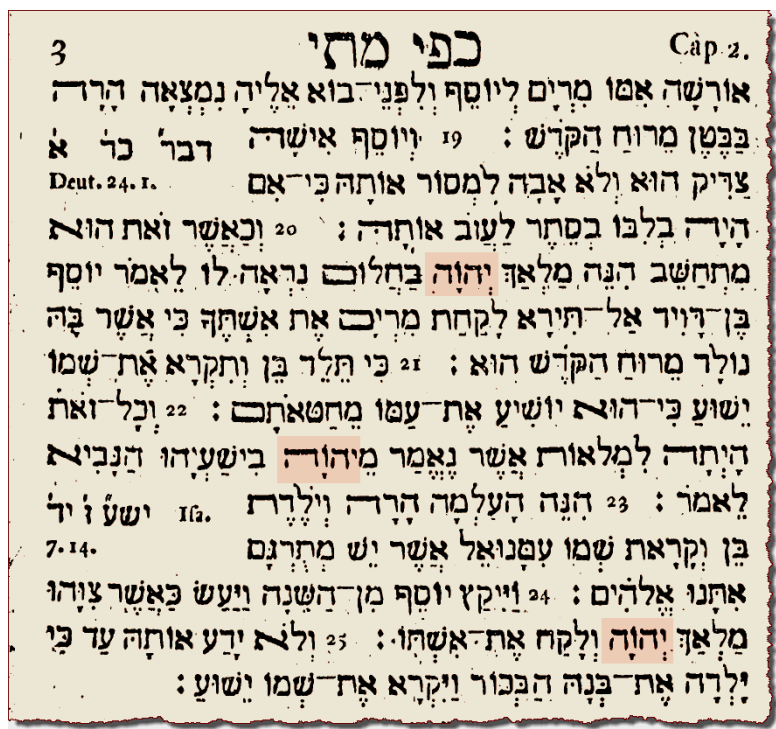


The Greek “Lord” and “God” rendered יהוה in Hebrew,
but “Lord” is distinguished by “Lord” as “אֱלֹהֵינוּ”
when Jesus is meant in the text. (Eph 6:4).
Martin Luther, *Catechesis D. Martini Lutheri Minor*.
Germanice, Latine, Graece & Ebraice,
Selfisch (1605), pp. 61, 217.



The form *Ἰεχωβά* mentioned in the autograph manuscript of the *Exegesis of John the Supreme Theologian's Book of Revelation* (Εξήγησις εις την του Ιωάννου του Υψηλοτάτου Θεολόγου Αποκάλυψιν), composed by the Artan Metropolitan Zacharias Gerganos (d. 1631) between 1621 and 1623 (MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud. Gr. 77, fol. 112r).¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ Vasileiadis (2014) 70, n. 107.



The Tetragrammaton rendered “יהוה” in Hebrew
(Matthew 1:20, 22, 24).

William Robertson (edited Elias Hutter’s Hebrew NT of 1599),

תורת יהוה הדשה

בהי ברה האדונינו ישועא המשעה למשהים

/ בלה יהודים בלשון הכדש נכהבה

Lex Dei summi nova atque hae cest,

Novum Domini nostril Jesu Christi Testamentum

Sacro-Sanctum Christianis simul, ac Judaeis,

Sancta Linguâ Hebraeâ Scriptum,

London (1661).

ה

327

ה

ἀξιοπαράτητον, ὅτι αὕτη ἡ διαίρεσις ἀνεφέρετο εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τοῦ Δαβὶδ, καὶ ἀκόμη προτιήτερον ὡς π. χ. Ἰησ. 11: 16, 21. Σαμ. Β. 2: 10. 5: 5. 19: 41. 20: 2. 24: 9. Χρην. Α. 21: 5. Λοιπὸν ἡ ὁ ἱστορικός ἐβαλε πράγματα ἐδὼ παράκαιρα, ἡ ἡ διαίρεσις ἠκολούθησε προτιήτερα ἀπὸ ὅ,τι φαίνεται ἀπὸ τὴν διήγησιν.

3. Μετὰ τὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν ὅλος ὁ τόπος τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἔλαβε τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα. Ἀγγ. 1: 1, 14. 2: 3.

יְהוּדָה, καὶ πληθ. יְהוּדִים, ὃ יְהוּדִים. 9ηλ. δὲ יְהוּדִים καὶ יִזְרְעֵל. Ἰδε Ἀριθ. 4. ὄν. ἐθνικόν. Ἰουδαῖος.

1. Ἰουδαῖος ἡ Ἰουδαία, ἐν γένει, λέγεται ὅστις ἀνήκει εἰς τὴν φυλὴν τοῦ Ἰούδα.

2. Πολίτης τῆς βασιλείας τῆς Ἰούδα. Βασ. Β. 16: 6. 25: 25.

3. Μετὰ τὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν, Ἰσραηλίτης, ἐν γένει, Ἰερ. 32: 12. 38: 19. 40: 11. 43: 9.—καὶ ἐξαιρέτως 34: 9, (ὅπου ἰσοδυναμεῖ μετὰ יְהוּדִים) Νεεμ. 1: 2. 3: 33. 4: 6. Ἐσθ. 2: 5. 3: 4. 5: 13.

4. 9ηλ. יְהוּדִים, ὡς ἐπὶ. Ἐβραϊστὶ, Ἰουδαῖστὶ. (Συγκ. Ἀριθ. 3.) Βασ. Β. 18: 26. Νεεμ. 13: 24.

יְהוּדָה, ὄν. Χαλδ. Ἐβραῖος, Ἰουδαῖος. Ἐυρίσκεται μόνον εἰς τὸν πληθ. יְהוּדִים, καὶ ἐμφατ. יְהוּדִים, Δαν. 3: 8, 12. Ἐσθ. 4: 12, 23. 5: 1, 5.

יְהוָה, τὸ κύριον ὄνομα τοῦ ὑψίστου Θεοῦ εἰς τὴν Ἐβραϊκὴν γλῶσσαν, **יְהוָה**, Ἐξ. 6: 3.

Εἶναι ἀξιοπαράτητον, ὅτι αὕτη ἡ λέξις δὲν ἔχει τὰς ἰδικὰς τῆς στιγμάς, ἀλλὰ ἐκείνας τοῦ יְהוָה, μετὰ ταύ-

την τὴν διαφορὰν, ὅτι γράφεται μετὰ ἀπλοῦν Σεβὰ, οὕτω יְהוָה ὑποκάτω τοῦ י' ἀντὶ Χατέφ πατάχ, οὕτω יְהוָה τὸ ὅπου ὄν εὑρίσκεται ὑποκάτω τοῦ נ', τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα יְהוָה, Ἀδονάϊ, οἱ Ἐβραῖοι, κατὰ παλαιὰν τινα συνήθειάν των, μεταχειρίζονται ἀντὶ **יְהוָה**, **יְהוָה**, ὅπου καὶ ἂν εὑρίσκεται τὸ ὕστερον. Ὅθεν μετὰ Προτιθέμενα γράφεται יְהוָה, יְהוָה, יְהוָה, (διὰ τὴν συμφωνήσασιν αἱ στιγμαὶ μετὰ ἐκείνας τοῦ יְהוָה,) καὶ ὅταν יְהוָה יְהוָה εὑρίσκεται ὁμοῦ, γράφονται יְהוָה יְהוָה, καὶ προφέρονται יְהוָה יְהוָה.

Τώρα λοιπὸν ζητεῖται, Ποία εἶναι ἡ ὀρθὴ προφορὰ τοῦ יְהוָה. Πολλοὶ πεπαιδευμένοι λέγουν יְהוָה, ἐπιστηριζόμενοι εἰς τὸ ῥῆτόν διαφορῶν συγγραφῶν, οἵτινες λέγουν, ὅτι οἱ Ἐβραῖοι ὠνόμαζον τὸν Θεὸν των ΙΑΩ. Ἀναμεταξὺ ἄλλων τοιούτων λέγει ὁ Θεοδώρητος, εἰς Ἐξ. 15, Καλοῦσι δὲ αὐτὸ Σαμαρεῖται ΙΑΒΕ, Ἰουδαῖοι δὲ ΙΑΩ. Εἰς τοῦτο ἀντιλέγεται ὑπὸ διαφορῶν συγγραφῶν ὅτι יְהוָה δὲν ἔχει σχηματισμὸν Ἐβραϊκῷ ὀνόματος. Ἡ αὐτὴ ἀντίστασις ἔχει τὸν τόπον τῆς, ὡς πρὸς τὴν λέξιν יְהוָה, τὴν ὁποίαν μερικοὶ παράγουν ἀπὸ τὸ ΙΕΥΩ τοῦ Φίλωνος Βυβλίου. Ἡ ἀληθινὴ προφορὰ λοιπὸν ἴσως ἦτον יְהוָה, καὶ οὕτως ἤθελεν εἶσθαι ὡς μέλ. τοῦ יְהוָה. Ἀπὸ τοῦτο παράγονται εὐκόλα οἱ συνοπτικοὶ σχηματισμοὶ יְהוָה καὶ יְהוָה.

Ἡ προφορὰ יְהוָה, (Αὐτὸς Θέλει εἶσθαι,) ἐπιστηρίζεται εἰς τὴν ἐξήγησιν τὴν ὁποίαν δίδει ὁ Μωϋσῆς, Ἐξ. 3: 14. 6: 3. Συγκ. Ἀποκαλ. 1:

The form *Ἰεοβὰ* in Isaac Lowndes's *Hebrew-Modern Greek Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Λεξικὸν Εβραϊκὸ-Νεοελληνικὸν τῆς Παλαιᾶς Διαθήκης) published at Malta in 1842 (p. 327).

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| b. | Babylonian Talmud |
| A.Z. | ‘Avodah Zarah |
| Ber. | Berakhot |
| DHNT | Hebrew New Testament, by Prof. Franz Delitzsch (1901). |
| ESV | <i>The Holy Bible, English Standard Version</i> , Crossway (2001/2016). |
| HB | Hebrew Bible |
| HNC | <i>New Covenant</i> , Bible Society in Israel (2005). |
| Kid. | Kiddushin |
| LES | Ken M. Penner (gen.ed.), <i>The Lexham English Septuagint</i> , Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press (2019). |
| LXX | Septuagint, the wider scriptural tradition of the Greek Jewish Scriptures, esp. transmitted as part of the early Christian canon. The references are taken from the online edition of the Septuagint that is based on the Septuagint edited by Alfred Rahlfs, Second Revised Edition, edited by Robert Hanhart, Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006. |
| m. | Mishnah |
| MB | Mishnah Berura (R. Israel Meir Kagan of Radun) |
| ²⁸NA | Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger (eds.), <i>Nestle-Aland–Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , 28th revised ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012. |
| NETS | Albert Pietersma & Benjamin G. Wright (eds.), <i>A New English Translation of the Septuagint</i> , Oxford University Press (2007). |
| NT | New Testament |

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| OG | Old Greek, the oldest recoverable form of the Greek Jewish Scriptures that is believed to be the original translation. |
| OT | Old Testament |
| Pes. | Pesahim |
| PG | <i>Patrologia Graeca</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris 1857–1887. |
| PL | <i>Patrologia Latina</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris 1844–1864. |
| RSV | <i>Revised Standard Version of the Bible</i> , National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (1946/1973). |
| Sanh. | Sanhedrin |
| S-GHNT | Hebrew New Testament, by Dr. Isaac Salkinson & Dr. Christian David Ginsburg (1886). |
| Shab. | Shabbat |
| Sot. | Sotah |
| T^J | Targum Jonathan |
| T^O | Targum Onqelos |
| T^{Ps-J} | Targum pseudo-Jonathan |
| Tos. | Tosefta |
| y. | Yerushalmi, Palestinian Talmud |
| Yad. | Yadaim |

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