

“Sanctified be your Name”

Did **J**esus “**J**e[HoVaH]-
salvation” know God’s name?
Y-H-W-H (Î-eH-Û-Â)

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Michael Servetus (1511-1553) participated in the Protestant Reformation and translated the Hebrew Bible into Latin. In July 1531, he published his book entitled *De Trinitatis Erroribus* (*On the Errors of the Trinity*) in which he explained clearly that the Trinity was a 3-headed monster. Accordingly, Catholics and Protestants alike condemned him. He was then arrested in Geneva and burnt at the stake as a heretic by order of the city's Protestant governing council.

Despite the fact that Servetus had an exceptional scientific knowledge, for example he was the first European to correctly describe the function of pulmonary circulation, as well as an amazing linguistic knowledge, he was gifted in languages like Latin, Greek and Hebrew, his masterpiece *De Trinitatis Erroribus* was translated into English only in 1932, 400 years later¹! Still worse, his main arguments in part V of his book were completely distorted. For example he explained that God's name was Iehouah because in Hebrew this name was close to the name of Iesua (Jesus), or Iehosuah, which means “Ie[hovah]-salvation”. He also knew that according to Paulus de Heredia, a Christian Cabbalist, the meaning of God's name was “He causes to be” (*yehauueh*, piel form of the verb “to be”), but he never confused the pronunciation of God's name (Iehouah) with its Cabbalistic meaning (*yehaweh*). For Servetus, Iehouah was the only true God.

Paradoxically, most modern commentators of the book of Servetus have changed the name Iehouah (Jehovah), vigorously defended by Servetus, by Yahweh, a name based on a Cabbalistic guess suggested by Paulus de Heredia in his mystical book *Epistle of Secrets* (published in 1488). In addition, it is noteworthy that a (diabolic) erratum at the end of the *De Trinitatis Erroribus* indicates that Iehonah was printed with an n inverted instead of Iehouah.

Since Servetus died, more than 450 years ago now, I have decided to promote his *De Trinitatis Erroribus* and I have collected more information in order to show that his choices regarding God's name were absolutely reasonable and correct, specially his explanation of Jesus as “Iehouah is salvation”. The reader will see if I have been faithful to the spirit of Servetus.

¹ The Two Treatises of Servetus on the Trinity (Harvard University Press XVI, 1932).

“Hallowed Be Thy Name” —What Name?

You have probably already heard this expression “Hallowed be thy name”, or more commonly now “Sanctified be your name”, because it is the first request of the Lord’s prayer, also called “Our Father”, which is regularly recited today in Christendom by more than one billion persons. In fact Jesus himself has made that well-known request when he encouraged his disciples to sanctify the name of the God of Abraham (Matthew 6:9, Luke 11:2). Consequently, the God of Jesus was the God of the Jews (1st century) as well as Christians and Muslims later.

The prayer of Jesus is still recited by Jews today when they say the Kaddish² (“Holy” in Aramaic). The opening words of this prayer are inspired by Ezekiel 38:23. Similarly, the holiness of God’s name is daily invoked by more than one billion of Muslims when they pray to God because all the surahs of the Quran (except the 9th) begin by “In the name of God”. One might therefore think that the name of the God of Abraham is the same today for Jews, Christians and Muslims but paradoxically this is not the case. If you ask a Catholic priest: *what is God’s name?*, his answer will probably be “God”, “Father” or “Lord”, if you ask an Evangelical pastor, his answer will probably be “Lord” or “Jesus”, if you ask a Muslim imam, his answer

will probably be “Allah”, which means “The God” in Arabic, and if finally you ask a Jewish rabbi, his answer will probably be “Hashem” or “Adonai”, knowing these names mean respectively “The Name” and “My Lord” in Hebrew.

Why such a mess? If you ask again these religious leaders why God’s name is not the same, their answers generally will be: “*it does not matter*”; “*God has many names, you can choose which one you like*”; “*God’s name has been lost, in fact pleasing God is more important*”. Would Jesus have agreed with these answers, did he know the name of God and finally, is it really important to know that name?

Have you ever wondered why Jesus put the sanctifying of God’s name first in his prayer? Afterward, he mentioned other things such as the coming of God’s Kingdom, God’s will being done on earth and our sins being forgiven. The fulfilment of these other requests will ultimately mean lasting peace on earth and everlasting life for mankind. Can you think of anything more important than that? Nevertheless, Jesus told his disciples to pray first of all for the sanctification of God’s name.

It was not merely by chance that Jesus taught his followers to put God’s name first in their prayers. That name was clearly of crucial importance to him, since he mentioned it repeatedly in his own prayers. On one occasion when he

² Kaddish (קַדִּישׁ, Qaddish) is a hymn of praises to God found in the Jewish prayer service. The central theme of the Kaddish is the magnification and sanctification of God’s name.

was praying publicly to God, he was heard to say: *Father, glorify your name!* And God himself answered: *I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again* (John 12:28, The Jerusalem Bible).

The evening before Jesus died, he was praying to God in the hearing of his disciples, and once again they heard him highlight the importance of God’s name. He said: *I have made your name known to the men you took from the world to give me (...) Holy Father, keep those you have given me true to your name.* Later he repeated: *I have made known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them* (John 17:6,11,26).

After Jesus' death God's name remained a central theme among his disciples. For example, the apostle Paul, who was educated at the feet of Gamaliel³ (Acts 22:3), wrote to his fellow Hebrew Christians: *As it was his purpose to bring a great many of his sons into glory, it was appropriate that God, for whom everything exists and through whom everything exists, should make perfect, through suffering, the leader who would take them to their salvation. For the one who sanctifies, and the ones who are sanctified, are of the same stock; that is why he openly calls them brothers in the text: I shall announce your name to my brothers, praise you in full assembly* (Hebrews 2:10-12). He also wrote to the Romans: *For in Scripture he says to Pharaoh; It was for this I raised you up, to use you as a means of showing my power and to make my name known throughout the world* (Romans 9:17). He warned Christians: *However,*

God’s solid foundation stone is still in position, and this is the inscription on it: The Lord knows those who are his own, and: All who call on the name of the Lord must avoid sin (1 Timothy 2:19). However the early Christians who were of Jewish origin were extremely puzzled that now (first century CE) pagans could invoke God's name. That’s why James⁴ explained to the apostles: *When they had finished it was James who spoke. My brothers, he said, listen to me. Simeon (Peter) has described how God first arranged to enlist a people for his name out of the pagans. This is entirely in harmony with the words of the prophets, since the scriptures say: After that I shall return and rebuild the fallen House of David; I shall rebuild it from its ruins and restore it. Then the rest of mankind, all the pagans who are consecrated to my name, will look for the Lord, says the Lord who made this known so long ago* (Acts 15:13-18).

Even though the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Volume 2, page 649) says: *One of the most fundamental and essential features of the biblical revelation is the fact that God is not without a name: he has a personal name, by which he can, and is to be, invoked,* in 2001, the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (the agency in charge of liturgical matters) put forth an “Instruction” known as *Liturgiam Authenticam* which included the following directive: *In accordance with immemorial tradition ... the name of almighty God expressed by the Hebrew tetragrammaton (YHWH) and*

³ Gamaliel, a well-known Pharisee, was a Law teacher esteemed by all the people (Acts 5:34).

⁴ James was a son of Joseph and Mary, and half brother of Jesus (Mark 6:3; Galatians 1:19).

rendered in Latin by the word *Dominus*, is to be rendered into any given vernacular by a word equivalent in meaning. In 2008 this rule was then reinforced by a “Letter to the Bishops Conferences on The Name of God”: *In the light of what has been expounded, the following directives are to be observed: 1. In liturgical celebrations, in songs and prayers the name of God in the form of the tetragrammaton YHWH is neither to be used nor pronounced. 2. For the translation of the biblical text in modern languages, destined for the liturgical usage of the church, what is already prescribed by No. 41 of the instruction Liturgiam Authenticam is to be followed; that is, the divine tetragrammaton is to be rendered by the equivalent of Adonai/Kyrios: Lord, Signore, Seigneur, Herr, Señor, etc. 3. In translating in the liturgical context, texts in which are present, one after the other, either the Hebrew term Adonai or the tetragrammaton YHWH, Adonai is to be translated Lord and the form God is to be used for the tetragrammaton YHWH, similar to what happens in the Greek translation of the Septuagint and in the Latin translation of the Vulgate.*

For a sincere Catholic the present situation must be very uncomfortable, because he can read in his official Bible (Jerusalem Bible): *They are doing their best, by means of the dreams that they keep telling each other, to make my people forget my name, just as their ancestors forgot my name in favour of Baal ("Lord"). Let the prophet who has had a dream tell it for a dream! And let him who receives a word from me, deliver my word accurately! 'What have straw and wheat in common? Yahweh demands (Jeremiah 23:27-28). Paradoxically his*

own Bible is now under the ban (!) because it uses the forbidden name Yahweh, and if he obeys his Church he disobeys God who condemns the prophets of the “Lord” (Baal). On the other hand it was written in his former Bible (Crampon 1904): *Then those who feared Jehovah talked to one another about this, and Jehovah took note and listened; and a book of remembrance was written in his presence recording those who feared him and kept his name in mind. On the day when I act, says Jehovah of armies, they will be my most prized possession, and I shall spare them in the way a man spares the son who serves him (Malachi 3:16-17).*

Since the Bible of Abbot Crampon became the official Bible of Catholicism in 1904, the Latin title *Dominus* “Lord” in the Vulgate⁵ has been systematically replaced by *Jehovah*, however, when this name appears for the first time in the text of Genesis 2:4 a footnote explains: *Its real pronunciation was Yahveh; the form Jehovah comes from the Masoretes, who attributed to this word the vowels of Adonai, another name for God, which means Lord.* When the Bible was revised in 1923, the main revision was

⁵ The Vulgate is a late 4th-century Latin translation of the Bible that became, during the 16th century, the Catholic Church's officially promulgated Latin version of the Bible. The translation was largely the work of Jerome, who, in 382, was commissioned by Pope Damasus I to revise the *Vetus Latina* (“Old Latin”) collection of biblical texts in Latin then in use by the Church. Once published (405), it was widely adopted and eventually eclipsed the *Vetus Latina* and, by the 13th century, was known as the “*versio vulgata*” (the “version commonly-used”) or, more simply, in Latin as *vulgata*. The Catholic Church made it its official Latin Bible as a consequence of the Council of Trent (1545-63).

to replace Jehovah by Yahweh. Obviously this new choice created a cacophony in God’s name and its controversial oneness (until 1923) collapsed because that name, which appeared for the first time in the Tyndale Bible⁶ in 1530, exploded into a multitude of names: *Jehovah, Yahweh, Jahweb, Jahveh, Jahve, Jave, YHWH*, etc.

In view of all of this, there is a risk to conclude (if you trust more in scholars than in the Bible): *We simply do not know how God’s ancient servants pronounced this name in Hebrew. However if we no longer know the pronunciation of God’s name, its meaning, according to most Christian theologians, is Yahweh “He causes to become” in Hebrew.* This naive conclusion contradicts both logic and (worse) the Bible itself.

Those who state that the pronunciation of God’s name has been lost are illogical because most Egyptian gods were able to preserve their names (Râ, Amun, Thoth, Isis, Horus, Aten, etc.) but the Almighty God would not have been able to preserve his great name whereas he had warned the Israelites: *Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal “Lord”* (Jeremiah 23:27, King James Bible). The prophets of

the Lord, because Baal means “Lord” in Hebrew, would have succeeded to make forget God’s name. Apparently they succeeded because it is written in many English Bibles: *If we had forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a foreign god, would not God have discovered it, since he knows the secrets of the heart? (...) Let them know that you, whose name is the LORD —that you alone are the Most High over all the earth (...) Blessed is the people of whom this is true; blessed is the people whose God is the LORD* (Psalms 44:20-21; 83:18; 144:15, New International Version). However the translation of this Bible is incoherent because it replaced the personal name of God by LORD, but many other Bibles disagree with this choice⁷, which supports the main goal of the prophets of the LORD: “overshadow the name of God”.

Those who state that the pronunciation of God’s name has been lost contradict the Bible itself because when God revealed the meaning of his name to Moses he

⁶ Tyndale included the name of God, usually spelled IEHOVAH, in several verses (Genesis 15:2; Exodus 6:3; 15:3; 17:6; 23:17; 33:19; 34:23; Deuteronomy 3:24. He also included God’s name in Ezekiel 18:23 and 36:23 in his translations that were added at the end of *The New Testament*, Antwerp, 1534), and in a note in this edition he wrote: *Iehovah is God’s name... moreover as oft as thou seist LORD in great letters (except there be any error in the printing) it is in Hebrew Iehovah.*

⁷ King James Bible: *That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.* American King James Version: *That men may know that you, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, are the most high over all the earth.* American Standard Version: *That they may know that thou alone, whose name is Jehovah, Art the Most High over all the earth.* Darby Bible Translation: *That they may know that thou alone, whose name is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth.* English Revised Version: *That they may know that thou alone, whose name is JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth.* Webster’s Bible Translation: *That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.* World English Bible: *that they may know that you alone, whose name is Yahweh, are the Most High over all the earth.* Young’s Literal Translation: *And they know that Thou —(Thy name [is] Jehovah —by Thyself,) [Art] the Most High over all the earth!*

also said: *God, furthermore, said to Moses: Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel “The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you”. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations (...) Your name, O LORD, is everlasting, Your remembrance, O LORD, throughout all generations* (Exodus 3:15; Psalms 135:13, New American Standard Bible). Consequently, God’s name will never be forgotten: *My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD Almighty* (Malachi 1:11); *All the nations may walk in the name of their gods, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever* (Micah 4:5). As we can see, the translation of the New American Standard Bible is really absurd because *God's name will be great among the nations for ever and ever* and at the same time that name will be the LORD, which is not a personal name but a title, like Eternal or God. How can one explain this paradox?

Why some translations use the title LORD instead of God's name? The answer is amazing: *Discipline me, LORD, but only in due measure, not in your anger, or you will reduce me to nothing. Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you, on the peoples who do not call on your name* (Jeremiah 10:24-25). Consequently, according to their own translation, which does not call on God's name as we have seen, God had to “pour out his wrath” on these

translators. This explanation is the first key of the mystery. In fact, God has always revealed his name to his faithful servants, those seeking his glory (John 5:39-44; 12:43), despite frequent persecutions and apparent foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:19-25), not those seeking their own glory (Matthew 11:25).

First conclusion, when the translators of a Bible refuse to use God's name they strongly displease God because it is written in the Jerusalem Bible: *Give thanks to Yahweh, call his name aloud. Proclaim his deeds to the people, declare his name sublime. Sing of Yahweh (...) we hoped in you, Yahweh, your name, your memory are all my soul desires (...) Yahweh our God, others lords than you have ruled us, but we acknowledge no one other than you, no other name than yours (...) My name is Yahweh, I will not yield my glory to another, nor my honour to idols (...) all day long my name is constantly blasphemed. My people will therefore know my name; that day they will understand that it is I who say: I am here (...) to make known your name to your enemies, and make the nations tremble at your presence (...) I was ready to be approached by those who did not consult me, ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said: I am here, I am here, to a nation that did not invoke my name* (Isaiah 12:4; 26:8,13; 42:8; 52:6; 64:2; 65:1).

You may wonder: who proclaims the name of Yahweh today and who are the people of Yahweh? Apparently nobody. Once again the answer is within the Bible itself. For example, the apostle Peter explained why the early Hebrew Christians

received the Holy Spirit: *When Pentecost day came round, they had all met in one room, when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak different languages as the Spirit gave the gift of speech (...) These men are not drunk, as you imagine; why, it is only the third hour of the day. On the contrary, this is what the prophet Joel spoke of: In the last days to come —it is the Lord who speaks— I will pour out my Spirit on all mankind. Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. Even on my slaves, men and women, in those days, I will I pour out my Spirit. I will display portents in heaven above and signs on earth below. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great Day of the Lord dawns. All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved (Acts 2:1-4,15-21).* This translation is quite accurate and reliable except on one central point: the quotation of Joel 3:1-5 in the Jerusalem Bible reads Yahweh instead of the Lord, which changes completely the meaning of what Peter said. To be saved must we call on the name of Yahweh (formerly Jehovah) or Lord? If our salvation depends on our invocation of the divine name, so it is important to know it.

We have seen that the translators who replaced God's name by “Lord” had made this choice for theological reasons. This imposture

was unmasked by a relatively simple investigation, indeed the fact of checking internal contradictions in the bibles of these translators has been sufficient. This imposture is very old since it appeared with the first Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (c. 280 BCE), known as the Septuagint (LXX). For example the text of Leviticus 24:13-16 is read in the Jerusalem Bible as: *Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said: Take the man who pronounced the curse outside the camp. Let all who have heard him lay their hands on his head, and let the whole community must stone him. Then say to the Israelites: Anyone who curses his God shall bear the consequences of his fault. The one who blasphemes the name of Yahweh must die; the whole community must stone him. Stranger or native, if he blasphemes the Name, he will be put to death*, but the same text is read in the Septuagint (Brenton LXX) as: *And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Bring forth him that cursed outside the camp, and all who heard shall lay their hands upon his head, and all the congregation shall stone him. And speak to the sons of Israel, and thou shalt say to them: Whosoever shall curse God shall bear his sin. And he that names the name of the Lord, let him die the death: let all the congregation of Israel stone him with stones; whether he be a stranger or a native, let him die for naming the name of the Lord.* Paradoxically, as had noticed a Jewish philosopher named Philo (-25 to +50) in his book on the life of Moses that: *it was worse to name God than even to curse him* (De vita Mosis II:203-206)!

How can one explain that Philo gave such an absurd comment

because he knew, according to the text of Numbers 6:22-27, that the high priest had to name the name of God upon all the people on the day of atonement, once a year, in order to get the blessing from God: *And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying: Thus ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying to them: The Lord [YHWH] bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and have mercy upon thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I the Lord [YHWH] will bless them.* According to the text of the Septuagint the high priest had to name God [YHWH] and consequently to be stoned! Obviously, this conclusion is absurd.

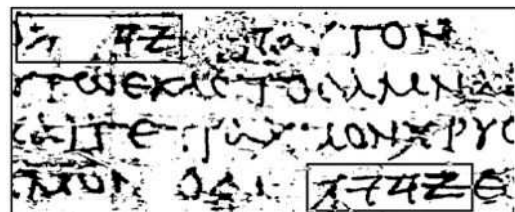
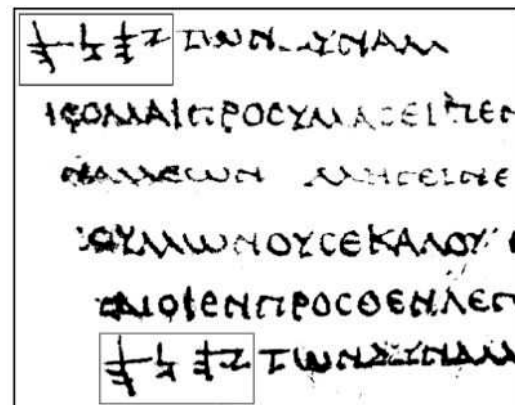
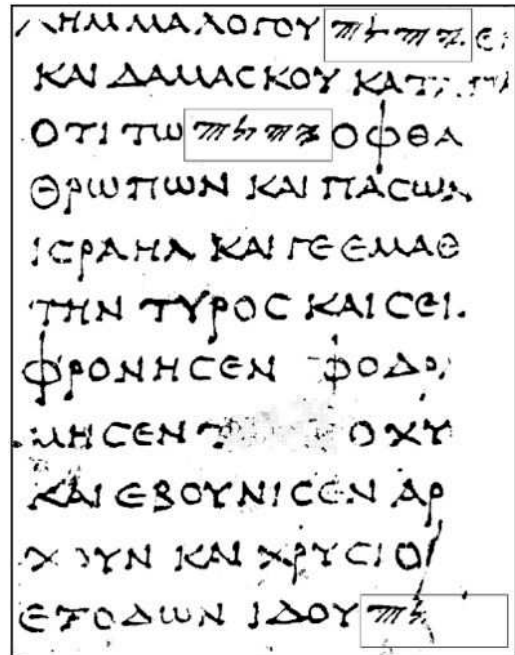
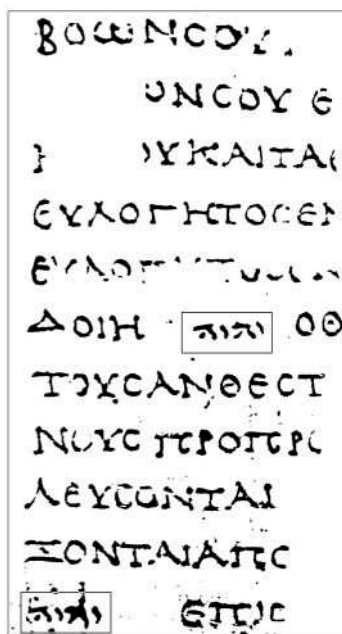
Regarding the divine name in the first century, Philo explains: *there was a gold plaque shaped in a ring and bearing four engraved characters (tetragrammaton) of a name which had the right to hear and to pronounce in the holy place those ones whose ears and tongue have been purified by wisdom, and nobody else and absolutely nowhere else. And this holy prophet Moses calls the name, a name of four letters (YHWH), making them perhaps symbols of the primary numbers (...) above this mitre is a golden leaf, on which an engraving of four letters was impressed; by which letters they say that the name of the living God is indicated, since it is not possible that anything that it in existence, should exist without God being invoked; for it is his goodness and his power combined with mercy that is the harmony and unity of all things (De vita Mosis II:115,132).* The testimony of Philo confirms

several points: the name of God was still pronounced in the 1st century but only by a small group of people (the priests in the temple), this sacred name was made up of four letters that Philo could not read any more (because it was ancient Hebrew), and he concluded in his comment on Exodus 3:14 that paradoxically God had no proper name [in Greek] (*De vita Mosis I:75*)! The strange conclusion of Philo is explained by the fact that he did not know Hebrew. Regarding the pronunciation of God's name, Flavius Josephus (37-100), gave a more reliable witness because he was familiar with the Bible and was able to read it in Hebrew⁸. Contrary to Philo, Josephus says that some Jews (those who spoke Hebrew) knew the proper name of God: *when those people thought they had got clear of the enemy, they snatched from them what they had brought with them, even while they had frequently entreated them, and that by calling upon the tremendous name of God (The Jewish War V:438).* Regarding the pronunciation of God's name, he explains: *The high priest had his head dressed with a tiara of fine linen embroidered with a purple border, and surrounded by another crown in gold which had in relief the sacred letters; these ones are four vowels (The Jewish War V:235).* This

⁸ Josephus, was a Romano-Jewish scholar, historian and hagiographer, who was born in Jerusalem —then part of Roman Judea— to a father of priestly descent and a mother who claimed royal ancestry. He explained in his autobiography that as belonging to a priestly family he had wanted to become a rabbi. He wrote all his books in Aramaic then translated them later into Greek (*The Jewish War I:3*).

description is excellent and completes the one found in Exodus 28:36-39: *You are to make a shining plate of pure gold and engrave on it as one would engrave a seal: Holiness belongs to Jehovah.* However, as we know, there are no vowels in Hebrew but only consonants. Regrettably, instead of explaining this apparent abnormality, certain commentators influenced by the hypothetical form Yahweh mislead the readers of Josephus by indicating in a note that this reading was IAUE, which is absurd since the “four sacred letters (YHWH)” had been written in paleo-Hebrew⁹, not in Greek. In addition, this reading would imply to read IAUDE the name YHWDH (Juda) whereas it is read IHUDA (Y^ehudah) in Hebrew, similarly YŠW^e (Y^ešū^e) is read IŠU^e.

In the first century no controversies concerning God’s name are observed among the Jews, since that name was always written in Hebrew, even in the Greek text. Among all the papyrus of the Septuagint dated before 150 CE (at least five), the tetragrammaton is written, either in square Hebrew (right picture) or more often in Paleo-Hebrew (hereafter).



These manuscripts prove a crucial point: before 150 CE, God's name had never been written “Lord (*kyrios*)” in the Greek texts. All historical testimonies prove also that God's name YHWH was not pronounced “the Lord” in the first century and before 130 CE its pronunciation was not under ban.

- ❖ Ben Sirach wrote (c. 200-175 BCE): *Do not accustom your mouth to an oath, and do not become used to the naming of the Holy One. For just as a domestic who is*

⁹ Even in heaven, all proper names, like God's name (Revelation 14:1) are still in Hebrew, not in Greek (Revelation 9:11).

- constantly scrutinized will not be wanting for a bruise, so also he who swears and always speaks the name will never be cleansed from sin (...) Then as he descended, he raised up his hands over the entire assembly of Israel's sons, to give a blessing of the Lord from his lips and to boast in his name (Sirach XXIII:9-10; L:20).*
- ❖ Aristeeas wrote to Philocrates (c. 150 BCE): *They (the Jews) worship the same God —the Lord and Creator of the Universe, as all other men, as we ourselves, O king, though we call him by different names, such as Zeus (Iovi) or Dis (Letter of Aristeeas §§15,98).*
 - ❖ Jewish apocryphal (c. 50 BCE): *And this became a hidden trap for mankind, because men, in bondage to misfortune or to royal authority, bestowed on objects of stone or wood the name that ought not to be shared (Wisdom of Solomon 14:21).*
 - ❖ Terentius Varro (c. 50 BCE), reported by Johannes Lydus (490-570): *But the Roman Varro, when discussing him, says that among the Chaldeans, in their mystical [writings], he is called Iaô, meaning “mentally perceived light” in the language of the Phoenicians, as Herennius [Philo] says. And he is frequently called Sabaôth, meaning the one who is “above the seven heavenly spheres” —that is, the creator (De mensibus IV:53).*
 - ❖ Diodorus Siculus (c. 50 BCE): *among the Jews Moyses referred his laws to the god who is invoked as Iaô (The Library of History I:94:2).*
 - ❖ Livy (c. 10 BCE): *The Jews do not mention to which deity pertains the Temple at Jerusalem, not any image found there, since they do not think the God partakes any figure (History of Rome CII).*
 - ❖ Philo of Alexandria (c. 40 CE): *there was a gold plaque shaped in a ring and bearing 4 engraved characters of a name which had the right to hear and to pronounce in the holy place those ones whose ears and tongue have been purified by wisdom, and nobody else and absolutely nowhere else. And this holy prophet Moses calls the name, a name of four letters (YHWH), making them perhaps symbols of the primary numbers (De vita Mosis II:115,132).*
 - ❖ Dioscorides Pedanius (c. 80 CE): *Wherever I am in the cosmos, which is subject to me, be thou with me, lord God Iaô, Iaô (On the Peony XI:2).*
 - ❖ Flavius Josephus (c. 95 CE): *The high priest had his head dressed with a tiara of fine linen embroidered with a purple border, and surrounded by another crown in gold which had in relief the sacred letters (YHWH); these ones are four vowels (The Jewish War V:235).*
 - ❖ Philo of Byblos (c. 100-120 CE): *Of the affairs of the Jews the truest history, because the most in accordance with their places and names, is that of Sanchuniathon of Beirut, who received the records from Hierombal the priest of the god Ieiô (Iεωω) (Phoenician History IV). The character Hierombal, priest of Yehwoh, was called “Hierobaal, Judge of the god YHWH”, in the Septuagint (Judges 7:1-2).*
 - ❖ Rabbi Abba Saul said (c. 130 CE): *anyone who pronounces the name according to its letters will not have his share in the world to come (Sanhedrin 101b; 10:1).*
 - ❖ Talmud (c. 135 CE): *They then brought up R. Hanina b. Teradion and asked him: Why hast thou occupied thyself with the Torah? He replied: Thus the Lord my God*

*commanded me. At once they sentenced him to be burnt, his wife to be slain, and his daughter to be consigned to a brothel. The punishment of being burnt came upon him because he pronounced the Name according to its letters. 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 according to its letters? He did it in the course of practising, 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 (...) The Executioner then jumped and threw himself into the fire. And a *bathkol*¹⁰ exclaimed: R. Hanina b. Teradion and the Executioner have been assigned to the world to come (Abodah Zarah 17b-18a).*

How was the tetragram pronounced in the New Testament, given that during the 1st century CE, the Jews believed that the privilege to pronounce God's name was reserved only to the Temple and that it should not be disclosed to (Greek) foreigners. The answer to this question depends on several factors: was the informant Jewish or not (like Pilatus), did he know Hebrew or only Greek (like Cornelius), did he know any priests who were officiating in the Temple of Jerusalem (like Josephus)? At that time, the Hebrew language was known mainly by those

who were attending the Temple priests because people generally only spoke Aramaic: *This became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their language Akeldama*¹¹, that is, “Field of Blood” (Acts 1:19). If one had asked Pilatus: *what is the name of the god worshiped in the temple of Jerusalem?*, he would have answered as Livy, a Roman historian, when he commented around 10 BCE on the taking of Jerusalem by general Pompey in 63 BCE: *They (the Jews) do not mention to which deity pertains the Temple at Jerusalem* (History of Rome CII)¹². Finally if one had asked the apostle Paul what he knew regarding God's name he would have answered that the name of God was written YHWH and because he knew Hebrew¹³ he was able to say how this name was pronounced in Hebrew.

Paradoxically the main cause of the disappearance of God's name in the Christian world was not the ignorance of Hebrew (indeed, a very few Christian scholars still knew it), but the influence of Greek philosophy. For example, Justin (100-165), a Christian philosopher, often commented in his works that it was impossible for man to name God (Apologies I:10:1; I:61:11; I:63:1;

¹¹ The word *haqel-dema*’ is Aramaic because in Hebrew this word was *sadeb-badam*, as well the word *sabaqtani* (Matthew 27:46) is Aramaic because in Hebrew we read: *azabtani* (Psalm 22:1).

¹² P. SCHÄFER – Judeophobia: Attitudes Toward the Jews in the Ancient World (Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 36-39.

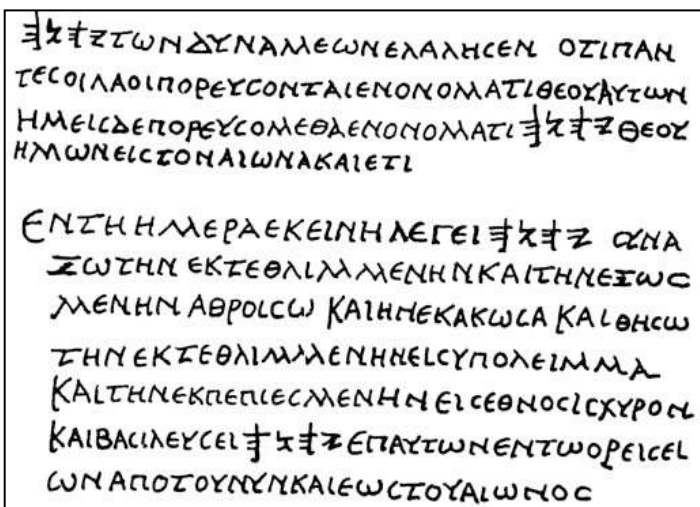
¹³ Hebrew was the official language of the Temple: *Many Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city. It was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek* (John 19:20, International Standard Version).

¹⁰ A *bathqol* (“daughter of voice”) is a voice descending from heaven according to Daniel 4:21.

II:12:4), and his main argument came from *Timaios*, a work of Plato (Apologies II:6:1). Some anomalies are found in his quotes, like the passage of Mika 4:1-7 in his *Dialogue with Tryphon* (§109), which enables us to conclude that he knew the writing of God's name. His quotes did not correspond exactly with the Septuagint, or with the Masoretic text, but only with the texts found at Qumran. In spite of the tetragram clearly appearing in paleo-Hebrew in this Greek text¹⁴, Justin did not understand it as a proper name. Perhaps he thought that it was an archaic procedure for writing the word “Lord”. At this time, even Irenaeus of Lyons (130-202) believed that the word Iaô meant “Lord” in primitive Hebrew (Against Heresies II:24:2). Because they did not understand Hebrew, as all Gentile Christians, Justin and Irenaeus of Lyons believed that God's name was Jesus (Dialogue with Trypho LXXV)!

In the same way the apostle Paul wrote to the Christians staying in Rome a letter written in Greek (c. 56 CE): *For I say that Christ actually became a minister of those who are circumcised in behalf of God's truthfulness, so as to verify the promises He made to their forefathers, and that the nations might glorify God for his mercy [Ps 18:49]. Just as it is written: That is why I will openly acknowledge you among the nations and to your name I will make melody [Dt 32:43]. And again he says: Be glad, you nations, with his people. And again: Praise YHWH, all you nations, and let all the peoples praise him [Ps 117:1]. And again Isaiah says [Is 11:10]: There will be the root of Jesse, and there will be one arising to rule nations; on him nations will rest their hope* (Romans 15:8-12). Paul had to write YHWH in his quote of Psalms 117:1, not the “Lord”, because God's name was written in all the copies of the Septuagint at that time. In addition, because he explained clearly that God had planned in the past to be openly acknowledged among the nations making melody for his name, it would have been incomprehensible that Paul used the title “Lord”, usually assigned to Roman gods, instead of the personal name of God.

Similarly the apostle John wrote to the Christians staying in Greece a booklet written in Greek (c. 98 CE): *I am the Alpha and the Omega, says YHWH God, the One who is and who was and who is coming, the Almighty (...)* I will write upon him the name of my God (...) saying: *We thank you, YHWH God, the Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power*



Mika 4:1 (picture line 1):
YHWH TON DYNAMEON instead of
YHWH PANTOSPATOPOS (LXX)

¹⁴ D. BARTHÉLEMY - Les devanciers d'Aquila in: *Vetus Testamentum, Supplements* vol. X (Leiden 1963), pp. 203-212.

and begun ruling as king. But the nations became wrathful, and your own wrath came, and the appointed time for the dead to be judged, and to give [their] reward to your slaves the prophets and to the holy ones and to those fearing your name, the small and the great (...) And it opened its mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name and his residence (...) And I saw, and, look! the Lamb standing upon the Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads (...) Who will not really fear you, YHWH, and glorify your name, because you alone are loyal? For all the nations will come and worship before you (...) the men were scorched with great heat, but they blasphemed the name of God (...) After these things I heard what was as a loud voice of a great crowd in heaven. They said: Praise Jah, you people! The salvation and the glory and the power belong to our God (...) And right away for the second time they said: Praise Jah, you people! And the smoke from her goes on ascending forever and ever. And the 24 elders and the 4 living creatures fell down and worshiped God seated upon the throne, and said: Amen! Praise Jah, you people! Also, a voice issued forth from the throne and said: Be praising our God, all you his slaves, who fear him, the small ones and the great. And I heard what was as a voice of a great crowd and as a sound of many waters and as a sound of heavy thunders. They said: Praise Jah, you people, because YHWH our God, the Almighty, has begun to rule as king (Revelation 1:8; 3:12; 11:17-18; 13:6; 14:1; 15:4; 16:9; 19:1-6).

John had to have written YHWH in his book for the same reasons Paul did. His comment about

the name Abaddon proves that he knew Hebrew¹⁵: *They have over them a king, the angel of the abyss. In Hebrew his name is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon* (Revelation 9:11). He did not replace YHWH by “Lord” for another reason. Indeed he used several times the well-known expression Allelu-ia, which means “Praise Yah” in Hebrew, he did not use the expression Allelu-el “Praise God”, nor Allelu-adonai “Praise the Lord”. The name Jah¹⁶ was a shorten form of YHWH (Psalms 68:4).

After the *Birkat ha-Minim* “Blessing on the heretics” (c. 90 CE), Christian Jews have been considered by other Jews as heretics. Rabbi Tarphon (c. 90-130 CE), related the problem of the destruction of Jewish Christian texts which contained the tetragram¹⁷ (Shabbat 116a). Probably from 100 CE the name YHWH was replaced, among Christians, by some “sacred names¹⁸” like “L[or]d (ΚΣ)” or “G[o]d (ΘΣ)”. Question: how have Christian Jews pronounced the name of God YHWH?

¹⁵ The Hebrew word *’adaddon* appears in Psalms 88:11, the Greek word *apoliean* in Matthew 7:13 and the Aramaic word *’abdan* in Esther 8:6. John mentions *armageddon* “mountain of Megiddo” as a Hebrew place (Revelation 16:16). In addition, John had to know Hebrew because he was known to the high priest (John 18:15).

¹⁶ *Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid; for Jah, Jehovah, is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation (...) Confide ye in Jehovah for ever; for in Jah, Jehovah, is the rock of ages* (Isaiah 12:2; 26:4) Darby Bible Translation).

¹⁷ D. JAFFÉ - Les Sages du Talmud et l’Évangile selon Matthieu in: *Revue de l’histoire des religions* Tome 226:4 (2009), p. 583-611.

¹⁸ G.D. KILPATRICK -The Principles and Practise of New Testament Textual Criticism in: *Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium* XCVI, pp. 207-222.

God's name —Its pronunciation

Did Jesus know God's name? The answer is obvious but what is controversial is: How did Jesus pronounce it? We can suppose that he was pronouncing God's name in the same way that the high priest was uttering it in the Temple before its destruction in 70 CE.

Despite the fact that the New Testament is written in Greek, the numerous controversies Jesus met regarding doctrinal points of the Old Testament had to be conducted in Hebrew given that the text of the Bible was written in Hebrew. For example when Jesus discussed with Satan after his baptism, they both quoted precisely some parts of the Old Testament written by Moses: *The Tempter came and said to him: If you are a son of GOD, tell these stones to become loaves of bread. But in reply he said: It is written: Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through YHWH's mouth (Dt 8:3). Then the Devil took him along into the holy city, and he stationed him upon the battlement of the temple and said to him: If you are a son of GOD, hurl yourself down; for it is written: He will give his angels a charge concerning you, and they will carry you on their hands, that you may at no time strike your foot against a stone (Ps 91:11-12). Jesus said to him: Again it is written: You must not put YHWH your GOD to the test (Dt 6:16). Again the Devil took him along to an unusually high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and he said to him: All these things I will give you if you fall down and do an act*

of worship to me. Then Jesus said to him: Go away, Satan! For it is written: It is YHWH your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service (Dt 5:9; 6:13) (Matthew 4:3-10).

The discussion between Jesus and Satan highlights two crucial points: Jesus read aloud God's name in Hebrew and he systematically used it, which Satan never did because one notices that he preferred using the word GOD (*Elohim*). This choice was not made by chance because Jesus quoted the text of Deuteronomy 6:13, which says: *YHWH your God you should fear, and him you should serve, and by his name you should swear*, whereas Satan quoted the word GOD as he already had done with Eve (Genesis 3:1-5), rather than the name YHWH which Eve used (Genesis 4:1).

Similarly, Jesus had to quote the text in Hebrew, not in Greek, when he quoted the Bible in his discussions with the Pharisees: *And one of them versed in the Law, asked, testing him (...) Now while the Pharisees were gathered together Jesus asked them: What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he? They said to him: David's. He said to them: How, then, is it that David by inspiration calls him 'Lord', saying: YHWH said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies beneath your feet? If, therefore, David calls him 'Lord', how is he his son? And nobody was able to say a word in reply to him, nor did anyone dare from that day on to question him any further (Matthew 22:35,41-45). Some scholars claim that Jesus had observed the rabbinic*

custom of reading the divine name as Adonai “My Lord”. This statement is illogical for two reasons: Jesus had strongly disapproved rabbinic traditions (Matthew 15:1-9) and this controversy would have been incomprehensible (except for theologians!) if Jesus had said: *The Lord says to my Lord.*

When Jesus read aloud a passage from Isaiah's scroll in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-21) he inevitably pronounced the divine name (YHWH), since the quoted passage mentions it: *The spirit of Lord YHWH is on me for YHWH has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the news to the afflicted, to soothe the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, release to those in prison, to proclaim a year of favour from YHWH and a day of vengeance for our God, to comfort all who mourn* (Isaiah 61:1-2). Because Nazareth was a city in Lower Galilee, most Jews of that synagogue had to be Hebraic Jews speaking Aramaic rather than Hellenistic Jews speaking Greek (Hebrews 6:1). Consequently the text quoted by Jesus had to be read in Hebrew and translated/interpreted into Aramaic (this translation or interpretation of reading was a ‘Targum’).

Some sceptics quibble that we do not know exactly how Jesus uttered God's name, which is strictly true (indeed, we unfortunately did not record his reading), but this is also true for all other Hebrew names without exception. The quest of a true pronunciation must be reasonable. To take the most

prominent example, consider the name Jesus. According to the New Testament: *She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins* (Matthew 1:21), in order to help the reader, The Jerusalem Bible¹⁹ adds a footnote: *Jesus’ (Hebr. Yehoshua) means ‘Yahweh save’.* This note has probably left you very puzzled (and you did not dare to admit it) because it is obvious that if Yehoshua means “Yahweh saves”, it should have to be read in Hebrew Yahw[eh]shua, not Yehow[ah]shua. If the name Jesus was really read Yehoshua in Hebrew, its meaning must be “Yehowah saves”. There is therefore a major contradiction between the reading of this name and the explanation of its meaning. An explanation is needed.

The name of Jesus is very old, it comes from a transformation of the name Hôshea‘ “He saved” into Yehôshua‘ “Yehôwah will save” (Numbers 13:16), then it has been abbreviated into Yeshua‘ “salvation” (1 Chronicles 24:11). Afterwards Yeshua‘ was pronounced Yesu‘ in Aramaic and written Iesous in Greek (LXX). Consequently in the first century Jesus was called Yehôshua‘ in Hebrew but usually Yesu‘ by his disciples who spoke Aramaic²⁰. When Aquila of Sinope revised the translation of the Septuagint (c. 130 CE), he corrected the name Iesous

¹⁹ The gospel according saint Matthew in: THE JERUSALEM BIBLE, London 1974, Ed. Darton, Longman & Todd p. 7.

²⁰ Hence the name Yesu‘ in the Talmud to speak about Jesus instead of Yeshua‘.

into Iesoua (Ἰησοῦα; Deuteronomy 1:38), however the writers of the New Testament continued to use it even when it was Joshua (Acts 7:45; Hebrews 4:8). To avoid such confusion Jerome decided to change the name Jesus into Iosue, in his Latin translation (Vulgate), when he was the servant of Moses.

It is noteworthy that Jerome, in his commentary on Psalm 8:2²¹, confirmed that in the past God's name had been written in Hebrew in Greek texts: *The name of the Lord in Hebrew has four letters, Yod He Waw He, which is the proper name of God which some people through ignorance, write ΙΙΙΙΙ [instead of יהוה] in Greek and which can be pronounced Iaho.* He wrote in his prologue of the books of Samuel and Kings: *That the Hebrews have 22 letters is testified also by the Syrian and Chaldaean languages, which for the most part correspond to the Hebrew; for they have 22 elementary sounds which are pronounced the same way, but are differently written (...) and we find the four-lettered name of the Lord [tetragram] in certain Greek books written to this day in the ancient characters (Prologus Galeatus).* It is noteworthy that Jerome wrote the tetragram *can be pronounced Iaho* instead of *is pronounced Iaho in Hebrew.* As previously if God's name had been Iaho the name of Jesus would have been Yahôshua', not Yehôshua'

In the first century, because Greek was the international language of traders and Roman authorities, Hebrew was the holy language of

priests as well as scribes in synagogues and Aramaic was the language of most people in Israel, it was usual to bear three names, like the apostle Peter (Greek), called Cephas (Aramaic) by Jesus, but Simon (Hebrew) was his birth name. Consequently, finding the authentic pronunciation of a name in the first century is meaningless because Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew were all authentic languages. For example: Jesus: *Iesous, Yeshu', Yehôshua'*; John: *Iôannen, Yôhanan, Yehôhanan*; Matthew: *Matthaion, Mattay, Matthatyah*; Jude: *Iouda, Yehud, Yehûdab.*

In the first century very few people were still speaking Hebrew, except educated people such as scribes, officers or international traders. For example, Simon bar Kokhba who was the Jewish leader of what is known as the Bar Kokhba revolt against the Roman Empire in 132 CE, wrote several letters to his officers in Aramaic as well as Hebrew and Greek. Consequently, finding the Hebrew pronunciation of a Jewish name at Jesus' time is feasible.

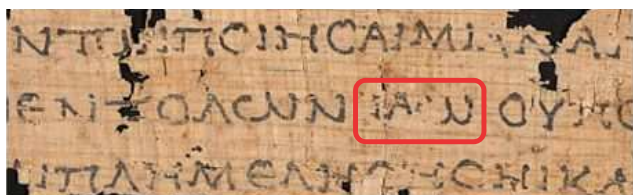
It is easy to see that all theophoric names, which include the divine name YHW- at their beginning, are always pronounced Yehô- (Yehow-) in Hebrew, without exception²². This elementary observation allows us to deduce that the divine name YHWH had to be pronounced Yehô-ah / Yehowah because all the Hebrew proper names ending in -WH in Hebrew are always

²¹ ST JEROME - S. Hieronymi presbyteri opera, in: *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* vol. LXXII (Ed. Brepols 1959), p. 191.

²² Yehô- became Iô- in the Septuagint because of iotacism, the sound Ye merged to I, and there is no letter H in Greek.

read -wah / -wâ²³, again without exception²⁴, but -weh is never found (except in Yahweh of course!).

Theophoric names oblige us to conclude that God's name had to be pronounced Yehowah in Hebrew in the first century. Given that the Hebrew names Yehoshua²⁵, Yehohanan and Yehudah became respectively in Greek Iesous, Ioannen and Iouda it is difficult to imagine how Yehowah could have been pronounced in Greek at that time, maybe something like Ioua²⁵ or Ieoa, a pronunciation which is close to the form Ieüô (Ιεϋω) given by Philo of Byblos. Most scholars today refuse this conclusion for the following reasons: Ieüô is rare in contrast Iaô is frequent in the first century, and above all this name Iaô appears in a copy of the Septuagint (below) dated c. 100 BCE found in Qumran.



²³ The final H being a vowel it should be noted â. It is for this reason that many authors write Juda instead of Judah.

²⁴ Alwah (Gn 36:40), (Eve) Hawwah (Gn 4:1), Ishwah (Gn 46:17), Iwwah (2R 19:13), Puwah (Nb 26:23) and Tiqwah (2Ki 22:14). However, this obvious fact only appears in Hebrew because in Aramaic, final gutturals (H, ‘ and ’) were not any more pronounced already in the 3rd century BCE, which has influenced some Greek transcriptions like Eve instead of Hawwah, Iesou instead of Yeshûa or Joshua (Heb 4:8), Tekoue instead of Tiqwah, etc. Even the Assyrian name Nineveh (Gn 10:11), which is spelled NYNWH in Hebrew, is written ^{uru}NINA^{ki} in cuneiform (probably from NIN.AN “Lady of Heaven”) and is read Ninua in Akkadian or Ninuwa in Mari letters dated 18th century BCE.

²⁵ The H is rarely used in Latin proper names

It is amazing that this conclusion is accepted because it contradicts the historical context, the theophoric names (which begin always with Yehô-) and finally logic (an anonymous name!). In Qumran the name of God was held in very high esteem, to such an extent that it was forbidden to pronounce it under penalty of excommunication. This name was often written in ancient Hebrew in the biblical texts.



As one can see in the text Psalms (above) found at Qumran²⁶ (Psalms 129:4-130:6), God's name Yah (bottom right) was written normally while on the other hand, the name YHWH was written in ancient Hebrew (framed in the upper part), furthermore, several Adonay (underlined) took the place of YHWH. These errors show that God's name was sometimes replaced by Adonay “My Lord”, Elohim

²⁶ J.P. SIEGEL -The Employment of Palaeo-Hebrew Characters for the Divine Names at Qumran in the Light of Tannaitic Sources in: *Hebrew Union College Annual* n°42 (1971), pp. 159-172.

“God” or Yah. Other scrolls show that God's name could also be replaced by a special substitute Hû'â “He, himself”.

However: 1) How can one explain that a scribe of Qumran had dared to write God's name as it is pronounced whereas he risked to be excommunicated while the Christian scribes of Jewish origin who did not risk anything had preferred to write YHWH in their copies of the New Testament instead of Iaô. 2) The pagans would have known God's name whereas the Jews no longer used it outside Israel for several centuries, because of the ban on pronouncing it imposed by the Septuagint. 3) Josephus who knew that Iaô was known by the Romans as the God that the Jews were invoking, thanks to Terentius Varro and Diodorus, did not confirm this widespread information but 4) on the contrary wrote that YHWH had four vowels, whereas Iaô has three. 5) Given that Rabbi Abba Saul forbade (c. 130 CE): *to pronounce God's name according to its letters*, this prohibition was implying a pronunciation of Y,H,W,H close to I,H,U,A, which is far from I,A,H,O. 6) At last, if Yahwoh (Iaô) was the true name of God at that time, how can one explain that among the hundreds of theophoric names in the Hebrew Bible there is not even one beginning with Yah-. The answer to these six objections is simple: Iaô was simply a substitute of God's name, like sometimes the word Hu'a “Himself” in some scrolls of Qumran.

Once more, some linguists disagree with this conclusion, arguing that Iaho (Yahwoh) was not a substitute but rather an intermediate form between Yah and Yehowah, according to an evolutionary process, maybe like what follows: YaH >> YaHu >> YaHuW >> YaHuWa >> YeHuWa >> YeHoWaH. That kind of interpretation is strongly influenced by the theory of evolution, which implies that YHW could be the “missing link”. Instead of searching which linguistic interpretation is the “true one” regarding the pronunciation of God's name, because there are many (as many as linguists), the true question is: who has the truth? There is the same problem with the meaning of God's name, because there are many theological interpretations (as many as theologians). The answer to this very complex question “where to find the truth about God's name?” is very simple: in the Bible itself. If you had been in the first century, what would you have done to find the truth about God's name? The apostle Paul, who was a sincere Jew, gives the answer to his fellow believers: *he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence* (Acts 17:2-3).

One must note that according to the New Testament there never were any linguistic controversies among the Jews or even between Jews and Christians regarding the pronunciation of God's name. There were only theological controversies concerning the identification of the

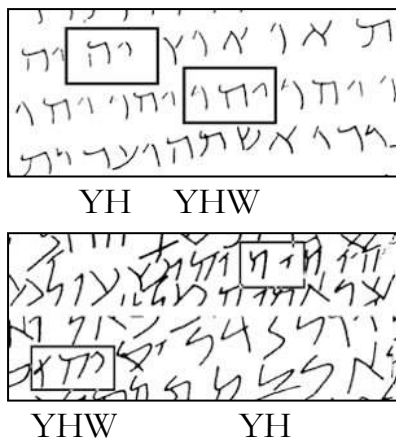
Messiah as well as the links between the “Lord God” of the Old Testament and the new “god Lord (Jesus)” worshipped by Christians. However, when the Jews prohibited pronouncing God’s name, around 130 CE, some Gnostic groups appeared both among Christians and Jews, who pretended to keep the true name of God. For example among Christians:

- ❖ Justin Martyr wrote (c. 150 CE): *Moreover, in the book of Exodus we have also perceived that the name of God Himself which, He says, was not revealed to Abraham or to Jacob, was Jesus, and was declared mysteriously through Moses (Dialogue with Trypho LXXV).*
- ❖ Christian gnostic (c. 150-170 CE): *The Son is his name. He did not, therefore, keep it secretly hidden, but the son came into existence. He himself gave a name to him. The name, then, is that of the Father, just as the name of the Father is the Son (The Gospel of Truth).*
- ❖ Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 170 CE): *But what other name is there which is glorified among the Gentiles than that of our Lord, by whom the Father is glorified, and man also? And because it is [the name] of His own Son, who was made man by Him, He calls it His own. Just as a king, if he himself paints a likeness of his son, is right in calling this likeness his own, for both these reasons, because it is [the likeness] of his son, and because it is his own production; so also does the Father confess the name of Jesus Christ, which is throughout all the world glorified in the Church, to be His own, both because it is that of His Son, and because He who thus describes it gave Him for the salvation of*

men. Since, therefore, the name of the Son belongs to the Father, and since in the omnipotent God the Church makes offerings through Jesus Christ, He says well on both these grounds, And in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure sacrifice (Against Heresies IV:17:6).

Among the Jews the situation was quite different. Because they were not allowed to pronounce God's name, they began speculations about the substitute Yahû (YHW) they had used in the past, which was now considered as a secret name. This name played a great role in Jewish esotericism as one can see in a book written around 80 CE: *Go, Jaobel, and by means of my ineffable Name raise me yonder man, and strengthen him (so that he recover) from his trembling. And the angel came, whom He had sent to me, in the likeness of a man, and grasped me by my right hand, and set me up upon my feet, and said to me: “Stand up, [Abraham,] Friend of God who loves thee; let not the trembling of man seize thee! For, lo! I have been sent to thee to strengthen thee and bless thee in the name of God —who loves thee— the Creator of the celestial and terrestrial. Be fearless and hasten to Him. I am called Jaobel by Him who moves that which exists with me on the 7th expanse upon the firmament, a power in virtue of the ineffable Name that is dwelling in me (The Apocalypse of Abraham X:3-7).* The name of Jaobel is represented as a being possessed of the power of the ineffable name, a function assigned in the Rabbinical writings to Metatron, whose name is like unto that of God Himself (Sanhedrin 38b). The name Yahoel “Yahô is God” is evidently a

substitute for the ineffable name. A cryptic story in the Babylonian Talmud states that: *On the eve of every Shabbat, Judah HaNasi's pupils, Rab Hanina and Rab Hoshaiah, who devoted themselves especially to cosmogony, used to create a delicious calf by means of the Sefer Yetzirah, and ate it on the Sabbath* (Sanhedrin 65b, 67b). The Sefer Yetzirah (c. 150 CE), the earliest extant book on Jewish esotericism, reads²⁷: *With three of the simple letters seal "above". Choose three and place them in His great Name: YHW. With them seal the six extremities. Face upward and seal it with YHW* (Sefer Yetzirah I:15). The great Name used in Jewish magic was therefore YHW (Yahû) instead of YHWH (Yehowah). The comparison (below) between the Jewish amulets written (from 150 to 400 CE) in Hebrew²⁸ and Greek confirms the equivalence between YHW (Yahû) and Iaô as well as YH (Yah) and Ia.



As one can see among these samples, numerous amulets of this time, written in Greek, contain the name Iaô, occasionally written backwards²⁹. Sometimes other names like: Ia, Sabaot/Sabao, Adonai, etc., are found, but the most frequently found in these Greek amulets is Iaô³⁰. Origen who was the greatest textual critic of the early Christian Church wrote (c. 250 CE): *and from the Hebrew Scriptures him who is termed in Hebrew Iaô or Jah, and Sabaoth, and Adonaeus, and Eloaeus. Now the names taken from the Scriptures are names of one and the same God* (Against Celsus VI:32). *For Iaô means etymologically lifting up, elation. Now the Word comes to men who formerly could not receive the advent of the Son of God who is the Word* (Commentary on John II:1). His comment shows³¹ that he was well aware of substitutes for God's name but, despite the fact he

²⁷ A.P. HAYMAN - Sefer Yesira: Edition, Translation and Text-critical Commentary. Tuebingen 2004, Ed. Mohr Siebeck, pp. 89-90.
²⁸ J. NAVEH - A Recently Discovered Palestinian Jewish Aramaic Amulet in: Arameans, Aramaic and the Aramaic literary tradition (Tel-Aviv 1983, Bar-Ilan University Press), pp. 81-88.
 J. NAVEH, S. SHAKED - Amulets and magic bowls Jerusalem 1985 Ed. Magnes Press pp. 40-61.
 J.A. MONTGOMERY -Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur. Philadelphia 1913 Ed. University Museum, pp. 145-146,165,209-210.

²⁹ K. PREISENDANZ -Papyri Graecae Magicae I 1928; II Berlin 1931 Stuttgart 1974 XVIIa 1-2.
³⁰ M. PHILONENKO -L'anguipède alectorocéphale et le dieu Iaô in: C.R.A.I.L. Paris 1979 Ed. Klincksieck pp. 297-304.
³¹ He directed the production of the massive Hexapla ("Sixfold"), an Old Testament in six columns: Hebrew, Hebrew in Greek characters, the Septuagint, and the Greek versions of Theodotion, Aquila of Sinope, and Symmachus. He was one of the greatest biblical scholars of the early Church, having written commentaries on most of the books of the Bible.

was the most skilled Christian scholar of his time, he did not know the genuine pronunciation of the tetragram and he believed that Iaô meant etymologically: “*lifting up, elation*” (instead of “*Yah himself*”).

Rapidly the Jews were not interested anymore in the pronunciation of God's name, but some small mystic groups continued to speculate about the symbolic meaning or esoteric understanding of the letters of God's name that they were writing YY, YYY or YWY. This method is called Kabbalah. According to adherents of Kabbalah, its origin begins with secrets that God revealed to Adam. One of the central doctrines concerns the 72-letter name of God used for meditation purposes³². For example, Abraham ibn Ezra wrote a book (c. 1154) entitled the *Book of the Name* (*Sefer ha-Shem*) in which he establishes links between digital and also zodiacal values from the letters of the tetragram. Because Philosophy, Gnosticism and mystical, even astrological beliefs, had become increasingly influential, Maimonides a Jewish scholar and famous Talmudist, in order to contend with such influences, put forward a whole new definition of Judaism. His reasoning centred on the Name of God, the tetragram, which was explained in his book entitled *The Guide of the Perplexed* (Book I §64), written in 1190. There he exposed the following powerful

reasoning: the God of the philosophers did not require worship only polite acknowledgement of his existence, since it would be impossible to establish relations with a nameless God (Elohim). Then he proved that the tetragram YHWH is the personal name of God, that is to say the name distinctly read (*Shem ha-mephorash*), which is different from all the other names such as: *Adonay*, *Shadday*, *Elohim* (which are only divine titles having an etymology), because the tetragram has no etymology.

However, Maimonides knew well the problem of the pronunciation of God's name prohibited by Jewish tradition. On the other hand, he also knew that some Jews believed in the almost magical influence of the letters or the precise pronunciation of divine names, but he warned his readers against such practices as being pure invention or foolishness. The remarkable aspect of his argumentation lies in the fact that he managed to avoid controversy on such a sensitive subject. He asserted that in fact it was only true worship which had been lost, and not the authentic pronunciation of the tetragram, since this was still possible according to its letters. To support this basic idea (true worship is more important than correct pronunciation), he quoted *Sotah 38a* to prove that the name is the essence of God and that is the reason it should not be misused, then he quoted the text of Zechariah 14:9 to prove the oneness of this name, also

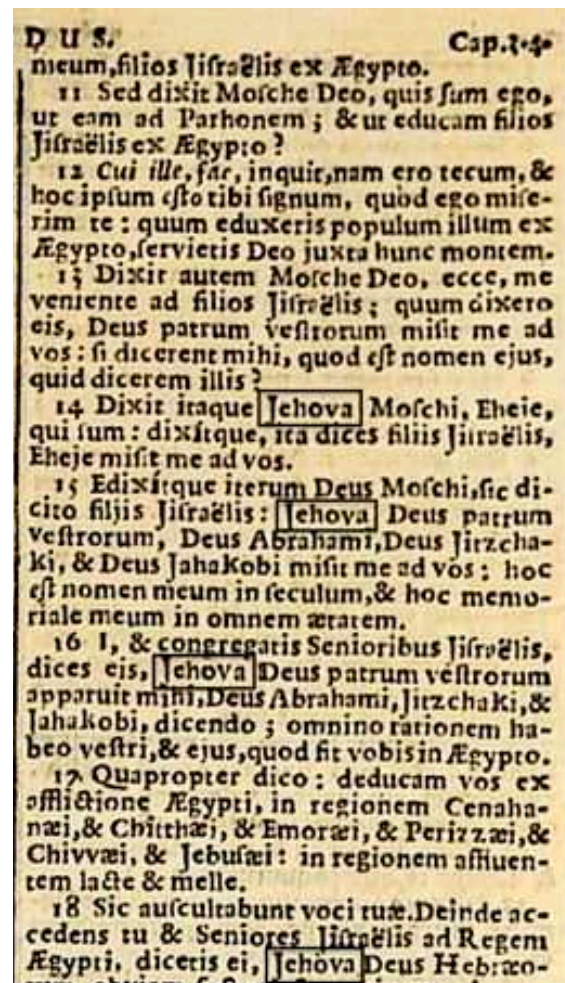
³² This concept is derived from the Hebrew verbal utterance Moses spoke in the presence of an angel, while the Sea of Reeds parted, allowing the Hebrews to escape their approaching attackers.

Sifre Numbers 6:23-27 to show that the priests were obliged to bless by this name only. Then, to prove that the pronunciation of the Name did not pose any problem in the past, and that it had no magical aspect, he quoted *Kiddushin 71a*, which said that this name was passed on by certain rabbis to their sons. Also, according to *Yoma 39b*, this pronunciation was widely used before the priesthood of Simon the Just, which proved the insignificance of a magical concept, because at this time, the Name was used for its spiritual not supernatural aspect. Maimonides insisted on the fact that what was necessary to find was the spirituality connected to this Name, and not the exact pronunciation. In order to demonstrate this important idea of understanding the sense and not the sound conveyed by this name, he quoted a relevant example. Exodus 6:3 indicates that before Moses the Name was not known. Naturally this refers to the exact meaning of the Name, and not its pronunciation, because it would be unreasonable to believe that a correct pronunciation would have suddenly been able to incite the Israelites to action, unless the pronunciation had magical power, a supposition disproved by subsequent events. To conclude his demonstration, Maimonides quoted Exodus 3:14 to show that the expression *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, which can be translated as: *I shall be who I shall be*, was above all a spiritual teaching. Because the tetragram had no linguistic etymology, this link with the

verb “to be (*hayah*)” expressed above all a religious etymology, that is a teaching about God, who can be defined theologically as: *the Being who is the being or the necessary being*. It is interesting to note that Judah Halevi, another Jewish scholar, put forward almost the same arguments in his book *The Kuzari* published in 1140. He wrote that the main difference between the God of Abraham and the God of Aristotle was the tetragram (Kuzari IV:16). He proved also that this name was the personal name of God (IV:1) and that it meant according to the Bible: *He will be with you*. To show once again that it was the meaning of this name which was important and not the pronunciation, he quoted Exodus 5:2 where Pharaoh asked to know the Name: not the pronunciation which he used, but the authority of this Name (IV:15). He pointed out that the letters of the tetragram have the remarkable property of being “*mother of reading*”, that is the vowels associated with other consonants, such as the spirit is associated with the body and makes it live: *Although its meaning is hidden, the letters of which it is composed speak. For it is the letters alef, hē (H), wāv (W) and yōd (Y) which cause all consonants to be sounded, as no letter can be pronounced as long as it is not supported by one of these four, viz. â by alef, and hē, û by wāv, and î by yōd. They form, so to speak, the spirit in the bodies of the consonants. The name Oh is like the tetragrammaton (Ex III:14). As to EH'YEH, it can be derived from the latter name, or from the root hāyāh “to be” (The Kuzari IV:3).*

Contrary to a widespread opinion (conveyed by opponents), there were never any controversies about the writing and pronunciation of God's name in Hebrew among Rabbis, except among small esoteric groups, the Name [of God] has always been written YHWH and has been pronounced Yehowah³³. In addition, contrary to a fairly widespread idea, Jewish scholarly authorities acknowledge without difficulty that the name Jehovah is the genuine name of God in Hebrew. For example it can be seen in a technical book written for the Jews³⁴, prefaced by the French Chief Rabbi Joseph Sitruk (1987-2008), that: *the name Ye.ho.va (Jéhovah), written with the Hebrew letters Yod, He Vav, He, is considered as the genuine name of God.* Most people ignore this basic truth because Jewish scholarly authorities are much less known than the Jewish religious authorities who teach that God's name is Adonay. For example, professor J.H. Levy explained in his article published in 1903 in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*³⁵ that the vowel-points of the tetragram (e,o,â) are not those of Adonay (a,o,â) and Yâhû (יהו) is not a real name because the final û (ו) is simply the old nominative affix (which means “he”, therefore Yâhû means “Yah [is] He”). He concluded his article: *My solution of that problem may be tersely stated in the*

words of Isaiah xxvi. 4: יהוה יהוה “Y’howah is Yah”. These issues are not new, since some Jewish scholars of the past, who had edited grammars of Hebrew and translated the Bible into Latin, had already used the name Jehovah in their books. For example, Immanuel Tremellius, an Italian Jewish convert to Christianity, who was known as a leading Hebraist and Bible translator³⁶, wrote a *Chaldaic and Syriac grammar* (1569) and translated the Hebrew Bible into Latin (1579) in which he systematically used the name Jehova (framed below) and did not translate the first *Eheie* (“I shall be”) in Exodus 3:14, which appears just before in verse 12 (Latin *ero*):



³³ Yehovah in Hebrew of today.

³⁴ A.J. KOLATCH – Le Livre Juif du pourquoi? T. 1. Genève 1993, Ed. MJR Editions, pp. IX, 347.

³⁵ J.H. LEVY – The Tetra(?)grammaton in: *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Oct., 1902), pp. 97-99.

³⁶ In 1549 he succeeded Paul Fagius as Regius professor of Hebrew at Cambridge. He also translated John Calvin's Geneva Catechism into Hebrew (Paris, 1551).

Baruch Spinoza³⁷ after he published his Hebrew grammar (*Compendium grammatices linguae hebraeae*), regularly used the name Jehovæ in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (in 1677). Similarly Alexander Harkavy³⁸, who was a lexicographer and linguist, used Jehova several times in his translation of the Bible from the King James version (*The Holy Scriptures*, 1916). If today the vast majority of people believe that the God of the Bible has no name, but just a title “Lord (Adonay)”, or that this name has been lost, it is not the fault of Jewish scholars, but of the Jewish religious leaders condemning those who use God’s name (Jehovah). That’s why Nehemia Gordon³⁹, a Karaite Jew who holds a Master's degree in Biblical Studies from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, published a book *Shattering the Conspiracy of Silence*

³⁷ He was a Dutch philosopher and was raised in the Portuguese Jewish community in Amsterdam.

³⁸ He was a Russian-born American writer. After the antisemitic pogroms of 1880 in Russia, Harkavy joined the Jewish Am Olam (Eternal People) back-to-the-land movement.

³⁹ He was born to a Jewish family of rabbis. He rejected the idea that the Talmud has divine authority and became a Karaite. Nehemia is a native of Chicago but has lived in Jerusalem, Israel since making Aliyah in 1993. Until recently Gordon served on Universal Karaite Judaism's "Religious Council", and on the Board of Directors of the ancient Karaite synagogue in Jerusalem. He is also a co-founder of the World Karaite Movement, a Karaite revival group. From 2007 to 2008, Nehemia Gordon served in the position of senior academic administrator of the Karaite Jewish University. He assisted in the translation of texts contained in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader*, was an assistant on the *Dead Sea Scrolls Publication* project coordinated by Emanuel Tov, and worked as a researcher on the Hebrew University Bible Project under the auspices of Shemaryahu Talmon.

(2012) in which he explains that the fact of not mentioning God’s name is unfounded and on the contrary one must pronounce this name Yehovah⁴⁰ (in modern Hebrew).

Samuel Cahen, who produced for Jews the first French translation directly from the Hebrew text, began (in 1834) to systematically use the Iehova vocalization (see below) in his French text instead of Eternal.

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2. Qu'elle ruisselle comme la pluie, ma doctrine ;
Que ma parole coule comme la rosée,
Comme une averse sur l'arbuste,
Comme des torrens d'eau sur l'herbe.

3. Car c'est le nom de Iehova que j'invoque ;
Apportez de la magnificence à notre Dieu.

4. Le rocher ! parfaite est son œuvre ;
Car, dans toutes ses voies, juste,
Dieu de vérité, sans iniquité,
Il est droit, il est intègre.

(Iar'hi). שם יהוה אקרא Je veux invoquer ou plutôt célébrer le nom de Iehova. Le Samaritain a כטם comme Isaïe, ch. 12, v. 4; Jérém.,

תגל כטל אמרו	2	י ערף כמטר לקח
וכרביבים על עשב		כשעורים על ידשא
הכו גזל לאלהינו	3	כי שם יהוה אקרא
כי כרדדכו משפט	4	הצור המים פ עליו
צדיק וישר הוא		אל אמנה ואין עול

He explained that he used the name Iehova because it was the most reliable reading according to all the best grammarians of Hebrew including Wilhelm Gesenius, a renowned German orientalist and Biblical critic. This Hebrew scholar recognized that theophoric names were giving a powerful argument in favour of Yehovah in his *Hebräisches und Chaldäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (1834): *Several consider*

⁴⁰ N. GORDON –Shattering the Conspiracy of Silence. Arlington 2012, Ed. Hilkiah Press, pp. 191-207.

that יהוה (Yah^awoh) is the true pronunciation (...) others as Reland (...) following the Samaritans, suppose that יהוה (Yah^bweh) was anciently the true pronunciation (...) Also those who consider יהוה (Y^chowah) was the actual pronunciation are not altogether without ground on which to defend their opinion. In this way can be abbreviated syllables יה (Y^chó) and י (Yó), with which many proper names begin, be more satisfactorily explained⁴¹. Consequently, several Jewish translators systematically used the name Jehovah in their translation of the Hebrew like the Bible of Rabbi Lazarus Goldschmidt⁴²:

Land das Milch fließt und Honig. Höre O Israel, Jehovah ist unser Gott, Jehovah ist einig. Liebe deinen Gott Jehovah

or Joseph Magil⁴³ (Deut 6:4):

4. Hear, O Israel,	שמע ישראל
Jehovah is our God,	יהוה אחד
Jehovah is one.	יהוה אחד

All these Jewish translators, who knew Hebrew as well as the ban on pronouncing God's name, used the name Jehovah in their writings (obviously they did not encourage anyone to pronounce it). How many used the name Yahweh: absolutely none of them.

Based upon the previous evidence, many Bible translators have

⁴¹ H.W.F. GENESIUS –Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament. Grand Rapid, Michigan 1979, Ed. Baker Book House, p. 337.

⁴² L. GOLDSCHMIDT –Die heiligen Bücher des alten Bundes übertragen durch Vol. 1. The Holy Books of the Old Covenant, translated by Berlin, Ed. Rosenthal & Co. 1925.

⁴³ J. MAGIL –Magil’s Linear School Bible (1910 reprint) 1899 New York, Ed. J. Magil’s Publishing.

felt that the divine name should be restored when they translate the New Testament. For example, many African, American, Asian, and Pacific-island language versions of the New Testament use the divine name liberally. Some of these translations have appeared recently, such as the Rotuman Bible (1999), which uses the name Jihova 51 times in 48 verses of the New Testament, and the Batak-Toba version (1989) from Indonesia, which uses the name Jahowa 110 times in the New Testament. The divine name has appeared, too, in French, German, and Spanish translations. For instance, Pablo Besson translated the New Testament into Spanish in the early 20th century. His translation uses Jehová at Jude 14, and nearly 100 footnotes suggest the divine name as a likely rendering. Below are some examples of English translations that have used God’s name in the New Testament:

- ❖ *A Literal Translation of the New Testament ... From the Text of the Vatican Manuscript*, by Herman Heinfetter (1863).
- ❖ *The Emphatic Diaglott*, by Benjamin Wilson (1864).
- ❖ *The Epistles of Paul in Modern English*, by George Barker Stevens (1898).
- ❖ *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*, by W. G. Rutherford (1900).
- ❖ *The Christian’s Bible—New Testament*, by George N. LeFevre (1928).
- ❖ *The New Testament Letters*, by J.W.C. Wand, Bishop of London (1946).

Some critics argue that these Christian translators were not aware

that the name of God was not Jehovah but Yahweh because those who knew Hebrew well had preferred using Yahweh! For example, Levi Herzfeld, a German rabbi and historian, was the first scholar who chose to replace systematically Jehovah by Jahweh in his comments on the Old Testament⁴⁴ (1855). In fact, this rabbi did not know Hebrew very well. In contrast, Johann Babor, Doctor of Theology and historian, professor of hermeneutics of the Old and New Testament and Director of theological studies at the University of Olomouc, used the name Ihoua (Luke 4:18 below) in his translation of the New Testament⁴⁵ (1805).

ten Sjaias, und als er es aufrollte, fiel er auf folgende Stelle: ich werde vom Geiste des **Jhova** angetrieben, der mich erföhren hat),

Why did Babor choose the form Ihoua instead of Iehoua? The response is simple, at that time many Hebrew scholars wanted to improve the pronunciation of God's name not because of theological reasons, but because of linguistic reasons. Indeed, they had wanted to take into account that the tetragram had to be pronounced “according to its letters” before 130 CE (see Sanhedrin 10:1). For example, Antoine Fabre d'Olivet in his study of the Hebrew language and the history of the human race

⁴⁴ L. HERZFELD -Geschichte des volkes Iisrael von der zerstörung des ersten tempels bis zur einsetzung des Makkabäers Schim, Vol 2. Rodhausfen 1855, Ed G. Westermann.

⁴⁵ J. BABOR - Uebersetzung des Neuen Testaments mit erklärenden Anmerkungen. Wien 1805, Ed. J.V. Degen, pp. 147,152,168.

entitled: *The Hebraic Tongue Restored: And the True Meaning of the Hebrew Words Re-Established and Proved by their Radical Analysis*, in which he⁴⁶ explains there is no need of vowel-points to understand Hebrew, because this language can be vocalized through vowel letters. He applied this method, of reading the words according to their letters, in his translation of the Book of Genesis (1823) in which he systematically used IHÔAH (Gn 8:20-21, below):

<p>ויבן נח מזבח ליהוה ויקח מכל הבהמה הטמאה ומכל העוף הטמא ועל עלת כמזבח :</p>	<p>20. Et-il-édifia, Noah, un-lieu de-sacrifice à IHÔAH et-il-prit de-tout-quadrupède de-la-pureté, et-de-tout-volatile de-la-pureté; et-il-éleva une-élévation (il fit exhaler une exhalaison) de-ce-lieu-de-sacrifice.</p>
<p>והחיה את ריחה ויאכריתיה אל לבו לא אסף לקחל עוד את</p>	<p>21. Et-il-respira, IHÔAH, cet-esprit-odorant de-douceur; et-il-dit, IHÔAH, devers-le-cœur-sien,</p>

Jean du Verdier, a colleague of David Paul Drach, a Catholic convert from Judaism, and librarian of the College of Propaganda in Rome, used the form IEOE in his Hebrew grammar⁴⁷ (1843) in which he explains that the Hebrew language can be read according to its letters (Y, H, W, ‘ and ’). Augustin Crampon who studied theology and biblical exegesis under the direction of the Orientalist Arthur Le Hir, then carried out himself this teaching and translated into French all the canonical books from the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. He systematically used the name Jova

⁴⁶ Fabre d'Olivet was a French author, poet and composer whose Biblical and philosophical hermeneutics influenced many occultists.

⁴⁷ J. DU VERDIER - Nova methodus hebraica punctis masoreticis expurgata Paris 1847, Éd. J.P. Migne, pp. 883-890.

(framed) in his Latin translation⁴⁸ (1856), in accordance with all the theophoric names of the Vulgate beginning with Jo-.

<p>Effatum Jova ad Dominum meum : « Sede ad dexteram meam, usque dum posuero hostes tuos scabellum pedibus tuis. »</p> <p>2. Baculum potentiae tuae emittet (protendet Jova ex Sione : impera in medio hostium tuorum.</p> <p>3. Populus tuus spontaneas oblationes dno militiae tuae in ornatu sancto, ex utero aurorae tibi ros juventutis tuae.</p> <p>4. Juravit Jova nec poenitebit eum : « Tu es sacerdos in perpetuum, secundum rationem Melchisedeci. »</p> <p>5. O Jova Dominus (Messias) ad dexteram tuam <i>adest</i>,</p>

All these Christian translators who knew Hebrew used the name Jehovah, or a similar form (Jova, Ihoah, Ihoua), in their writings. How many used the name Yahweh: absolutely none of them.

If we believe that this name (YHWH) is really important to God, this extraordinary coincidence that all Jewish translators of the Old Testament as well as all Christian translators of the New Testament who have consented to use God's name in their translation, may have chosen Jehovah instead of Yahweh the so-called “correct form”, this extraordinary coincidence seems to be providential, in any case Yahweh is really unlucky.

Very few people know that the name Yahweh is not a linguistic re-enactment based on theophoric names, but a conjectural form based on a theological interpretation of God's name in Exodus 3:14 as being “*He causes to be[come]*”, God being the creator of all that is. Accordingly,

Yahweh is not the original pronunciation of God's name but a supposed grammatical form of the meaning “*He causes to be[come]*” of God's name. What is amazing is that all academics have been hypnotized by this demonstration, which served and still serves to justify the Yahweh shape, whereas it is absolute nonsense. Indeed, even the Anchor Bible Dictionary, which supports this causative form, to prove the vocalization Yahweh, must admit it does not exist: *The reconstructed form yahwēh is the corresponding form of the causative stem (of the Hebrew verb hāyāh, “to be”). This analysis is encouraged by theological notions of God as one who is, or who exists, or who causes existence. Thus the explanation of Yahweh in Exod 3:14, “I am who I am,” is a folk etymology based on this verb. The analysis of the name as a causative falters on the grammatical point observed by Barr that “the causative of this verb does not occur in Hebrew elsewhere”⁴⁹. The absence of the causative form of the Hebrew verb “to be[come]” is well known by Hebrew scholars⁵⁰. André Caquot noticed that the form Iaoue (Yahweh) given by Clement of Alexandria (c. 200 CE) and explained by him as “*the being and having to be*”,*

⁴⁹ D.N. FREEDMAN - The Anchor Bible Dictionary vol. 6. New York 1992, Ed. Doubleday p. 1011.

⁵⁰ In a scholarly Bible (L. Pirot, A. Clamer 1956 p. 83) it is written that the causative form cannot be taken into account for two main reasons. Firstly, the causative form of the verb “to be” is not known in Hebrew, furthermore to express a causative sense, the *piel* form was used. Secondly, this philosophical notion did not come from Hebrew but from Greek philosophy and the more natural meaning is: *I shall [prove to] be (with you)* according to Exodus 3:12.

⁴⁸ A. CRAMPON - Supplementum ad commentaria in scripturam sacram R.P. Cornelii a Lapide Paris 1856, Ed. Ludovicus Vives Bibliopola.

was a theological choice rather than philological⁵¹. What's really amazing, is that the decisive argument for choosing Yahweh is easy to refute. Just check in a Hebrew grammar for beginners to notice that factitive and causative forms of the verb HYH “to be” do not exist⁵² and must be reconstituted. Bible readers were blinded by scholarly explanations of theologians who have never understood that biblical etymologies are not “folk etymologies (for simpletons)” but “prophetic etymologies” based on wordplays (for believers)”. There is the key.

For example, the very first question that Moses asked God when he was appointed as mediator was: *Suppose the sons of Israel do say to me: What is his name?, what shall I say to them?* (Exodus 3:13). The question of course was neither about pronunciation because Moses knew it, as proves the name of his mother: Jochebed “*Jeho[vah] is Glory*” (Exodus 6:20), nor about the grammatical meaning of the Name because Moses knew the Hebrew language very well (we can guess), but the question, as evidenced by God's answer, was about its significance. Besides, Abraham who knew God's name did not know that meaning: *I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as the Almighty God; but by my name Jehovah I was not made known to them* (Exodus

6:3, Darby Bible). Consequently when Moses asked God his name, he wanted to know its meaning. In fact his real question⁵³ was: “*Suppose the sons of Israel do say to me: Who is he?*” in the same way when Pharaoh asked Moses: “*Who is Jehovah?*” (Exodus 5:2), not in order to know the pronunciation of God's name (that he knew!) but to know what kind of god Jehovah was, because there were

⁵³ An inaccurate translation of Exodus 3:13 leads to a faulty understanding of this verse. In numerous Bibles one can read the question: *What is his name?* as in Judges 13:17, when Manoah wanted to know the name, that is the pronunciation of the name, of the angel who came to meet him; on the other hand the Israelites asked Moses: *How is his name?* that is: *what does his name/fame mean?*. One can verify that in Hebrew the interrogation ‘what, how’ is *mâ* (מה) and ‘who’ is *mî* (מי). Thus, there is a big difference between asking to know a name because one is in ignorance of it, as in Ezra 5:4, and asking the meaning of a name which one already knows, as in Genesis 32:27 where the angel asks Jacob to remind him of the meaning ‘He will supplant’ of his name, which meaning was already known to him (Gn 27:36), in order to give him a new one ‘He will contend’ (Gn 32:28). Thus, when Moses asked God: *How is his name?* God, in fact, gave the explanation: *I shall [prove to] be what I shall [prove to] be (ehyeh asher ehyeh)*. Even here, regrettably, numerous translators are influenced by Greek philosophy on the being as existing, developed by Plato in some of his works, including Parmenides. For example, the Septuagint translated this passage by: *I am the being (egô eimi o ôn)*, that is: *I am He who is*; while Aquila's translation, more faithful to Hebrew, translates this sentence by: *I shall be: I shall be (esomai esomai)*. As indicated by a study on the translation of this sentence, the difficulty results from translators who want to explain this translation by means of their personal beliefs very often influenced by Greek philosophy; otherwise there is no difficulty (B. ALBREKTSON -On the Syntax of אהיה אשר אהיה in Exodus 3:14 in: Words and Meanings (1968, Cambridge University Press pp. 15-28). For example, one finds the word *ehyeh* just before (Ex 3:12) and just after (Ex 4:12,15) and here translators have no problem translating it by: *I shall [prove to] be with you*.

⁵¹ A. CAQUOT - Les énigmes d'un hémistiche biblique in: Dieu et l'être (Paris 1978) Ed. Études Augustiniennes C.N.R.S. p. 24 note 23.

⁵² A. VANLIER HUNTER - Biblical Hebrew Workbook: An Inductive Study for Beginners Lanham 1988, Ed. University Press of America, pp. 140-141.

hundreds of gods in Egypt and Jehovah was an insignificant god for Egyptians.

Consequently, controversies about God's name were about its meaning or in a practical way his relationship with humans, never about its pronunciation. For example, when there were controversies between Christian theologians and Jewish rabbis the dispute about God's name was mainly about its exact meaning as well as its links with Messiah's name, never with respect to its pronunciation. However after 130 CE, these controversies were rare because Christian theologians didn't know Hebrew, except a few Christians of Jewish origin called Judeo-Christians⁵⁴. The Babylonian Talmud⁵⁵ says that (c. 110-120 CE) Jacob of Kfar Sechania, a Nazarene, quoted Deuteronomy 23:18: *You shall not bring the fee of a whore or the price of a dog into the house of the Lord your God in fulfilment of any vow*. Jacob says that he was taught this by Yeshu (Jesus), then asked Eliezer whether it was permissible to use a whore's money to build a toilet for the high priest. When Rabbi Eliezer did not reply, Jacob quoted Micah 1:7: *For they were amassed from whores' fees and they shall become whores' fees again*. This was the teaching that had pleased Rabbi Eliezer who was accused of heresy

⁵⁴ As Symmachus the Ebionite (also called Symmachian). According to Eusebius and Jerome he translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek (c. 165 CE) in which he systematically wrote God's name in ancient Hebrew (YHWH).

⁵⁵ The Talmud repeats the account about Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus (Hullin 2:24) and adds additional material.

(Abodah Zarah 16b-17a). Aristo of Pella tried (in vain) to answer some Jewish objections in his book *A Disputation of Jason and Papiscus* (c. 135 CE). For example, to the objection that Jesus' divinity contradicts the unity of God and is a blasphemy, he replied that Christians believe likewise in only one God. The Old Testament itself makes a distinction with the appearance of the three men at Mamre (Gn 18:22,33) one of whom was confessedly God, yet distinct from the Creator⁵⁶. Another reason why the controversies with Rabbis were rare also came from the ban to pronounce God's name.

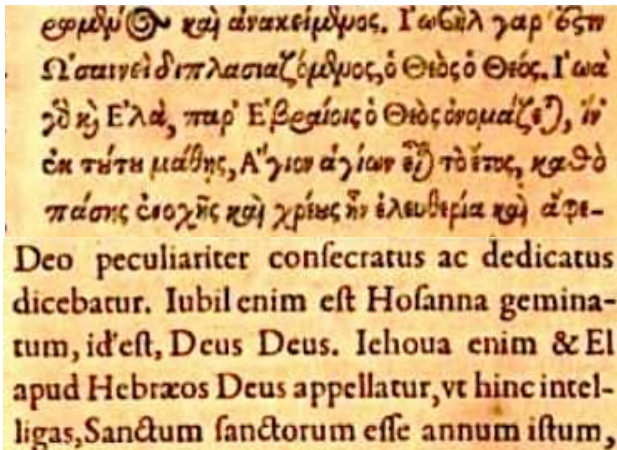
Evagrius Ponticus travelled to Jerusalem, where in 383 he became a monk at the monastery of Rufinus and Melania the Elder, and wrote: *The tetragram, which is ineffable, was written in Hebrew: Ioth, e, ouau, e (YHWH), that is to say, πικι the God*⁵⁷. He also explained that the name of the Lord (Jesus) was: *ioth, e, ouab, eth, with the Hebrew letter "s" (called shin) in the middle (YHŠWH)*. In his comment, probably from Origen's *Selecta*, Evagrius makes a theological link between the name of God YHWH and the name of Jesus YHŠWH, but not linguistic because in Hebrew this name is written YeŠoWa' not YeHŠoWaH⁵⁸.

⁵⁶ P. SCHAFF - Literary Contest of Christianity with Judaism and Heathenism in: *History of the Church* Vol II Chap III, 1997 Oak Harbor WA Logos Research Systems.

⁵⁷ P. DE LAGARDE - *Onomastica Sacra* Hildesheim 1966 Ed. Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung pp. 205-206,230.

⁵⁸ Ad tomum III operum S. Hieronymi appendix in: *Patrologia Latina* XXIII (J.P. Migne, 1845), pp. 1275-1280.

Similarly, Severus of Antioch (465-538), who lived in Antioch the main centre of Hellenistic Judaism, used the form Iôa (c. 500 CE) in a series of comments on chapter 8 of John's gospel (Jn 8:58), pointing out that it was God's name in Hebrew⁵⁹.



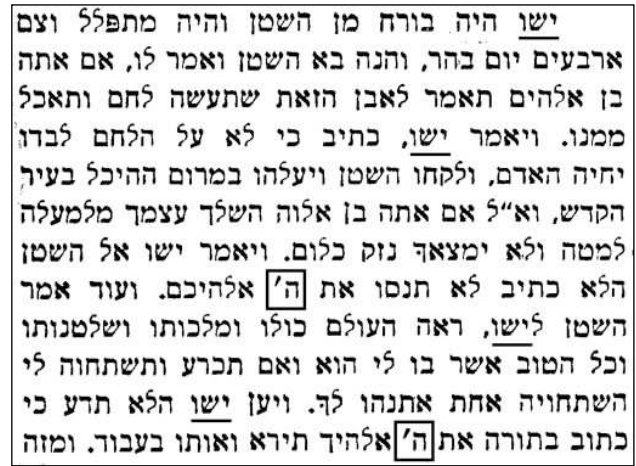
The Book of Nestor the priest⁶⁰ is a dispute between a Nestorian and Monophysist, which is commented on by a Jewish scribe in the 7th century⁶¹. This book teaches us that (at that time) some Christian scholars had contact with Jews who were using the Hebrew substitute *Hashem*, “The Name” in Hebrew, abbreviated to H⁶² (framed) in place of the Tetragram (YHWH). Note also that Jesus (underlined name) is written phonetically Yeshû (YŠW) in this passage from Matthew 4:1-10, instead of the usual Yeshûa‘ (YŠW‘).

⁵⁹ Baltasar Cordeiro - Catena patrum graecorum in Sanctum Ioannem Paris 1630 (officina Plantiniana) p. 244. Roma Biblioteca Vallicelliana ms. E40 (10th CE) fol. 153v line 33.

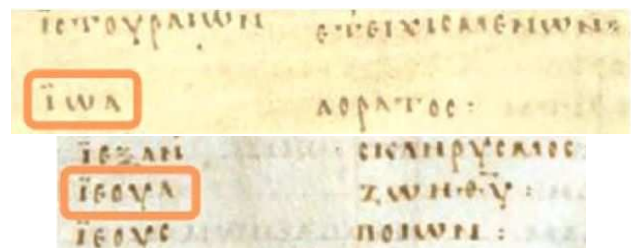
⁶⁰ J.D. EISENSTEIN - Ozar Wikuhim Israel 1969 pp. 310-315.

⁶¹ D.J. LASKER, S. STROUMSA -The Polemic of Nestor the Priest in: *The Jewish Quarterly Review* Vol. 91:3/4 (2001, University of Pennsylvania Press), pp. 471-474.

⁶² One notes that the Jewish medieval anti-gospel “Toledot Yeshu” claims that Jesus performed miracles by using YHWH in a magic way.



In its *onomasticon sacrum*, the Codex Coislinianus 1 (dated 7th century CE) explains (figures below fol. 4r et 3v) that God's name Iôa means “invisible” (αορατος) and Iéoua “Life of G[o]d” (ζωη θ̄υ):



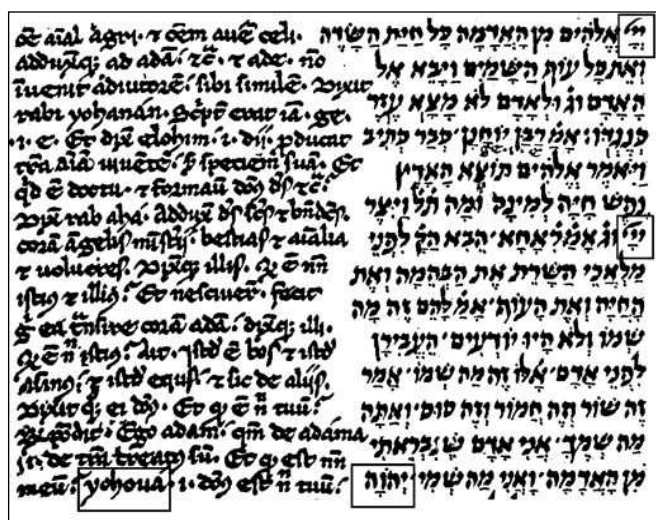
In 1250 Ramón Martí⁶³, in order to help Christian theologians to debate better with the rabbis, began writing from 1269⁶⁴ (until his death in 1284) a study book of biblical texts in Hebrew: called *Pugio Fidei* (“Dagger of Faith”). Martí used the spelling Yohoua⁶⁵ for God's name in his *Pugio Fidei* (III:II) It is clear that this scholar who knew the Hebrew form Y^eHoWâH, also abbreviated Y^eYâY

⁶³ As Catalan Dominican friar and theologian, he was one of eight friars appointed to make a study of oriental languages with the purpose of carrying on a mission to Jews and Moors.

⁶⁴ It is noteworthy that around 1270 appeared the first works dealing with Hebrew language like those of Roger Bacon (*Greek and Hebrew Grammar*) and Williams of Mare (*Biblical Glossary of the Hebrew and Greek Vocabulary*).

⁶⁵ R. MARTINI - *Pugio Christianorum* Paris (c. 1300), Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviève ms.1405 fol. CLXIIv.

(framed), and did not transcribe it Yehouah in Latin as might be expected, but Yohoua.



Martí explained at length the reasons for his choice. He quoted the Talmudic references from Rabbi Moseh Ben Maymon in his *Guide of the Perplexed*, especially those of chapters 60-64 of part I, which concern the Name. Thus, the tetragram, the only name of God (*elohim*) according to Zechariah 14:9, was written in Hebrew Iod He Vau He, and pronounced *adonai*. This name was indicated by the word *shemhamphoras*, which means “*the Name distinctly read*” or “*the Name read according to its letters*”. Martí noticed that Abba Saul (a rabbi of 2nd century) had forbidden the *pronunciation of this name according to its letters*. This knowledge led Martini to deduce that the Name YHWH had to be pronounced IHUA that is Ihoua. However, because all theophoric names beginning with *Yehô-* in Hebrew had been transcribed *Jo-* in Latin, like Johannes (John), Martí chose to write Yo-houa instead of I-houa in order to harmonize this name with all theophoric names like

Yohonan (Johannes), Yohoyaqim (Joiachim), etc. At that time the scholar transcription Y, instead of I, was frequent and the use of the letter H was erratic⁶⁶. Martí did not claim that Yohoua was the exact pronunciation, but insisted on the necessity of using it, quoting Isaiah 52:6: *For that reason my people will know my name*. The *Pugio Fidei* impressed very much a few Christian scholars knowing Hebrew.

All these examples show that the rabbis have always considered that the true pronunciation of the name of God (YHWH) was consistent with its reading “according to its letters (IHUA)”. We have seen that the rabbis of today consider the reading of God's name (YHWH) as Yehovah (which is close to IHUA), which is authentic because it matches with all theophoric names.

How can anyone find the pronunciation of God's name when one doesn't know Hebrew? You only need three tools: a literal translation, an encyclopaedic dictionary of the Bible and a logical mind. Despite the fact that all translations of the Bible have theological biases, mainly about God's name, however their linguistic comments are generally of a scientific nature. For example, the well-known Greek expression: *allelouia* (Rv 19:1) is a transcription of the Hebrew word HLLW-YH, which means “Praise (plural) Yah”. Yah does not mean “God” but is a shortened form of God's name (Psalms 68:4).

⁶⁶ Elohyim for Elohim, Helye for Eli, Ysayas for Isaias, etc. In the same way Jesus was written either Hiesu, or Jhesu and Ihesu.

Despite God's name Yah appearing at the beginning of the Hebrew Bible⁶⁷ (Exodus 15:2; 17:16) most translations have removed it. In fact it had already been suppressed in the Septuagint and in the Samaritan Pentateuch⁶⁸. Despite the fact that the name Yah is mentioned 43 times in the Psalms, it was systematically translated as "the Lord" in the Septuagint, except in the usual expression "Praise Yah" which was transcribed as a new proper name: Alleluia (meaningless in Greek).

Even if Yah is a shortened form of Yehowah it is neither the same name, nor an abbreviation of that name. Thus Yah is mentioned next to Yehowah (Isaiah 12:2, 26:4) and the abbreviation of God's name in Greek is always Iô, never Ia. For example, the name "Jôchebed" means "Jô is glory", not "Jah is glory", similarly the name "Baaljah" (1 Chronicles 12:5) means "The lord is Jah", not "The lord is Jehovah". Consequently Yah is a substitute of God's name not God's name itself. To summarize: YaH = Y[eHoW]aH.

It is easy to see that all theophoric names with -YHW as suffix are always pronounced *-yahû* in Hebrew, without exception. What is the link of this new name "Yahû" with God's name? Most scholars

believe that Yahû is the oldest form of God's name, claiming: YHWH = YHW[H], which implies a hypothetical reading process: YaHuW[aH] >> YaHaWaH >> YaHaWeH or YeHoWaH. However a careful examination of all theophoric names rather proves that: YHW = YH[W], with the mere equivalence: YaHU = YaH[U].

Biblical names containing the suffixes *-yahû* or *-yah* show a marked preference for the latter (340 *-yah* as opposed to 123 *-yahû*) and in several cases (44) both *-yahû* and *-yah* terminate, interchangeably, the names of the same individuals⁶⁹. This equivalence of theophoric names, both ending in *-yahû* and *-yah*, shows that for the Hebrews of that time these two names were equivalent, Yah being viewed as an abbreviation of Yahû. Similarly, and for the same reason, all theophoric names ending in *-yahû* have been transcribed in the Septuagint (as most translations do), either into *-ia* or into *-iou*⁷⁰, but never into *-iaou*. In contrast, all theophoric names with YHW- as prefix are always pronounced *Yehô-* in Hebrew, without exception, and are frequently abbreviated as *Yô-* or exceptionally as *Ye-* (Yesu', Yehu'). All the theophoric names in *Yehô-* or *Yô-* have both been transcribed into Iô- in the Septuagint.

⁶⁷ *My strength and song is JAH, And He is become my salvation: This is my God, and I glorify Him; God of my father, and I exalt Him* (Exodus 15:2, Young's Literal Translation). *And he said, For the hand is on the throne of Jah; Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation* (Exodus 17:16, Darby).

⁶⁸ A Hebrew manuscript of Exodus 17:16 found at Qumran (4Q14), dated 50-25 BCE, contains the words "throne of Yah (KS YH)".

⁶⁹ J.D. FOWLER –Theophoric Personal Names in Ancient Hebrew. A Comparative Study: *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series 49* (1988), pp. 21-62.

⁷⁰ For example, in III Kings 2:1-46, the name Adoniyahû has been transcribed: Adonias (4), Adonia (2) and Adoniou (2). The name Benayahû: Banaias (3), Banaia (1) and Banaiou (3).

To summarize, the 3 prefixes: Yehô-, Yô- and Yê- are abbreviations of Yehowah⁷¹ and the 2 suffixes: -yah and -yahû are substitutes of Yehowah, Yah being an abbreviation of Yahû. For example:

Name	MT	LXX	reference
Abihu	Abihû	Abioud	Ex 6:23;
Abijah	Abiyah	Abia	1Ch 3:10
Abijah	Abiyahû	Abia	2Ch 13:20
Joab	Yôab	Iôab	2Sa 8:16
Jehu	Yêhu	Iêou	1Ch 2:38
Elihu	Elihû	Eliou	Job 32:2,4
Elijah	Eliyah	Elia	Ezr 10:21
Elijah	Eliyahû	Eliou	1Ki 17:1
Joel	Yôel	Iôel	1Ch 5:12

The famous French rabbi Rashi of Troyes (1040-1105) explains in his commentary on Numbers 26:5 that all God-bearing names begin with Yehô- or end with -yah (or -yahû): “Therefore, the Holy One, blessed is he, appended His Name to them, the letters of H’ [YHWH] at the beginning and Y. [YH] at the end, as if to say “I bear witness for them, that these are the sons of their fathers.” This is stated explicitly by David « the tribes of Yah, testimony to Israel » (Ps. 122:4) —this Name testifies for them regarding their tribes”.

The origin and meaning of the substitute Yahû are controversial because this name only appears as suffix of some theophoric names in the Bible, but never alone (contrary to Yah), mainly after the monarchy period. In contrast, whereas God's name YHWH does not appear in the Aramaic letters from Elephantine

⁷¹ Even inside the names, as the name Elichoenai which is written in Hebrew: El-yehô-‘enay “Toward Yehow[ah] my eyes” (1 Chronicles 26:3), is written El-iô-naï in the Septuagint.

(dated 514-398 BCE), it is frequently replaced either by YHW or YHH. Given that Yah was viewed as an abbreviation of Yahû, the latter would have been understood as Yah-hû “Yah-Himself”. For example:

Name	meaning
Abi.hû	My Father: Himself
Abi.yah	My Father: Yah
Abi.yahû	My Father: Yah-himself
Yô.ab	Y(eh)ow(ah): Father
Yê.hu	Ye(howah): Himself
Eli.hû	My God: Himself
Eli.yah	My God: Yah
Eli.yahû	My God: Yah-himself
Yô.el	Y(eh)ow(ah): God

This logical conclusion is disputed by some theologians who argue that: YHH = YHW = YHW[H] = YaHWo[H]. These theologians are either incompetent or, worse, dishonest. Indeed, all competent Hebrew scholars know:

- ❖ While Hebrew does exceptionally encounter the anomaly of a final -H vocalized -ô⁷², this peculiarity does not exist in Aramaic⁷³, the language in which these letters are written.
- ❖ Because the letter H had become almost inaudible, it was frequently doubled, as in the feminine suffix of the 3rd person singular, written interchangeably YH/ YH’/ YHH⁷⁴. Consequently, the pronunciations:

⁷² Most cases when a Hebrew word ending in -H is vocalized -ô instead of -â is due to a defective writing -Hû, pronounced -(h)ô and sometimes written -W for indicating the sound -ô (like Nabaû which is written NabaW and NaBaHû).

⁷³ F.I. ANDERSEN A.D. FORBES -Spelling in the Hebrew Bible (1986, Biblical Institut) p. 324.

⁷⁴ E. QIMRON -The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls in: *Harvard Semitic studies* n°29 (1986, Scholars Press), p. 23 §100.7 p. 58 §322.

Yâ (YH), Yâh (YHH) and Yâ' (Y') were the same in Aramaic.

- ❖ No names ending in -HH are vocalized -Hô in the Bible. These names are always vocalized -Hâ, as Bilhâ (Gn 29:29), Yogbehâ (Nb 32:35), etc. In addition, at Qumrân, words ending by -HH are always vocalized either -Hâ, or âH.
- ❖ Among Elephantine letters a few theophoric names begin with YHH-. If YHH was pronounced Yahô the name YHH'WR, for example, would have been pronounced Yahô'ûr "Yahô is light", which implies that the letter H would have been used as vowel inside a word, but the H is never used as word-internal vowel⁷⁵.

Consequently, God's name YHH (Yah) in the Aramaic letters from Elephantine was the exact equivalent of the Hebrew biblical name YH (Yah). It is of note that all theophoric names found at Elephantine are written with a rather free spelling (phonetic in fact), which contrasts enormously with the rigor of the Masoretic text⁷⁶. In an Aramaic context, the authors of these missives wanted to dissociate the divine name YH from the vocative particle YH meaning "Oh!" as these two words are homonyms in Aramaic.

⁷⁵ F.I. ANDERSEN A.D. FORBES -Spelling in the Hebrew Bible (1986, Biblical Institut) p. 92.

⁷⁶ One finds the same fluctuations in the biblical text, which indicates by a point inside the letter (*mappiq*) if the final H must be pronounced or not. In the Bible all theophoric names ending in *-yah* are written without *mappiq* with the exception of Yedidyah (2 Samuel 12:25) and should thus be pronounced *-yâ* (יָא). On the other hand, the divine name Yah alone is always written with a *mappiq* except in Song of Solomon 8:6, and should be pronounced Yâh (יָא) not Yâ.

Some scholars argue that the name YHW would have been pronounced Yahô in Elephantine, instead of Yahû, because God's name was Iaô in Greek. This argument is wrong for the following reasons:

- ❖ The Greek form Iaô appears only from the 1st century BCE, when Aramaic language became Middle Aramaic (from c. 200 BCE to c. 200 CE), whereas the Elephantine letters had been written in Official Aramaic (from c. 600 BCE to c. 200 BCE).
- ❖ In the Elephantine letters, most theophoric names ending with *-yhw* are frequently written *-yww*, as in Samaria, where Aramaic was spoken. In contrast, this change never occurred in Judea because all these names have always remained written *-yhw* and read *-yahû*. Consequently, we must have the following equivalence: YW = Y(H)W, which implies YaW / YaU = Ya(H)U, because in Aramaic the equivalence YW = YO is not possible⁷⁷.

In conclusion, the Jews of Elephantine used two Aramaic substitutes for God's name, the first one YHH instead of YH (Yah) as well as YHW (Yahû) instead of YHWH (Yehowah). Why did they avoid using the tetragram? First, there was no ban of writing the word *yhw* because in Elephantine, the Aramaic verbal form *yhw*, read as *yihweh* "It

⁷⁷ Similarly, when the Jews changed their system of numbering, about the 2nd century BCE, they scrupulously avoided the confusion of the new numbers with the two divine names YH and YW. So, the number 15 was never written YH (YaH) but rather TW; also the number 16 was never written YW (YaW) but TZ; moreover, this modification remains to our day.

will be”, appears frequently in those letters. Second, the Bible provides a very simple explanation of the disappearance of the tetragram, outside the Bible, which occurred when the Jews had to flee from Jerusalem after her fall in 587 BCE.

When Pharaoh Necho defeated King Josiah then established Eliakim “God will raise up” as vassal and perhaps as provocation, changed his name to Jehoiakim “Yehô will raise up”. This proves that Necho knew the great name of the God of the Hebrews (2 Kings 23:34). Some years later, in a similar way and in the same context, the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar would establish as vassal King Mattanyah “gift of Yah” and change his name to Zedekiah “rightness of Yah”. This proves that Nebuchadnezzar knew the divine name, but only the more familiar form Yah, and not the form of the great name (2 Kings 24:17). It is easy to understand the chain of events after the destruction of the Temple. For the Jews it was a terrible humiliation to be defeated by pagans. Likely at this time they took good care in the use of the holy name in order not to profane it (Ezekiel 36:20,21; Malachi 1:6) and they surely remembered previous warnings on the subject (Isaiah 52:5; Amos 6:10). It is noteworthy that after the return from exile even the prophets avoided using the Name with non-Jews. For example, Daniel used the Tetragram (Daniel 1:2; 9:2-20) but he used several substitutes with non-Jews: *God in the heavens, Revealer of secrets, God*

of heaven, the Most High, the heavens (Daniel 2:28,29,37,44; 4:17,24,26,32). In the same way Ezra and Nehemiah used the tetragram with the Jews (Ezra 3:10,11 8:28,29; Nehemiah 4:14 8:9) but they used substitutes with non-Jews: *God, the great God, God of the heavens, God of the heavens and the earth* (Ezra 5:8,11,12,17; Nehemiah 2:4,20). Furthermore, these non-Jews no longer used the tetragram in their answers to the prophets. Cyrus was probably the last who used the name Jehovah (Ezra 1:2). In the book of Esther there is no tetragram, but the last book (Malachi) written for the Jews, contains it many times.

In the first century, God's name was still pronounced Yehowah (in Hebrew) by the high priest in the Temple, but Adonai “my Lord” or Elohim “God” in synagogues. However most of the Jews who spoke Aramaic used either the Aramaic substitute Yaw (pronounced Yao and transcribed Iaô into Greek, but pronounced Yawe by the Samaritans of that time) or the other Aramaic substitute Shema’ “the Name” (used in the Talmud).

Therefore if you had asked to the early Christians how the name YHWH was pronounced, they would have answered: “the Lord” for those who spoke Greek, Yahô for those who spoke Aramaic, Yawe for those who spoke Samaritan and Yehowah⁷⁸ for those who spoke Hebrew (mainly the priests working in the Temple).

⁷⁸ Given that the name YHWDH was transcribed Iouda into Greek, similarly YHWH could have been transcribed Iou(d)a or Iôa (Ioa).

God's name —Its meaning

Did Jesus know the meaning of God's name? Yes, obviously, because he told the apostle John: *Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness* (Revelation 1:4, American Standard Version). However most theologians, as well as linguists, do not agree with Jesus because his explanation is slightly different from that one given by God to Moses in Exodus 3:14.

The verse of Exodus 3:14 is certainly the most controversial verse of the entire Bible. Because of those endless controversies, which started with the first translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek (around 280 BCE), most people today believe that the pronunciation of God's name has been lost and its meaning must be unattainable. If you ask a rabbi how God's name must be read, he will probably answer that God gave his name to Moses in Exodus 3:15 not: “to time indefinite (*le'olam*)” but “to be hidden (*le'elam*)”, and a Catholic theologian will probably answer that the pronunciation of God's name is uncertain and the best is to use “the Lord”. If you ask a Jewish linguist what is the meaning of Yehowah he will probably answer that this name means: “He was, he is, he will be (*haya, howeh, yihyeh*)”. A Catholic linguist will probably answer: “He is (*yihyeh*)”, a Protestant linguist: “He will form (*yehaweh*)” or “He causes to be (*yahweh*)”.

Impressed by all these scholars you probably did not dare to search the answer by yourself, but you were wrong because Jesus said: *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes* (Matthew 11:25). To find the answer, simply take the famous King James Bible and read Exodus 3:13-14: *And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.*

What did you understand? If you are a “normal mind”, almost nothing because God's answer is really weird and Moses' question even more strange. First step to understand these verses, read the endnote⁷⁹: *To the question ‘what is his name?’, God says to Moses ‘I will be what I will be’. The reading of the phrase ‘I will be’ sends Moses to Egypt where he will encounter whatever it is YHWH may be. The AV favours a different translation of the evasive phrase and settles for the more misleading ‘I AM THAT I AM’, thereby sacrificing the future aspect of YHWH's presence in the exodus story. First key to unlock the mystery, you know now that the translation ‘I am that I am (there is no need to use capital letters)’ is*

⁷⁹ THE BIBLE. AUTHORIZED KING JAMES VERSION (Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 331.

misleading because the correct translation is ‘*I will be what I will be*’. If you use a literal translation, you will see that in the “mysterious” Hebrew utterance ‘*ehyeh asher ehyeh*’, the word ‘*ehyeh*’ appears just before (Exodus 3:12) and just after (Exodus 4:12,15) and here translators have no problem translating it by: *I shall be [with you]*.

Why have most translators chosen to mislead their readers? The answer is simple: because mainstream translators must respect the choices of theologians. For example, we can see that the translation of Exodus 3:14 changed in time according to the following well-known mainstream translations:

Bible	tongue	date
Torah of Ezra	Hebrew	400 BCE
<i>ehyeh asher ehyeh</i>	<i>I will be what I will be</i>	
Septuagint	Greek	280 BCE
<i>egô eimi o ôn</i>	<i>I am He who is</i>	
LXX of Aquila	Greek	130 CE
<i>esomai esomai</i>	<i>I shall be: I shall be</i>	
Vulgate	Latin	400 CE
<i>ego sum qui sum</i>	<i>I am who I am</i>	

Why did these translators choose to modify the phrase “*I will be what I will be*”, easy to translate, in a “cryptic sentence”, which leads the reader to believe that God allegedly refused to answer. In fact the explanation is simple: if you read the phrase “*I will be what I will be*” outside its context, its meaning is not quite clear even in Hebrew because normally when you say “*I will be*” you usually must say after “what you will be”, as the phrase “*I will be [your king, or whatever you decide to be]*”.

Consequently to understand God’s answer we must understand first why Moses asked God such a strange question?

Just before asking God, we read that God said to Moses: *So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt. But Moses said to God: Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?* (Exodus 3:10-11). Therefore the objection of Moses is quite realistic, because when he will appear later before the mighty Pharaoh of Egypt, the latter will say: “*Who is Jehovah? I do not know Jehovah at all*” (Exodus 5:2). It is obvious that the question of pharaoh “*Who is Jehovah*” did not concern the pronunciation and meaning of God’s name, but rather “*Who is he?*”, in the same way Nabal said to David’s servants: “*Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse?*” (1 Samuel 25:10). The rhetorical question “*Who is he?*” means in reality “*Is he significant?*”. Consequently, the significance of God’s name is neither a theological significance “*He causes to be (as Creator)*” nor a linguistic significance “*He is (the supreme Being)*” but a practical significance “*He will be with his servants*”, in the same manner the apostle Paul wrote: “*If God is for us, who can be against us*” (Romans 8:31).

God gave an answer to Moses’ question in order to strengthen his faith, he did not give him a lesson in linguistics. Similarly Paul wrote to the Jewish Christians: *without faith it is impossible to please [him] well, for he that approaches God must believe that he is and*

that he will be the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him (Hebrews 11:3). Therefore God was, is and will be the rewarder of his servants. In this sense, the “significance” of God's name increases with time. For example, we read: *And God went on to speak to Moses and to say to him: I am Jehovah. And I used to appear to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as God Almighty, but as respects my name Jehovah I did not make myself known to them* (Exodus 6:2-3). Abraham, Isaac and Jacob knew that Jehovah was an almighty God but they did not know that he would be later a saviour God. Similarly when Moses asked God “*If they say: Who is he?*”, Jehovah did not answer “*I shall be your saviour*”, which would have been the “normal” answer but “*I shall be*” because this answer had a wider meaning: “*I shall be [what I choose to be]*” in the same way that the phrase “*I will favour the one whom I will favour and I will show mercy to the one to whom I will show mercy*” (Exodus 33:19), not to express an uncertainty or a refusal to intervene, but as a reminder that it depends on him alone, as confirmed in the Christian Greek Scriptures (Romans 9:15-18) which comment on this passage. Therefore, one could translate Exodus 33:19 by “*I will favour the one whom I want to favour and I will show mercy to the one to whom I choose to show mercy*”. In the same way, one could also translate “*I shall be that I shall be*” by “*I shall be what I choose to be*”. This type of expression is not unique to God as humans use it as well. For example, in John 19:22

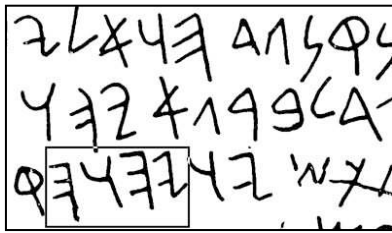
“*what I have written, I have written*” can also be translated by “*what I have written, I have chosen to write*”.

Theologians and linguists who give academic comments on Exodus 3:14 usually make two big mistakes: they forget that Moses knew very well ancient Hebrew (consequently he knew the pronunciation and meaning of God's name) and 2) when Moses asked God to know his name, it was in order to be reassured on his mission, because if God had answered “*I am [the Supreme being]*” or “*I cause to be [everything]*”, Moses was already convinced of that self evidency. In contrast, when God said to him: my name means “*I shall be with you*” (Exodus 3:12), this explanation certainly strengthened Moses' faith.

Moses knew the pronunciation of God's name, as proves the name of his mother: Jochebed “*Jeho[vah] is Glory*” (Exodus 6:20), but he also knew the linguistic meaning of this name because he knew Aramaic, a tongue close to Hebrew (Genesis 31:47). The name “*Yehowah*” does not mean anything in Hebrew but it is identical to the Aramaic verbal form *yhw* vocalized *yih^ewêh⁸⁰*, which appears in Ecclesiastes 11:3: *in the place where the tree shall fall, there it shall be* (Septuagint). Because there is no theological implication in this verse, most translators, including those of the Septuagint, are able to translate it easily “*it will be*”. This verbal form was well known, it was used in an

⁸⁰ B. DAVIDSON – The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon (1990, Hendrickson Publishers), p. 51 note 4e, p. 300.

Aramaic inscription found at Sefire⁸¹ (below) dated around 750 BCE as well as in the Aramaic letters from Elephantine.



In addition, at that time there was only one verbal form written *yhw* in Aramaic⁸². Consequently, if Moses guessed that God's name meant linguistically “*He will [come to] be*”⁸³, he was not able to know its spiritual significance, because if he knew that God “*will come or prove to be [something?]*”, his linguistic knowledge did not help him to understand what was the “something”. This point is crucial, the biblical etymologies are not linguistic but spiritual teachings.

It is evident that the “folk etymology” given in Exodus 3:14 “*I will be whoever I will be*” cannot be used to vocalise God's name⁸⁴ because all these biblical etymologies are wordplays, not linguistic definitions. There is generally no equivalence between a biblical name and its “folk

etymology”, but only a link based on vocal similarities⁸⁵ as “same sound ≈ same sense”. For example, it reads: *This one will be called Woman, because from man this one was taken* (Genesis 2:23), but the biblical etymology of “Woman” is obscure. In order to keep the same spiritual significance, we could say: *This one will be called Woman, because she is Wife of man*, but it would be absurd to argue that the word “Woman” was pronounced “Wifeman” according to linguistics⁸⁶.

The biblical meaning of God's name was for Moses “*He will be with you to free the Israelites*”, for Abraham this name meant “*He is the Almighty*”, for the apostle Paul “*He is and he will be the rewarder*”, for the apostle John: *the One who is and who was and who is coming, the Almighty*. Each significance enlightens an aspect of God's name. To summarize, the name Yehowah means: *He will [prove to] be what He chooses to be*. Similarly, because we have been made in his image, we will prove to be (as well as our new name) what we choose to be. This is not a question of linguistics.

Paradoxically, the knowledge of Hebrew is often a handicap for understanding the Bible. For example, it reads: *And he called his name Noah, saying: This one shall comfort us concerning our work and concerning the toil of our hands, because of the ground which Jehovah has cursed* (Genesis 5:29,

⁸¹ A. FITZMYER – The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire. *Biblica et orientalia* -19/A (1995, Pontificio Istituto Biblico), pp. 18-20, 126 pl. IX.

⁸² This verbal form is called *peal* “simple” and it is vocalized *yihwēh* “He will be”. Much later (12th century CE) some cabbalists invented a new verbal form called *piel* vocalized *yehanwēh* “He will cause to be” or “He will form”.

⁸³ The Hebrew verb HYH “to be” meant in fact “to be/ to become” in ancient Hebrew, but in modern Hebrew it means “to be/ to exist”.

⁸⁴ A.D. SURLS – Finding the Meaning of the Divine Name in the Book of Exodus: From Etymology to Literary Onomastics. (PhD, Wheaton College, November 2014), pp. 21-24.

⁸⁵ H. MARKS - Biblical Naming and Poetic Etymology. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 114/1 (1995, The Society of Biblical Literature), pp. 21-42. J. BARR - Etymology and the Old Testament. *Oudtestamentische Studiën* XIX. Leiden (1974, Brill), pp. 1-28.

⁸⁶ Woman << Wimman << Wifman.

Darby Bible Translation). If you take an encyclopaedic dictionary of the Bible you will see that the name Noah means “*rest*” in Hebrew, which is very different from the name Menahem “*one who comforts*”. How can one explain this oddity? The translators of the Septuagint chose to correct the verse in order to harmonize the prophetic name Noah with its linguistic etymology “he will comfort”, it reads: *And he called his name Noah, saying: this one will cause us to rest from our works, and from the toils of our hands, and from the earth, which the Lord God has cursed.* The Jerusalem Bible adds in a footnote that Noah was probably called Menahem at his birth and afterwards his name was changed to Noah (after the Deluge?). All these linguistic explanations are misleading because according to the context, before *Noah's time the badness of man was abundant* (Genesis 6:5) and after the Deluge the earth had become *restful* again (Genesis 8:21). Consequently, Noah was prophetically called “rest” because his parents knew that their son would bring comfort for mankind by means of a global rest.

In the same way, we read: *Therefore was its name called Babel; because Jehovah there confounded (balal) the language of the whole earth* (Genesis 11:9, Darby). The link between Babel and *balal* “confounded” is not clear. In addition, in the most ancient documents, the name of the city is always written in Sumerian in the form KA.DINGIR.RA(K) which means “Gate of God”. This name

was translated into Akkadian as Babilum. Afterwards, once the Sumerian language had disappeared, this name was read as Bab-ili (Gate of god)⁸⁷, or sometimes as Bab-ilani (gate of each individual god). Furthermore, it seems illogical that the builders of a city would call it “*confusion*” especially as the Bible recorded that her builders were presumptuous because they hoped its top would be in the heavens (Genesis 11:4). Once again, how can one explain this oddity? In fact, Babel, the famous Babylonian “*gate of heavens*”, became for God the “*city in the confusion*” by means of a prophetic wordplay⁸⁸. In the Bible, that ancient city of Babylon is depicted as the symbol of religious confusion (Revelation 18:2) more than the confusion of languages.

In fact, “folk etymologies” are in reality “prophetic etymologies” based on wordplays and the name Abraham is a good example: *Your name will not be called Abram anymore, and your name must become Abraham, because a father (ab) of a crowd (hamon) of nations I will make you.* (Genesis 17:5). If you take your encyclopaedic dictionary you will see that the name Abram means “*Father is exalted*” and

⁸⁷ In this time the expression ‘Gate of God’ was understood as ‘Gate of Heavens’ or ‘Heavenly Gate’, which is in agreement with the concepts of this epoch, for example, to express his admiration Jacob said: *How fear-inspiring this place is! This is nothing else but the house of God and this is the gate of the heavens* (Genesis 28:17).

⁸⁸ The change BaLaL into Ba-BiL is identical with the name Be-ŞaL-’eL Bezalel (Exodus 31:3), which means “*in the shadow of God*”. The word ŞêL (shadow) comes from the verb ŞaLaL (to be shaded) in the same way that the Aramaic passive participle *bîl* comes from the verb *balal* (to mix).

the name Baal-hamon (The Song of Songs 8:11) means “*Lord of a crowd*”, but the name Raham does not exist and worse does not mean anything in Hebrew. Why did God change the name Ab-ram into Ab-raham, instead of Ab-hamon, according to Hebrew linguistics? The explanation is found in the New Testament: *but also to that which adheres to the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all, just as it is written: I have appointed you a father of many nations* (Romans 4:16-17). Abraham means in reality “*Father of many nations*” or “*Father of a great crowd (rab hamon)*”. Consequently the full significance of Abraham in Hebrew is Abrab-hamon “*Father of a great crowd*” and that name has been merged phonetically (by wordplay) into Abraham.

Many biblical etymologies are often in accord with Hebrew linguistics, despite there not being based on it. For example: *My husband will join himself to me, because I have borne him three sons. His name was therefore called Levi. And she became pregnant once more and brought a son to birth and then said: This time I shall laud Jehovah. She therefore called his name Judah* (Genesis 29:34-35). The name Levi “*being joined*” is not quite identical to its biblical etymology “*He will be joined*”, similarly the name Judah “*He will be laud (yehûdah)*” is slightly different from its biblical definition “*He will laud (yehôdêh)*”. Sometimes, the biblical etymologies are multiple: *And she became pregnant and brought a son to birth. Then she said: God has taken away my reproach! So she called his name*

Joseph, saying: Jehovah is adding another son to me (Genesis 30:23-24). The name Joseph (Yôseph) means both “*He will take away (yé’soph)*” and “*He will add (yôsiph)*”. According to Jewish tradition the name Jerusalem means “*Foundation of a double peace (yeru-šalayim)*” but according to Genesis 14:18, Jerusalem was the “*city of Šalem*”, which meant at that time “*city of peace*” (Hebrews 7:2), which can be translated into Akkadian⁸⁹: *uru šalim*.

The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: there is no need to know Hebrew to understand the biblical etymologies because they are not based on Hebrew linguistic but on common wordplays implying a prophetic fulfilment for those who had received these names. Consequently when God explained to Moses that Yehowah meant “*He will prove to be [what he will prove to be]*”, he did not give him a lesson of Hebrew linguistic⁹⁰, but a spiritual teaching⁹¹ in order to strengthen his faith because “*He will prove to be*” with him [Moses] to free the Israelites. That prophecy was in fact a small fulfilment of what he will do in the future when “*He will prove to be with his servants to free them from death*”, as Jesus reminded his listeners (Matthew 22:32).

⁸⁹ In the Execration texts, dated around 1950 BCE; the name of Jerusalem is Urušalimum which means “city of peace” in Old Babylonian.

⁹⁰ Egyptians and Babylonians also believed that the words, which own close sounds had also close meanings.

⁹¹ The spiritual meaning of God’s name (in Hebrew) is “*He will prove to be [what he will prove to be]*”, which can be understood as “*He will prove to be [what he chooses to be]*”.

The Divine Name Through the Ages

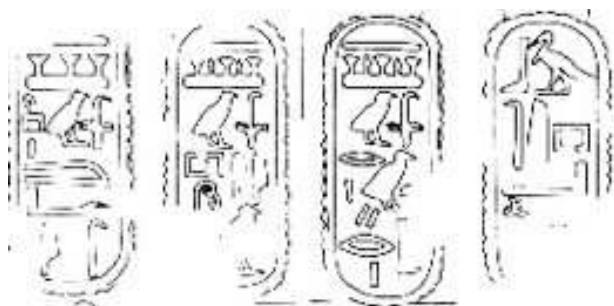
We know that Adam and Eve were familiar with God's name because after Eve gave birth to Cain she said: *I have acquired a man with the help of Jehovah* (Genesis 4:1). Later we read that Noah said: *Blessed be Jehovah, Shem's God* (Genesis 9:26). However God's name was not used in worship except by a few people: *then a beginning was made of calling in the name of Jehovah* (Genesis 4:26, *Young's Literal Translation*). Furthermore, one can note there are no theophoric names before the time of Moses, except: Mahalael "*Praise of God*" (Genesis 5:12) and Jocheded "*Yô is glory*" (Exodus 6:20). Even among pagan nations, the earliest theophoric names appeared only from 2450 BCE among the kings of Egypt, for example: Djedef-râ and Khâf-râ (râ means "Sun" as god), and from 2350 BCE among the kings of Mari: Ikun-Šamaš and Iblul-Il (Šamaš means "Sun" as god and Il means "God").

Is there any evidence of God's name among extra-biblical documents? According to the Bible, before the time of Moses (c. 1500 BCE) there was only some private adoration of Yehowah, in addition, God decided to make his name known only from that time: *But, indeed, for this reason I have allowed you (Pharaoh Seqenen-râ) to remain, in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth* (Exodus 9:16). Consequently, evidence of the name Yehowah before 1500 BCE is unlikely.

In the tablets of Ebla written in cuneiform (dated around 2300 BCE) appear several names with the constituent *ia* or *ia-u* inside the name. However, the word *ia* means "mine", implying "*mine [of god]*". Thus the name Mi-ka-ia must be translated by "*who [is] like mine [of god]*" because there was no worship of Yah at Ebla. Similarly the name Ia-ra-mu must be translated by "*mine [of god is] exalted*", not by "*Yah is exalted*" as well as Šu-mi-a-u "*son of mine [of god]*", not "*Son of Yahû*".

According to the Bible, the Pharaoh who opposed Moses knew God's name and was able to pronounce it: *After this, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him: This is what YHWH, God of Israel, says "Let my people go, so that they can hold a feast in my honour in the desert". Who is YHWH, Pharaoh replied, for me to obey what he says and let Israel go? I know nothing of YHWH, and I will not let Israel go* (Ex 5:1-2). According to the Bible of Abbot Crampon (official Bible of Catholicism in 1904), Pharaoh would have said: *Who is Jehovah (...)* *I know nothing of Jehovah*, however, according to the revision of 1923, he would have rather said: *Who is Yahweh (...)* *I know nothing of Yahweh*. According to the Jerusalem Bible (official Bible of Catholicism since 1955) he would have finally said *Yahve!* There is something lost in translation, but the Pharaoh did not have to consult some skilled Hebraists to know how to

pronounce YHWH (fortunately for him) because he spoke only Egyptian like the Pharaoh Amenhotep III who had engraved the tetragram in a shield⁹² on a column of the temple of Amun, to the north of an Eastern portal (pointing towards Canaan), containing a short list of 4 names⁹³ (below), of which the second from the left is the tetragram⁹⁴.



This document confirms the Bible, indeed the Egyptian pharaohs knew, since the disastrous departure of Israelites from Egypt, that their god was called Yehowah. To avoid such a conclusion, Egyptologists strongly discredit this document arguing that the second name is not God's name but a place name, the Shasu people “Bedouin” mentioned in the shield was only a small tribe somewhere in Edom and finally the tetragram had to be pronounced Yahwe according to current studies, not Yehua according to the conventional reading of hieroglyphs, but these 3 statements are wrong.

⁹² J. LECLANT - Les fouilles de Soleb. Annuaire du Collège de France 1980-1981, pp. 474-475.

⁹³ M. SCHIFF GIORGINI – Soleb V Le temple bas-reliefs et inscriptions (1998, Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale), pl. 221.

⁹⁴ J. LECLANT - Le "Tétragramme" à l'époque d'Aménophis III (Near Eastern Studies, 1991) pp. 215-219.

M.C. ASTOUR - Yahweh in Egyptian Topographic Lists (1979, Festschrift Elmar Edel), pp.17-32.

The translation of that list of 4 names (from left to right), according to the conventional reading, is as follows, if the names are those of gods (underlined) or place names⁹⁵ (second line with asterisk*):

- 1) *t3 š3-sw-w s3 m-'ti-i*
Land of Shasu after Maat
Land of Shasu [of] *Samata**
- 2) *t3 š3-sw-w y-h-w3 w*
Land of Shasu those of Yehua
Land of Shasu [*those*] of *Yahwe**
- 3) *t3 š3-sw t-w-r-ji b-l*
Land of Shasu showing respect to Bel
Land of Shasu [of] *Turbil/r**
- 4) *b3-i-ti h '-[n-t]*
Bait [house of] *A[nat]*
Bait [house of] *A[nat]**

The translation, which supposes place names, is illogical⁹⁶ for two reasons: Anat⁹⁷ was a major northwest Semitic goddess, not a place name, and the three other “place names”: *Samata*, *Yahwe* and *Turbil/r* are absolutely unknown in the El-Amarna letters. In contrast, Maat, meaning “truth/ harmony” in Egyptian, was a major goddess of Byblos, Yehowah was the Israelite God, Bel was the Babylonian Baal, meaning “Lord” in Canaan, and Anat was a major Syrian god. So, the Egyptians distinguished among different kinds of Canaanite Shasu “Bedouin / nomads” by the chief

⁹⁵ ALLEN, SPENCER L. -The Splintered Divine: A Study of Ištar, Baal, and Yahweh Divine Names and Divine Multiplicity in the Ancient Near East" (2011, Penn Dissertations), pp. 350-354.

⁹⁶ C. ALING, C. BILLINGTON -The Name Yahweh in Egyptian Hieroglyphic Text, in Autumn 2009 issue of *Artifax*.

⁹⁷ Hebrew and Phoenician עַנַּת, ‘Anāt; Ugaritic ‘nt.

god they worshiped. In Ramses II's lists, the Shasu⁹⁸ in Canaan are distinguished from one another. For example, at the Battle of Kadesh, a text reads (pap. Anastasi): *Came two Shasu from the tribes of Shasu (...) He takes what is left and joined the (ranks of) wretched. He mingles with the tribes of Shasu land and disguises himself as those Asiatics (aamu)* (I, 23,7-8). *We ended allowing to tribes of Shasu from Seir (Edom) to pass the fortress* (VI, 54-56).

One notes that from Ahmose (c. 1530 BCE) there is a complete disappearance (into nowhere!) of any reference to the Hyksos in Egyptian documents and at the same time Palestine, called "Lower Retenu", became suddenly the "land of

⁹⁸ Shasu refer to Bedouin ("wandering" in Egyptian), called Habiru ("emigrants" in Akkadian) by Canaanites. This identification is confirmed by the Egyptian priest Manetho himself. He explains the word as Hyksos from *hyk-sos* "King Shepherd", which is relatively accurate, because the Egyptian word *heq* means "ruler/chief" and the word *šos* actually means "shepherd". Sahidic translation (late Egyptian) of Genesis 47:6: *if you know any able men among them, then make them rulers over my cattle*, used for example the word *šos* to describe these "rulers of cattle". The Hyksos word actually comes from the Egyptian *heqaw ha'sw.t* "Rulers of foreign lands", but Manetho connected it to the Shasu appeared later and thus translated it as "Rulers of shepherds" *heqaw šosw* (in Egyptian *šs* means "travelling"). Studies on Shasu tend to rehabilitate this so-called popular etymology (M.G. HASEL - *Domination and Resistance. Egyptian Military Activity in the Southern Levant*, Leiden 1998, Ed. Brill, pp. 217-239). In fact, the Egyptians understood the word *shasu* as a common noun designating semi-sedentary shepherds staying mainly in the south of Palestine. They used the phrase "Lands of Shasu", which shows that they originally included this phrase as a geographical designation. The fact that they wrote the word sometimes *shas* (*ššs*) "wandering" instead of the usual *shasu* (*ššsw*) also shows that they originally included the word as a synonym for "transhumant".

Harru⁹⁹ (Hurrians). Shortly after, from Thutmose I (c. 1490 BCE) and up to Ramses III (c. 1160 BCE), appear (from nowhere!) in Palestine an important new Asiatic people, called Shasu, who are extensively described in the Egyptian iconographic documents¹⁰⁰. "Shasu land" in the Egyptian inscriptions was not a small area of unknown nomads because in the list of six place names on a chariot of Thutmose IV, "Shasu land" was considered potentially as a powerful enemy by the Egyptians like Naharin land (Western Mesopotamia) or Shinar. In the tomb of Anen (TT120), brother-in-law of the king Amenhotep III, the Shasu people is pictured (the first one starting on the left) as one of the nine traditional enemies of Egypt. Consequently, for Amenhotep III, Yehua' was the god of Canaan, the country of Shasu (Hebrew herders).

Another controversy raised by Egyptologists: how to pronounce God's name written *Y-h-w* in the shield: Yehua or Yahwe?



⁹⁹ J.-C. GOYON – *De l'Afrique à l'Orient* (Paris 2005, E.J. ellipses), pp. 57-61.

¹⁰⁰ R. GIVEON - *Les bédouins Shosou des documents égyptiens* (1971, E.J. Brill), pp. 248-250.

This controversy illustrates the dishonesty of Egyptologists because in all the dictionaries of hieroglyphs the reading of 3 is “a”, the reading of w is “u” and the reading of w3 is “ua¹⁰¹”. Today the sign w3 is read either “wa” or “oua” as in the word *w3-w3-t*: Wawat or Ouauat (Nubia) or the word *w3-d-y-t*: Wadjet or Ouadjet (the Green Crown). First remark, the reading “Yahwe” of *Y-h-w3* is not possible because the value “we” for w3 never appears.

Some Egyptologists state that the sign w3 could be read “u” or “o”, instead of “ua”, because some transcriptions of w3 have this value, consequently the name *Y-h-w3* could be read Yahu or Yahoo. This statement is false because all the transcriptions, which are reliable (dated after 300 BCE), are very approximate¹⁰². The sign w3 at that time was probably read “oa” instead of “ua”, not “u” or “o”.

How could someone who does not know Egyptian writing read the name *Y-h-w3*? First, if you take a dictionary of hieroglyphs you will note that many words written with the sign w3 are also written w3-3¹⁰³. These variants prove that the sign w3 was pronounced as w3-3, if w3 was pronounced “u” one would have had

the equivalence: “u (w3)” = “u-a (w3-3)”, this is absurd. In contrast the equivalence: “u-a (w3)” = “u-a-a (w3-3)” is logical. Second logical argument, if the sign w3 had been pronounced “u”, why use it to vocalize the sound “u” in foreign proper names whereas the usual practice was to use the sign “w”. For example, Puduhepa (1297-1215), a Hittite queen married to the King Hattusili III, was also well-known in Egypt. Given that she was cited on numerous documents in different scripts, we know exactly her name, which was read as Puduḥêpa and was transcribed in hieroglyph as:



Even if one ignores these ancient writings, careful observation of all these signs enables one to verify that the name of the queen in Egyptian hieroglyphs is written with an alphabet using three main “vowels”: w = “u”, y = “i” and 3 = “a” (thus w3 = “ua”). If there were no vowels between two consonants the Egyptians did as we do today, they used to put a short “e” (called shewa ə) like Egypt or Copt. The syllable “pt” corresponds to Ptah (a creator god) written p-t-ḥ and pronounced pətəḥ or “pth”. It is noteworthy to note that Herodotus (c. 450 BCE) vocalized the name of pharaohs: Nêcôs (Nêkaô in the Septuagint) and Sabacôs (History II,152) which are respectively written in hieroglyph: *N-k3-w* (Nəkau) and *Ṣ3-b3-k3* (Ṣabaka). So according to these equivalences, which confirm

¹⁰¹ E.A.W. BUDGE –An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary Vo. I (London, 1920), pp. XLIV,145.

¹⁰² Ptolemaios is written *p-t-w3-lw-m-y-s*

Pharaoh *w3-s3-i-r-k-n* is read Osorkon or Osokhor (Manetho), Sô in Hebrew (2 Kings 17:4) and Segor in the Septuagint.

Tiwlôn (1 Chronicles 4:10) = *t-lw-w3-3-n*

Beth-hôron (Joshua 16:3) = *b3-i-ti-ḥ—w3-3-rw-n*

¹⁰³ Like: *w3-w3-t* / *w3-3-w3-3-t*; *w3-ḥ* / *w3-3-ḥ*; *w3-g* / *w3-3-g*; *t-w3* / *t-w3-3*.

the conventional reading, the Egyptian tetragram *Y-h-w* should be read *Yəhua* (Yehoua). If this tetragram was pronounced Yahweh, Egyptians would have spelled it phonetically *Y-ʒ-h-w-h* (Yahuəh), not *Y-h-w* (*Yəhua*).

If the tetragram had been pronounced Yahu, instead of Yehua, it would have been written *Y-ʒ-h-w* (Yahu) or *Y-h-w* (Yəhu) not *Y-h-w* (*Yəhua*). For example the name of Jaffa was written Joppa in Greek (Joshua 19:46) but was vocalized *Yəpô* (Ypw) in Hebrew and *Yapû* (Ia-pu) in Old Babylonian. According to these witnesses the original vocalization of the city should be *Yəpû* or *Yopû* because at that time the w was always read “u” not “o”. Given that that city was written *Y-p-w* in hieroglyph, its vocalization should be *Yəpu* which is very close to *Yopu*, but neither *Yəpo*, nor *Yəpue*, etc.

When the Israelites entered in Canaan one would have thought that God's name was going to spread but it was not the case for two reasons: the priests neglected to read the book of Moses to the people (who therefore remained ignorant) and the Israelites continued worshipping Baal “the Lord” by means of sacred poles. One notes that during the period of the Judges, from Joshua to Samuel, there were only two theophoric names with El “God” (Othniel and Samuel) but none with Yah or Yehowah. When the Israelites were able to make a kingdom, in fact when Abimelech (c. 1260 BCE)

became the first ruler (Judges 9:22), the Egyptians ceased to speak of the “land of Shasu” but now they spoke of the “people of Israel”, as in the Merneptah Stele.

In fact God's name began to spread when David started building the Temple in Jerusalem. It is noteworthy that David's son, the famous Solomon, was the first Israelite king who received a theophoric name: Jedidiah “Beloved of Yah” (2 Samuel 12:25).

God's name began to spread again, even among foreign nations around Israel, like Moab. For example, Mesha (2 Kings 3:4-6), a Moabite king (c. 900-870), knew God's name (YHWH) because it appears in line 18 of his stele.



It is not by chance that king Mesha was able to pronounce God's name, because his main adversary was king Jehosaphat, the first Judean king who had a theophoric name “Yeho is judge” as birth name. How did Moabite king Mesha pronounce God's name? Given that the theological vocalization Yahweh “He causes to be” never existed, this reading must be excluded. We have three strong clues to find the pronunciation of God's name:

- ❖ The Mesha Stele contains two Israelite names: Omri and Israel, and because these names were of foreign origin (for Moabites) they were to have been written phonetically. As the name Omri is written ‘MRȲ (‘oMRI) and Israel is written YŠR’L (ÍSRa’eL), we can suppose that God’s name, which was an Israelite name was pronounced in the same way (Y = I): YHWH (IHWaH).
- ❖ King Mesha knew king Jehoshaphat and obviously he had to know how to pronounce his name, which was Yehô-shaphat “Yehô is judge” in Hebrew. Consequently the name YHW-H had to be pronounced similarly as YeHoW-aH.
- ❖ The orthography of the Aramaic portion of the Tell Fekherye Bilingual¹⁰⁴ (c. 850 BCE) proves that for a long time three “vowel letters” were used to vocalize proper names: W for U, Y for I, and H for final A. Several names of that stele are also mentioned in the Bible.

¹⁰⁴ D.N. FREEDMAN, A.D. FORBES, F.I.

ANDERSEN – Studies in Hebrew and Aramaic Orthography (*Biblical and Judaic Studies* vol.2, 1992), pp. 137-170.

One notes that the vocalization of Hebrew names¹⁰⁵ was similar to the one from Akkadian, in addition, in all cases there was a systematic equivalence: Y = I, W = U.

Habor	Nergal	writing
HBWR	NYRGL	Alphabetic
Ĥa-bur	Ne-iri-gal	Syllabic
ĤaBUR	NIRGaL	Akkadian
ĤaBOR	NeRGaL	Hebrew
Abôr	Nerigêl	Greek

Gozan	Sasnuri	writing
GWZN	SS-NWRY	Alphabetic
Gu-za-ni	Šamaš-nu-ri	Syllabic
GUZaN	SaS-NURI	Akkadian
GOZaN	-	Hebrew
Gôzan	-	Greek

Consequently the most likely pronunciation of God's name in the Mesha Stele was something like Yehowah (likely) or Ihua.

One must note that after Jehoshaphat's reign many Israelite kings bore theophoric names. In addition, archaeology confirms that during the period from the building of the temple of Jerusalem by Solomon up to its destruction by the Babylonians in 587 BCE, the tetragram was widely used in inscriptions and also sometimes the two other names: Yah and Yahu.

For example, several writings dated c. 800 BCE have been found at Kuntillet Ajrud, near the Sinai; they contain either the name YHW or YHWH. The inscription reads: *to Obadyaw son of Adnah may he be blessed by* Yhm (*l'bdyw bn 'dnh brk h' lyhw*)

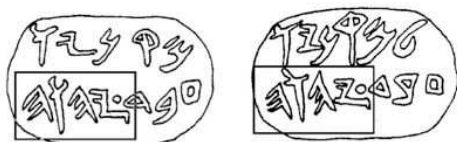
¹⁰⁵ Habor (2 Kings 18:11), Nergal (2 Kings 17:30), Gozan (2 Kings 18:11).



Other sentences read: *I bless YOU by [Yhwh] of Samaria and by [his] asherah (brkt 'tkm lyhwh Šmrn wl'šrth); I bless you by [Yhwh] of Teman and by [his] asherah ('t brkte lyhwh tmn wl'šrth), asherah being a sacred pole, tree or totem (Dt 16:21-22); and let [Yhw] give unto him as to his heart (wntn lh yhw klbbh); does good, [Yhwh] (hytb yhwh).*



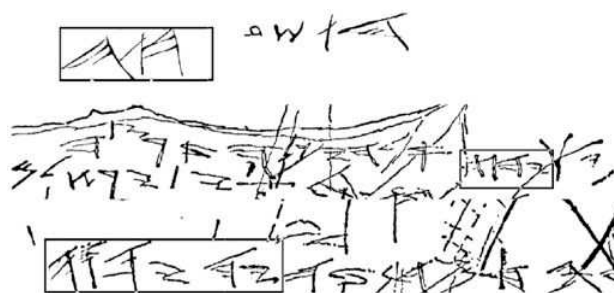
Dated around 775 BCE, a seal was found with the following inscription: *Miqneyaw servant of [Yhwh] / to Miqneyaw servant of [Yhwh] (mqnyw 'bd yhwh / lmqnyw 'bd lyhwh).*



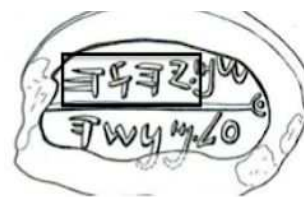
We can notice that these theophoric names end in *-yaw* and not in *-yahu*, but this anomaly only appears in inscriptions found outside Judaea, because in this territory theophoric names were always written with *-yahu* at the end not with *-yaw*. It is thought that Judaeans spoke a more correct Hebrew than the Hebrews of the North (Samaria) whose language was more relaxed. At Khirbet el-Qom, about 30 km south-west of Jerusalem, an epitaph dated c. 750 BCE was discovered, with the inscription:



The inscription reads: *Uriyahu the rich has written it, blessed be Uriyahu by [Yhwh] ('ryhw h'šr ktbh brk 'ryhw lyhwh). Hebrew inscriptions dated around 700 BCE may be read on the walls of a burial cave at Khirbet Beit Lei near Jerusalem. The tetragram appears in the following sentences¹⁰⁶: Save us [Y]hwh [Yhwh] the god of the whole earth (...) be merciful forgive Yh Yhwh.*



A limestone scaraboid (dated c. 700 BCE) found at Mamillah¹⁰⁷, near Jerusalem, reads: *Belonging to [Yehowah]hen, daughter of Paqu'oth (יהוהחנ בת פקעת).*



A bullae from Samaria¹⁰⁸ (dated c. 690 BCE), reads: *[The] name of [Yhwh] on Manasseh (šm yhwh l mnšh).*

¹⁰⁶ A few letters are hard to read but the two words Yh Yhwh are clearly legible.

¹⁰⁷ R. DEUTSCH – Three Hebrew Seals from the Iron Age Tombs at Mamillah, Jerusalem (Eisenbrauns 2006), pp. 316-318.

¹⁰⁸ R. DEUTSCH – New bullae: “The Name of Yahweh on Manasseh” (*Havrit Weahyoteha* Vols. 2-3, 2002-2003) p. 183.



Two silver plaques have been found at Ketef Hinnom (near Jerusalem) dated 650-600 BCE. On plaque II there are three tetragrams, both contain the famous priestly blessing¹⁰⁹ recited in the temple for Yom Kippur. The exact quotation of Numbers 6:24-26 in an amulet shows that the Bible had been known and read for several centuries.

Plaque I

1	יהו	1.
2	...	2.
3	גד[ל שמר]	3.
4	הברית ו	4.
5	(ה)חסד לאהב	5.
6	יו שמר [מצ]	6.
7	[ותו]	7.
8	תה על נ.]	8.
9	(ה)ברכה מכל [פ]	9.
10	ח ומהרע	10.
11	כי בו גאל	11.
12	ה כי יהוה	12.
13	(מ)שיבנו ו	13.
14	צור יבר	14.
15	ך יהוה ו	15.
16	י[שמרך י]	16.
17	[א]ר יהוה	17.
18	פנ[יך]	18.

The priestly blessing (Numbers 6:24-26) is highlighted in bold in the translation hereafter:

1. Yehow[ah ..]
2. ...
3. grea[t .. who keeps]
4. the covenant and

5. Graciousness toward those who love
6. [hi]m and those who keep [his]
7. [commandments] ...
8. [?]
9. blessing more than any
10. [sna]re and more than Evil.
11. For redemption is in him.
12. For Yehowah
13. is our restorer [and]
14. rock. **May bless**
15. **you Yehowah and**
16. **[may he] keep you. [May] he**
17. **make shine Yehowah**
18. **[his] face [upon you ..]**

Plaque II

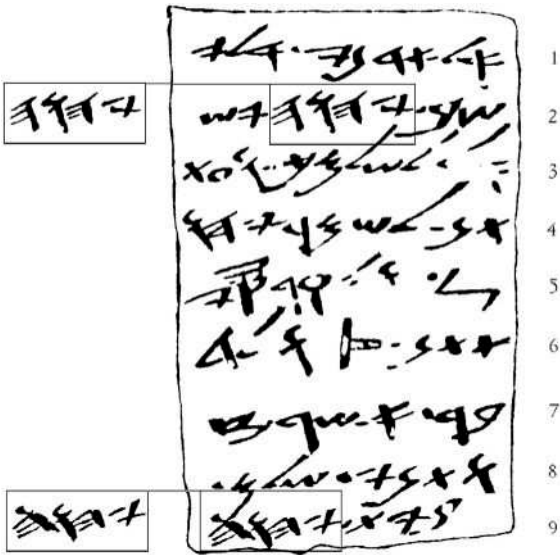
1	הו בוך ה	1.
2	[א] ליהו[ה]	2.
3	העזר ו	3.
4	הגער ב	4.
5	[ר]ע יברך	5.
6	יהוה י	6.
7	שמך	7.
8	יאר יה	8.
9	[ו]ה פניו	9.
10	[א]לך ו	10.
11	שם לך ש	11.
12	[ל]ם	12.

1. [may he] be blessed
2. [-] by Yehowah
3. the helper and
4. the rebuker of
5. Evil. **May bless you**
6. **Yehowah, may**
7. **he keep you**
8. **May he make shine**
9. **Yehowah his face**
10. **upon you and**
11. **grant you**
12. **peace**

A few ostraca have been discovered at the site of Tell Arad. These texts date from 700 to 600 BCE. For example in ostracon N°18 we find the following text:

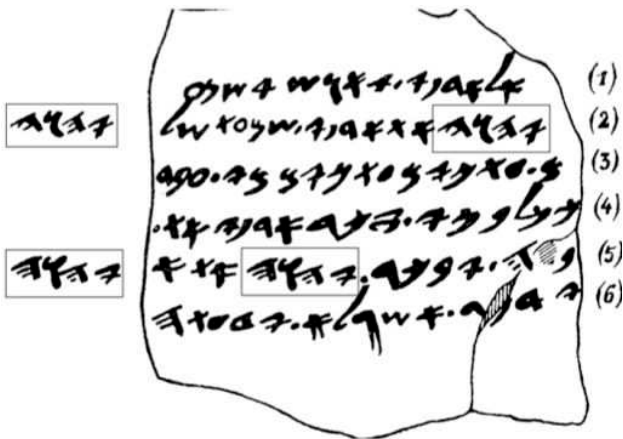
¹⁰⁹ G. BARKAY, A.G. VAUGHIN, M.J. LUNDBERG, B. ZUKERMAN – The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A New Edition and Evaluation (*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 334, 2004) pp. 41-71.

Consequently the tetragram was widely used in daily life until 600 BCE. From an archaeological point of view, the tetragram disappeared just after the destruction of the first temple (587 BCE), except in the Bible. In the period from 900 to 600 BCE about 40 tetragrams can be found. Thus, the tetragram played a major role in worship, even though, as indicated in the Bible, the short name Yah was also used alone. As a result, this name was used for less formal occasions as in theophoric names or in engravings on jars. For example, several jars have been found dated c. 750 BCE with names Yah and Yahu stamped on them¹¹¹.



- 1) To my lord Elia-
- 2) -shib may **Yhwh** seek
- 3) your welfare. And now
- 4) give to Shemaryahu
- 9) temple of **Yhwh**

A few ostraca of the same period (c. 600 BCE) have been found at the site of Lakish with the following inscription on ostracum¹¹⁰:

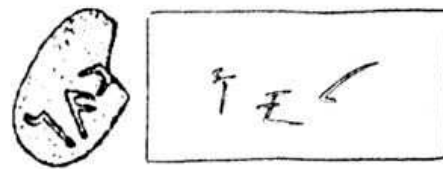


- 1) To my lord Yoash May
- 2) **Yhwh** make my lord hear to a news of peace
- 3) in this very day, in this very day. Who is your servant,
- 4) a dog, in order for my lord to remember his servant?
- 5) May **Yhwh** allow my lord ...

¹¹⁰ This inscription agrees with the events which were described in Jeremiah 34:6-7.



Yah to Yah



Yahû to Yaw

The destruction of the first Temple had significant consequences for worship and later the pronunciation of the Name. As archaeology confirms, before this

¹¹¹ Notice that these names are sometimes preceded by the Hebraic particle L which means “to, for” implying that these objects were intended for the Temple, perhaps as tithes. In a few cases the name YHW, during the period of the second temple, is surmounted by a Hebrew symbol which means “shekel”, that is the collection for the sanctuary (Exodus 30:13). During this period some parallel inscriptions are written LMLK which means “to the king”.

destruction the Name was widely used by the Hebrews, but, as Maimonides pointed out, it also confirms that the Name did not possess any mystical power. Knowing the proper pronunciation was for the Hebrews neither a material advantage, nor a protection against their enemies.

Another very important consequence of the destruction of the first temple was the Jews’ 70 years of captivity in Babylonia during which time the people learnt Aramaic. Thus, from this period some parts of the Bible were written in this language¹¹². Therefore, when the Jews came back to Jerusalem, many of them had forgotten their mother tongue (Nehemiah 13:24). Hence, to make the Bible more readable, around 450 BCE, Ezra changed the old Hebrew characters into Aramaic characters or “modern Hebrew” (Talmud Sanhedrin 21b) and to help the people to understand, read the text and explained it. On the other hand, the old Hebrew style was retained by the Samaritans in their writings.

However, the influence of Aramaic, which affected slightly the pronunciation of Hebrew also affected its writing. One can moreover observe, in the study of inscriptions on stamps and seals, a wide variety of shapes in Paleo-Hebrew. This variety is less evident on the seals than on the stamps. No doubt, this conservatism in seals exists because they were made by

professional “printers”. Among the hundred jars with the divine names stamped on them, dated between 500 and 300 BCE, about 60 have the name YH and 40 the name YHW¹¹³.

The resemblance between the Aramaic name Yehud (YHD) and the Hebrew name Yahu (YHW) certainly favoured the emergence of the Hebrew name Yehud “Judea” on stamps and coins, because, as seen, this defective spelling in Hebrew is abnormal. Furthermore, when in observing the chronological frequency of these two names, one notices that, at about the 3rd century BCE, there was a reversal of the trend, with inscriptions of Yehud (YHD) replacing inscriptions of Yahû (YHW). The confusion in reading between Yahu and Yehud began when coins that actually were marked Yehud (YHD/ YHDH / YHWD) were found (© = shekel?):

Paleo-Hebrew (c. 500 BCE)



© YHW © YHW

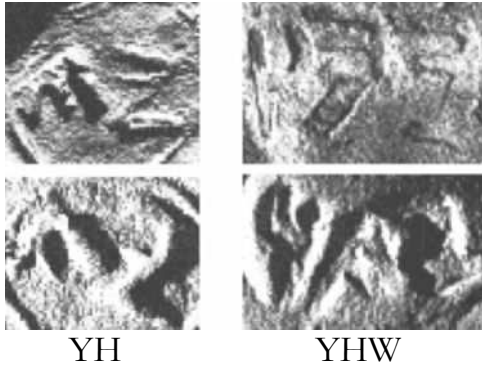
Paleo-Aramaic



© YHD © YHD YHWD *Yehud.*
 YHW^cZR *Yeboezzer*
 P̄HW[?] *Governor*

¹¹² Daniel 2:4-7:28; Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-28.

¹¹³ Y. AHARONI -Excavations at Ramath Rahel 1954 (I.E.J. vol. 6:3, 1956) pp. 144-151.
 Y. AHARONI -Excavations at Ramath Rahel 1961-62 (1964, Centro di studi semitici), pp. 20-46 pl. 19,20.

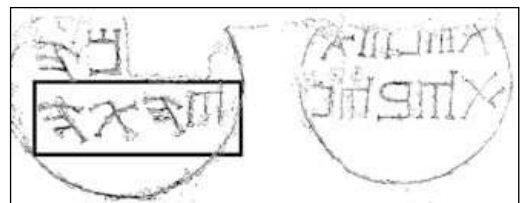


At the beginning of the 3rd century BCE most people in Judea spoke Aramaic, and most tradesmen also spoke Greek. The Jewish aristocracy spoke Greek and Hebrew but this latter language was probably a little different from the Biblical Hebrew, just as common Greek, or *koine* was a little different from literary Greek. Thus, in order to improve the people's comprehension, the Hebrew text of the Bible was paraphrased in Aramaic. This vernacular translation was called the Targum. Mainly to help the Greek speaking Jews of the Diaspora, a Greek translation of the Pentateuch, the Septuagint was made around 280 BCE. It is noteworthy that, given the name Yahû was still used by Jewish people at this time, "to protect" this substitute for the tetragram, all theophoric names ending with *-yahu* were modified to *ia* or *iou*, according to the preference of the translator induced by Greek declensions. Furthermore the number of theophoric names using *yahu* declines sharply from this period on¹¹⁴. The Talmud (Yoma 39b) indicates that at about the 3rd century BCE, at the time of high

priest Simon the Just, the use of the tetragram was reserved for the Temple only, and it specifies that in time even the divine names stamped on jars (YH and YHW because no tetragram has been found) would be removed to protect their holiness (Shabbat 61b, 'Arakin 6a).

According to the historic testimonies of the Talmud, the Letter of Aristeas (written c. 170-150 BCE) and Josephus (Jewish Antiquities XII:43), the translation of the Septuagint and the disappearance of God's name in Israel were contemporary events, since all these accounts indicate that Ptolemy Philadelphus and Simon the Just lived at the same moment¹¹⁵. Indeed, no divine names, whether under the forms: YH, YW, and YHW and YHWH, were exhumed in the documents dated from 3rd century BCE to 2nd century CE.

While the Jews ceased to use ancient Hebrew for writing God's name, some Samaritans continued to use it as one can see in the Samaritan inscription¹¹⁶ (below) found at Syracuse (dated 2nd century CE): *Do arise, YHWH, and let your enemies be scattered*, similar to the text of Numbers 10:35.



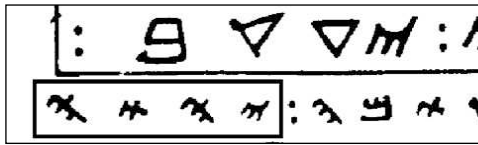
[QW]MH YHWH WYPSW YBYK

¹¹⁴ Z. ZEVIT - A Chapter in the History of Israelite Personal Names (*BASOR* 250), pp. 3-14.

¹¹⁵ R. MARCUS - Jewish Antiquities Books XII-XIII (1998 Loeb Classical Library), pp. 462-466.

¹¹⁶ V. MORABITO - Les Samaritains de Sicile (1998, Zèbre), pp. 195-197.

We can see the same text in another inscription dated 3rd century CE¹¹⁷. These few tetragrams show that there had never been any ban on writing God's name.



QJWMH: YHWH

After 50 CE, Judeo-Christians who spoke mainly Aramaic were called “Nazarenes” in Greek (Acts 24:5) or “Nozrim” in Hebrew. They soon split into numerous small sects (Ebionites, Elcesaites, Hermits, etc.) whose main teaching about God was his uniqueness. Because they spoke Aramaic, they did not substantially spread outside Palestine except in the south of Babylonia. With the arrival of Islam some Jewish Christians were converted and introduced into Muslim religion the concept of a unique god with 99 beautiful names (the one hundredth name being the supreme name).

When the apostle wrote his letter to the Hebrews in Judea, he quoted many times the Septuagint, which contained the tetragram at that time (61 CE), for example: *I will declare your name to my brothers; in the middle of the congregation I will praise you with song. And again: I will have my trust in him. And again: Look! I and the young children, whom יהוה gave me* (Hebrews 2:12-13). Why did Paul observe that Jewish custom of writing God's name in Hebrew (יהוה) instead of writing Iaô in Greek, as in the

Septuagint of Qumran, since there was no ban (before 130 CE) on its pronunciation? Philo of Alexandria explains why (c. 40 CE): *there was a gold plaque shaped in a ring and bearing 4 engraved characters of a name which had the right to hear and to pronounce in the holy place those ones whose ears and tongue have been purified by wisdom, and nobody else and absolutely nowhere else. And this holy prophet Moses calls the name, a name of four letters (יהוה), making them perhaps symbols of the primary numbers* (De vita Mosis II:115,132). At that time the Jews had the habit of writing God's name in Hebrew because they considered it as most holy. In fact, that Jewish custom was a way of sanctifying God's name. Given that custom of writing God's name did not violate any biblical command the apostle Paul complied. In his letters to the Corinthians he explains why: *For though I am free from all people, I have made myself the slave to all, so that I may gain as many people as possible. To the Jews I became as a Jew in order to gain Jews; to those under law I became as under law, though I myself am not under law, in order to gain those under law. To those without law I became as without law, although I am not without law toward God but under law toward Christ, in order to gain those without law. To the weak I became weak, in order to gain the weak. I have become all things to people of all sorts, so that I might by all possible means save some. But I do all things for the sake of the good news, in order to share it with others (...)* You cannot be drinking the cup of יהוה and the cup of demons; you cannot be partaking of the table of יהוה and the table

¹¹⁷ J. NAVEH - Early History of the Alphabet (1982, E.J. Brill), p. 124.

of demons. Or, are we inciting יהוה to jealousy? We are not stronger than he is, are we? All things are lawful, but not all things are advantageous. All things are lawful, but not all things build up. Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person. Eat whatever is sold in a meat market, making no inquiry because of your conscience, for "to יהוה belong the earth and everything in it." If an unbeliever invites you and you want to go, eat whatever is set before you, making no inquiry on account of your conscience. But if anyone says to you: This is something offered in sacrifice, do not eat because of the one who told you and because of conscience. I do not mean your own conscience, but that of the other person. For why should my freedom be judged by another person's conscience? If I am partaking with thanks, why am I to be spoken of abusively over that for which I give thanks? Therefore, whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God's glory. Keep from becoming causes for stumbling to Jews as well as Greeks and to the congregation of God, just as I am trying to please all people in all things, not seeking my own advantage, but that of the many, so that they may be saved (1 Corinthians 9:19-23; 10:21-33). The main reason why the apostle had respected some Jewish laws, despite the fact he was not obliged to do so, was to save as many Jews as possible: Welcome the man having weaknesses in his faith, but do not pass judgment on differing opinions. One man has faith to eat everything, but the man who is weak eats only vegetables. Let the one eating not look down on the one not eating, and let the one not eating not judge the one eating, for God has welcomed

him. Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for Jehovah can make him stand. One man judges one day as above another; another judges one day the same as all others; let each one be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who observes the day observes it to יהוה. Also, the one who eats, eats to יהוה, for he gives thanks to God; and the one who does not eat does not eat to יהוה, and yet gives thanks to God. Not one of us, in fact, lives with regard to himself only, and no one dies with regard to himself only. For if we live, we live to יהוה, and if we die, we die to יהוה. So both if we live and if we die, we belong to Jehovah. For to this end Christ died and came to life again, so that he might be Lord over both the dead and the living. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you also look down on your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written: As surely as I live, says יהוה, to me every knee will bend, and every tongue will make open acknowledgment to God. So, then, each of us will render an account for himself to God. Therefore, let us not judge one another any longer but, rather, be determined not to put a stumbling block or an obstacle before a brother. I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; only where a man considers something to be unclean, to him it is unclean. For if your brother is being offended because of food, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not by your food ruin that one for whom Christ died. Therefore, do not let the good you do be spoken of as bad. For the Kingdom of God does not mean eating and drinking, but means righteousness and peace and joy with holy spirit. For whoever

slaves for Christ in this way is acceptable to God and has approval with men. It is noteworthy that there was a ban on pronouncing God's name at Qumran (before 70 CE), consequently the form Iaô (Iαω) which appears in one copy of the Septuagint must be a (authorized) substitute, like Adonai (Ἀδωναϊ) the usual substitute for God’s name which equally appears in some copies of the Septuagint, including the Codex Alexandrinus (in 1 Kings 1:11 for example).

When the letters of Paul were read, how did early Christians pronounce God's name? The answer depended on the public: when it was a pagan the reading could be *theos* “God”, when it was a Greek believer the reading could be *kurios* “Lord”, when it was a Jewish believer who spoke Hebrew the reading could be Yehowah, but there was no absolute rule, the Talmud only says that the usual substitute was *adonai* “my Lord” in Hebrew.

After 90 CE, the majority of Jews were affiliated to the Jewish Council (the rabbinate) founded at Yabneh by Johanan ben Zakai, whose main objective was to keep the synagogue worship and preserve the oral teaching from the Pharisees and because Christian Jews were considered by other Jews as heretics, they introduced the *Birkat ha-Minim* “Blessing on the heretics” in order to stop contact with them. Because of that cursing (called “blessing”), discussions with Jews were no longer possible, consequently the compliance with the Jewish custom

of writing God's name in Hebrew was no longer necessary to observe. Probably from 100 CE the Christian leaders of Alexandria decided to replace the name יהוה written in Hebrew by some *nomina sacra* “sacred names” like “L[or]d (ΚΣ)” or “G[o]d (ΘΣ)” written in Greek. How were these names L-d and G-d pronounced? It is noteworthy that current religious Jews still use this system, the word L-d is read “Lord” but if you know Hebrew you could say “Yehowah”. For example, Samuel Cahen, who was the first Jewish Bible translator in French (1831-1851) systematically used the name Iehovah instead of the substitute Lord (Adonay) or Eternal.

After 100 CE, most Christians were Gentile Christians living in Greece (Revelation 1:4) who, from 150 CE, made a strong connection between the Lord god (Jesus) and the god Lord (Jehovah). The two lords were completely merged after 300 CE (beginning of the Trinity). For these Christians (Roman Catholics), God’s name was either KS “L-d” or IHS “J-E-S”).

When Hebrew was no longer spoken after 200 CE, the oral teaching called Mishnah was put in writing (Talmud of Jerusalem). There was no controversy among Jews on how to pronounce God's name, because after 130 CE its pronunciation was forbidden, but what was really the genuine name of God, the “hidden name”? Some Jewish mystics began to teach that God has many names beside the

great name YHW (Sefer Yetzirah I:15). In time, Kabbalists “Those who have received [the knowledge]” would look at each of the 72 triads and consider them as one of the 72 Names of God, others would teach that God’s name is the Torah itself¹¹⁸.

The name YHW (Yahô) played a great role in Jewish esotericism as one can see in a book written around 80 CE: *Go, Jaobel, and by means of my ineffable Name raise me yonder man, and strengthen him (so that he recover) from his trembling (...)* I am called Jaobel by Him who moves that which exists with me on the 7th expanse upon the firmament, a power in virtue of the ineffable Name that is dwelling in me (The Apocalypse of Abraham X:3-7). The name of Jaobel is represented as a being possessed of the power of the ineffable name, a function assigned in the Rabbinical writings to Metatron, *whose name is like unto that of God Himself* (Sanhedrin 38b). The name Yahoel “Yahô is God” was evidently a substitute for the ineffable name Yehowah. Similarly for the same reasons, the name Iaô (Yahô) played a great role in Christian Gnosticism.

After 135 CE, a minority of Jews (Sadducees, Essenians, etc.) continued to copy the Bible without being affiliated to any religious organizations. We know that the groups of Jewish scribe-scholars who worked to copy the Torah between the 6th and 10th centuries CE, were

called the Masoretes “Tradition Keepers¹¹⁹”. We do not know what happened exactly to the Sadducees and Essenes after the Bar Kokhba revolt (132-135), but we know that the Karaites who appeared around 700 CE were the successors of the Sopherim (Sadducean scribes).

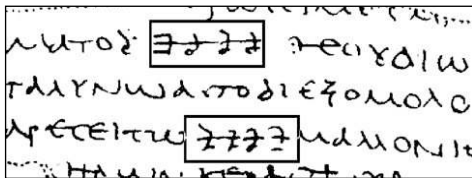
¹¹⁹ The ben Asher family of Masoretes was largely responsible for the preservation and production of the Masoretic Text, although an alternate Masoretic text of the ben Naphtali Masoretes, which differs slightly from the ben Asher text, existed. The halakhic authority Maimonides (1138-1204) endorsed the ben Asher as superior, although the Egyptian Jewish scholar, Saadya Gaon al-Fayyumi (882-942), had preferred the ben Naphtali system. The ben Asher family and the majority of the Masoretes have been Karaites. Karaite Judaism “Readers [of the Hebrew Scriptures]” is a Jewish movement characterized by the recognition of the Tanakh alone as its supreme legal authority in Jewish religious law and theology. It is distinct from mainstream Rabbinic Judaism, which considers the Oral Torah, as codified in the Talmud and subsequent works to be authoritative interpretations of the Torah. Karaites maintain that all of the divine commandments handed down to Moses by God were recorded in the written Torah without additional Oral Law or explanation. As a result, Karaite Jews do not accept as binding the written collections of the oral tradition in the Midrash or Talmud. According to Rabbi Abraham ben David, in his *Sefer HaQabbalah*, the Karaite movement crystallized in Baghdad in the Gaonic period (c. 600-1050), under the Abbasid Caliphate in what is present-day Iraq. The Geonim played a prominent and decisive role in the transmission and teaching of Torah and Jewish law. Anan Ben David (c. 715-795) is considered to be a major founder of the Karaite movement. Karaites were already living in Egypt in the first half of the 7th century, the evidence consisting of a legal document that the Karaite community in Egypt had in its possession until the end of the 19th century, which was said to be stamped by the palm of Amr ibn al-’As, the first Islamic governor of Egypt, in which he ordered the leaders of the Rabbanite community not to interfere in the way of life of the Karaites nor with the way they celebrate their holidays. This document was reported to be dated 641 CE.

¹¹⁸ When Arabic began replacing Aramaic, the Babylonian rabbis decided to fix the Talmud (c. 500 CE), which became the reference (Babylonian Talmud).

What happened between 100 and 1200 CE regarding copies of the Hebrew Bible and the writing and reading of God’s name?

GOD’S NAME THROUGH THE DARK AGES (100-1200 CE)

Contrary to Christians, Jewish copyists carried on the use of writing God’s name in Hebrew until around 300 CE. For example, the tetragram was written in paleo-Hebrew in a copy of the Septuagint of Symmachus (c. 300 CE), an Ebionite (Judeo-Christian) who had revised the Septuagint around 165 CE.

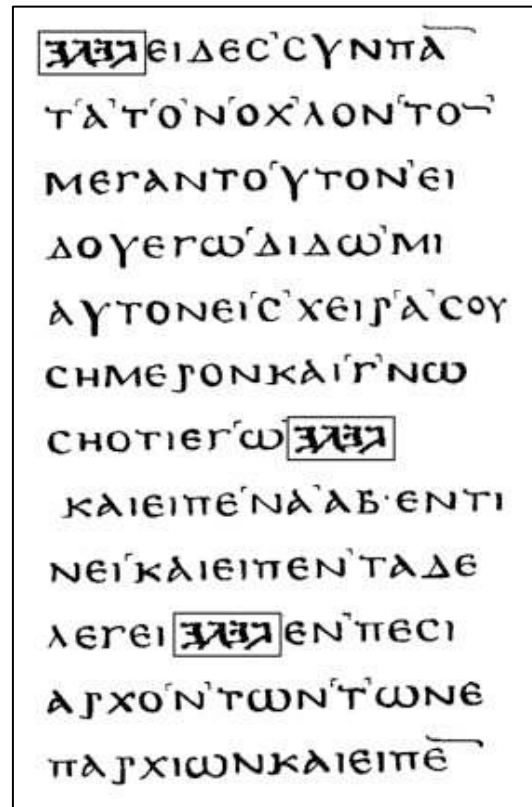


Psalm 69:30-31

As Christians had no longer understood Hebrew for a long time, except rare scholars¹²⁰, for most of them that kind of writing was viewed as mysterious and meaningless. For example, Origen noted in his comment on Psalms (c. 250 CE), the Jewish custom of writing the tetragram in old Hebrew embedded in the Greek text as one can see in this copy of Aquila's translation¹²¹ dated 5th century CE.

¹²⁰ Among the early Christian Fathers, Jerome was the only one who learned Hebrew well, even Origen who was born and spent the first half of his career in Alexandria did not come to learn Hebrew. One must be careful with the use of Greek testimonies concerning God's name, got from the Jews, because Hebrew stopped being spoken after 135 BCE and most rabbis spoke Aramaic in daily life, not Hebrew (cf. Talmud).

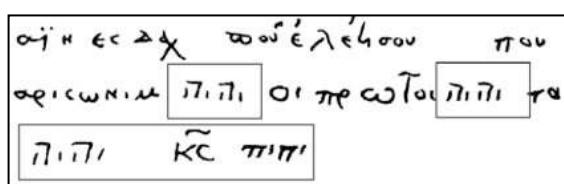
¹²¹ F. CRAWFORD BURKITT - Fragments of the Books of Kings According to the Translation of Aquila (1898, Cambridge), pp. 3-8.



After 300 CE, Eusebius and Jerome pointed out that the Jews used again modern Hebrew to write the Name, and regrettably these Hebrew letters (יהוה) were confused with Greek characters of similar shape (ππι), as one can observe in many hexaplar¹²² “six columns” copies. Accordingly, Pseudo-Denys, a Christian theologian and philosopher, probably Syrian, demonstrated in his book *The Divine Names* (dated c. 530 CE) that: *it is impossible for man to name God*, despite the name Iaô being still mentioned in some copies of the Septuagint (in reference to theophoric names) as well as in some Apocryphal Christian writings. In commenting on a work of Severi of Antioch, the famous scholar James of Edessa made clear in a technical comment (c. 675 CE),

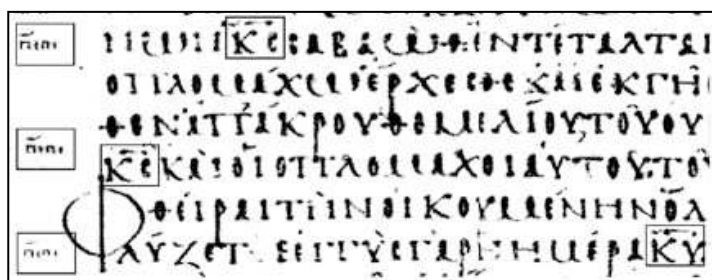
¹²² ORIGÈNE -Origenis Hexaplorum tomus II (Psalm 26:1; 27:4,7; 28:1;jes. I,2) 1964 Ed. Georg olms verlagsbuchhandlung Hildesheim pp. 124,-127,431.

that the copyists of the Septuagint (of his time) were divided over whether to write the divine name Adonai, to keep it within the Greek text in the form ΠΙΠΙ (which was the Hebrew name YHYH as he mentioned), or to translate it as Kurios “Lord” and write it in the margin of the manuscript¹²³. One can see the use of modern Hebrew in the Ambrosiano O39 manuscript¹²⁴ dated around 900 CE.



As one can imagine, these rapid changes would also have an impact on the Septuagint of Jewish origin in which God's name in Hebrew occurred. The Christian copyists, in copying out these manuscripts, would first transform these names, יהוה became πῖπῖ, then replace them by the Greek abbreviation KS “L-d”. There was also a case where the copyist actually read the word πῖπῖ in Greek, or Pypy. Thus, Bishop Paul of Tella, in his Syriac translation of the Septuagint (c. 616 CE), used this strange name Pypy to refer to God¹²⁵. These gross mistakes prove that Christian copyists did not understand what

they read and therefore they were unaware that the strange word has a pronunciation in Hebrew.



As seen in this codex¹²⁶ of the 6th century, the word (ΚΣ) (Kurios) took the place of the divine name. However, each time, the copyist indicated the presence of the tetragram (written ΠΙΠΙ) in the margin, furthermore, as a marginal note in Ezekiel 1:2 and 11:1 the name Iaô (Ιαω) appeared. Several hexaplar manuscripts were written in this way¹²⁷. The procedure of the *nomina sacra* (ΚΣ instead of KYRIOΣ) was systematically used in all Christian manuscripts after 135 CE. Isidore of Sevilla for example (560-636), knew God's ten names (El, Eloim, Eloë, Sabaoth, Elion, Eie, Adonai, Ia, Tetragram, Saddai) owing to Jerome's letter number 25, but he thought that the unspeakable tetragram resulted from the double name IaIa. The erudite Photius explained around 870 CE, in his letter N°162 to Amphiloc, that the tetragram was written with four evanescent letters called in Hebrew *iôth*, *alph*, *ouauth*, *eth*, and that this name was pronounced Aïa by the Jews but Iabe (Ιαβε) by the Samaritans. These quotations are

¹²³ E. Nestle - Jacob von Edessa über den Schem hammephorasch und andere Gottesnamen. (Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft XXXII, 1878), pp. 465-508,735.

¹²⁴ G. MERCATI -Codex Rescriptus Bybliothecae Ambrosiane O39 (Psalterii Hexapli Reliquiae. Pars prima, 1958), pp. 11,97,101.

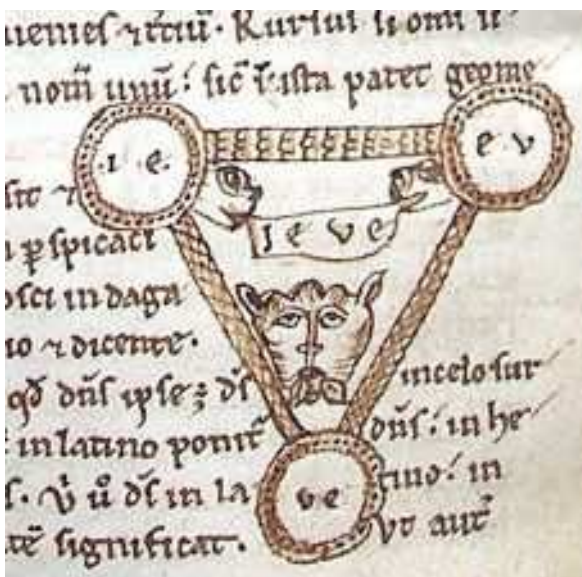
¹²⁵ B.M. METZGER - Manuscripts of the Greek Bible (1991, Oxford University Press), p. 35, 94-95,108-109.

¹²⁶ I. COZZA -LUZI -Prophetarum codex Graecus Vaticanus 2125 (1890, Biblioteca Vaticana), pp. 205,509,588.

¹²⁷ Codices: Q, 86, 88, 234^{mg}, 264.

exceptional, because the greater majority tended towards the ineffability of God's name. Albinus Flaccus Alcuini (735-804), a famous translator of the Bible into Latin, specified that although God's name was written *Jod, He, Vau, Heth*, it was read *Domini* (“Lord” in Latin), because this name was ineffable.

As seen, Christian biblical scholars had very little knowledge of the Hebrew Bible, even among the most prominent. In order to better understand the Hebrew language, Christian scholars began an exchange with Hebrew scholars although not without disagreement. Additionally, a small number of Jews had converted to Catholicism and they greatly improved the knowledge of Hebrew and above all of divine names. For example, Petrus Alfonsi, called Moses Sephardi before his baptism, was probably the first one to connect the ‘ineffable’ trinity with the ‘ineffable’ tetragram by means of the Tetragrammaton-Trinity diagram in this manuscript¹²⁸ dated 1109.



¹²⁸ St John's College University of Cambridge. Manuscript MS E.4 f.153v.

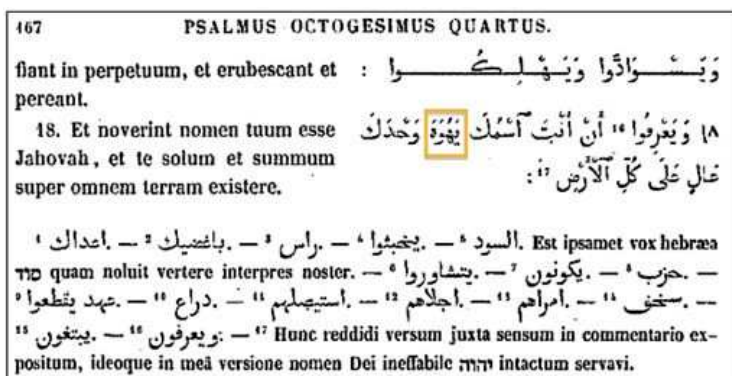
This diagram influenced many Christian biblical scholars. Petrus Alfonsi clarified the meaning of several Hebrew names¹²⁹, but he said that the tetragram was secret, written in Greek with only three letters I, E, V, and four figures (IEVE, IE, EV, VE) or three geometrical figures in one. In fact, he gave a transcription of letters between Greek and Hebrew: I = Y, E = H, V = W, but he did not claim to give a correct pronunciation of God's name.

Petrus Blesensis (1135-1204), a Christian writer, completed these remarks. He said, in his short treatise against the Jews¹³⁰, and to prove the trinity, that the name of God was made up of four figures: *Io, he, vaf, he* God's name: *Io, he*, another name of God (*Iah*) and two altered names of God: *he, vaf* (*Hu*) and *vaf, he* (*??*). The Name thus began to reappear in the Christian world. However, Christian scholars were not interested in the pronunciation of God's name but only in theological links between the three different letters (I, E, V) of the tetragram and the three persons of the Trinity. Despite the fact that Petrus Alfonsi was a former Jew he did not speak about the pronunciation of God's name because he believed, as all the Jews of his time, that the Name (*hashem*) was ineffable. Which Jewish scholars knew at that time about the pronunciation of the God's name?

¹²⁹ For example: *Eloha* “god”, *Elohai* “my gods/ my God”, *Elohi* “my god”, *Elohim* “gods/ God”, *Adon* “lord”, *Adoni* “my lord”, *Adonai* “my lords/ my Lord”.

¹³⁰ PETRI BLESENSIS - Contra perfidiam Judæorum (*Patrologia Latina* CCVII), p. 833.

Yefet ben Eli (c. 920-1010) was perhaps the foremost Karaite commentator on the Bible¹³¹, during the “Golden Age of Karaism”. His commentaries were written in Arabic, and covered the entire Tanakh¹³² (Old Testament). In his books the tetragram יהוה is represented most often in the large Hebrew text as אֲדוֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ. In other citations of the Hebrew text it is most often represented by יי or יי. Furthermore Yefet ben Eli distinguishes between אֱלֹהֵינוּ/יהוה and אֱלֹהֵינוּ. Thus the translation of אֱלֹהֵינוּ is always The Lord and אֱלֹהֵינוּ is God¹³³. In some exceptional cases he also vocalized the tetragram “Yahuwa”, like in his Arabic translation of the book of Psalms¹³⁴.



¹³¹ He was a native of Basra (in present-day Iraq). Later in his life, he moved to Jerusalem, between 950 and 980, where he died. The Karaites distinguished him by the epithet *maskil ha-Golah* (teacher of the Exile).

¹³² They were accompanied by a very literal translation of the Hebrew text, which often violated the rules of Arabic grammar.

¹³³ I. SASSON - *Methods and Approach in Yefet Ben 'Ali Al-Basri's Translation and Commentary on the Book of Proverbs*. PhD in Bible and Ancient Semitic Languages (The Jewish Theological Seminary, 2010), pp. 39,344.

¹³⁴ J.J.L. BARGÈS - *Libri psalmodum David Regis et prophetarum*. Versio à R. Yaphet ben Heli (1861, Institutum Imperialis Gallicani Bibliopolam), pp. 167,184.

It cannot be a mistake, because the text concerns precisely God's name: *Let them know that you alone bear the name of Yahuwa, Most High over all the earth* (Ps 83:18). Furthermore one of the leading Karaite scholars of that time, Jacob al-Qirqisani, a native of Upper Mesopotamia, wrote in his book¹³⁵ entitled *Kitab al-'Anwar* (in 937 CE): *Some of the Karaites of Khorasan ignore “ketib and qere” and read only what is written. Some of them do in the case of the Name which is written Yod He (YHWH) and maintain that he who read reads it as Aleph Daleth (Adonay) is an unbeliever.* Qirqisani also mentioned the ancient tradition of rendering the tetragram as *al-rabb* “the Lord” or *'allah* “the God¹³⁶” despite the meaning of the tetragram¹³⁷ being “He will be”.

So, why did Yefet ben Eli use Yahuwa rather than Yehuwā, given the name Jesus, for example, can be better transcribed Yesua into Arabic (يسوع) rather than the current Yasu. In fact he knew the ancient Hebrew substitute Yahû “Yah-Him”, which is pronounced correctly Yahuwa in Arabic and means “Yâ Him”. For example, a manuscript (a charm of protection dated c. 940 CE) containing a text of 50 lines, reads¹³⁸:

¹³⁵ B. CHIESA, W. LOCKWOOD – Yaqub al-Qirqisani on Jewish Sects and Christianity (*Judentum und Umwelt* 10 (Frankfurt 1984), p. 155.

¹³⁶ M. POLYAQ – *The Karaite Tradition of Arabic Bible Translation* (1997, Brill), p. 70.

¹³⁷ For example, Aaron ben Joseph Ha-Rofe', a Karaite scholar, wrote in his *Sefer HaMivchar* (dated 1294) that God's name Yhwh had to be understood as *yihweh/yihyeh* “He will be” according to Exodus 3:14.

¹³⁸ M. POLYAQ – *Les grottes de Murabba'at* (1961, Clarendon Press), pp. 283-290.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
 1) *In the name of God the merciful, the compassionate. In the name of God*

۸ أَسْمَاكَ بِأَسْمَائِكَ الْكَثِيرَةِ الْكَبِيرَةِ
 ۹ الرِّضَىِ الْمَرْضِيَّةِ الْعَزِيزَةِ الْمَمْتَنَّةِ
 ۱۰ التَّامَّةِ الْكَامِلَةِ الطَّاهِرَةِ الَّتِي لَا يَنْبَغِي
 ۱۱ أَنْ يَسْمَأَ بِهَا أَحَدٌ غَيْرَكَ يَا اللَّهُ أَسْمَاكَ بِأَسْمَا
 ۱۲ تِلْكَ الَّتِي لَا... [] وَلَا تَزُولُ الَّتِي لَا يَرُدُّهَا شَيْءٌ مِنْ
 ۱۳ دُونِكَ الْمُتَوَكَّلَةِ الَّتِي بِهَا يَتَمَّ عَهْدُكَ الَّتِي تَجِيبُ
 ۱۴ مِنْ دَعَاكَ يَا اللَّهُ يَا اللَّهُ أَسْمَاكَ تَكْمَلَةُ

8) *I pray thee by thy names, numerous, large,*
 9) *desirable, satisfactory, powerful, unapproachable,*
 10) *perfect, complete, pure, [with whom] we should*
 11) *name nobody else but you. O God, I pray thee by thy*
 12) *names that do not [pass? and] do not cease to which only you respond*
 13) *[with] the reward, by which your patronage is completed, to which you respond*
 14) *to that one who invokes thee. O God, O God, O God, I pray thee*

۲۷ وَكَسْرٌ وَتَصَالِيْبٌ وَبِأَسْمَائِكَ الْعَالِيَةِ الطَّاهِرَةِ
 ۲۸ الْمَطْهُرَةِ الْمَمْدُوْحَةِ الرَّفِيعَةِ الْجَلِيْلَةِ الْكَرِيْمَةِ
 ۲۹ الْجَمِيْلَةِ يَا هُوهُ يَا هُوهُ يَا هُوهُ يَا هُوهُ
 27) *[...] and a cross. And by thy names, the illustrious ones, the pure ones*
 28) *the purified ones, the praised ones, the sublime ones, the great ones, the noble ones*
 29) *the beautiful ones: Yâh, Yâh, Yâh, Huwa, Huwa, Huwa, O God*

هـ وَيَخَاتَمُ سَلِيْمُنَ بْنِ دَاوُدَ
 50) *and through the seal of Solomon son of David*

Huwa is the personal pronoun of the 3rd person, singular, masculine, HE, i.e. God, or He is. It occurs in the Qur'an in this sense, e.g. Surah III:1 *Allahu la ilaha illa Huwa*, “God there is no god but HE”. The word is often used by Sufi mystics in this form: *هو الاله هو ما يعلم لا يا hu, ya hu, ya man la ya'lamu*

ma hu illa hu, “O He (who is), O He (who is), O He whom no one knows what He Himself is but Himself.” Some commentators have supposed the word Hu to stand for the exalted name of God, the *Ismu 'l-a'zam* (“the supreme name”) which Muslim doctors say is only known to God.

Mansur al-Hallaj¹³⁹ (858-922), a Persian mystic, revolutionary writer and teacher of Sufism, wrote (in Arabic): *Here are the words of which sense seemed ambiguous. Know that temples hold by His Yâhuwah and that bodies are being moved by His Yâsîn. Now Huwa and Sîn are two roads which end into the knowledge of the original point*¹⁴⁰. Yâ-Sîn is a reference to the Sura 36 and Yâ-Huwah written Y’HWH in Arabic, makes reference to the Hebrew tetragram but the name Yâhuwah was understood Yâ Huwa “Yâ Him” or “Oh Him” in Arabic. However the Yâhuwah vocalization influenced several imams, such as Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi (1149-1209), a Persian Sunni Muslim theologian who, knowing the 99 beautiful names of God, explained that the supreme Name (*ism-al-a'zam*) of God was Yâ Huwa not Allâh¹⁴¹. It is noteworthy that the name Yahuwah is still found in a few Arabic Bibles¹⁴². As a result, some

¹³⁹ Mansur al-Hallaj was rejected as madman by his teacher, al-Junayd, and died crucified in Bagdad as a heretic.

¹⁴⁰ L. MASSIGNON – Akhbar al-Hallâj (1975, Vrin), p. 113 (French translation), p. 26 (Arabic).

¹⁴¹ IBN ‘ATA’ ALLÂH - *Traité sur le nom ALLÂH* (1981, Les Deux Océans), pp. 146-147.

¹⁴² FARES CHIDIAQ & WILLIAM WATTS - *The Holy Bible* (London, 1857) Yahuwah in Ex 6:3, 6, 8. *THE DOMINICAN FATHERS - The Dominican Bible* (Iraq, 1875) Yahuwah in footnote of Ex 3:14 but Yahwah in footnote of Ex 6:3.

Karaites did indeed pronounce God's name but they used its Hebrew substitute Yahu “Yah Him”, which was pronounced Yahuwa in Arabic and understood in this language as “Oh Him”. Accordingly, Jewish scholars did not try to find the genuine pronunciation of God's name and Christian scholars, at least until 1200, were only interested in finding theological links between God's name IEUE and the name IESU. For example, Joachim of Flora gave a Greek transliteration IEUE of YHWH in his *Expositio in Apocalypsim* (finished in 1195) and used the expression: *Adonay IEUE tetragramaton nomen* in another book entitled *Liber Figurarum* (c. 1202). As seen in his illustration¹⁴³, Joachim of Flora also gave the three other names: IE, EV, VE, which he associated with the Father (IE), the Son (EV) and the Holy Spirit (VE)!



The transcription of the Tetragram (IEUE) associated with the name of Jesus (IESU) would soon be improved by Pope Innocent III in one of his sermons written around 1200. Indeed, he noticed that

¹⁴³ GIOACCHINO DA FIORE -*Expositio in Apocalypsim, Concordia Veteris et Novi Testamenti* (c. 1200-1220) Library of the Seminary of Reggio Emilia, fols. 222-235.

the Hebraic letters of the Tetragram Ioth, Eth, Vau (that is Y, H, W in Hebrew) were used as vowels, and that the name IESUS had exactly the same vowels I, E and U as the divine name. Like Joachim of Flora, he broke up the divine name IEUE into IE-EU-UE, which led him to suppose that the name IE-SUS contained God's name IE. He also drew a parallel between the name written IEUE, pronounced Adonai, and the name written IHS but pronounced IESUS¹⁴⁴.

GOD'S NAME, ITS REBIRTH INSIDE CHRISTENDOM (1200-1600 CE)

At the end of the 12th century CE, one notes there were no controversies among biblical scholars because they all agree that God's name is ineffable. Some Christian scholars (very few) rediscovered that the Hebrew tetragram YHWH can be transcribed in Greek IEVE or IEUE, and some Arabic scholars (very few as well) rediscover that the hidden name of God is: Yâ Huwa “Oh Him”, an Arabic pronunciation of the Hebrew substitute: Yah Hu‘.

The first Jewish scholars to be interested in the pronunciation of the tetragram were Kabbalists¹⁴⁵. Kabbalah is based on teachings used by Jewish mystics to define the inner meaning of both the Hebrew Bible

¹⁴⁴ INNOCENTII III papæ - *Sermones de sanctis. Sermo IV, in circumcissione domini (Patrologiæ Latina CXXVII)*, pp. 465-470.

¹⁴⁵ Kabbalah emerged, after earlier forms of Jewish mysticism, around 1200 in Southern France and Spain, becoming reinterpreted in the Jewish mystical renaissance of 16th-century Ottoman Palestine.

and traditional Rabbinic literature and their formerly concealed transmitted dimension, including the pronunciation of the hidden name of God. Some Kabbalists even thought that the correct pronunciation of God's name could produce miracles. For example, Eleazar ben Judah of Worms (1165-1230) wrote in his book *Sodei Razayya* (lost), that if the tetragram had been written on the head of a human form made of clay he could become a Golem (human being)¹⁴⁶ only if the tetragram was pronounced correctly¹⁴⁷.

In order to prevent the spreading of such esoteric teachings, Maimonides explained in his *Guide of the perplexed* (1190) why these mystic beliefs were absurd. First, the correct pronunciation of God's name in the past, before the prohibition to pronounce it (c. 130 CE), did not give any magical power because the high priests, who knew it, were unable to stop enemy armies which had come to destroy the Temple. Second, God's name is not hidden because it is written YHWH and it is easy to read it according to its letters. Flavius Josephus (37-100), who knew the priesthood of this time very well, gave the same explanations, he wrote that when the Romans attacked the Temple, the Jews called upon the fear-inspiring name of God, with no result and that holy name is written with four sacred letters (YHWH) which are four vowels (The Jewish War V:235, 438).

¹⁴⁶ The word *golem* means “embryo” (Ps 139:16).

¹⁴⁷ According to the *Toledot Yesbu* Jesus performed miracles by using YHWH in a magic way.

Judah Halevi and Maimonides gave convergent information which marked a turning point in pronouncing God's name. However, the expression “*pronounced according to its letters*” which Maimonides used is strictly exact only in Hebrew, vowel letters as pointed out by Josephus as well as Judah Halevi.

However, the explanations of Maimonides concerning God's name “read as it is written” were really understood only when Christian scholars began to take an interest in Hebrew which occurred when a few Jews had converted to Catholicism. These Jews, like Petrus Alfonsi (1062-1110), greatly improved the knowledge of Hebrew and above all of divine Names. With this new knowledge of Hebrew texts, the Dominicans (a powerful missionary order) decided on a confrontation with the Jewish Authorities. The Disputation of Barcelona (1263) was a formal ordered medieval debate between representatives of Christianity and Judaism regarding whether or not Jesus was the Messiah¹⁴⁸. However, Christian theologians did not succeed in

¹⁴⁸ It was held at the royal palace of King James I of Aragon in the presence of the King, his court, and many prominent ecclesiastical dignitaries and knights, between Dominican Friar Pablo Christiani, a convert from Judaism to Christianity, and Rabbi Nahmanides (Ramban), a leading medieval Jewish scholar. Since the Dominicans claimed the victory, Nahmanides felt compelled to publish the controversy. King James ordered to a committee the removal of passages deemed offensive from the Talmud. It consisted of Bishop of Barcelona Arnaldo de Guerbo, Raymond de Penyafort, and the Dominicans Arnaldo de Legarra, Pedro de Janua and Ramón Martí (1220-1284).

winning that debate. In order to help Christian theologians to debate better with rabbis, Ramón Martí began writing from 1269, until his death in 1284, a study book of biblical texts in Hebrew: called *Pugio Fidei* "Dagger of Faith".

Among the numerous controversies between Christians and Jews, Martí tackled for the first time the question of the pronunciation of God's name, not to know what was its authentic pronunciation, but in order to know whether that name could be pronounced, because the rabbis used to say that it was forbidden to pronounce God's name but according to Maimonides, who quoted the Talmud in his *Guide of the Perplexed*, God's name could be pronounced according to its letters. Martí did not claim that Yohoua was the exact pronunciation, but insisted on the necessity of using it, quoting Isaiah 52:6: *For that reason my people will know my name.*

The work of Martí had a great influence and was copied many times¹⁴⁹. It is noteworthy that in the first copies of the *Pugio Fidei* during the 14th century, God's name is written Yohoua but in two copies it is written Yehoua, instead of Yohoua¹⁵⁰, the Codex Barcinonensis (c. 1350?) and the Codex Majoricanus (dated 1381).

¹⁴⁹ We still have five copies dated between 1300 and 1400, see TRAVELLETTI D. -Front commun: Raymond Martin, al-Ġazālī et les philosophes : analyse de la structure et des sources du premier livre du "Pugio Fidei" (2011, Thèse de Doctorat, Université de Fribourg), pp. 74-75.

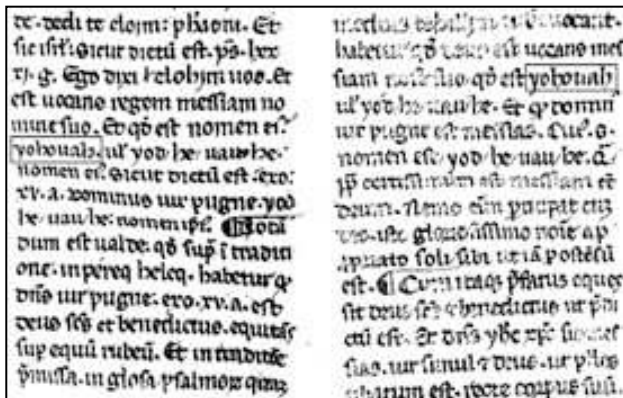
¹⁵⁰ G.F. MOORE - Notes on the Name יהוה (*The American Journal of Theology* 12:1, 1908), pp. 34-52.

Surprisingly, most of the academics who followed would not be interested themselves in the question of the pronunciation. For example, Arnaldus of Villa Nova, a former student of Ramón Martí, would indeed be most interested in God's name, shown by his work entitled *Allocutio super Tetragramaton* (1292), but his considerations of the pronunciation of the Name are more of cabalistic nature. He mixed the vocalism and symbolism of the letters, in order to make links between the name 'Jesus' and the Tetragram. Although he mentioned the equivalences of the consonants Y and W with their respective vowels I and U, he did not come to any conclusion on the pronunciation of the Tetragram but instead he linked its resemblance written IHVH, with the name of Jesus, written either IHS, or IHESVS. He then speculated on the place of these letters I, H, V within these names and on their respective symbolism in proving the Trinity. In contrast a Christian copyist made a lengthy commentary¹⁵¹ (dated around 1300) of the part dedicated to the name of four letters Yohoua which is spelled: *yod he uau he* in Hebrew.

Another Christian scholar, Porchetus de Salvaticis, completed a book (dated 1303): *Porchetus' Victory Against the Ungodly Hebrews*, in which

¹⁵¹ R. MARTI - Incipit phemium pugionem christianorum ad impiorum perfidiam jugulandam et maxime judeorum Coimbra (c. 1300), Biblioteca Geral Digital Universidade de Coimbra, ms.720 fol. CLXXXIIv, CLXXXIII.

he regularly used the spelling Yohouah¹⁵² (Ihouah in later versions after 1500).



Like Martini, he quoted Maimonides to justify his assertions on the Name. He repeated that the tetragram, written *yod he uau he*, was the only name of God. He insisted on the fact that one had to mention God's name to be blessed (Psalms 20:1,7; 79:6,9; Micah 5:4), and that that name could not have disappeared, because it is written: *only the very name of the wicked ones will rot* (Proverbs 10:7). Concerning pronunciation, he showed the absurdity of agreeing on one hand to pronounce the shortened name Yah in the expression Alleluia “Praise Yah” and to refuse on the other hand to pronounce God’s name, since YH and YHWH are considered, each separately, to be God’s name (Psalms 68:4; 83:18); Thus why allow the pronunciation of one and not the other? These relevant remarks were reserved for the very small circle of the Christian and Jewish scholars in their debates. However, most of the population

was in deep ignorance on this subject, and, to make matters worse, some erudite theologians taught their flocks that it was absurd to name God. For example, the famous theologian Thomas Gallus, abbot of Verceil, asserted in many of his works on God's name, such as *Explanatio de divinis nominibus* (dated 1242), that it was impossible for man to name God.

A famous Talmudist, Pablo de Sancta Maria of Burgos, converted to Catholicism in 1390, copied the Bible of Nicholas of Lyra adding his own comments¹⁵³ to those already existing, including one concerning the pronunciation of the Name. After comments on Exodus 3:14, he indicated that the Tetragram was spelt Y.h.b.h (in Spanish b is pronounced as v), and that this name was very close to the name of Jesus (Y.h.v.), because these two names both had 4 letters, the 1st letter and the 3rd one being the same (y and v). He pointed out that the consonants y and v could serve as vowels (for i and u), and that the Hebraic guttural, that is the *ayn*, was unknown in the Latin language, which increased the resemblance between these two names (Ihua and Isuâ). However, he did not vocalize either of these names in the Hebraic language. Once again, the explanations given by Paulos of Burgos did not concern the true pronunciation of God's name but only its links with Jesus' name (transcribed into Hebrew).

¹⁵² PORCHETO DE SALVAIGNIS - Victoria Porcheti adversus impios Hebraeos (1380, Bibliothèque municipale de Dijon ms 231 fol. 169).

¹⁵³ PAULUS DE SANCTA MARIA - Additiones ad Postillam Nicolai de Lyra (1429, Bibliothèque Royale Albert Ier, ms. 240 fol. 36-38).

Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, an erudite theologian, was fascinated by this subject on which he commented repeatedly in his sermons. For example he dedicated his first sermon (on John 1:1) to explaining the links between God's name and the name of Jesus. For example, in this sermon entitled *In Principio Erat Verbum*, written around 1428, he explained, based on Maimonides' works, the various names of God and the meaning of the Tetragram, which he vocalized Iehoua. In this sermon¹⁵⁴, he began to develop the idea that Jesus was the "speaking" element (the Word) of the "unspeakable/ ineffable" God. He explained in another sermon¹⁵⁵, written around 1440, that the name of Jesus "saviour" is pronounced Ihesua in Hebrew, and this name "Saviour" is also the Word of God. He indicated that the unspeakable name is Ihehoua in Hebrew. In two other sermons¹⁵⁶, written in 1441, he pursued the connection between the unspeakable Greek Tetragram, spelt *Iot, He, Vau, He*, and the "speaking" name of Ihesus which he often wrote Ihus. Then in a sermon written in 1445, he explained in detail the grammatical reasons permitting a link between these two names. God's name is the Greek Tetragram which

is spelt in Hebrew *Ioth, He, Vau, He* (YHWH); these four letters serve as vowels, corresponding to I, E, O, A in Greek¹⁵⁷, because in this language there is no specific vowel for the sound OU¹⁵⁸. So, in Greek, the writing Ieoua would be more exact than Ieôa and would better reflect the OU sound of the Hebrew name Ieoua, becoming in Latin Iehova or Ihehova, because the letter H is inaudible and the vowel U also serves as a consonant (V). He noted finally that the Hebraic form IESŪA of the name "Jesus" is distinguished from the divine name only by a holy letter Š which is interpreted as the "elocution" or the Word of God, also the salvation of God. He would continue this parallel, between God's name (Ieoua) and the name of Jesus (Iesoua) in yet another sermon¹⁵⁹. However towards the end of his life he wrote several important works: *De Possess* (1460), *Non Aliud* (1462), to explain the purely symbolic character of God's name which had all names and so none in particular. Contrary to his books, his sermons were not widely diffused.

Cardinal of Cusa was the first scholar who clearly distinguished between the transcription of the tetragram in Greek IEUE and its pronunciation in Greek IEOUA, according to the Hebrew text, as well

¹⁵⁴ NICOLAI DE CUSA - Opera omnia. Sermo I. In principio erat verbum (1970, Felix Meiner. Academia Heidelbergensis Tom. XVI:1, pp. 1-19).

¹⁵⁵ NICOLAI DE CUSA - Opera omnia. Sermo XX Nomen eius Jesus (1977) Tom. XVI:3, pp. 301-317.

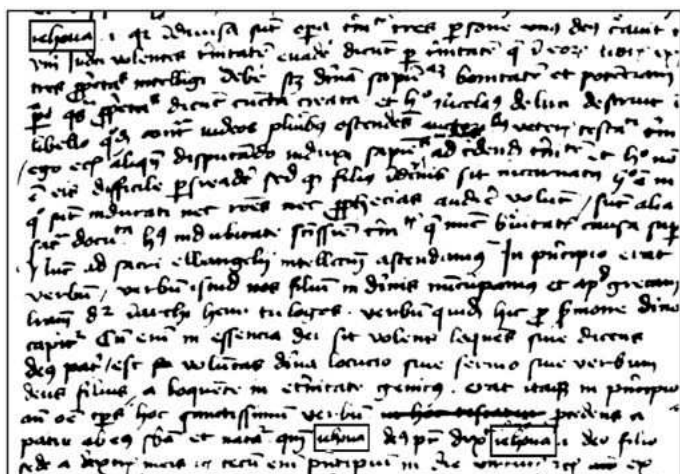
¹⁵⁶ NICOLAI DE CUSA - Opera omnia. Sermo XXIII, XXIV Domine, in lumine vultus tui (1984) Tom. XVI:4, pp. 358-433.

¹⁵⁷ NICOLAI DE CUSA - Opera omnia. Sermo XLVIII Dies sanctificatus (1991) Tom. XVII:2, pp. 200-212.

¹⁵⁸ The letter U in Greek is pronounced as the French Ü.

¹⁵⁹ NICOLAI DE CUSA - Opera omnia. Sermo LXXI (Felix Meiner. Academia Litterarum Heidelbergensis, Tom. XVII:4).

as the transcription of the tetragram in Latin IHVH and its pronunciation in Latin IEHOVA¹⁶⁰.



Cultivated readers nevertheless began to take advantage of this important information. For example, Denis the Carthusian, who was a close friend of Nicholas of Cusa, was also a fervent reader of Rabbi Paulus (Paul of Burgos). Denis wrote a commentary on the book of Exodus *Enarrationes in Exodum*, around 1455, in which he explained that from Rabbi Paulus he knew God's name, vocalized Iehouah¹⁶¹. However, at that time, the knowledge of Hebrew remained still low among Christian scholars and they used variants of the pronunciation given by cardinal of Cusa. For example, Marsilio Ficino¹⁶² indicated in his *Book of the Christian Religion*¹⁶³, published around

¹⁶⁰ NIKOLAUS DE CUSA - Codex Cusanus 220 dated 1430. Berkastel-Kues Germany. Bibliothek des Cusanus Stites, fol. 56,57.

¹⁶¹ DIONYSIUS CARTUSIANUS - *Enarrationes pie ac eruditae: In quinque Mosaicae legis libros* Quentel, 1534, fol CLVI.

¹⁶² He was an Italian scholar and Catholic priest who was one of the most influential humanist philosophers of the early Italian Renaissance. He was also an astrologer, a reviver of Neoplatonism
¹⁶³ MARSILII FICINI FLORENTINI - *Liber de Christiana Religione*. Capitulum XXX (1474, British Museum Library C.9.b.4. fol. 83b).

1474, that God's name was Hiehouahi and that this name expressed all the tenses of the verb “to be” (Jewish tradition).

et solus recte pronūciare sciebat nomē illud dei propriū: quod est apud uos præ cæteris uenerādū. & quia quatuor solū litteris cōstat: & illis quidem uocalibus difficillimē omnium pronūciatur. sonat autem ferme in hunc modum.
¶ **Hiehouahi**. i. fuit: est: erit. Atq; hæc maior hebreorū pars opināē. Sitatē: cū nihil apud uos hoc noie sanctius habeat

Johannes Wessel Gansfort, the spiritual father of Martin Luther, preferred (around 1476) the form Iohuah in his treatises¹⁶⁴.

spiritū sanctū edoctus Moyses, deū per essentiam, ita iah & iohuah noiauit, quasi cetera omnia entia non sint, adeo ut ultimum dei nomen etiā in patria, magis eieieh azer, q̄ iah & iohuah, quia quātūcūq; uel per se existentē, uel uenientē uel uidentē uel cognoscentē uel sapientem cognoscunt, & beate cognoscūt semper, quo cognoscibilis nō cognoscatur omnibus beatis, etiam beatorū primis, ut supra. l. pre. ca. xi. Et hoc est eieieh azer eieieh, nomen, quo ipse se nominat sapientibus, & quo sapientes deum cognoscentes ab eieieh azer eieieh, hinc iah & iohuah, hinc iahi, hinc iah, hinc iadath, hinc chakma forbet alaba, sed ipse eieieh azer eieieh, sanctum & terribile nomen, beatorū humilitatem fouens, quod semper beate super capita eorū intonat. Ero qui ero. Et ipse

Johann Reuchlin, one of the founders of Hebraic and Greek studies in Europe, published his *De Verbo Mirifico* (in 1494) mainly to defend the IEUE transcription (liber III Cap. XII-XIX). He supposed that the final letter of Jesus’ name had to be E because in the Vulgate the name IESU was sometimes spelt IESUE¹⁶⁵. He emphasized that this Greek transcription had the advantage of reintroducing the four vowels of God’s name, however, the Latin transcription being IHVH he specified in order to harmonize these two transcriptions that the Greek

¹⁶⁴ JOANNES WESSEL GANSFORTIUS - *Tractatus* () Wesseli. De Oriatione. Pars III lib III, cap XI-XI. 1521, British Library 477.a.41(3) fol XXXIX.

¹⁶⁵ Ezra 3:2 and 1 Samuel 6:14, Iesue is also found in the Septuagint in 1 Chronicles 7:27.

letter E was the equivalent of the Latin H. So the Greek form IESUE would give the Latin form IHSVH. One of the most brilliant scholars of this time, the Italian humanist Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, friend and former student of Marsilio Ficino, studied the etymology of God's name in his *Disputianum Adversus Astrologos* (in 1496). Due to his vast knowledge he made brilliant links, which however proved to be rather daring. To prove the superiority of the Bible he tried to demonstrate that heathen religions were in fact plagiarisms of biblical religion. He asserted for example that the Roman god Jupiter was in fact an idolatrous imitation of the God of the Hebrews, and that even the etymology of this name Jupiter "IOVE-pater" (Jove-father) was a fraudulent copy of it (Liber V,VI).

The scholarly explanations of Reuchlin and Pico della Mirandola have impressed very much, but they were completely wrong.

- ❖ The etymology of God's name which would have come from the name Jove according to the change in time: Jupiter << Jove-pitar << Jova-pater, is completely fanciful¹⁶⁶.
- ❖ There is a constant confusion between the transcription of the name Jesus into Latin (IHSU) and its usual vocalization IESU.
- ❖ The paralleling of transcriptions of God's name into Hebrew (YHWH),

Greek (IEUE) and Latin (IHSVH) with those of the name of Jesus into Hebrew (YSW'), Greek (IESUE) and Latin (IHSVH) are false, because the transcriptions of the name of Jesus are ISU into Greek and IHSV into Latin. Furthermore, the name of Jesus is usually vocalized in Hebrew: Yešua' (ישוע), never Yehšuah (יהשוה).

The constructed form by Kabbalist Reuchlin of the Hebrew name of Jesus, YHŠWH (יהשוה), is called the pentagram "five letters" and it is usually vocalized Yahshuah. The first ones to take a name of Jesus as pentagram YHŠWH "Yahshuah" were Renaissance occultists.

Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples¹⁶⁷ disagreed with the form IHSVH for Jesus' name. In his biblical commentary of the book of Psalms, *Quintuple Psalms* (in 1509), he explains that thanks to the remarks of Reuchlin, it was easy to pronounce IHVH as it is written, that is I-HE-U-HE. However he observed a major disagreement because according to Hebrew the name of Jesus was IHSVA or IHESVA instead of IHESV but never IHSVH (or IHESVHE).

Christi dñi. bibebat eni(inquit)de spiritali cōsequēte eos petra. petra autē erat Christi. est eni & petra nostra & saluator noster. sed & pater filij petra & saluator est. petra quidē ex psalmi 30 ver su quanto. sed & saluator. dicit (ingt)ate mee salus tua ego sū. Verū & Iesus hic cōmune nomē est & scribit p ain hebrei i fine. ppriū autē saluatoris & dei nostri nomē tetragrāmaton cōtinet: sū me dia littera hinc inde triadē cōnectente. tūc eni velligiū sue veritati /uoq; exēplari infertū /id est qd ad imaginē & similitudinē dei fuerat in principio creatū a diuino verbo assumptū: & tūc ineffabile effabile factū est. v. in annotationib* psalmi 71 dicitū est. ppriū sic repñentat IHSVH. cōmune sic IHSVA & interdū merathesi litterarū IHVSA. ¶ Scōto verū. ꝑocupem* facē eius in cōfēssioe: ex hebreo: ꝑocupem* vultū ei* in grārū actioe. quasi id velit. ꝑpheta/anticipem* aduentū ei* in

Est nomē eius in eternū /vltā solē perferabūt nomē eius. quod etiā & si de benedictō nomine IHESV intelligatur. nichil abs onū. Nā de iero autore Paulo est nomē quod est super omne nomē. & de quo ad Romanos: IHESVS Christus heri & hodie ipse & in secula. qd & toti versū quadrat. & de quo Petrus in Actis. nō est in aliquo alio salus. nec eni aliud est nomē sub celo datū hominibus in quo oporteat nos saluos fieri. quod & sequēt versū haud inaccommodabile videtur /vbi dicit. & benedicentur in ipso oēs tribus terre: omnes gentes magnificabunt eū. Cū in sermonibus /cri- sic hoc admirabile & benedictū nomē: totū in se claudere cum media sū /id est littera magnū del ineffabile nomē tetragrāmaton /quatuor litteris loth. he. vau. he. confiatū. quod hīs litteris nostris quoquo pacto representare possumus I H E V H E. iunctim sic I H E V H E. iunge igitur sū /id est f in medio: fiet IHESVHE nomē benedictū regis nostri & saluatoris omnium. & deo incarnato / ineffabile factū est effabile. Illud idē scripsit Mirandola. & de eodē librū edidit elegantissimus: & sine cō

¹⁶⁶ In fact the name Jove comes from an ancient Mycenaean word Diwei "daylight" (c. 1200 BCE) >> Diuvei >> Iouei >> Jove. There was another change: Diwos >> Diuos >> Djios/Dieus >> Zeus/Deus.

¹⁶⁷ He was the first French translator of the Hebrew Bible into French.

When Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples published a few sermons of Nicholas of Cusa¹⁶⁸ in 1514, he used the form Iehoua for God's name, but neither Ieheve nor Iova. However, several Bible translators influenced by the scholarly explanations of Reuchlin and Pico della Mirandola regarding the etymology of God's name, chose to use the new name Iova instead of Iehoua. For example, a friend of Pico della Mirandola, Agostino Giustiniani¹⁶⁹ used it in his *Psalterium*¹⁷⁰ (in 1516). The name IOVA appears in Psalm L.

נִמְרֹתַי וְעִמְרֹתַי לְעִיבָא	nemorum, & preparavi iustis	דָּרָא עִיבָא	data est lex &c. Sed
בְּגַרְדֵּיזִין בְּעֵינֵיזִין דְּבִיזִין	in horto deliciarum animalia munda	וְעִיבָא	nuncq̄d perit alter eo
וְעִיבָא	& bouē filuestrē qui pascitur quotidie	וְעִיבָא	rū ELOHIM. f. se
			folo & alter ē IOVA
			se. fe folo, se paracimeg

Giustiniani believed that the name Iova (or Ioua) was an alteration of the name Jupiter.

אֵינִי אֵינִי תִּקְוָה	in corde tuo ero fortis	וְעִיבָא	in misericordia tua, q̄
וְעִיבָא	sicut tu, arguam te in hoc mundo,	וְעִיבָא	quidem est ipsum no-
וְעִיבָא	& ordinabo gehennam	וְעִיבָא	men Dei tetragram-
			maton .i. יהוה Ioua.
			Et uocabit totam terrā
			ut cognoscere eos

When the manuscript entitled *Porchetus' Victory Against the Ungodly Hebrews* was published in 1520, the name Yohouah was replaced by Ihouah. Sébastien Chateillon explained in his book *Dialogorum Sacrorum*, published in 1549, that the name IOVA (or IOUA), even

though it might have a link with the name Jupiter (Jove-pater), should be used in the Bible, which he did in his Latin translation (in 1551). He used the name Ioua systematically and translated exactly the famous verse Exodus 3:14 as “I shall be who I shall be (*ero qui ero*)”, not as the usual “I am who I am” (*ego sum qui sum*).

Despite appearances there was no controversy in the early 16th century on the pronunciation of God's name among Hebrew scholars. The only dispute was to know which language to use: Hebrew of the Torah, Greek of the Septuagint or Latin of the Vulgate, for harmonizing God's name Iehoua with theophoric names. Indeed, there was a problem with Jesus because this name vocalized Yešua‘ in Hebrew, was vocalized Iesus in the Septuagint and Jesus in the Vulgate of Jerome but the name Joshua which is vocalized Yehošua‘ in Hebrew, was vocalized Iesus in the Septuagint and Josue in the Vulgate. Jerome chose to change the Greek name Jesus (Yehošua‘ in Hebrew) to the Latin name Josue, in order to distinguish Joshua from Jesus, but this choice is incorrect because the Hebrew name Yošua‘ never existed. The best choice would have been to vocalize this name Jesua (Yehošua‘), rather than Joshua, to keep the closeness with the Greek name Iesou (Yešua‘). This choice would have enabled the reader to see easily the phonetic similarity between God's name: Iehoua (Jehova), and Jesus' name: Iesoua (Jesua).

¹⁶⁸ JACQUES LEFÈVRE D'ÉTAPLES - Nicolas de Cusa Excitionvm Paris 1514 Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal Fol.B.1298(2) fol. XII,XIV,LII,LIV.

¹⁶⁹ He was a Catholic bishop, linguist and geographer.

¹⁷⁰ Besides the Hebrew text, the Septuagint translation, the Chaldee paraphrase, and an Arabic version, his Bible contains the Vulgate translation, a new Latin translation by the editor, a Latin translation of the Chaldee paraphrase, and a collection of scholia.

the uncertainty about the pronunciation of God's name. This explanation marked a milestone in establishing the divine name as Iehoua, and thus convinced some translators to use it in their translations of the Bible, at least in certain verses. To summarize: the Hebrew name (1st line) is vocalized according to the Septuagint (2nd line), the Vulgate (3rd line), vowels letters (4th line), the Masorettes (5th line), Galatino (6th and last line).

Joshua	Judah	Jehu	YHWH
Yhwšw‘	Yhwdh	Yhw’	Yhwh
Iesus	Ioudas	Ieou	(Adonay)
Iosue	Iudas	Iehu	Dominus
Ihōšûa‘	Ihūdâ	Ihû’	Ihûâ
Y ^e hōšûa‘	Y ^e hūdâ	Yehû’	Y ^e howâ
Iehosua	Iehouda	Iehou	Iehoua

Galatino did not use the punctuation given by the Masorettes to vocalize the tetragram but only the vocalization of all Hebrew names beginning with YHW-, which are always vocalized in Ieho-, without exception. It is noteworthy that he used the book *Epistle of Secrets*¹⁷², written by Paulus de Heredia, a Christian cabalist who explains that the Hebrew verbal form in Hebrew close to *yhwh*, is the imperfect *piel* of the verb “to be”, vocalized *yehaune* which means “*He will make to be*”¹⁷³.

Sunt uerba diuersa quæ unū ostēdunt. Postq̄ aut̄ hoc tibi aperui animaduerte nomē q̄tuor l̄ræ: put̄ scriptio ē. & sic scribit̄ i hebraico id est yehauue: ipsū deū generatē significat

¹⁷² PAULUS DE HEREDIA - Epistola Neumia filii Haccanae de Secretia (1488, Bibliothèque Nationale Française, Res D-67975) fol. 1-5.

¹⁷³ Or “*He will constitute*”. The *Qal* verbal form *yihweb* (in Ec 11:3) means “*He will prove to be*”.

In his *Epistle of Secret*¹⁷⁴, Paulus of Heredia distinguished between the pronunciation of God’s name: Iehoua, according to Hebrew, and its cabalistic meaning¹⁷⁵ *yehawe* “*He will make to be*” according to linguistic. It is clear that the cabalistic meaning of God's name did not play any role in its vocalization. For example, Michael Servetus¹⁷⁶ in his *De Trinitatis Erroribus* “On the Errors of the Trinity” published in 1531, explains that the name Iehouah is close to the name of Jesus (Iesua), which means “salvation” (Iesua) in Hebrew. He also explained, that Iehouah means “*He causes to be*” in Hebrew.

lus et salutare. Christus est Euangelium, hoc saluta
re Christum esse interpretatur. Lxx. וְיֵשׁוּעַ
אלו. Eadem ratione angelus, nomen Iesu, salutare
interpretatus est. De eodem, uoxa dicitur Habacuc li
xit Maria, Exultabit spiritus meus in Deo salutare
meo, Habacuc enim dixerat, in Elolium saluari meo.
Et licet Iehouah dicatur salutare, quia per Christum
saluatur, tamen nunquam conunguntur, nunquam leguntur
יְהוָה יֵשׁוּעַ. Sed quod est etiam notabile post 20
uocem Iehouah, aduē solet de וְיֵשׁוּעַ id est, de
hic est Elolium, Christus saluator. Similiter patre de
monstrato, q̄te est Iehouah et letabitur in Iesuato,
id est, in Iesu eius, in salutare eius Christo: est enim
nomen eius וְיֵשׁוּעַ Iehouah, quod etiam ponitur
Psal. 11. 13-16. 20-20. וְאִלְפִי יְהוָה לֹחֲמִים
potest וְיֵשׁוּעַ, id est, essentia finis, essentiarum ga
nitor, esse facies essentiam, essendi causa. Cabalistic
sua secretat relinquo: et plane dico, q̄ (ut Ioh̄ Ioh̄
sum nobis indicat) est futurum p̄ict, quod est signifi
cationis altius, et adde וְיֵשׁוּעַ Iesu ponitur וְיֵשׁוּעַ

The demonstration of Galatino was accepted by all Hebrew scholars. For example, Sebastian Münster, the best German scholar in Hebrew of this time, used the name Iehoua in his Chaldean grammar¹⁷⁷ published in 1526 (he also used the name Iehosvae instead of Josue).

EX PSALTERIO CHALDAICO.
חוס עלי וי ארום קרמך אצלי כל יומא : אחר ינשא
ךעבך Sic legas: Hus alai I E H O V A ærum koda
mach æzalle kal ioma : æhade naphscha deabdach.
Interpretatio eius: Miserere super me domine quor

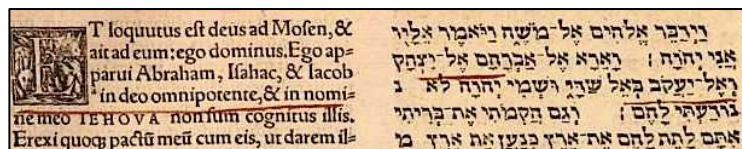
¹⁷⁴ The Hebrew title of this booklet is *Gale Razeya* (Cod. Vat. Lat. 4582, fol. 4r–24v).

¹⁷⁵ The Cabalists despise the simplistic meaning *yihweb* “*He will prove to be*” found in the Bible.

¹⁷⁶ Michel Servetus was a Spanish theologian, physician, and Renaissance humanist, was renowned for his scholarly study of the Bible in its original languages.

¹⁷⁷ S. MUNSTERUM - Chaldaica grammatical, Basileae, 1527, p. 16.

The same year, Martin Luther wrote in a sermon¹⁷⁸ on Jeremiah 23:1-8: *This name Iehouah, Lord, belongs exclusively to the true God.* A few years later Münster used the name Iehova in Exodus 6:3 when he published his own translation of the Bible¹⁷⁹, despite the fact that he thought this name came from “Iouis pater”.



William Tyndale, with his burning desire to make the Bible known to the people made a new translation. The Name first appeared in an English Bible in 1530, when he published a translation of the first five books of the Bible. He included the name of God, usually spelled Iehouah, in several verses¹⁸⁰, and he wrote in a note in this edition: *Iehovah is God's name (...) Moreover as oft as thou seist LORD in great letters (except there be any error in the printing) it is in Hebrew Iehovah*¹⁸¹. Thomas Cajetan¹⁸², He compensated his ignorance of Hebrew by consulting rabbis and through his familiarity with the

Greek text. From 1523 to 1532 he published in several volumes a literal translation and commentary on the Bible¹⁸³. His emphasis on the search for the literal meaning of the text places him at the origins of the modern Catholic exegetical tradition. Thanks to his knowledge of Hebrew he improved the Latin translation of the Bible, for example: *The Book of Iosue* became *The Book of Iehosua* and in his comments on the books of Moses¹⁸⁴, published in 1531, he used the name Iehouah frequently.

Many competent Hebrew scholars having been convinced by the arguments of Galatino did not dare using the name Iehoua, except in private, in their Hebrew grammars or in their translation of the Bible. For example, Santes Pagnino¹⁸⁵ was the first Hebrew scholar after Jerome to translate the Bible directly from the Hebrew text alone. He was the

¹⁷⁸ M. LUTHER - Ain Epiftel aufz dem Prophete Jeremia. Wittemberg 1527.

¹⁷⁹ S. MUNSTERI - En tibi lector Hebraica Latina. Basileae 1534 pp. 56v, 57.

¹⁸⁰ Genesis 15:2; Exodus 6:3 15:3 17:16 23:17 33:19 34:23; Deuteronomy 3:24.

¹⁸¹ Most English translations of this time mentioned the name of God, very often in Exodus 6:3, except for the Coverdale translation (1535). Matthew's Bible (1537) explained about Exodus 6:3: *Iehouah is the name of God, and none creature has been named like it, it means: this one who is himself and who depends of no thing.*

¹⁸² He was an Italian philosopher, theologian, cardinal and the Master of the Order of Preachers, also stands as exegete.

¹⁸³ Including a large part of the Old Testament and almost all of the New Testament with the exception of the Apocalypse of John.

¹⁸⁴ T. DE VIO CAJETAN -In quinque libros Mosis iuxta sensum lit. commentarii (1531, Antonium Bladum).

¹⁸⁵ Pagnino was born 1470 at Lucca, in Tuscany, central Italy. At sixteen he took the religious habit at San Domenico in Fiesole, where he studied under the direction of Savonarola and other eminent professors. In acquiring the Oriental languages, then cultivated at Florence, he displayed unwonted quick sightedness, ease and penetration. His genius, industry and erudition won him influential friends, among them the Cardinals de Medici, subsequently popes Leo X and Clement VII. He was the first to divide the text into chapters and verses. Ever since, his division of the Old Testament has become standard. The merit of his Bible translation lies in its literal adherence to the Hebrew, which won for it the preference of contemporary rabbis and induced Leo X to assume the expenses of publication until his death.

author of a new Latin translation of the Bible from the original languages (*Veteris et Novi Testamenti nova translatio*, 1527) as well as a monumental Thesaurus of the Holy Tongue (*Thesaurus linguae sanctae*, 1529). However, among all his works he never used the name Iehoua, only Adonai, in order not to offend his colleagues among the rabbis

Following the example of early translators, Pierre Robert Olivétan preferred to use occasionally the form Iehouah in his Bible translation into French (in 1535), while recognizing that the tetragram could also be pronounced Ioua (according to the Vulgate). Antonio Brucieli preferred to use the form Ieova (once) in his Bible translation into Italian (in 1535) and François Vatable used frequently the form Iehoua in his Bible translation into Latin (in 1545) but Martin Bucer preferred to use systematically, either Iehouah or Iehouæ (in 1547) in his translation of the book of Psalms.

Strongly influenced by the remarks of Reuchlin and Pico della Mirandola, the grammarians of this time believed that Iehoua was an improvement on the name Jupiter (Jove), a deformation of Ioua-pater “Father Ioua”. Angelo Canini¹⁸⁶ clarified however, in his grammar¹⁸⁷, written in 1554, that he preferred Iehoua to Ioua, because Iehoua more closely resembled names Ieshoua and Iehouda. Consequently after 1555, all

translators adopted the form Iehoua, coming from Galatino, and some of them used it systematically in the entire Bible as did the French translator Robert Estienne in 1556, the Spanish translator Casiodoro de Reina in 1569, and many others.

It is noteworthy that the form Iehoua, used by Christian scholars, has never been challenged by Jewish scholars. For example, Immanuel Tremellius¹⁸⁸ was an Italian Jewish convert to Christianity. He was known as a leading Hebraist and Bible translator. He published his Grammar of Syriac and Hebrew (*Grammatica chaldaea et syra*) in 1568 but his chief literary work was a Latin translation of the Bible from the Hebrew and Syriac, published between 1575 and 1579, in which he systematically used the name Jehova.

However, suspicion towards the vocalization Iehoua had appeared when it finally won linguistically. The debate over the use of Iehoua or Ioua had been a technical quarrel restricted to Hebrew scholars. However, when the conclusions of their debate began reaching readers of the Bible, it became much more theological and controversial. As was the case in the past, the modern prophets of the Lord are those: *who think to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, even as their fathers forgot my name for the “Lord (Baal)”* (Jeremiah 23:27).

¹⁸⁶ Angelus Caninius was an Italian grammarian, linguist and scholar from Anghiari.

¹⁸⁷ ANGELO CANINI- De nomine Iesv et Iova. Institutiones linguae Syriacae (Lyon, 1554).

¹⁸⁸ He was born at Ferrara, and educated at the University of Padua. He was converted about 1540 to the Catholic faith through Cardinal Pole, but embraced Protestantism in the following year, and went to Strasbourg to teach Hebrew.

Jehovah, a controversial pronunciation: why?

From the late 16th century the name of Iehoua began to be disputed not by linguists but by Christian theologians. In fact, the real reasons behind this quarrel against God's name was theological because the majority of Bible translators at that time, as well as qualified Hebraists, were either Waldensian supporters like Pierre Robert Olivétan, François Vatable, Robert Estienne or worse, anti-Trinitarians like Michael Servetus and Sébastien Castellion.

The first antagonist was Archbishop Gilbert Genebrard, who, in his book written in 1568 to defend the Trinity, dedicated several pages to God's name in an effort to refute Casteillon, Galatino, Pagnino, and others who had used Iehoua. For example, he argued that the name Iehoua resulted from a change of the heathen name Ioue (Jupiter) into Ioua then Iehoua; he specified that the verbal form *yhwé* "He is" should be read Iehue, not Iehoua. First of all, he rejected Chateillon's Ioua using Saint Augustine's explanation, via Varro, that the Jews had worshiped Ioue (Jove-pater), and therefore the use of Ioua was a return to paganism. In the foreword to his commentary on Psalms he went so far as to state that the name Ioua was barbarian, fictitious and irreligious. Concerning the writings of Clement of Alexandria (Iaou), Jerome (Iaho) and Theodoret (Iabe), he considered these as mere variations of Ioue, and that these

testimonies appeared unreliable because, at the time they were written, the Jews had not pronounced the Name for several centuries. Lastly, he claimed that Galatino (as well as Pagnino), who had used the form "Iehoua", had not accounted for the theological meaning "He is" when searching for the right pronunciation. Indeed, since the translation of the Septuagint ("He who is" in Exodus 3:14) it was known that the definition of the divine Name was essentially "He is". Genebrard tried to confirm this definition due to his knowledge of the Hebrew language. So, since in Exodus 3:14 God calls himself "I am", in Hebrew "Ehie", one should say, when speaking about God, "He is", that is in Hebrew "Ihie". Grammatically, the form "Ihie" was likely derived from a more archaic form "Iehue", suggested in 1550 by Luigi Lippomano. Genebrard then pointed out that Abbot Joachim of Flora used this more exact form (Ieue) in his book on the Apocalypse. Genebrard's explanations, although unable to convince, impressed many because of its intellectual approach, and, during the century that followed Bible commentators often noted this form Iehue (or Iiheue) when using the more accepted Iehoua. What is really amazing for a modern reader now is to see that his scholar explanations are either completely irrelevant, false, or absurd.

- ❖ There is absolutely no link between the names Ioue (Jove) and Ioua (Jova). In fact the Latin word “Jove” comes from the Old Greek word “Zeus” (originally written “Diwe” in Minoan), and meant “heavens”. This word “Zeus” appears three times in the New Testament and meant “God” for Greeks. For example, it reads: *they were calling Barnabas “God”* (Acts 14:12). Ironically, because the word “God” meant “heavens” at the origin, the expression “kingdom of heavens” meant “kingdom of Zeus” for Greeks, accordingly some Jewish translators prefer using the Hebrew word “Elohim” (which is holy) instead of the pagan word “God”. As we have seen, the name Ioua (Ihouah) is written without an H because theophoric names in the Vulgate all lost their H, like Iehohanan which became Ioanne (John) instead of Ihohanan.
- ❖ Genebrard's major error was to introduce the theological meaning of the Name into the search for its pronunciation, a process that provoked a profusion of new pronunciations due to the ever increasing knowledge of the Hebrew language and its history. He did not understand that when God gave a meaning for some names, including his own, God had spoken to his prophets not to theologians and he had given prophecies not theological interpretations. For example, when God changed Abram's name to Abraham, he prophesied that his friend Abram was going to become the “*Ab-rab-hamon*”, that is to say the

“Father of a great crowd”, obviously that was not a linguistic explanation. Similarly, Yehowah explained to Moses that his name meant “He will be (*yihweh*) what he chooses to be”.

Despite its gross mistakes, Genebrard's explanations succeeded to influence many Hebraists. For example, translator Benito Arias Montano explained in one of his books (in 1572), that the divine name was never read Iehovih or Iehovah by the Masoretes and he agreed with Genebrard that the old pronunciation was probably Iehveh. Being afraid to favour a name of heathen origin, since he too thought Iehoua resulted from a transformation of Iouis into Ioua, then Iehoua, he replaced this name in his Latin translation of Psalms (in 1574) with IA (surer form). Cardinal Robert Bellarmine asserted moreover (in 1578) that the form Iehoua was erroneous, because it had the vowels e,o,a, of Adonay (a,o,a becoming e,o,a for grammatical reasons!) the word usually read in place of God's name. Although all these accusations were actually a stacking of guesswork based on uncertain knowledge, they would be quickly “improved” by Protestant theologians from 1600 on. This time around, the real reasons behind the quarrel against God's name were once again theological because the majority of Catholic scholars of that time had finally accepted the form Iehouah and this choice displeased Protestant scholars who felt more competent than Catholic scholars.

Attacks against the pronunciation “Iehoua” focused mainly on three points: 1) this vocalization could not be true because it had resulted from a misreading, the vowel-points of Adonay (a,o,a) having been mixed with the consonants of YHWH; 2) the vocalization Iehueh of the verbal form “He is/ He will be”, matching to the religious explanation given in Exodus 3:14, was different to Iehoua and 3) the verbal form Iehueh could come from an archaic Iahueh because the oldest testimonies of the pronunciation of God's name were Iaô/ Iaho or Iave, according to ancient historians. For example, Johannes van den Driesche, a Flemish Protestant divine, distinguished specially as an Orientalist, published in 1603 a long article dedicated to the pronunciation of God's name (*Tetragrammaton sive de nomine dei proprio*) in order to discredit the vocalization Iehoua. His main arguments were that the Masoretic punctuation of the tetragram (e,o,a) could not be used as a basis for pronouncing God's name because it was a traditional reading of Adonay; hence the form Iehovih, resulting from Elohim (ê,o,i), would be nonsense. He thus concluded that Iehovah was also a barbarism. He repeated the same arguments as Genebrard against Ioua, and then reminded his audience that according to the best grammarians of his time the expression “He is” should be pronounced Ieheve meaning “*He will be*” (as in Ecclesiastes 11:3). He then

theorized, using a few examples that the form Ieheve resulted from an archaic Iahave or Iahveh, and in conclusion noted that this form Iahave was very similar to the Samaritan pronunciation Iave given by Theodoret. Although all these arguments were backed by great scholarship, they remained still a stacking of guesswork based on an uncertain knowledge. However this very complicated explanation intended to justify the form Iahveh has disconcerted some translators who had used the “simplistic” Iehoua. Once again, what is really amazing is to see that these scholarly explanations are either completely irrelevant, false, or absurd.

- ❖ The vowels of Adonay are *a,o,a*, obviously not *e,o,a*, and the vowels of Yehowah are *e,o,a* not *a,o,a*.
- ❖ The vowels *e,o,a* of Yehowah have never been used to vocalize God's name, they were used to indicate the traditional reading Adonay, in the same way that the vowels *ê,o,i* were used to indicate the traditional reading Elohim, not to vocalize the tetragram “Yêhowih”.

Louis Cappel, a French Protestant churchman and Hebrew scholar, dedicated almost one hundred pages to the pronunciation of the Name in one of his articles¹⁸⁹ published in 1650. As well as resuming many of Drusius' arguments, he explained a few new ideas. For example, he argued that the first syllable was certainly Iah-, because many names had lost their

¹⁸⁹ IOANNIS CAPPELLI -Critica Sacra, pp. 666-739.

initial vowel, for example Nabû in the Septuagint had become Nebô in the Masoretic text, consequently Yahûh could have become Yehôh¹⁹⁰, in addition he noted that most ancient witnesses (hence the most reliable) usually mentioned Iaô, and for this last reason he preferred Iahuoh to Iahave or Iahue. Cappel's work deeply impressed Protestant circles. For example, Jean Le Clerc, a Swiss Protestant theologian and biblical scholar, who was famous for promoting exegesis, or critical interpretation of the Bible, quoted Cappel in his *Ars Critica* published in 1696, to explain why he preferred Jahvoh to Jehovah¹⁹¹. However, after further examination of this complex issue, Le Clerc changed his mind and preferred Jahveh to Jahvoh.

What is surprising in his argument is that it is purely philosophical and takes no account of linguistic laws. He explained first that, according to the testimony of Jerome (Iaho), the vocalization of the tetragram could be Jahavoh, Jahvoh or Jahwoh¹⁹² but according to Theodotet (Iave), the vocalization of the tetragram could be Javeh or Jahweh. To choose between these two possibilities he appealed to philosophy. According to the text of Exodus 3:14 the meaning of the tetragram (YHWH) comes from the verb “to be” in Hebrew (HYH) or

Aramaic (HWH). According to the Septuagint, God’s name means “He who is” while according to the Vulgate it means “He is” whereas to Hebrew it means “He will be”. To solve the problem, Leclerc offered a new definition of God's name, because God is the Creator of everything “He makes to be” everything¹⁹³. In Hebrew there are only two possible ways to express this idea: 1) the factitive form *yehawêb* (piel) “He makes to be” or the causative form *yahawêb* (hiphil) “He causes to be”.

Dubium non est quin vox ab יהוה facta deri-
vetur, quo factum ut suspicaret Deum voca-
bulum יהוה sibi sumisse, non quod sua natura
sit, adeoque aeternitate gaudeat, sed quod effi-
ciat ut res sint, quasi esset futurum Hiphil
יהוה aut Pihel יהוה, faciet ut sit: quae sola signi-
ficatio & huic loco & pluribus aliis convenit,
ut paulò diligentius ostendemus, quoniam res
est nova, & à nemine adhuc, quem norim,
excogitata. Uno verbo Græcè non inelegerit
dixeris *ἰσχυροῦς ἐξιστήναι ἐφέλλομαι*, quæ vo-
ce *Clemens Alexandrinus* aliique Patres usi sunt,
ut significetur ὁ θεὸς ἰσχυρὸς πάντων ἐγγύς ἐστιν.
Vult ergo Deus se Abrahamo, Isaac & Jaco-
bo ea specimina potentiae suae ostendisse, ut
non possent dubitare quin, ad omnia quae pol-
liceretur olim præstanda, esset יהוה *schaddai*,
hoc est, satis potens; sed tamen maximorum
illorum promissorum eventum ab his non fuisse
conspectum, qui jam (יהוה) ut esset facturus
erat, eumque ob oculos Israëlitis positurus.
Hinc Deus hic orationem orditur his verbis
יהוה אני ego *Jehova*, hoc est, is sum qui re-
præstiturus sum quod olim promisi. Idem re-
petit vers. 6, & 8. postquam promissa illa com-
memoravit. Similiter vers. 29. Ego *Jehova*,
ait Deus Mosi, ut sciret quamprimum imple-
nda esse vetera promissa, nec dubitaret ejus apud
Pharathonem esse interpretem. Capite verò VII, 5.
*Tum scient Aegyptii me esse Jehovam, cum in
Aegyptum manum meam exseruero &c.* hoc est,
cum esse qui facit ut sit quidquid vult. Sic &
vers. 17. *Hoc me Jehovam esse cognosces, ecce
ego aquas fluvii virgâ quae in manu mea est per-
cutiam, atque in sanguinem convertentur; Deum
esse, vimirum, qui effectum dat quod videtur.*
Iterum Cap. VIII, 22. *Distinguam ego die Go-
senitidem, ubi est populus meus, ut me Jeho-
vam in media tua terra esse intelligas; hoc est,
ne putes Deum me esse ἰσχυροῦς, qui in Aegypto*

¹⁹⁰ This hypothesis is absurd because if Yahûh was the ancient vocalization of God’s name it would have been Iaou in the LXX.

¹⁹¹ *Ars Critica* (Part II, Section I, Chapter XIII).

¹⁹² He considered that the vocalization given by Philo of Byblos (Ieuo) was a distortion of Iahuoh.

¹⁹³ JOANNIS CLERICI - Mosis prophetae Libri quatuor; Exodus, Leviticus, Numeri, et Deuteronomium (Amsterdam 1710), pp. 18-32.

The causative form (*hiphil*) whose meaning is close to the factitive form had the great advantage of starting with Yah-, which corresponded to the testimonies of the past and particularly to that of Theodoret (Iaoue). The god Yahweh, who *causes to be/become*, the rival of the true god Jehovah, who *will [prove to] be*, was born at this very moment in 1710.

When Hebraists are asked today why they read God's name "Adonay", instead of Yehowah, they usually respond that it is for sake of the Jewish custom inspired by one of the "Ten commandments", in order not to blaspheme God's name. Once again these Hebraists induce people into error because the Torah by no means forbids the pronouncing of God's name, but only not to use it in vain for worthless things: *You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain, for the Lord will not hold blameless anyone who takes His name in vain* (Exodus 20:7, *The Complete Jewish Bible With Rashi Commentary*). So this custom is not observed by all Jews, it is generally respected in Rabbinism, the majority tendency of Judaism¹⁹⁴, but not in Karaism. This unbiblical practice emerged around the middle of the 2nd century CE. The Talmud warns against the magical use of certain biblical quotations such Exodus 15:26, and says that those

who do it will not participate in the world to come. The rabbi Abba Saul added (c. 130 CE): *as one who pronounces the name according to its letters will not have his share in the world to come* (Sanhedrin 101a; 10:1). The term "to pronounce the Name according to its letters" means to pronounce the name as it is written, or according to the sound of its letters which is different from spelling a name according to its letters. Indeed, it was allowed to spell the name YHWH according to its letters, as the Talmud itself does, that is to say in Hebrew: Yod (Y), He (H), Waw (W), He (H); in contrast, it was forbidden to pronounce it according to these letters. In the Talmud the tetragram is designated by the term *Shem Hamephorash*, which means "the name read distinctly" or "the name read according to its letters". Some Kabbalists claim that the word *mephorash* means "hidden" but, once more, this statement contradicts the sense that the Bible gives to this word: *And they read in the scroll, in the Law of God, distinctly, and gave sense, and they explained the reading to them* (Nehemiah 8: 8, *The Complete Jewish Bible With Rashi Commentary*). The ban on not reading the name of God according to its letters has therefore nothing mysterious or esoteric, it simply means that one should not pronounce the name of God as it is written. For example, the name YHWDH is spelled Y, H, W, D, H and is pronounced, according to its letters: IHUDA (Yehudah in Hebrew, Iouda in Greek), because

¹⁹⁴ Rabbanite Jews are the successors of the Pharisees, they consider that the Oral Law (Talmud), which was finally written after 200 CE is higher than the written law (Torah) in contrast the Karaites (such as the Masorettes) have the opposite point of view.

the Y and W are semi-consonants (or semi-vowels: I and U) and the final H is pronounced â (A) otherwise the letter is inaudible. Similarly, the name YHWH is spelled Y, H, W, H and is pronounced, according to its letters: IHUA, which is close to Yehowah.

God's name is really an amazing paradox, because despite it being one of the easiest names to read, since it is pronounced as it is written, theologians with the help of grammarians succeeded in convincing ordinary people that the pronunciation had been lost and that through their great knowledge they had managed to find again the probable pronunciation of God's name: Yahweh (based on a late Samaritan testimony in Ιαβε) or Yahwoh (from a Greek papyrus of the Septuagint with Ιαω at Qumran).

Although the study of the Hebrew language has made immense progress, academic books continue to spread the gross errors from the theologians of the 16th century. For example one reads: *The uncorrected word in the text is the Kethibh (כְּתִיב, 'it is written'). The corrected reading in the margin or footnote is the Qere (קֵרֵי, 'to be read').* NOTE: *In the unpointed scrolls read in the Synagogues, the Kethibh (i.e. the uncorrected form) is similarly retained in the text, but no Qere (corrected form) is given in the margin or footnote. The reader is expected to be familiar with the text and to know when a word is to be corrected, i.e. to read the Qere instead of the (written) Kethibh (...)* Another type of deliberate change in reading due, in this case, to reverence, is the Divine name יהוה on יהוה

(*Yah^aweh or Yahweh*). The Divine name was considered too sacred to be pronounced; so the consonants of this word were written in the text (Kethibh), but the word read (Qere) was יהוה (meaning 'Lord'). The consonants of the (Kethibh) יהוה were given the vowels of the (Qere) יהוה namely ה ו ה producing the impossible form יהוה (Y^ehōwâ). Since, however, the Divine name occurs so often in the Bible, the printed editions do not put the reading required (Qere) in the margin or footnote; the reader is expected to substitute the Qere for Kethibh, without having his attention drawn to it every time it occurs. For this reason it has been called Qere Perpetuum, i.e. permanent Qere¹⁹⁵. The scientific explanation is repeated *ad nauseum* by all Hebrew scholars worthy of the name. However, if one makes the effort to check this sweeping statement (“the reader is expected to be familiar”) it is easy to see that this is a concentration of nonsense. First, the printed editions do not put the reading required (Qere) in the margin or footnote, the *qere perpetuum* (Latin words always impress more), it is for the simple reason: the *qere perpetuum* does not exist! The only information from the Masoretes about this important topic appears in their note on Genesis 18:3, which refers to the Great Masora listing the 134 places where the Sopherim (precursors of Masoretes) had noted that the tetragram was replaced by Adonay, the traditional substitute. It is therefore not a permanent Qere

¹⁹⁵ J. WEINGREEN -A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew (1959, Ed. Oxford University Press), pp. 22-23.

since it only covered 134 reading corrections, in addition, when the divine name was associated with the word Adonay, it was read Elohim instead of Adonay, proving again that this *qere* was not permanent but only traditional. If we look more closely at the explanations in this *qere perpetuum*, we enter into wonderland. First, we read: *The consonants of the (Kethibb) יהוה were given the vowels of the (Qere) אֲדֹנָי namely ְ ִ ֶ, which is obviously false since the word אֲדֹנָי is punctuated by ְ ִ ֶ, not ְ ִ ֶ. To reassure the reader, a footnote adds: The composite shewa which was under the guttural א in the word אֲדֹנָי becomes a simple shewa under the ך of the Kethibb יהוה. It's absolutely illogical. Indeed, this scholarly explanation is triply absurd as already noted (in 1844) Paul Drach¹⁹⁶ a former rabbi and eminent Hebrew scholar of the Vatican. First, it is already untrue in the case of YêHoWiH (יהוה) read 'êLoHiM (אֱלֹהִים) because, as can be seen in many codex (cf. Codex of Petrograd dated 916 CE), the vowel ê (*hatef segol*) of the *qere* was not modified into e (*shewa*) in order to give YeHoWiH (יהוה). Second, when the Masoretes indicate a *qere*, different from *ketib*, that is precisely not to confuse the two words (so it would be absurd to read the vowels of the *qere* with the consonants of the *ketib*, unless one is completely ignorant). Third, before the 12th century, the divine name YHWH was not vocalized e, o, a (*shewa, holem,**

qamats) but only e, a, as can easily be seen in the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Hebrew text for modern Bibles) which excludes grammatical reasons because it becomes impossible to explain the disappearance of the vowel o in this way, unless re-invoking a magical process. A final comment on this magical explanation of permanent *qere*, the author states: *producing the impossible form יהוה (Y^ehōwâ)* and adds in a footnote of the page: *The English Jehovah!* to mock naïve ones who know nothing in Hebrew. Naive ones have not to worry, all theophoric names are always vocalized, without exception, according to the so-called impossible form -הוה (Y^ehō-) and none begins with Yab^hw-, or Yab-, the supposedly authentic form of the divine name (naive ones are perhaps not those one believed). If the name was Jahweh, why is there absolutely no theophoric name with Jau- or Ja- in the Septuagint, but always with Jô-?

The invention of *qere perpetuum* raises several questions: why do highly competent Hebraists propagate a patently false explanation about God's name? For example, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* reads: *The pronunciation of yhwh as Yabweh is a scholarly guess. Hebrew biblical mss were principally consonantal in spelling until well into the current era. The pronunciation of words was transmitted in a separate oral tradition. The Tetragrammaton was not pronounced at all, the word אֲדֹנָי, "my Lord," being pronounced in its place; אֱלֹהִים, "God,"*

¹⁹⁶ P.L.B. DRACH – De l'harmonie entre l'Église et la synagogue (1978. Socii Sancti Michaelis), pp. 480-481.

was substituted in cases of the combination ’ādonāy yhw̄h (305 times; e.g., Gen 15:2). (This sort of reading in MT is called a qere perpetuum.) Though the consonants remained, the original pronunciation was eventually lost. When the Jewish scholars (called Masoretes) added vowel signs to biblical mss some time before the 10th century A.D., the Tetragrammaton was punctuated with the vowels of the word “Adonai” or “Elohim” to indicate that the reader should read “Lord” or “God” instead of accidentally pronouncing the sacred name. The form “Jehovah” results from reading the consonants of the Tetragrammaton with the vowels of the surrogate word Adonai. Why do the Jews refuse to read God's name as it is written and usually read instead Adonay “My Lord” (a plural of majesty)? Why is God's name usually punctuated e,â (shewa, qamats) by the Masoretes, making its reading impossible since the 4 consonants (YHWH) of God's name must have at least 3 vowels (long or short) in order to be read, like the words ’aDôNâY and ’êLôHîM which have 4 consonants and 3 vowels?

The solution of the returning to a pronunciation of God’s name “according to its letters” was not deemed satisfactory by Bible translators who believed that the form Yahweh was authentic¹⁹⁷. Levi Herzfeld, a German rabbi and historian, was the first scholar who

chose to replace systematically Jehovah by Jahweh in his translation of the biblical text¹⁹⁸ (1855). This choice was decisive for most Bible translators because after that date a growing number of Bibles replaced the name Jehovah by Jahweh (or a variant like Yahweh or Jahve).

As one can see the work of Herzfeld published in 1855 had a great impact because after that date more and more translators chose to replace Jehovah by Yahweh or LORD. When the Bible for French Jews of Samuel Cahen was reprinted in 1856 the name Iehovah was systematically replaced by “Eternel”. In 1906, the prestigious *Jewish Encyclopedia* validated blindly all the erroneous conjectures of Jean Le Clerc. When the Emphasised Bible (1872) for American Protestants of Joseph Bryant Rotherham was revised in 1878, the translator extensively explained in his preface the reasons which led him to replace Jehovah by Yahweh¹⁹⁹: *(God's name is) erroneously written and pronounced Jehovah, which is merely a combination of the sacred Tetragrammaton and the vowels in the Hebrew word for Lord, substituted by the Jews for JHVH, because they shrank from pronouncing The Name, owing to an old misconception of the two passages, Ex. xx. 7 and Lev. xxiv. 16 ... To give the name JHVH the vowels of the word for Lord (Heb. Adonai) and*

¹⁹⁷ Like Antoine Fabre d’Olivet who used the name Ihôah in his French translation of the book of Genesis (in 1823) or Augustin Crampon who used the name Jova in his Latin translation of the Hebrew Bible (in 1856).

¹⁹⁸ L. HERZFELD -Geschichte des volkes Iisrael von der zerstörung des ersten tempels bis zur einsetzung des Makkabäers Schim, Vol 2 (1855, G. Westermann).

¹⁹⁹ J. BRYANT ROTHERHAM -The Emphasised Bible A New Translation (1916, The Standard Publishing Company), pp. 22-29.

pronounce it Jehovah, is about as hybrid a combination as it would be to spell the name Germany with the vowels in the name Portugal —viz., Gormuna. The monstrous combination Jehovah is not older than about 1520 A.D. —Professor Paul Haupt²⁰⁰, General Editor of “The Polychrome Bible,” in the Book of Psalms, pp. 163,164 (...) The form “Yahweh” is here adopted as practically the best. The only competing form would be “Yehweh,” differing, it will be observed, only in a single vowel —“e” for “a” in the first syllable. But even this difference vanishes on examination. It is true that “Yehweh” is intended to suggest the derivation of the noun from the simple (Kal) conjugation of the verb, and that some scholars take “Yahweh” as indicating a formation from the causative (Hiphil) conjugation (...) The true pronunciation seems to have been Yahwè (or Iahway, the initial I = y, as in Iachimo). The final e should be pronounced like the French ê, or the English e in there, and the first h sounded as an aspirate (...) Yahweh is almost always regarded as the third person, singular, masculine, imperfect tense, from the root hawah, an old form of the root hayah. The one meaning of hawah

²⁰⁰ Paul Haupt was a Semitic scholar, one of the pioneers of Assyriology in the United States. In 1880 he became privatdocent in the University of Göttingen and from 1883 to 1889 was assistant professor of Assyriology. In 1883 he became professor of Semitic languages at Johns Hopkins University, but until 1889 continued to lecture in the summer at Göttingen. In addition to numerous smaller articles, he projected and edited the Polychrome Bible, a critical edition of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, and a new English translation with notes. A unique feature of this edition is the use of different colours to distinguish the various sources and component parts in the Old Testament books — each one of which is entrusted to a specialist in biblical studies.

is “become.” So that the force of Yahweh thus derived, as a verb, would be “He will become”. Impressive amount of scholarly twaddle relying on a prestigious Professor.

As one can see the vowels of Adonay are *a,o,a*, not *e,a* which come from the Aramaic word ŠeMa’ “the Name²⁰¹” and they have never been used to vocalize God's name²⁰². One must know that in most Hebrew Codex of the Bible before 1300, the tetragram is punctuated *e,a* :

date	Codex	(Adonay)	(Elohim)
700?	Geniza ²⁰³	YeHWaH	YeHWiH
900	Berlin ²⁰⁴	YHWaH	YHWH
916	Petrograd ²⁰⁵	YHWH	YêHoWiH
930	Aleppo ²⁰⁶	YeHWaH	YeHoWiH
950	Or.4445	YeHWaH	YeHWiH
1008	B19a ²⁰⁷ (BHS)	YeHWaH	YeHWiH
1100	Urbinati ²⁰⁸	YHWaH	YHWiH
1105	Reuchlianus ²⁰⁹	YeHWaH	YêHWiH
1286	Paris Hébreu1	YeHWaH	YêHoWiH
1300	Palatini ²¹⁰	YHWaH	YêHoWiH

The second statement from the Emphasised Bible is downright absurd: how is it possible to have in the same time a “simple” (Qal) form “He will become” Yehwêh and a

²⁰¹ P. JOÛON, T. MURAOKA – A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew. Part One (Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993), p. 73 f6.

²⁰² For example, Pope Innocent III explained in one of his sermons (c. 1200) that IESU's name has the same vowels of IEUE, a Greek transcription of God's name (which was punctuated *e,a* in Hebrew).

²⁰³ I. YEIVIN (1973, Makor Publishing Ltd).

²⁰⁴ I. YEIVIN (1972, Makor Publishing Ltd).

²⁰⁵ H.L. STACK - Codex Babylonian of Petrograd (1971, Ktav Publishing House).

²⁰⁶ M.H. Goshen Gottstein (1976, Magnes Press).

²⁰⁷ D.S. LOEWINGER (1971, Makor Publishing).

²⁰⁸ E. LEVINE (1980, Makor Publishing Ltd).

²⁰⁹ A. SPERBER (1956, Ejnar Munksgaard).

²¹⁰ A. SPERBER (1959, Ejnar Munksgaard).

causative (Hiphil) form “*He causes to become*” Yahwêh. If you accept that Yahwêh = Yehwêh (or Noah = Nahum, and so on), one dares say that Big Brother is watching you and is saying to you “2+2 = 5”.

The reaction of the Catholic Church dealing with Yahweh has been more complex. Despite the numerous improvements of biblical texts made by Protestant scholars, always supporting the Vulgate until 1904 (a Latin Bible which does not contain God's name) as well as the vocalization Jehovah! For example, Paul Drach, a rabbi converted to Catholicism who later belonged to the *Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith*²¹¹, explained in his work *Harmony Between the Church and the Synagogue* published in 1842, why it was logical that the pronunciation Yehova, which was in agreement with the beginning of all theophoric names, was the authentic pronunciation, contrary to the form Yahve of Samaritan origin. He disproved the foolish criticisms against the form Yehova, like the charge of erroneous reading attributed to Galatino, quoting Raymond Martini and Porchetus de Salvaticis to reject this assertion. Then he demonstrated the unreasonableness of the (cabbalistic) transmutation of the vowels *a,o,a* of the word Adonay into *e,o,a*, since this

hypothetical grammatical rule (one contrary to the nature of the *qere/kethib*) was already demolished in the word Elohim which keeps its three vowels *ê,o,i* without the need to change them into *e,o,i*. With great humour, he mocked those who wanted to pronounce the tetragram by “Lord” or “Yahve” calling them the Adonites or Yahvehites, because according to their logic for those who worship Adonai they would have to pronounce the well-known names (in Hebrew): *John (Yehohanan), Jonathan (Yehonathan), Joshua (Yehoshua), Jesus (Yeshua), Jehu (Yehu)*, as: *Adonan, Adonathan, Adonshua, Adonsus, Adonbu*, but for those who prefer the name Yahve: *Yahn, Yanathan, Yashua, Yasus, Yahu*.

Those who refuse to pronounce God's name in the New Testament and prefer to read “Lord” are not logical because the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was Yehowah, according to Jesus himself (Acts 3:13). Furthermore the name “Lord” (*Kurios* in Greek) never appears neither in the Septuagint, nor in the New Testament, in copies before 150 CE, in addition, from 150 to 400 CE the names “Lord”, “God” and “Jesus” are only written LD (KS for *kurios*), GD (TS for *theos*) and JS (for JESUS). How to read these “sacred names? Jerome had to solve this problem when he translated the Bible into Latin (in 382), not from the Greek text of the Septuagint (Vetus Latina) but directly from the Hebrew text (Vulgate).

²¹¹ The *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* was founded by Pope Gregory XV in 1622 to arrange missionary work on behalf of the various religious institutions, and in 1627 Pope Urban VIII established within it a training college for missionaries.

For Jerome, one of the biggest linguistic undertakings was to learn the Hebrew language²¹². This man, later Doctor of the Church, was not only the first Latin-speaking Christian writer who started research into the Hebrew Bible; he was also the person who achieved such mastery in Hebrew that no other Christian writer—before and a few thousand years after him—could compete with him. His first intention was rather the correction of the accepted version of the Bible based on the Septuagint²¹³. However, because the canon of the Septuagint accepted by his Church contained several apocryphal books, not found in the Hebrew canon, Jerome got converted to the revolutionary principle of *veritas hebraica* “truth in Hebrew”, but paradoxically he did not apply it to God’s name.

Jerome knew that the oldest copies of the Septuagint contained God's name written in Hebrew YHWH in the Greek text, which

²¹² He had the first lessons of Hebrew during his stay in the Syrian Desert (after 374) and then he was taught by some converted Jew. He continued (until 379) this education in Bethlehem under Jew Bar Anina who is told to have come to teach Jerome at night due to Anina's fear of other Jews. At the turn of the years 383 and 384, Jerome started the biggest work of his life, on which he was working for 20 years.

²¹³ This improvement was to consist in using the tools of text criticism as well as in comparing this text with other Greek versions and the Hebrew original. Apart from the Septuagint, there were other Greek translations of the Bible: literal Aquila's version, free Symmachus' translation as well as the corrected edition of the Septuagint prepared by Theodotion. However, none of these texts was in sufficient conformity with the Hebrew original in order to be the basis for translation, as was claimed by Jerome.

some people through ignorance, write IIIII [instead of יהוה] in Greek and which can be pronounced Iaho. Jerome also knew that God's name written YHWH was pronounced *Adonay* “Lord” by Jews, a word which has been translated *Kurios* “Lord” and written KS in Greek. For example, how to translate into Latin this verse of Joel: *And it shall come to pass [that] whosoever shall call on the name of YHWH shall be saved: for in mount Sion and in Jerusalem shall the saved one be as YHWH has said, and they that have glad tidings preached to them, whom YHWH has called* (Joel 2:32). The first solution would have been to follow the Jewish custom of writing God's name with four letters, for example IHVH in Latin instead of PYPY (IIIII) in Greek, but as Jerome noticed, nobody understands and, worse, this weird writing misleads the reader. The second solution would have been to replace the Greek word KS by Iaho, because as Jerome noticed, God's name can be pronounced Iaho (according to Jewish tradition), but he knew that this name (Yahu in Hebrew) was only a substitute of the tetragram. Given that Jerome knew Hebrew, he was able to read and translate Hebrew names. For example, Joshua corresponds to Jesus in Greek and could be transcribed Iehosua (Yehoshua) in Latin, but Jerome chose to transcribe it as Iosue. If he had chosen Iehosua it would have been easier to see its meaning “Ieho[ah] is salvation”, accordingly, Jerome had to know that YHW[H]

could be read Ieho[ah] in Latin, but finally, he chose diplomatically to use the word *Dominus* “Lord” in Latin.

Because of Jerome's choice, most Christians today pray to the “Lord” instead of Jehovah. Similarly, because of Muhammad's choice (when he dictated the Quran), most Muslims pray to Allah instead of Yâhuwa (YHWH), despite the name Zakariyâ “He has remembered Yâ” being mentioned in the Quran²¹⁴ (Surah VI:85). Muhammad's choice was not made by chance, because when he realized that the Jews would never accept his Quran he decided to modify the messianic lineage of Yasu (Jesus) changing his Jewish origin from Israel to an Arabic origin, Yasu “Yâ[huwa] is salvation” became ‘Isa, an Arabic vocalization of ‘Esau²¹⁵ “Hairy”. Accordingly, God’s name Yâhuwa became Yâ huwa “Oh He”.

GOD’S NAME, SO WHAT

The conclusion of the matter, everything having been heard, there is only one God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob whose name is written YHWH in Hebrew, more than 6000 times in the Old Testament. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus, whose name means “Je[hovah] is salvation” said: *Let your name (YHWH) be sanctified* (Matthew 6:9), not *Let my name be sanctified* as well as: *I shall proclaim your name (YHWH) to my brothers, praise you in full assembly* (Hebrews 2:12).

²¹⁴ Two other theophoric names are mentioned: Yahyâ (John) and Ilyas (Elijah).

²¹⁵ Encyclopédie de l’Islam Tome IV (1978, E.J. Brill), pp. 85-90.

In the Bible, names are never translated. Replacing a name by a title “Lord/ God/ Almighty”, or a symbol like the word “Heaven”, is a crime. When somebody was entering a concentration camp, the first act made by Nazi officers was to replace names by figures in order to deny the existence of these anonymous victims. The only character in the whole Bible who knows God and refuses to pronounce his name is Satan, even when he discusses with Jesus (Matthew 4:1-10).

Knowing God’s name would have to concern Christians because the New Testament reads: *Symeon has related thoroughly how God for the first time turned his attention to the nations to take out of them a people for his name* (Acts 15:14). Knowing God’s name would have to concern Jews because the Old Testament reads: *At that time those in fear of YHWH spoke with one another, each one with his companion, and YHWH kept paying attention and listening. And a book of remembrance began to be written up before him for those in fear of YHWH and for those thinking upon his name* (Malachi 3:16). Knowing God’s name would have to concern everyone because one reads: *For all the peoples, for their part, will walk each one in the name of its god (Adonai, the Lord, Allah, Jesus, Brahma, Love, Peace); but we, for our part, shall walk in the name of YHWH our God to time indefinite, even forever* (Micah 4:5). If you still prefer pronouncing God's name "Jahve", instead of "Jehovah", you must know that Jahve is closer to Jove (Jupiter) than to Jehovah.

Common objections regarding God's name

❖ *Knowing the name of God is useless.*

Knowing the name of God is vital for a religious Jew because it is written: *And it shall come to pass [that] whosoever shall call on the name of YHWH shall be saved* (Joel 2:32). It is also vital for a religious Christian because the text of Joel is quoted in the New Testament (Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13). Joel's text has become obscure today because the name YHWH was replaced by KS in Greek, from 130 to 400 CE, then by KURIOS ("LORD"). The last stage was to replace "the name of LORD" by "the name of the LORD".

❖ *In the Old Testament, God's name is not Jehovah but YHWH.*

Jehovah is the English vocalization of the transcription Yehowah, which is written YHWH in Hebrew. Accordingly Jehovah is the usual vocalization of YHWH in the same way that Jesus (Yehôshûa) is the usual vocalization of YHWHŠW'.

❖ *We don't know the pronunciation of God's name because it has been lost.*

According to the Talmud: *Rabbah bar Chanah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: The 4-letter Name of God is transmitted by the Sages to their students—once every seven years. And some say twice every seven years* (Kiddushin 71a). Maimonides wrote in his Mishna Thora-Hilchot Tefillah 14:10: *Outside the Temple, the 4-letter Name "Yud Heb Vav Heb" is pronounced "A-do-nai". Inside the Temple, when the priests gave the Priestly Blessing, they pronounced it ("I-eh-u-a") as it is written ("Y-b-w-b").* There

are no Jewish documents specifying that the pronunciation of God's name was lost in Hebrew. In contrast, some Cabbalists claim that the "true pronunciation (?)" of the 4-letter name could give you direct access to God, but this mystical teaching contradicts the Bible (as well as logic because Satan himself knows God's name).

❖ *We cannot be dogmatic, the vocalization Jehovah is not certain.*

Generally, those who claim not to be dogmatic are paradoxically extremely dogmatic in their doubt. In addition, it is true that the pronunciation Jehovah is not absolutely certain, but like all the other names in the Bible, no more no less. One supposes for example that Jesus, the English pronunciation of the Greek name "Jesus", comes from the Aramaic name Yeshu which comes itself from the Hebrew name Yehoshua', but obviously nothing is certain, including uncertainties.

❖ *The true pronunciation of God's name is Yahwob (Iaô) according to a copy of the Septuagint found in Qumran.*

Given that it was forbidden to pronounce God's name in Qumran, under penalty of excommunication, consequently the form Iaô which was a Greek vocalization of the Hebrew substitute Yahû (YHW), already used (6th century BCE) by the Jewish scribes of Elephantine, was not the complete name YHWH. Given that the name Jesus means "Je[hovah is] salvation" in Hebrew

(Yehoshua), if Yahwoh had been the true pronunciation, the name Jesus would have been Yahoshua in Hebrew (“Ya[hoshua is] salvation”) and consequently would have been shortened into Jasus, not Jesus²¹⁶. In addition, when the Psalms of the Bible were sung, God's name was sometimes replaced by Adonay or Elohim. Given that these two words have exactly 3 syllables (A-do-nay, E-lo-him) they were used to replace Ye-ho-wah. As one can see, the name Yahwoh has only 2 syllables.

- ❖ *The true pronunciation of God’s name is Yahweh according to its linguistic meaning “He causes to become (Yahaweh)”.*

The biblical meaning of Yehowah is given in Exodus 3:14 “*I shall [prove to] be what I shall [prove to] be*”. Given that the question of Moses was not about the linguistic meaning of God's name (because Moses knew Hebrew!), but only regarding the personality of God (in the same way Pharaoh asked: who is Yehowah?) accordingly there is no reason to link God’s answer with the pronunciation of his name. Interestingly, the verbal form *yihweh* (= *yihyeh*) found in Ecclesiastes 11:3 means “*he will [prove to] be*” which is identical to the biblical meaning of Yehowah. In contrast, the verbal form *Yahweh* “*He causes to be/come*” never existed in Hebrew.

- ❖ *Jehovah is the God of the Old Testament, called Lord in the New Testament.*

Jesus and his disciples were Jews and they regularly quoted and read some verses of the Old Testament in

which YHWH appears frequently. In addition, the prohibition of not pronouncing God's name only appeared from 130 CE onward. The discussion between Jesus and Satan in Matthew 4:3-10 highlights a crucial point: Jesus read aloud God's name in Hebrew and systematically used it, while Satan never did so because one notices that he preferred to use the word God (*Elohim*). This choice was not made by chance because Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:13, which says: *Yehowah your God you should fear, and him you should serve, and by his name you should swear*. It reads: *Yehowah your God* in the Bible of Rabbi Lazarus Goldschmidt (1925) as well as *Iehovah your God* in the Rabbinic Bible of Samuel Cahen (1938-1851). No Jewish Bible contains the fanciful name Yahweh.

- ❖ *Among the thousands of papyrus and manuscripts of the New Testament there is not one with Jehovah.*

In fact, among the hundreds of papyrus and manuscripts of the New Testament, between 150 and 400 CE, there is not one with KURIOS “Lord”, but only the cryptic name KS appears (similarly Jesus is written IS). Those strange names are called *nomina sacra* (“sacred names”). Before 150 CE, among all the Christian papyrus, including those from the Septuagint, there is not one with KURIOS “Lord”, but only the name YHWH written in Hebrew. In his letter to the Hebrews the apostle Paul [who knew Hebrew (Ac 22:1-3)] systematically quoted the Septuagint, but never the Masoretic text.

²¹⁶ Moreover, if the true name of God had been Iaô (instead of YHWH), the evangelical writers would have used it in their writings.

❖ *The vocalization Iehouah (Jehovah) is very late. It appeared for the first time in 1518 in the work of Galatino.*

Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa in his sermon on John 1:1: *In Principio Erat Verbum* (1428 CE), explained, based on Maimonides' works, the various names of God and the meaning of the tetragrammaton, which he vocalized Iehoua. Judah Halevi, a Jewish scholar, in *The Kuzari* (1140 CE), wrote that the main difference between the God of Abraham and the God of Aristotle was the tetragrammaton YHWH, which was the personal name of God. He pointed out that the letters of God's name have the remarkable property of being "mother of reading": Y = Î, W = Û and H (final) = Â, implying a reading IHUA for YHWH (Kuzari IV:1-16). *The Book of Nestor the idolatrous priest (Sefer Nestor Hakomer)* is a dispute between a Nestorian and Monophysite which is commented by a Jewish scribe in the 7th century CE. This book teaches us two things: some Christian scholars had contact with Jews who (at that time) were using the Hebrew substitute *Hashem* (HŠM) which means "The Name", abbreviated in H' in place of the tetragram (in the passage of Matthew 4:1-10 for example). In its *onomasticon sacrum*, the Codex Coislinianus 1 (dated 6th century CE) explains the God's name Îôa means "invisible" (αορατος) and Îêoua "Life of G[o]d" (ζωη θυ). Some authors, such as Severus of Antioch (465-538), used the form IÔA (Iωα), not IAÔ, in a series of comments on chapter eight

of John's gospel (Jn 8:58), pointing out that it was God's name in Hebrew. Evagrius Ponticus wrote (c. 380 CE): *The tetragram, which is ineffable, was written in Hebrew: Ioth, e, ouau, e, that is to say, πππ the God.* He also explained that the name of the Lord (Jesus) is: *ioth, e, ouab, eth, with the Hebrew letter "s" (called shin) in the middle.* Maybe he meant that the name Jesus was pronounced Iesûa in Hebrew, involving Ieûa for God's name, because the name Jesus is written Iesoua (Dt 1:38) in the Septuagint of Aquila. According to the Talmud (c. 135 CE): *They then brought up R. Hanina b. Teradion and asked him: Why hast thou occupied thyself with the Torah? He replied: Thus the Lord my God commanded me. At once they sentenced him to be burnt, his wife to be slain, and his daughter to be consigned to a brothel. The punishment of being burnt came upon him because he pronounced the Name according to its letters. 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 (c. 130 CE): Also he who pronounces the Name according to its letters (I-H-U-A)? He did it in the course of practising, 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 (...) The Executioner then jumped and threw himself into the fire. And a bathkol exclaimed: R. Hanina b. Teradion and the*

Executioner have been assigned to the world to come (Abodah Zarah 17b-18a). Rabbi Tarphon, related the problem (90-130 CE) of the destruction of Christian texts which contained the tetragram (Shabbat 116a). According to Flavius Josephus (c. 95 CE): The high priest had his head dressed with a tiara of fine linen embroidered with a purple border, and surrounded by another crown in gold which had in relief the sacred letters; these ones are 4 vowels (The Jewish War V:235). According to Philo of Alexandria (c. 40 CE): there was a gold plaque shaped in a ring and bearing 4 engraved characters of a name which had the right to hear and to pronounce in the holy place those ones whose ears and tongue have been purified by wisdom, and nobody else and absolutely nowhere else. And this holy prophet Moses calls the name, a name of 4 letters, making them perhaps symbols of the primary numbers (De vita Mosis II:115,132). Philo of Byblos, a Punic writer of grammatical and historical works, wrote (c. 100-120 CE): Of the affairs of the Jews the truest history, because the most in accordance with their places and names, is that of Sanchuniathon of Beirut, who received the records from Hierombal the priest of the god Ieiüô (Ιεῦω); he dedicated his history to Abibaal king of Beirut, and was approved by him and by the investigators of truth in his time. Now the times of these men fall even before the date of the Trojan war (1184 BCE), and approach nearly to the times of Moses, as is shown by the successions of the kings of Phoenicia (Phoenician History IV). The character Hierombal (1300-1260 BCE), priest of Ieiüô (Yehowah), was called “Hierobaal [Gideon], Judge of the

god YHWH”, in the Septuagint (Jg 7:1). On a shield from Soleb (Nubia) dated around 1350 BCE we read: Land of Shasu (Israelites) those of Yehua. The name Y-h-w3, which is read Yehua (from conventional reading of Egyptian hieroglyphs), is still very close to Yehowah (in Hebrew).

❖ *The vocalization Yehowah comes from a mix between the letters of God's name (YHWH) and the vowels of Adonay.*

The vowels of “Adonay” are *a,o,a*, not *e,o,a*, and up to 1300 CE the vowels of God’s name were only *e,a* (YeHWaH) originating from the Aramaic word *shema* “The Name”.

❖ *Yehovah is better than Yehowah.*

Yehovah is God’s name in modern Hebrew and it originates from ‘Yehowah²¹⁷’ in 1st century spoken Hebrew. Jesus was able to know and pronounce God's name (Hebrews 2:12) because, before 70 CE, the high priest knew God’s name and, above all, he had to pronounce it in the Temple of Jerusalem (Numbers 6:24-27). Given that in the 1st century we know that all theophorus names began with Yehô- (or Yehow-) in Hebrew, consequently YHW-H was to be pronounced Yehow-ah (Iôa in Greek) not Yahow-ah or Yahû (Iaô in Greek).

❖ *Yehovah is better than Jehovah.*

Yehovah is God’s name in Israeli rendered as Jehovah in English.

❖ *Ihouah is better than Jehovah.*

Maybe, but all theophoric names begin with Yehô- not Ihô-.

²¹⁷ Until 130 CE, the Hebrew letter “W” (ו) was always pronounced Waw (וואו) in the Septuagint not Vav “V” (βαβ), see: Lamentations 1:6; 2:6; 3:15,16; Psalms 118(119):41.

❖ I have kept for the end the most formidable objection: *if the pronunciation of the name of God in Hebrew was really Yehowah in the 1st century, Yehovah today, why is there still no linguist of the Semitic languages (absolutely none indeed) who endorses this choice?* After reading this booklet the reader will have understood that the specialists who discredit Yehowah's vocalization are essentially theologians. Indeed, the Old Testament asserts on many occasions that “*the nations will have to know that I am Jehovah* (Ezekiel 37:28)”, and the New Testament confirms that God will preserve “*a people for His name* (Acts 15:14)”. Consequently, God asserts unambiguously that he will preserve his word and especially his great name. The question of Moses about the name of God in Exodus 3:13-14 did not concern its pronunciation since his mother was called Yochebed “*Yehow[ah] is glory*” but its prophetic meaning “*I shall [prove to] be what I shall [prove to] be*” (and not its linguistic meaning since Moses knew Hebrew). Very early the rabbis assumed that the Hebrew pronunciation of God's name actually derived from the amalgam of three verbal forms **Yihyeh**, **howeh**, **hayah** “*He will be, (He) being, He was*”. Catholic and Protestant theologians have definitely obscured the name of God by proposing new meanings as “*he is/he will be (yihweh)*” in the Septuagint, then “*he causes to be (yehawe)*” or “*he causes to become (yahawe)*”. Evidently the linguists of the Semitic languages (who are not theologians) rely solely on linguistic and historical facts in order to recover the historical pronunciation of ancient words or names. One might think that these specialists could have been more objective than theologians but in fact this is unfortunately not the case because the name of God is above all a religious subject that strongly interferes with the religious beliefs of these specialists (atheism is also a strong belief).

In order to understand why professors of Ancient Languages are systematically “silent” concerning God's name I recently sent an email to an eminent Professor of Hebrew and Hamito-Semitic in which I said: *Since you know Emmanuel Tov I would like to ask you a question that I hope you will not judge impertinent. Indeed, I do not understand why the academics in general continue to endorse the Omerta on the pronunciation of God's name (Yehovah in modern Hebrew). Indeed, I have observed many times that this was an open secret (even among the rabbis) but that it should not be revealed to the general public for reasons that I find indefensible. For example, I have a friend who is finishing his thesis on the Greek transcriptions of the tetragrammaton in medieval manuscripts and who has discussed several times with Emmanuel Tov. Although this eminent scholar never vocalizes the name of God in his works, he confided to my friend, without difficulty, that this name is actually pronounced Yehovah in Hebrew, but as he published in journals financed mainly by religious institutions (mainly Jewish) he did not want to offend his readers. It is because of this kind of behaviour that I admire the approach of Nehemia Gordon (who worked extensively with Emmanuel Tov) when he denounces this “conspiracy of silence” in his book Shattering the Conspiracy of Silence: The Hebrew Power Of the Priestly Blessing Unleashed (2012). I also find that his attitude is also more honest than that of other academics because he does not mislead his readers by making them believe that the*

tetragrammaton cannot be pronounced or that its pronunciation is unknown. I know that you mention several times in your thesis on the Hebrew of Baruch Spinoza that this Jewish grammarian used the word Jehova several times, but you do not give any negative or positive criticism of this controversial linguistic choice. So my question is quite simple: do you think that this pronunciation Jehovah (Yebovah in modern Hebrew) is the right one? The first time I asked this question was to Jean Margain (my Hebrew teacher at the beginning of my research). He kindly replied in his letter dated February 22, 1998: « I cannot tell you that your conclusions are false. Everything connected with the designation of a divinity is not merely logical. Your work is to be placed on the subject of this delicate question in which beliefs of a religious or emotional nature, taboos, pagan influences and superstitious practices are mingled with the belief. I congratulate you for having carried out such an inquiry and I wish you to continue your research successfully ». Henri Cazelles, after having also congratulated me, registered my thesis in 1995 at the library of the Institut Catholique de Institut (T594GER) but without further action. I also asked Jean Leclant, who at the time was professor of Egyptology at the Collège de France, why he preferred to use Yahweh rather than Jehovah in his transcript of the tetragrammaton appearing in the shield found at Soleb and dated the 14th century BCE. He replied in his letter dated February 20, 1998: « It is very difficult to answer your question and it is best to stick to the conventional transcription system (yhw3) ». Professor Leclant obviously knew that the conventional transcription yhw3 was to be vocalized yehua according to this conventional system, as confirmed to me and patiently explained Jean-Claude Goyon, a research master at the CNRS and Professor Emeritus of Egyptology at the University of Lyon II. I received many answers to my question and some even explained why they were using Yahweh knowing it was wrong. For example, Alfred Kuen, a translator of the Living Bible and a professor at the Bible Institute, wrote to me in his letter of January 11, 2011: « I confess that I did not research as thoroughly as you did on the name of God. Personally, I do not like the name Yahweh (which sounds like the name of a foreign god), but its use has spread so widely —erroneously as you say— it is hard to escape from it. The reluctance to use the name of Jehovah doubtless comes, as you say, from the fear of being confused with the Jehovah’s Witnesses. I carefully keep your letter with all this information to use when the time comes (which I do not see yet) ». After reading this letter I wondered whether the final remark was humour or involuntary mockery. As you see the subject is disturbing, but thank you for having read me to the end. One day later, immediate reply by the Professor (email written in French): « The reply of Jean Margain, [private information], is the best answer that can be given. There is, therefore, no conspiracy and, for me, everyone is free to utter the tetragrammaton as he sees fit, since academics have no elements to clarify their reading. Yours sincerely ». Readers will judge.

As can be seen, the main objections to my conclusions are always the same: 1) *There is no conspiracy against the Name* (given that Satan does not exist), 2) *everyone is free to utter the tetragrammaton as he sees fit* (because of the right of free speech), 3) *since academics have no elements to clarify their reading* (because there is no absolute truth). These fallacious objections had already arisen when I published my book: *The Name of God Y.eH.oW.aH Which is Pronounced as it is Written*

I_Eh_oU_Ab (University Press of America, 2002). As one can understand, the main conclusion of my work is summarized in the title, which clearly contradicts the three previous objections. When my book was accepted for publication, my editor asked several peer review committees to give their opinion in order to promote my academic work. Paradoxically, he received 2 contradictory opinions: one short positive review (which he kept on his website, obviously) and another long review, but very negative (which was largely promoted by those who did not like my book, obviously).

- ❖ The first review was published in the *Religious Studies Review*²¹⁸ (July 2003 Vol. 29:3 page 285) by Professor Won W. Lee, Calvin College, who wrote: *This detailed treatment of the Name is useful for those who are interested in the history of its translation of the centuries. As can be seen the support was low (not to say minimum) but it has been positive.*
- ❖ In contrast the second review, which was published in the *Review of Biblical Literature* (6/6/2004) by Professor John Laurence Gee, a Mormon apologist, and Egyptologist at Brigham Young University, known for his writings in support of the Book of Abraham, who wrote: *Certain issues need to be examined at least once a generation, if only to remind ourselves why the current consensus is what it is. The pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton is one of those issues. In the book under review, Gérard Gertoux, a French engineer, takes issue with the current consensus and contends that it is incorrect. With excruciating detail and tortured logic, Gertoux passionately argues his point. This work is a revision in English of the author's thesis at the Institut Catholique de Paris. The French stamp on the work is apparent not only in the extensive use of French sources but in the transliterations throughout the work, which are into French rather than English. This proves one of the more frustrating aspects of the work, as too many times the French-style transliteration obscures rather than clarifies the argument, and in the case of the Egyptian evidence it leads Gertoux to erroneous conclusions (...) A decent editor could have fixed some of the book's obvious flaws. Errors of fact abound, and it would be pointless to attempt to correct them all. One wishes that less effort had been put into the Paleo-Hebrew fonts and more into fixing the transliterations used throughout the book. The book raises serious doubts about whether Gertoux controls any of the languages necessary for his study. Assertions such as "Hebraic language ... favors a vocalic reading of proper names instead of a consonantal reading (Aramaic)" (42) and errors in his transliteration chart (230) do nothing to assuage our doubts. Most of the relevant Egyptian evidence was passed over in silence, and what was used was often misconstrued; his appendix on the subject should be ignored. The Akkadian evidence was also underutilized. One wonders about his grasp of Greek phonetics when he asserts that "iotacism ... led mainly to the confusion of the sounds" iota, epsilon, eta, and alpha-iota (40). Examples could be multiplied ad nauseum, but possibly the best example of Gertoux's failure to master his languages is his advocacy of what he calls his letters method. Gertoux's letters method assumes that there is only one way to vocalize any particular consonantal skeleton, which is not the case. Thus his method is fundamentally flawed.*

²¹⁸ RSR is published by the Council of Societies for the Study of Religion (Valparaiso University).

The first criticism of Gee gives the key to understand what lies behind the curtain: *With excruciating detail and tortured logic, Gertoux passionately argues his point.* Did he mean that my arguments were satanic? In addition why was it so important to mention that I was a French engineer (from 1979 to 1983 to be precise)? In any case, the main objections were as follows: *A decent editor could have fixed some of the book's obvious flaws. Errors of fact abound, and it would be pointless to attempt to correct them all (...)* Examples could be multiplied *ad nauseum*, but possibly the best example of Gertoux's failure to master his languages is his advocacy of what he calls his letters method. *Gertoux's letters method assumes that there is only one way to vocalize any particular consonantal skeleton, which is not the case. Thus his method is fundamentally flawed.* A child can understand that according to “my letters method” the name Y-H-W-H can be read as I-H-U-A or I-eH-U-A, which is close to Yehowah, but where in my book did I assume that there is only way to vocalize any particular consonantal skeleton (in fact, I wrote the opposite). If you read again Gee's review you will see that the examples he gave are not samples of my “abundant mistakes” but only samples of his prejudices about my understanding of technical details, as: *the French-style transliteration obscures rather than clarifies the argument, and in the case of the Egyptian evidence it leads Gertoux to erroneous conclusions (which ones?), most of the relevant Egyptian evidence was passed over in silence (which ones?) and the Akkadian evidence was also underutilized* (this last example proves that he did not read my book correctly because I used a lot). My opinion on Gee's review is that my book gave him nausea, but once again readers will judge.

Paradoxically the review of John Laurence Gee, who is not a Bible scholar²¹⁹, is quoted very often but the one of Won W. Lee, who is a skilled Bible scholar²²⁰, is completely ignored (you can imagine why). Ironically, Gee, who is a Mormon apologist and mocks my work, especially my conclusion that Jehovah is the genuine name of God (rather than Yahweh), believes more in the book of Mormon (by Joseph Smith) in which the name Jehovah appears twice (2 Ne. 22:2; Moro. 10:34). Moreover Joseph Smith explained in his book entitled the “Times and Seasons” Vol. 3 p. 358 (15th Nov. 1841): *We believe in God the Father, who is the Great Jehovah and head of all things, and that Christ is the Son of God, co-eternal with the Father.* If I dare say: Gee is more Catholic than the Pope.

Iehovah will [prove to] be King over all the earth; in that day Iehovah will [prove to] be one, and his name one (Zechariah 14:9, Rabbinic Bible of Samuel Cahen, 1843).

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²¹⁹ Gee earned his Ph.D. in Egyptology at Yale University in 1998, completing his dissertation on ancient Egyptian ritual purity. He is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church), which believes Joseph Smith divinely translated the Book of Abraham from Egyptian papyrus in the 19th century. Because of his expertise in Near Eastern studies and Egyptology, Gee is highly visible in the debate over the authenticity of the Book of Abraham.

²²⁰ Professor Lee specializes in biblical exegesis, theology, and hermeneutics of the Old Testament. Since 2000, he organizes the biannual Calvin Seminar on Higher Education in Korea which involves 4-5 Calvin faculty and 125-150 faculty members from various Korean Universities.