

PAVLOS D. VASILEIADIS The Pronunciation
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki of the Sacred Tetragrammaton:
Greece An Overview of a *Nomen Revelatus*
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Prologue

The name of the God of the Bible is instrumental in understanding His identity. The Hebrew “quadriliteral” term יהוה,¹ can be located in the core of almost every theological attempt to describe the biblical notion of God — either Jewish or Christian.² For centuries, this sacred name was met with only in Semitic contexts. But during the Hellenistic period, a crucial meeting between Hebrew and Greek cultures happened. There came a fundamental shift in the understanding of the identity of the God who bears this name and, consequently, of the meaning attributed to his name. Judaism moved from the biblically active “becoming,” as a covenantal God who seeks to get in close relation with faithful humans, to the philosophically static “being,” more akin to the Platonic view of God as immutable and utterly transcendent. A result of this development was that the divine name gradually became a taboo to the Jews. It may have started as reverence but it ended up as a long-lasting superstition. Since the Tetragrammaton became ineffable, the exact ancient pronunciation was thought to be lost or restricted to a few initiates. Philo, a contemporary of Jesus and the apostle Paul, was the first to describe God as “unnameable,” “unutterable,” and completely incomprehensible.³ The Tetragrammaton — a name that appears more than 6,000 times in the Hebrew Bible — was replaced by various circumlocutions, like “the Name” or “the Holy One.” Copies of the Greek LXX Bible made early in the Christian era had their text quickly overwhelmed by substitute titles like “Lord” and “God” in place of God’s name.

¹ In Greek *Τετραγράμματος* (or *Τετράγραμμον*), and in Latin *Tetragrammaton* (or *Tetragram*).

² The lexicographer N. Webster deduced an almost universal definition of the divine name under the word “Jehovah”: “The Scripture name of the Supreme Being, Heb. יהוה” (*A Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol. 2 (New York: S. Converse, 1828)).

³ J. M. Sockice, “Creation and the Glory of Creatures,” *Modern Theology* 29, no. 2 (2013): 180.

In addition to the reluctance to translate the proper name of a personal God, the Greek language was not adequately equipped to have the Hebrew phonemes precisely transcribed into Greek.⁴ Still, attempts to approximate the name in Greek commenced in pre-Christian times and have not ceased even until today. Literary sources present numerous examples clearly indicative of this. Particularly since the Renaissance, humanists, Hebraists, and Bible scholars advanced a deeper and wider knowledge of the Hebrew language. As a result, the level and the intensity of efforts to translate the Tetragrammaton into European languages reached previously unprecedented levels.

Pre-Christian renderings of the Tetragrammaton

There is evidence that at least one Greek form of the proper name of the Jewish God was known among pagans for a few centuries before the Christian era. For instance, two classical authors from the mid-first century BCE were accustomed to the form *Iao* (Gr. *Ἰαω*⁵) of the Tetragrammaton. It was likely pronounced originally as *Yaho* (a vocalization impossible to accurately represent in Greek due to its inherent linguistic restrictions, like the inability to represent a medial *h* sound), as transcriptions into Latin and Demotic (Coptic) indicate.⁶ Nevertheless, it is assumed that this was not widespread knowledge among the many Greek readers who most likely read it simply as it was written *Ya-o*. Much ink has been consumed as to whether this form is due to a northern or a southern Israelite pronunciation and whether the Tetragrammaton is more original in its shorter or longer version.⁷

More specifically, the Greek historian Diodorus of Sicily (1st century BCE), while mentioning a catalogue of national lawgivers and their deities, also refers to the Jews, Moses, and “the god who is invoked as *Iao*.”⁸ This reference seems to denote that at the time it was known that there was a rather unhindered invocation of the divine name among Jews. Also, it is of interest that “Diodorus was not using some secret, magical,

⁴ For the “incompatibility of the Latin and Greek alphabets for rendering Hebrew sounds,” see A. Sperber, *A Historical Grammar of Biblical Hebrew: A Presentation of Problems with Suggestions to Their Solution* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), 170–71.

⁵ I use the unaccented Greek forms in the main text. The variously accented forms are used as they are found in the mentioned sources.

⁶ Jerome, *Commentary in Psalms* 8.2; Hans D. Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 249; cf. also Erwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period, Vol. 2: The Archeological Evidence from the Diaspora* (Princeton: Literary Licensing, LLC, 1953), 192.

⁷ Frank Shaw, “The Earliest Non-Mystical Jewish Use of Ἰαω” (PhD diss., University of Cincinnati, 2002), 93 n. 20; 95; 187 n. 40. A restriction of the Latin language compared to Greek is the inadequacy to mark the long vowels η and ω (James Barr, “St Jerome and the Sounds of Hebrew,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 12 (1967): 30).

⁸ Translation by C. H. Oldfather (*Loeb Classical Library*), in Greek, “τὸν Ἰαὼ ἐπικαλούμενον θεόν” (Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History, Volume I: Books 1-2.34*, trans. Charles H. Oldfather (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), 321, 1.94.2).

or esoteric form of the name comprehensible only to the initiated.”⁹ The Roman writer Varro (1st century BCE) mentions the name *Iao*, too. His reference is cited by the Byzantine John Lydus in his work *De Mensibus*, discussing the identity of the Jewish God as understood by the Gentiles.¹⁰ It is also possible that the pagan writers Valerius Maximus (early 1st century CE) and Herenius Philo of Byblos (late 1st century CE) were acquainted with this form of the divine name, but the evidence is not sufficiently clear.¹¹

Not long before our common era, the divine name was hypostatized, considered as deserving a place of reverence by itself.¹² Extreme reverence for God and the Creator of all things, which practically transformed into a superstition, finally ended up being “under taboo for the longest time in history,”¹³ along with the advanced requirements for ritual purity and holiness (reflecting the strong ancestral guilt that resulted in the rejection by God and their inconceivable Babylonian exile¹⁴) led to the anonymisation of the “God of the fathers.” These tendencies are reflected in the LXX translational practices, as for example in Lev. 24:16, a verse rendered so as to be a “warning against a vain or blasphemous use of the name,” which was later “taken in an absolute sense” with the aim to instill awe against simply pronouncing the name that had been explicitly revealed by God to Moses and to His people.¹⁵ Moreover, in the Wisdom of Sirach 23:9b (early 2nd century BCE) is written: “Neither use thyself to the naming of the Holy One” (*Authorized Version*). Within the frames of the cosmopolitan Hellenistic syncretism, there seemed no need for a special name for the one supreme Deity — such a local Israelite God would seem tribal, too anthropomorphic and completely outdated. This notion is also reflected in the Aramaic Targums, in which the Tetragramma-

⁹ Frank Shaw, “The Emperor Gaius’ Employment of the Divine Name,” *Studia Philonica Annual, Studies in Hellenistic Judaism* XVII (2005) (Brown Judaic Studies 344): 42.

¹⁰ John Lydus, *De Mensibus* 4.53.40: “Ὁ δὲ Ῥωμαῖος Βάρρων περὶ αὐτοῦ διαλαβῶν φησι παρὰ Χαλδαίους ἐν τοῖς μυστικοῖς αὐτὸν λέγεσθαι Ἰάω.”

¹¹ Shaw, “The Earliest Non-Mystical Jewish Use of Iao,” 89–115.

¹² Guy G. Stroumsa, “A Nameless God: Judaeo-Christian and Gnostic ‘Theologies of the Name,’” in *The Image of the Judeo-Christians in Ancient Jewish and Christian Literature. Papers Delivered at the Colloquium of the Institutum Judaicum, Brussels 18-19 November, 2001*, eds. Peter J. Tomson and Doris Lambers-Petry (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 231.

¹³ Joseph T. Shipley, *In Praise of English: The Growth & Use of Language* (New York: Times Books, 1977), 153. E. Löfstedt explains that “the name of great divinities are taboo: the most celebrated example is Jehovah (Jahveh)” (Einar Löfstedt, *Late Latin: Oslo, Aschehoug* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 182).

¹⁴ Philip Comfort, *Encountering the Manuscripts: An Introduction to New Testament Paleography and Textual Criticism* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2005), 208.

¹⁵ The LXX translates Lev. 24:16 as: “Ὀνομάζων δὲ τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου θανάτῳ θανατούσθω· λίθοις λιθοβολεῖτω αὐτὸν πᾶσα συναγωγὴ Ἰσραὴλ· ἕάν τε προσήλυτος ἕάν τε αὐτόχθων, ἐν τῷ ὀνομάσαι αὐτὸν τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου τελευτάτω.” *The Orthodox Study Bible* (Thomas Nelson, 2008) translation: “Let him who pronounces the Lord’s name be surely put to death. Let all the congregation of Israel stone him with stones, the resident alien as well as the native. Let him die when he pronounces the Lord’s name.”

ton was substituted for *elohim*, aiming to convey the sense of exclusivism — there is no other God than Yahweh.¹⁶

As P. W. Skehan has suggested, by 100 BCE the word *Adonay* (“Lord”) served in certain Jewish circles as a substitute name in public reading.¹⁷ Despite this tendency, it is of great interest that the Greek form *Iαω* — either partly (triliteral, or, more precisely, triconsonantal יהו) or full — was used in copies of the Greek Bible. The Bible manuscript 4QLXX Lev^b (=4Q120, Rahlfs 802), dated from the first century BCE, is a rare witness in the OG/LXX textual tradition that survived until our days and is using the readable form *Iαω*. Obviously, this suggests that “יהוה” was actually pronounced when the text was read,¹⁸ despite the restrictive interpretation imposed gradually to the people by priestly circles, and the spreading reluctance to utter the majestic name during the last centuries of the Second Temple period. This substitution of the Tetragrammaton with appellations (which were in fact divine titles already used for God in the Bible text) now used extensively to replace the proper name of God had “far reaching consequences”¹⁹ and “serious implications.”²⁰

Dr. Paul E. Kahle observes: “We now know that the Greek Bible text [the Septuagint] as far as it was written by Jews for Jews did not translate the Divine name by *kyrios* [Lord], but the Tetragrammaton written with Hebrew or Greek letters was retained in such MSS [manuscripts].”²¹ Professor George Howard adds that “we have three separate pre-Christian copies of the Greek Septuagint Bible and in not a single instance is the Tetragrammaton translated *kyrios* or for that matter translated at all. We can now say with near certainty that it was a Jewish practice before, during, and after the New Testament period to write the divine name ... right into the Greek text of Scripture.”²² Following a similar procedure with the Greek copies of the Hebrew Scriptures, it is probable that the insertion of *kyrios* into the Greek text of the Christian Scriptures in places where the Tetragrammaton originally might have stood was a matter of time.²³

¹⁶ Marianne M. Thompson, *The God of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 30–32.

¹⁷ Patrick W. Skehan, “The Divine Name at Qumran, in the Masada Scroll, and in the Septuagint,” *BIOCS* 13 (1980): 36.

¹⁸ Wolfgang Kraus and R. Glenn Wooden, *Septuagint Research: Issues And Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 161.

¹⁹ Geoffrey H. Parke-Taylor, *Yahweh: The Divine Name in the Bible* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1975), 100.

²⁰ Stroumsa, “Nameless God,” 232 [230–43].

²¹ Paul E. Kahle, ed., *The Cairo Geniza* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1959), 222–24.

²² George Howard, “The Name of God in the New Testament,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 4:01 (1978): 12–4.

²³ George Howard, “Tetragrammaton in the New Testament,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992): 6:392–93; George Howard, “The Tetragram and the New Testament,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96 (1977): 63–8.

Early Christianity and the use of the Tetragrammaton

It is probable that during the early Christian era pagans of this period like Valerius Maximus (early 1st century CE)²⁴ and even the Roman emperor Gaius (Caligula, 12–41 CE),²⁵ used the name of the Jewish God liberally. It was “well-known in the Graeco-Roman world,” observes G. H. van Cooten.²⁶ It is quite clear that among the Jews during the late Second Temple period (200 BCE — 70 CE) the priesthood and the rabbinic teachers began replacing the name with other metonymic terms, like “Heaven,” “the Name,” and so on. Josephus informs us that until the end of the 1st century CE there were Jews like himself who knew the correct pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton, though they were bound by the then current rabbinical interpretations not to utter it.²⁷ But there are no clear indications that the prohibition against uttering the name resulted in the common Jewish people’s ceasing to use it. The pronunciation was heard by the people at least at the annual Day of Atonement, when the high priest had to pronounce it aloud.²⁸ “Rabbinic threatenings against the pronunciation of the tetragrammaton in the second century AD shew that so far the true pronunciation was not uncus-

²⁴ “Idem Iudaeos, qui Sabazi Iovis (that is *Iove*, read like *Yo-weh*) cultu Romanos inficere mores conati erant, repetere domos suas coegit.” Translation: “The Jews had tried to corrupt Roman values with their cult of Jupiter Sabazius, so the praetor [Gnaeus Cornelius Hispanus] forced them to go back to their home” (Valerius Maximus, “Epitome of Julius Paris,” in *Memorable Deeds and Sayings. One Thousand Tales from Ancient Rome*, trans. Henry J. Walker (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004), 14, 1:3.3[12]). “As the Romans already worshipped the god Jupiter (Iouei) which was never the case for the Jews, this strange name Sabazi Iouis must be an approximation for the Hebrew name Sabaoth Ioua (or Iao), which is a more plausible conclusion” (Gérard Gertoux, *The Name of God Y.eH.oW.aH which is Pronounced as it is Written I_Eh_oU_Ah: Its Story* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2002), 106–07). The same seems to be the case with Augustine, who writes that Varro “thought the God of the Jews to be same as Jupiter,” Lat. “deum Iudaeorum Iouem putauit” (*Harmony of the Gospels*, 1:22.30).

²⁵ “Καὶ ἀνατείνας τὰς χεῖρας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐπεφήμιζε πρόσρησιν, ἣν οὐδὲ ἀκούειν θεμιτὸν, οὐχ ὅτι διερμηνεύειν αὐτολεξεί.” Translation: “And raising his hands to heaven he uttered a Name which it is a sin even to hear, let alone to pronounce” (Philonis Alexandrini, *Legatio ad Gaium* 44.353, trans. E. Mary Smallwood (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 142). See Shaw, “The Emperor Gaius’ Employment,” 33–48.

²⁶ George H. van Cooten, “Moses/Musaeus/Mochos and His God Yahweh, Iao, and Sabaoth, Seen from a Graeco-Roman Perspective,” in *The Revelation of the Name YHWH to Moses: Perspectives from Judaism, the Pagan Graeco-Roman World, and Early Christianity (Themes in Biblical Narrative)*, ed. George H. van Kooten (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 128 [107–38].

²⁷ “Περὶ ἧς [προσηγορίας] οὐ μοι θεμιτὸν εἰπεῖν.” Translation: “Concerning which [i.e. the name of God] it is not lawful for me to say any more” (Flavius Josephus, “Antiquities of the Jews,” in *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (London: Armstrong & Berry, 1839), 57, 2:276; 11:332). However, “not all Jews of the second temple period were eager to discontinue their employment of the divine name,” and “there was considerable choice among ancient Jews and early Christians regarding how to refer to God,” including effable forms of the Tetragrammaton (David T. Runia, ed., *Philo of Alexandria: An Annotated Bibliography 1997–2006* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 229–30).

²⁸ According to a statement included in the Talmud, “the Ineffable Name, having been pronounced in the Temple by the High Priest, immediately ‘disappeared’ from the hearer’s memories” — thus being obscured the simple fact that common people knew the true pronunciation of God’s name (TJ, Yom. 3:7; see Rachel

tomary,” states J. B. Harford.²⁹ G. A. Deissmann observes that the Tetragrammaton “in its correct pronunciation” “was, of course, still known to the Jews, though they shrank from using it, up to and into the Christian era.”³⁰ It has been admitted that “the tradition of the non-pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton was a rather later tradition, dating to the second century BCE, and enforced by the Masoretes after the second century CE.”³¹ Therefore, all this indicates that until the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton was actually well known among the common people.

The radical character of the Christian movement and of its leader came into head-on collision with non-biblical traditions and the “hypocritical” religious establishment (Matt. 15:3–9). The prohibition against using the divine name might have been one of these “heavy burdens” fiercely attacked by Jesus (Matt. 23:2, 4, *English Standard Version*). Jesus Christ would have no valid reason to abide by such a rule imposed by mere humans and thus to restrict his mission “to bear witness about the light” (John 1:7). Jesus could not have “manifested God’s Name,” that is to “reveal His very Self, His real Self, His character” (John 17:6, 26, *Amplified Bible*), and he could not have asked his followers to pray for His “holy name [to] be honored” (Matt. 6:9, *Good News Translation*) if the name itself were considered to be ineffable and were not actually used. The same might be true for his apostles and his disciples (Acts 15:14, 17; Heb. 2:12). Actually, they were prepared to die for their firm beliefs and, later on, pronouncing the Tetragrammaton might have possibly incurred capital punishment for blasphemy.

Early Christians were not a homogeneous community. Jewish Christians living in Judea, in North Palestine and across the Diaspora were to render worship jointly with Gentile Christians who came from Greek, Roman, Oriental and African backgrounds. They were dispersed across the Roman Empire, they spoke different languages, and they came from different educational backgrounds and social strata. Even though it may not be safe to conjecture as to what exactly the case with the use of the divine name was, the reverence for God’s name was incontestably part of their Biblical heritage. The so-called “theology of the names” appeared later, during the days of the Apologists and was climaxed in the corpus of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.

What was the case with the Christian writings that later became the canonical Christian Scriptures, or the “New Testament”? “When the Septuagint Version that the New Testamental Church used and quoted, contained the Divine Name in Hebrew

Elior, “Early Forms of Jewish Mysticism,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Vol. 4: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period*, ed. Steven T. Katz (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 778–81).

²⁹ John B. Harford, *Studies in the Book of Ezekiel* (Cambridge: University Press; New York: Macmillan, 1935), 144.

³⁰ G. Adolf Deissmann, “Greek Transcriptions of the Tetragrammaton,” in *Bible Studies*, trans. Alexander Grieve (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1903), 335.

³¹ Kristin De Troyer, “The Pronunciation of the Names of God, with Some Notes Regarding *Nomina Sacra*,” in *Gott Nennen*, eds. Ingolf U. Dalferth and Philipp Stoellger (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 163.

characters, the writers of the New Testament included without doubt the Tetragrammaton in their quotations,” concludes G. Howard.³² Despite the fact that the LXX rendering of Lev. 24:16 had given a negative meaning to the phrase “ὁ ὀνομάζων τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου” (“the one who pronounces the name of the Lord”), the Christian Scriptures were affirmative in pronouncing God’s name. Not even a hint of the prior explicit rabbinical prohibition made its way into the Christian canonical texts.³³ Consequently, the removal of the Tetragrammaton “created confusion in the minds of early Gentile Christians about the relationship between the ‘Lord God’ and the ‘Lord Christ.’” The development of the trinitarian doctrine at the metropolises of the Roman Empire was abetted by the containment of such religious elements that were thought to be Judaic. This is also confirmed by the fact that early Christian *onomastica* used forms of the Tetragrammaton like *Iαω*, *Ιω*, and *Ιωα* but these were gradually replaced in their later copies by *Kyrios* (Lord) and *Theos* (God), especially since the 6th century CE.³⁴

There is some evidence that the name survived for some time among Christian communities. Greek translations of the Hebrew Scriptures that were elaborated during the early times of Christianity included the divine name in different forms. For example, Symmachus — who, according to Eusebius (EH 6:17), was a Jewish Christian “Ebionite” — used the Tetragrammaton written in Paleo-Hebrew characters in his translation in the early-to-mid-2nd century CE.³⁵ The Tosefta, a written collection of Jewish oral laws completed at the end of the 2nd century CE, mentions with regard to Christian writings that were burned on the Sabbath: “The books of the *gilyonim* [the Gospels] and the books of the *minim* [mainly Jewish Christians] they do not save from a fire. But they are allowed to burn where they are, they and [even] the references to the Divine Name which are in them.”³⁶ There are also quoted the words of Rabbi Yosé the Galilean, who lived at the beginning of the 2nd century CE, as saying that on other days of the week “one cuts out the references to the Divine Name which are in them [the Christian writings] and stores them away, and the rest burns.” Gentile Christian scribes “had no traditional attachment to the Hebrew Tetragrammaton and no doubt

³² *Biblical Archeology Review* (March 1978): 14. See, also, *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 6 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) 392.

³³ “Ὁ μέντοι στερεὸς θεμέλιος τοῦ θεοῦ ἔστηκεν, ἔχων τὴν σφραγίδα ταύτην· ἔγνω κύριος τοὺς ὄντας αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀποστήτω ἀπὸ ἀδικίας πᾶς ὁ ὀνομάζων τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου” (2 Timothy 2:19). Translation: “But God’s firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are his,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity’” (*English Standard Version*).

³⁴ Shaw, “The Earliest Non-Mystical Jewish Use of *Iαω*,” 21–44; Shaw, “The Emperor Gaius’ Employment,” 43, n. 48.

³⁵ The same was the case with the translation of Aquila, and possibly with the one made by Theodotion (Natalio F. Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 128; Howard, “Tetragrammaton in the New Testament,” 392–93).

³⁶ Tos. Shab. 13:5. See, also, Jacob Neusner, *Chapters in the Formative History of Judaism: Fifth Series* (Lanham: University Press of America 2010), 105–106; James R. Edwards, *The Hebrew Gospel and the Development of the Synoptic Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 2009), 191.

often failed even to recognize it,” observes G. Howard. As a result, they “contributed to the use of surrogates like *kyrios* and *theos* for the Tetragrammaton.” They marked the sacred nature of these special words with contracted forms (*nomina sacra*), but gradually the special role of this practice faded out and was forgotten. Moreover, the aggravation of the heated conflict between Christians and Jews resulted to the gradual extinction of elements that seemed Judaic and especially later on “un-trinitarian,” or even anti-trinitarian.

Such contemplation led some translators of the Christian canonical scriptures to “reinstate” the Tetragrammaton into the text of the New Testament. The use of the Tetragrammaton in Hebrew editions of the New Testament led the way for this practice in other languages, as well. The esteemed polymath Joseph Priestley exhorted other Bible translators: “In the Old Testament let the word *Jehovah* be rendered by Jehovah, and also the word *kurios* in the New [Testament], in passages in which there is an allusion to the *Old [Testament]*, or where it may be proper to distinguish *God* from *Christ*.”³⁷

Patristic literature and the Tetragrammaton in Greek

In the literature produced by Church fathers and other Christian writers the reference to the Tetragrammaton is made in various ways.³⁸ To be sure, the LXX translation of Ex. 3:14 as “I am He That Is” or “I am the Existent” (“Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ὢν”) is a typical sample of interpretation made by Hellenistic Judaism that prevailed among Church fathers and Christian writers alike and fundamentally influenced their understanding of the divine name. The Tetragrammaton was permanently replaced in the Christian copies of the Hebrew Bible by the term *κυριος* (Kyrios) — a title or appellation of God that became a noun and was used as a proper name. Christian writings that might contain references to the “Judaic” name of God probably faced a similar fate.

Concerning the reference to the Hebrew Tetragrammaton, various Greek transliterations were used, like *Iaw*, *Iwa*, *Ieww*, *Iafa*, *Iaβe*/*Iaβa*, *Iaov*(ε), *Iam*, etc.³⁹ More-

³⁷ Joseph Priestley, “Rules of translating” for “A plan to procure a continually improving translation of the Scriptures,” in J. T. Rutt, *The Theological and Miscellaneous Works of Joseph Priestley, Vol. 17* (London: G. Smallfield, 1797), 532.

³⁸ For a detailed collation of the patristic sources, see Pavlos Vasileiadis, “The Holy Tetragrammaton: A historical and philological approach of God’s name,” *Bulletin of Biblical Studies* 28 (2010): 87–99 [82–107, in Greek].

³⁹ The widespread form *Iaw* is mentioned by Irenaeus of Lyon (*Against Heresies*, 1:4.1; 1:21.3; 1:30.5, 11; *Iaoth* at 2:35.3), Origen (*Commentary on John*, 2.196 [v. 1:1]; *Selections on Psalms*, 2), and Eusebius (*Demonstratio evangelica*, 4:17.23, 10:8.28; *Prophetic Extracts*, 3.23); *Iaw*, *Iaβe*/*Iaβa* (transcr. *Iave*) from Theodoret of Cyrus (*Questions in 1 Paral.*, 9; *Questions in Exodus*, 15; *Compendium of Heretical Accounts*, 5:3), and Didymus the Blind (*Commentary on Zechariah*, 2:14.7). The form *Iwa* (*Ioa*) is given from Severus of Antioch (*Commentary on John*, chap. 8) and Codex Coislinianus (6th century). Clement of Alexandria mentions the form *Iaoue* (*Iaoue*) at his *Stromata* (5:6.34). Also, the form *Iaw* is found in Hesychius’ *Lexicon* (lemmata “Ἰωαθαμ” and “Ὀξειας”), being probably the work of an unknown ecclesiastical interpolator. Non-Christians, also, deliver forms of the divine name, such as *Ieww* (*Iewo*/

over, the Greek term ΠΙΠΙ (Lat. Pipi) was used in writings and even in Bible copies. This was a Greek form of the divine name based on the visual similarity with the original Hebrew term (יהוה, or even the late substitute יהוה). In fact, these terms were used rarely, mainly in references to the Semitic God, the God of the “Old Testament.” But, overall, the gross lack of knowledge of the Hebrew language combined with influences from the predominant Greek philosophical currents further obscured the primary Biblical notion concerning the divine name.

Greek magical papyri comprise a valuable source of information, as they were not under the strict control of Jewish or Christian religious authorities and in this way they did not undergo the usual orthodox “normalizations.” Greek renderings of the Tetragrammaton include additionally *Ιαω/Ιαο*, *Ιαβω*, *Ιαχω*, *Ιαωα*, *Ιεωα*, *Ιαεωβα*, *Ιεου*, *Ιηουα*, *Ιαωουεη*, *Ιωα*, *Ιαβα/Ιαβας*, etc. Almost all of these Greek renderings have their Latin equivalents. The rendering attempts in Latin were just a foretaste of what would follow during the Bible literature outbreak that took place at the Renaissance.

The Tetragrammaton during the Middle Ages (500–1500)

During the Middle Ages Latin became rapidly the “lingua franca” of the spreading Christianity and of the emerging European literature. A few early Latin Church fathers used forms like *Iaho* and *Iao* to refer to the proper name of the Bible God.⁴⁰ Just like Jerome, who turned to the *hebraica veritas* for assistance, the Christians turned to Hebrew informants for linguistic help.⁴¹

The growing study of the Hebrew language made clear that the words are based on consonantal roots and, as a result, Hebrew words rendered in other languages cannot be made up solely of vowels. Although they were well accustomed to the patristic renderings, it became clear that according to the Hebraists “the Semitic unpointed script is syllabic in character, each letter representing the unit of consonant plus any or no vowel.”⁴² In the early 12th

leuo) that comes from Porphyry (Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 1:9, 10:9). According to G. Ger-toux, the Greek *Ιαω* comes from the old Hebrew *Yahu*, and the Samaritan *Ιαβε* comes from the Aramaic *Yaw*.

⁴⁰ The form *Iao* is used by Tertullian (interestingly, Tertullian presents a Valentinian Gnostic explanation for the reason they believed that they “find ‘Iao’ in the Bible” (Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians*, transl. Mark T. Riley (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1971), 14:3), Lat. “inde invenitur ‘Iao’ in scripturis”) – an additional indication that forms of the Tetragrammaton could be found in certain Bible copies at that time), the form *Iaho* by Jerome (*Breviarium in Psalmos*, psalm 8; also, the form *ΠΙΠΙ*, at Epist. 25 [“De decem Nominibus Dei”]), and the form *Iaia* by Isidore of Seville (*Etymologiae*, 7.1). Non-Christian testimonies for *Iao* come from Cornelius Labeo and Macrobius (Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 1:18.18–21).

⁴¹ James Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 65, 66.

⁴² Ignace J. Gelb, *A Study of Writing* (Chicago: Phoenix Books, 1963), 122–40; John C. L. Gibson, “The Massorettes as linguists,” in *Language and Meaning, Studies in Hebrew Language and Biblical Exegesis*, ed. James Barr (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 94.

century, Judah Halevi pointed out that “it is the letters *alef*, *hē*, *wāv* and *yōd* 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.”⁴³ Moses Maimonides commented that the Tetragrammaton “is written, but is not pronounced according to its letters,” in compliance with the traditional taboo.⁴⁴ Despite the prevailing antisemitism and the Crusades, the Jewish-Christian scholar interchanges and the increasing Christian approach to the *hebraica veritas* brought forth texts that used forms of the Tetragrammaton. Maimonides, Judah Halevi and Elias Levita were among the prominent Jewish personages that ignited Christian research.

The Latin language had the *h* sound available within words — an advantage over the Greek renderings, as it was a proximate corresponding to the Hebrew *he*. The form of the Latin renderings of the Tetragrammaton was affected by the transformation of the Latin (followed by English) at the late part of the Middle Ages. The semi-vowels *i/j* and *u/v* transformed gradually and they became finally separate letters representing vocalic and consonantal values respectively. The ending and sometimes the medial *h* were either included (*Iehouah*) or left out (*Ieova*), and sometimes the *y* was used to render the starting *yod*. For example, *Ieoua/Ieova* was the form used by Nicolaus Cusanus (early 15th century)⁴⁵ and John Dee (late 16th century).⁴⁶ Cardinal Thomas Cajetan (early 16th century) was among the first ones who made constant use of the form *Iehouah/Iehovah*. Joachim of Fiore (late 12th century) and Pope Innocent III (early 13th century) had already written down the transcriptional form *Ieue/Ieve*. Ramón Martí (late 13th century) used the form *Yohoua* (reprinted as *Jehova*). Early in the 16th century, Pietro Galatino used the form *Iehoua* and Martin Luther in his works the form *Iehouah*. At the same period, Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples used *Ihevhe* and *Iehova*, Alfonso of Valladolid (Abner of Burgos, early 14th century) used *Yehabe*, and Paulus de Heredia (mid-15th century) the form *Yehauue*. All these different forms of rendering the Tetragrammaton are explained by the fact that the understanding of the Hebrew language was still in its cradle. These numerous attempts made by eminent writers were based on the assumption that the par excellence name of God may be pronounced “as it is written,” or “according to its letters.”

In any case, in the early 16th century, the form *Iehova/Iehovah* was already used as the standard and most wide-spread form of the rendered Tetragrammaton. The first English dictionary, composed by R. Cawdry (1604), defined the word “Iehoua” as “Lord almighty.” Early printed Bible translations, like the *Authorized King James Version* and the ones made by W. Tyndale, S. Münster, P. R. Olivétan, A. Brucioli, Fr. Vatable, and M. Bucer, started a tradition of using freely and restoring the divine name back into the Bible text — mainly in the so-called Old Testament and usually only few

⁴³ Hartwig Hirschfeld, trans., *Judah Hallevis Kitab Al Khazari* (London: G. Routledge and Sons, 1905), 201–02.

⁴⁴ Moses Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. Michael Friedländer (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd.; New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1904), 56.

⁴⁵ Nicolaus Cusanus, *Dialogus de Genesi (Opera)* (ed. J. Bade), 1514, vol. 1, fol. lxxii[r], lxxiii[r]).

⁴⁶ John Dee, *Monas hieroglyphica* (1564), 4.

times. In the Greek-speaking Orthodox East, the views concerning the name of God reproduced primarily patristic ideas. Besides the magical use of the divine names in Byzantium, lonely and rare voices like Michael Psellos (early 11th century) mentioned and made short comments on the Tetragrammaton sporadically.⁴⁷ But such voices were condemned and marginalized under Byzantine theocracy. At the end of the 14th century, the Jewish Greek translation *Graecus Venetus* rendered all the instances of the Tetragrammaton as *Οντωτης*, *Οντουργος*, or *Ονσιωτης*, which mean “the One that Gives, or Creates, the Existence, or the Essence.”⁴⁸

Greek renderings of the Tetragrammaton during the modern period (1500–today)

During most of the Middle Byzantine Era (843–1261), the Greek letters did not advance significantly. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, many Greek scholars fled to the West and flourished at the European universities. Later on, Western influences resurged in Greek thought and studies. At that time, the form *Jehovah* was predominant in Latin, English, German and even Russian books of various genres. In the Greek-speaking world, the introduction of the form *Ιεχωβα* (*Jehovah*, read /iexová/ or /iexová/) took place at a time that in Europe and America (but also in the translations made for distant lands by missionaries with the assistance of Bible societies) this form had been the standard for few centuries.

In Greek literature, the Grecized form *Ιεχωβα* appeared probably for the first time in the text of the *Orthodox Confession of Faith of the Catholic and Apostolic Church of the East*,⁴⁹ which was “drawn up by St. Peter Mogilas (Mohyla) at 1638, Metropolitan of Kiev, the father of Russian theology (d. 1647), or under his direction, and was revised and adopted by the Græco-Russian Synod at Jassy, 1643, signed by the Eastern Patriarchs, and approved again by the Synod of Jerusalem, 1672.”⁵⁰ The Phanariot Great Dragoman Panagiotis Nikousios (Mamonas) translated it from Russian to Latin and theologian Meletios Syrigos amended and translated it from Latin to Modern Greek, and then it was printed at Amsterdam in 1667.⁵¹ Contemporary and Ancient Greek dictionaries, like

⁴⁷ Michael Psellus, *Theologica*, 1.136–151; 152–167; *Opuscula psychologica, theologica, daemonologica*, 132.26–133.6.

⁴⁸ Marcos, *Septuagint in Context*, 178–79.

⁴⁹ *Ορθόδοξος Ομολογία της καθολικής και αποστολικής Εκκλησίας της Ανατολικής*. The text in Greek: “Τὸ μαρτυρᾶ ὁ αὐτὸς Θεὸς, ὀνομαζόμενος Ἰεχωβᾶ”; in Latin: “Deus ipsemet, cui Jehovah nomen est”; and, in English: “As God, whose name is Jehovah, doth himself testify” (*The Orthodox Confession of the Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Eastern Church, Faithfully Translated from the Originals*, trans. Philip Ludwell (London, 1762), 17).

⁵⁰ Philip Schaff, *Bibliotheca Symbolica Ecclesiae Universalis, Vol. 2: The Greek and Latin Creeds, with Translations* (New York: Harper, 1878), 275.

⁵¹ Ioannes Karmires, *The Dogmatic and Symbolic Monuments of the Orthodox Catholic Church, Vol. 2* (Athens, 1953), 582–92, 597 [Greek]; George A. Maloney, *A History of Orthodox Theology Since 1453* (Belmont: Nordland Pub. Co., 1976), 34. Among the copies of the *Russian Confession* that were availed

the trilingual of the author and printer G. Vendotis⁵² and the famous Greek-English *Lexicon* by H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, as well as Bible dictionaries, like the Hebrew-Modern Greek of I. Lowndes,⁵³ included this neologism, in the forms *Ιεχωβα*, *Ιεωβα* or *Ιεοβα* (or, rarely, the English term untranslated). Moreover, the dispersion of the Sephardi Jews all over the Ottoman Empire in the early 16th century created an atmosphere that contributed to these efforts. Despite the long and ascendant LXX tradition imposing translation terms or substitutes like “ο Ων” and *Κυριος* in Greek literature, Church writers, Bible scholars, theologians, historians, lexicographers, encyclopedists, novelists, and poets welcomed and often used the translated divine name. Motivated by Adamantios Korais and under the auspices of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the scholar Archimandrite Neophytos Vamvas and his colleagues produced the first translation that utilized the form *Ιεοβα* (Ieova) into the sacred text. Despite the subsequent rejection by the Orthodox Church, it became the most widely circulated Greek Holy Bible.⁵⁴ During the 20th century the divine name was included even in schoolbooks.⁵⁵ Early in the 20th century, the use of the forms *Ιαβε* and later *Παχβε* expanded similarly.

Remarks on the available Greek reconstructions-renderings of the Tetragrammaton

It is true that rendering the Hebrew Tetragrammaton in Greek has often been considered as an impossible task — constituting a “second generation” linguistic taboo. But we must admit that linguistically the sacred Tetragrammaton is nothing more than a word, even a name, and as such it should be read as all other names. However, as McDonough notes, “we must emphasize from the start that a final resolution of the problem of *precisely* how the name was said is impossible. We have no tape recordings of people saying the tetragrammaton; and even if we had one from, say, Jerusalem,

to me, a copy dated 1696 had in this place the Greek “ὁ Ων,” but all the following editions (1831, 1900) included the word “Ιεοβα.” The same was the case with the German edition of the *Confession* translated by C. G. Hofmann dated 1751. As the original is not any more available, we don’t know whether Mogilas in Russian or Nikousios in Latin was the originator of the divine name in the text. The Greek translation from the very first edition uses the word “Ιεχωβα.”

⁵² Γ. Βεντότης, *Λεξικόν τριγλωσσόν της Γαλλικής, Ιταλικής και Ρωμαϊκής διαλέκτου, εις τόμους τρεις δημοσθένον*, Vol. 1 (Vienna, 1790), 493.

⁵³ I. Λάουνδς (Isaac Lowndes), *Λεξικόν Εβραϊκό-Νεοελληνικόν της Παλαιάς Διαθήκης* (Μελίτη (Malta): Αποστολική Εταιρία Λονδίνου, 1842), 327.

⁵⁴ Ν. Βάμβας, *Ο Πεντάτευχος Μωσέως* (1833). See, also, Charles A. Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece: 1821–1852* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 136–139; Joze Krašovec, ed., *The Interpretation of the Bible: The International Symposium in Slovenia. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 289*. (Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 1998), 313.

⁵⁵ For instance, Η. Π. Μηνιάτης, *Ερμηνεία Περικοπών εκ της Παλαιάς Διαθήκης, δια την Δ' Τάξιν του Γυμνασίου* (Athens: Βιβλιοπωλείον της Εστίας, 1937). Approved by the Ministry of Education and the Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church (no. 40822/1-8-1933).

there would still be the possibility that there were significant local variations elsewhere in the Mediterranean. The somewhat mysterious status of this divine name during our period exacerbates the problem.”⁵⁶ That means that it is utopian to search for the *one and only* pronunciation of this name — a truth for almost every other Biblical name rendered into Greek. Some of the issues concerning this matter include: Should the “semi-vocalic consonants”⁵⁷ *yod* and *waw* be considered as vowels or as consonants — י or γ/γλ, ου or β? Should the medial *he* rendered as χ or be simply dismissed, considering it inherently voiceless? Should the divine name be transliterated (rendered letter by letter) or be transcribed (by constructing proper syllables)?

We should keep in mind that the Masoretic vowel points in the Leningrad Codex allow for the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton as *Yehwah* (יהוה), *Yehwih* (יהוהי), and *Yehowah* (יהוהי). The notion of the “qere perpetuum” — a term invented likely by T. F. Stange at early 1820s⁵⁸ — probably aimed to disregard the traditional “Jehovistic” vocalization of the name in the Masoretic text and tried to support this view by an undocumented virtual grammatical rule.⁵⁹ The resulted common explanation that assumed that the Masoretes used the vowel points of the term *Adonay* is not considered satisfactory.⁶⁰ Instead, the vowel points of the Aramaic term *Shema* (שמע) have been

⁵⁶ Sean M. McDonough, *YHWH at Patmos* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 117.

⁵⁷ Joze Krasovec, *The Transformation of Biblical Proper Names* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 97.

⁵⁸ Theodor F. Stange, “Hebraische sprachfunde” (1820), *Kritisches Journal der neuesten theologischen Literatur* 15 (1822): 382.

⁵⁹ The controversy between the so-called Adonists (“critics who maintain that the Hebrew points ordinarily annexed to the consonants of the word Jehovah are not the natural points belonging to that word, but to the words *Adonai* and *Elohim*”) and Jehovists (supporters of the originality of the Hebrew points annexed to the consonants of the divine name) have been lasting few centuries (John McClintock and James Strong, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, Vol. 1* (New York: Harper, 1867), 76). The form *Yahweh* that is singled as the current communis opinio is a scholarly reconstruction that is described as “a strange combination of old and late elements” (Barton Payne, “hāwā: Yahweh,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 1*, eds. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980/2003), p. 210). A growing number of recent studies reveal that the “currently favored” pronunciation *Yahweh* prevails as it is repeatedly and uncritically reproduced with virtually no definite and adequate argumentations. For example, S. M. McDonough states that “one must admit that the virtual unanimity of the *cognoscen-ti* on the matter counts for something” and admits honestly that “the case can hardly be considered close.” Also, “there is no direct evidence from the late Second Temple period which supports such a pronunciation” (McDonough, *YHWH at Patmos*, 117–19; see, also, Parke-Taylor, *Yahwe*, 80).

⁶⁰ J. Levy, “The Tetra(?)grammaton,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 15, no. 1 (1902): 98; Gertoux, *Name of God*, 137–39. F. B. Freedman and W. D. O’Connor were cautious when they wrote: “It is not probable that these scholars intended to imply that they were giving the correct pronunciation” (*The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. 12*, (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1912), 470). See, also, the section entitled “The so-called Tradition of the Non-Pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton,” in De Troyer, “Pronunciation of the Names of God,” 144–48 [143–72].

proposed as the original Masoretic qere of the Tetragrammaton.⁶¹ The traditional form *Yehowah* (Lat. Iehova/Iehovah/Yehova, Eng. Jehovah, Gr. Ιεχωβα/Ιεωβα/Ιεοβα), although it is the “natural” reading of the divine name in Hebrew, has been treated disparagingly especially during the previous century.⁶² Views expressed categorically that describe the form *Jehovah* as “impossible,” a “hybrid,” or even a “monstrous” form have not been followed by adequately sound, clear, and firm support.⁶³ In addition, it is interesting to note that the Leningrad Codex contains not only three but *seven* different vowel pointings (qere) as vocalizations of the Tetragrammaton.⁶⁴

Table 1. Greek renderings of the Tetragrammaton sorted out by the earliest date that are testified from (1st century BCE — 20th century CE)

No	י	ה	ו	ה	Date
1	י	α	ὠ	—	1 st century BCE
2	י	α	ῶ	—	1 st century BCE
3	י	ά	ω	—	1 st century BCE
4	י	ά	ο	—	1 st century BCE
5	י	ε	υώ	—	1 st — 2 nd century CE
6	י	α	βώ	—	2 nd century
7	י	α	βού	—	2 nd — 3 rd century
8	י	αχ	ώ	—	2 nd (?) / 4 th century
9	י	α	ου	[έ]	3 rd century
10	י	α	ω	ά	3 rd — 4 th century
11	י	ε	ω	ά	3 rd — 4 th century
12	י	αε	ωβ	ά	4 th century
13	י	ε	οῦ	—	4 th century
14	י	η	ου	ά	4 th century
15	י	α	—	ή	4 th century
16	י	α	ουου	εη	4 th century

⁶¹ Kristin De Troyer, “The Names of God, Their Pronunciation and Their Translation: A Digital Tour of Some of the Main Witnesses,” *Lectio Difficilior* 2 (2005): 3–4; De Troyer, “Pronunciation of the Names of God,” 163–64; Elias J. Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 265; Martin Rösel, “The Reading and Translation of the Divine Name in the Masoretic Tradition and the Greek Pentateuch,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 31, no 4 (2007): 412.

⁶² Concerning the “natural” reading, see Gertoux, *Name of God*, 173, 270–78.

⁶³ J. B. Rotherham quoted such designations to show that “Jehovah” had been “too heavily burdened with merited critical condemnation” (*The Emphasized Bible* (London: H. R. Allenson, 1902), 24). For example, R. Kittel explicitly stated: “The form was never pronounced Yehowah (Jehovah)” (*The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. 12*, 471). Similarly, D. N. Freedman and M. P. O’Connor wrote about “the impossible form *y^hhōwāh* (Eng. “Jehovah”)” (David N. Freedman and Michael P. O’Connor, “YHWH,” *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 5 (1986): 501). E. G. Hirsch concluded that it is a “grammatically impossible” form, and proposed various conjectural explanations (*The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 7* (London and New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1904), 87–8).

⁶⁴ That is, יְהוָה (Yəhōwāh), יְהוֹה (Yəhōhāh), יְהוֹוִה (Yəhōwih), יְהוֹוִי (Yəhōwih), יְהוֹוֵה (Yəhōwih), and יְהוֹוִי (Yəhōwih). (Gertoux, *Name of God*, 143–44.)

The Pronunciation of the Sacred Tetragrammaton...

No	י	ה	ו	ה	Date
17	י	—	ω	ἄ	4 th century
18	י	—	ω	αἶ	4 th century
19	י	α	β	έ	4 th – 5 th century
20	י	α	β	αί	4 th – 5 th century
21	י	α	β	ά	4 th – 5 th century
22	י	α	β	άς	4 th – 5 th century
23	י	εχ	ωβ	ᾱ	17 th century
24	י	ε	ὠβ	α	17 th century
25	י	ε	ωβ	ἄ	17 th century
26	י	—	ωὺ	α	17 th century
27	י	—	ωυ	ἄ	17 th century
28	י	—	ωϋ	α	17 th century
29	י	—	ωβ	ἄ	17 th century
30	י	εχ	οβ	ἄ	18 th century
31	י	ε	ὠβ	ᾱ	19 th century
32	י	ε	ωο	ᾱ	19 th century
33	י	ε	οβ	ἄ	19 th century
34	י	εχ	οβ	ᾱ	19 th century
35	Γ	εχ	οβ	ἄ	19 th century
36	Γ	εχ	ωβ	ᾱ	20 th century
37	Γ	ε	οβ	ά	19 th century
38	י	εχ	οβ	ᾱχ	19 th century
39	י	εχ	οβ	ᾱχ	19 th century
40	י	εχ	ωβ	ᾱχ	19 th century
41	י	αχ	ωβ	ᾱ	19 th century
42	Γι	ᾱχ	β	ε	20 th century
43	Γι	αχ	β	έ	20 th century
44	י	αχ	β	έ	20 th century
45	י	αχ	β	ἐχ	20 th century
46	Γι	αχ	β	ἐχ	20 th century
47	Γι	αχ	ββ	ἐχ	20 th century
48	Γι	εχ	ωβ	ά	20 th century
49	Γι	εχ	ωβ	ᾱ	20 th century
50	Γι	εχ	ωβ	άς	20 th century
51	Γι	ε	οβ	ά	20 th century
52	Γι	αχ	ωβ	ά	20 th century
53	Γι	αχ	ωβ	ᾱ	20 th century
54	Γι	αχ	ωβ	άς	20 th century
55	י	αχ	ωβ	άς	20 th century
56	י	εχ	ωβ	άς	20 th century
57	י	E	B	E	20 th century
58	י	α	υ	έ	20 th century

As seen in *Table 1*, there have been numerous renderings of the Hebrew name in Greek in a period spanning more than 20 centuries. It is observable a quite reasonable phonetical diversity of the rendered Greek terms according to their various spelling

forms. Not all of these renderings appear with the same frequency; neither do they have the same weight. For example, some of them are found in magical papyri, selected between *nomina barbara* (most of the now unintelligible words and names used esp. in invocations). Or some of them are very rare, found only in a very small number of texts, or have otherwise a very restricted use. Also, concerning the earlier transcriptions, it cannot be said with certainty if the original Hebrew term they represent is the quadriliteral divine name or some other partly or shortened form of it.

It is obvious that the earlier Greek renderings of the Hebrew term are actually transcriptions — that is, letter-to-letter correspondences of the Hebrew letters to the Greek ones. We may also note that **(a)** the letter *yod* is transcribed consistently as vocalic ι (/i/) or a few times as consonantal γι (/j/) or γ (/y/), **(b)** the first *he* of the name is either missing or rendered as χ (/x/), **(c)** the first vowel used in the word is either ε or η (/e/), the η was read later as /i:/, i.e. the name Jesus Ἰησοῦς⁶⁵ or α (/a/), **(d)** the letter *waw* is rendered as a vocalic ου (/u/) or ω (/o:/) or as consonantal β or υ (/v/, in some cases even combined), **(e)** the second vowel of the name is either missing or rendered as ω or ο (/o/, formerly pronounced /ɔ:/), **(f)** the last *he* is usually missing as voiceless (/Ø/), **(g)** the third vowel wherever used is rendered either α (also, normalized with the male gender ending -ας /as/) or ε (/e/), and **(h)** virtually all are accented on the last syllable.

Many questions require further examination regarding aspects of the sacred Tetragrammaton. For example, to what extent did the *Hebrew* pronunciation of the divine name change during all these centuries? How strong was the influence of the Aramaic on the Biblical Hebrew as reflected in the development of the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton? To what extent has been the differentiation of the pronunciation of the divine name between the different Jewish communities dispersed across the Mediterranean Sea and eastwards at Mesopotamia? How noteworthy were the influences from Gnostic, Egyptian, Greek, and Oriental sources? To what extent did the late rabbinical and Church restrictions imposed on the religious and sacred literature mutate them during their transmission?

⁶⁵ Until approximately the 4st century CE the Greek name Ἰησοῦς would read /ie:sús/ (like starting with *Ie-*) and since then as /iisús/. For more details, see Francis Th. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (Milano: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino – La Goliardica, 1975), 240–49, 261–62.