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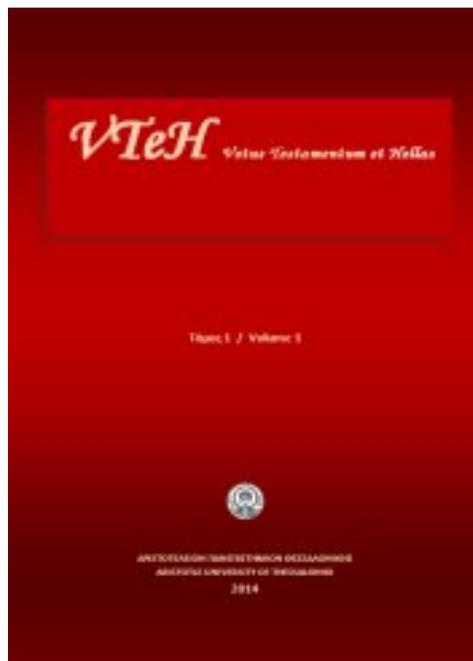
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**The god *Iao*
and his connection with the Biblical God,
with special emphasis
on the manuscript 4QpapLXXLev^b**

Pavlos D. Vasileiadis

(Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)

Abstract: The personality of the Biblical God spans through all over the writings that comprise the Jewish Hebrew Scriptures and respectively the core of the Christian Old Testament. Despite the absence of an explicit theological exposition, the qualities of the supreme deity sketch a quite distinct profile for Him. On the other side, the god named *Iao* is found in Greek and Latin sources of the Hellenistic period already since the 1st century BCE. It mainly appears in writings displaying marks of religious syncretism, used as one of the names designating either the highest God or one of his emanations. In the following is examined the possibility that the use of the name *Iao*, instead of another form of the Tetragrammaton, in the manuscript 4QpapLXXLev^b (4Q120; Rahlfs 802) may be the result of a Hellenizing rather than a re-Hebraizing tendency, a view that tends to prevail in the Septuagint studies. Evidence coming from Christian writers shows that for few centuries CE Bible manuscripts that contained the theonym *Iao* were circulating among them and even possibly produced by them.

Keywords: *Iao*, Tetragrammaton, Biblical theonyms, divine name

Introduction

The earliest Septuagint copies (LXX or Ⲙ)—either close to the “original” Greek translation (OG, “Old Greek”) or relics of its subsequent revisions and recensions, dated from the pre-Christian to the Christian era and discovered in Palestine and Egypt—provide ample evidence for the continuous production and use of manuscripts that included Hebrew forms of the Tetragrammaton within the Greek sacred text. Aston-

ishingly, 4QpapLXXLev^b, known also as 4Q120¹, is the only surviving LXX manuscript that uses a *Greek* rendering of the Biblical name of God. The object of this presentation is to pose the question whether the use of *Iao* (Gr. *Ιαω/Ιαώ*) in place of the sacred Tetragrammaton within this manuscript is part of the primary, original translators' activity (that is, part of a more general *Hellenizing* process) or rather part of a secondary, correcting *Hebraizing* tendency.

Our working hypothesis is that the utilization of the divine name *Ιαω* within the sacred text of the Greek Torah may have been primarily motivated by Hellenistic theological conceptions adopted by certain Jewish circles, especially in Egypt. The Maccabean Revolt was an uprising against foreign oppression but also a civil conflict between the orthodox and the reformist parties within the Jewish people. This was a struggle of Hebrew self-identification against the flood of Hellenistic culture. This article investigates some aspects of the consequent implications.

The God of the Bible

Within the Biblical texts the God of Israel is depicted as zealous and demanding exclusive devotion—no other God is tolerated. The Decalogue, the ten precepts that constituted “unconditional community policy,” commence with these words:

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; *you shall have no other gods before/besides me. You shall not make for yourself an idol*, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. *You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God*, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.” (Exodus 20:2–6, *NRSV translation and notes*)

¹ For the sake of simplicity, the symbol “4Q120” will be used in the body of the article.

For subsequent generations of Israelites it became clear that both “the worship of the “wrong gods” (i.e. alien deities and the divine images associated with them)” and “the worship of the “right God” in the wrong way (i.e. the worship of YHWH via divine images)” were equally condemned². The God of the Bible would not accept any worship that included veneration of other gods or any kind of religious representations. Only *his* name was to be called upon by his worshippers. In all the Scriptures, he identifies himself with a distinct, four-letter proper name, that is the sacred Tetragrammaton *yhwh*. Despite this clear-cut declaration in the core of the most ancient Jewish law code, the Biblical and also the extra-Biblical history of the people of Israel present a record of departure from it time after time³.

The sole God and the multiple deities behind the name *Iaω*

Considering religious-philosophical notions regarding divine realities, two early identities of the deity named *Iaω* are traceable. On the one hand, the name *yhw* (usually vocalized *Yaho*) was used as the theonym of the God of the Hebrews as he was conceived by Jewish Egyptian communities like the colony at Elephantine during the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. Their notion of God was the result of a *syncrasis* of “hypostatized aspects of Yahweh with paganizing Canaanite-Aramean influences”⁴. W.F. Albright concluded that ‘pagan theological

² T. Judge, *The Relationship Between the Worship of Other Gods and the Worship of Idols within the Old Testament*, PhD thesis, Durham 2015, 4. For a discussion of the development of the worship of God as reflected in the LXX renderings, see E.Γ. Δάφνη, Ἡ Μονοθεΐα εἰς τὸ Βιβλίον τοῦ Ἱερεμίου καὶ τὴν Ἐπιστολὴν Ἱερεμίου, *Vetus Testamentum et Hellas* 1 (2014) 66-106.

³ “There were syncretistic cults and movements at every known stage of the development of Yahwism.” (W.F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths*, London 1968, 229).

⁴ J. Anderson, *Monotheism and Yahweh's Appropriation of Baal*. London 2015, 33; W.F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process*. Baltimore, MD 1940, 287. The names of other deities found in the Elephantine corpus do

conceptions entered into post-exilic Jewry through the circles to which these Jews belonged' and he described the religion of the Jews at Elephantine as "a very remarkable form of Yahwistic syncretism"⁵. The further development of this theological notion behind the theonym *Iao* (observable at Elephantine) towards its utilization as a generally legible rendering of the four-letter *name* of the Biblical God—who was *at the same time* understood as the Highest God, the only true god who is universally worshiped—was a *Hellenizing* process. Indeed, this theological shift is discernible in the LXX Torah composed in Alexandria during the third century BCE⁶.

In the following centuries, this trend was intensified within ecumenical Hellenistic culture, where blending of major theological beliefs seemed unavoidable. Such an adoption of this widespread syncretistic mentality is obvious on a large scale among the Alexandrian Jews. J. Assmann observed:

The growing political and commercial interconnectedness of the ancient world and the practice of cross-cultural translation of everything, including divine names, gradually led to the concept of a common religion. The names, iconographies, and rites—in short, the cultures—might differ, but the gods remained the same everywhere. This concept of religion as the common background of cultural diversity and the principle of cultural translatability eventually led to the late Hellenistic outlook, where the names of the gods mattered little in view of the overwhelming natural

not provide an adequate basis to describe the Jewish community as polytheistic. Rather, they were probably "hypostases of *Yhw*," or "aspects of *Yhw*." (L. Grabbe, *Elephantine and the Torah*, in A.F. Botta (ed.), *In the Shadow of Bezalel. Aramaic, Biblical, and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Bezalel Porten*, Leiden-Boston 2013, 125-135, here 127-128).

⁵ W.F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*. Baltimore, MD 1956, 168; *idem*, *From the Stone Age*, 286-287. In contrast, Anderson's view is that the Yahwism of Elephantine was a "traditional Israelite religion that predated the instauration of strict monotheism." (*Monotheism*, 32-33).

⁶ For the importance of naming gods in ancient Greek religion, see E. Eidinow/J. Kindt, *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*, Oxford 2015, 13-14. For indications of "continuity within the Jewish community in Egypt over the Persian and Hellenistic periods" as reflected in the LXX, see J. Joosten, *Divergent cultic practices in the Septuagint. The "shoulder" (βραχίον) of the priest*, *Journal of Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 48 (2015) 27-38, here 32-33.

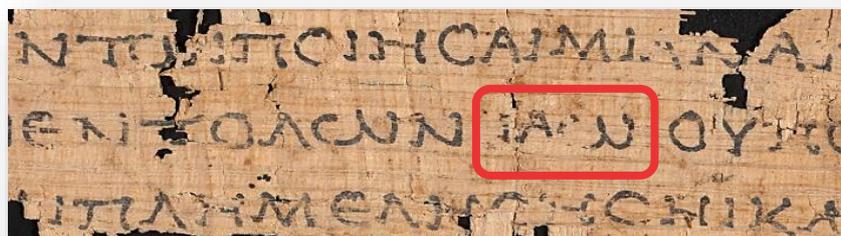


Figure 1:
The phrase «εντολων ιαω» as found in Leviticus 4:27
within the text of 4Q120/4QpapLXXLev^b
(fragment 20:4/plate 378, fragment 15).

evidence for their existence and presence in the world. The idea that the various nations basically worshiped the same deities albeit under different names and in different forms eventually led to the belief in a “Supreme Being” (Gk. *Hypsistos*, “the Highest One”). It essentially comprised not only the myriad known and unknown deities but also those three or four gods who, in the contexts of different religions, play the role of the highest god (usually Zeus, Sarapis, Helios, and Iao = YHWH). This super-deity is addressed by appellations such as *Hypsistos* (supreme), and by the widespread “One-God” predication *Heis Theos*⁷.

Thus, from the first century BCE and climaxing at the end of the first century CE and on, within Gnostic and magical-mystical contexts the name *Iaω* was used to denote “angels or subordinate deities”⁸. Obviously, this use of the Greek

⁷ J. Assman, *Of God and Gods: Egypt, Israel, and the Rise of Monotheism*. Madison, WI 2008, 55.

⁸ F. Shaw, *The Earliest Non-Mystical Jewish Use of Ιαω*, Leuven-Paris-Walpole, MA 2014, 191-235; S.M. McDonough, *YHWH at Patmos: Rev. 1:4 in Its Hellenistic and Early Jewish Setting*, Tübingen 1999, 95-97. For instance, in late Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, *Iaω* was a prominent name of the lion-headed Sabaoth, the Biblical Creator, who could assume many names and be identified with other gods or heroes. He was Mihos for the Egyptians, Ialdabaoth for the Ophite Gnostics, Judas, Michael or Moses for other Judaizing sects, and also the Greek hero Perseus. He was a god invoked on amulets and was named in several magical spells. Also, he was depicted as using the powerful divine snake Chnoubis as his weapon. (A. Mastrocinque, *Perseus and Sabaoth in Magic Arts and Oriental Beliefs*, in *Mito y magia en Grecia y Roma*, Simposio Internacional, Barcellona 21-23 Marzo 2012. E. Suárez de la Torre/A. Pérez Jiménez (eds.), Zaragoza 2013, 103-116, here 104-105). This content behind the name is widely observable all over the Me-

trigrammaton implies that there was here probably no clear understanding of the personality of the Biblical God nor any perceived connection with the Hebrew Tetragrammaton.

The identity of 4Q120 and the occurrence of the Greek theonym within it

The LXX Torah was a prominent product of Hellenistic Judaism. It was translated in Egypt by Greek-speaking Jews, presumably in the first half of the third century BCE, while the rest of the Biblical books were translated in Palestine as well as in Egypt, during the following four hundred years⁹. The notable 4Q120¹⁰ is a papyrus scroll dating from the first century BCE, or even “to the opening years of the first century A.D.,” and it probably originated from “Jewish circles in Egypt”¹¹. The theonym *Iαω* is found twice in Lev 3,11 and 4,27, and may be reconstructed in another 12 instances in the fragments of this parchment manuscript and in one ma-

diterranean world in inscriptions of that period. (See, for instance, the *Searchable Greek Inscriptions* web site of The Packard Humanities Institute at: <http://epigraphy.packhum.org/search?pat=ιαω>).

⁹ E. Tov, *Septuagint and Other Ancient Greek Translations*, in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible*, M.D. Coogan (ed.), Oxford 2011. F. Clancy argued for dating the LXX a century earlier and claimed that “scholars should not assume the earliest LXX translations occurred before c. 150 B.C.,” but with little effect. (*The Date of LXX*, *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 16.2 (2002) 207-225, here 223).

¹⁰ P.W. Skehan/E. Ulrich/J.E. Sanderson, *Qumran Cave 4.IV: Palaeo-Hebrew and Greek Biblical Manuscripts. Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, Vol. 9, Oxford 1992, no. 120 (pp. 167-186; pl. 39-41). For the image displayed here and others, see *The Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library*, <http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-298692>; <http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-503715>.

¹¹ M. 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 (2007) 411-428, here 417; E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. Third edition, revised & expanded. Minneapolis, MN 2012, 132; P. Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*. Second edition, New York, NY 1960, 223-224.

nuscript¹². “This scroll, 4Q120, presumably reflects the OG” that provides us “a genuine LXX text” by being ‘an excellent representative of the LXX’ and “a typical exemplar of the LXX”¹³.

The view of the “Hebraizing” restoration (or, “re-Hebraization”) of the Hebrew Tetragrammaton within the Greek Bible text is based on the presupposition that in the OG original text or its archetypes the surrogates¹⁴ *κύριος* and *θεός* (or *δεσπότης*) were used¹⁵. But this is far from being proven. Admittedly, the original rendering of the Tetragrammaton in the Old Greek Bible (i.e. the reconstructed original LXX) is “a

¹² These 12 instances are Lev 1,11; 2,3; 3,13.14; 4,3.4(x2).6.7; 5,19. 20.21. E. Ulrich further suggested that *Iaw* may well have been the original form of the theonym to be reconstructed in 4QLXXDeut (4Q122) as well. (Skehan et al, Qumran Cave 4.IV, 196).

¹³ Tov, Textual Criticism, 132; A. Pietersma, Kyrios or Tetragram: A Renewed Quest for the Original LXX, in A. Pietersma & C. Cox (eds.), *De Septuaginta: Studies in Honour of John William Wevers on his sixty-fifth birthday*. Mississauga, ON 1984, 85-101, here 91-92. Earlier, Tov wrote boldly: “4QpapLXXLev^b reflects the original text of LXX, while the main LXX tradition reflects a revision.” (The Greek Biblical Texts from the Judean Desert, in S. McKendrick/O. O’Sullivan (eds.), *The Bible as Book: The Transmission of the Greek Text*, London, New Castle and Grand Haven 2003, 97-122, here 112).

¹⁴ I use the word “surrogate” for these Greek terms because all of them lie outside the semantic domain of the original Hebrew term. According to T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, Louvan-Paris-Walpole, MA 2009, 419), *κύριος* is defined (as used of God) as “one who exercises absolute authority over [somebody] else or [something]: applied to the God of Israel.” The notions of “authority”/“dominion” and “divinity” can only be considered as broad dynamic equivalents that displace a proper name for a generic divine title. This translational choice implies a shift in the theological understanding of God. It is not implausible that *κύριος* might have been introduced later on in LXX translations of other Bible books.

¹⁵ Defining more precisely such a “Hebraization” process is required in each and every reference. For example, the peculiar *language* of the Alexandrine Jews observed within the LXX text was described as “Hebraizing tendency” by J.A.H. Tittmann, *Remarks on the Synonyms of the New Testament*, Vol. 2, Edinburgh 1837, 153.

heavily debated subject”¹⁶. Was the theonym (a) replaced by surrogates like “Lord” and “God,” (b) rendered phonetically, or rather (c) kept reverentially untranslated in Hebrew script?

The fact that 4Q120 antedates the mainline LXX tradition of the great Christian codices and it has some readings that have to be “regarded as more original than the majority of LXX manuscripts” led to the conclusion that *Iao* “is the most likely candidate for the original reading of the LXX” and that it was used “as if it were a personal name in its transliteration”.¹⁷ According to the “prevailing assumption,” “the original translators of the LXX never rendered the divine name with κύριος, but kept the *tetragrammaton* in Hebrew or Palaeo-Hebrew characters, or they used the transcription *Iao*.” This evidenced assumption was originally discussed by P. Kahle and a few decades later G. Howard extended the same schema to explain in a similar process the treatment of the Tetragrammaton within the textual tradition of the Christian sacred scriptures, i.e. the Greek New Testament (NT)¹⁸. A.

¹⁶ P. Vasileiadis, Aspects of rendering the sacred Tetragrammaton in Greek, *Open Theology* 1 (2014) 56-88, here 60-61.

¹⁷ E. Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Developmental Composition of the Bible*, Leiden-Boston 2015, 154; Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 132; Rösel, *The Reading*, 416-7; P. Skehan, *The Qumran Manuscripts and Textual Criticism*, in G.W. Anderson et al (eds.), *Volume du Congrès, Strasbourg 1956. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* 4, Leiden 1957, 148-160, here 157.

¹⁸ L. Gaston summarized Howard's position—described by him as “a very important discovery that has been strangely neglected in New Testament studies”—as follows: “G. Howard points out that in none of the now considerable LXX texts from the first century is *kyrios* used for the tetragrammaton, which is written in Hebrew letters. He concludes that the use of *kyrios* was begun by Christian scribes in the second century, who applied it also to New Testament texts. This means that Old Testament citations in New Testament manuscripts originally contained the tetragrammaton. It will be seen that this makes a considerable difference in the interpretation of many texts.” (L. Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, Eugene, OR 2006/1987¹, 117-118). F. Shaw proposed that the Greek form *Iao* ‘would more likely have been the familiar form understood by the earliest Christians and by those to whom they preached’ as far as it was “a word in Greek script that existed in the Greek-speaking world of the early Christians,” ‘a form familiar to gentiles.’ (*The Earliest*, 287-288).

Pietersma attempted to refute this new consensus and support the traditional view that *κύριος* was original in the LXX but despite the popularity of this view, it seems more and more unconvincing.¹⁹

Surely, we must keep in mind that while *after* the first century CE a single Hebrew Bible text tradition is actually traceable—the so called “proto-Masoretic tradition”, before that time we are faced with a multiplicity of textual forms.²⁰ In a comparable manner, it is observable that *various* practices were used to render the sacred Tetragrammaton in

¹⁹ As E. Ulrich noticed, “in addition to [Pietersma’s] argument’s going against the evidence, it is difficult to imagine a scribe introducing the not-to-be-pronounced divine name where the more reverent *κύριος* was already in the text.” (The Dead Sea Scrolls, 154; see, also, Shaw, *The Earliest*, 134-149, 245; J. Joosten, *Le dieu Iaô et le tréfonds araméen des Septante*, in M. Loubet/D. Pralon (eds.), *Eukarpa: Études Sur La Bible Et Ses Exégètes, En Hommage À Gilles Dorival. La Bible d’Alexandrie*, Paris 2011, 115-124, here 117-118). A most obvious reason for the wide repetition of Pietersma’s position is exactly because it provides a facile solution that supports the centuries-long held traditional thesis that *κύριος* originality rendered the Tetragrammaton within the original Greek NT. However, as G. Howard argued, this scenario does not satisfactorily explain the subsequent Christological implications of the NT textual variants and the long and bloodstained theological disputes provoked. (The Name of God in the New Testament, *Biblical Archaeology Review* 4/1 (1978) 12-4, 56, here 14). Pietersma tried to revive the core of Baudissin’s thesis, that is, that “the LXX had rendered the divine name as *kurios* right from the beginning” but “today, however, Baudissin’s view is generally discarded.” (M. Epstein, *On the “Original” Septuagint*, *The Bible Translator, Technical Papers* 45/3 (1994) 322-329, here 327-328). Regarding the sequence in which *Iaω* appeared, M. Rösel concluded: “I would speculate that the strange reading of *IAΩ* is a secondary replacement that comes from a community (in Egypt?) that still pronounced the name of God in this way.” (The Reading, 419). But the question remains: If there were a ‘community in Egypt that still pronounced the name of God’ during the first century BCE and the first century CE, why might there not have been such a community two centuries earlier when the LXX Torah was written down?

²⁰ E. Tov, *The Scribal and Textual Transmission of the Torah Analyzed in Light of Its Sanctity*, in B.G. Wright, III (ed.), M.F. García/H. Najman (ass. eds.), *Pentateuchal Traditions in the Late Second Temple Period. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism*, Vol. 158, Leiden-Boston 2012, 57-72, here 57-58.

Greek during this same period²¹. All these different practices were employed to mark different mentalities or attitudes concerning the God of the Bible. In a wider spectrum, it was simultaneously possible to denote the oneness of YHWH and also his commonality with other prominent divine figures. A spirit of national regeneration—“a resurgence of the Hebraic identity” according to L. Hurtado²²—which is evidenced during the Second Temple period (as revivals of the Maccabean ideology) might have prompted archaizing and Hebraizing trends in the revision of translations and new recensions and, also, the emergence of special scribal conventions. Nevertheless, they could hardly have achieved uniformity or even impose conformity in the treatment of the Tetragrammaton within the copies of the sacred Scriptures²³. And after all, this Hebraization fever obviously did not affect all scribal activity.

While the rest of the earliest LXX manuscripts use conventional representations of the Tetragrammaton in Hebrew, 4Q120 includes a vocalized form of the name²⁴. Thus, while

²¹ Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 154.

²² L. Hurtado, "Re-Hebraization" in the Graeco-Roman Period, 2013, <https://larryhurtado.wordpress.com/2013/07/17/re-hebraization-in-the-graeco-roman-period/>.

²³ R. Wilkinson, *Tetragrammaton: Western Christians and the Hebrew Name of God: From the Beginnings to the Seventeenth Century*, Leiden 2015, 47-50. 58-65.

²⁴ More specifically: (a) P.Fouad Inv.266 (Rahlfs 848), dated in the first century BCE, containing a passage from the book of Job with the Tetragrammaton in Aramaic script; (b) P.Oxy.L 3522 (Rahlfs 857), dated in the early first century CE, containing a small passage from the book of Job with the Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew script; (c) 8HevXII (Rahlfs 943), a fragmentary scroll of the Twelve Prophets in Greek from Wâdi Khabra (W.Khabra XII Kaige), dated between 50 BCE-50 CE, containing the Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew letters; and (d) P.Oxy.VII.1007 (Rahlfs 907), late third century CE, a papyrus fragment of Genesis, in which the Tetragrammaton is abbreviated as a double yod (׃), enlarged so as looking like a double Greek *zeta* (ΖΖ), a standard abbreviation in the later rabbinic tradition. The Tetragrammaton is also used in the Greek translations (LXX revisions and partly *de novo* translations) made since the early second century until the end of the third century CE by Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion and Origen in *all* five Greek columns of his *Hexapla*, as it is testified by surviving fragmentary copies like Codex Ambrosianus O 39 (Rahlfs 1098). D. Barthélemy,

the former copies allow the reader to choose to read or not to read the divine name, this manuscript prompts the reader to *pronounce* a certain form of the theonym in Greek²⁵. When this scroll was read aloud the listeners *heard* the proper name of God. It is true that despite the rabbinical ordinances against pronouncing the divine name, the shunning from articulating the name of God in public was not a uniform practice among the Jews (not to speak among the non-Jews) during the Second Temple period (200 BCE– 70 CE). Even though laws discussed in later rabbinical documents that refer to the punishment of the utterance of the Tetragrammaton are often projected back to the first centuries CE, it is doubtful whether they were effective or strictly imposed before the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE²⁶. Because it was found in Palestine and

Les devanciers d'Aquila: Première publication integrale du texte des fragments du Dodécaprophéton trouvés dans le désert de Juda. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 10, Leiden 1963, convincingly argued that, by the start of the first century CE, the LXX was sufficiently well established so that it formed the sole basis for these revisions. This means that, aside the appearance and widespread use of the *nomina sacra* from the second half of the second century CE and onwards, Christian readers and authors who made use of these translations were for centuries in contact with Hebrew or Greek forms of the Tetragrammaton either in the best available copies of the LXX or its revisions well until the tenth century CE (cf. E. Gallagher, The religious provenance of the Aquila manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah, *Journal of Jewish Studies* 64/2 [2013] 283-305). At the end of the fourth century CE, Gregory of Nazianzus knew and mentioned the scribal practice of the Hebrews of using different letters to write the name of God, «χαρακτῆρσιν ἰδίοις τὸ θεῖον τμήσαντες». (*Oratio* 30, *Theologica* 4 [PG 36:125B; PG 130:192A]; F. Norris, The Tetragrammaton in Gregory Nazianzen (*Or.* 30.17), *Vigiliae Christianae* 41 [1989] 339-344).

²⁵ P. Skehan stated that *Iaw* within 4Q120 “allows for the pronunciation, or at least a pronounceable and normal writing, of the Yhwh name in the same hand employed for the rest of the text.” (The Divine Name at Qumran, in the Masada Scroll, and in the Septuagint, *Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 13 [1980] 14-44, here 29).

²⁶ It seems that rabbinic laws dictated that uttering the divine name was blasphemy and it was punishable by death. (cf. *Mishnah* Sanhedrin 7.5) The reason for the trial of Jesus and the accusations against early Christians—like Trypho’s that they were speaking «βλάσφημα πολλὰ», “many blasphemous things” (Justin Martyr,

in view of the scarcity of surviving ancient Bible copies, 4Q120 provides ample evidence that some Greek and Aramaic or Hebrew speaking Jews were using at that time a pronounceable and widely recognizable form of the sacred name.

It is obvious that the use of a Greek form for the divine name within the Greek Bible is of major importance. The use of a Graecized form of the Tetragrammaton was a deliberate scribal choice and consequently this was probably the practice of at least the scribe (or the scribal school) responsible for 4Q120 during the first century BCE and first century CE. Both Jews and pagans—and, not much later, Jewish and Gentile Christians—potentially knew and pronounced the theonym *Iaō*. Taking into account that it is a *pronounceable* Greek word, already recognizable and circulating in the Hellenistic world, and that it is not contrasted in any way with the rest of the adjacent Biblical text of the manuscript (without overlining, spaces before and after the name, but written in the same hand), it seems highly improbable that it was a substitute term for the sacred Tetragrammaton aimed at reminding the reader that in public reading it was to be *orally replaced* by another term like *κύριος* (“Lord”)²⁷. As a matter of fact, the uttering of the form *Iaō* may have implied two totally different attitudes and consequently may have been considered at the same period of time as:

Trypho 38.1; 80.3 [PG 6:557A. 664C | T. Falls (transl.), Saint Justin Martyr, *Fathers of the Church* 6, New York 1948, 204. 276])—may imply or include oral use of the divine name.

²⁷ Shaw, *The Earliest*, 133-4; Rösel, *The Reading*, 416. R.J. Wilkinson mentioned the possibility for the use of *Iaō* in 4Q120 that “perhaps although it was written, it was not said aloud,” but this is highly hypothetical. (Wilkinson, *Tetragrammaton*, 76 n. 19) The Greek historian Diodorus Siculus, who lived and wrote in the first century BCE, is a typical example often cited to display this wide knowledge of the name of the God worshiped by the Jews: «Παρά δὲ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις Μωσῆν τὸν Ἰαὼ ἐπικαλούμενον θεόν», that is, “among the Jews Moses [referred his laws] to the god who is invoked as Iao.” (*Bibliotheca Historica* 1.94 [C.H. Oldfather (transl.), Diodorus Siculus. *Library of History*, Vol. I: Books 1-2.34. Loeb Classical Library 279, Cambridge, MA 1933, 320-321]; cf. Shaw, *The Earliest*, 37-60).

- (a) A Greek **substitute** that was part of an attempt by pious Jews to safeguard the true and original four-letter Tetragrammaton that ought to have been hidden from non-Jews or even from the Jewish common people (consequently, it was a substitute name intentionally used to hide the real pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton)²⁸; and
- (b) A **theonym** per se, originating from the derivative three-letter form *yhw* that was commonly used for few centuries by Aramaic-speaking Egyptian Jews and was received within the Hellenistic environment as an acceptable and even legitimate Greek proper name used by the Jewish common people and also freely by the Gentiles in a cosmopolitan, syncretistic setting (consequently, it was a name used freely as a satisfactory Greek rendering of the Tetragrammaton)²⁹.

²⁸ Actually, Baudissin supported the view that there existed an official form, that is *Yhwh*, spoken at Jerusalem, and a folk or unofficial one, that is *Yhw* or *lao*, spoken by the common people. (W.W. Graf von Baudissin, *Kyrios als Gottesname im Judentum und seine Stelle in der Religionsgeschichte*, Vol. 2, Giessen 1929, 201) S.M. McDonough noted similarly the possibility that many within Judaism “could have proffered the form *lao* to outsiders while retaining the “true” pronunciation within their own community,”—as such, “*lao* was a *conscious substitution* for the true divine name.” (YHWH at Patmos, 118-120) E. Bickerman also concurred with this dichotomy of official and popular form: “The Tetragrammaton continued to be written in Mss. of the Bible (and of the Greek version), but persons who read the sacred text aloud used a cypher (e.g., *Adonai*), or an abbreviation of the Tetragrammaton (YH, YHW, YHH), which necessarily lacked the supernatural potency of the full Name. It appears that such was the practice of Elephantine Jews in the fifth century.” (Studies in Jewish and Christian History. A New Edition in English including *The God of the Maccabees*. Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity, 68/1, Leiden-Boston, MA 2007, 81-82).

²⁹ Shaw, *The Earliest*, 247. 272; McDonough, *YHWH at Patmos*, 121. This stand-alone three-letter form *yhw/yhh* (i.e. not when found within theophoric names) used by the Aramaic-speaking Jews of Elephantine might have originated from a later oral form of the four-letter *yhwh* in Hebrew that considered at least the final *he* as a vocalic consonant and later on was omitted altogether, as a conjectured characteristic of so-called Transitional Biblical Hebrew. This truncated written form *yhw* may have resulted in a new way of reading this “Tetragrammaton” (that could be written now either as *yhw* or *yhh*—if the latter is not taken as an erroneous form) sometime during the era of the dominance of the Imperial Aramaic language.

Is *Iaω* a transcription or a transliteration of the Hebrew term, a rendering of the *four-letter Tetragrammaton* or of the later *three-letter “Tetragrammaton”*?

Recently, F. Shaw summarized the available information and persuasively concluded that “*Iaω* is ultimately derivative from the fuller form *Yhwh* via the shorter transitive *Yhw/Yhh*”³⁰. Additionally, as M. Rösel pointed out, ‘the use of *IAΩ* as the shortened form of the divine name points to Jewish circles in Egypt.’

As regards the language of these “Jewish circles in Egypt,” this later truncated form of the Tetragrammaton is found in abundance at the fifth century BCE Elephantine corpus (both papyri and ostraca) written in Aramaic. This means that *yhw* was part of the vernacular *Aramaic* diction—in contrast with the Hebrew four-letter *yhwh* that was in common use in the pre-exilic period and was also abundantly

In this same period (c. fifth century BCE) the paleo-Hebrew alphabet or script was replaced by the Aramaic or Assyrian script.

³⁰ Shaw, *The Earliest*, XII, XIII; B. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony*, Cambridge 1968, 106. The four-letter Tetragrammaton “has been established as primitive; abbreviations such as Yah, Yahû, Yô, and Yehô are secondary.” (K. van der Toorn, *Yahweh*, in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, K. van der Toorn/B. Becking/P.W. van der Horst (eds.), Leiden 1999, 910-919, here 910, 913) Regarding the Hebrew *yhw* in Palestine, the reference “the form *Yhw* is said to be originally Judaeen (WEIPPERT 1980: 247), but its occurrence in the northern wayfarer’s station of Kuntillet ‘Ajrud shows that it was not unknown among Northern Israelites either” has to do with morphological elements used in the construction of theophoric names and not with instances of the stand-alone three-letter theonym. The scarcity of evidence does not allow a definite inference to a broad use of the three-letter theonym among the pre-exilic Israelites. (cf. Porten, *Archives*, 105-106; G.J. Thierry, *The Pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton*, in P.A.H. De Boer (ed.), *Oudtestamentische Studiën*, Vol. 5, Leiden 1948, 31. 41-42) There is no evidence for the four-letter Tetragrammaton as a component in theophoric anthroponyms. M. Reisel attributed this shortening within Hebrew language to the “loss of tone,” “a shift of stress toward the conjunctive word” because of its use as theophoric component in anthroponyms. (*The Mysterious Name of Y.H.W.H.*, Assen 1957, 44-45)

found within the sacred Scriptures³¹. In multilingual societies like the ones in Egypt and Palestine, the different languages employed influenced one another to different degrees and in this case it was Aramaic that influenced the form and the pronunciation of the Hebrew Tetragrammaton³². The Aramaic influence meant that it was to be articulated according to the then current Aramaic phonological system and its grammatical rules. As regards their religion, a substantial part of their Jewish heritage seems to have been lost as far as their cult was neither monotheistic nor Biblical³³. Consequently, the *yhw/yhh-Iaω* stream cannot provide substantial assistance on the *early Biblical Hebrew* pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton.

³¹ B. Porten notes the permanent distinction observed in the available information between the “vernacular” form *yhw/yhh* and the “literary” form *yhw*. (Archives, 106) For *yhh*, M. Reisel proposed the possibility of this by-form’s phonetic development as: Yahūāh > Y^ehūāh > Y^ehuāh (*yhh*) > Y^ehō (*yhw*). (The Mysterious, 47)

³² Unfortunately, not even today do we have the historical information needed to reconstruct the Hebrew language for the Persian period, that is, from the fifth to third centuries BCE. Many conclusions are based on the conjectural “impression” that both Aramaic and Hebrew “had similar spelling rules and that these were fairly stable” during this period. Interestingly, “the spellings now found in M[asoretic] T[ext] are a perpetuation and preservation of norms that were put in place during the Persian Period.” (D.N. Freedman/A.D. Forbes/F. Andersen, *Studies in Hebrew and Aramaic Orthography*, Winona Lake, IN 1992, 34-35, 249-251; cf. W. Schniedewind, *Aramaic, the death of written Hebrew, and language shift in the Persian Period*, in S. Sanders (ed.), *Margins of Writing: Origins of Cultures*, *Oriental Institute Seminars 2*, Chicago 2006, 135-152, here 139-144). Regarding the Aramaic influence on Hebrew, Joosten notes: “The influence of Aramaic was one of the principal factors affecting the development of the Hebrew language, particularly in the post-exilic period. Old Hebrew words changed their meaning under the influence of Aramaic cognates and an increasing number of new words were borrowed from the contemporary world language. This state of affairs is reflected in the Septuagint.” (*Biblical Hebrew as Mirrored in the Septuagint: The Question of Influence from Spoken Hebrew*, in J. Joosten (ed.), *Collected Studies on the Septuagint: From language to interpretation and beyond*, Tübingen 2012, 67-80, here 70-72).

³³ M. Smith, *Studies in the cult of Yahweh*, Leiden 1996, 255.

As a matter of fact, all the available archaeological evidence that comes from the second half of the first millennium BCE testifies to a *four-letter* Hebrew Tetragrammaton³⁴. Leaving aside the onomastic evidence of the theophoric names as idiosyncratic, it is rather questionable “if ancient Jews abbreviated the divine name at all”³⁵. Before the tenth century BCE “Hebrew writing, like Phoenician, was purely consonantal.” Only from the ninth century BCE the Hebrews “under the influence of Aramaic” started employing the *matres lectionis* to indicate final vowels and not until the sixth century BCE was their use extended to indicate medial vowels³⁶. Keeping

³⁴ The related archeological findings include the Mesha Stele inscription (in Moabite), the Seal of Miquayaw, the Khirbet el-Qôm inscription, the Khirbet Beit Lei graffiti, the Kuntillet ‘Ajrud inscriptions, the Lachish letters, the Arad Ostraca, etc. The two instances in the the Kuntillet ‘Ajrud inscriptions that J. Joosten uses to support the view that an independent three-letter *yhw* was used by the inhabitants of the northern Israel (one of them is not well preserved and probably truncated and the other might have been an engraver’s omission) provide extremely feeble support in view of the whole picture. (Le dieu Iao, 116; J. Hadley, Some Drawings and Inscriptions on Two Pithoi from Kuntillet ‘Ajrud, *Vetus Testamentum* 37/2 (1987) 180-213, here 187) Lists of place names located in the Nubian temples of Soleb and Amara West dating from 14th and 13th centuries BCE record a *yhw(h)* toponym-theonym that has been identified with the Hebrew theonym *yhwh*. The problem is that Egyptian hieroglyphs combined logographic and alphabetic elements and represented multiliteral values, and, as a result, *yhw(h)* cannot shed light on the actual pronunciation because “er zeigt, dass sich nicht entscheiden lässt, ob *wʒ-w* in *jj-h-wʒ-w* konsonantische (*yhwʒw*) oder vokalische (*yhwu*) Bedeutung hat und entsprechend *yah-w-/yahw-* oder *yahû* zu sprechen ist.” (M. Leuenberger, *Jhwsh Herkunft aus dem Süden. Archäologische Befunde - biblische Überlieferungen - historische Korrelationen*, *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 122/1 [2010] 1-19, here 4-6).

³⁵ G.W. Buchanan, Some Unfinished Business with the Dead Sea Scrolls, *Revue de Qumrân* 13 (1988) 411-442, here 416.

³⁶ M. Κωνσταντίνου, ... του συνιέναι τα γραφάς; 13+1 βήματα εισαγωγής στην Παλαιά Διαθήκη, *Thessaloniki* 2014, 365-368; Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 209; A. Sáenz-Badillos, *A History of the Hebrew Language*, Cambridge 1996, 62-66; Z. Zevit, *Matres Lectionis in Ancient Hebrew Epigraphs*, Cambridge, MA 1980, 1-2. 8. *Matres lectionis* are the Hebrew consonant letters that “acquired the secondary function of representing some vowels” and were used as

in mind that *yod*, *he* and *waw* may be used as *matres lectionis* “if they do not represent etymological consonant phonemes,” it is required to have consonantal value at least the three letters that make up the verb root of the name. Leaving also aside the issue of the precisely which letters of the Tetragrammaton are to be considered as radical, the Hebrew pronunciation of the name originally should have been a three-syllable form³⁷.

“reading aids.” (Freedman et al, *Studies in Hebrew*, 5-6. 20) That is, as terminal vowels *waw* was used for û (also prob. for ô), *yod* for î (also prob. for ê), and *he* for â and in the final position ā, ē and ō were also represented by *he*. As internal vowel letters were used only *waw* for û and *yod* for î. (B. Schmidt, *Contextualizing Israel’s Sacred Writing: Ancient Literacy, Orality, and Literary Production*, Atlanta, GA 2015, 86-87)

³⁷ For the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton in Biblical Hebrew this means *prima facie* that *yod* and *he* should be consonantal as being respectively at the beginning and at the middle of the word, the “weak letter” or ‘vowel by nature’ *waw* (also *yod* when it is not at the beginning of a word) may conditionally lose its consonantal value and merge into a vowel when in the middle of the word, and the last *he* is usually voiceless and its presence might be either written or implied. (*Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, E. Kautzsch ed., A.E. Cowley revs., Oxford 1910, § 5b, 8.5m, 22-24; cf. J. Blau, *Phonology and Morphology of Biblical Hebrew*, Winona Lake, IN 2010) G.W. Buchanan observed on *yhw*: “If this vocalization [i.e. the one used by the Dead Sea Scrolls scribes] were applied to the Hebrew YHW, it might be pronounced, *Yahûwâh* or *Yahôwâh*.” (Some Unfinished, 415) It is of historic interest that Voltaire, just like Friedrich Schiller, was among those who used to vocalize the form *yhh* with three syllables as *Ihaho*—“*Moïse prononça le nom de Ihaho, ou Jehovah*” he wrote in his *Essai sur les mœurs et l’esprit des nations*. (Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs et l’esprit des nations*, Vol. 1, Geneva 1769, 105).

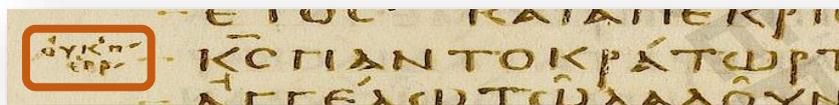


Figure 2:

An abbreviated marginal note at Zechariah 1:13 in Codex Vaticanus (mid fourth century CE) meaning “οὐ κείται παρ’ Ἑβραίοις” or “οὐ κείται παρὰ τοῖς Ἑβραίοις,” that is, “wanting according to the Hebrews [i.e. in the Hebrew text].” A second scribe inserted these marginalia which present a striking attempt to harmonize with the original Hebrew text. (Cod. Vat. gr. 1209, p. 987, col. 3, ln. 9)

Transliterating the Tetragrammaton in Koine Greek would be actually impossible as far as almost *none* of the three Hebrew letters had equivalents in the then current Greek alphabet.³⁸ Comparatively, Latin, Coptic and even Modern Greek have been better equipped to supply the phonemes needed to approximate the Hebrew original term.³⁹ If *all* the letters of the Tetragrammaton were considered as *matres lectionis*, the result would be purely vocalic renderings in Greek—i.e. various forms of the theonym in Greek that would consist only of vowels.⁴⁰ But such an attempt would totally

³⁸ Because of the fact that corresponding signs-letters for several sounds are wanting in the Greek alphabet, “only an approximate representation was possible in these cases.” (*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* § 6.1b, 10.1e)

³⁹ Apparently, it is admissible for the pronunciation of the sacred Tetragrammaton not to have been entirely uniform but rather, varied to different degrees by time, place, language and religious community. As a result, “there is no unique or universally “correct” rendering of the Hebrew [Tetragrammaton] in Greek.” (Vasileiadis, *Aspects*, 71)

⁴⁰ Vasileiadis, *Aspects*, 77-79. Such vocalic renderings are the following: *Ιαω/ Ιαο/ Ιαον, Ιαωα/ Ιαοα/ Ιαουα, Ιεω/ Ιεο/ Ιεου | Ιηω/ Ιηο/ Ιηου, Ιεωε/ Ιεοε/ Ιεουε | Ιηωη/ Ιηοη/ Ιηουη, Ιαωε/ Ιαοε/ Ιαουε, Ιεωα/ Ιεοα/ Ιεουα | Ιηωα/ Ιηοα/ Ιηουα*, etc. In fact, many of them are testified in various sources from the early centuries CE onwards. Additionally, *eccrusis*, a kind of vocalic elision within a word, might have simplified the form of such purely vocalic Greek terms with the passing of time. (Θ. Μωυσιάδης, *Ετυμολογία: Εισαγωγή στη Μεσαιωνική και Νεοελληνική Ετυμολογία*, Athens 2005, 84-87) Josephus might have had in mind one of the aforementioned vocalic forms when he wrote down that the “sacred letters” of the Tetragrammaton were «φωνήεντα τέσσαρα», that is, “four vowels.” (*Jewish War* 5.236/5.5.7 [H.St.J. Thackeray, *Josephus. The Jewish War*, Vol. 3: Books 5-7, Loeb Classical Library 210, Cambridge,

ignore a number of Hebrew grammar rules for the source term and the resulting Greek terms would seem and sound quite odd. In conclusion, **the Greek two-syllable *Iaω*** is most probably either

(a) a letter-by-letter exclusively vocalic *transliteration* of the three-letter form *yhw*⁴¹, or

(b) a *vocalization* or *phonetic transcription* of the pronunciation of the three-letter “Tetragrammaton” *yhw/yhh* as evidenced in Egyptian Aramaic-speaking environments⁴², provided that it was already pronounced *Yaho(h)*⁴³.

MA 1928, 272-273]) If Josephus meant vowels and not letters or characters in general, and if it were a kind of *transliteration* then the resulting term might have been an approximation (so because of lack of phonetic correspondence between the phoneme stocks of Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek languages) like *Iaωa/ Iaoa/ Iaova* or *Ieωe/ Ieoe/ Ieove*, or if it were some form of *phonetic transcription* then the resulting term might additionally be *Ieωa/ Ieoa/ Ieova | Iηωa/ Iηoa/ Iηova* or *Iaωe/ Iaoe/ Iaove*. Also, if the diphthong *ou* is included, four vowels count both *Iaov*, a form very close to *Iaω*, and *Ieov/ Iηov*, a form close to *Ieω/ Iηω*.

⁴¹ Such a transliteration practice is observed in the second column of Origen’s *Hexapla*.

⁴² Joosten stated regarding the “nom araméen YHW”: “En Palestine, la prononciation du nom divin se fondait sur le tétragramme, tandis qu’en Égypte le nom était connu sous forme d’un trigramme. ... Le nom Iaô fait partie de l’héritage «araméen» du judaïsme égyptien de l’époque hellénistique.” (Le dieu Iaô, 116. 118-119)

⁴³ H. Stegemann, *Religionsgeschichtliche Erwägungen zu den Gottesbezeichnungen in den Qumrantexten*, in *Qumran. Sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu*, M. Delcor (ed.), BEThL 44, Leuven 1978, 195-217, here 205; A. Lukyn Williams, YĀHŌ^h, *The Journal of Theological Studies* 28/111 (1927) 276-283. At the end of the fourth century CE, the Hebraist Jerome explicitly mentioned that “nomen Domini apud Hebraeos quattuor literarum est, Jod, He, Vau, He, quod proprie Dei vocabulum *sonat* et *legi* potest Jaho,” that is, “the name of God properly *sounds* and can be *read* Iaho.” (*Breviarum in Psalmos* 8:2 [PL 26:838A; CCL 72:191]; Reisel, *The Mysterious*, 44) “Perhaps the word [Ἰαώ] was pronounced *yahó*.” (B. Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Palaeography*, New York 1981, 35; Thierry, *The Pronunciation*, 30) When *Iaω* was re-transliterated back in Hebrew it took the form *y’w* [יא’]. (G. Bohak, *Ancient Jewish magic: A history*, Cambridge 2007, 296) There is also the possibility that the trigrammaton *yhw* was read as a three-syllable term, virtually like *Yahūwā/ Yehūwā* and *Yahōwā/*

Iao in 4Q120: A sample of the diversity in rendering the Tetragrammaton in OG/LXX

P. W. Skehan concluded that by 100 BCE the *Hebrew* term *Adonay* (“Lord”) might have served in certain Jewish circles as a substitute name in public reading, but no pre-Christian testimony has verified such practice in the OG Bible text. In turn, P. Nagel remarked that the scribes during the last centuries BCE seem to have been “uncomfortable with the term κύριος as a *Greek* rendering for the Tetragram, especially in the more ‘Jewish’ circles”⁴⁴. As regards the Qumran scrolls, we must keep in mind that they “cannot tell us unequivocally whether the [tetragrammaton] was pronounced or not”⁴⁵.

It is clear today that with respect to LXX Bible copies “different groups of scribes treated the Tetragrammaton in different ways”, although the manuscripts “seem to be con-

Yehôwâ, or as a two-syllable like *Yahwâ/ Yehwâ* and *Yahwô/ Yehwô*. (cf. D. Thomas, A further note on YHWH, *The Bible Translator*, Practical Papers 44.4 [October 1993] 444-445) Although a *purely* verbal form of the Tetragrammaton (phenomenally like *Yahwe[h]*, similar to *yihyeh* that means literally “he will be/become,” based on mixed early and late, Hebrew and Aramaic elements of the verbs *hyh* and *hwh*) satisfies the modern need for an apparent and overt explanation of the morphology, phonology and semantics of the Tetragrammaton, such a theonymic form that consisted of (or, was identical to) a commonly used verbal type, would most probably be a paradox and may have sounded rather odd in the ears of the worshippers. (cf. Lukyn Williams, YĀHŌ^h) Actually, “it would be virtually unparalleled for a bare verbal form to exist as a divine name.” (B. Beitzel, Exodus 3:14 and the Divine Name: A Case of Biblical Paronomasia, *Trinity Journal* 1 (1980) 5-20, here 16) If it were for a mixed three-syllable verbal form, it would be read like *Yahôweh*, or even *Yahûweh*. (Thomas, A further note, 445).

⁴⁴ P. Nagel, The explicit KYPIOΣ and ΘEOΣ citations by Paul: An attempt at understanding Paul's deity concepts. PhD thesis, Pretoria 2012, 48-49. For such a possibility, see Wilkinson, Tetragrammaton, 87. The reverence towards the divine name contributed to a wide-spread trend of using euphemistic circumlocutions and metonymies instead of mentioning the Tetragrammaton itself, especially in pietistic circles.

⁴⁵ K. Penner, Dead Sea Scrolls, in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible*, Oxford 2011, 173-192, here 187-188.

sistent within themselves in representing the divine name⁴⁶. Despite the different devices used to render the Tetragrammaton, the general use of *Iaω* in oral or written speech prevailed for many centuries, including in the Bible copies⁴⁷.

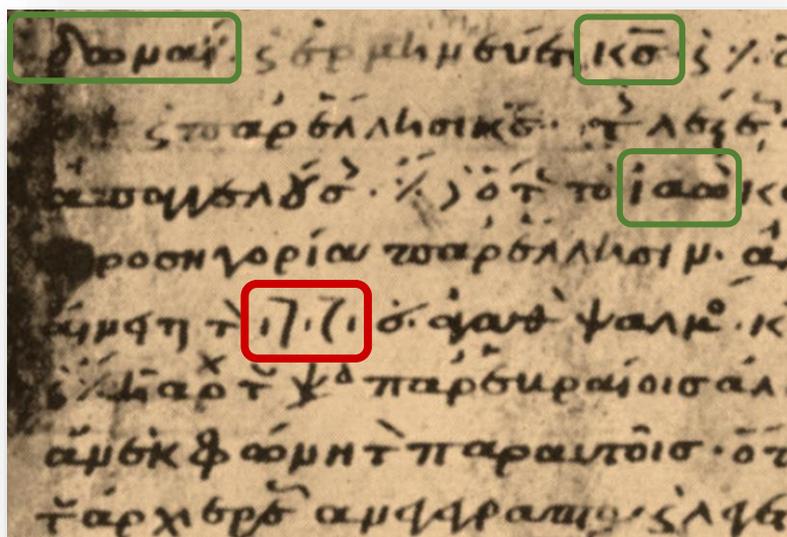


Figure 3:
The phrase «Αἰνεῖτε τὸν ἰη»», that is “Praise *yhh*,”
and the Greek theonym *ιαω*, along with *αδωναι* and *nomina sacra* (*θς*, *κς*).
(Cod. Vat. gr. 744/Rahlfs 1172, fol. 2r).

4Q120 and early Christianity

Early Christianity shared the same religious and cultural heritage as the rest of Judaism in which the divine name played a

⁴⁶ Wilkinson, Tetragrammaton, 60. 63. 66; Skehan, The Divine Name at Qumran, 36. P. Nagel observed: “There existed no systematic approach, nor a general accepted method or rule, at least from the 3rd/2nd century BCE, for rendering the Hebrew deity in general, and the Tetragram in particular, with a ‘most suitable’ Greek equivalent” (The explicit, 48). Joosten remarked a possibility proposed by Shaw in his PhD thesis: “D’après ce savant [i.e. Shaw], il serait possible que κύριος et Ιαω aient été utilisés tous les deux dans la Septante primitive, en des passages différents, et que l’emploi du premier ait été généralisé ensuite” (Le dieu Ιαω, 118).

⁴⁷ Vasileiadis, Aspects, 68.

major role. The Bible copies they owned and used—either “scrolls” of papyrus or scrolls of “parchments”⁴⁸—came from the same scribal circles. The earliest Christian communities emerged within the variety of scribal conventions for rendering the Tetragrammaton in the Greek Bible⁴⁹. As a result, the so-called “task of recovering Christianity's diversity before and behind the “orthodoxy” of the post-Constantinian church” should include an inquiry into the treatment of the sacred Tetragrammaton by early Christianity.⁵⁰

As implied by Jewish temple traditions, Jesus was probably “familiar with the Temple pronunciation of the Name”⁵¹. Also, it is possible that “in oral speech Jesus and the disciples vocalized the divine name”⁵². either in the Hebrew

⁴⁸ 2Tim 4,13, *NIV*.

⁴⁹ Even “within the group of Qumran scribes different practices were employed for writing the divine names,” observed E. Tov. (Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert. *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah*, Vol. 54, Leiden-Boston 2004, 244. 265) Consequently, bold statements like “undoubtedly *kyrios* also represented the Tetragrammaton YHWH in the Greek texts [i.e. of the Septuagint] copied by Christians” need to be reconsidered. (C. Perrot, *Kyrios/Lord*, in *Religion Past and Present*. Brill Online 2011. http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/religion-past-and-present/kyrioslord-COM_12537).

⁵⁰ Y.A. Reed, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and post-70 Judaism*, in S.C. Mimouni/B. Pouderon/C. Clivas (eds.), *Les Judaïsmes dans tous leurs états aux Ier-IIIe siècles*. Paris 2016, 119.

⁵¹ Thomas, *A further note*, 445. The Mishnah states: “In the sanctuary one says the Name as it is written, but in the provinces, with a euphemism.” (*m. Sotah* 7:6 [J Neusner (transl.), *The Talmud of the Land of Israel*, Vol. 27: *Sotah*, Chicago-London 1984, 193]; *m. Berakhot* 9:5; *m. Sanhedrin* 10:1; *m. Tamid* 7.2; *b. Sotah* 37a-38b; *b. Pesahim* 50a; 1QS [*Serek Hayahad* or *Rule of the Community*] 6:27b-7:2a; Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 2.12.4; see Wilkinson, *Tetragrammaton*, 179).

⁵² D. Block, *Who do Commentators say "the Lord" is? The Scandalous Rock of Romans 10:13*, in *On the Writing of New Testament Commentaries: Festschrift for Grant R. Osborne on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*, Leiden-Boston 2013, 173-92, here 182. In *Pistis Sophia*, a Gnostic text written between the third and fourth centuries CE, Jesus is described as actually using the name *Iao*, and in one case as referring to “Ieou [Jeu] Sabaoth.” (4:136 [C. Schmidt (ed.), V. MacDermot (transl.), *Pistis Sophia*. Nag Hammadi Studies 9,

pronunciation as was heard in the temple of Jerusalem or in the already well-known Aramaic-Greek form *yhw/Iαω*⁵³. By the same token, ‘the Christian Scriptures were affirmative regarding the pronunciation of God’s name’⁵⁴. As J. Daniélou explained, within “Christianity’s diversity” the “Jewish Christian doctrine of the Name” held a prominent position and acquired a wide spectrum of conceptions⁵⁵. Later on, far beyond the early roots of Judaism and Jewish Christianity and in harmony with the already existing “pagan familiarity with *Iαω*,” it is observed that outstanding Greek and Latin Christian authorities like Irenaeus of Lyons, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Didymus the Blind, Eusebius of Caesarea, Tertullian and Jerome were familiar particularly with *Iαω/Iao/Iaho*—even with the Hebrew *yhh*—⁵⁶, the Greek rendering of

Leiden 1978, pp. 353-354; G. Mead, *Pistis Sophia*, London 1921, 358-359]; cf. Psalm 22,22| 21,23, *LXX*; John 17,6).

⁵³ Recently, after evaluating the available inscriptional evidence in the early Roman Galilee, S.D. Charlesworth concluded: “It is likely that some of the Twelve were [...] productive [Aramaic/Hebrew-Greek] bilinguals, that Jesus himself could also have known Greek, and that some of the earliest Jesus tradition might have been transmitted in Greek.” (S.D. Charlesworth, *The Use of Greek in Early Roman Galilee: The Inscriptional Evidence Re-examined*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 38/3 (2016) 356-395, here 383)

⁵⁴ Vasileiadis, *Aspects*, 64; idem, *The pronunciation of the sacred Tetragrammaton: An overview of a nomen revelatus that became a nomen absconditus*, *Judaica Ukrainica* 2 (2013) 5-20, here 10-12.

⁵⁵ J. Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity: A History of Early Christian Doctrine Before the Council of Nicaea*. Vol. 1, London-Chicago 1964, 146-163.

⁵⁶ Origen’s comment on Psalm 2,4 survives in a tenth century CE manuscript as following: «Δέκα ὀνόμασι παρ’ Ἑβραίοις ὀνομάζεται ὁ θεός. ὃν ἔν ἐστι τὸ ἄδωναῖ, καὶ ἐρμηνεύεται κ[ύριος], καὶ ἔστιν ὅπου λέγεται τὸ ἄδωναῖ παρ’ Ἑβραίοις καὶ παρ’ Ἑλλήσι κ[ύριος], τῆς λέξεως τῆς γεγραμμένης παρὰ τοῦ προφήτου τοῦτο ἀπαγγελούσης. ἔστι δὲ ὅτε τὸ *ιαὼ* κεῖται, ἐκφωνεῖται δὲ τῆ κυρίως προσηγορία παρ’ Ἑλλήσιν ἀλλ’ οὐ παρ’ Ἑβραίοις, ὡς ἐν τῷ «Αἰνεῖτε τὸν π[α]τ[ε]ρ ὅτι ἀγαθὸν ψαλμός». κ[ύριος]ν γὰρ ἐνθάδε ἀντὶ τοῦ *ιαὼ* εἶρηκεν, καὶ ἔστιν ἡ ἀρχὴ τοῦ ψαλμοῦ παρ’ Ἑβραίοις «Ἀλληλούϊα». ἔστι δὲ τι τετραγράμματος ἀνεκφώνητον παρ’ αὐτοῖς». (Cod. Vat. gr. 744 (Rahlfs 1172), fol. 2r; G. Mercati, *Note Bibliche: 1. Sulla scrittura del tetragramma nelle antiche versioni greche del Vecchio Testamento*, *Biblica*, 22/4 (1941) 339-66, here 350-4; Mercati in his transcription of this text read mistakenly «τῆ κυρίως προσηγορία»

the shortened Tetragrammaton (introduced then also in Latin), and even used it as an acceptable theonym to refer to the true God⁵⁷. The same was the case with the circulation “among the Christian common people” of Jewish and Christian *onomastica* that widely used Greek forms of the Tetragrammaton and underwent more slowly a gradual replacement of these forms with other substitute or metonymic terms like

instead of the correct «τῆ κυρίως προσηγορία», thus further obscuring the meaning of the phrase; Wolfram Kinzig, *Eigenart und Aussprache des Tetragramms bei den Kirchenvätern*, in H. Assel/H.C. Askani (eds.), *Sprachgewinn. Festschrift für Günter Bader. Arbeiten zur historischen und systematischen Theologie*, Vol. 11, Berlin 2008, 202-233, here 207-210) It is highly remarkable that the Hebrew trigrammaton *yhh* (also found in the margin of Cod. Urbin. gr. 84, fol. 215r) is used along with the Greek “proper appellation” *Iao* and the *nomina sacra* *θc* and *κc*. In Migne’s edition, instead of the two cases of *Iao* it appears in both instances as *Iaη* [Lat. *Jae/Iae*] and instead of *yhh* it reads «Κύριον». (PG 12:1104B) Regarding the appearance of *Iao* within the Greek Bible copies, Mercati observed that possibly “Origene l’abbia trovato sotto quelle figure in codici greci” and “gli Ebrei lo leggevano o pronunciavano tal quale lo scrivevano, al pari di tutte le altre parole.” (Note Bibliche, 352) It is observable that while Origen used the Hebrew Tetragrammaton in his scholarly *Hexapla* (sometimes copied as ΠΙΠΙ), he generally employed *Iao* in his literary works.

⁵⁷ Wilkinson, *Tetragrammaton*, 123-129; Shaw, *The Earliest*, 37; Vasilieadis, *The pronunciation*, 6-8; Kinzig, *Eigenart und Aussprache*, 202-233; Thierry, *The Pronunciation*, 33-34. For instance, Didymus the Blind, after using *Iao* in the etymologies of the names Zephaniah and Joshua/Jesus, explains that «ἐν δὲ τῶν ὀνομάτων τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸ Ἰαὼ [ἐστὶν] Ἑβραίων φωνῆ», that is “*Iao* is one of the names of God in the tongue of the Hebrews.” (*Commentary on Zechariah* 6:10. 11 [Hill 117])

κύριος, θεός and αόρατος⁵⁸. Gnostic Christianity bears similar witness in Hebrew, Greek and Coptic contexts⁵⁹.

The use of a form of the Tetragrammaton within the 4Q120 manuscript was admittedly the major reason for classifying it as of Jewish origin⁶⁰. In the light of the available information today (such as lowering the date of the common use of the Tetragrammaton and the evidenced longstanding use of *Iaω* among Christians)⁶¹, might a Jewish Christian origin of the manuscript, penned sometime during the first century CE be considered possible? Some positive factors for such a hypothesis are the following.

⁵⁸ Shaw, *The Earliest*, 153, 296-299; A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, New York-London 1910, 415. Origen's *onomastica sacra*, edited by Eusebius, mentions: «*Ἰάω: κύριος, ἢ θεός, ἢ ἀόρατος*». (Cod. Vat. gr. 1456 (palimpsest, 12th century CE) [PL 23: 1225-1226] P. de Lagarde, *Onomastica sacra*, Göttingen 1870, 192. 203]) Remarkably, ancient Syriac Christianity displayed a notable sensitivity towards the use of the Tetragrammaton both within the OT and NT translations and other writings. (Vasileiadis, *Aspects*, 62. 64 n. 55; Kinzig, *Eigenart und Aussprache*, 218-220) This includes both the scribal conventions and the Semitic mentalities involved. Also, with respect to popular devotion, a Christian amulet that dates from about the third century CE found at Tyre, opens with the tripartite baptismal formula inscribed using *nomina sacra* («*ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ[σο]ῦ χριστοῦ καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου*»), followed by an evocation of the great name of *Iao* («*τὸ μέγα ὄνομα Ιαω*»). (R. Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets: The inscribed gold, silver, copper, and bronze lamellae*, *Papyrologica Coloniensia* 22/1, Opladen 1994, no. 53, 301-305).

⁵⁹ For instance, a new member of the so-called “Marcosians” (Μαρκώσιοι), a third century Christian Gnostic movement, he confessed during his baptism: «*Ἐστήριγμα καὶ λελύτρωμαι καὶ λυτροῦμαι τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου καὶ πάντων τῶν παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Ἰαώ, ὃς ἐλυτρώσατο τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ τῷ ζῶντι*», that is, “I have been redeemed, and I redeem my soul from this age and all the things that are from it in the name of Iao who redeemed his soul unto redemption in the living Christ.” (Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1.14.2 [SC 264:299-302]; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 2:36 [F. Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Book I, Sects 1-46*, Leiden-Boston 2009, 250]).

⁶⁰ P. Kahle stated: “The fragment of Qumran Cave 4 renders the name of God by *ιαω* (written in majuscule letters) and this alone already shows that this papyrus was written by a Jew.” (*The Cairo Geniza*, 224) This conclusion is not to be considered safe anymore.

⁶¹ Shaw, *The Earliest*, 167-272.

The members of the early Christian movement were among the people that would have been less willing to submit to rabbinic traditions and ordinances that they considered to be un-Biblical and were supported by practices introduced and promoted by the scribes⁶². Making and sharing copies of their sacred Scriptures, i.e. mainly the Greek Bible (later called “Old Testament”), was highly important for their intensive evangelizing activity⁶³. Their writing and copying skills are well renowned very early among them. Furthermore, such Jewish Christians may have been among the “Jewish scholars standing outside the Rabbinic tradition during the period of the first four centuries CE,” scholars able to create and use the Greek transliterations of the Hebrew Scriptures like the ones utilized by Origen in the second column of his *Hexapla*⁶⁴. Besides, a good number of the Qumran Bible scrolls were imported *from outside* the community and were stored there before its abandonment. Speaking of the Dead Sea Scrolls found at Qumran, P. Comfort observed that “it is not farfetched to think that some Greek-speaking Jewish Christians deposited [there] some manuscripts, both from the Old

⁶² Vasileiadis, The pronunciation, 9-12. Cf. Mt 5,20; 20,18; 23,1-27; Mk 2,6.7; 3,22; 7,1-15; 8,31; 10,33; 11,18; 12,38-40; 14,1.43.53; Lk 5,21.30; 6,6-11; 9,22; 11,53.54; 19,47; 20,19.45-47; 22,2.66; 23,10.

⁶³ Regarding the surviving NT papyri, P. Orsini and W. Clarysse observed: “There are no first century New Testament papyri and only very few can be attributed to the second century (P⁵², P⁹⁰, P¹⁰⁴, probably all the second half of the century) or somewhere between the late second and early third centuries (P³⁰, P⁶⁴⁺⁶⁷⁺⁴, 0171, 0212).” (P. Orsini/W. Clarysse, Early New Testament Manuscripts and Their Dates. A Critique of Theological Palaeography, *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, 88/4 (2012) 443-474, here 466) The “books of the sectarians” (*sifrei ha-minim*, Heb. סִפְרֵי הַמִּנִּים) is an explicit reference to Torah scrolls written most probably by Jewish Christians. (*Tosefta* Shabbat 13:5, et al. | *Jerusalem Talmud* Shabbat 16.1:15c | *Babylonian Talmud* Shabbat 116a).

⁶⁴ M. Martin, Writing divine speech: Greek transliterations of near eastern languages in the Hellenistic East, in C. Cooper (ed.), *Politics of Orality. Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece*, Vol. 6, Leiden-Boston 2007, 251-274, here 268.

Testament and the New Testament”⁶⁵. For centuries Christians incessantly read and reproduced Greek, Hebrew and Latin forms of the Tetragrammaton in excerpts from the *Hexapla*⁶⁶, in Biblical *onomastica* and other patristic literature⁶⁷.

Author	Greek excerpt	English translation
Irenaeus of Lyons, <i>Adversus haereses</i> 2:35.3	secundum hebraeam linguam diverse dictiones positas in Scripturis ... Ιαωθ/Ιαωη ... Ιαοθ	“various Hebrew names are placed in the Scriptures ... Ιαōth/Ιαōh ... Ιαοth ”
Origen, <i>Contra Celsum</i> 6.32	ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ἑβραϊκῶν Γραφῶν [λαβόντες] τὸν Ἰαὼ ... ἀπὸ τῶν Γραφῶν ληφθέντα ὀνόματα	“from the Hebrew scriptures they took Iao ... the names taken from the Bible”

⁶⁵ P. Comfort, *Encountering the Manuscripts: An Introduction to New Testament Paleography & Textual Criticism*, Nashville, TN 2005, 126-127.

⁶⁶ Kahle wrote concerning the *Hexapla* in the Milan palimpsest, edited by Mercati: “The name of God is throughout in all the five columns written as the Tetragrammaton in Hebrew square letters. That there were *Christian LXX MSS* in Origen's time in which the name of God was written in Hebrew square letters is directly contrary to all that we otherwise know.” (*The Greek Bible Manuscripts Used by Origen*, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 79.2 (1960) 111-118, here 116-117) Kahle's hesitancy to admit the existence of LXX copies produced by Christian scribes that included the Tetragrammaton seems rather outdated.

⁶⁷ Shaw, *The Earliest*, 13-36, 303-310; Vasileiadis, *Aspects*, 61-71; idem, *The Pronunciation*, 12-13; Gallagher, *The religious provenance*. For example, Basil of Caesarea apparently made use of *onomastica sacra*, when he wrote: «Ἐρμηνεύεται γὰρ ὁ Ἀχὰς, κατὰ-σχεςις Ἰωάθαν, Ἰαὼ συντέλεια· ὁ δὲ Ὀζίας, ἰσχὺς Ἰαὼ». (*Enarratio in prophetam Isaiam* [Dub.] 7:193) The same is true for Cyril of Alexandria, Origen, Didymus the Blind, Ps-John Chrysostom, Theodoret and Hesychius' *Lexicon* («Ἰωαθάμ: Ἰαὼ συντέλεια» and «Ὀζείας: ἰσχὺς Ἰαὼ» [M. Schmidt (ed.), *Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon*, repr. Amsterdam 1965, Vol. 2, 381; Vol. 3, 180]).

The god Iao and his connection with the Biblical God

<p>Origen, <i>Selecta in Psalmos</i> 2:4</p>	<p>ἔστι δὲ ὅτε τὸ Ἰαὼ κείται, ἐκφωνεῖται δὲ τῇ κυρίως προσηγορίᾳ παρ' Ἑλλήσιν ἀλλ' οὐ παρ' Ἑβραίοις</p>	<p>“it happens then that when Iao is laid [in the Bible text], it is pronounced as the properly appellation by the Greeks but not by the Hebrews”</p>
<p>Eusebius, <i>Demonstratio evangelica</i> 10:8.28</p>	<p>καὶ τοῦτο διὰ πάσης σχεδὸν εὐροις ἂν τῆς γραφῆς, ἐπεὶ καὶ κυρίως οὕτως παρὰ τοῖς Ἑβδομήκοντα ἔτι καὶ νῦν τῇ Ἑβραίων ὀνομάζεται φωνῇ. φέρονται γὰρ μὴν παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τῆς θείας προσηγορίας καὶ ἕτεραί τινες ἐκφωνήσεις, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ τὸ Σαδδαι καὶ τὸ Ἰαὼ καὶ τὸ Ἥλ καὶ ἄλλα τούτοις παραπλήσια</p>	<p>“and you will find it throughout nearly all the Scriptures, and even now in the Septuagint He is called properly by the Hebrew name. Though of course the Hebrews had other expressions for the divine Name—such as Saddai, Iao, El, and the like”</p>
<p>Tertullian, <i>Adversus Valentinianos</i> 14.4</p>	<p>inde inuenitur Iao in Scripturis</p>	<p>“the name Iao comes to be found in the Scriptures”</p>
<p>Ps-John Chrysostom, <i>In Psalmos</i> 101-107 55.653</p>	<p>τὸ δὲ, Ἰαὼ, Ἑβραῖοι ὀνομασίαν ὥσπερ τινὰ τῷ Θεῷ κατέλιπον ἀνεμῆνευτον</p>	<p>“regarding Iao, just because it is a name of God, the Hebrews left it untranslated”</p>

Table 1:

Patristic evidence for the use of *Iaow* within their Greek Bible copies.

Furthermore, there is compelling evidence, both explicit or implicit, that some of the Greek Bible copies—like the ones read by Christians such as Irenaeus of Lyons⁶⁸, Origen⁶⁹,

⁶⁸ The native Smyrnaean Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, wrote that “secundum hebraeam linguam diverse dictiones positae in Scripturis,” that is, “various Hebrew names are placed in the Scriptures,” including among others *Iaowth/Iaowh* (v.l.) and *Iaowh*. (*Adversus haereses* 2:35.3 [PG 7:838B-840A] U. Mannucci, *Irenaei Lugdunensis episcopi Adversus Haereses Libri quinque, Part 1, Rome 1907, 472. 474; R. Grant, Irenaeus of Lyons, London-New York 1997, 91-92*).

⁶⁹ Origen mentioned that «ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ἑβραϊκῶν Γραφῶν [λαβόντες] τὸν Ἰαὼ ... ἀπὸ τῶν Γραφῶν ληφθέντα ὀνόματα», that is, “from the Hebrew scriptures they took Iao ... the names taken from the Bible.” (*Contra Celsum* 6.32 [PG 11:1345C-1348A] H. Chadwick (transl.), Origen: *Contra Celsum*, Cambridge 1953, 349]).

Eusebius of Caesarea⁷⁰, Tertullian⁷¹, Jerome⁷², and Ps-John Chrysostom⁷³—were employing the use of *Iaω* for the Tetragrammaton⁷⁴. If this conclusion is valid, this would imply that

⁷⁰ Eusebius wrote: «Καὶ τοῦτο διὰ πάσης σχεδὸν εὖροις ἂν τῆς γραφῆς, ἐπεὶ καὶ κυρίως οὕτως παρὰ τοῖς Ἑβδομήκοντα ἔτι καὶ νῦν τῆ Ἑβραίων ὀνομάζεται φωνῇ. φέρονται γε μὴν παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τῆς θείας προσηγορίας καὶ ἕτεραί τινες ἐκφωνήσεις, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ τὸ Σαδδαι καὶ τὸ Ἰαὼ καὶ τὸ Ἥλ καὶ ἄλλα τούτοις παραπλήσια», that is: “And you will find it throughout nearly all the Scriptures, and even now in the Septuagint He is called properly by the Hebrew name. Though of course the Hebrews had other expressions for the divine Name—such as Saddai, Iao, El, and the like.” (*Demonstratio evangelica* 10:8.28 [PG 22:765C] W.J. Ferrar (transl.), *The Proof of the Gospel being the Demonstratio Evangelica* of Eusebius of Caesarea, New York 1920, 220]).

⁷¹ Tertullian stated that “inde inuenitur Iao in Scripturis,” that is, “the name Iao comes to be found in the Scriptures.” (*Adversus Valentinianos* 14.4 [PL 2:565A] P. Holmes (transl.), *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Vol. 15: *The Writings of Quintus Sept. Flor. Tertullianus*, Vol. 2, Edinburgh 1870, 140; M. Riley, Q. S. Fl. *Tertulliani Adversus Valentinianos: Text, translation, and commentary*, PhD thesis, Stanford, CA 1971, 45]). G. Quispel stated: “Scripture must mean here: Holy Writ. Does this mean that his Greek copy of the Septuagint still contained Ἰαώ?” (G. Quispel, *Gnostica, Judaica, Catholica. Collected Essays of Gilles Quispel*, J. van Oort (ed.). Leiden-Boston 2008, 400)

⁷² Jerome commented that “nomen Domini apud Hebraeos quattuor literarum est, Jod, He, Vau, He, quod proprie Dei vocabulum sonat et legi potest Jaho,” that is, “the name of God properly sounds and can be read Iaho,” as it was found and read within the Bible copies at hand. (*Breviarum in Psalmos* 8:2 [G. Morin (transl.), *Sancti Hieronymi presbyteri Commentarioli in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana*, Vol. 3, Part 1, Oxford 1895, 20. 21]).

⁷³ In a work attributed spuriously to John Chrysostom, it is stated in a comment concerning the meaning of *Ἀλληλούϊα* at the superscription of the Psalm 105|104, LXX: «Τὸ δὲ, Ἰαὼ, Ἑβραῖοι ὀνομασίαν ὥσπερ τινὰ τῷ Θεῷ κατέλιπον ἀνεμῆνευτον», that is, “regarding Iao, just because it is a name of God, the Hebrews left it untranslated.” (*In Psalmos 101-107* [PG 55:653])

⁷⁴ Similar might be the case for Theodoret of Cyrus, whose editorial activity involved *Iaω*, “the usual transliteration in the LXX for YHWH.” (C. Scholten, *Theodoret De Graecarum affectionum curatione. Heilung der griechischen Krankheiten. Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae*, Vol. 126, Leiden 2015, 221; A. Baumgarten, *The Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos. A Commentary. Études*

for a few centuries *Iao* was prevailingly present within the Bible copies read by the dispersed Christian communities, side-by-side with Hebrew Tetragrammata⁷⁵ and the increasingly dominant scribal device of *nomina sacra*⁷⁶. As a result,

préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire Romain, publiées par M. J. Vermaseren, Vol. 89. Leiden 1981, 54 n. 59)

⁷⁵ As late as the fourth century CE, Jerome mentioned that public *readers* of Greek books (obviously copies of the Greek Bible) met the Hebrew Tetragrammaton within their Greek texts: “Nonum [nomen Dei est] τετράγραμμον / τετραγράμματον, quod ἀνεκφώνη-τον, id est ineffabile, putaverunt, quod his litteris scribitur: iod, he, vau, he. Quod quidam non intelligentes propter elementorum similitudinem, cum in Graecis libris repererint, ΠΙΠΙ legere consueverunt.” That is: “The ninth, τετράγραμμον [=Tetragram], which they considered ἀνεκφώνητον, that is, unspeakable, and it is written with these letters, Iod, He, Vau, He. Certain ignorant ones, because of the similarity of the characters, when they find it in Greek books, are accustomed to read ΠΙΠΙ [/pipi/]” (*Letter 25, To Marcella* [PL 22:428, 429; CSEL 54:219]; Metzger, *Manuscripts*, 35 n. 73). Also, Origen remarked on copies of the Greek Bible: «Ἐν τοῖς ἀκριβεστέροις δὲ τῶν ἀντιγράφων Ἑβραίοις χαρακτηῖσι κείται τὸ ὄνομα, Ἑβραϊκοῖς δὲ οὐτοῖς νῦν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀρχαιοτάτοις». That is: “In the most accurate of the copies, the Name [of God] is put in Hebrew characters, not the current Hebrew characters [Aramaic script], but the most ancient [paleo-Hebrew script].” (*Selecta in Psalmos* [Dub.] 2:2 [PG 12:1104B]) Similarly, Jerome wrote: “Et nomen Domini tetragrammaton in quibusdam graecis voluminibus usque hodie antiquis expressum litteris invenimus.” That is: “And we find the four-lettered name of the Lord in certain Greek books to this day written in the ancient characters.” (*Praefatio in libros Samuel et Malachim/In libros Regum praefatio* [PL 28:550] Ph. Schaff (ed.), *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: Second Series*, Vol. 6, New York 1893 (repr. 1980), 489]) Jerome used Origen’s *Hexapla*—where the Tetragrammaton was retained in the Aramaic-script form 𐤇𐤍𐤅𐤇/ΠΙΠΙ—as the base text for his Latin translation of at least some of the OT books. (A. Fürst, *Veritas Latina. Augustins Haltung gegenüber Hieronymus' Bibelübersetzungen*, *Revue d'Etudes Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 40 (1994) 105-126, here 108-109). Cf. Joosten, *Le dieu Iao*, 117.

⁷⁶ The various forms of the scribal editorial activity that resulted in the alteration of “the text for both philological and theological reasons”—including the ‘safeguarding of the sacred divine name or tetragrammaton (YHWH)’—is an observable practice in the transmission process of the Hebrew scriptures. (B. Waltke/M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, Winona Lake, IN 1990,

a possible consequence is that *Iαω* (or, less possibly, a similar Greek term⁷⁷) might well have appeared in the original NT copies as well as in the early Christian *kerygma*⁷⁸. In the following centuries a rapid elimination of the Biblical theonym from the Christian scriptures and literature is observed, while Christian and Jewish theological and philosophical inquiries regarding the divine onomastics appeared and fully blossomed in various directions.

Although this hypothesis of a Jewish Christian origin for the 4Q120 scroll cannot be definitely substantiated, it proposes that *Iαω* cannot anymore be considered as the primary factor in the argument for a Jewish origin and a pre-Christian dating. This papyrus fragment is a sample of the Bible copies that link the Jewish OG/LXX Torah scrolls with the late Christian LXX codices. And in the links of this chain Jews, Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians were all actively involved.

(AUTH – 09.03.2016)

19.e). Especially the technique of the *nomina sacra* in the text of the Christian scriptures used during the early Christian era testifies to theological-reverential scribal conventions regarding the theonyms (sacred and divine names) that resulted in textual alterations and varying textual traditions. (cf. B. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament*, Oxford 1996, 83-85, 172 n. 83. 271 n. 22).

⁷⁷ For instance, during the early sixth century CE, Severus of Antioch and Olympiodorus, a deacon of Alexandria, both used the form *Iωα* [Lat. *Joal/Joā*] for rendering the Tetragrammaton in Greek, most probably following *onomastica sacra* available to them. (*Fragments in Jeremiam* 23:6 [PG 93:676A]; *Catena in Joannem* 8:58 [PG 23:1276 n. 4]) Similarly, the forms *Iαεω-Iαηω* might have been considered more precise Greek transcriptions of the trigrammaton *yhw* than *Iαω*. (R. Ganschinietz, *Iao*, in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Vol. 9.1, Stuttgart 1914, 700. 60).

⁷⁸ Shaw, *The Earliest* 273-301; Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 117-118, 131; G. Howard, *The Tetragram and the New Testament*, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96/1 (1977) 63-83; idem, *The Name of God*; idem, *Tetragrammaton in the New Testament*, in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, D.N. Freedman (ed.), Vol. 6, New York 1992, 392-393.