Phonetic Factors in Transliteration of Biblical Proper Names into Greek and Latin

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The current forms of biblical proper names in various European languages have been influenced by the phonetic changes necessitated by their transfer and transliteration from Hebrew and Aramaic into Greek and Latin, from which sources other languages borrowed in their turn. By way of Bible translation into Greek, Latin, and other ancient languages many biblical proper names have passed into general usage. On the whole, the frequency of references shows that the pool of names in use in the Bible period was similarly limited, as it has been in all later periods until today. Within Greek and Latin it is evident that popular names were much less exposed to phonetic changes than those that were used more rarely. This means that the unified forms of proper names reflect a unified common pronunciation and an orthographic tradition in a living tradition which helped to maintain phonetic stability in spite of the difficulty of phonetically reading the Hebrew consonantal text at a time when Hebrew was no longer a spoken language.

  The Greco-Latin alphabets are inadequate for rendering some Semitic sounds, insofar as these alphabets do not have exact equivalents for Semitic gutturals or sibilants. On the other hand, the pre-Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible caused translators many phonological problems, because originally it did not contain vowel sounds. Ancient translators sometimes render differently the same Hebrew name forms in the various biblical books or even within the same book. There are indications that even the most famous translators and interpreters, such as Flavius Josephus and Jerome, did not always transcribe the same name the same way. From this fact we may deduce that the Hebrew parent text of the LXX could not have

been part of a uniform tradition.[1] Codex Alexandrinus (A) and Codex Vaticanus (B) of the LXX, for instance, are composed of different portions, which each belong to different periods, even though these versions are genetically linked.

1. General Observations on Transliteration Issues

Many phonological and grammatical rules dictate the transliteration of biblical proper names into Greek and Latin. The absence of some letters and sounds in Greek and Latin was the main reason for many phonetic changes in the transfer of the names from Hebrew and Aramaic into Greek and Latin. The most important source for the transliteration of biblical names into Greek are the LXX, the fragments of Greek translations of the Old Testament by Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, and the New Testament. Other sources are the major literary works of the time, such as various inscriptions, Judean Desert documents, the works by Flavius

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[1] See especially the recent publications: F. Siegert, *Zwischen Hebräischer Bibel und Altem Testament: Eine Einführung in die Septuaginta* (MJSt 9; Münster / Hamburg / Berlin / London: LIT, 2001); H.J. Fabry and U. Offerhaus (eds.), *Im Brennpunkt: Die Septuaginta: Studien zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der Griechischen Bibel* (BWANT 153; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2001); A. Schenker (ed.), *The Earliest Text of the Hebrew Bible: The Relationship between the Masoretic Text and the Hebrew Base of the Septuagint Reconsidered* (SCSt 52; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003); S. Kreuzer and J.P. Lesch (eds.), *Im Brennpunkt: Die Septuaginta: Studien zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der Griechischen Bibel,* Band 2 (BWANT 161; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2004); I.L. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah and Cognate Studies* (ed. R. Hanhart and H. Spieckermann; FAT 40; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); I.Z. Dimitrov, J.D.G. Dunn, U. Luz, and K.W. Niebuhr (eds.), *Das Alte Testament als christliche Bibel in orthodoxer und westlicher Sicht* (WUNT 174; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); A. Rahlfs, revised by Detlef Fraenkel, *Verzeichnis der griechischen Handschriften des Alten Testaments,* Bd. I, 1: *Die Überlieferung bis zum VIII. Jahrhundert* (Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum: Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004); S. Weeks, S. Gathercole, and L. Stuckenbruck (eds.), *The Book of Tobit: Texts from the Principal Ancient and Medieval Traditions: With Synopsis, Concordances, and Annotated Texts in Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Syriac* (PoSub 3; Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004).

Josephus,[2] rabbinic literature, Origen's Hexapla,[3] Vetus Latina, Eusebius' book on the sites and names of Hebrew places,[4] the Latin Vulgate, and Jerome's works on place names of the Holy Land.[5] In comparison with the

[2] For the use of forms of biblical proper names in the writings by Flavius Josephus, see A. Schalit, *Namenwörterbuch zu Flavius Josephus* (A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus: Supplement I; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968).

[3] See especially the edition by F. Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt sive veterum interpretum Graecorum in totum Vetus Testamentum fragmenta* I–II (Oxford, 1875; reprint in Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1964).

[4] See the edition by P. de Lagarde, *Onomastica sacra* (Göttingen, 1870; 2nd ed. 1887; reprint in Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966). In this edition the Greek and Latin texts do not appear in parallel but in succession: first Latin, then Greek. The editor provides the material with references to biblical and other sources, without introductory notes and commentary. All the more precious is the first scientific edition of the *Onomasticon,* published by E. Klostermann, *Das Onomastikon der biblischen Ortsnamen* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1904; reprint in Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1996). More recently several translations of the *Onomasticon* have been published: a Hebrew translation of this work was published by E.Z. Melamed, *The Onomastikon of Eusebius* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1966). An English translation both of the Greek text by Eusebius and Latin translation by Jerome was prepared and published by G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, R.L. Chapmann III, and J.E. Taylor, *Palestine in the Fourth Century A.D.: The Onomasticon by Eusebius of Caesarea* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2003). A triglott edition (Greek, Latin, and English) with notes and commentary was published by R.S. Notley and Z. Safrai, *Eusebius, Onomastikon: The Place Names of Divine Scripture* (Boston / Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2005). Most studies of the book have not focused upon its literary aspect, but rather upon the identification of sites. See also P. Thomsen, *Palästina nach dem Onomasticon des Eusebius* (Ph.D. diss.; Tübingen, 1903); idem, *ZDPV* 26 (1903), 145–188; E.Z. Melamed, "The Onomastikon of Eusebius," *Tarbiz* 3 (1932): 314–327, 393–409 [Heb.].

[5] Of special interest is Jerome's Latin translation of Eusebius' book on the sites and names of Hebrew places, which has various designations according to the different manuscripts and printings: *Liber de situ et nominibus locorum hebraicorum, Liber de distantiis locorum, Liber locorum oder locorum et nominum.* This Latin version of Eusebius' *Onomasticon* became the main source for the research of Palestine in the west. The edition by Paul de Lagarde includes this work under the title *Hieronymi de situ et nominibus locorum hebraicorum liber.* In addition to translation of Eusebius' book on the sites and names of Hebrew places (Bethlehem 388), Jerome himself composed (Bethlehem 388) a book of Hebrew names, or Glossary of Proper

LXX, Josephus tends to follow official spelling in his orthography. On the other hand, the New Testament sometimes comes close to the LXX and follows the common pronunciation.

There are some specific phenomena pertinent to the transliteration from Hebrew into Greek: consonant interchange, vowel interchange, confusion in the use of a double or single consonant in Greek, misunderstanding of the declension system, transformation of Semitic suffixes, the declining of gutturals, declining of the prefix, and scribal errors. Spelling differences between the Hebrew and Greek forms of proper names are not only due to different general phonetic laws pertinent to these languages but also to the pronunciation in the time of the LXX being different in many respects from the time of the Tiberian grammarians. Transliteration forms of proper names in Greek and Latin indicate how any given name was pronounced in that particular period. Very often proper names are rendered in forms that differ from those of the Masora. Greek codices are not uniform texts and therefore must be assigned to different textual types.

For a comparative study of the forms of biblical proper names we must consider the complete LXX tradition in comparison with other forms of the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and such sources as Flavius Josephus, and Eusebius' book on the sites and names of Hebrew places. Redaction of the New Testament material is simple, as most names do not show significant variants. Flavius Josephus is of particular importance for a comparative study of the forms of biblical proper names because his transcriptions, such as the overall use of vowels as well as the quality of certain vowels, differ from all the recognized branches of the LXX tradition so often and consistently that it is hardly possible to conclude that the underlying forms could have been taken from any LXX MS. Josephian transcriptions are comparable to the New Testament ones insofar as they

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Names in the Old Testament. This book has been edited by Paul de Lagarde, *Onomastica sacra*, under the title: *Hieronymi liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum* (pp. 26–116). A comprehensive study of this work was made by F. Wutz, *Onomastica sacra: Untersuchungen zum Liber interpretationis nominum hebraicorum des Hl. Hieronymus* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1914).

must be assumed, as a rule anyway, to have had uniform prototypes. Eusebius' book on the sites and names of Hebrew places is the most important book for the study of the forms of many biblical names in the Roman period. The work as a whole comprises close to one thousand entries, for slightly more than eight hundred place names. The scientific edition of this work is based on MS Vatican 1456.

It is a widely accepted view that Jerome's transliterations must be based upon originals belonging to different periods. Another view is that Jerome's contributions are not genuine transliterations of Hebrew name forms into Latin characters, but go back to originals in Greek characters—that they are merely a Latin transliteration of Greek texts. At times Jerome explains his own pronunciation of Hebrew, or rather that of his Jewish teachers. His inconsistency in transliterating Hebrew proper names and in using examples for his explanations reflects the state of sources available in his time. Concerning the incredible number of variant forms of biblical proper names the situation is similar in the LXX in the whole framework of individual books and of extant manuscripts. Orthography and phonetics in Hellenistic Greek and in late classical Latin are beset with great difficulty because consonants and especially vowels were subject to widespread changes, which gradually became apparent in writing. In the period 330 BCE-200 CE there was no fixed orthography in existence. This situation might be a much more important reason for the striking inconsistency in rendering the transliteration of biblical names.

In this investigation, we would like to outline the basic grammatical principles that govern the transliteration of biblical names into Greek and Latin. To make evident equivalents and variants from Greek transliterations, all examples will be given in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin forms. We state that since translators were very free in their transliteration of biblical names, many alternative forms developed in the spelling of names. In this connection we state that the basic phonetic relationship between Semitic languages on the one hand and non-Semitic languages, like Greek and Latin, on the other hand, is so complex that it was hardly possible to establish a unified tradition in writing the forms of biblical

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proper names within the Greek and Latin cultures. Given the fact that the Greek and Latin alphabets are inadequate for transliteration, authors of Greek and Latin Bibles were utter grammatical and cultural innovators.[6]

2. Transliteration of Semitic Consonants into Greek

The history of transliteration of Semitic writing symbols is in causal relationship with the development of the Greek alphabet on Semitic grounds. Archaeology and classical scholarship generally agree that the Greek alphabet handed down to us was received from the Phoenicians,

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[6] Many important findings about the phonetic relationship between the Hebrew/Aramaic, Greek and at least partly Latin languages are comprised in the monographs or articles by: H. St. John Thackeray, *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek* (2nd ed.; Cambridge, 1909; reprint in Hildesheim / Zürich / New York: Georg Olms, 1987); F. Wutz, "Die Bedeutung der Transkriptionen in der LXX," *BZ* 16 (1924): 194–203; idem, *Die Transkriptionen von der LXX bis zum Hieronymus* (Stuttgart, 1933); W. Borée, *Die alten Ortsnamen Palästinas* (Leipzig, 1930; reprint in Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1968); A. Sperber, *Hebrew Based upon Greek and Latin Transliterations* (Offprint from *Hebrew Union College Annual*, Volume XII–XIII; Cincinnati, 1937–1938); G. Lisowsky, *Die Transcription der hebräischen Eigennamen des Pentateuch in der Sptuaginta* (Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde an der Theologischen Fakultät der Universität Basel; Basel, 1940); J. Ziegler, "Transkriptionen in der Ier.-LXXX: Transkription der Eigennamen (EN)," *Beiträge zur Ieremias-Septuaginta* (Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens VI; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), 59–86; A. Murtonen, *Hebrew in Its West Semitic Setting: A Comparative Survey of Non-masoretic Hebrew Dialects and Traditions* (SSLL 13; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986); R. Zadok, *The Pre-hellenistic Israelite Anthroponymy and Prosopography* (OLA 28; Leuven: Peeters, 1988); E. Tov, "Loan-words, Homophony, and Transliterations in the Septuagint," *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (VTSup 72; Leiden / Boston / Köln: E. J. Brill, 1999), 165–182; idem, "Transliterations of Hebrew Words in the Greek Versions: A Further Characteristic of the Kaige-th Revision?," *The Greek and Hebrew Bible,* 501–512; T. Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity. Part I: Palestine 330 BCE – 200 CE* (TSAJ 91; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002); P.A. Kaswalder OFM, *Onomastica Biblica: Fonti scritte e ricerca archeologica* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 2002); Y. Elitzur, *Ancient Place Names in the Holy Land: Preservation and History* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004).

most probably before the twelfth century BCE. This is borne out not only by tradition, but also by the significant fact that as regards form, name, and order, the two alphabets show a striking correspondence. There is, however, one important difference between the Phoenician and the Greek systems. While the former has no signs for vowels, and a great variety of aspirate and sibilant consonants, the latter, even in the earliest specimens found, shows an already fully developed vowel-system, and contents itself with one sibilant and one aspirate representative respectively. Thus the Greeks probably evolved out of the Phoenician consonants *aleph*, *he*, *yod*, *ayin*, the vowels α ε ι ο, and moreover invented υ, as a twenty-third letter.[7] In all Semitic languages the alphabets consist solely of consonants, some of which also have a kind of vocalic power. The Hebrew/Aramaic alphabet has twenty-two signs to represent consonantal phonemes.

The Greek alphabet in its final stage of development, on the other hand, consists of twenty-four Greek signs of which seven (α ε η ι ο υ ω) are vowels, and the remaining seventeen consonants. The characters υ φ χ ψ are not found in the Phoenician alphabet; they are Greek inventions. Until the fifth century BCE, there were some differences between the Attic alphabet, which represents chiefly Athens, and the eastern or Ionian alphabet. The old Attic alphabet contained two different vowels and two different consonants: instead of the long vowels η and ω other symbols were in use, namely the symbol E, which stood for ε, η and the diphthong ει, and the symbol O, which stood for ο, ω and the diphthong ου; and instead of the consonants ξ and ψ the digraphs ΧΣ (ΚΣ) and ΦΣ (ΠΣ) respectively were in use. Only in the year 403 did the present composition of the Greek alphabet establish itself also in the received or Attic alphabet.

The phonemic system of Hebrew and Greek alphabets are not sufficient to distinguish between some signs within their linguistic family and/or in their phonetic interrelation. Hebrew signs are not sufficient to distinguish between some common Semitic symbols, as for instance between *šin* and

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[7] Cf. A.N. Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar* (London / New York: Macmillan 1897; reprint in Hildesheim / Zürich / New York: Georg Olms, 1987), 21.

śin, between ʿ*ayin* and *ġayin*, or between *ḥeth* and *ḫeth*. Vowels were not indicated except for in the sporadic use of the vowel letters, *waw*, *yod* and final *he*. On the other hand, Greek had no laryngeals and only two sibilants, whereas Hebrew had four laryngeals and five sibilants. Consequently transliteration of proper names is often perforce inexact.

Greek authors render Semitic consonants with the following Greek characters: א has no consonantal value of its own, but indicates *spiritus lenis* and serves to carry the respective vowel; ב = β, π, φ; ג = usually γ, sometimes κ (especially at the end of the name); ד = usually δ, sometimes τ, θ; ה is without consonantal value, like א; ו = υ; ז = usually ζ, sometimes σ; ח = usually rendered by a vowel (often by ε in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the name), sometimes transliterated with χ; ט = usually τ, sometimes δ, θ; י = ι or ignored; gemination כ = κ, κχ (LXX), χχ (variants and Origen); כ = χ; ל = λ; מ = μ and ν (at the end of a name); נ = ν and μ (at the end of a name); ס = σ/ς; ע = usually not expressed, sometimes transliterated with γ; gemination פ = π, πφ (LXX), φφ (variants and Origen); פ = φ; צ = σ; ק = κ, κχ (LXX), κκ (variants and Origen); ק = usually κ, sometimes χ, γ; ר = ρ; שׁ/שׂ = σ/ς, within a name occasionally double σ; gemination ת = τ, τθ (LXX), θθ (Origen); ת = usually θ, sometimes τ, δ. It is noteworthy that palatals, dentals, and labials are not clearly distinguishable in pronunciation. The development of the forms of biblical proper names in European languages represents a great challenge for clarifying—in greater detail and on the basis of applicable examples—the problem of the phonetic value of the letters of the Semitic, Greek, and Latin alphabets.

The Semi-vocalic Consonants Waw and Yod

The semi-vocalic consonant *waw* sometimes retains its consonantal character, in Greek transliterated with υ, and in Latin with v: חַוָּה (Gen 4:1)—Εὔα, Εὔα, Vg: Hava; חֲוִילָה (Gen 2:11)—Εὐιλατ, Εὐιλατ, Vg: Evilat; חִוִּי (Gen 10:17)—Εὐαῖος, Εὐαῖς, Vg: Eveus; לֵוִי (Gen 29:34)—Λευί, Vg: Levi; עֵשָׂו (Gen 25:25)—Ἐσαύ, Ἐσαυ, Vg: Esau. Most often the letter is considered merely as the bearer of the respective preceding vowel; ו is usually

employed to denote ô and û, and י to denote ê and î; צָדוֹק (2 Sam 8:17)—Σαδώκ, Vg: Sadoc; אֲחִיטוּב (2 Sam 8:17)—Ἀχιτώβ, Vg: Achitob; הֵימָן (Ps 88:1)—Αἰμαν, Vg: Eman. The transliteration system from Hebrew/Aramaic to Greek and Latin shows that the sound *yod* in some combinations was not considered, for instance in the ending י– and ים–: סִינַי (Exod 16:1)—Σινά, Vg: Sinai; שָׂרַי (Gen 11:29)—Σάρα, Vg: Sarai; אֶפְרַיִם (Gen 41:52)—Ἐφραίμ, Vg: Ephraim; מִצְרַיִם (Gen 10:6)—Μεσράιν, Vg: Mesraim; קַיִן (Gen 4:1)—Κάιν, Vg: Cain. Quite often *yod* is transliterated with the letter ι: בִּנְיָמִין (Gen 35:18)—Βενιαμίν, Vg: Beniamin; יוֹסֵף (Gen 30:25)—Ἰωσήφ, Vg: Ioseph; יְרֵחוֹ (Num 22:1)—Ἰεριχώ, Ἰεριχώ, Vg: Hierichus; יִשְׂרָאֵל (Gen 32:29)—Ἰσραήλ, Vg: Israhel; מִרְיָם (Exod 15:20)—Μαριάμ, Vg: Maria. This state of affairs is due to the fact that the Greek and Latin alphabets do not distinguish between the J-sound (consonant) and the I-sound (vowel). The reader therefore is often induced to pronounce the Greek letter *iota* as a consonant rather than a vowel.

The Gutturals Aleph, He, and Cheth

The gutturals א and ה have no consonantal value, but serve only to carry a vowel sign or to act as a mere orthographic indication of a preceding vowel. With regard to pronunciation it may be remarked that א is the weakest of the gutturals; it corresponds to the *spiritus lenis* of the Greeks and is actually pronounced only in a syllable that is closed in one way or another. The letter ה, on the other hand, corresponds to the *spiritus asper* of the Greeks and is pronounced at the end of a syllable and before a vowel as a light guttural; at the end of a word it is inaudible. In the Greek transliteration of Hebrew proper names contained in the Septuagint and other Bible translations א is always considered merely as the bearer of the respective vowel: אֲבִימָאֵל (Gen 10:27)—Ἀβιμαέλ, Vg: Abimahel; אַלְמוֹדָד (Gen 10:27)—Ἐλμωδάδ, Vg: Helmodad; יִזְרְעֶאל (1 Chr 4:3)—Ἰεζραήλ, Vg: Iezrahel; יִשְׂרָאֵל (Gen 32:29)—Ἰσραήλ, Vg: Israhel; פְּנוּאֵל (Judg 8:8-9)—Φανουηλ, Vg: Phanuhel. How can the insertion of an /h/ before the radical א be explained? Since this happened only in compound names, we may assume

that the purpose was to indicate that the two vowels are to be pronounced separately: Bahalmeon, Behelfegor, Behelsefon, Beselehel, Iamuhel, Israhel, Misahel, Raguhel.[8] In transliterated proper names into Greek ה is fairly often dropped; rarely is it rendered by the *spiritus asper*; in transliteration into Latin this letter is sometimes retained and rendered by h: אַבְרָהָם (Gen 17:5)—Ἀβραάμ, Vg: Abraham; אַהֲרֹן (Exod 4:14)—Ἀαρών, the syncopated form Ἀρών (Cod. A in Exod 6:26; 7:8; Num 12:10; Sir 45:6), Vg: Aaron; גֵּי־הִנֹּם (Josh 15:8)—Ἐννόμ, Vg: Gehennom; הוֹשֵׁעַ (Hos 1:1)—Ὡσηε, Vg: Osee; הֵימָם (Gen 36:22)—Αἰμάν, Vg: Heman; הֵלֶם (1 Chr 7:35)—Ἐλάμ, Vg: Helem; יְהוּדָה (Gen 29:35)—Ἰούδας, Ἰουδα, Vg: Iuda; יְהוֹשֻׁעַ (Exod 17:9)—Ἰησοῦς, Vg: Iosue. We may conclude that Jerome transliterates ה at times with h on the basis of Hebrew grammar. An especially conspicuous example of this kind is the name Abraham as explained by Jerome in his discussion of the changes in the name forms Abram/Abraham.[9]

Greek could not convey the guttural sound of the Hebrew letter *ḥeth*. In a number of names it is transliterated with the letter χ, in Latin with the letter h, for instance: אַחְאָב (1 Kgs 16:28)—Ἀχαάβ, Vg: Ahab; חֶבְרוֹן (Gen 13:18)—Χεβρών, Vg: Hebron. More often the letter is not expressed at all in either Greek or in Latin, or it is transcribed with a vowel: אֲחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ (Ezra 4:6)—Ἀσσουῆρος, Vg: Asuerus; חֲנוֹךְ (Gen 5:21)—Ἐνώχ, Josephus: Ἄνωχος, Ἀνώχης, Vg: Enoch; חָצוֹר (Josh 11:1)—Ἀσώρ, Vg: Asor; חֶרְמוֹן (Deut 3:8)—Ἀερμών, Vg: Hermon; יוֹחָנָן (2 Kgs 25:23)—Ἰωανάν(A), Ἰωνά(B), in many other biblical verses and in Josephus: Ἰωάννης, Vg: Iohanan. A good number of names are transliterated without considering this sound or with a semi-vowel, indicated with the *spiritus asper*: חַגַּי (Hag 1:1)—Ἀγγαῖος,

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[8] Cf. A. Sperber, *Hebrew Based upon Greek and Latin Transliterations,* 112.

[9] See *Quaestiones* on Gen 17:5: "Dicunt autem Hebraei quod ex nomine suo deus, quod apud illos tetragrammum est, he literam Abrahae et Sarae addiderit: dicebatur enim primum Abram, quod interpretatur pater excelsus et postea uocatus est Abraham, quod transfertur pater multarum: nam quod sequitur, gentium, non habetur in nomine, sed subauditur. Nec mirandum quare, cum apud Graecos et nos A litera uideatur addita, nos he literam hebraeam additam diximus: idioma enim linguae illius est, per E quidem scribere, sed per A legere: sicut e contrario A literam saepe per E pronuntiant."

Ἁγγαῖος, Vg: Aggeus; חֲבַקּוּק (Hab 1:1)—Ἀμβακούμ, Ἀμβακούμ, Vg: Abacuc; חַוָּה (Gen 4:1)—Εὕα, Εὕα, Vg: Hava; חִזְקִיָּהוּ (2 Kgs 16:20)—Ἐζεκίας, Vg: Ezechias; חַנָּה (1 Sam 1:2)—Ἅννα, Ἄννα, Vg: Anna; חֲנַנְיָה (Jer 28:1)—Ἁνανίας, Ἁνανίας, Vg: Ananias.

Medial ח with a vowel, when it represents a laryngeal rather than a velar, is variously rendered: by a single or double vowel, by omission of the sign, etc.: יַחְלְאֵל (Gen 46:14 A)—Ἁλοήλ, Vg: Iahelel, but in Num 26:26 (22) Ἀλλήλ, Vg: Ialel; יַחְצְאֵל (Gen 46:24)—Ἀσιήλ, Vg: Iasihel, Iessihel (Num 26:46); מַחְלִי (Exod 6:19)—Μοολι, Vg: Mooli; נַחְבִּי (Num 13:14)—Ναβί, Vg: Naabbi; נַחֲלָאֵל (Num 21:19)—Νααλιήλ, Vg: Nahalihel; נַחְשׁוֹן (Exod 6:23)—Νααssών, Vg: Naasson; רָחָב (Josh 2:1)—Ῥαάβ, Josephus Ῥαάβη, Ῥαχάβη, Vg: Raab; רְחוֹב (Num 13:21/22/)—Ῥαάβ, Vg: Roob.

The Guttural Letter Ayin

Jerome notes to his explanation of the place names Gomorra and Gaza that the G-sound does not exist in Hebrew, but it is rendered by the vowel ע.[10] It is true that the strongest sound of ע is a guttural g, an ancient consonant which is preserved only in Arabic. In transliteration of this letter from Hebrew/Aramaic into Greek and Latin it may be remarked that the sound is often not expressed at all, while it is sometimes transliterated with the Greek letter γ and Latin g, at other times indicated by the *spiritus asper,* and in Latin it can occur as some other guttural, for instance h. This fact allows the conclusion that the spelling of the ע was something between the Greek *spiritus lenis* and the letter γ.[11] The most probable reasons for transliterating the letter with γ and g are: the initial position of the letter ע, the position of the letter ע between vowels, and phonetic similarity between Hebrew

[10] See *Liber interpretationis Hebraicorum nominum,* Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 72, Pars I, 1, p. 67: "Gomorra populi timor siue seditio. Sciendum quod G litteram in hebraico non habet, sed scribitur per uocalem ע." Cf. P. de Lagarde, *Onomastica Sacra,* 33; idem, p. 87: "*Gaza fortitudo, sed sciendum quod apud Hebraeos non habeat in principio litteram consonantem, uerum incipiat a uocali ain, et dicatur Aza*." Cf. Paul de Lagarde, *Onomastica Sacra,* 51.

[11] Cf. G. Lisowsky, *Die Transcription*, 149.

proper names. Examples: עַזָּה (Gen 10:19)—Γάζα, Vg: Gaza; עַי (Gen 12:8)—
Ἀγγααί, Vg: Ai; עֲמֹרָה (Gen 10:19)—Γόμορ(ρ)α, Vg: Gomorra as against אֱמֹרִי
(Gen 10:16)—Ἀμορραῖος, Vg: Amorreus; כְּדָרְלָעֹמֶר (Gen 14:1)—Χοδολλογομόρ
(A E), Χοδολλαγόμορ (D), Josephus: Χοδολάμορος, Vg: Chodorlahomor; צֹעַר
(Gen 13:10), צוֹעַר (Gen 19:22)—Ζόγορα (13:10), Σηγώρ (19:22), Josephus:
Ζόαρα, Ζωώρ, Σήγωρα, Vg: Segor (in both places); צוּעָר (Num 1:8)—Σωγάρ,
Vg: Suar; רְעוּ (Gen 11:18)—Ῥαγαῦ, Josephus: Ῥεούς, Ῥοῦμος, Vg: Reu; רְעוּאֵל
(Gen 36:4)—Ῥαγουήλ, Ῥαγουῆλος (Tob 6:11-BS), Josephus: Ῥαούηλος,
Ῥαγούηλος, Vg: Rauhel. Jerome explains the Latin forms Seor/Segor by
referring to the transliteration of the Hebrew vowel ע with the consonant
γ.[12] It is striking that the guttural ע is exceptionally transliterated with h in
the Latin form of the name עֵיטָם (1 Chr 4:3)—Αἰτάμ, Vg: Hetam.

The Sibilant Letters Samekh, Ṣade, and Sin/Shin

Due to limitations of the Greek and Latin alphabets the three Hebrew letters
צ, ס, and שׂ/שׁ can be rendered only by one character, namely σ/s. The
incompatibility of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin alphabets for rendering
Hebrew sounds results in a situation in which two entirely different
Hebrew/Aramaic proper names are identical in transliteration. Examples:
סַבְתְּכָא סַבְתָּה (Gen 10:7)—Σαβθά...Σαβαθακά, Vg: Sabatha … Sabathaca; צִיּוֹן
(2 Sam 5:7)—Σιών, Vg: Sion; צוּרִישַׁדַּי (Num 1:6)—Σουρισαδαί, Vg:
Surisaddi; שְׁלֹמֹה (2 Sam 5:14)—Σαλωμών, Vg: Salomon. Jerome remarks on
this phenomenon in his introduction to those explanations coming under
the letter S.[13] He attempts to explain the pronunciation of Hebrew sibilants

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[12] See *Liber interpretationis*, 72: "*Seor parua uel meridiana. … Segor parua. Ipsa est
quae et supra Seor. Sed sciendum quia G litteram in medio non habeat, scribaturque apud
Hebraeos per uocalem ain.*" Cf. P. de Lagarde, *Onomastica Sacra*, 37.

[13] See *Liber interpretationis*, 71: "*Quod in principio dixeramus in uocalibus litteris
obseruandum eo, quod apud nos una sit interdum littera et apud Hebraeos uariis uocibus
proferatur, hoc nunc quoque in S littera sciendum est. Siquidem apud Hebraeos tres S sunt
litterae: una, quae dicitur samech, et simpliciter legitur quasi per S nostram litteram
describatur: alia sin, in qua stridor quidam non nostri sermonis interstrepit: tertia sade,
quam aures nostrae penitus reformidant. Sicubi ergo euenerit ut eadem nomina aliter atque*

while explaining names or other words.[14] It is obvious that Jerome was unfamiliar with the differentiation between שׁ and שׂ.

Doubling of Single Consonants in Transliteration into Greek and Latin

It seems that LXX originally transliterated Semitic consonants consistently by using single consonants. In some cases, the corresponding Greek letters β, δ, κ, λ, μ, ν, ρ, σ, φ and/or their Latin equivalents are, however, incorrectly doubled in some variant readings. This fact shows that the indicated Greek consonants have some natural tendency to duplication. Examples: דְּבוֹרָה (Judg 4:4)—Δεββωρά, Δεββώρα, Josephus: Δαβώρα, Δεβώρα, Vg: Debbora; זָבוּד (1 Kings 4:5)—Ζαββούθ (A), Vg: Zabud; יְדָיָה (Neh 3:10)—Ἰεδδειά (S), Vg: Ieiada; צָדוֹק (2 Sam 8:17)—Σαδδούκ (B), Vg: Sadoc; רִבְקָה (Gen 22:23)—Ῥεβέκκα, Vg: Rebecca; עֶקְרוֹן (Josh 13:3)—Ἀκκαρών, Vg: Accaron; Ἐλλυμαΐς (Tob 2:10-B), elsewhere written with single λ: Ἐλυμαΐς (1 Macc 6:1-A); מִקְלוֹת (1 Chr 9:37)—Μακελλώθ (B S), Vg: Macelloth; תִגְלַת פִּלְאֶסֶר (2 Kings 15:29)—Θαλγαθφελλασάρ, Vg: Theglathfalassar; נָעֳמִי (Ruth 1:2)—Νοεμμείν (A), Vg: Noemi; אַבְנֵר (1 Sam 14:51)—Ἀβεννήρ, Vg: Abner; מְנַשֶּׁה (Gen 41:51)—Μαννασσή (A; several other places), Μανασσή (E; most other places), Vg: Manasse; חָרָן (Gen 11:31)—Ἀρράν, Ἀρράν, Josephus: Χαρρά, Vg: Aran; שָׂרָה (Gen 17:15)—Σάρρα, Vg: Sarra; מֹסֵרוֹת (Num 33:30)—Μασσουρούθ, Vg: Moseroth; מִצְפָּה (Judg 11:11)—Μασσηφά, Vg: Maspha; אֱלִישָׁע (1 Kings 19:16)—Ἐλισσαιέ, Ἐλισσαιε (A; several other places), Ἐλισαιέ, Ἐλισαιέ (B; most other places), Vg: Heliseus; אֶשְׁתּוֹן (1 Chr 4:11)—Ἀσσατών, Vg: Esthon; שָׁפָן (2 Kings 22:3)—Σαφφάν (B), Σαπφάν (A), Josephus: Σαφᾶς, Vg: Saphan.

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aliter interpretentur, illud in causa est quod diuersis scripta sunt litteris." Cf. P. de Lagarde, *Onomastica Sacra*, 36–37.

[14] See edition Vallarsi, vol. IV, p. 155E: "נצר. *Sed sciendum quod hic NESER per SADE literam scribatur: cuius proprietatem et sonum inter z et s Latinus sermo non exprimit. Est enim stridulus et strictis dentibus vix linguae impressione profertur.*" Jerome also attempts to explain the pronunciation and transliteration of Semitic sibilants in *Quaestiones* on Gen. 26:12; 41:29. (Both cited by A. Sperber, *Hebrew Based upon Greek and Latin Transliterations,* 115).

Single and Double Kaph, Qoph, Pe, and Taw in Transliteration into Greek and Latin

The single consonant כ is normally transliterated with χ in Greek and ch in Latin, both at the beginning of and within a name; the single ק is transliterated with the letter κ. The harder sound of gemination קּ was sometimes transcribed by the cluster κχ in Greek and cch in Latin. Examples: זַכַּי (Ezr 2:9)—Ζακχαῖος, Vg: Zaccheus, Zacchee (2 Macc 10:19; Lk 19:2, 5, 8); עַכּוֹ (Judg 1:31)—᾿Ακχώ, Vg: Achcho; בֻּקִּי (Num 34:22)—Βακχείρ, Vg: Bocci. The single פ is rendered in almost all instances by φ in Greek and p or f in Latin. Jerome states that no equivalent for the Latin character P can be found in the Hebrew alphabet.[15] The harder sound פּ is sometimes rendered by πφ in Greek and by pp or ff in Latin: צִפֹּרָה (Exod 2:21)—Σεπφώρα, Vg: Seffora. The consonant ת is usually rendered by the Greek θ and the Latin th. The harder sound תּ is sometimes rendered by θθ and τθ in Greek and tth in Latin: מַתַּנְיָה (2 Kgs 24:17)—Μαθθανίας (B), Μεθθανίας (A), Ματθανίας, Ματθάν, Vg: Matthanias. For some names Lucian is the only one who renders the geminated letters by the clusters κχ, πφ, τθ.

Insertion of Consonants and Transcription of the Semitic Clusters בצ, בש, זר, מר

A remarkable feature of Hellenistic Greek is the insertion of consonants in order to achieve better euphony. There is a tendency to insert the nasal μ before the labial π and the spirant σ. When the preceding μ is inserted it may cause the change of σ into ψ: שִׁמְשׁוֹן (Judg 13:24)—Σαμψών (BA), Vg: Samson. In addition to this phonetic problem of the consonant μ, euphony requires insertion of the β between μ and ρ: מַמְרֵא (Gen 13:18)—Μαμβρή, Vg: Mambre; זִמְרִי (1 Kgs 16:9) and עָמְרִי (1 Kgs 16:16)—Ζαμβρ(ε)ί, ᾿Αμβρ(ε)ί, Vg:

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[15] See edition Vallarsi, vol. V, p. 724 C: "אפדנו *APEDNO. Notandum autem, quod P literam Hebraeus sermo non habeat, sed pro ipsa utatur PHE, cuius vim Graecum φ sonat. In isto tantum loco apud Hebraeos scribatur quidem PHE, sed legatur P.*" (cited by A. Sperber, *Hebrew Based upon Greek and Latin Transliterations*, 131).

Zamri, Amri; נִמְרָה (Num 32:3)—Ναμβρά, Vg: Nemra; עַמְרָם (Exod 6:18)—
Ἀμβράμ (-αν), Ἀμράμ, Vg: Amram. Another salient transcription problem is
connected with the clusters בצ, בש, and זר when they appear within names.
The cluster בצ and the cluster בש are transcribed with the Greek letter ψ and
the Latin letter b: אִבְצָן (Judg 12:8, 10)—Josephus: Ἀψάνης, LXX:Ἀβαισάν
(B), Ἐσεβών, Ἐσεβών (A), Vg: Abessan; אַבְשָׁלוֹם (2 Sam 3:3)—Josephus:
Ἀψάλωμος and Ἀβεσάλωμος, LXX:Ἀβεσσαλώμ, Ἀψάλωμος (1 Macc 11:70;
13:11), Vg: Absalom, Absolom. The cluster זר represents a difficulty in Greek
pronunciation, giving rise to the insertion of the letter δ: עֶזְרָא (Ezra 7:1)—
Ἔσρας (B), Ἔζρας (A), Ἔσδρας (S), Vg: Ezras. The form Ἔσδρας was adopted
in the Deuterocanonical / Apocryphal books. The insertion of δ allows for
two possible explanations: first, euphony, as in other similar cases; second,
correspondence of σδ to Hebrew ז with the reminiscence of the old
pronunciation of ζ = zd. It is more than clear that Latin phonetics is not
affected to the same degree by the tendency to euphony.

3. Transliteration of Semitic Vowel Letters and Vowel Signs into Greek and Latin

The original vowels in Semitic languages are only for three pure sounds, *a, i,
u.* The sounds *e* and *o* always arise from an obscuring or contraction of these
three sounds: *ĕ* by modification from *ĭ* or *ă*; *ŏ* from *ŭ*; *ê* by contraction from *ai*
(properly *ay*); and *ô* sometimes by modification (obscuring) from *â,* and
sometimes by contraction from *au* (properly *aw*).[16] Of special interest is the
partial expression of the vowels by the consonants י ,ו ,ה ,א. The symbols א
and ה have established themselves as vowel letters to indicate final vowels:
שלה ,סֶנֶּה ,אַרְיֵה ,שָׂרָה ,נא ,יֵהוּא ,אַדְמָתָא, etc. The previously consonant ו was
retained as a vowel letter to denote the respective long vowels *ô* and *û,* and
the symbol י to denote *ê* and *î:* תִּירָס ,תֵּימָא ,שָׁאוֹל ,צָדוֹק, etc. The present state of
combining consonants and vowels to denote long vowels has probably
resulted from contraction of the consonant ו and the preceding *a* into *au* and

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[16] See E. Kautzsch and A. E. Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (15th impr. ed.;
Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), § 7, 1 a.

further to *ô*, or of the preceding *u* into *û,* and from contraction of **י** with a preceding *a* into *ai* and further to *ê,* or with a preceding *i* into *î.*[17]

Transcription of proper names in Greek and Latin Bible translations shows most clearly the fact that more than one way of pronouncing individual grammatical forms was possible and admissible. In order to escape the danger that the correct pronunciation might ultimately be lost when Hebrew and Aramaic died out, the Palestinian Jewish grammarians gradually developed in the sixth and seventh centuries AD the vowel signs or vowel points in order to fix pronunciation. In striving to preserve an older tradition, they invented an exact phonetic system that testified to a high degree to the faithfulness of the tradition. The Masoretes of Tiberias were not concerned with any question of quantity but with fixing the received pronunciation as faithfully as possible, by means of writing the vowels represented by the ordinary punctuation. Some vowels are represented only by vowel signs or vowel points, others by vowel letters. Nevertheless, in many cases comparative study of older traditions based on internal reasons and the analogy of related languages proves itself as the first rule in striving for the real pronunciation of early Hebrew.

The vowel-system of the Masoretic text consists of full vowels and half-vowels. The full vowels are classified according to the three principal vowel sounds: the A-sound, the I- and E-sounds, and the U- and O-sounds. Even though the vowel signs or points are numerous, "they are yet not fully adequate to express all the various modifications of the vowel sounds, especially with respect to length and shortness."[18] On the other hand it is true that the Greek and Latin alphabets are even less adequate to express all the various modifications of the vowel sounds in transliteration of Hebrew/Aramaic forms of proper names. Another problem is the lack of uniformity of linguistic traditions and fixed orthographic rules in the Hellenistic and the Greco-Roman periods when Greek and Latin Bible translations were made and our oldest uncials were written. As regards the

[17] See GKC, § 7, 2 e.
[18] See GKC, § 9, a.

Septuagint, Codex B perhaps goes back to an earlier age than Codex A, for on the whole B is nearer to the originals in orthography as well as in text than A; consequently A occupies a secondary position in comparison with B.

It is generally held that the Semitic and Greek vowel-systems are primarily intended to mark only differences of quality rather than any question of quantity, such as distinction between long and short vowels. To transliterate the generally accepted Semitic phonological vowel system, seven vowels of the Greek alphabet—α ε η ι ο υ ω—were available to the Greek scribes. Greek vowels correspond to a clear majority of the Masoretic vowel system. The Latin transcription of Hebrew/Aramaic proper names is based on the Greek text and reflects therefore the same Hebrew vowel system. The correspondence between the Greek and Latin vowels is as follows: α = a; ε = e; ει= e; η = e; ι = i; ο = o; ου = u; υ = y; ω = o. To make the relationships between respective languages as clear as possible, individual vowels will be illustrated with examples from the Masoretic text and in Greek and Latin transliterations.

The A-sounds in Hebrew/Aramaic and in Transliteration

In Hebrew/Aramaic, the A-sound is represented by *Qameṣ*, *Pataḥ*, and *Segol*. *Qameṣ* expresses by nature and origin the essentially long *â* when followed by the character א, and a long ā, lengthened only by position. *Pataḥ* indicates a short *a* and stands almost exclusively in a closed syllable with or without the tone. *Segol* by origin belongs most frequently to the A-sound class, but sometimes also to the I- and E-sound class. The vowel signs *Qameṣ* and *Pataḥ* each have one equivalent in the Greek vowel letter α: אָדָם (Gen 2:5)—Ἀδάμ, Vg: Adam; כְּנַעַן (Gen 9:18)—Χανάαν, Χαναάν, Vg: Chanaan. An exception is the name לָבָן (Deut 1:1) in Greek: Λοβόν; Vg has the form Laban. In Greek, *Pataḥ* is sometimes transliterated with e, in Latin not always in the same names: חַוָּה (Gen 4:1)—Εὕα, Vg: Hava; נֹחַ (Gen 5:29)—Νῶε, Vg: Noe; נַפְתָּלִי (Gen 30:8)—Νεφθαλεί, Νεφθαλείμ, Vg: Nepthalim. The letter α is used also for the vowel sign *Segol* where this corresponds to

an A-sound, for instance in the *segolate* type of names in pausal forms. The interchange between the A- and E-sounds in the *segolate* noun forms is frequent in general use of nouns, but does not affect the basic form of proper names. The Hebrew long vowel *ê* is often transcribed by the diphthong αι, and the long vowel *ô* by αὐ: הֵימָם (Gen 36:22)—Αἱμάν, Vg: Heman; עֵיבָל (Gen 36:23)—Γαιβήλ, Vg: Hebal; עֵילָם (Gen 14:1)—Αἰλάμ, Vg: (rex) Aelamitarum; עֵינָן (Num 1:15)—Αἰνάν, Vg: Henan; אוֹן (Num 16:1)—Αὔν, Vg: Hon; אוֹנָן (Gen 38:4)—Αὐνάν, Vg: Onam.

The I- and E-sounds in Hebrew/Aramaic and in Transliteration

In Hebrew, the I-sound is represented by the vowel sign *Ḥireq*, which can be both long and short. It is long according to the origin of the form (indicated by the consonant *Yod*), or according to the nature of the syllable. The short *Ḥireq* is frequent in sharpened syllables and in toneless closed syllables. In transliteration into Greek, the short *Ḥireq* is rarely transliterated with the vowel ι: יִשְׁמָעֵאל (Gen 16:11)—Ἰσμαήλ, Vg: Ismahel; שִׁלֹּחַ (Isa 10:6)—Σιλωάμ, Vg: Siloae. *Chireq* is much more frequently given by α and ε: בִּלְעָם (Num 22:5)—Βαλαάμ, Vg: Balaam; מִרְיָם (Ex 15:20)—Μαριάμ, Vg: Maria; נִמְרֹד (Gen 10:8)—Νεβρώδ, Vg: Nemrod; רִבְקָה (Gen 22:23)—Ῥεβέκκα, Vg: Rebecca. We note that LXX writes the vowel ε for the sharp *Ḥireq*: אִמֵּר (1 Chr 9:12)—Ἐμμήρ, Vg: Emmer. It is not overly difficult to see a clear reason for the choice in any particular case. The transcription of proper names in the LXX shows very clearly that the real pronunciation of early Hebrew is probably not consistently preserved by the Masoretic tradition. From all the various modifications of the vowel sounds in transliteration into Greek and Latin it follows that Hebrew vowels were often pronounced somewhat indistinctly. The long *Ḥireq* is transliterated into Greek by ι or ει. The vowel ι has been interchanged ever since the sixth century BCE with ει that had ceased to be a diphthong, and since then ει and ι could be used indifferently to represent long i. The uncial B of LXX in general prefers writing long i as ει, whereas the uncial A prefers ι as representing the sound of long i: דָּוִד (1 Sam 16:13)—Δαυειδ, Δαυίδ, Vg: David.

As regards the E-sounds, the Masoretic system distinguishes three categories: *Sere* with *Yod* representing the longest *ê*, *Sere* without *Yod* representing the tone-long *ē*, and *Segol* indicating the short e modified from original *i*. In Greek, both types of *Sere* are normally η, exceptionally by ε or ει: דָּנִיֵּאל, דָּנִיֵּאל (Dan 1:6)—Δανιήλ, Vg: Danihel; יִשְׂרָאֵל (Gen 32:29)—Ἰσραήλ, Vg: Israhel; עֵדֶן (Gen 2:8)—Ἐδέμ, Vg: paradisus; לֵוִי (Gen 29:34)—Λευεί, Vg: Levi; לֵאָה (Gen 29:16)—Λεία, Vg: Lia; יְרֵחוֹ (Num 22:1)—Ἰρειχώ, Ἰριχώ, Vg: Hierichus, Hiericho; sometimes the vowel sign is transliterated by α: יַרְדֵּן (Gen 13:11)—Ἰορδάν, Vg: Iordan. The vowel sign *Segol* is normally rendered by ε, exceptionally by η (when followed by the final *He*), or α (in *segolate* noun forms): מַלְכִּי־צֶדֶק (Gen 14:18)—Μελχισεδέκ, Vg: Melchisedech; מְנַשֶּׁה (Gen 41:51)—Μανασσῆ, Vg: Manasse; הֶבֶל (Gen 4:2)—Ἄβελ, Vg: Abel; תֶּרַח (Gen 11:24)—Θάρρα, Vg: Thare.

The U- and O-sounds in Hebrew/Aramaic and in Transliteration

In Hebrew/Aramaic, the U-sound is represented by the vowel signs *Šureq* וּ *û* and *Qibbuṣ*. *Šureq* is written fully or defectively; it stands also in a sharpened syllable and expresses the long *û*. *Qibbuṣ* stands in a toneless closed syllable and a sharpened syllable and expresses the short *a*. In transliteration into Greek, the scribes write the diphthong ου for both *Šureq* and for *Qibbuṣ*: בָּרוּךְ (Jer 32:12)—Βαρούχ, Vg: Baruch; יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם (Josh 10:1)—Ἱερουσαλήμ, Vg: Hierusalem. Sometimes the sign *Šureq* is transliterated with ω: זְבֻלוּן (Gen 30:20)—Ζαβουλών, Vg: Zabulon; עוּץ (Gen 10:23)— Ὢς, Josephus: Οὔσης, Vg: Us. For *Qibbuṣ* in a sharpened syllable the LXX usually writes the vowel ο: עֲדֻלָּם (Josh 12:15)—Ὀδολλάμ, Vg: Odollam; עֻזָּא, עֻזָּה (2 Sam 6:3,8)—Ὀζά, Ὀζᾶ, Vg: Oza; עֻזִּיאֵל (Exod 6:18)—Ὀζευήλ, Ὀζιήλ, Vg: Ozihel. Sometimes *Qibbuṣ* is rendered by the vowel ο also in a toneless closed syllable: חֻלְדָּה (2 Kgs 22:14)—Ὀλδα, Vg: Olda.

The O-sound has in Hebrew/Aramaic four varieties: the long *Ḥolem* וֹ *ô*, which is contracted from original *aw* (=au); the long *Ḥolem* וֹ *ô*, which is obscured from original *â*; the tone-long *Ḥolem* ō, which is lengthened from an original *u*; and the short *Ḥolem* o, which is modified from a short *u*. In

transliteration into Greek, *Ḥolem* is rendered by ω and ο: עַכּוֹ (Judg 1:31)—
Ἀκχώ, Vg: Achcho; עַמּוֹן (Ps 83:8)—Ἀμμών, Vg: Ammon; קֹרַח (Gen
36:5)—Κόρε, Vg: Core. The short *Ḥolem* is rarely represented in biblical
proper names.

Transliteration of Hebrew Half-vowels into Greek and Latin

In addition to full vowels the Hebrew/Aramaic Bible also has half-vowels.
The following grammarian's explanation should aid in understanding of the
problem of transliteration:

> The punctuation makes use of these to represent extremely slight sounds
> which are to be regarded as remains of fuller and more distinct vowels from
> an earlier period of the language. They generally take the place of vowels
> *originally short* standing in *open syllables.* Such short vowels, though preserved
> in the kindred languages, are not tolerated by the present system of pointing
> in Hebrew, but either undergo a lengthening or are weakened to *Shwa*.
> Under some circumstances, however, the original short vowel may reappear.
>
> To these belongs first of all the sign, which indicates an extremely short,
> slight, and (as regards pronunciation) indeterminate vowel sound, something
> like an obscure half ĕ (ᵉ). It is called *Š^ewâ,* which may be either *simple Š^ewâ*
> (*Š^ewâ simplex*) as distinguished from the compound, or *vocal Š^ewâ* (*Š^ewâ*
> *mobile*) as distinguished from *Š^ewâ quiescens,* which is silent and stands as a
> mere syllable divider under the consonant which closes the syllable.[19]

  An addition to short vowels, the *Š^ewâ* determines more accurately the
pronunciation corresponding to the three vowel classes, called *Ḥaṭeph-*
Patach, *Ḥaṭeph-Segol*, and *Ḥaṭeph-Qameṣ*.
  Transliteration of proper names into Greek is the best indication of how
indeterminate the sounds of half-vowels are. It is obvious that the guttural
consonants play an important role in the process of transliteration from
Hebrew/Aramaic into Greek and Latin. In the LXX, the *Š^ewâ* is expressed by
the full vowel ε: יְרוּשָׁלַם (Josh 10:1)—Ἰερουσαλήμ, Vg: Hierusalem. We find
also the diphthong ευ for the Masoretic half-vowel: פְּרָת (Gen

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[19] See *GKC,* § 10, a–b.

2:14)—Εὐφράτης, Vg: Eufrates. Quite frequently, the *Šᵉwâ* is transliterated by the vowel α: בִּלְעָם (Num 22:5)—Βαλαάμ, Vg: Balaam; יִצְחָק (Gen 17:19)—Ἰσαάκ, Vg: Isaac; מְתוּשֶׁלַח (Gen 5:22)—Μαθουσαλά, Vg: Mathusalam; שְׁמוּאֵל (1 Sam 1:20)—Σαμουήλ, Vg: Samuhel. Another Greek vowel standing in the place of the Masoretic *Šᵉwâ mobile* is υ: פְּלִשְׁתִּים (Gen 10:14)—Φυλιστιείμ. Vg: Philisthim. The most striking way of pronouncing the Hebrew/Aramaic sound of *Šᵉwâ mobile* is to assimilate its indeterminate sound to the following principal vowel: סְדֹם (Gen 10:19)—Σόδομα, Vg: Sodoma; רְחֹב (Num 13:21)—Ῥοώβ (A), Ῥαάβ (B), Vg: Roob; שְׁלֹמֹה (2 Sam 5:14)—Σολομών, elsewhere also Σαλωμών, Vg: Salomon. The three *Ḥaṭephs* are usually transliterated in line with the Masoretic punctuation: אֲבִיגַיִל (1 Sam 25:3)—Ἀβιγαία, Vg: Abigail; אֱלִיעֶזֶר (Gen 15:2)—Ἐλιέζερ, Ἑλιέζερ, Vg: Eliezer. Sometimes the transliteration creates different vowels, possibly more in accordance with the original phonetics: נַעֲמָה (Gen 4:22)—Νοεμά, Vg: Noemma; נָעֳמִי (Ruth 1:2)—Νωεμίν, Vg: Noemi; אֱמֹרִי (Gen 10:16)—Ἀμορραῖς, Vg: Amorreus. For pronunciation reasons, the Masoretic half-vowels, together with the associated guttural consonants, are often dropped: אַהֲרֹן (Gen 4:14) Ἀαρών, Vg: Aaron; יַעֲקֹב (Gen 25:26)—Ἰακώβ, Vg: Iacob; כְּנַעֲנִי (Gen 12:6)—Χαναναῖος, Vg: Chananeus; כְּנַעֲנִית (Gen 46:10)—Χανανίτις, Vg: Chananitis; אָהֳלָה, אָהֳלִיבָה (Ezek 23:4)— Ὀολά, Ὀολιβά, Vg: Oolla, Ooliba.

Conclusions

The complex phonetic relationship between Semitic, Greek, and Latin forms of biblical proper names raises various questions concerning the plurality of forms in the Greek and Latin traditions. Many scholars conclude that the sources used by Greek and Latin translators could not have been part of a uniform tradition. This conclusion is convincing in view of variant forms of biblical names having an indisputable geographical and historical stamp, but not in cases of nearly innumerable variant readings of the same name occurring in the same manuscript, in various biblical books, or even in the same book. At this point the most important finding of a comparative study

of the forms of biblical names throughout history contained in the Hebrew Bible and in Greek and Latin translations is the significant fact that well-known names are practically without variants, and they usually retain the same form throughout the Bible, whereas most names of rare occurrence appear in many variant readings. This fact allows the conclusion that well-known names were part of an established vivid tradition, and therefore an unwritten law, both in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Latin, and other cultural environments. They became part of a common and international cultural heritage. In light of this, the less known names became the greatest challenge for all translators throughout history for three main reasons: firstly, names of rare occurrence could not become part of an established tradition—not even in a local dimension, let alone internationally; secondly, the Hebrew and Aramaic texts were not yet provided with vowels, and pronunciation of original forms of names was not sustained by a vivid tradition because only in rare circles were Hebrew and Aramaic spoken languages; thirdly, the Greek and Latin alphabets are inadequate for transliteration of Semitic characters—in fact no non-Semitic alphabet is fully adequate for translation of Semitic names.