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

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been part of a uniform tradition.\textsuperscript{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.

\textit{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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Josephus, rabbinic literature, Origen’s Hexapla, Vetus Latina, Eusebius’ book on the sites and names of Hebrew places, the Latin Vulgate, and Jerome’s works on place names of the Holy Land. In comparison with the


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

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
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

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. 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 ι η ο υ ω) are vowels, and the remaining seventeen consonants. The characters υ θ 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 Ε, which stood for ε, ι and the diphthong ει, and the symbol Ω, 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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śin, between 'ayin and 'ayin, or between heth and heth. 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 = ב, פ, פ: ז = usually ג, sometimes ק (especially at the end of the name); ד = usually ת, ת; נ is without consonantal value, like א; ו = ו; ז = usually ס, sometimes מ (at the end of a name); 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; י = usually ι, sometimes θ; ק = usually כ, sometimes נ; ר = ר; ש = ש, within a name occasionally double ש; gemination of a consonant is usually represented by doubling the letter; θ(Origen); ρ = 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: רָאָשׁ (Gen 4:1)—Ε(rate, Ε, Vg: Hava; רִיתָן (Gen 2:11)—Ευίλατ, Ευίλατ, Vg: Evilat; צ (Gen 10:17)—Εύσίος, Εύσιος, Vg: Eves; נ (Gen 29:34)—לֵוִי, Vg: Levi; ע (Gen 25:25)—וֹסָא, וֹסָא, Vg: Esau. Most often the letter is considered merely as the bearer of the respective preceding vowel; τ is usually
employed to denote ô and û, and ÿ to denote è and ê;

/קָדָד vav with holam (2 Sam 8:17) — Sadw&k, Vg: Sadoc; אַחִיט (2 Sam 8:17) — Aχιτωβ, Vg: Achitob; קָר (Ps 88:1) — Ayμων, 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 — and י and י (Exod 16:1) — Σινά, Vg: Sinai; ק (Gen 11:29) — Σάρα, Vg: Sarai; ק (Gen 41:52) — Εφραίμ, Vg: Ephraim; נָרַי (Gen 10:6) — Μεσράιμ, Vg: Mesraim; קר (Gen 4:1) —Καίν, Vg: Cain. Quite often yod is transliterated with the letter i:

/כָנְיָמִי (Gen 35:18) — Βενιαμίν, Vg: Benjamin; ק (Gen 30:25) — Ιωσήφ, Vg: Ioseph; וְרָאֵל (Num 22:1) — Ιεριχώ, Ιεριχώ, Vg: Hierichus; י (Gen 32:29) — Ισράηλ, Vg: Israel; יְרֵח (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: אֶבְיָמִא (Gen 10:27) — 'Αβιμαέλ, Vg: Abimahel; אֶלֹמָד (Gen 10:27) — 'Ελμοδάδ, Vg: Helmodad; אֵלֶּבּ (1 Chr 4:3) — Ίζραήλ, Vg: Iezraehel; י (Gen 32:29) — 'יָרָאֵה, Vg: Israel; פַּנְיָ (Judg 8:8-9) — Πανουηλ, 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, Beselhel, Israhel, Misahel, Raguhel. 8 In transliterated proper names into Greek η 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: מְבָהַלמַּה (Gen 17:5) — ‘אֵבְרָאָם, Vg: Abraham; וְנָרְקָ (Exod 4:14) — ‘אָאֹרָו, the syncopated form ᾠρῶν (Cod. A in Exod 6:26; 7:8; Num 12:10; Sir 45:6), Vg: Aaron; יְרֵדַב (Josh 15:8) — ’אֵוְנָו, Vg: Gehennom; וַּשַׁנְז (Hos 1:1) — מָאַס, Vg: Osee; יְנָקָ (Gen 36:22) — ‘אְיֵמָא, Vg: Heman; וְל (1 Chr 7:35) — ‘אְלָו, Vg: Helem; וִיָּס (Gen 29:35) — י’ואֶשדּא, י’ואֶשד, Vg: Iuda; וַש (Exod 17:9) — י’ואָש, Vg: Iosue.

We may conclude that Jerome transliterates η 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 ה. In a number of names it is transliterated with the letter χ, in Latin with the letter h, for instance: בֵּקָן (1 Kgs 16:28) — ‘אֵחָאָב, Vg: Ahab; נְבִּר (Gen 13:18) — נְבָרָו, Vg: Hebron. More often the letter is not expressed at all in either Greek or in Latin, or it is transcribed with a vowel: שִׁיחָנָ (Ezra 4:6) — אֵסֵוַרָס, Vg: Asuerus; רַנְי (Gen 5:21) — י’אֵוְך, Josephus: ‘אַוֹךְ, ‘אָוֹךְ, Vg: Enoch; רַנְי (Josh 11:1) — לֹאָו, Vg: Asor; נַרְמָ (Deut 3:8) — אֵטְרָו, Vg: Hermon; נַרְי (2 Kgs 25:23) — י’ואֶעָאו(А), י’ואע(В), in many other biblical verses and in Josephus: י’ואע(А), Vg: Iohanan. A good number of names are transliterated without considering this sound or with a semi-vowel, indicated with the spiritus asper: רַנְי (Hag 1:1) — י’אָטָאוּס,

8 Cf. A. Sperber, Hebrew Based upon Greek and Latin Transliterations, 112.
9 See Quaestiones on Gen 17:5: “Dicit autem Hebraei quod ex nomine suo deus, quod apud illos tetragrammum est, he literam Abrahæi et Saræ 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 dixerimus: idiomata enim linguae illius est, per E quidem scribere, sed per A legere: sicut e contrario A literam saepe per E pronuntiant.”
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Aγγαίος, Vg: Aggeus; אָגָג (Hab 1:1)—’Аμβακούμ, Αμβακούμ, Vg: Abacuc; אֲבַק (Gen 4:1)—’אוס, Vg: Hava; גִּבְנְך (2 Kgs 16:20)—’אֶצְכָּאָס, Vg: Ezechias; עָנָה (1 Sam 1:2)—’אָנוֹ, Vg: Anna; חֲנַנְיָה (Jer 28:1)—’עַנְיָא, Vg: Ananias.

Medial ֶ in 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.: יַחְלְא (Gen 46:14 A)—’אָלוֹ, Vg: Iahelel, but in Num 26:26 (22) ’אָלָּל, Vg: Ial; יַחְצְא (Gen 46:24)—’אָסָּל, Vg: Iasihel, Iessihel (Num 26:46); מַחְלִי (Exod 6:19)—’מּוֹל, Vg: Mooli; נַחְנִי (Num 13:14)—’נָבּוּ, Vg: Naabbi; יַחְצְא (Num 21:19)—’נָאָל, Vg: Nahalihel; נַחְנִי (Exod 6:23)—’נָאָס, Vg: Naasson; יַחְנִי (Josh 2:1)—’נָאָב, Josephus ’נָאָב, ’נָאָב, Vg: Naab; יַחְנִי (Num 13:21/22)—’נָאָב, 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 ְ. It is true that the strongest sound of ְ 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 ְ was something between the Greek spiritus lenis and the letter γ. The most probable reasons for transliterating the letter with γ and g are: the initial position of the letter ְ, the position of the letter ְ between vowels, and phonetic similarity between Hebrew


11 Cf. G. Lisowsky, Die Transcription, 149.
proper names. Examples: בֶּן (Gen 10:19)—Γαζός, Vg: Gaza; בֶּן (Gen 12:8)—אֲגַגְּסֵי, Vg: Ai; בֶּן (Gen 10:19)—גּוֹמְרֵס, Vg: Gomorrah as against רָמֹס (Gen 10:16)—Ἀμορραίος, Vg: Amorreas; בֶּן (Gen 14:1)—Χοδόλλαγομόρ (A E), Χοδόλλαγομόρ (D), Josephus: Χοδόλλαμορος, Vg: Chodorlahomor; בֶּן (Gen 13:10), בֶּן (Gen 19:22)—זֹגוֹר (13:10), שְׁנֹוֹר (19:22), Josephus: Ζώφαρ, Ζωάρ, Σήγουρα, Vg: Segor (in both places): בֶּן (Num 1:8)—Σωγάρ, Vg: Suar; בֶּן (Gen 11:18)—Pagoû, Josephus: Πεως, Πούμος, Vg: Reu; מְדִינֵה (Gen 36:4)—Pagoουή, Παγουής (Tob 6:11-85), Josephus: Παγουής, Παγουής, Vg: Rauhel. Jerome explains the Latin forms Seor/Segor by referring to the transliteration of the Hebrew vowel ב with the consonant ג. It is striking that the guttural ב is exceptionally transliterated with h in the Latin form of the name בֶּן (1 Chr 4:3)—Aītāμ, Vg: Hetam.

The Sibilant Letters Samekh, Sade, and Sin/Shin

Due to limitations of the Greek and Latin alphabets the three Hebrew letters ב, כ, and ש can be rendered only by one character, namely ב/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: בַּת תֶּב (2 Sam 5:7)—Σιόν, Vg: Sion; כַּת תַּשְׂנִי (Num 1:6)—Σουρισάδι, Vg: Surisaddi; שָׁלֹמ (2 Sam 5:14)—Σαλωμών, Vg: Salomon. Jerome remarks on this phenomenon in his introduction to those explanations coming under the letter S. He attempts to explain the pronunciation of Hebrew sibilants


13 See Liber interpretationis, 71: “Quod in principio dixeramus in vocalibus litteris observandum eo, quod apud nos una sit interdum littera et apud Hebraeos variis vocibus praefatur, hoc nunc quoque in S littera scindendum est. Sigendum 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 interspetit: tertia sade, quam aures nostrae penitus reformidant. Sicubi ergo euenerit ut eadem nomina aliter atque
while explaining names or other words. It is obvious that Jerome was unfamiliar with the differentiation between ש and ש.

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, μ, ν, ρ, σ 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: צְבָּה (Judg 4:4)—Δεββώρα, Δεββώρα, Josephus: Δεββώρα, Δεββώρα, Vg: Debbora; דבּ (1 Kings 4:5)—Σαββουθ (A), Vg: Zabud; דְּנֵי (Neh 3:10)—יִשְׁדֵּית (S), Vg: Ieida; דָּבָּה (2 Sam 8:17)—Σαδουκ (B), Vg: Sadoc; דְּבָּר (Gen 22:23)—Δεβέκκα, Vg: Rebecca; דְּבָּר (Josh 13:3)—Δακαρών, Vg: Accaron; Έλλαμαίας (Tob 2:10-B), elsewhere written with single λ: Ἕλλαμαιας (1 Macc 6:1-A); דֶּבֶר (1 Chr 9:37)—Μακελλώθ (B S), Vg: Macelloth; דָּבֶר (2 Kings 15:29)—Θαλαγφέλλασσάρ, Vg: Theglathalassar; דְּבָּר (Ruth 1:2)—Νεμμειν (A), Vg: Noemi; דְּבָּר (1 Sam 14:51)—Δβενוевич, Vg: Abner; דְּבֶר (Gen 41:51)—פֹּנָו (A; several other places), פונס (E; most other places), Vg: Manasse; דְּבֶר (Gen 11:31)—אֲרָפָּא, אֲרָפָּא, Josephus: סֵרָפָּא, Vg: Aran; דְּבֶר (Gen 17:15)—סאֶרָא, Vg: Sarra; דְּבֶר (Num 33:30)—מָסְעֶר (A); מָסְעֶר (B), Vg: Meseroth; דְּבֶר (Judg 11:11)—מָסְוָפָּא, Vg: Maspha; דְּבֶר (1 Kings 19:16)—זָּלָא, זָּלָא (A; several other places), זלasse, Ζαλάσσα (B; most other places), Vg: Heliseus; דְּבֶר (1 Chr 4:11)—אָסָּר (A; several other places), אָסָּר (B), אָסָּר (A), Josephus: סֵפָּא, Vg: Saphan.


14 See edition Vallarsi, vol. IV, p. 155E: “דֶּב. Sed sciendum quod hic NESER per SADÈ litteram scribatur; cius proprietatem et sonum inter z et s Latinus sermo non expressit. 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 ק was sometimes transcribed by the cluster κχ in Greek and cch in Latin. Examples: רַכְפֵּס (Ezr 2:9)—Zeḵχαῖος, Vg: Zaccheus, Zacchee (2 Macc 10:19; Lk 19:2, 5, 8); רֵכְפֵּס (Judg 1:31)—Akχώ, Vg: Achcho; רֵכְפֵּס (Num 34:22)—Baḵχείρ, 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. The harder sound פ is sometimes rendered by pf in Greek and by pp or ff in Latin: פְלִיפֵל (Exod 2:21)—Σεφ.WriteString, Vg: Seffora. The consonant נ is usually rendered by the Greek θ and the Latin th. The harder sound נ is sometimes rendered by θθ and т in Greek and th in Latin: נְתָנֵי (2 Kgs 24:17)—Μαθαϊος (B), Μαθαϊος (A), Μαθαϊος, Μαθαϊος, Vg: Matthias. 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

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: מְסָנַת (Judg 13:24)—Σαμφών, Vg: Samson. In addition to this phonetic problem of the consonant μ, euphony requires insertion of the β between μ and ρ: בְּסֵכָה (Gen 13:18)—Μομβήρι, Vg: Mambre; בְּסֵכָה (1 Kgs 16:9) and בְּסֵכָה (1 Kgs 16:16)—Ζομβήρϊ, Αμβήρϊ, Vg:

Zamri, Amri; נִמְרָה (Num 32:3)—Ναμβρά, Vg: Nemra; נָמְרָה (Exod 6:18)—Ἀμβράμ (-αυ), Ἀμμάμ, Vg: Amram. Another salient transcription problem is connected with the clusters ש, ב, נ, and ר when they appear within names. The cluster בצ and the cluster בש are transcribed with the Greek letter ψ and the Latin letter β:

/נָמְרָה (Judg 12:8, 10)—Josephus: Ἀφανής, LXX: Ἀβαισάν (B), Ἀσαίσάν (A), Vg: Abessan; מְרָנ (2 Sam 3:3)—Josephus: Ἀφαλάμως and Ἀβεσαλάμως, LXX: Ἀβεσαλάμ; Ἀφαλάμως (1 Macc 11:70; 13:11), Vg: Abassal, Absolom. The cluster זר represents a difficulty in Greek pronunciation, giving rise to the insertion of the letter δ:

/עֶזְרָא (Ezra 7:1)—1Ezra(B), 1Ezraj(A), 1Esdraj(S), Vg: Ezras. The form 1Esdraj 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 sd 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: ̀ by modification from ̀, ̀δ from ̀; ̀ by contraction from ̀a (properly ay); and ̀δ sometimes by modification (obscuring) from ̀. The previous consonant ̀ was retained as a vowel letter to denote the respective long vowels ̀δ and ̀, and the symbol ̀ to denote ̀ and ̀: ̀, ̀, ̀, etc. The present state of combining consonants and vowels to denote long vowels has probably resulted from contraction of the consonant ̀ and the preceding a into au and

further to ô, or of the preceding u into û, and from contraction of â with a preceding a into ai and further to ê, or with a preceding i into î.\textsuperscript{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.”\textsuperscript{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 uncialss were written. As regards the

\textsuperscript{17} See GKC, § 7, 2 e.
\textsuperscript{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—\( \alpha \), \( \epsilon \), \( \iota \), \( \omicron \), \( \upsilon \), \( \nu \), \( \omega \)—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: \( \alpha = a; \epsilon = e; \epsilon \iota = e; \iota = i; \omicron = o; \upsilon = u; \nu = y; \omega = o \).

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 Qames, Patah, and Segol. Qames expresses by nature and origin the essentially long \( \ddot{a} \) when followed by the character \( \aleph \), and a long \( \dot{a} \), lengthened only by position. Patah 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 Qames and Patah each have one equivalent in the Greek vowel letter \( \alpha \): νά (Gen 2:5)—'Αδάμ, Vg: Adam; ναάν (Gen 9:18)—Χανάαν, Χαναάν, Vg: Chanaan. An exception is the name να (Deut 1:1) in Greek: Λαβάν; Vg has the form Laban. In Greek, Patah is sometimes transliterated with \( e \), in Latin not always in the same names: να (Gen 4:1)—Eúα, Vg: Hava; ν (Gen 5:29)—Nóe, Vg: Noe; νά (Gen 30:8)—Νεφθολεί, Νεφθολείμ, Vg: Nepthalim. The letter \( \alpha \) 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 ο by αυ: יַעַן (Gen 36:22)—Auûν, Vg: Heman; יַעַן (Gen 36:23)—Γαυβῆλ, Vg: Hebal; יַעַן (Gen 14:1)—Aiłûμ, Vg: (rex) Aelamitarum; יַעַן (Num 1:15)—Auûν, Vg: Henan; יַעַן (Num 16:1)—Auûν, Vg: Hon; יַעַן (Gen 38:4)—Auûν, Vg: Onam.

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

In Hebrew, the I-sound is represented by the vowel sign *Hireq*, 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 *Hireq* is frequent in sharpened syllables and in toneless closed syllables. In transliteration into Greek, the short *Hireq* is rarely transliterated with the vowel ι: יִשְׂמָאֹל (Gen 16:11)—Iσμαήλ, Vg: Ismahel; יִשְׂמָאֹל (Isa 15:20)—Σιλαοίμ, Vg: Siloae. *Chireq* is much more frequently given by α and ει: יִמְרָאֹ (Num 22:5)—Βαλαάμ, Vg: Balaaam; יִמְרָאֹ (Ex 15:20)—Μαρίαμ, Vg: Maria; יִמְרָאֹ (Gen 10:8)—Nεμρוד, Vg: Nemrod; יִמְרָאֹ (Gen 22:23)—Ρεβέκκα, Vg: Rebecca. We note that LXX writes the vowel ε for the sharp *Hireq* ιε (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 *Hireq* 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 ι. The uncial B of LXX in general prefers writing long ι as ει, whereas the uncial A prefers ι as representing the sound of long ι: יִדְוֵ (1 Sam 16:13)—Δαυίδ, Δαυιδ, Vg: David.
As regards the E-sounds, the Masoretic system distinguishes three categories: Sere with Yod representing the longest è, Sere without Yod representing the tone-long é, and Segol indicating the short e modified from original i. In Greek, both types of Sere are normally ē, exceptionally by ε or ει: דאֵל (Dan 1:6)—Δανιήλ, Vg: Daniel; קָנֵן (Gen 32:29)—קִנּוֹ, Vg: Israel; מַעֲר (Gen 2:8)—Μαρία, Vg: Maria; י ש (Gen 29:34)—Ιεζεκ, Vg: Levi; נֵנְ (Gen 29:16)—Λεία, Vg: Leah; יִרְאֵל (Gen 32:29)—Ιερουσαλήμ, Vg: Jerusalem; עֵדֶ (Gen 2:8)—Οδόλαμ, Vg: Odel; ולֵי (Gen 29:34)—Λευί, Vg: Levi; צָדֵק (Gen 14:18)—Melchisedek, Vg: Melchisedech; יִרְאֵל (Gen 4:2)—אָבֶל, Vg: Abel; וָאְ (Gen 11:24)—Qaṭṭara, 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 û and Qibbus. Šureq is written fully or defectively; it stands also in a sharpened syllable and expresses the long û. Qibbus stands in a toneless closed syllable and a sharpened syllable and expresses the short a. In transliteration into Greek, the scribes write the diphthong ou for both Šureq and for Qibbus: עֶבֶד (Jer 32:12)—Βαρουχ, Vg: Baruch; בַּשְׂדוּרִי (Josh 10:1)—ירושאלי, Vg: Hierusalem. Sometimes the sign Šureq is transliterated with ω: עֵדֶ (Gen 30:20)—Ζαβουλῶν, Vg: Zabulon; מ (Gen 10:23)—Ος, Josephus: ὄσης, Vg: Us. For Qibbus in a sharpened syllable the LXX usually writes the vowel o: פַּלְמֵר (Josh 12:15)—Ὅδολάμ, Vg: Odollam; עֵזֶר (2 Sam 6:3,8)—Οζά, Οζό, Vg: Oza; פַּלְמֵר (Exod 6:18)—Ὅζεμηλ, Όζηλ, Vg: Ozihel. Sometimes Qibbus is rendered by the vowel o also in a toneless closed syllable: פַּלְמֵר (2 Kgs 22:14)—Ολδα, Vg: Olda.

The O-sound has in Hebrew/Aramaic four varieties: the long Holem ǿ, which is contracted from original aw (=au); the long Holem ǿ, which is obscured from original ǿ; the tone-long Holem ǿ, which is lengthened from an original u; and the short Holem o, which is modified from a short u. In
transliteration into Greek, *Holem* is rendered by ω and ο: ὑσε (Judg 1:31)— Ἀχχό, Vg: Achcho; ἰσσ (Ps 83:8)— Ἀμμόω, Vg: Ammon; Ἡρ (Gen 36:5)—Κόρε, Vg: Core. The short *Holem* 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 ('). It is called Ṣwā, which may be either simple Ṣwā (Ṣwā simplex) as distinguished from the compound, or vocal Ṣwā (Ṣwā mobile) as distinguished from Ṣwā 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 Ṣwā determines more accurately the pronunciation corresponding to the three vowel classes, called *Hateph-Patach*, *Hateph-Segol*, and *Hateph-Qames*.

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 Ṣwā is expressed by the full vowel ε: Ἰςραιλή (Josh 10:1)— Ἰορώσαλήμ, Vg: Hierusalem. We find also the diphthong ευ for the Masoretic half-vowel: Ἱερ (Gen

19 See GKC, § 10, a–b.
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2:14) — Εὐφράτης, Vg: Eufrates. Quite frequently, the Šwâ is transliterated by the vowel α: בֹּלך (Num 22:5) — בָּלָאמ, Vg: Balaam; כּוֹס (Gen 17:19) — כּוֹס, Vg: Isaac; יַשְּחֶנֶה (Gen 5:22) — יַשְּחֶנֶה, Vg: Mathusalam; (1 Sam 1:20) — סְמּוֹף, Vg: Samuhol. Another Greek vowel standing in the place of the Masoretic Šwâ mobile is α: בָּלָאִית (Gen 10:14) — פְּלֶסְטִיִּים. Vg: Philisthim. The most striking way of pronouncing the Hebrew/Aramaic sound of Šwâ mobile is to assimilate its indeterminate sound to the following principal vowel: בֻּדָה (Gen 10:19) — סְדוֹמָה, Vg: Sodoma; בָּרָה (Num 13:21) — רֹאָב (A), רֹאָב (B), Vg: Roob; הָלָם (2 Sam 5:14) — סְלוּמָן, elsewhere also סְלָוְמָו, Vg: Salomon. The three Ḥātephs are usually transliterated in line with the Masoretic punctuation: מַעִי (1 Sam 25:3) — מַעִי, Vg: Abigail; Eliezer, Eliezer, Vg: Eliezer. Sometimes the transliteration creates different vowels, possibly more in accordance with the original phonetics: נַעֲמָה (Gen 4:22) — נוֹאָמ, Vg: Noemma; נַעֲמִי (Ruth 1:2) — נוֹאָמ, Vg: Noemi; אֲבִיָּפֶר (Gen 15:2) — אֵלִיֶּף, אֵלִיֶּף, Vg: Eliezer. For pronunciation reasons, the Masoretic half-vowels, together with the associated guttural consonants, are often dropped: מַעִי (Gen 4:14) מַעִי, Vg: Aaron; מַעִי (Gen 25:26) — וֹאֵקָו, Vg: Iacob; נָעֲנִי (Gen 12:6) — נוֹנָי, Vg: Chananeus; נָעֲנִי (Gen 46:10) — נוֹנָי, Vg: Chananitis; נוֹנָי (Ezek 23:4) — Oolla, 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.