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CONTENTS

Graphic Symbols for God's Name in an Unknown Recension of the *Tanhuma* from the Cairo Genizah

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Introduction

Samples of Hebrew manuscripts and codices from the tenth and eleventh centuries are rare, making the Cairo Genizah an important resource for study of Hebrew paleography.[1] In addition to preserving unique texts and versions, Genizah fragments include some of the earliest examples of Hebrew manuscripts, predating European medieval manuscripts, and thus contributing greatly to the understanding of book history from the perspective of material culture. They are also the source of many innovations and insights regarding the earlier forms of Hebrew texts and the development of scribal practices.[2] One of the more curious examples of this can be seen when examining the various conventions employed for rendering God's name. In this paper, we will describe the incidence of two

1   Edna Engel, "Styles of Hebrew Script in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries in the Light of Dated and Datable Genizah Documents" *Te'uda, XV* (1999): p. 366. (Hebrew).

2   Stephan Reif, "The Genizah and the Dead Sea Scrolls: How Important and Direct is their Connection?" in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Context*, Vol. 2 (eds. Armin Lange, et al; Leiden, 2011), pp. 673-691 p. 677.

unique graphic symbols, one representing the Tetragrammaton and the other, the name *Elohim*, that appear together in one midrashic manuscript from the Cairo Genizah. We will demonstrate that these symbols preserve signs and marks used in the vicinity of the Land of Israel and Syria in the third century and perhaps even earlier, and that continued to be documented in Genizah manuscripts dated up until the eleventh-twelfth centuries. We will propose that the different symbols used to represent God's names in the various manuscripts reflect not only the chronological development of scribal practices, but also relate to their role within the text.

The Manuscript

In his landmark study of the *Tanhuma-Yelamdenu* literature, Bregman presented a comprehensive catalogue of both full and fragmentary manuscripts. The catalogue surveys witnesses of the known printed editions alongside unknown and unique recensions documented mainly in Genizah fragments. Among the Genizah materials are four fragments that Bregman identified as belonging to a single manuscript that he termed "Tanhuma – unknown recension".[3] Three of these are single folium, each approximately 12.5 cm high and 10.5 cm wide. One (Or.1081 2.51) is a bifolium (a sheet folded to create two pages), approximately 12.5 high and 21.5 wide.[4] CUL: T-S C2.38 and CUL: Or.1081 2.51 are almost complete pages with just a few small tears or imperfections, but JTS: ENA 691.18, JTS: ENA 3692.7 are torn and significant sections of the text are missing. The four fragments contain parts of seven homilies on various *sedarim* from the middle of Leviticus (chapters 16-23), according to the triennial cycle read in the Land of Israel. They are non-sequential and lack significant portions of text. We have dubbed the extant manuscript TLGR

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3   Marc Bregman, *The Tanhuma-Yelammedenu Literature – Studies in the Evolution of the Versions*. Piscataway, 2003, pp. 80-81, (Hebrew).
4   The estimated size is based on the physical data generated by the Friedberg site and its measuring tool. There are slight differences between the pages due to their physical condition. Several are frayed along the edges and two are torn.

(Tanhuma Leviticus Genizah Recension). The pages are of vellum,[5] with both sides scraped and cleaned so that only a slight difference in shade distinguishes the two, as is typical of early Oriental manuscripts.[6] There are twenty-one lines of writing in clear, square Hebrew script in black ink[7] on both sides of each page.[8]

The manuscript was inspected by Prof. Marina Rustow who estimated that it was written in the tenth or the eleventh century, and by Prof. Judith Schlanger who identified the script as what she has termed "simple oriental square of South-Western type", (covering Palestine and Egypt) that was used up to the mid-eleventh century. In Schlanger's opinion, the

5   Vellum fell into disuse in the East quite early, being quickly replaced by cheaper paper. The latest dated vellum Hebrew codex from the Genizah is from 1327 and most of the undated vellum manuscripts are thought to be much earlier. See Malachi Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Codicology: Historical and Comparative Typology of Medieval Hebrew Codices based on the Documentation of the Extant Dated Manuscripts until 1540 Using a Quantitative Approach,* (ed. Zofia Lasman; trans.; Ilana Goldberg and Nurit Pasternak) Preprint internet English version 0.3+, August 2019), pp. 213-214.
      Online:
      https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/collections/manuscripts/hebrewcodicolog y/Documents/Hebrew-Codicology-continuously-updated-online-version-ENG.pdf.
6   Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Codicology*, p. 220.
7   The ink in this manuscript seems to match examples of iron gall-based ink. See for example MS Jerusalem, NLI Heb. 8° 4120 <Italy> 1282, fol. 38v, photographed in: Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Codicology*, pp. 274-278. In contrary to earlier hypothesis, and on the basis of chemical analyses, Beit-Arie stresses that iron gall ink is also found to be common in Eastern manuscripts. For additional information on the types of inks: Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Codicology*, pp. 274-278. See for example MS Jerusalem, NLI Heb. 8° 4120 <Italy> 1282, fol. 38v photographed in: Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Codicology*, p. 277. For list of documents found to be written in iron gall- based inks see p.278.
8   The words וכי תבאו וגו' are written on the bottom of the last page of CUL: Or. 1081 2.51 under the 21st line. It is possible that these are catch words or alternately that they were included in the page to complete the proem. See full discussion in Tova Sacher, "*A String of Jewels - Content and Composition in an Unknown Recension of the Tanhuma from the Cairo Genizah*", PhD diss., University of Haifa, April 2020.

manuscript was written around the year 1000. This is indicated by the fact that some of the *alephs* in TLGR have a non-square kappa shape, which is not found in manuscripts dated prior to the second half of the tenth century (such as the upper script of the palimpsests or in the early Italian group).[9] In 1893, Wertheimer published the text from the bifolium (Or.1081 2.51) under the title *Midrash Yelamdenu*.[10] He writes that despite extensive research, he was unable to find parallel sources for these homilies in any of the known midrashic collections. Coupled with the fact that the homilies are arranged according to the triennial *sedarim* read in the Land of Israel, the lack of parallel sources led him to the conclusion that they must belong to the lost *Yelamdenu*, despite the absence of the usual opening "our sages taught" – "ילמדינו רבינו" or any other kind of halakhic proem that typify this genre. In his comments at the end of *Batei Midrashot*, Abraham Epstein agrees with Wertheimer's identification and categorizes these midrashim as דרשות לימודיות – "scholarly homilies".[11] The description provided by Epstein is characteristic of what was later defined as the *Tanhuma-Yelamdenu* genre. Mann also refers to this same fragment and writes that "It seems to contain a version of Midrash Tanhuma quite different from TB (Tanhuma Buber) and T (standard Tanhuma)".[12] Unfortunately, Sonne, who completed the posthumous publication of Mann's book, failed to find the referenced notes with Mann's comments on these homilies.[13] In this article, we will explore one of the most distinctive features of this manuscript, the unique graphic symbols it employs when referring to God.

9   We are grateful for their help and interest.

10   Shlomo Aaron Wertheimer, *Batei Midrashot*, Vol. 1. Jerusalem 1989, pp. 168-173, (Hebrew). These included partial homilies on Lev. 17:1 and Lev. 19:23.

11   Wertheimer, *Batei Midrashot*, p. 415.

12   J. Mann, I. Sonne, *The Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue, Vol. 2.* Cincinnati 1966, p. 92, see also p. 100 and 104.

13   Mann-Sonne, *The Bible,* p. 165.

God's Names in TLGR

The Tetragrammaton

The Tetragrammaton is referred to 17 times in TLGR. All but two of these are part of biblical quotes.[14] In all cases, it is represented by four dots in a square configuration. We have found no other recorded examples of this same exact symbol.

Elohim

When not quoting scripture, TLGR refers to God almost exclusively by the name *Elohim* which appears thirty-seven times throughout the manuscript.[15] According to Bregman, the use of the name *Elohim* is one of the most prominent identifying features of Tanhuma literature's early stratum. In light of the fact that the later strata are characterized by the more common usage of the abbreviation קב"ה (indicating קדוש/קודש ברוך הוא or its Aramaic equivalent) ,[16] the overwhelming predominance of the use of *Elohim* in TLGR seems to therefore indicate that this text preserved materials from the early stratum.

Even more unusual than the prevalence of the name *Elohim* in TLGR is the way in which it is written. The letters א, ל, ה in the name *Elohim* are represented by variations of an X-like figure with a dot or dash added above, combined with the prefixes "ל" (to) or "ה" (the) or the suffixes "ים" (indicating the plural form), "י" (indicating plural construct state or possessive forms), or "ך" (indicating second person form), as applicable. This symbol is used in

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14   The symbol is used once in a purposely misquoted verse and once is written as the answer to the question "and if you do not know to Whom it is that you offer sacrifices – to God." In this case, using God's actual name is a rhetorical necessity intended to single out the Creator of the world as the God of Israel by using His actual Name, as opposed to a descriptive title, like *Elohim.*

15   The appellation הק' appears five times and הק' בריך הוא appears once.

16   Bregman, *Evolution of the Versions,* pp. 176-177. Bregman notes that while there are examples of the name *Elohim* in the published Tanhumas and other late midrashim, these are few and far between.

both scriptural quotes and rabbinic exposition.[17] In most instances, the symbol resembles an X but a few have a tag on the upper right arm, giving the symbol a more *aleph*-like appearance . Both renderings are clearly distinct from the actual letter *aleph* in the manuscript .

The uniqueness and significance of the symbols in TLGR becomes more evident in light of the early epigraphic evidence and manuscript witnesses, as described below.

Historical Background

The belief that God's names, and particularly the Tetragrammaton, were inherently and essentially holy led to a growing tendency documented from Hellenistic times onwards, to avoid using Holy names and titles in both oral and written discourse.[18] This tendency resulted in two related yet distinct phenomena:

- The use of **alternative vocalizations**, instead of uttering God's names.
- The creation of special conventions for **writing** God's name.

The first phenomenon refers to the way in which God's name is pronounced, while the second deals with the ways in which the Divine names are written. The different names by which God was identified and the ways in which these Divine names and titles were depicted has changed over time.

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17   The symbol may have also been used to represent gods and not just the Holy Name. See the homily on Lev. 16:1 (JTS: ENA 3692.7 r, line 10), where the symbol appears in a quote of Ezek. 28.2 and can be possibly read as referring to the prince of Tyre, who proclaimed himself a god, rather than to *Elohim*.

18   Nathanael Andrade, "The Jewish Tetragrammaton: Secrecy, Community and Prestige among Greek- Writing Jews of the Early Roman Empire", *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, 46 (2015), p. 205. Based on epigraphic and archeological findings it appears that the four-letter name was freely written during the First Temple period. Online: https://doi-org.ezproxy.haifa.ac.il/10.1163/15700631-12340099. See also, Shimon Sharvit, "Jewish Traditions of Writing and Pronouncing Divine Names" *Lesonenu: A Journal for the Study of the Hebrew Language and Cognate Studies*, 70 (2008), p. 600. (Hebrew). Online: http://www.jstor.org/stable/24332580

The Spoken **Name**

The desire to avoid calling God by name (the Tetragrammaton) can be traced back to the Bible itself. At times, the later books of the Bible shy away from using the Tetragrammaton in favor of other titles and names, such as *Elohim, El* etc.[19] The Septuagint translates the prohibition in Lev. 24:16: וְנֹקֵב שֵׁם־ה' מוֹת יוּמָת as "And he that **names the name of God**, let him die the death". This interpretation understands the verse as forbidding all verbal articulation of God's name rather than as prohibiting the cursing of God's name, as may be inferred from its textual context[20] and as is construed by rabbinic law.[21] The interpretation implied in the Septuagint indicates that the prohibition of pronouncing God's name was well-established by the third century B.C.E.[22] Furthermore, in many of the early manuscripts of the Septuagint, the Tetragrammaton is replaced with the Greek word *Κupioς* which means "Lord" and parallels the Hebrew *Adonai*, alluding to the fact that the formal title was said in place of God's name in both languages.

Philo avoids the Tetragrammaton and its Greek equivalents, referring to it as the "name of four-letters" said to "represent the living God". He explains that if anyone "were even to dare to utter His name unseasonably, he must endure the punishment of death".[23] Josephus refrains from

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19   Jonathan Ben-Dov, "The Elohistic Psalter and the Writing of Divine Names at Qumran," *Meghillot: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 8-9 (2010), pp. 53-55, (Hebrew). Online: http://www.jstor.org/stable/23438294

20   The commandment immediately follows an account of a blasphemer (Lev. 24:10-14) and the prohibition to curse God, so it is therefore logical that it too refers to blasphemy rather than simply speaking God's name. See John E. Hartley, *Leviticus.* Dallas, 1992, pp. 409-410, "In this passage (verse 11) the use of the word קלל, "curse" with a *waw* consecutive after נקב further defines נקב. […]. Certainly, these two verbs are to be taken together, indicating that they describe a single act of wrongdoing and not two distinct acts".

21   See *b. Sanhedrin 56a*; *Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael* (ed. Horowitz) *Kaspah (Mishpatim)* 19, p. 317.

22   Kristin De Troyer, "The Names of God, Their Pronunciation and Their Translation: A Digital Tour of Some of the Main Witnesses," *lectio difficilior* 2 (2005), p. 5. Online: lectio.unibe.ch+troyer_names_of_god.pdf

23   Philo, *On the Life of Moses II*, Sec. 115, 132 &, 206. (Translated by Colson, p. 505, 513, 551). See also: Andrade, "The Jewish Tetragrammaton", p. 210.

mentioning God's name throughout his works and explicitly states: "And God revealed to him His name, which had not previously come to men and **about which I am not permitted to speak**".[24] Evidence from Qumran documents and testimony from Origen indicate that even when the Name was nevertheless written down, Jews pronounced it as *Adonai* or *Elohim*.[25] Both sectarian law, as preserved in the Qumran documents,[26] and rabbinic *halakha* forbid speaking the Name.[27] *Sifre* Numbers teaches that only the priests performing the priestly blessings in the Temple enunciated the Tetragrammaton while priests repeating them outside the Temple substituted *Adonai*.[28]

The reluctance to utter God's name necessitated the development of substitute names and titles that could be pronounced in place of the Holy Name when quoting scripture or when referring to God in exposition and exegeses.[29] The Tetragrammaton rarely appears in non-biblical texts in the sectarian works from Qumran where it is replaced with *El* or with other third person titles, at times rephrasing biblical quotes such as those found

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24   Josephus Flavius, Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* (2.275-276), Translated by Louis H. Feldman, "Judean Antiquities 2, Whiston 12.4, Niese 275-276", in: Flavius Josephus Online, Steve Mason. Consulted online on: 12 November 2020 http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.haifa.ac.il/10.1163/9789004320079_fjo_AJ_2_00275. See also: Andrade "The Jewish Tetragrammaton", p. 210.""

25   De Troyer, "The Names of God", pp. 3-5. Andrade, "The Jewish Tetragrammaton", p. 207.

26   Sectarian law also forbade the uttering of God's Name (1QS VI 27-VII 1) and the penalty for transgressing this ruling was expulsion from the community. See Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts from the Judean Desert*, Boston 2005, p. 243, and sources quoted there.

27   *y. Sanhedrin 50b.* אין לו חלק לעתיד לבוא: אבא שאול אומר אף ההוגה את השם באותיותיו - "He has no portion in the world to come: Abba Shaul says also one who speaks God's name as it is written (lit. with its letters)"""".

28   *Sifre* Numbers (ed. Kahana) 39, pp. 105-106. See also *m. Sotah* 7:6, *Tamid* 7:2. According to rabbinical sources, even this practice was curtailed before Hasmonean times as evidenced by *t. Sotah (ed. Lieberman)* 13:8, p. 233, according to which the priests stopped pronouncing God's name after death of Simon the Righteous.

29   This was also mentioned by Origen and Jerome, Sidney Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study*, Eisenbrauns 1968, pp. 271-272.

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in the *Pesharim.*[30] However, since *El* and *Elohim* are also recorded in the Bible as Divine names, they were also considered sacred. For example, in the Qumran texts, some of the scribal conventions used for writing the Tetragrammaton such as writing the Name in paleo-Hebrew letters,[31] were employed when writing *Elohim* or *El*. In the same vein, the rabbinic prohibition of erasing God's name also applies to titles such as *Elohim* and *Adonai.*[32] The prohibitions against enunciating and erasing other names of God necessitated the formulation of further substitutions or abbreviations by which to refer to God in rabbinic discourse.

According to Urbach, the *Tannaim* and *Amoraim* avoided using any of God's biblical names or titles, replacing them with a variety of substitute names which included הקודש (The Holy), הקדוש ברוך הוא (The Holy One Blessed Be He), המקום (lit. The Place), שמים (Heaven), השכינה (The Presence), הגבורה (The Powerful) and ריבונו של עולם (Master of the Universe). Urbach claims that the *Tannaim* preferred the titles שמים, שכינה and המקום to denote God, whereas the *Amoraim* favored הקדוש ברוך הוא.[33] He bases this distinction on what he describes as "early" and "good" manuscripts, explaining that later scribes systematically replaced המקום

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30   Tov, *Scribal Practices*, pp. 218-221. See also examples and discussion by Ben-Dov, "The Elohistic Psalter", pp. 71-72.

31   Tov, *Scribal Practices*, p. 244.

32   See also *y. Megillah* 12b which extends the prohibition of erasing God's Name to other titles as well:
אילו שמות שאינן נמחקין: הכותב את השם בארבע אותיות ביו"ד ובה"א באל"ף ובדל"ת אל אלהים אלהיך אלהי אלהינו אלהיכם שדי צבאות אהיה אשר אהיה... תני רבי יוסי אומר: של בית חגירה כותבנים אומנים היו בירושלם היו מוחקין צבאות, שכן הוא שם חול במקום אחר: ופקדו שרי צבאות בראש העם. - These are the names which are not erased: One who writes the four-letter name, with *yod* and with *hey*, with *aleph* and with *dalet, El, Elohim, Elohekha, Elohai, Elohenu, Elohekhem, Shadai, Tzva'ot, Ehyeh asher Ehyeh, …* It is taught, Rabbi Jose says: The house of Hagira were master scribes in Jerusalem and they would erase *Tzva'ot*. See also Shimon Sharvit, "*Writing and Pronouncing Divine Names*", p. 603.

33   Efraim Elimelech Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, Jerusalem 1969, pp. 32, 53-67. Urbach notes that the name *HaQadosh* exists already in the Bible appearing as a synonym for *Elohim* in *Habakuk* 3:3, and that it was also the Holy name of choice among the Hellenized Jews. The Rabbis' preoccupation with God's names and titles is illustrated in Ex. Rabbah (ed. Shinan) 3:6, pp. 127-128 (note 5).

with הקב"ה in both Tannaitic and Amoraic works. Sharvit questions such distinctions, explaining that any definitive conclusions are difficult to draw due to the fact that there are no extant manuscripts and only scarce epigraphic evidence from Tannaitic and Amoraic times. Any discussion about God's names during those periods is thus really a discussion about scribal practices in the medieval ages. In Sharvit's opinion, the *Tannaim* tended to use the word *hashem* which literally means "the Name" as a shortened form of the phrase "The Explicit Name" – שם המפורש.[34]

The Written Name

A related, but separate development is the rise of various scribal conventions and practices used to replace the Divine Name in **writing.** The essential holiness of the Name, together with the ban on pronouncing the Tetragrammaton and possibly, the mystical powers attributed to it, encouraged the scribes to use special formats or to add unique signs when writing the four-letter Name.[35] These also served to alert or remind the reader that it was not to be enunciated. In Aramaic papyri from Elephantine, dated to the fifth century B.C.E., the Tetragrammaton is written with one of the letters missing, usually the final ה - *hey*.[36] Lauterbach claims that Hellenistic Jews often avoided writing down the Holy Name by changing the *wav* into a *yod*. This can be seen in older manuscripts of the Septuagint where the Tetragrammaton was rendered in the Hebrew letters י, ה, י, ה - the third letter appearing as a *yod* instead of a *wav*. The Hebrew letters י - ה י - ה were not recognized as representing God's name in Greek circles and were instead sometimes replaced with

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34 Sharvit refers to examples from the *Tosefta* and *Mishnah*. See Sharvit, "Writing and Pronouncing Divine Names", p. 605. See also Yaakov Shmuel Spiegel, *Chapters in the History of the Jewish Book: Writing and Transmission*, Ramat Gan 2005, p. 622.

35 The Tetragrammaton continued to be written in Torah Scrolls and Bregman hypothesizes that in the early centuries it was written out in rabbinic texts that were written as scrolls. See Marc Bregman, "An Early Fragment of 'Avot De Rabbi Natan' from a Scroll", *Tarbiz* vol. no. 52(2) 1983, pp. 205–206. Online: www.jstor.org/stable/23595970; Myron Bialik Lerner, "The Genizah Fragments of Sh'eiltot de-Rav Ahai in the Munich Library," in Mordechai Akiva Friedman (ed.), *A Century of Genizah Research: Te'uda* XV, 1999, pp. 161-88.

36 Spiegel, *Chapters in the History of the Jewish Book*, p. 611 note 1.

the Greek letters π ι π ι. The phenomenon of deliberately "misspelling" the Tetragrammaton indicates the reluctance to write it in full.[37]

In the *pesharim* and sectarian documents from Qumran, the name *Adonai* was usually substituted for the Tetragrammaton.[38] As noted above, this type of substitution also appears in the Septuagint where the Greek word for "Lord" is written in place of the Tetragrammaton.[39] *Adonai* is also used instead of the Tetragrammaton in the biblical quotes in the remnants of Ben Sira found at Masada and dated to the first century,[40] and in the verses of *Shema* (Deut. 6:4) found inscribed above doorways in Palmyra dating to the sixth century, perhaps earlier.[41]

A variety of scribal conventions were used to represent the Tetragrammaton in Qumran. These include placing a dicolon before the Tetragrammaton, writing the Name in paleo-Hebrew letters,[42] or replacing it with four dots (tetra puncta) arranged either in a row at the same height as the letter tops ,[43] or in two clusters .[44] This last practice

37   Jacob Z. Lauterbach, "Substitutes for the Tetragrammaton", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 2 (1930-1931), p. 40 note 3. Online: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3622131

38   See Tov, *Scribal Practices*, pp. 218-221.

39   Sharvit, "Writing and Pronouncing Divine Names", p. 600. Although, as noted below, many of the earliest copies include the Tetragrammaton itself in paleo-Hebrew script or the equivalent Greek letters.

40   Sharvit, "Writing and Pronouncing Divine Names", p. 602. In the Genizah fragments of Ben Sira these have been changed to two or three *yods*, as is the common practice in medieval manuscripts.

41   Andrade, "The Jewish Tetragrammaton", p. 208.

42   This has been found in Early Greek translations of scripture as well. According to Tov, this served to alert the reader and possibly to ensure that the Name would not be erased since the paleo-Hebrew letters were considered especially sacred. See Tov, *Scribal Practices*, p. 245. Spiegel argues the opposite. He believes the paleo-Hebrew script was not considered holy (as stated in the *m. Yadayim*, 4:5) and was therefore used to ensure that the scrolls themselves would not be considered sacred. See Spiegel, *History of the Jewish Book,* p. 625.

43   Images taken from https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive (using Tov Table 19 *Scribal Practices*, p. 206). 4Q462 plate1 frag.1, B-358874. Online: https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-358874.

44   4Q176 plate 284 fragment 2 Plate 285, Fragment 2, B-360381. Online: https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-360381

dates to Hasmonean times.[45] A similar symbol has been found in a rare early liturgical text published by Felix Klein-Franke as "A Hebrew Lamentation from Roman Egypt", which seems to contain a version of the *Modim* prayer for fast days.[46]

The medieval texts' use of multiple *yod*s in place of the written Tetragrammaton is well documented. Based on manuscript evidence together with various midrashim and commentators, Spiegel writes that a configuration of three *yods* in a row or in a triangular shape was the preferred and predominant replacement for the written Name in medieval manuscripts.[47] Various commentators offer different theological reasons or scriptural supports for this practice, but it is likely that the various configurations of *yods* were chosen because they were unpronounceable, guaranteeing that no one would accidentally say the forbidden Name in the midst of studies or prayers.[48] Based on the Kaufman, Parma and Loew manuscripts of the *Mishnah*, Spiegel explains that the three *yods* were used when quoting God's name in scripture and the word *hashem* - השם ("the Name") was written when the Sages had need to refer to God by name. This distinction was lost over time and the word *Hashem* prevailed both in discourse and when quoting scripture because it was permissible to read and to erase. Later, close to the advent of the printing press, *hashem* began to be abbreviated to the letter *hey* - ה found in the later manuscripts and in some of the early printed editions.[49]

After surveying medieval manuscripts, Lauterbach records 83 variations of written representations of the Tetragrammaton, all combinations of the letters *yod, vav* and graphic signs (dots, dashes etc.).[50]

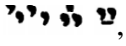45   Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices*, pp. 218-220.
46   Felix Klein-Franke, "A Hebrew Lamentation from Roman Egypt", *ZPE 51* (1983), pp. 80 – 84. Hillel Newman is preparing a revised edition of this important text.
47   Spiegel, *History of the Jewish Book*, p. 614. There are, however, Genizah fragments with the Tetragrammaton.
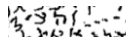48   Spiegel, *History of the Jewish Book*, pp. 614-627.
49   Spiegel, *History of the Jewish Book*, pp.630-632.
50   Sharvit, "Writing and Pronouncing Divine Names", pp. 47-58. Sharvit lists the appearances of different variations of God's name in Ma'agarim. However, these results do not represent graphic symbols that are transcribed as letters in

Among these, he notes several combinations of *yods* and dots יי״ ‫וּ‬ ‫עֹ‬, found in a variety of medieval manuscripts, including Genizah manuscripts. Beit-Arié agrees with this observation and adds that the precise renderings of the Tetragrammaton often reflected individual preferences and varied from scribe to scribe.[51]

Magical Texts

Four dots in place of the Tetragrammaton, similar to the symbol used in Qumran, have been found in magical sources, including a silver amulet written in Greek and Aramaic that was discovered in Tel Amarna in Egypt and dated to between the fourth-sixth centuries ‫כֹּשׁאֹלֹ־וׄיׄ‬,[52] and on Babylonian incantation bowls.[53] Another important and relevant format found in magic texts is the writing of four *yods* in a row: ‫יׄיׄיׄיׄ‬.[54]

Four *yods* arranged in a square rather than a straight line have been documented in an Aramaic incantation bowl from Babylonia (MS 2053/19 line 8) dated to the seventh century,[55] on which the Divine Name appears

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Ma'agarim. This is seen clearly in the case of TLGR where Ma'agarim writes two *yods* in place of the four dots and 'הא in place of the X.

51 Beit-Arié, *Codicology*, pp. 546-548.

52 In line 22 of the spell. See Roy Kotansky & Shaul Shaked, "A Greek-Aramaic Silver Amulet from Egypt in the Ashmolean Museum," *Le Muséon* 105 (1992), p. 6, 18. More common are slated lines //// also found in this amulet and common in magical sources.

53 Many thanks to Gideon Bohak, James Nathan Ford and Rivka Elizur Leiman for the advice and examples they sent us.

54 Amulet 1, in: Joseph Naveh, Shaul Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity*, Jerusalem 1985, p. 43. There is no information about the provenance of this amulet, but it has been dated between the fourth and seventh centuries. See Hanan Eshel and Rivka Leiman, "Jewish Amulets Written on Metal Scrolls," *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 1 (2010), pp. 189-199. Naveh and Shaked also assume the use of this form in their completions to amulets 11 and 13 (p. 94 and 98).

55 The bowl is due to be published by Moshe Morgenstern. For the dating, see: Shaul Shaked, James Nathan Ford, Siam Bhayro, *Aramaic Bowl Spells: Jewish Babylonian Aramaic Bowls*, Leiden 2013, p.1, note 2.

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as part of the magical name טיטינוס חי חי מץ.[56] This configuration is remarkably similar to the symbol in TLGR except for the fact that it is composed of letters rather than symbols. Another similar mark is found in a magical recipe from the Genizah that seemingly renders God's name as a square of two dots and two dashes or possibly *yods*. The same form appears in biblical quotations and as part of the expression בשם יי נעשה ונצליח [בשקיי].[57] While this is thought to be a medieval manuscript, Naveh and Shaked note that the magic of the Genizah followed the Palestinian tradition and is often useful for understanding and reconstructing earlier Palestinian amulet practices and conventions.[58]

In another magical text from the Genizah, T-S K1.56,[59] a magical prescription quotes Hab. 3.18-19, using first a triplet of *yods* and later, a triplet of dots.[60]
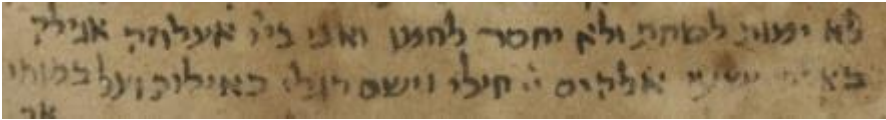
This may be evidence of a process by which combinations of letters used to replace the Divine Name are gradually replaced by combinations of more abstract forms or vice versa.

One can surmise a relationship between the four dots used during the Second Temple period found in Qumran and in magical amulets, and those

56   On the magical name see Matthew Morgenstern and James Nathan Ford, "On Some Readings and Interpretations in the Aramaic Incantation Bowls and Related Texts," *Bulleting of SOAS* 80 (2017), pp. 203-206.

57   CUL: T-S K1.73. Naveh and Shaked, *Amulet and Magic Bowls,* pp. 230-236, plate 37.

58   Naveh and Shaked, *Amulet and Magic Bowls*, pp. 29-30.

59   *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Genizah*, Band I, p. 29 – 45 Another magical use of three yods which assimilates three dots is found in CUL: T-S K1.108: ⬚, ⬚, ⬚ . Other writings of the Tetragrammaton in these fragments use the biblical spelling with a line above ⬚.

60   The first triplet replaces the Tetragrammaton, and the second replaces אדני. It is obvious that the scribe followed the Masoretic vocalization here as the written יהו-ה אדני should be vocalized אלהים אדני .

on incantation bowls with the later groupings of *yods*.[61] A possible indication of this relationship is found in one of the earliest known Hebrew manuscripts, the Munich Palimpsest. This palimpsest consists of two leaves of a Latin manuscript of Orosius's *Historia Adversus Paganos* written on top of an earlier Hebrew scroll containing Yom Kippur prayers. The Latin manuscript is dated to the early eighth century so the original Hebrew scroll cannot be later than late-seventh century. Based on his paleographic analysis, Beit-Arié suggests that it was written even earlier, in the vicinity of the fourth-fifth centuries.[62] In the Munich Palimpsest, the Tetragrammaton is written as four *yods* in a row under four dots .[63] The combination of *yods* and dots found in this early manuscript indicates a possible link between the two conventions.[64] Perhaps shortened or purposely misspelled versions of the Name evidentially gave way to more abstract graphic forms that were transcribed as letters by later scribes. It is possible that the realm of magic practice, in which the use of abstract forms is common, was indeed the 'workshop' for such processes. Although, as discussed below, a similar phenomenon is also documented with regard to the use of the X-form in magic texts, we have no conclusive evidence to support a claim that the use of such practices in the literary fragments discussed above was indeed influenced by magical scribal practices. It is evident however, that there were two distinct types of substitutions for the written Name since early times: abstract graphic symbols or abbreviations/substitution of letters.

To summarize, there is both epigraphic and manuscript evidence of various substitutes for the Tetragrammaton, starting from the Second Temple period. In Qumran, there are examples of the Name being

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61   As suggested by Abraham Meir Habermann, *The Scrolls of the Judean Desert*, Tel Aviv 1959, pp. 31-32 (Hebrew).

62   Malachi Beit-Arié, "The Munich Palimpsest: A Hebrew Scroll Written before the 8th Cent. CE", *Kirjath Sepher* 43 (1968), p. 420 (Hebrew). See also: Joseph Yahalom, "The Munich Palimpsest and the Ancient Qedushta", *Tarbiz* 38 (1969), p. 377 (Hebrew). Online: http://www.jstor.org/stable/23592934

63   The images of the Munich Palimpsest are taken from the website of Bavarian State Library: Orosius, Paulus: Historia adversus paganos (Palimpsest) - BSB Clm 29416 (http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0002/bsb00028970/images/).

64   Sharvit, "*Writing and Pronouncing Divine Names*", p. 609.

represented by a row of dots. Similar symbols have also been found in a silver amulet from Tel Amara and on Babylonian incantation bowls. The Munich Palimpsest, a fifth century *Modim* prayer, and amulets depict the Tetragrammaton as a row of four *yods*. Of particular interest is the incantation bowl featuring the Tetragrammaton as four *yods* arranged in square-like configuration, similar to that of the dots in TLGR. Such an arrangement may be an interim stage on the way to the square of four dots, representing a transition from a letter-based symbol to an abstract form. Various combinations of *yods* and dots together with other graphic marks, some arranged in square-like formations, are common in medieval manuscripts and discussed by early commentators. Nevertheless, the symbol found in TLGR is different from the known dot formations in that the dots are arranged in a square rather than a straight line. It also differs from the *yod* formations in that it is exclusively graphic, comprised solely of dots, with no hint of the letter *yod*.

X = אלוה

In addition to the various substitutions of the written Tetragrammaton, different symbols were used to replace written forms of other Divine names and titles (such as *Adonai, Elohim* or any of their derivatives).[65] The Divine Name *Elohim* was often replaced with a variety of ligatures, most of which seemed based on the letter *aleph* or part of it, at times combined with a whole or partial *lamed* or other letters.[66] However, in a survey of the different ways *Elohim* is written in the early manuscripts, Yeivin writes that one of the rarest and earliest representations of *Elohim* is an X-like symbol, similar to that found in TLGR.[67]

Some scholars suggest that the X-symbol found in the early manuscripts described below may be related to the graffiti-like X-marks etched on Jewish ossuaries from Jerusalem and Rome dating from the first

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65   Based on Deuteronomy 12:3-4. See *y. Megillah* 1:9 and *b. Shevu'ot* 35a.
66   Israel Yeivin, "On the Writing of the 'E-lohim' in Early Hebrew manuscripts," *Alei Sefer: Studies in Bibliography and in the History of the Printed and the Digital Hebrew Book*, vol. no 11 (1984), pp. 37-55 (Hebrew).
      Online: http://www.jstor.org/stable/24152672
67   Yeivin, "On the Writing of the E-lohim", p. 40, 54.

century B.C.E. to the second century C.E., (see fig. 1). These marks are presumed to have served as indication that the deceased was a Jew.[68]
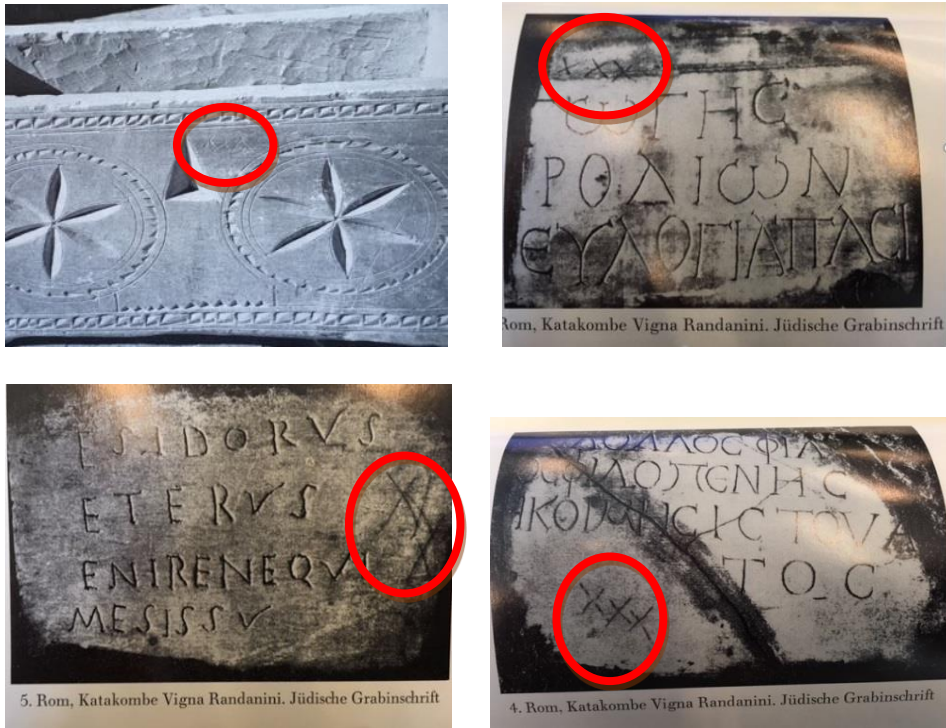

Figure 1: Epigraphic Evidence of X-Symbol[69]

Ormann postulates that these X-like marks are actually the paleo-Hebrew letter *taw* ת and that it was used as a mark of the sacred. He refers to the rabbinical discussion regarding the mark (תו) placed on the foreheads of

68   Spiegel, *History of the Jewish Book,* pp. 612-614. Gustav Jacob Ormann, "The X-symbol in the Munich Palimpsest", *Kirjath Sepher*, 43 (1968), p. 583 (Hebrew).
69   The image in the left top corner is plate 33 (image 422) in Pau Figueras, *Decorated Jewish Ossuaries*, Leiden 1983, pp. 22-23. See also plates 32 (image 179) and 35 (image 566). The other three images plates 3-5 in Erich Dinkler*, Signum Crusis,* Tübingen 1967.

the righteous in Ez. 9:4. In a discussion in *b. Shabbat* 55a, the rabbis all agree that the תו in Ezekiel is the letter *taw* - ת but offer different opinions as to its significance. Ormann points to the opinion of *Reish Lakish,* who says the letter *taw* - ת was chosen because it is the last letter in God's stamp (אמת), thus connecting the mark directly to God. Another example of the connection between X and the sacred can be found in the Talmud's account that the anointing oil was spread on the priests' forehead in the shape of the Greek letter *chi* - χ which is identical to the paleo-Hebrew letter ת ✗.[70] Based on these sources, Ormann (and following his lead Spiegel) suggests that in some circles, the paleo-Hebrew ת was seen as a symbol signifying the sacred, which led to the written X-like mark designating *Elohim* found in later manuscripts.[71] In our opinion, these epigraphic uses of the X form represent a distinct phenomenon and any attempt to associate it with the X used to designate אלה found in the manuscripts described here, is speculative at best.
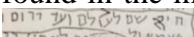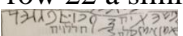
X-like symbols have also been found in magical materials, but it is uncertain whether they actually represent God's name or are a purely magical figure. One such example is a silver amulet found in a tomb near Aleppo, first documented by Schwab in 1922.

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70   See *b. Kerithot 5b*: מושכין את המלכים כמין נזר ואת הכהנים כמין כי, א"ר מנשיה כמין כי יונית - "One anoints the kings similar to a crown, and one anoints the Priests similar to *chi*". Χχ See Menahem Mendel Kasher, *Torah Shelemah,* 23. Jerusalem 1992, pp.194-197. Spiegel, *History of the Jewish Book,* pp. 612-613.

71   Ormann,"The X-Symbol in the Munich Palimpsest", pp. 583-584. He recalls the Qumran practices of writing the Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew as evidence that this alphabet was used to represent the Divine names.

Figure 2: Silver Amulet from Aleppo (Schwab 1922)[72]

Different types of X-like figures are found in this amulet, at times appearing together with other signs and at times in context of God. In row 8, (יש- x (ח)י חי X אל אהיה למלך) x- God …living I am and king), a cross-like symbol appears in the middle of a line referring to God .[73] Schwab identified this symbol as a Christian sign but it has since been regarded as a symbol that may have preceded Christianity and that was used outside of its circles.[74] In row 12 (שם לעולם ועד דרום ופנים X היא - "<may> the name of God be for eternity; South, east"), the figure is similar to some of those found in the manuscripts described below, and apparently refers to God .[75] However, in row 22 a similar X-mark is part of a series of seemingly magical symbols .

An X-sign somewhat different from those discussed here is found in row 6 of another silver amulet, written in Greek and Aramaic and which was found in Tel el Amarna, Egypt . The writing in this amulet is dated to the fifth century. This symbol is known from Jewish and non-Jewish magical texts and its presence in this amulet is one of its earliest

72   Joseph Naveh, Shaul Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity*, Jerusalem 1985, p. 59. Illustrations by the late Ada Yardeni.
73   Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls*, pp. 54-60.
74   Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls,* p. 22.
75   Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls,* pp. 56-57. Figure taken from p. 59.

attestations. The X appears as part of a series of symbols and is transcribed as a magical sign.[76]

Figure 3: Silver Amulet from Tel el-Amarna[77]

Some magical texts from the Genizah contain X-marks, but most of these seem to be magical symbols as opposed to a representation of God's names.[78] The majority of X-marks in magical fragments include small circles at the edges, as in the amulet from Tel el-Amarna shown above, and are clearly part of a set of similar symbols, are outside the scope of this discussion.[79] We may however note one rare symbol in CUL: T-S NS 322.10 . The symbol clearly resembles the X-symbol in our midrashic texts and in other literary fragments surveyed below, however it is unclear whether this serves as a substitute for God's name or for an angelic name. It is followed by magical signs and other substitutions and forms commonly used to mark the Divine Name (for example). The fragment is nonetheless part of a collection of prescriptions, and its layout

76   Kotansky & Shaked, "A Greek-Aramaic Silver Amulet", p. 6, 8.
77   See Kotansky & Shaked, "A Greek-Aramaic Silver Amulet", p. 6.
78   See for example CUL: T-S K1.23   or CUL: T-S K1.127   .
79   For more on this symbol, see Richard Gorden, "The Charaktêres between Antiquity and Renaissance, Transmission and Re-invention," in Véronique Dasen, Jean-Michel Spieser (eds), *Les savoirs magiques et leur transmission de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance* Florenz, 2014, pp. 253-300.

suggests that it was included in a practical notebook. This would offer a reasonable explanation as to the inclusion of different scribal practices that reflect the different uses in its varied source materials.[80] If the triplet of X's is intended as a representation of a Divine name, it is quite possible that this fragment records an important moment in which two different degrees of abstractions of the written Name are preserved simultaneously. One is a variation of the actual letters, and the other, an entirely abstract form.
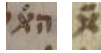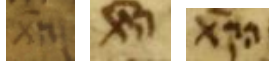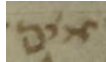
Manuscript Evidence of X

The X-symbol has been found to date in a handful of manuscripts, most of them Genizah fragments (see Table 1). In most instances, the X is combined with appropriate suffixes indicating the plural, second person, plural construct state or possessive forms (ך/י/ם). It often appears with a dot or dash above it. These shared features strengthen the hypothesis that the different manuscripts all belong to the same milieu.

Table 1: X = *אלהים*

Manuscript	Symbol
Dura Europos Ms.	
Munich Palimpsest	
Pesach *Piyyut* Bodl. Heb. d. 41/11-15	
Yom Kippur *Piyyut* T-S NS 249.2	

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80   For the notion of practical notebooks in medical materials from the Genizah, see
      Efraim Lev, "Mediators between Theoretical and Practical Medieval Knowledge:
      Medical Notebooks from the Cairo Genizah and their Significance," *Medical
      History* 57 (2013), pp. 487-515.

Manuscript	Symbol
TLGR	
Midrash T-S Misc. 36.127	
Midrash T-S 20.158	
Buber Tanhuma Or.1080.15.79(1v)	
T-S C1.120-123	
Early Mahzor for Pesach: Halper 210	

• Early Manuscripts

The earliest example of this symbol found in a manuscript is a remnant of a *Birkat Hamazon* (Grace after Meals) *piyyut* written on a parchment discovered in the Dura Europos synagogue, a building destroyed in 256-257.[81] Lieberman identified this as an *aleph* representing אתה, claiming that God's name was missing from the blessing, but later scholars,

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81   This is one of the oldest pieces of Hebrew writing after the Qumran scrolls, a period from which very few pieces of Hebrew writing survived. See Malachi Beit-Arié, *"The Munich Palimpsest"*, p. 415. For a detailed description of the fragment, see Steven Fine, "Liturgy and the Art of the Dura Europos Synagogue" in *Liturgy in the Life of the Synagogue: Studies in the History of Jewish Prayer,* (eds. Ruth Langer and Steven Fine; Winona Lake 2005), pp. 48-52. Fine concurs with Beit-Arié's analysis of the X-symbol. Spiegel, *History of the Jewish Book*, pp. 612-613.

including Beit-Arie´, Yeivin and Fine, argue convincingly that it signifies the Divine Name, *Elohim*. Spiegel identifies the X in the Dura Europos fragment as signifying the Divine Name *Adonai*, itself a replacement for the Tetragrammaton and concludes accordingly that the X-sign preceded the more familiar *yods* as a representation of God's name.[82] However, in all the other manuscripts described below, the X undoubtedly represents *Elohim* and not *Adonai.*
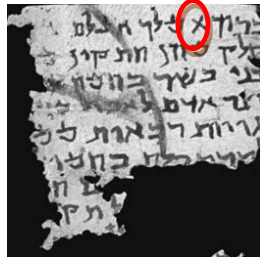

Figure 4: *Birkat Hamazon* Piyyut from Dura Europos Synagogue

The next text witness in which God's name is represented by X-symbols is the Munich Palimpsest mentioned above,[83] where it replaces אלה in the name *Elohim* and its derivatives. The sign is prevalent throughout this palimpsest but there are also several instances where the name *El* or אלוה appears with a broken *aleph-lamed* ligature ﬡ, including one instance where a derivative of the name *Elohim* is then written in full ﬡ־היך.[84] The broken *aleph-lamed* ligature is fairly common as opposed to the X-symbol which, besides these two very early examples, has been documented to date in only a handful of Genizah fragments described below.

82   Spiegel, *History of the Jewish Book,* pp. 613-614.
83   State University of Munich - BSB Clm. 29416.
84   This combination is found in manuscripts of *piyyutim* with Palestinian vocalizations. In later manuscripts, the two letters were sometimes combined. See Yeivin, "On the Writing of the E-lohim", pp. 37-38.

• **Pesach Piyyutim (Oxford Bodl. Heb. D 41/11-15)**[85]

This manuscript is thought to be relatively early, as is indicated by the Palestinian vocalizations printed above the letters. This method of vocalization discovered in the Genizah was used predominantly (although not exclusively) in *piyyutim* between the ninth and twelfth centuries.[86] There are several variations of the system, which became more complex over time. The system used in this manuscript contains only six vowels as opposed to later manuscripts, which have seven. According to Yahalom, this indicates that these *piyyut* manuscripts are "very early".[87]

The X-symbol appears several times throughout the *piyyut* but this manuscript also contains other depictions of God's name including ק, an abbreviation of קדש, and an *aleph-lamed* ligature . Yeivin points out that the X-symbol in the *piyyut* is slightly different from that found in the Munich Palimpsest, in that its upper right arm has a tip, making it look more *aleph*-like . It is, however, distinct from the usual *aleph* appearing in the manuscript . Careful reading reveals that the X-symbol in the Pesach *piyyut* manuscript appears almost exclusively when the Divine Name is part of a biblical quote.[88]

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85   This manuscript was first published by Israel Davidson, *Schechter Studies*, vol. 3, New York 1927, pp. 1-34 (Hebrew). He attributed the *piyyutim* to Yannai and Samuel. It was also published twice by Joseph Yahalom: first in *A Collection of Genizah Fragments of Piyyute Yannai*, Jerusalem 1978, pp. 169-178, and later in *Palestinian Vocalised Piyyut manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections*, Cambridge 1999. In the later book, Yahalom attributes the *piyyut* to Hadutahu who was "probably earlier than the Qalir".

86   Joseph Yahalom, "The Palestinian Vocalization – Its Investigation and Achievements, Instead of a Summary", *Lěšonénu: A Journal for the Study of the Hebrew Language and Cognate Subjects,* 52 (1988), p. 121 (Hebrew). Online: https://www.jstor.org/stable/24347409?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

87   Yahalom, "The Munich Palimpsest"; Yahalom, *Piyyute Yannai*, p. II.; Yahalom, *Palestinian Vocalised Piyyut*, p. 8.

88   In fol. 15A (Yahalom, *Piyyute Yannai*, p. 169) line 8 the X is used in a quote from Judges 9:13; in fol. 15B (Yahalom, *Piyyute Yannai*, p. 170) line 13, it is in a quote from Isaiah 29:9; in fol. 13A (Yahalom, *Piyyute Yannai*, p. 175) line 9 in a quote from the prayers and based on Isaiah 44:6; in fol. 14B (Yahalom, *Piyyute Yannai*, p. 178) line 14 in a quote from Ps. 136:2 (*Hallel Hagadol*). One exception is in
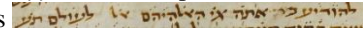
• Piyyut for Yom Kippur - CUL: T -S NS 249.2

The X figure denoting *Elohim* is also found in a Yom Kippur *piyyut* from the Genizah, the script of which is described by Revell as "Syrian type of the ninth century".[89] This manuscript also has Palestinian vocalizations but uses a more complex seven-vowel system indicating that it was written later than the previously described Pesach *Piyyutim* manuscript.[90] The symbol here is decidedly more *aleph*-like , yet still differs significantly from the letter *aleph* found throughout this manuscript . The thickened right head and dot above the mark are found in several other cases, indicating that these symbols are all related to the same convention.

X-symbols or similar signs have also been found in several Genizah manuscripts of midrashic texts identified as early *Tanhuma-Yelamdenu* variants. These include the following:

• TLGR

The X-symbol is consistently used throughout TLGR to represent the name *Elohim*, appearing both alone and together with appropriate suffixes. It clearly resembles an X more than an א. There are only a few instances where the tag on the upper right arm is clear and some instances where there is a hint of it, but these could be due to the scribe's pen resting on that point. This could possibly explain the origin of the tag, which later became more pronounced and deliberate, as the X became associated with א.

Of all the manuscripts described here in which the X-like mark has been found preserved, TLGR stands out as one of the most consistent. In it, the symbol is used almost exclusively, both when quoting scripture and in exposition, with very few instances of other names or symbols. It is possible that the X-symbol refers in one case to deities other than God, a

fol. 12A (Yahalom, *Piyyute Yannai*, p. 173) where the symbol appears with others in the line that reads . Only the first אלהי uses the X-symbol. The others are represented by a combined אל. While this is not a scriptural quote, it concludes the *piyyut*. It is possible that the scribe used the X-symbol for biblical quotes of *Elohim* to differentiate between the Holy Name of God and "their gods". In TLGR, the symbol is used indiscriminately, both when quoting scripture and in exposition as detailed below.

89   Ernest. J. Revell, *Hebrew Texts with Palestinian Vocalization*, Toronto 1970, p. 37.
90   Yahalom, *Palestinian Vocalised Piyyut*, p. 49, plate 7.

possible indication that the TLGR manuscript was written in a period when earlier distinctions were being forgotten or by a scribe who was unfamiliar with them and who was simply reproducing his source manuscript, while perhaps tending to "overcorrect" in the interest of consistency.

While the graphic symbols described above are used overwhelmingly throughout TLGR, there are six exceptions in which other Divine names and symbols are employed. These other symbols all appear as part of the narrator's voice and five out of the six are found in the same fragment, JTS: ENA 691.18. These include:

1. A broken *aleph-lamed* ligature representing the word *El* when quoting Ps.36:7 in the homily on Lev.22:27. It is possible that this short form was used because the word was perceived as an adjective and not a Divine name.[91] The *aleph-lamed* ligature is also used for the endings of the word ישראל . This shortened form is used only in the word Israel and not in other *aleph-lamed* sequences such as **El**isheba (in the homily on Lev. 16:1) or Samu**el** (in the homily on Lev. 19:1).

2. הק' appears five times in TLGR: once in the homily on Lev. 17:1, three times in the homily on Lev. 22:27 and once in the homily on Lev.23:1. These last two homilies are found on the same page (JTS: ENA 691.18). Ginzberg argued that ק represented the name *Elohim* based on CUL: T-S Misc.36.198 1v, where in line 6, שלא' (= שלאלהים) is crossed out and הק' is written in its place .[92] It is more likely however that this abbreviation was a shortened form of *HaQodesh* (הקודש), and indicates the transition from the earlier replacements of the Divine Name to the later ones.

91   Yeivin notes that there is a certain ambiguity as to whether the *El* in Ps. 36:7 refers to God as in צדקתך כהררי **אל** or , as *Rashi* interprets, is intended as an adjective ad loc. תוקף לשון. *Ibn Ezra* interprets similarly. Yeivin, "On the Writing of the E-lohim", p. 46. JPS translates the word as "high". As noted above, the combined ligature is found in other manuscripts in which the X-symbol is used, including in the *piyyutim* with Palestinian vocalizations and the Munich Palimpsest. See Yeivin, "On the Writing of the E-lohim", pp. 40-44.

92   Ginzberg, *Schechter Studies,* p. 51.

3. The title הק' בריך הוא appears only once in TLGR, in the homily on Lev. 22:27. This is the Aramaic forerunner of the common Hebrew הקדש/הקדוש ברוך הוא. It is noteworthy that TLGR, which largely follows the Tanhuma tradition of translating Aramaic into Hebrew, preserves the earlier Aramaic rendering of the title and not its later Hebrew version.[93]

4. Additionally, the Divine names המקום and רבוני also appear once each in TLGR and are specifically relevant to the contexts in which they are found.[94]

The fact that these other symbols are found almost exclusively on the same TLGR page (ENA 691.18), may imply that the scribe (or previous compiler whose work is copied in the fragments) preserved the varied practices used in different homilies which were part of his source material, whether such homilies were independent, or part, of wider works he utilized.

• CUL: T-S Misc. 36.127

This manuscript contains a proem on Gen 21:11. Ginzberg and Mann both agree that this text is related to CUL: T-S Misc. 36.198 + CUL: T-S C1.71, which we dubbed the "Midrash of Halakhic Proems". "The Midrash of Halakhic Proems" includes *Yelamdenu* proems for more than two dozen *Sedarim* from Genesis to Exodus and is a remarkable testimony to the extent of the *Tanhuma-Yelamdenu* materials we have lost, since only a quarter of the proems are known in extant compilations.[95] Mann identified CUL: T-S Misc. 36.127 as an alternate version of "The Midrash of Halakhic Proems",[96] while Ginzberg classified it as a later rendition.[97] A detailed analysis of "The Midrash of Halakhic Proems" language led

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93   Urbach, *Sages,* pp. 64-65.
94   המקום in the homily on Lev. 17:1 (CUL: Or.1081 2.51, 2v, left side, lines 11-12) and רבוני in the homily on Lev. 19:23 (CUL: Or.1081 2.51, 2v, right side, line 5).
95   The fragments of the "Midrash of Halakhic Proems" itself do not include the X-symbol.
96   Bregman, *Evolution of the Versions*, p. 68.
97   Louis Ginzberg**,** *Shechter Studies*, vol 1, New York 1927, p. 51.

Wormser to conclude that it preserves an earlier text, possibly belonging to Bregman's early Tanhuma stratum.[98]

As noted by Ginzberg, God's name is depicted in several different ways throughout this manuscript. At times, the X-symbol appears on its own or with the suffix ים-, representing *Elohim* in both Biblical quotes and midrashic discourse.[99] In some instances, it is rendered as a simple X , while in others, tags appear on the upper arms .[100] The X also appears combined with the letter *qof* – **Xק** .

Although the X-symbol is distinct from the *aleph* in this manuscript , even when combined with the ק, Ginzberg read the Xק as קא, admitting that he was unaware of the source of this combination. In Ginzberg's opinion, the variations and inconsistencies of the symbols representing the Divine name *Elohim*[101] in this manuscript are due to a "sloppy" scribe, an inferior original, or to the use of different written sources.[102] Also reading קא, Bregman raises the possibility that it is a form of הקבה.[103]

It is however possible that the different symbols reflect the distinct statuses or the authoritative hierarchy of different components used in the Midrash, while at the same time preserving different conventions used in distinct sources from which our text is drawn and that now form the different parts of the homily. A certain correlation can be discerned between the use of graphic symbols and the authority of sources in that only the X (and never the קX) is used in quotes from scripture. This

98   Yehonatan Wormser, "On Some Features of the Language of Tanḥuma-Yelammedenu", *Lěšonénu: A Journal for the Study of the Hebrew Language and Cognate Subjects*, 75 (2013), p. 193, note 19 (Hebrew). Online: http://www.jstor.org/stable/24328425; Yehonatan Wormser, "The Language of the Tanhuma-Yelemdemu." Master's Thesis, University of Haifa, 2011, p. 4 note 33 (Hebrew).

99   For example, CUL: T-S Misc. 36.127, p. 1 recto, line 16 of the X appears in place of *Elohim* in Genesis 1:17. In line 18 it is used instead of *Elohim* in Genesis 22:1.

100   In lines 18r, 3v, 5v, 7v and 22v of CUL: T-S Misc. 36.127 the X-symbols do not have tags and in line 10v the X-symbol has distinct tags.

101   Ginzberg identifies the ק itself as a replacement of *Elohim* based on the Midrash of Proems manuscript (CUL: T-S Misc.36.198 1v). See above p. 26.

102   Ginzberg, *Schechter Studies*, p. 51.

103   Bregman, *Evolution of the Versions*, p. 68.

resembles the evidence from the Pesach *piyyut* described above, where the X was used exclusively in quotes of scripture.

As to the possibility of reflecting different sources, it is pertinent to note that X without ק appears in only one specific exposition – that which interrupts the homiletic retelling of Isaac's birth and his rivalry with Ishmael: The first part of the homily tells of Sarah miraculously nursing many babies to prove her maternity. It is followed by a proem which opens with the introduction ילמדנו רבנו in line 19 on p. 1verso and that discusses God's skill as a craftsman. The story of Isaac's birth and youth resumes in a new proem, which begins with ד"א in p. 1recto line 24. The stories about Isaac use the קX symbol both before and after the intervening proem in which אלהים is represented by the X. In the framing proems that discuss Isaac's childhood, the X is used only when quoting scripture, while in the intervening proem which discusses God's skill as a craftsman, the X also appears in the course of exposition. Seen in this context, it is conceivable that the diversity of symbols indicates a variety of different sources that were combined to compose this homily, each section retaining the graphic symbol used in the source from which it was drawn.

This manuscript also includes examples of God's name represented by a plain *qof* - ק and by קדבה (probably an abbreviation of קדש ברוך הוא?קו), found in the torn corner of the other half of the bifolium. This page may have belonged to a different homily or exposition but is written in the same hand and includes הק' as well.
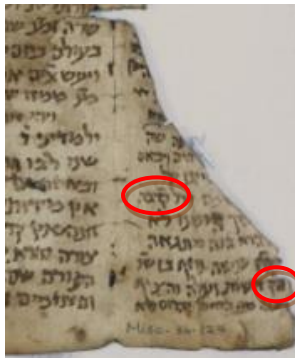
• CUL: T-S 20.158

This is a palimpsest containing part of an unknown midrash featuring unique content and structure. It is composed of a curious combination of several series of midrashic examples followed by lists of verses.[104]

The X-symbol in this manuscript represents *Elohim* in quotes from scripture. It has a tag on the right upper side [img], but is distinctively more X-like than the *aleph* in the same manuscript [img]. A combined *aleph-lamed* ligature is also used in the manuscript to depict אל in a quote from Job 35:5 [img].

In addition to the examples above, in which the mark clearly resembles an X and is distinct from the *aleph* in each of the given manuscripts, there are several other manuscripts in which a mark that appears to be half-way between an X and an *aleph* is employed to designate *Elohim.* In these manuscripts, the mark resembles either a whole or broken *aleph* yet, in each case, is definitively different from the manuscript's usual *aleph* and seems to reflect or echo the X.

• CUL: Or.1080.15 79(1v)

Bregman identifies the text in this manuscript as a possible earlier version of the Buber Tanhuma and notes the unusual use of *Elohim* alongside הקבה.[105] Furthermore, the name *Elohim* is written in several different ways. It is indicated by a symbol that seems to be halfway between an X and an *aleph*, which on occasion appears as part of the expositions [img]. In one instance, *Elohim* is depicted using a broken *aleph* [img].

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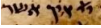
104   The lists of midrashic examples describe various groups of biblical figures who share various common attributes such as: people awaiting (salvation); righteous people born from the wicked and vice versa; kings who first had merit but later sinned, and so on. Lists of verses probably concluded each unit though the fragment's poor condition makes it impossible to be sure. Taken all together, these elements may represent a rabbinic narrative. See: Moshe Lavee and Shana Strauch-Schick, "The Egyptian Midwives: Recovering a Lost Midrashic Text and Exploring Why It May Have Been Forgotten", The Torah.com, note 5. http://thetorah.com/the-egyptian-midwives/.

105   Bregman, *Evolution of the Versions*, p. 43. He mistakenly writes that the word is האים =האלהים instead of ים X.

• CUL: T-S C1.20-23

This manuscript is labeled as Genesis Rabbah but the extant text deals with the *sedarim* from the end of Genesis which are known to be of Tanhuma provenance. When the text found here is compared with the known versions of the Tanhuma, it demonstrates all the differences typical of its early renditions. Accordingly, it could have been part of the lost Tanhuma recension from whose texts were transplanted at the end of Genesis Rabbah. In this manuscript, the top of the mark used to represent א, ל, ה in the word *Elohim* when quoting from scripture is similar to the *aleph* with a more X-like left leg . The more popular title הקבה is used when referring to God in the course of the exposition.

• Halper 210

This fragment is part of a Pesach (Passover?) *Mahzor*, containing parts of the *Musaf* prayer for the Festivals and the counting of the first day of the Omer. The counting of the Omer is in Aramaic, preceded by Judeo-Arabic instructions. It is worded differently to the other Aramaic versions we are familiar with.[106] The symbol used for *Elohim* in this manuscript is reminiscent of the X in that it is distinctive from the usual *aleph* and combines with various suffixes but resembles an *aleph* with an X-like left foot. We are unsure whether to interpret this as a variant of the X or of the broken *aleph*. It may even be a link between the two. As seen in the snippet, in this case, the Tetragrammaton is represented by a graphic symbol that includes a more X-like figure combined with a *yod* – י,

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106   The counting of the Omer is also in Aramaic in Siddur Rav Saadiah Gaon and Siddur Rabbi Shlomo b. Nathan. This custom continued in Yemen, however the wording in this fragment records יומאי חד יומא בעומרא, יומאי תרי יומי בעומרא rather than האידנא חד יומא בעומרא found in the Siddur Saadiah and Siddur Shlomo b. Nathan (BM.675 D3 S353). See Israel Davidson, Simha Assaf, Bernhard Issachar Joel, *Siddur R' Saadja Gaon; Kitab Gami As-salawat Wat-Tasabiah* (Hebrew Edition), Jerusalem, 1941, p. 29; Shmuel Haggai (Shmuel Kroizer), *Siddur Rabbenu Shlomo b. Nathan,* Jerusalem 1995, p. 91. For a recent assessment on the origins of the siddur in the areas between Aram Zova and northern Persia see Uri Ehrlich, "The Text of the Amidah in the Siddur of R. Shlomo b. Natan and the Question of the Provenance of the Siddur", *Kenishta* 4 (2010), pp. 9-26.

although it is possible that this form is accidental, and was intended to be a double *yod* with an apostrophe. Given the Judeo-Arabic instructions, this is probably the latest liturgical attestation of the custom, yet one that may be traced to the tenth century.

Conclusions

(1) The Evidence
The predominance of the name *Elohim* and the graphic symbols used to represent both this name and the Tetragrammaton are two of the more curious and significant features of TLGR. The symbol representing the Tetragrammaton is an enigma. No other identical examples have been recorded. Although reminiscent of the tetra puncta used in Qumran and in the magical sources described above, in that it is purely graphic without any resemblance to letters, the dots' arrangement in TLGR is different than in those sources. Most similar in TLGR is the symbol found in a magic bowl with four *yods* arranged in a square configuration and the mark written in a magical spell from the Genizah, which represents God's name in a square configuration of two dots and two dashes/*yods.*

(2) Dating
The fact that the symbols in TLGR are similar to those found in the magical texts might point to an early dating for TLGR or its written sources. The evidence from magical texts opens a window onto a scribal practice that hails from the first millennium. The survey of literary manuscripts presented above provides the scant textual evidence for the use of similar practices in literary context (as opposed to magical use). These offer a glimpse into early scribal practices which were not preserved in the fuller literary manuscripts, the majority of which were written much later.

The use of dots for the Tetragrammaton in TLGR may also indicate that the text was copied from early manuscripts, since the most similar symbols hail from Qumran from the beginning of the millennium and magical amulets that date between the fourth and seventh centuries, while

in medieval manuscripts, the Tetragrammaton was most commonly represented by some combination of *yods* as described by Lauterbach.[107]

An Aramaic incantation bowl from around the 4th to the 7th century also represents the Tetragrammaton as a square configuration, but with four *yods* rather than dots.[108] Combinations of dots and *yods* have been found in several manuscripts including the Munich Palimpsest in which the Tetragrammaton is written with four *yods* under four dots. This together with the *Modim* parchment that includes four *yods* indicate the early dating of this practice. These two rare and early liturgical attestations may represent a transitional stage between dots and *yods*. The dots could be either forerunners or simplifications of the more common *yod* variations. We can imagine a progressive process in which later scribes mistook the four dots of the earlier graphic symbol for *yods*. While these suggestions are all plausible, they are nonetheless, primarily conjecture.

The Munich Palimpsest is of extreme importance since it employs a similar practice to TLGR, both in terms of the X-symbol and in its use of possessive determiners. As such, it provides a helpful chronological reference, predating the practices documented in TLGR to before the tenth century. Indeed, the X-symbol, while rare, is easier to place. It can be traced in manuscripts from as early as the third century up until eleventh–twelfth centuries manuscripts found in the Genizah.

(3) Geo-Cultural Provenance

Yeivin concludes that the X-mark was an early representation of *Elohim* most commonly found in the *piyyutim* from the Cairo Genizah, however his survey did not include examples of the midrashic manuscripts from the Genizah. Taking these into account, it is possible to expand upon Yeivin's conclusion and assert that the X-symbol seems to have been extensively used in both the *piyyut* and *Tanhuma–Yelamdenu* literature found in the

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107   Lauterbach, "Substitutes for the Tetragrammaton", p. 49-57. See also the variations of God's name found in the different text witnesses of *Pesiqta de Rav Kahana*. The closest to our symbol is perhaps that found in the Parma manuscript, which records a triangle shape of two *yods* under a dot. See Pesikta de Rav Kahana. (ed. Bernard Mandelbaum; New York 1962), p. 19 (Introduction).

108   See above n. 55.

Genizah.[109] Both of these genres, as well as non-Genizah manuscripts with the X-symbol, originated in the Land of Israel/Syria during the Byzantine period and perhaps even earlier. It is therefore plausible that this sign was common to that geo-cultural milieu. The possibility of X-like symbols representing God's name in amulets found in this area is consistent with this suggestion.

The similarity between the square sign depicting the Tetragrammaton in what we perceive as texts emanating from the Land of Israel and that found in the aforementioned Babylonian incantation bowl, which is undeniably Babylonian writing is not uncommon as various phrases, expressions, vocabularies and orthography have been found to be common to both amulets found in the vicinity of the Land of Israel and to Babylonian incantation bowls.[110]

(4)   A Matter of Genre: The X-Symbol and "Practical" Texts?

The fact that the two examples most similar to the symbols found in TLGR are found in magical texts may indicate a commonality of practices among scribes copying rabbinic texts and magical practitioners. One possibility is that the X-symbol emanated from or originated in writing practices among magical circles. Another option is that scribes involved in the writing of magical bowls and amulets were increasingly exposed to rabbinic literature and to writing conventions. Noting the use of legal formulae known to us from rabbinic legislation by scribes of magic bowls, some scholars suggested that perhaps the same scribes engaged in both genres. Manekin-Bamberger specifically refers to the plausibility of scribes' involvement in both liturgy and magical writing.[111] If this was indeed the case, one may propose that the majority of genres in which the X-symbol

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109   Even T-S C1.20-23 which has been identified as Genesis Rabbah is most probably transplanted Tanhuma materials as described above. This reflects the relationship between these genres previously noted by scholars. See Bregman, *Evolution of the Versions*, p. 182 and Yaron Zini, "*The Lexicon and Phraseology of Hekhalot Rabbati*", Ph.D diss., Hebrew University, 2012 (Hebrew).

110   Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls*, p. 34.

111   Avigail Manekin-Bamberger, "Intersections between Law and Magic in Ancient Jewish Texts", Ph.D diss., Tel-Aviv University, 2018, pp. 45-52. She also refers to the practice of substituting four *yods* for the Divine Name as evidence.

was employed are of a practical nature, i.e., not texts aimed for scholastic learning but rather, for practical use: liturgy and *piyyutim* in the synagogue, as well as magical texts with clearly practical purposes. It is thus possible that the use of the X-symbol in proto-canonical Tanhuma texts indicates that they belonged to the realm of practical texts - texts which were aimed at, or related to, worship. It is possible that the texts were derived from actual sermons or records of them (this is not to say that they are verbatim representations of sermons). Such a proposal would support the argument in favor of distinguishing the literature of the synagogue from that of the rabbinic academies.[112] Manekin-Bamberger wisely comments that "whether or not this is the case, it seems that, at the very least, the bowl scribes had knowledge from outside their circle of magicians".[113] The similarities between the graphic symbols employed in the two genres might be further evidence of an actual commonality of scribal practices.

Indeed, all the literary representations of the symbols found to date are limited in terms of the genres in which they are preserved. They are found only in *piyyutim* and in unique Tanhuma recensions which differ from the later published editions or that precede the later canonization of selected *piyyutim* into festival prayers. This proto-canonical nature of the text in which the symbol is preserved can also be seen in the unique version of the Omer counting. This implies the common use of the symbol in a milieu that maintained or developed a branch of Tanhuma literature – a milieu which was later lost and that would have remained unknown without the discovery of the Genizah. Both the scribal conventions and the texts in which they were embedded failed to endure and disappeared from the known or accepted written records.

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112   Much later evidence of a scribe who clearly distinguished between "scholarly texts" and "practical texts" (which are aimed at worship contexts) is found in the book lists of Rav Yosef Rosh Haseder. See Moshe Lavee, "Haggadic Midrash in the Genizah, as Reflected in the Book Lists of Rav Yosef Rosh Haseder", in: *Uncovering the Canon: Studies in Canonicity and Genizah*, Robert Brody, Menahem Ben-Sasson, Amiah Liblich and Donna Shalev (eds.), Jerusalem 2010 (Hebrew), p. 60 and n. 58.
113   Avigail Manekin-Bamberger, "Jewish Legal Formulae in Aramaic Incantation Bowls", *Aramaic Studies* 13, pp, 69-81. Citation taken from p. 81.

(5) A Matter of Function

The evidence outlined above may lead to different conclusions than those arrived at in previous scholarship. Yeivin sees the X as a forerunner of the broken *aleph*. He suggests that later scribes mistakenly read the X-figure as an *aleph* - א and wrote it as such. This, in turn, gave way to the variations of broken or partial *alephs* and the *aleph-lamed* ligature common in the Genizah documents and later medieval manuscripts. Although it was originally intended to represent the Divine Name, Yeivin documents how, over time, the combined *aleph-lamed* ligatures came to be used for the word *Elohim* and its derivatives, even when they did not actually represent God's name, until it eventually became a convenient shorthand utilized whenever the letters appeared together, even in other words.[114]

This progression does not fit the findings described above. In almost all the manuscripts in which the X-symbol appears, it is used together with other, more common, symbols (*aleph-lamed* ligature, a broken or partial א or הק').[115] None of the manuscripts described above consistently uses only one type of symbol. Even in the Munich Palimpsest, the X is found alongside the broken *aleph-lamed* and *yods*. In TLGR, the X for *Elohim*, which Yeivin defines as very early, appears alongside the *aleph-lamed* ligature used in a word other than God's name, which Yeivin considers to be a later development.

This suggests that all the symbols existed and were used simultaneously from the time of the Munich Palimpsest (which both Beit-Arie´ and Yahalom date as significantly earlier than the seventh century), calling the gradual process described by Yeivin into question.

These findings lead us to two possible conclusions:

First, it is possible that rather than representing different stages of scribal practice, the different symbols also bear a certain semantic weight and that they represented different contexts or usages of God's name. "X" might have been originally reserved for liturgical or scriptural quotes, as opposed to references to God's name in exegesis and exposition, where other symbols such as the broken *aleph* or ק were used.

114   Yeivin, "On the Writing of the E-lohim", p. 54.
115   The only exception is the fragment from Dura Europos of which just a few partial
       sentences are preserved.

Similar correlations between specific symbols and distinct contexts can be found in several Genizah fragments of the *Tanhuma-Yelamdenu* (even when the X-symbol is not one of them). One such example is the Midrash of Halakhic Proems (CUL: T-S Misc.36.198) discussed above,[116] in which a variety of different symbols are found but with an apparent logic in their use. On two of the pages, a broken *aleph-lamed* is used in place of *Elohim* in biblical quotes ⬚ and a somewhat different-looking broken *aleph* or X ⬚ is used in the expositions. On the other two pages, a broken *aleph* ⬚ is used in verses and 'הק or הקב"ה ⬚ or מ/קבה ⬚ is used in expositions (including the correction mentioned above).[117]

In CUL: T-S C2.13 + CUL: C.2.88, which was identified by Bregman as an unknown recension of the Tanhuma on Exodus,[118] what appears to be the upper half of an X ⬚ represents *Elohim* in a biblical verse while 'הק ⬚ is used in exposition.

It is possible that these distinctions were eventually lost and that the different symbols, including the X, began to be used indiscriminately until, eventually, the X was replaced by the more familiar conventions.[119] The process described by Yeivin might explain the later loss of this distinction as the various אל ligatures gained dominance. This would also explain the hybrid symbol קx found in T-S Misc. 36.127 described above.

Second, the above survey shows that the X-symbol continued to be used, at least sporadically, alongside other symbols in the Genizah communities until it was gradually supplanted by the later scribal convention in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The "hybrid" symbols

116   See Bregman, *Evolution of the Versions*, p. 67. This manuscript consists solely of halakhic proems and is considered an early recension of the *Yelamdenu* by Ginzberg and as a Tanhuma-type midrash by Milikowsky on Friedberg Genazim Site. Lavee dates it as belonging to Bregman's early stratum of the *Tanhuma–Yelamdenu*.

117   The pages are not consecutive and are written in seemingly different hands. The different conventions may therefore reflect the personal preferences of different scribes as described by Beit-Arié or the combinations of materials gleaned from different sources.

118   Bregman, *Evolution of the Versions*, p. 74.

119   Similar to the process suggested by Spiegel that led to the 'ה being used as a symbol to the Tetragrammaton. See p. 12 above.

described above may be intermediary steps in this process. The marks that seem to combine X-like features with more *aleph*-like symbol can be viewed as echoes of the earlier X (constructed from two diagonal brushstrokes as in the Dura Europos fragment, the Munich Palimpsest, as well as TLGR) whose influence continued to reverberate in individual scribal practice. The need to distinguish between X and א could also be related to the eventual replacement of the name *Elohim* (outside of scripture) with the titles 'הק and הקבה. Unlike X, these letter combinations would not be confused with an *aleph*. Spiegel suggests that the X-symbol fell out of use with time due to its resemblance or relationship to the Christian cross.[120] It is also possible that the preference for the later ligatures is connected to the transition from the square script to semi-cursive in the late tenth to the early eleventh century as described by Engel. The X is more appropriate to the square script while the *aleph-lamed* ligature leans toward the cursive in that it can be written in a single stroke.[121]

As noted above, the predominance of the Divine Name *Elohim* itself in a manuscript suggests an earlier rather than later provenance. In the case of the Tanhuma, it indicates that the text or parts of it are drawn from the early stratum of the Tanhuma (which Bregman claims was first composed at the same time as the classic Amoraic midrashim in the Land of Israel). This conclusion is consistent with the fact that TLGR and the other Genizah fragments surveyed above, preserve a graphic tradition found in manuscripts that date to the seventh century, and even earlier. The fact that similar symbols are also found or implied in much earlier practices, such as the X-symbol in Dura Europos from the third century and in the four dots in Qumran, is thought-provoking. It is possible that the Genizah fragments are witnesses to the continuity or progression of such practice in the Land of Israel and Syria up to the end of the first millennium. The sporadic use of other names does not negate this conclusion since, as shown, combinations of different graphic symbols denoting different Divine names are found in almost all the manuscripts containing the X-

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120   Spiegel, *History of the Jewish Book*, pp. 613-14.
121   See Edna Engel, "Styles of Hebrew Script in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries in the Light of Dated and Datable Genizah Documents", *Te'uda* XV (1999), pp. 365-375.

symbol. As Bregman notes, it is rare to find a "pure" example of the early stratum.[122] In the case of the Tanhuma texts, it is entirely conceivable that the variations of appellations and abbreviations used simultaneously represent early efforts at compiling the Tanhuma from multiple written sources. As such, it demonstrates that creative transmission and the multiplicity of performance which is usually associated with orality could also have been present in stages of written transmission.

The graphic symbols used in place of God's names in TLGR are an example of how the Genizah provides evidence of traditions associated with antiquity being continued into the early medieval period, and helps us fill in the blanks in the transmission history of Jewish writing and text.[123]

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122   Bregman, *Evolution of the Versions*, p. 178.
123   Other examples include, for example, Second Temple texts like Ben Sirah or the Damascus Document discovered in the Genizah. See: Stephan Reif, "The Genizah and the Dead Sea Scrolls: `How Important and Direct is their Connection?`" in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Context*, vol. 2 (eds. Armin Lange, et al; Leiden 2011), pp. 673-691.