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FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON THE NAME YAHWEH AND ITS MODIFICATIONS IN PROPER NAMES

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IN the *Journal*, Vol. XLIII, pp. 370—8, the writer published a short discussion of the Tetragrammaton and its meaning, form in proper names, etc. From a number of criticisms and suggestions which have been made, it is evident that striving for concision has led again to lack of general intelligibility in certain parts of the paper. The following observations will perhaps help to remedy this defect.

On page 374 we discussed the Masoretic form *Yehô-* at the beginning of theophorous compound names, and compared it with "the equally absurd *Yehôsef* for *Yôsef*." More detail is here necessary. The spelling יהוה for the usual יהו is found once in the Old Testament (Ps. 81 e), and frequently on the ossuaries and graffiti of the Second Temple (cf. Klein, *Corpus inscriptionum judaicarum, passim*, and Sukenik, JPOS IV, 172 ff.). Of course, the name was still pronounced *Yôséf*; the spelling "*Yehôséf*" is due to the analogy of the vast category of names beginning with *Yô*,—and always so written in the early period of the Kings of Judah,—which began to be spelled יה in the seventh century and were virtually always so spelled after the Exile, though the pronunciation still remained *Yô*. Fortunately, we can follow the spelling from century to century, thanks to the ample epigraphic material now accessible. The ostraca from Samaria and the earlier seals from the ninth and eighth century write consistently יה, that is *Yau* (for

older *Yáhū*) or *Yô*; just when *Yau* was contracted to *Yô* we cannot tell, but it may have occurred during the latter part of the pre-exilic period, since the Assyrian transcriptions of the eighth century indicate a pronunciation *Yau*. The change in spelling which we find in the Jerusalem ostrakon, from the seventh century, as well as the later pre-exilic seals, all of which write **יָו**, probably represents a reaction due to the religious revival of Yahwism in the period of Hezekiah and Josiah, which insisted on the use of the full form of the name *Yahweh*, just as we find in J (= Eissfeldt's J), compiled early in the seventh century (so from Gen. 10), and D. To strict Yahwists, the pronunciations *Yáhū*, *Yau* and *Yô* were associated with religious laxity and worship of the god of Israel under heathen forms. The fact that the Jews of Elephantine still wrote the divine name as *Yáhū*, instead of using the full Tetragrammaton, is thus in itself an illustration of the distinctly pre-Deuteronomic attitude of the colonists in Upper Egypt, who were descended from Jewish circles opposed to Jeremiah and the Deuteronomic innovations. On the other hand, the **יָו** and **יָ** of the well-known early post-exilic jar stamps from Jericho and Jerusalem (now brought to light in numbers by the Palestine Exploration Fund excavations) are presumably nothing more than convenient abbreviations for administrative purposes, and have no ulterior bearing.

The Masoretes took the spelling **יָו**, handed down to them, and tried to vocalize it. They were faced with the same problem as in other cases of superfluous letters due to historical spelling. The familiar illustration of **כָּפֶר** shows how they went to work. Here they found the pronunciation *bêr*, for *bê'r*, for **bî'r*, where the *alef* had quiesced, just as in Arabic *bîr* for *bî'r*. Since all the consonants except the last one had to be pointed, and their system forbade pointing *alef* with *šewâ*, they naturally had to place the *šewâ* under the initial consonant. It goes without saying, however, that the Masoretes themselves did not pronounce *bê'ér*, but *bêr*. It was only in later times that the artificial pronunciation *bê'ér* was adopted, just as large circles in the lower middle classes of America have begun to pronounce the silent consonants in English because they are written: e. g., *fore-head*,

etc. In the same way they found the spelling **יָוֹ** with the pronunciation *Yô*. There was only one way out of the difficulty—to point the initial *yôd* with *šewâ*, which they promptly did. It is by no means impossible that they actually thought that *Yô* was an unjustifiable contraction from an original **Yehô*, since they were not comparative philologists. At all events, their system forced them to create an anomalous punctuation which presently became a literary pronunciation, and has been responsible for gallons of wasted ink in recent times.

In connection with the Egyptian parallels cited on pp. 375, 8 my attention has been called to the Egyptian *Hpry*, a title of *Rē* which became very popular in the late period, as a possible case in point. I had indeed thought of it before, having noticed the comparison made in one of Völter's papers (to which I may spare myself the trouble of referring), but had not considered it worth-while mentioning it. Most Egyptologists regard *Hpry* as merely meaning "Divine Beetle"; the scarab beetle, Eg. *hpr-r* > *hpry*, was the symbol of the god Amôn-rē', who was, therefore, called "Beetle", in accordance with the mystic interpretation of early mythological symbolism which became so popular in the first millennium B. C.

Before closing we may consider briefly the contentions of Luckenbill's recent paper, "The Pronunciation of the Name of the God of Israel", *AJSL* XL, 277—83 (July, 1924). Professor Luckenbill has given a number of trenchant criticisms of prevailing views, and his observations must be considered carefully.

On p. 278 he calls attention to the Late Babylonian (*Murašû*) spelling of *Yônatan*: *Ya-a-hu-u-na-tan-nu*, which proves a pronunciation *Yahûnatân*. This is, however, an exception, which only shows that the Babylonian Jews of the post-exilic age were under the same seventh century influence as their Palestinian brethren, and that they pronounced the name *Yônatan* on formal occasions as *Yahûnatân*, the correct archaizing form, which was still well-known to them because of the variant pronunciations *Yâhû*, *Yah* and *Yô* at the end of theophorous names. Luckenbill's further comments on the basis of Babylonian and West-Semitic transcriptions are without much bearing on the history of the Tetragrammaton, since the latter was coined and contracted

long before the ninth century B. C., to which our oldest relevant epigraphical material belongs.

The final η in the orthography of the Mesha Stone represents $\acute{e}h$, not $\acute{o}h$, as the writer has tried to show in a paper not yet published on the dialect of this text. It is by no means impossible that it stands for $\acute{o}h$ in the name $Qr\acute{h}h$, but there is no reason why the Moabite final he should be any more restricted in vocalization than the Hebrew one. Practically all occurrences of final he on the Stone denote the pronominal suffix of the third person masculine, both with nouns and verbs. Since the language of the inscription is at least strongly influenced by Aramaic, the vowel of the pronominal suffix should be \acute{e} , i. e., we should read $ar\acute{z}\acute{e}h$, "his land," not $ar\acute{z}\acute{o}h$. Quite aside from other considerations is the fact that the vowel \acute{o} can only appear after the intervocalic h has been elided, $\acute{a}h\acute{u}$ becoming au , which is then contracted to \acute{o} . The e vowel of $\acute{e}h$ has a different origin, and corresponds exactly to the Hebrew connecting vowel \acute{e} in imperfect forms like $ya'ab\acute{d}\acute{e}h\acute{u}$ which is also originally short. In other words, the he is quite in place in $\acute{e}h$ for $\acute{*}h\acute{u}$, but entirely out of place in $\acute{o} < \acute{*}au < \acute{*}áhu$. The statement in Gesenius-Kautzsch quoted on p. 280 by Luckenbill is based upon a few anomalous vocalizations of the Masoretes. Luckenbill's statement (p. 282) that "the writing $\eta\eta\eta$ found in the Moabite stone, so far from favoring a pronunciation 'Yahweh', seems definitely to preclude it" is strange, even if we admit that the Tetragrammaton should be pronounced $Yáh\acute{o}$ in Hebrew, since the Moabite Stone does not write medial long vowels *plene*.

At the end of his paper Professor Luckenbill hazards a suggestion which he puts in the form of a question: "Was the original form of the name $Yáhaun$?" The basis of the strange appearing form is an effort to make the *waw* in the name $Yahweh$ as given in the Mesha Stone less anomalous in case the pronunciation should be $Yáh\acute{o}$. While stipulating that it is all hypothesis, he suggests: "A form $Yáhaun$, written $\eta\eta\eta$, might have lost its final $n\acute{u}n$ like $\eta\eta$, etc., and it is not inconceivable that the resulting $Yáhau$, $\eta\eta$, which may have been going over into $Yáh\acute{o}$, might have had a η added to it as a vowel-letter." Here we have a misunderstanding of the morphological relation

of *Šilô(h)* and *Šilônî*, *Seilân*, which has been explained in my paper in this *Journal*, p. 374, n. 22. Since the *ôn*-ending stands for *ân*, and not for *aun*, there would be no parallel, even if my explanation should be rejected. On Luckenbill's theory, the Moabite spelling ילל could only represent a pronunciation *Yahwôh*, which might conceivably stand for *Yahwôn*.

Since Professor Luckenbill, as the foremost Assyrian philologist in America, is contending vigorously against faulty Assyrian philology, wherever it appears, he will surely not object to criticism of his Hebrew phonology, where he is quite abreast of the current standard. At all events, temperate discussion of these knotty problems can only be advantageous to biblical scholarship.