

In the Third Edition of *Jehovah's Witnesses Defended: An Answer to Scholars and Critics*, Greg Stafford takes up the familiar defense of subjects having to do with the use and pronunciation of the divine name, the identity of the biblical God Jah and of Jesus of Nazareth, as well as issues and questions having to do with salvation, God's sovereignty and mankind's "free will." This edition also contains discussions of several controversial issues, including questions related to abortion, a person's sexual orientation, and regarding uses of blood.

Most significantly, this book puts forth not only a defense of some the biblical teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses associated with the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, but it also further introduces the Christian Witnesses of Jah, Jehovah's Witnesses who reject human traditions when these can be shown to contradict what is based on the best available reasons. Thus, a call is made to all Jehovah's Witnesses, to all Christians, indeed, to "every breathing thing" to bear witness to and to praise the biblical God Jah, and to acknowledge what can be shown to be true for good reasons about Jesus of Nazareth.—Psalm 150:6; Isaiah 29:13; 43:10, 12; Acts 18:24-28; Galatians 1:10; Revelation 19:1, 3, 4, 6.

GREG STAFFORD is also the author of *Three Dissertations on the Teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses* and of various articles and debates on biblical Christianity and the history and the beliefs of the Watchtower Society and Jehovah's Witnesses. He is a Christian Witness of Jah, one of Jehovah's Witnesses who rejects traditions and beliefs that are not based on the best available evidence.



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Murrieta, California

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place of a *chataph patach* “a” sound in *YaH*, would be if they recognized a distinct sound quality associated with their use of a *chataph patach* that they believed more closely represented the true pronunciation of the divine name. If this is true, then the sound (*chataph patach*, *ַ*) they sought to avoid associating with the first syllable of the divine name must be closer to if not *the* original, first-syllable sound of God's name in Hebrew!

It is good to review the evidence from the Masoretic tradition in this way. It helps answer some important questions and it should also help make us more aware of possible reasons for why the Masoretes treated the divine name the way they did. The best available evidence shows clearly that they did *not* use the precise vowel points of *'adonay* with the tetragrammaton. Ultimately, though, the evidence from the Masoretes is not very conclusive concerning the ancient, pre-Masoretic pronunciation of the divine name. But there is much better evidence from much earlier times regarding the pronunciation of the divine name that will now be presented and considered in relation to the use of “Jehovah” and other forms of the divine name today.

Early Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek forms of the divine name. The earliest recorded use of the divine name in the Bible is in Genesis 2:4, where Jehovah God is credited with the creation of the heavens and the earth. The earliest dateable use of the divine name outside of the Bible, but related to it, is found in the Moabite Stone. Discovered in 1868, this tablet supports events recorded in the biblical account of 2 Kings 3 regarding the conflict between Israel and Moab. It is dated to between 840-830 BCE.³⁶

On this stone tablet the divine name is written in four ancient Hebrew or Phoenician (an ancient dialect of Hebrew) letters on line 18, the translation of which appears to describe King Mesha of Moab as having ‘taken vessels of Jehovah and presented them before Chemosh.’³⁷ Speaking in reference to the use of the four-

³⁶ See J.A. Emerton, “The Value of the Moabite Stone as an Historical Source,” *VT* 52.4 (2002), pages 483-492.

³⁷ Compare Freedman and O'Connor, “יְהוָה *YHWH*,” page 502. A. Cowley, “A Passage in the Mesha Inscription, and the Early Form of the Israelitish Divine Name,” *JRAS* (April, 1920), pages 175-184, argues for a different reading of the inscription,

letter form of the divine on the Moabite Stone, Harris notes it “would be odd indeed if Mesha had copied the name of the Hebrew deity in a Moabite orthography and added letters that weren’t there.”³⁸

This suggests that this early four-letter form of the name on the Moabite Stone was likely an early Hebrew form. If so, this would provide us with the earliest written evidence of the tetragrammaton, *YHWH*, the full four-letter form of the divine name. But the ancient Hebrew used here does not contain any vowel points such as we find much later in the Masoretic Bible texts discussed above. Therefore, even though some of the letters may indicate certain vowel sounds, we cannot know for a certainty the ancient pronunciation of the four-letter form of the divine name used in the Moabite Stone at the time it was written.³⁹

namely, taking יהוה (the tetragrammaton) as a verb with the resulting restoration of the text being, “But I took away that which should be for myself and tore them in pieces before Kemosh” (Cowley, “A Passage in the Mesha Inscription,” page 184). Cowley bases this reading in part on the fact that the earliest forms of the divine name outside of the Moabite Stone are יו (YW) and יהו (YHW), and so יהוה must be the verb “to be” (= “that which should be for myself” rather than “that which [belonged to] Jehovah”). It is Cowley’s view that יו (YW) is the earliest form of the divine name, that the form יהו (YHW) represents “the same pronunciation (Yāw), and that at some point in time between the date of the ostraka from Samaria (say 900 B.C.) and the Aramaic papyri, the practice arose of writing a ה [heh] to represent a long vowel” (Cowley, “A Passage in the Mesha Inscription,” page 178). But while יו (YW) does appear as an early theophoric prefix and suffix in proper names (see note 55 below), it is never found as a stand-alone form of the divine name as are יה (YH), יהו (YHW), or יהוה (YHWH), forms I will discuss in more detail below. Further, there does not seem to be any reason for why we should think that King Mesha felt that the objects in view “should be” for himself when he subsequently ‘gives them’ to Chemosh! The contest appears to involve the taking of that which belonged to one God, Jehovah, and the giving of these same things to Chemosh. Thus, there are good reasons for regarding the occurrence of the tetragrammaton on the Moabite Stone as the earliest instance of the four-letter form of the divine name and not as an instance of the Hebrew verb “to be.”

³⁸ R. Laird Harris, “The Pronunciation of the Tetragram,” in *The Law and the Prophets: Old Testament Studies Prepared in Honor of Oswald Thompson Allis*, ed. John H. Skilton (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1974), page 223.

³⁹ Ancient Hebrew letters that indicate vowel sounds are known as *matres lectionis* (“mothers of reading”). For examples, see Ziony Zevit, *Matres Lectionis in Ancient Hebrew Epigraphs*, David Noel Freedman, ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1980), pages 12-15. However, according to Sandra Gogel, “When dealing with proper names in epigraphic Hebrew, one is uncertain of the

The four-letter form of the divine name is also found in Hebrew inscriptions discovered while excavating a citadel on the biblical Arad (Judges 1:16), as well as on inscriptions unearthed in southern Palestine in what is considered to be the biblical city of Lachish (Jeremiah 34:7), all of which are from the late sixth century BCE.⁴⁰ In these inscriptions the tetragrammaton occurs numerous times in salutations and in oaths. With respect to the Lachish inscriptions, which “provide glimpses of the workings of the royal administration, primarily military, in this period shortly before the Babylonian exile,” Dennis Pardee writes “that there is no indication in any of these texts that the divine name (the ‘tetragrammaton’) was not used currently nor that it was not pronounced as written, i.e., something along the lines of [‘Yahweh’].”⁴¹

However, though we can say how the divine name was “written” in such early texts, “the precise vocalization of the name is uncertain”⁴² since we cannot say for sure whether the letters in such early texts were purely consonantal or what vowels they for a certainty indicated in different places.⁴³ But early evidence for the use of the divine name does not only support the four-letter form of the divine name, the tetragrammaton. Other forms of God’s name are also represented in early Hebrew and Aramaic.

orthographic conventions followed.” Gogel also notes that even in theophoric affixes such as *-yhw* and *yw-* the view that some of the consonants are actually vowel sounds (“mothers of reading”) is an “assumption” that is “not absolutely certain” (Sandra Landis Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew* [Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1998], pages 57, 58 [but see the balance of her discussion on “Final” and “Internal” *matres lectionis* on pages 58-74]).

⁴⁰ See James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: Supplementary Texts and Pictures Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), pages 321-322, 568-569; Freedman and O’Connor, “יהוה” *YHWH*,” pages 503-504.

⁴¹ Dennis Pardee, “Lachish Ostraca,” in *The Context of Scripture*, vol. 3, *Archival Documents from the Biblical World*, William W. Hallo, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2002), page 78, note 3.

⁴² Pardee, “Lachish Ostraca,” page 78, note 3.

⁴³ See Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*, pages 59-60, where it is observed that the final *heh* (which is the last letter in the tetragrammaton [יה]) can represent a long *a*, a long *e*, and a long *o* in epigraphic Hebrew, that is, in Hebrew found on ancient inscriptions.

For example, from the early fifth to the early fourth centuries BCE (from 495 to 399 BCE) there is “evidence for a Jewish garrison with a full-size Temple” on the island of Elephantine, near Aswan in Egypt.⁴⁴ This Jewish community made regular use of the form *YHW* (the first three letters of the tetragrammaton) for the name of God. However, though it is used as a part of place or personal names (concerning which, see below) in the Bible, it is not therein used as a stand-alone name of God (but see below on the use of the equivalent Greek, three-letter form of the divine name used in at least one very important Greek Bible manuscript). However, as noted earlier, the Bible does use both the four-letter tetragrammaton (*YHWH*) and a two-letter form of God’s name, *YH*

⁴⁴ Bezalel Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English: Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), page 18. For examples of the divine name in these papyri, see Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English*, pages 107, 140, 142, 143, 144, 146, 147, 151, 159, 160, 196, 205, 212, 213, 216, 217, 223, 237, 241, 242, 245, 246, 248, 249, 251, 266. The example on page 266, TAD B7.3, has *YHW* as a theophoric element in a longer name for the local god, “Anath*YHW*,” which could suggest that “Anath*YHW*” or even “*YWH*” was a creation of ‘Arameans from Israel who migrated to Egypt’ (Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English*, page 266, note 7). The form *YHH* is also found once as a part of a compound expression (1.2), once standing alone (13.14) in the Elephantine papyri (see A.E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005 (1923)], pages 1, 2, 37, 38, 40), and at least eight times in a formulaic expression in ostraca (pottery inscriptions) from the same site (see Freedman and O’Connor, “יהוה” *YHWH*,” page 504). Driver, “The original form of the name ‘Yahweh,’” pages 22-23, writes that this form is also found “on jar-handles of the 5th or 4th century B.C., found at Jericho and Jerusalem,” and on a coin “issued probably between 405 and 380 B.C., in Phoenicia or Philistia.” The form *YHH* is represented in figure 1.1 below as an equivalent to the Greek form *Ιωω* (*Iao*). The reason for this is because this form (*YHH*) appears to use a second *heh* (ה) to represent the same sound indicated by the final *waw* (ו) in the form *YHW* (the other form of the name used in the Elephantine Papyri) which final sound is likely either “o” (as in “Ya[*YH*]-o[*H*]”) or “u” (as in “Ya[*YH*]-u[*H*]”). Compare D.D. Luckenbill, “The Pronunciation of the Name of the God of Israel,” *AJSLL* 50.4 (July, 1924), pages 281-282. In contrast, Driver, “The original form of the name ‘Yahweh,’” page 21, believes the *heh* in both *YHW* and *YHH* “serves the purpose only of maintaining the *a*-sound” (which Driver would represent as “Ya[*H*]H” [for *YHH*] and “Ya[*H*]W” [for *YHW*]), making both *YHW* and *YHH* representatives of “the same pronunciation to the tetragrammaton when standing independently,” as in the vocalization “Ya,” which is the name of God before the time of the Exodus according to Driver (“The original form of the name ‘Yahweh,’” page 25). Driver’s explanation, though possible, runs contrary to the apparently corresponding transliteration of such forms by the Greek *Iao*, which I will discuss further later in this section.

(*YaH*, or in English, “Jah”), as stand-alone names.⁴⁵ The Hebrew and Aramaic forms of the divine name that occur apart from place or personal names in the Dead Sea Scrolls are also either four-letter or two-letter forms.⁴⁶ These forms are written in Aramaic square script (as in 1QIsa^a) or in an older Hebrew script (as in 1QIsa^c).⁴⁷

Now that we have this ancient Hebrew and Aramaic evidence before us, what does it say about the pronunciation of the divine name? Since we do not know for sure whether certain letters in these early, pre-Masoretic texts represented vowel sounds (and if so which vowel sounds they may have represented), and since we do not know for sure whether we can rely on possible etymologies of the divine name for its proper pronunciation (see the discussion of Exodus 3:14 at the end of this chapter), we need additional evidence before reaching any further conclusions. Buchanan provides a helpful introduction to some of the remaining evidence:

When trying to find the correct pronunciation of an ancient name that worshippers stopped pronouncing, it seems methodologically reasonable to search ancient texts for possible

⁴⁵ See page 3, notes 4 and 5.

⁴⁶ For a list of the occurrences of these forms of the divine name in the Scrolls, see Martin G. Abegg, Jr., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Concordance*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pages 296-297. There are also certain circumlocutions and surrogates in the Scrolls from Qumran and elsewhere, as in the Ben Sira Masada Scroll and the Cairo Genizah fragments. “Circumlocutions” are representational words or letters intended to avoid actual use of another word. For a discussion of the different treatments of the divine name in these scrolls and in other documents from the Judean desert, see George Howard, “The Tetragram and the New Testament,” *JBL* 96 (1977), pages 66-70; Emmanuel Tov, “4QLev^{c,e,g} (4Q25, 26a, 26b),” in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, David P. Wright, David Noel Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz, eds. (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1995), pages 265-266; D.W. Parry, “4QSam^a and the Tetragrammaton,” in *Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks, eds. (STDJ 20; Leiden Brill, 1996), pages 106-125; and Parry, “Notes on Divine Name Avoidance in Scriptural Units of the Legal Texts of Qumran,” in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues, Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies Cambridge 1995*, Moshe Bernstein, Florentino Martínez and John Kampen, eds. (STDJ 23; Leiden: Brill, 1997), pages 437-449.

⁴⁷ For a discussion of the different scripts used for the divine name in the Qumran scrolls, see Jonathan P. Siegel, “The Employment of Paleo-Hebrew Characters for the Divine Names at Qumran in the Light of Tannaitic Sources,” *HUCA* 42 (1971), pages 159-172.

clues that would give some hints. These can be found in Greek translations of the Hebrew before the pronunciation was discontinued, in proper names that include the divine name, in poetry whose meter depends on the number of syllables involved, and the pronunciation of the last syllable.⁴⁸

Before considering the available evidence from early and late Greek forms of the divine name, let us first consider the forms of the divine name that are included in proper names in the Bible and in ancient inscriptions as early as the ninth century BCE. Then we can review Buchanan’s findings relative to poetry and “the pronunciation of the last syllable.” Finally, we will consider the Greek evidence for the pronunciation of the divine name.

When used as part of other proper names, the two-letter (יה) [YH] or even יו [YW]) and three-letter (יהו) [YHW]) forms are found in early Hebrew, Aramaic, and Assyrian sources.⁴⁹ The clearest textual evidence for the pronunciation of these forms of the divine name comes from the vowel pointing of the Masoretic text. But as is true of the Masoretic evidence for the stand-alone, four-letter form of the name (the tetragrammaton), we cannot be certain of the accuracy of the vowel sounds indicated by the Masoretes for forms of the divine name that are used as part of other proper names. Still,

⁴⁸ Buchanan, “Some Unfinished Business with the Dead Sea Scrolls,” page 418.

⁴⁹ Driver, “The original form of the name ‘Yahweh,’” pages 7-19; Luckenbill, “The Pronunciation of the Name of the God of Israel,” pages 278-279; Freedman and O’Connor, “יהוה YHWH,” pages 506-509; A.R. Millard, “YW and YHW,” *VT* 30.2 (1980), page 210; Ziony Zevit, “A Chapter in the History of Israelite Personal Names,” *BASOR* 250 (spring, 1983), pages 1-14; Buchanan, “Some Unfinished Business with the Dead Sea Scrolls,” page 417; Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*, Appendix: Texts and Seals, pages 385-494. Zevit provides twenty-three examples of “twinning names,” that is, where biblical names such as “Ahaziah,” “Amaziah,” “Adonijah,” and other names occur with both the two-letter (יה-) and the three-letter (יהו-) theophoric suffixes (Zevit, “A Chapter in the History of Israelite Personal Names,” pages 10-13). Regarding the “stages in the development of [the use of the forms of the names] in these texts,” Zevit writes that “they are beyond reconstruction” (Zevit, “A Chapter in the History of Israelite Personal Names,” page 13). He also notes that: “Sociolinguistic processes, which are beyond reconstruction but which had both synchronic and diachronic aspects, gave rise to situations in which different texts or types of texts referred to the same person by either the long or short form of the same name” (Zevit, “A Chapter in the History of Israelite Personal Names,” page 14).

with this qualification of the Masoretic evidence in mind, consider the following:

Although the pointing of the Masoretic Tetragrammaton may not be reliable, there are scores of proper names that include parts of the Tetragrammaton. Names like Jonathan in Hebrew is *Yaho-nathan*, “*Yaho* has given.” If one syllable was dropped by contraction, it was not the *ô* but the *â* sound that suffered. Yahonathan was sometimes spelled Yonathan. John was spelled, *Yaho-chanan*, “*Yaho* has been gracious.” Elijah’s name was *Eli-Yahu*, “My God is *Yahu*.” *Yaho-shapat* was spelled *Yaho-shapat*, “*Yaho* has judged.” Some names have variant spellings. For example, sometimes Jeremiah’s name is *Yeremi-Yahu* and sometimes *Yeremi-Yah*; Zecharia is sometimes *Zekar Yahu* and sometimes *Zekar Yah*, showing that abbreviation was permissible, but throughout the entire Hebrew Scripture, there is no proper name, using the Tetragrammaton either at the beginning or at the ending that comes out “*Yahweh*,” omitting the middle syllable. It is reasonable to think that when parents named their children after deities they would have pronounced their names the way they understood the deity’s name to have been pronounced. Names like *Ishbaal*, “Man of Baal,” and *Baalyasha*, “Baal has saved,” for example, were probably pronounced according to the true pronunciation of Baal, and *Obed-Yahu*, “Slave of *Yahu*,” was probably pronounced according to the true pronunciation of *Yahu*, with the possible addition of an unspelled aspirant *ah*, “*ObedYahuwah*,” or abbreviated to “*Obed-Yah*.”⁵⁰

One of Buchanan’s points is that where the three-letter form of the divine name is used (as part of proper names in the Bible) there is a second syllable in the pronunciation. This means also that when the divine name has a fourth letter (*heh*, the final *H* [ה]) it may have had three syllables (as in *YaHuWaH* or *YaHoWaH*). Or the fourth letter (again, the final *H*) may have represented

⁵⁰ Buchanan, “Some Unfinished Business with the Dead Sea Scrolls,” page 417. See also George Wesley Buchanan, “How God’s Name Was Pronounced,” *BAR* 21.2 (March-April 1995), page 31.

something else. Later in this section I will put forth a new theory for the pronunciation of the divine name that builds on existing theories and evidence. I will also suggest a form of the name for the biblical God around which I believe a pronunciation most will agree can be accepted without dispute, for personal and for public use, and in Bible translation.

There are some (including me) who believe that certain letters of the divine name may indicate vowel sounds rather than stand for consonants. For example, Luckenbill argued that the final letter of *YHWH* from the Moabite Stone indicates a long “o” sound, which results in something like “Yaho” as the pronunciation of *YHWH*.⁵¹ This pronunciation is consistent with the use of the three-letter form of the divine name in proper names in the Bible and in other early literature, as well as with its use as an independent word in the Elephantine papyri.⁵² A Hebrew/Aramaic pronunciation of “Yaho” is also consistent with ancient and well-known Greek forms of the divine name, such as *Ιαω* (*Iao*), which are presented in figure 1.1 below. But, again, the form of the divine name on the Moabite Stone may be consonantal or some of the letters may indicate certain vowel sounds. The answer is still uncertain, though I will come back to this question later in this section.

Now comes the evidence from Hebrew poetry, “whose meter depends on the number of syllables involved.” Buchanan refers to and cites several texts from the song of Moses and the sons of Israel after God destroyed the Egyptians as they attempted to cross the Red Sea. This song is recorded in Exodus Chapter 15. Here are several of the examples given by Buchanan, reproduced with most of the diacritical marks that he presented in his article⁵³ which will

⁵¹ Luckenbill, “The Pronunciation of the Name of the God of Israel,” pages 280-283.

⁵² Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B. C.*, page xviii, says that this name (יהו), *YHW* “is not an abbreviation of יהוה [YHWH], but an earlier form, and only another way of writing the earliest [in Cowley’s opinion] form יו [YW, ‘Yo,’ or ‘Ya-o,’ or ‘Ya-u’].” See note 37 above for more on Cowley’s view of the earliest form of the divine name and its relationship to other forms. See note 55 below for more on the use of *YW* as a theophoric element in other proper names.

⁵³ Buchanan, “Some Unfinished Business with the Dead Sea Scrolls,” page 418. See also Buchanan, “How God’s Name Was Pronounced,” page 31.

allow those familiar with these marks to see the precise vocalic representation indicated. Those unfamiliar with such marks can simply pronounce the letters as they recognize them, though I suggest the use of an aspirated (in this case, a “breathing out” sound for) “ah” when this element occurs in a word-final position:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Exodus 15:1: | 'Ašîrâh laYâhweh kî ga'oh gâ'âh. |
| Exodus 15:1: | 'Ašîrâh laYahôwâh kî ga'oh gâ'âh. |
| Exodus 15:6: | Yemînekâ, Yâhweh, ne'ddârî bakkoah; yemînekâ, Yâhweh, tir'as 'ôyêb. |
| Exodus 15:6: | Yemînekâ, Yahôwâh, ne'ddârî bakkoah; yemînekâ, Yahôwâh, tir'as 'ôyêb. |
| Exodus 15:17: | Mâkôn lešibttekâ pâ'alттâ, Yâhweh. |
| Exodus 15:17: | Mâkôn lešibttekâ pâ'alттâ, Yahôwâh. |

I believe that anyone reading the above will agree with me and with Buchanan that the lines “sound rough and unrhythmical when the Tetragrammaton is pronounced ‘Yahweh’ but smooth and poetic when pronounced ‘Yahowah.’”⁵⁴ With that in mind, let us look closer at some of the other evidence involving other Hebrew and Aramaic forms of the divine name. Then we will consider the Greek evidence.

As discussed previously, the primary Hebrew and Aramaic forms of the Jewish name for God inside and outside of the Bible, standing alone or as a part of proper names, are the forms *YH*, *YHW*, *YHWH*, with some early use of *YW*.⁵⁵ In the Bible the

⁵⁴ Buchanan, “Some Unfinished Business with the Dead Sea Scrolls,” page 418.

⁵⁵ Driver, “The original form of the name ‘Yahweh,’” pages 7-8, notes that on Israelite ostraca dated to “the latter half of the 9th cent. B.C. or, less probably, to the first half of the following century, the divine name always takes the form יׁ [YW], both at the beginning and at the end of proper names.” Zevit (*Matres Lectionis in Ancient Hebrew Epigraphs*, page 12, note 14) states well the complications involved in the development and use of *YW* in proper names:

The history of the pronunciation of this theophoric element in personal names is extremely difficult to trace for any number of reasons: 1) The data in inscriptions are distributed chronologically over many centuries, linguistically over many languages and dialects, and are represented in many orthographic systems involving unique conventions. Although equations may be established between the representation of the element in one system and its representation in another, phonetic equivalence may not

primary stand-alone form (by a large margin!) is *YHWH* (English: “Jehovah”). It occurs 6,828 times in the standard Hebrew text (BHS) of the Bible used for most translations of the OT today. The stand-alone form *YH* (English: “Jah”) occurs a respectable number of times (49) in the OT. The form *YHW* only occurs once in the OT as a stand-alone name for God, and this is in the Greek form *Iao* that is found in an ancient fragment of the LXX of Leviticus (4QLXXLev^b). It is possible, however, that the Greek *Iao* was used to represent the four-letter name of God, as I will soon explain. But apart from this three-letter Greek form, the three-letter Hebrew or Aramaic form *YWH* does not stand alone in the Bible as a name for God. Still, it is used as such in the Aramaic papyri from Elephantine (as is the three-letter form *YHH*), and the forms *YHW* and *YH* both occur as part of place and personal names in- and outside of the Bible at different times from as early as the ninth century BCE.⁵⁶

But in pre-Masoretic times it is unclear just what precise Hebrew, Aramaic, or other ancient language pronunciations were given to these forms in various locations, at the same or different times or in different dialects. Though the Masoretic evidence provides us with a basis for certain older and some modern pronunciations of the name, it is not clear which pronunciations (if any) in the Masoretic text may be correct indications of a particularly ancient (or original) pronunciation when standing alone or when used as a part of other proper names. The evidence from the use of the divine name in the Masoretic text’s pointing of the two- and three-letter forms of the divine name (*YH* and *YHW*, respectively) in proper names supports a second syllable pronunciation of *Hu* (as in *Ya-Hu*) or *Ho* (as in *Ya-Ho*). The lack

be assumed unless worked out by inner reconstruction from within each system. 2) The significance of the element in Israelite personal names from the biblical period onward may have resulted in socio-linguistic factors complicating the issue even more. Archaic or archaizing pronunciations may have been maintained which diverged from the apparent phonetic realization of a conventionalized orthography, or *vice versa*, an archaic, nonphonetic orthography may have been maintained after sound changes had affected the pronunciation. This is exemplified in the post-Exilic books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

⁵⁶ See the references in note 44 for dates on the various early uses of these forms.

of the four-letter form of the divine name as a part of other proper names could mean the fourth letter stands for or marks something already represented by the three-letter form (*YHW*).

In other words, it could be that the fourth letter in *YHWH*, the final *heh* (ה [H]), simply serves as a vowel indicator for what may be the three-letter form's final-syllable vowel sound. If this is so, then it would make *YHWH* the equivalent of *YHW* by being vocalized along the lines of *YaH-Wo(H)*. Here the final *heh* serves as a vowel indicator (a *mater lectionis*) and not as a consonant. This would then explain why *YHWH* never occurs as a part of other personal names while *YHW* does, that is, because they both represent the same name pronounced the same way!

My review of the evidence suggests that the final letter of the three-letter form of the divine name (*waw* [ו]) may also represent an aspirated “o” sound.⁵⁷ This is consistent with the likely pronunciation of the best Greek representation of the divine name available, namely, Ιαω [*Iao*]). This could mean that both the two-letter (*YH*) and three-letter (*YHW*) forms of the divine name that occur in proper names in- and outside of the Bible, may in fact represent the two independently pronounced forms of the divine name *inclusive* of the pronunciation associated with the four-letter tetragrammaton.

Of course, it is also possible that the final *heh* in *YHWH* represents an aspirated “ah” sound, or some other “breathed out” sound in addition to the “o” or “u” sound indicated by the third letter of the tetragrammaton, *waw* (ו). As noted above, with examples provided by Buchanan, the evidence from the pointing of the Masoretic text in poetic sections of the OT supports a pronunciation of three syllables for the four-letter form of the divine name (*YHWH*), with the same final aspirant that was observed with “Yahowah” in the selections from Exodus 15. In those texts, “Yahowah” sounds much more rhythmical than “Yahweh.” But what would these same selections look like, or more appropriately *sound* like with “Yah-wo(h)” in place of

⁵⁷ See note 43. Also, compare note 44 regarding the use of final *heh* in the three-letter form of the divine name *YHH* in the Elephantine Papyri.

“Yahowah”? You can make the substitute yourself by using the examples provided on page 36 above. In my opinion, with my substitutions, Exodus 15:1 still sounds ‘smooth and rhythmical’ with “Yah-wo(h)” and in 15:6 or 15:17 “Yah-wo(h)” also sounds acceptable, especially with a “breathed out” final syllable.

What, though, does the evidence from early Greek forms of the divine name tell us about the name’s early pronunciation by Jews, by Christians, and by others? Consider figure 1.1 below, which contains a listing of different Greek forms of the divine name occurring in literature that speaks to the early use and/or the early (pre-Masoretic) pronunciation of the divine name.

Figure 1.1

Greek Forms of the Divine Name and their Corresponding Hebrew/Aramaic Forms with English Transliterations

| GREEK FORMS | HEBREW / ARAMAIC FORMS | ENGLISH TRANSLITERATIONS AND APPROXIMATE PRONUNCIATIONS |
|---------------|------------------------|--|
| Ιαω | יהוה, יהה, יהר | Greek: <i>Ia-o</i> , from “Yah-wo(h),” “Ye-wo(h),” “Ya-ho(h)” or “Ya-ho,” all of which could represent pronunciations of any of the corresponding Hebrew/Aramaic forms listed. |
| Ιαωια Ιαη | יהו+יה יה | Greek: <i>Ia-o-ia</i> , from a combination of the Hebrew “Yah” or “Ye-ho” and “Yah.” Greek: <i>Ia-e</i> or <i>Ia</i> , from the Hebrew “Yah” (see note 65) |
| Ιαου Ιαουε | יהר יהרה | Greek: <i>Ia-ou</i> or possibly <i>Ia-o</i> , from “Ya-hu,” “Ye-hu,” “Ya-ho,” or “Ye-ho.” Greek: <i>Ia-ou-e</i> or possibly <i>Ia-o-e</i> , from “Ya-hu-weh” or “Ye-hu-weh,” or “Ya-ho-weh” or “Ye-ho-weh.” |
| Ια | יה | Greek: <i>Ia</i> , from the Hebrew “Yah.” |
| Ιεω Ιευ | יהוה יהר | Greek: <i>Ie-u-o</i> , possibly from a Hebrew “Ye-hu-wo(h).” Greek: <i>Ie-u</i> , possibly from “Ye-hu.” |
| Ιαωθ | יהרה, יהר | Greek: <i>Ia-oh</i> , from “Ya-ho” or “Ye-ho,” with the Greek <i>theta</i> (θ) serving as a sign of aspiration (see note 69). ⁵⁸ |

⁵⁸ Some believe that this form (Ιαωθ) is a combination of the shortest form of the divine name, “Yah,” and the ending of the Hebrew word **צְבָאוֹת** *sabaoth*, which is transliterated into Greek as *σαβαωθ* (*sabaoth*, meaning “hosts” or “armies,” as in ‘Jehovah of armies’). But see the explanation of the ending of the Greek form of the divine name with *theta* (θ) by Irenaeus in note 69 below.

| | | |
|------|--------|--|
| Ιαηλ | יְהוָה | Greek: <i>Ia-el</i> , from a combination of “Yah” and ‘ <i>el</i> ’ (the Hebrew word for “God”). ⁵⁹ |
|------|--------|--|

In the above chart, in the discussion preceding it, and in the discussion which now follows I have attempted to give as much relevant information about Greek forms of the divine name and their equivalents in Hebrew/Aramaic as I think is practical to here give. I believe that the good reasons I here present will allow me to make reasonable conclusions regarding the ancient and the modern pronunciation of the divine name, particularly as it relates to the use of the Anglicized names “Jehovah,” “Jaho,” and “Jah.”

Ιαω occurs in one of the earliest and best representatives of the Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint (or LXX). In 4QLXXLev^b (dating from the first century BCE [see page 67, note 113]), there are two occurrences of this form of the divine name, namely, in Leviticus 3:12 and in 4:27. This text, its implications for the use of the divine name in the LXX in general and even in the NT where it quotes from the OT, will be considered later in this chapter. Ιαω also occurs in the writings of Diodorus Siculus,⁶⁰ Tertullian,⁶¹ Origen (see note 65),

⁵⁹ M.D. Johnson, “Life of Adam and Eve,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, James H. Charlesworth, ed. (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1985), page 285, note 29b; L. Wells, “The Books of Adam and Eve,” in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, R.H. Charles, ed., vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1964 [1913]), page 148, note “4. Jael.” This Greek form of the divine name is similar to the form of the divine name used in the Hebrew of 3 Enoch for the angel Metatron, who is also known as the “lesser YHWH” (3 Enoch 12:5) in contrast to the “greater YHWH” (3 Enoch 48B:1[44]). It is also used of an archangel who is actually named “Yaho’el,” which “probably originated in speculation about the angel in whom God’s name resides, according to Exodus 23:20f.,” which angel is identified in 3 Enoch 12:5 as “Metatron.” See P. Alexander, “3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, James H. Charlesworth, ed. (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1983), page 244. This form of the name is similar to the “Iaoel” of the Apocalypse of Abraham, a work that may have originally been written in Hebrew (but preserved today only in Slavonic) in the late first or early-to-middle second century CE (see 10:3 and 17:3 in R. Rubinkiewicz and H.G. Lunt, “The Apocalypse of Abraham,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, pages 693, 697).

⁶⁰ Around 30 BCE Diodorus completed a famous “Library of History” in which he writes that among the Jews Moses “referred his laws to the god who is invoked [ἔπικαλούμενον] as Iao [Ἰαώ]” (1.94.2; LCL series of Diodorus’ works, vol. 1, page 321). This reference from Diodorus is also cited by Justin Martyr (who died around

Varro,⁶² Jerome,⁶³ and in early Onomastica.⁶⁴ $\text{I}\alpha\omega\text{I}\alpha$ and $\text{I}\alpha\eta$ both occur in the writings of Origen.⁶⁵ $\text{I}\alpha\omega$ and $\text{I}\alpha\omega\epsilon$ are from the

165 CE) in his *Hortatory Address to the Greeks* (see ANF 1, chap. 9, page 277). Frank Shaw, “The Earliest Non-mystical Jewish Use of $\text{I}\alpha\omega$,” (Ph.D. diss.: University of Cincinnati, 2002), pages 45-74, notes that Diodorus’ use of *Iao* in this passage suggests that he was using a term that his audience could relate to since they were familiar with it the same as they were familiar with other groups and figures mentioned by Diodorus, namely, the early “Arians,” “Hestia,” and the “Good Spirit.”

⁶¹ In his *Against the Valentinians* (ANF 3, chap. 14, page 511) Tertullian (c. 160-c. 220 CE) refers to the use of the name *Iao* which “comes to be found in the Scriptures [Latin: *inde inuenitur Iao in scripturis*]” (see *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. 47, Aemilii Kroymann, *Q. Sept. Florent. Tertulliani Opera*, part 3 [Academiae Litterarum Caesareae Vindobonensis, 1906], page 193).

⁶² In a fragment preserved by John Lydus (a mid-6th century CE Constantinople official), the Roman scholar Varro (116-27 BCE) when defining the Jewish God “says he is called *Iao* [$\text{I}\alpha\omega$] in the Chaldaean mysteries.” Lydus connects this *Iao* to Herennius Philo of Byblos’ (concerning whom, see note 68 below) claim that the meaning of this name “in the Phoenician language” is “intelligible light” (Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, vol. 2 [Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1980], page 141, under 324; see also Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, vol. 1 [Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1976], page 211, under 75).

⁶³ Jerome (c. 342-c. 420 CE), in his “Commentary on Psalm 8,” writes: “The name of Lord in Hebrew language contains four letters, Yod He Waw He; it is the proper name of God and can be pronounced as *Yahō* [Latin: *legi potest IAHO*]” (as translated by G.J. Thierry, “The Pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton,” *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 5 [1948], page 34; see also the same reference in A. Lukyn Williams, “The Tetragrammaton—Jahweh, Name or Surrogate?” *ZAW* 54 [1936], page 266, under 1). This truly remarkable comment, where Jerome directly states that the full four-letter form of the divine name can be pronounced as “*Yaho*,” fits perfectly with my theory that the four-letter form of the divine name is actually the pronunciation equivalent of the three-letter form of the name found in the Elephantine Papyri and represented in Greek by the form $\text{I}\alpha\omega$ (*Iao*).

⁶⁴ “Onomastica” are defined as “a division of a larger genre called glossae,” which were “Greek literary tools meant to explain words and expressions either no longer used in living language or foreign to the reader due to dialectical variation” (Shaw, “The Earliest Non-mystical Jewish Use of $\text{I}\alpha\omega$,” page 20). For example, P.Oxy 2745, published as an “Onomasticon of Hebrew Names” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. 36 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1970), page 3, has *Iao* eight times in a column that provides “an etymological interpretation” of Old Testament Hebrew names translated into Greek. This portion of the papyrus is dated to the third century CE and it is likely the product of a Christian scribe since, in addition to the use of *Iao* throughout, the Greek word for “God” is contracted in column B, line 5, in what is known as a *nomen sacrum* (“sacred name”), which is believed to be a post-apostolic Christian invention that I will discuss later in this chapter in relation to the use of the divine name in the NT. Shaw’s study is an excellent presentation of the use of *Iao* and, in addition to P.Oxy 2745, he notes occurrences of *Iao* in the following onomastica: The Heidelberg Papyri, dated to the late third or early fourth century CE, which has

nine instances of *Iao* and two instances of *Iω* (*Iō*, corresponding to the Hebrew י; see notes 37, 52, and 55 above; compare the reading of Vat. 174.81 [see Shaw, "The Earliest Non-mystical Jewish Use of *Iω*," page 35, note 69, page 36, note 70, and page 38, note 82]). This papyrus roll, like P.Oxy 2745, contains an instance of the Greek word for "God" as a *nomen sacrum*. Further, it also incorporates a quotation of Matt 27:46 or Mark 15:34 and violates the alphabetical listing of words in favor of *Ιησους* ("Jesus"). These facts mark the papyrus as a Christian document (Shaw, "The Earliest Non-mystical Jewish Use of *Iω*," page 22, note 8). Codex Marchalianus (Q) is a sixth century LXX manuscript that contains "onomastic notes in its marginalia" (Shaw, "The Earliest Non-mystical Jewish Use of *Iω*," page 26). Twice in the notes for Eze 1:2 and 11:1 *Iao* is used. According to Shaw the use of *Iao* in these onomastica, which are based on the Greek names used in the LXX, probably indicates "an early time when *Iω* was being read and employed by Jews" (Shaw, "The Earliest Non-mystical Jewish Use of *Iω*," page 27). We could also say this is true among early Christians based on the Christian character of some of these onomastica, in particular P.Oxy 2745 and the Heidelberg Papyri, as noted above. Shaw notes an additional instance of *Iao* in "another apparently old onomasticon" in the "marginalia of an uncial palimpsest of Genesis and Exodus from the Vatican collection of Pius II (Gr. 15), dated to the ninth century [Ralphs 662]," but the interpretations of which "date to the time or milieu of Origen due to certain agreements (one unique) between this onomasticon and name expositions given in Origen" (Shaw, "The Earliest Non-mystical Jewish Use of *Iω*," page 32). Shaw also cites the Onomasticum Coislinianum of the sixth century CE, which is "comprehensive for the entire Bible," and it has "the most [ten] instances of *Iω* in the non-papyrological Greek onomastica." There is also the Onomastica Vaticana (dated prior to the sixth century CE) which contains some form of *Iao* in several instances, and the Glossae Colbertinae (dated to between the third and sixth centuries CE) which contains two instances of *Iao* (Shaw, "The Earliest Non-mystical Jewish Use of *Iω*," pages 32-37). Several other onomastic sources, some as late as the fifteenth century (!), are also cited by Shaw ("The Earliest Non-mystical Jewish Use of *Iω*," pages 37-38). Shaw also notes instances of *Iao* in other language onomastica, including six instances of *Iao* and two instances of *Ia* in the Syriac onomastica, which are mostly from the sixth or seventh centuries CE, but "clearly translated from Greek *Vorlagen* [= underlying texts] since they retain the order of the Greek, not the Syriac, alphabet in their listing of names" (Shaw, "The Earliest Non-mystical Jewish Use of *Iω*," pages 39-41 [the quote is found on page 40 of his dissertation]). For the instances of the divine name in the Ethiopian onomastica, see note 69 below.

⁶⁵ In his *Commentary on John*, Origen (c. 185-c. 253 CE) explains the meaning of "Jeremiah" as μετεωρισμός *Iω* (*meteorismos Iao*, "Iao means 'lifting up'"). Compare the translation in ANF 10, page 322, Book II, second column ("IAO means etymologically lifting up, elation"). See also G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), page 865, under μετεωρισμός. The forms *Iao* and *Iaioia* also derive support from the possible readings of *Contra Celsus* 6.32, where Origen refers to those involved in the magical arts who took the name *Iao* or *Iaioia* "from the Hebrew scriptures," which is the "name used by the Hebrews" (ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν γραφῶν τῶν Ἰαωία παρ' Ἑβραίοις ὀνομαζόμενον). See Henry Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), page 349. The form *Iaioia* is listed in the main text of Paul Koetschau's *Origenes Werke*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899). Chadwick (*Origen: Contra Celsum*, page 349,

tradition of Clement of Alexandria.⁶⁶ Ια is represented by Origen, Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, Theodoret, and Epiphanius.⁶⁷

note 1) cites both *Iao* and *Iaouia* as Greek forms of the divine name used in this citation. Thus, both forms are listed in figure 1.1 as having been associated with the usage of the “Hebrews” in the ancient world. The form Ιαη (*Iae*) is found in Origen’s commentary on Psalm 2, as found in J.P. Migne, *Patrologiae Graeca* (Paris, 1857-66), vol. 12, column 1104, which is translated in relevant part by Leslie John McGregor, *The Greek Text of Ezekiel: An Examination of Its Homogeneity* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1985), page 208, note 7, as follows:

Mention must be made of the word pronounced ‘Kurios’ by the Greeks and ‘Adonai’ by the Hebrews. God is given ten names by the Hebrews. One of these is ‘Adonai’ and is translated as ‘Lord’ [Kurios]. In some places it is pronounced ‘Adonai’ by the Hebrews and ‘Kurios’ by the Greeks, the form of what has been written in Scripture dictating this. When Iae [Ἰαῆ] is found, it is pronounced ‘Kurios’ by the Greeks, but not by the Hebrews, as in ‘Praise the Lord, for praise is good’ [LXX: Ps 146.1]. ‘Lord’ [Kurion] is said there instead of Iae [Ἰαῆ]. The beginning of the Psalm is ‘Allelouia’ according to the Hebrews.

Here the use of Ιαη (*Iae*) is clearly tied to the use of *Allelouia* in the Greek of Psalm 146:1, with *Iae* serving as “a transcription of *Yah*” (Roland de Vaux, “The Revelation of the Divine Name YHWH,” in *Proclamation and Presence: Old Testament Essays in Honour of Gwynne Henton Davies*, John I. Durham and J.R. Porter, eds. [Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1970], page 52, note 16). This form (*Yah*) is also represented by the *-ia* in the Greek *Allelouia*. The Greek letter *eta* (η) appears to be an attempt to represent the Hebrew *heh* (ה) in *YaH*. This may have something to do with “the earliest forms of the Greek alphabet” where “η was a mark of aspiration” (Speiser, “The Pronunciation of Hebrew Based Chiefly on the Transliterations in the Hexapla: The Vowels,” page 24).

⁶⁶ In his work, *The Stromata* (ANF 2, Book 5, chap. 6, page 452), Clement (c. 150- c. 220 CE) writes concerning the temple and the name of God:

Again, there is the veil of the entrance into the holy of holies. Four pillars there are, the sign of the sacred tetrad of the ancient covenants. Further, the mystic name of four letters [τό τετραγράμμον] which was affixed to those alone to whom the adytum was accessible, is called Jave [Ἰαου], which is interpreted, “Who is and shall be” [ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἐσόμενος] The name of God, too, among the Greeks contains four letters [τετράδα περιέχει γραμμάτων].

The reading Ιαου (*Iaou*) in figure 1.1 is based on J.P. Migne, *Patrologiae Graeca* (Paris, 1857-66), vol. 9, column 60, which is supported by the eleventh century Greek Codex Laurentianus. Some editions of Clement’s *Stromata* read Ιαουε (*Iaouē*) instead of Ιαου (*Iaou*) in the main text of Clement based on less than convincing evidence (see *Stromata* 5.6.34 in Alain Le Boulluec, ed., *Les Stromates*, Stromate V, Tome 1 [Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1981] and in O. Stählin and L. Früchtel, eds., *Stromata I – VI* [Berlin, 1960]). But not only is the reading *Iaouē* textually uncertain but it also appears to contradict the comparison between the “four letters” of the divine name and the “four pillars” (κίονες τέταρες) Clement refers to as “the sign of the sacred tetrad [τετράδος] of the ancient covenants,” since *Iaouē* has five letters whereas the form *Iaou* has four letters. *Iao* has three letters, but it could involve a fourth unwritten letter

Ιεω and Ιευ are found in the tradition of Herennius Philo of Byblos.⁶⁸ Ιαωθ is used by Irenaeus.⁶⁹ And the form Ιαηλ is from The Books of Adam and Eve.⁷⁰

if the final *heh* in Hebrew merely marks the final “o” vowel sound of the Hebrew *waw*. Or perhaps the final *heh* indicates a breathing out of the final “o” sound, which in Greek was not represented by a letter or by some other mark during this time. Thus, *Iao* could again represent a pronunciation of the full four-letter written Hebrew/Aramaic form of the divine name, the tetragrammaton (see note 63).

⁶⁷ Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), page 73, states that Aquila (early to middle second century CE) and Symmachus (middle to late second century CE) use *Ia* in their translations of Ps 67(68):5 and Isa 12:2. Further on the use of *Ia* by Aquila in Ps 67(68):5, in the possibly early fifth century CE work *Hypomnestikon Bibliion Ioseppou* (or “Notebook of Josephus [or ‘Joseph’]”) we read that “Lord is his name” is rendered by Aquila as “Ia [Iα] is his name” (151:4 in Robert M. Grant and Glen W. Menzies, *Joseph’s Bible Notes [Hypomnestikon]*, Harold W. Attridge, ed. [Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1996], page 331). Aquila also uses *Ia* twice in Isa 38:11. Theodotion (late second century or early third century CE) uses *Ia* in Ps 67(68):5, Isa 12:2, and twice in Isa 38:11. The fifth column of Origen’s Hexapla (produced between 230 and 240 CE) also uses *Ia* in Ps 67(68):5. According to the critical edition by Natalio Fernández Marcos and Angel Sáenz-Badillos, *Theodoretus Cyrensis Quaestiones in Octateuchum* (Madrid, 1979), page 112 (15.17-18), Theodoret (c. 393-c. 468) wrote, Καλοῦσι δὲ αὐτὸ σαμαριεῖται μὲν Ἰαβέ, ἰουδαῖοι δὲ Ἰα, which can be translated, “The Samaritans pronounce it [the divine name mentioned in 15.15] ‘Iabe’ [Iαβε], but the Jews pronounce it ‘Ia’ [Iα].” Epiphanius of Salamis (c. 315-c. 403 CE) also lists *Ia* and *Iabe* (see *The Panarion* 1.3.40) among the names of God.

⁶⁸ This form of the divine name (*Ieuo*) is preserved in Eusebius of Caesarea’s (c. 260-c. 340 CE) *Preparation for the Gospel* 1.9.20-21, where Eusebius quotes Porphyry’s (c. 232-c. 305 CE) work *Against the Christians*, in which work Porphyry gives a translation into Greek by Philo of Byblos (c. 70-c. 160 CE) of Sanchuniathon of Berytus’ (believed to have lived in pre-Trojan times, anywhere from 2000 to 1300 BCE) history of the Jews. With respect to this history it is said that Sanchuniathon “received the records from Hierombalus the priest of the god Jeuo [Ἰεωύ]” (E.H. Gifford’s translation of Eusebius’ *Preparation* as found in Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, vol. 2, page 139; see also George H. van Kooten, “Moses/Musaeus/Mochos and His God Yahweh, Iao, Sabaoth, Seen from a Graeco-Roman Perspective,” in *The Revelation of the Name YHWH to Moses: Perspectives from Judaism, the Pagan Graeco-Roman World, and Early Christianity*, George H. van Kooten, ed. [Leiden: Brill, 2006], pages 119-120). However, the form *Ieuo* from this passage from Philo of Byblos is “changed into ‘Iao’ in Theodoretus of Cyrhus in Syria (c. AD 393-466), *Graecarum affectionum curatio* 2.44” (van Kooten, “Moses/Musaeus/Mochos and His God,” page 120, note 32; see also Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, vol. 2, page 140, note for 21, Ἰεωύ). Indeed, elsewhere John Lydus (see note 62 above) references Varro’s use of the name *Iao* and says that Philo of Byblos defines this name “in the Phoenician language” (Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, vol. 2, page 141, under 324; van Kooten, “Moses/Musaeus/Mochos and His God,” page 127). This “shows that Philo of Byblos

While forms of the divine name found in literature devoted to the use of magic are sometimes the same as some of the Greek forms of the divine name referenced in figure 1.1 above, novel or unusual Greek forms of the divine name found in magic texts are not listed in figure 1.1. This is because “these prayers and incantations in the magical papyri mix all sorts of sounds

“appears to have known the Jewish God not only as ‘Ieuo’ ... but also as ‘Iao’” (van Kooten, “Moses/Musaeus/Mochos and His God,” page 127). *Ieu* is listed in figure 1.1 above because of the reference to this form by Stern (*Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, vol. 2, page 141, note for 21, Ἰεϋώ) as occurring in codex A of this text’s manuscript history in place of *Ieuo* in the text of Eusebius translated by Gifford (quoted earlier in this note). See also William F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns, 1968), page 263, note 155, who cites these two variants (*Ieuo* and *Ieu*), as well as the reading *Iao* from Theodoret.

⁶⁹ Irenaeus (c. 130-c. 200 CE), in his work *Against Heresies* (ANF 1, pages 412-413), refers to the four-letter form of the “name of God ... among the Greeks” as Ιαωθ (*Iaoth*). Here Irenaeus also refers to different meanings for Greek forms of the divine name (each having four letters) but where the two referenced forms differ with respect to the pronunciation of the last syllable. The form “Jaōth” (given in Latin, but with a Greek omega [ω] and presumably an understood Greek *theta* [θ] at the end) is said to be “long and aspirated” while the form “Jaōth” (with a Greek *omicron* and a final *theta*) is said to be “written shortly.” Again, each of these forms of the divine name, in Greek, would have four letters: *iota, alpha, omega, and theta*, or *iota, alpha, omicron, and theta*. The Greek forms Ιαωθ and Ιαωτ (*Iaot*), both with an *omega*, are found in several Greek papyri (see G. Adolf Deissmann, *Bible Studies* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1988 (1901)], page 327), and also in a thirteenth century CE Ethiopian *onomasticon* (Frank Wutz, *Onomastica Sacra*, vol. 2 [Leipzig: J.C. Hinriches'sche Buchhandlung, 1915], pages 1004, 1005). Shaw notes that the form cited by Wutz as *Iao* is actually equivalent to Ιαηλ (*Iael*) in two manuscripts (α and γ) and Ιαα (*Iaa*) in one other (β), and that the presence of these forms, together with the form Ιαωθ in the Ethiopian *onomastica*, “likely shows that the influence of much earlier usage of Ιαω in Jewish *onomastica* had long range effects” (Shaw, “The Earliest Non-mystical Jewish Use of Ιαω,” pages 41, 42). But the fact that Irenaeus speaks of one form being “long and aspirated” and another form “written shortly” should be noted.

⁷⁰ *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, Gary A. Anderson and Michael E. Stone, eds., Second Revised Edition (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1999), page 72, verse 29:4, and page 79, verse 33:5. This work is believed to have been of Jewish origin and originally composed in Hebrew and then later translated into Greek, Latin, and other languages. The date of the original Hebrew composition is thought to have been between 100 BCE and 200 CE, with the Greek text having been produced “between that time and A.D. [CE] 400” (Johnson, “Life of Adam and Eve,” page 252; see also Wells, “The Books of Adam and Eve,” pages 126-127). As observed in the latter half of note 69 above, this form also appears in two manuscripts (α and γ) of an Ethiopian *onomasticon* (see Shaw, “The Earliest Non-mystical Jewish Use of Ιαω,” page 41).

together.”⁷¹ Thus, such forms of the divine name are not always useful when it comes to isolating non-incantational Jewish, reportedly Jewish, or early Christian pronunciations of the name.⁷² I have therefore given little attention to the use of the name in such texts for the purposes of this discussion.

Other Greek forms of the divine name associated with Jewish and Samaritan usage. The Greek forms used in reference to the Samaritan use of the divine name are also not listed in figure 1.1, because they are distinguished by the early writers who use them from the reported Jewish pronunciation. However, in addition to the five-letter Greek variant *Iaoue* discussed above from Clement of Alexandria (which reading is uncertain and does not fit well the context of Clement's remarks), it is the Greek forms representing the Samaritan pronunciation that are considered to be “the earliest concrete testimony to the pronunciation ‘Yahweh.’”⁷³ It is these forms and some other information concerning the Jewish use of the divine name that we will now consider.

As noted previously, the Greek form *Iaoue* in Clement of Alexandria's writings is a variant reading from one of his texts that seems to represent a Hebrew/Aramaic pronunciation such as “Ya/e-Ho/u-WeH.” But in spite of the textual and contextual problems this Greek form presents (as discussed in note 66), if we accept the form *Iaoue* as original to Clement then this form, unlike “Yahweh,” appears to ‘maintain the middle vowel’!⁷⁴ Therefore, though it may be possible that the *ou* in *Iaoue* represents the Hebrew *waw*, even this Greek variant form (*Iaoue*) does not necessarily support the pronunciation of “Yahweh,” because in “Yahweh” there is no middle vowel.

This brings us to the Samaritan forms of the divine name, namely, the Greek forms *Iabe* (Ιαβε) and *Iabai* (Ιαβαί) used in the works of Epiphanius of Salamis (c. 315-c. 403 CE) and Theodoret

⁷¹ Buchanan, “Some Unfinished Business with the Dead Sea Scrolls,” page 415.

⁷² See Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, pages 321-336, for a good survey of Greek forms of the divine name including some from selections of the magical papyri.

⁷³ Sean M. McDonough, *YHWH at Patmos: Rev. 1:4 in its Hellenistic and Early Jewish Setting* (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1999), page 118.

⁷⁴ Buchanan, “Some Unfinished Business with the Dead Sea Scrolls,” page 416; Buchanan, “How God's Name Was Pronounced,” page 31.

of Cyrrhus (c. 393-c. 468).⁷⁵ However, as we can see from the quotation of Theodoret above (at the end of note 67), he does not use either of these forms for the *Jewish* pronunciation of the divine name. Rather, Theodoret uses *Iabe/Iabai* to represent the reported Samaritan pronunciation *in contrast to the reported Jewish pronunciation!*

The Greek form *Ia*, which Theodoret represented as being the Jewish pronunciation of the divine name, appears clearly to be a transliteration of the two-letter form of the divine name in Hebrew, namely, יָה (YH, “YaH,” or in English, “Jah”). As noted earlier, this form of the divine name stands alone in the Hebrew Bible at least 49 times and it is used frequently as a prefix and as a suffix in compound names in- and outside of the Bible. It is also used at least 9 times standing alone or as a part of the expression “Hallelujah” (Hebrew: הַלְלֵי־יָה [*halelu* and *Yah*]) in the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁷⁶ Further, this expression of praise for “Jah” is also found 4 times in the New Testament book of Revelation (19:1, 3, 4, 6; Greek: Ἀλληλουιά [*allelou* plus *Ia* (= transliteration of *Yah*, Anglicized today as “Jah”)]).

One of the variants listed for the Jewish use of *Ia* in the reference from Theodoret in note 67 above is the Greek word Ἀϊά (*Aia* [“A-i-a”]). This variant appears to be a Graecized form of the Hebrew word *'ehyeh* (“I will be”) found twice in Exodus 3:14. This form may have been represented elsewhere by some Jews in Theodoret’s time with the form Ιαβαί (*Iabai*).⁷⁷ It is possible, then, that the form *Iabe* comes from the Jewish use of *Iabai* for *Aia*, the Greek form of *'ehyeh*. Whether this is the origin of *Iabe* among the Samaritans or not (that is, it may derive ultimately from *'ehyeh* and *not* from a form of the divine name

⁷⁵ Williams, “The Tetragrammaton—Jahweh, Name or Surrogate?” page 264, notes that Epiphanius lists not only *Iabe* as a name for God but also a variant reading of *Iaue*.

⁷⁶ Abegg, Jr., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Concordance*, vol. 1, page 296. The divine name *Yah* (“Jah”) is used as part of the expression *halelu-yah* in the OT 24 times (Helmer Ringgren, “הַלְלֵי HLL,” TDOT 3 [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978], page 408, under “f”).

⁷⁷ Williams, “The Tetragrammaton—Jahweh, Name or Surrogate?” page 264, who states that “the Samaritans call it [the *Aia* of the Jews] *Iabai*” according to Theodoret’s *Haereticarum Fabularum Compendium*.

itself), the form *Aia* also represents the name “Ahijah” in the LXX (Nehemiah 10:26 [2 Ezra 20:27]). Therefore, it is unlikely that *Aia* represents the divine name itself. It is more likely a Greek representation of the Hebrew word *'ehyeh* from Exodus 3:14, which Theodoret could easily have confused with *Iabe* or *Iabai* among Samaritans or among the Jews.

In any event, the textual tradition of Theodoret shows that he attributed the use of *Iabe* to the Samaritans, not to the Jews whom Theodoret says used either *Aia* or *Ia*. It is possible that *Iabe* (or *Iabai*) does not represent a pronunciation of the tetragrammaton at all, but rather the Samaritan pronunciation of *'ehyeh* which is put in contrast to the Jewish pronunciation of the same, which is, in Greek, *Aia*. But even if the Greek form *Iabe* attributed by Theodoret to the Samaritans does refer to their pronunciation of the divine name itself, this pronunciation is still in direct contrast to the reported Jewish usage and “may well represent speculation on the part of the Gentiles (Samaritans and Christians) as to the pronunciation of the name.”⁷⁸ Further, as Lowy points out:

It might be thought that the reports originating from the anti-heretical Patristic literature, on the Samaritans' enunciating the Tetragrammaton as $\iota\alpha\beta\epsilon$ [*Iabe*] or $\iota\alpha\beta\alpha\iota$ [*Iabai*], must conclusively prove that this represents the real testimony of eye-witnesses. However, these reports are [quite possibly] nothing more than faulty transcriptions of incantatory formulae, derived from Samaritan magical texts.⁷⁹

Additionally, “the possibility that the bitter enemies of the Jews used the form Yahweh is no evidence that the Hebrews did likewise.”⁸⁰ Of course, it is possible that the Samaritans may have preserved a more ancient pronunciation of the divine name that the Jews left behind, but the truth is “there is no direct evidence from the late Second Temple period which supports such a

⁷⁸ Luckenbill, “The Pronunciation of the Name of the God of Israel,” page 282.

⁷⁹ S. Lowy, *The Principles of Samaritan Bible Exegesis* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), page 273.

⁸⁰ MacLaurin, “YHWH: The Origin of the Tetragrammaton,” page 459.

pronunciation [as ‘Yahweh’].”⁸¹ But McDonough also states that the “virtual unanimity” among scholars for preferring “Yahweh” must ‘count for something.’⁸² Quite frankly, as we have seen throughout this discussion, there have been plenty of scholars who have rejected “Yahweh” and McDonough himself notes, as quoted above, the lack of any “direct evidence from the late Second Temple period.”

The majority of scholarly opinion is not what is at issue here. What is important are the best available reasons, whether they are provided by a scholar’s published analysis and investigation or not. If the majority of scholarly opinion is based on the best available evidence, then it should be accepted based on the best available evidence not on the majority opinion itself. If the best available evidence is our guide, then Bible translations would not continue using “Lord” or “God” in place of a form of the divine name, since the Bible gives us no good reasons for accepting such an opinion. Yet, the majority of scholarly opinion does *not* use God’s name, and so their opinion alone cannot be accepted without first considering, understanding, and then accepting the reasons given in support of a particular belief. Anything less is not acceptable in a biblical discussion about the use of God’s name.

When it comes to comparing the good reasons offered in support of one pronunciation of the divine name over another, “Yahweh” loses dramatically to forms such as *Iao* and *Ia*, ancient Greek pronunciations of the Hebrew forms “Yaho” and “Yah.” But McDonough proposes several related theories for different pronunciations of the divine name among the Jews and pagans that simply have no credible evidence whatsoever supporting them. Indeed, they fly directly into the face of a mountain of evidence that supports *Iao*, and to a lesser extent *Ia*. Amazingly, even though McDonough considers much of the available

⁸¹ McDonough, *YHWH at Patmos*, page 118. For additional discussion of the Samaritan pronunciation of the divine name, see my *Three Dissertations on the Teachings of Jehovah’s Witnesses* (Murrieta, CA: Elihu Books, 2002), pages 223-224, note 32.

⁸² McDonough, *YHWH at Patmos*, page 117.

evidence regarding the use of the name, the very theory he advances is against the evidence McDonough presents! He writes:

In sum, then, I would suggest that there were two streams of tradition with regards to the pronunciation of the divine name in Judaism. The “official version,” presumably passed along by the temple hierarchy and the rabbis, may well have been “Yahweh” (although this is not provable from the existing evidence), and was likely *not* Iao. At the same time, a more popular version of the name, Iao, flourished among some Jews, perhaps especially in the diaspora. Iao originated, it is true, from a shortened version of the tetragrammaton, but it eventually gained independent status as the designation for the Jewish God. This form was more widely dispersed among the pagans, since its adherents were less attentive to the traditions restricting the usage of the divine name.⁸³

McDonough represents a large segment of present and past scholars who simply cannot shake themselves loose from the pronunciation “Yahweh,” even when they at the same time acknowledge that this pronunciation of the divine name “is not provable from the existing evidence.” It is no wonder, then, that we cannot get many modern Bible translators or translation committees to put God’s name back in the text where it belongs, using a pronunciation based on the best available evidence.

Additionally, it is not necessarily true that *Iao* ‘originated from a shortened version of the tetragrammaton.’ It may have, that is, if we accept *Iao* as a Greek transliteration of the three-letter form of the divine name *YHW* (יהו) and if we believe that the three-letter form is not pronounced the same way as the four-letter form *YHWH* (יהוה). But this is not a necessary conclusion. In fact, when we consider “the existing evidence” and if we draw reasonable conclusions from it for an acceptable pronunciation of the divine name, this conclusion is not well-founded at all.

⁸³ McDonough, *YHWH at Patmos*, page 122.

Conclusions regarding the pronunciation of the divine name based on the best available evidence. I have tried to present and to consider the best available evidence from some of the best sources and from discussions of the available evidence, this so I can reach reasonable conclusions about how the divine name should be pronounced. Specifically, my investigation is part of an effort to determine if the most common English and other modern language pronunciations used by Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Christian Witnesses of Jah, and others (namely, “Jehovah,” “Jaho,” and “Jah”) are legitimate pronunciations of the biblical God’s name. I have also tried to answer questions related to the use of “Yahweh” in order to determine if it is an acceptable transliteration and pronunciation of God’s name which is based on the best (or even good) evidence.

In this discussion I have presented evidence showing that the divine name was represented in three Hebrew/Aramaic forms either standing alone or as part of other words. Those three forms are יה (YH), יהו (YHW), and the tetragrammaton יהוה (YHWH). Pronunciations of these forms prior to the Masoretic convention of vowel pointing are practically impossible to determine without considering their representations in other languages, such as in Greek. The Masoretic evidence itself is inconclusive, since it is not clear whether any of the vowel pointings in the Masoretic textual tradition represent an accurate pronunciation of the divine name. What is certain is that the precise vowel points from *’adonay* are not ever used with the divine name in the Bible. The vowel pointing that is used more often than any other (at least in B19) is *YeH-WaH*. It is not clear what word, if any, the vowel points used for this form of the divine name are from.

The Greek forms of the divine name give us more help than do the Masoretic vowel pointing of the divine name when it comes to determining what pronunciations of the divine name were in use in the ancient world. As presented in figure 1.1 and in the notes following it, while there are several Greek forms of the divine name that occur in various early texts, the form *Iao* (Ιαω) is found in one of the oldest and best representatives of the LXX Bible tradition, 4QLXXLev^b (from around the first century BCE).

Ιαω (*Iao*) is also found throughout representatives of early Greek biblical onomastica, and it is the name of the God whom the historian Diodorus Siculus (around 30 BCE) said is “invoked” by the Jews to whom the law of Moses was given. It is connected with the Roman scholar Varro’s (116-27 BCE) description of the Jewish God according to the “Chaldean mysteries,” and Tertullian (c. 160- c. 220 CE) refers to *Iao* as “found in the Scriptures.” Origen (c. 185-c. 253 CE) uses the name *Iao* in an onomastic context in his *Commentary on John*, and in another one of his works Origen refers to those involved in magical arts who took the name *Iao* (or *Iaoia*) “from the Hebrew scriptures,” which Origen says is the “name used by the Hebrews.”

There is one other reference to the divine name to be discussed here. Josephus refers to the inscription of the divine name on a “golden crown” worn by the high priest “on the seventh days and new moons, and if any festivals belonging to [the Jewish] nation, which [they] celebrate every year, happened.”⁸⁴ Josephus says that on this crown “were embossed the sacred letters, to wit, four vowels [*phônêenta tessara*].” What is most interesting about this reference is that Josephus speaks of “four vowels,” not four consonants or even just four letters.⁸⁵ The Greek word for “vowels” here is from the Greek word *phônê* (φωνή) which is used frequently in reference to vowels (with and without the article), usually in contrast to consonants.⁸⁶ But *phônê* and other forms of the same word can also refer to a

⁸⁴ *War of the Jews* 5.230 (Whiston’s translation); Thackeray LCL 3, page 273.

⁸⁵ For example, Clement of Alexandria (see above, note 66) refers to the written form the divine name as ‘containing four letters’ (τετράδα περιέχει γραμμάτων). This is apparently not specific to vowels or to consonants, but simply to ‘written characters’ (see Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, page 322, under γράμμα).

⁸⁶ For example, in Plato’s *Cratylus* 424c Socrates twice refers to “vowels” (*ta phônêenta ... phônêenta ... tôn phônêentôn*) as opposed to “the consonants or mutes” (*ta ... aphôna kai aphthonga*). In *Sophist* 253a we have another reference to “vowels” (*ta ... phônêenta*) in contrast to “other” letters of the alphabet. *Philebus* 18b discusses “the vowel sounds” (*ta phônêenta*) as distinct from “mutes” (*ta aphthonga*) and “semi-vowels” (*ta mesa*). Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1016b, 20, writes, “But the unit is not the same in all classes, for in one it is the quarter-tone, and in another the vowel or consonant” (*entha men gar diesis entha de to phônêen ê aphônon*). In *Metaphysics* 1041b, 15 reference is again made to *phônêen kai aphônon* (“vowel and consonant”). See also *Metaphysics* 1054a, 1; 1093a, 10; *Poetics* 1456b, 25 (twice); 1458a 1, 10, 15.

“noise” or to a “sound.”⁸⁷ If this is its meaning here in the reference from Josephus, then it could very well simply refer to the four “sounds” of the “sacred letters,” namely, “Yod He Waw He,” which Jerome (400 CE) in his “Commentary on Psalm 8” said “is the proper name of God and can be pronounced as Yahô” (see note 63 above).

This last comment by Jerome shows clearly that there was an early tradition in which the four-letter form of the divine name, “Yod He Waw He” (יהוה), “can be pronounced Yahô.” This fits perfectly with some of the observations that I have offered in this chapter, specifically, that the three-letter form of the divine name represents the same pronunciation as the four-letter, again, *Yaho* (English: “Jaho”). As I also discussed earlier, this means that the final letter of the four-letter form of the divine name found on the Moabite Stone and found elsewhere in- and outside of the Bible (that is, the final *heh* [ה]), likely marks further the long “o” sound that is also represented by the third letter of the divine name, the letter *waw* (ו). This would explain the use of the three-letter form of the divine name instead of the four-letter form in proper names in the Bible and in other early literature. It is also consistent with the use of the three-letter form of the divine name found in the Elephantine papyri and it is consistent with the ancient and most well-known Greek form of the divine name, Ιαω (*Iao*).⁸⁸

Personal names that include the three-letter form of the divine name do not correspond to a form that leads to a pronunciation of “Yahweh.” Rather, the best evidence supports pronunciations such as “Yaho”/“Yeho” or “Yahu”/“Yehu”⁸⁹ for the three-letter

⁸⁷ Plato, *Laws* 701a, uses it for those who became “noisy” (*phônêent' egenonto*). In Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.7.13, *phônêenta* is used in reference to the “speech” of beasts.

⁸⁸ In addition to the evidence from the sources cited earlier, consider Deissmann’s observation that the Greek form *Iao* “became so familiar that it even underwent declension” (*Bible Studies*, page 324). As an example, he cites the form Ιαων from Pap. Lugd. J 382, iii.1.

⁸⁹ The Greek vowel α (*alpha*) is sometimes used to transliterate the Hebrew *sheva* (short “e” sound) as in זבולן (“Zebulun” [also זבולין and זבולין]) which in Greek is transliterated as Ζαβουλών. Other examples where the *sheva* is transliterated in proper names with the Greek *alpha* include Ἰαδιήλ for יְדִיעֵאל (“Jediael” [1Ch 7:6]) and Ἰαΐηλ for יְהִיֵּל (“Jehiel” [Ezra 10:26]). Therefore, the Greek form *Iao* could very

form of the divine name standing alone (as in the Aramaic papyri from Elephantine) or as part of other personal names in- and outside of the Bible. Whether combined with a final *heh* (the fourth letter of the tetragrammaton [יְהוָה]) or seen as the equivalent of the tetragrammaton in pronunciation without this fourth letter, the evidence associated with the three-letter form of the divine name in Hebrew, Aramaic, and in Greek (*Iao*) does not support the pronunciation “Yahweh.”

It is also possible that the final *heh* in the tetragrammaton could represent an aspirated sound that is additional to the “o” sound associated with the third letter (*waw*), which would result in a pronunciation along the lines of “Yaho-ah.” As noted earlier in this chapter where I presented the various Greek forms of the divine name in figure 1.1, the form Ιαωθ (*Iaoth*) is said by Irenaeus to be “long and aspirated” while the form Ιαωτ (*Iaot*) is “written [and therefore pronounced] shortly.”⁹⁰ It is possible, then, that the form *Iaoth* in Greek uses a Greek θ (*theta*) to mark final aspiration either in association with the final “o” sound of Ιαω (*Iao*), or to mark another common type of Semitic aspiration, concerning which Buchanan writes:

One of the variants in Dead Sea Scroll Hebrew often has a final aspirant, *ah*, which the Masoretic text lacks. For example the Hebrew for “he” and “she” according to the Masoretic text is HW’ and HY’ (*hû’* and *hî’*), but the Dead Sea Scrolls Hebrew has HW’H and HY’H (*hû’âh* and *hî’âh*). Also Masoretic words like LKM and LHM (*lâkem* and *lâhem*) have as their Dead Sea Scroll equivalents, LKM^H and LHM^H (*lâkemâh* and *lâhemâh*). It is possible that the Dead Sea scribes copied the texts as they were correctly pronounced in New Testament times, since Arabic spells its words the way the Masoretes did but pronounces them the way the Dead Sea Scroll scribes spelled them, with the unspelled aspirant at the end pronounced. For example the Arabic word for “he” is spelled

well represent the Hebrew/Aramaic pronunciation “Yeho.” To these examples can also be added the apparent representation of *’ehyeh* [יְהוָה] from Ex 3:14 by the Greek Ἰαίᾱ (*Aia*), as discussed above.

⁹⁰ See note 69 above.

hû’, but pronounced, *hû’âh*. If this vocalization were applied to the Hebrew YHW, it might be pronounced, *Yahûwâh* or *Yahôwâh*.⁹¹

It is also possible that the pronunciation *Yaho* and *Iao*, from the respective Hebrew, Aramaic, and the most common Greek three-letter forms of the divine name (when standing alone or as part of other proper names), could be a shorter form of the longest form of the name represented by *YHWH* in Hebrew and in Aramaic, and by some Greek forms such as *Iaoth* (Ιαωθ). Based on other, longer forms of Semitic words with an aspirated final *heh* (some of which were noted above in the quote from Buchanan),⁹² the pronunciation of the divine name could have been something like *Yahowah*, *Yahuwah*, *Yehowah*, or *Yehuwah*. Perfectly acceptable pronunciations that are also based on the best available evidence are *Yaho*, *Yahu*, *Yeho*, or *Yehu*.

Indeed, the three-letter and four-letter forms may both represent one of these pronunciations, as argued above and as supported explicitly by Jerome.⁹³ Finally, *Yah* was and still is a perfectly acceptable stand-alone pronunciation of the divine name. In addition to being used as part of other names, *Yah* is also used in the expression, “Hallelujah.” In fact, *Yah* (Greek: *Ia*; English: “Jah”) is the least disputed of all of the forms of the divine name that have come down to us, that is, in terms of its form and pronunciation.

⁹¹ Buchanan, “Some Unfinished Business with the Dead Sea Scrolls,” page 415. See also Buchanan, “How God’s Name Was Pronounced,” page 30; Buchanan, *The Consequences of the Covenant* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), Appendix I, page 317.

⁹² See also MacLaurin, “YHWH: The Origin of the Tetragrammaton,” page 458, who makes observations similar to Buchanan regarding the pronunciation of the Hebrew pronoun *hu* (meaning “he”) as *hu’ah* in “26 out of the 95 occurrences” in Qumran documents and in Arabic. Harris, “The Pronunciation of the Tetragram,” page 219, notes that “Ugaritic evidence also shows the pronoun *he* in about 1400 B.C. was *huwa*.”

⁹³ Compare also Williams, “The Tetragrammaton—Jahweh, Name or Surrogate?” page 267, who cites and agrees with F.C. Burkitt’s view that the final syllable with *heh* in the four-letter form of the divine name represents a “kind of honorific,” with the three-letter form (*YHW*) representing the pronunciation “YAH0,” and the four-letter form (*YHWH*) representing a similar pronunciation but one “lengthened and accented” as “YĀHŌH.”

In light of the above discussion, I propose that where there is any confusion or doubt over the pronunciation of the divine name, that those so confused do not use “Lord,” nor use “God” or even “Yahweh.” None of these have any significant, credible evidence supporting their use in the Bible for God’s name. Rather than keep people from using a form of the divine name that is based on what is actually in the Bible itself, and based on the best available reasons, we should use “Yah” or in English “Jah,” and thereby help others come to know the God of the Bible more personally. To help promote this recommendation, from here on and throughout the rest of this book, wherever possible, I will use “Jah” when referring to the biblical God. But what does this mean for “Jehovah,” the most popular English form of the divine name used by Jehovah’s Witnesses?

Should we only use those names whose ancient or original pronunciation is known to us? In his book about the beliefs and practices of Jehovah’s Witnesses, Evangelical scholar and apologist Ron Rhodes argues that his primary point of contention with Jehovah’s Witnesses is not the word “Jehovah” itself since, as Rhodes says, “Some evangelical Christians use the term as well.” Yet, in his discussion of the divine name he is quick to note that “the term Jehovah is not actually a biblical term” and that “there is no justification for the term Jehovah.”⁹⁴

As we discussed early in this chapter (see page 2, note 3, and page 4, note 6), Rhodes’ thinking is simply out of touch with how words in one language are represented in another language. “Jehovah” most certainly is a “biblical term,” no further removed from the Bible than is “Jesus” or “Jeremiah” or any other Anglicized name found in any Bible translation available today. In harmony with this, Francis Denio writes:

Jehovah misrepresents Yahweh no more than Jeremiah misrepresents Yirmeyahu [Jeremiah]. The settled connotations of Isaiah and Jeremiah forbid questioning their right. Usage has given them the connotations proper for designating the

⁹⁴ Ron Rhodes, *Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Jehovah's Witnesses* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 1993), pages 50-51.