

95. 3000, Earliest Menorah Finds

ReGenesis is the first open-access encyclopedia to
liberate pre-colonial research
to its rightful 3,000,000 BCE origins
- and -
liberate female spirituality.
(RGS.)

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Menorah.

The perennial lineage of the Asherim menorah
began at least as early as post exilic 3000 BCE Mesopotamia,
and continued through the Canaanite and Israelite traditions
into the Kabalistic Tree – of – Life, and remains to this day.
(TL: 37, Fig. 213.)

Asherah and the Menorah.

The difference between Asherah and the menorah
is that Asherah is a living tree
whereas the menorah is
an iconographical representation
in the form of a pruned almond tree.
(AMST: 51.)

First Jewish Temple Menorah.

The first known representation
of the Jewish temple menorah
was in the Jerusalem temple, first century BCE,
and later in the second temple as well.
(AMST: 46, 54.)

Menorah Lampstands.

The Zohar instructs rabbis that
‘the community of Israel receives the light
whilst the supernatural mother is crowned,
and all the lampstands illuminated from Her.’
(HVG: 206; TL: 50.)

A brief exploration of the ancient names for tree and almond introduces
this entry. “The Semitic name for tree is *Amygdala* from the botanical word
Amygdalus communis meaning Great Mother, archetypical Mesopotamian
goddesses of life and renewal” (TL: 41, n. 9). The biblical name for tree is *Luz*. Prior

to the Hebrew Bible, “*Luz* was synonymous with the old Canaanite ‘City of Almond,’ later renamed Bethel.” (TL: 41.) Relative to Bethel, both Asherah and El, essential components of Canaanite religion, were co-worshiped at Bethel/Luz.

One of Goddess Asherah’s attributes was that of a living tree-goddess, such as a grove or a living tree next to an altar. Asherim * were cultic representations of Asherah and were either natural or artificially made. (AMST: 51.) An Asherim example discussed by J. E. Taylor was the practice of trimming trees and bushes to a pruned stylized shape in honor of Asherah. (AMST: 42-51.) Several other Asherim examples are: the sacred pillar; pole; tree of wisdom or tree – of – life iconography; plus, the Masebah at Canaanite high places. (AMST: 51.)

* Additional considerations view Asherim as the masculine plural of Asherah (DGHW: 64), along-side the theory that Asherim can apply to both genders. (Also, AH: 385-408, plus 1 Kings 15:13 and 2 Kings 21:7.)

According to Meyers in, *The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult*, the temple menorah is a six-branch-plus-central-axis arrangement (TTM: 20-21; MASC-R: 325.) Taylor adds that this seven-branch gold menorah lampstand, fashioned on the almond tree, was an antitype of asherim. (AMST: 51.) The perennial lineage of the Asherim menorah began at least as early as post exilic 3000 BCE Mesopotamia, * and continued through the Canaanite and Israelite traditions into the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, and remains to this day. (TL: 37, Fig. 213.)

* See stone vase from Khafaje: (TL: 37, Fig. 213.) Also, 385-408, plus 1 Kings 15:13 and 2 Kings 21:7.)

Asherah as a living tree bursts forward each spring, re-birthing herself as an eternal living tree – of – life and wisdom. Not only is Asherah a universal life force continuum but according to E. O. James, the tree also embodies-and-is the very essence of the female principle in nature. (TOL.)

The Great Earth Mother who brings forth all life from herself is eminently the mother of all vegetation. The fertility rituals and myths of the whole world are based upon this archetypal context. The center of this vegetative symbolism is the tree. As fruit-bearing tree of life it is female; it bears, transforms, nourishes; its leaves, branches, twigs are ‘contained’ in it and dependent on it. ... But in addition to the tree is a container, ‘in’ which dwells its spirit, as the soul dwells in the body. The female nature of the tree is demonstrated in the fact that treetops and trunk can give birth [and do] (TGM: 48-49).

The difference between Asherah and the menorah is that Asherah is a living tree whereas the menorah is an iconographical representation in the form of a pruned almond tree. (AMST: 51.) Also, in Israel, the almond tree is always the first to bloom come January-February while other fruit trees remain bare. (AMST: 47; TL: 40-41.) The almond tree and blossoms were and continue to be living examples of new life, new hope, and new beginnings. All trees and especially almond trees were significant to the worship of Asherah. The almond tree may also have had further significance to Asherah in Bethel/Luz during the Middle to Late Bronze Age. (AMST: 51.)

Meyers summarizes the sacred fertility relationship between the menorah as the recurring priestly motif of fruit bearing trees and the eternal regenerative tree –of – life principle. (TTM: 95-122; GAT: 56-57.)

[I]t is hardly an exaggeration to indicate that the sacredness of

vegetation and trees has been a recurrent and integral theme in a wide range of cultures spanning most areas of the globe and most epochs of human history... [T]he sacred quality of trees lies in the fact of their embodiment of the life principle. ... [This] widespread association of vegetal life with the generative power of the divinity, has resulted in the common phenomenon of the manifestation of deity within or at certain trees. The God, often a fertility deity, who would favor the exceptional growth and fecundity of particular trees, indicate his presence or the possibility of his presence at such locations. ... The tree points the worshipper in the direction [of the divinity.] Furthermore the divinity revealed in the tree is also the source of the hoped-for life after death, to whom man [or one] turns in search of his [or her] own immortality. Thus, the theophany motif of the sacred tree becomes blended inextricably with the concept of life eternal. The tree – of – life in the sense of immortal life becomes an inseparable aspect of the regenerative principle contained within plant life (TTM: 95-96; ATLM: 15-16). (Also, ST: 111; RAB: 238; SOTB: 430; RDW: 146-8, 160; STP: 91-93; CDBL: 130-1; MTPC: 6-7; STCC.)

For an alternate interpretation about the ‘priestly invention’ of the menorah as an intended ‘hoped for’ demise of Asherah, see Leon Yarden in *Re-Genesis* BCE entry: 970, First Temple, Menorah, and Weavings. (RGS.)

Included in the first six (seven) branch menorah is a plaque from the Mesopotamian Jemdet Nasr Period and dates to post exilic 3000 BCE. This menorah is an ancient stylization of a six or ‘seven-branched tree—curiously round-branched and flanked by animals’ that was found on a stone vase. (TL: 37; TTM: 59; MASC-R: 325.)

Following the 3000 Jemdet Nasr find, a later discovery of a sacred tree with stylized menorah branch formations was found on a bituminous (coal composite) stone bowl in Susa. It dates to c. 2300 BCE. Susa or Shushan was an ancient city in the Elamite and Persian empires of Iran. Location was around 150 miles east of the Tigris River in southeastern Iran. (TL: 38.)

Another Mesopotamian example during the post-Akkadian 2200-2000 BCE period, is the famous Cylinder of the Temptation that includes a seven-branched tree flanked by a man and a woman in the foreground and snake in the background. (TL: 37-38, 154.)

The first known representation of the Jewish temple menorah was in the Jerusalem temple, first century BCE, and later in the second temple as well. (AMST: 46, 54.)

The first biblical reference of a menorah as a stylized six-branched almond tree is thought Exodus (Ex 25) and commanded by God to Moses at Sinai.

You shall make a lamp-stand of pure gold. ... [I]ts cups its capitals and its flowers shall be of one piece with it. And there shall be six branches going out of its sides, three branches of the lampstand out of one side of it and three branches out of the other side of it; three cups made like *almonds*, each with its capitals and flower, on the one branch, and three cups each with its capitals and flower on the other branch—so for the six branches going out from the lampstand * (Ex 25. 31-40, cf. 37.17-24).

* According to Asphodel Long, “This lampstand was the desert Tabernacle Menorah guarding and throwing light towards the Ark of the Covenant.” (ATLM: 20.)

Further BCE menorah–sacred tree examples include: a 16th and 13th century Egyptian relief that includes goddess Nut; 13th century pitcher from Lakish; 10th century altars from Taanak [Tannach]; numerous pre-exilic seals; 700 Assyrian palace reliefs; and an antique Greek vase with seven-branched palms next to an altar. (TL: 37-38.) Meyers spotlights additional menorahs including: 9th-7th century Assyrian cylinder seals; early prototypes from Middle Minoan II through the Late Minoan period; saucer lamps of Cypriote–Ionic form from 6th century Cyprus; plus, numerous Roman Empire examples from Pompeii and Herculaneum also 6th century and later. (TTM: 62, 77-79.)

Although the living tree and the menorah have a broad-base appeal, it is universal in Jewish history. A massive menorah is on the triumphal arch of Titus in Rome, “emphasizing the plight of the Jews losing their home and going into slavery in 70 CE, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.” (ATLM: 24.) When the Warsaw Ghetto fighters unveiled a memorial at Auschwitz and Theresienstadt death camps in 1963, the most significant aspect was two massive menorahs. (ATLM: 24.) The original temple menorah has yet to be recovered.

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Further sacred trees research: 4000, Garden of Eden, Sacred Trees, and Pillar Cults; 2400, Lilith and Eve; 2000, Asherah; and 1500, Lachish Ewer, Triangle, and Menorah. (RGS.) (Also see CE entry: 16th Century, Kabbalah.) (RG.)

Further menorah research: 2200, Nahariyah and Ashrath-Yam; 2000, Bethel, Almond City, and Asherah; 1500, Lachish Ewer, Triangle, and Menorah; 970, First Temple, Menorah, and Weavings; 900, Taanach, Canaanite Libation Stand; and 586, Destruction of the First Temple, Jerusalem Exile. (RGS.) (Also, CE entry: 70, Destruction of Jerusalem Temple.)

Further Bethel research: 2200, Bethel, Almond City; 2000, Asherah; and 1800, Re-Visioning Goddess Sarah and Abraham. (RGS.)

Further Al'luz or Al'Uzza research: 2000, Bethel, Almond City, and Asherah; 600, Goddess Kaabou at Petra, Jordan plus Mecca, Saudi Arabia; and 100, Mecca, the Ka'aba and Sacred Stones. (RGS.)

Further Asherah research: 2000, Bethel, Almond City, and Asherah; 2000, Asherah; 1500, Lachish Ewer, Triangle, and Menorah; 970, First Temple, Menorah, and Weavings; 900, Taanach, Canaanite Libation Stand; 800-700, Kuntillet Ajrud and Khirbet El-Qom; and 538 BCE-70 CE Second Temple Period. (RGS.)

IMAGE: MADABA MAP OF THE HOLY LAND: MADABA, JORDAN.
PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION: THE MADABA MOSAIC MAP IN THE CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE IN MADABA IS THE OLDEST KNOWN CARTOGRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION OF THE HOLY LAND (ISRAEL AND PALESTINE) PLUS SYRIA AND THE EGYPTIAN NILE AREA.
SLIDE LOCATION PETRA, SHEET 11, ROW 2, SLEEVE 4, SLIDE #11J, BCE. BCE.
CO_PET_S11_R2_SL4_S11J. VS. > CO_PET_S11_R3_SL4_S7J.
SHOT ON LOCATION: CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE IN MADABA AND BRITISH MUSEUM: LONDON, ENGLAND.
NOTE 1: FIELDWORK PROJECT 1989.

IMAGE: MADABA MAP OF THE HOLY LAND: MADABA, JORDAN
PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION: THE MADABA MOSAIC MAP IN THE CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE IN MADABA IS THE OLDEST KNOWN CARTOGRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION OF THE HOLY LAND (ISRAEL AND PALESTINE) PLUS SYRIA AND THE EGYPTIAN NILE AREA.
SLIDE LOCATION PETRA, SHEET 11, ROW 3, SLEEVE 1, SLIDE #24J, BCE.
CO_PET_S11_R3_SL1_S24J.
ON LOCATION: CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE IN MADABA, JORDAN AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM: LONDON, ENGLAND..
NOTE 1: FIELDWORK PROJECT 1989 AND 2002.

IMAGE: SEVEN-BRANCHED MENORAH ENGRAVING: SINAI, EGYPT.
PHOTO GSA DESCRIPTION: SEVEN-BRANCHED MENORAH ENGRAVING.
SLIDE LOCATION BIB ARCH, SHEET 2, ROW 2, SLEEVE 1, SLIDE #44, BCE.
CO_BAR_S2_R2_SL1_S44.jpg CO_BAR_S2_R2_SL1_S44_ILL.jpg
LOCATION: SINAI, EGYPT.
NOTE 1: FIELDWORK PROJECT
PHOTO NOTE: © BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY (1989).

IMAGE: MENORAH ENGRAVED ON AN OIL LAMP: ERICE, SICILY.
PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION: MENORAH (TREE – OF – LIFE) ON OIL LAMP, ERICE SICILY.
SLIDE LOCATION SICILY, SHEET 1, ROW 3, SLEEVE 4, SLIDE #21, BCE.
CU_SIC_S1_R3_SL4_S21
SHOT ON LOCATION: MUSEO COMUNALE CORDICI: ERICE, SICILY.

NOTE 1: FIELDWORK PROJECT 1998.

NOTE 2: SEE FURTHER MENORAH KEYWORDS: “MAGDALA STONE” AND “MARY MAGDALA.” LOCATION IS 1 CE, CITY OF MAGDALA NEAR GALILEE.

IMAGE: MENORAH AS SACRED TREE – OF – LIFE AND SPREAD EAGLE (ANZU): NIMRUD, ASSYRIA.

PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION: A FURTHER EXAMPLE OF A MENORAH IS ASSYRIAN SACRED TREE – OF – LIFE WITH PROTECTIVE WINGED SUN DISK AND SPREAD EAGLE (ANZU) OR GENII OVERHEAD, NIMRUD NORTH PALACE.

SLIDE LOCATION NEAR EAST, SHEET 9B, ROW 2, SLEEVE 5, SLIDE #20, BCE.

CU_NEA_S9B_R2_SL5_S20.jpg

SHOT ON LOCATION: BRITISH MUSEUM: LONDON, ENGLAND.

NOTE 1: FIRST STYLIZED MENORAH:

THE PERENNIAL LINEAGE OF THE ASHERIM MENORAH/S BEGAN AT LEAST AS EARLY AS POST EXILIC 3000 BCE MESOPOTAMIA, * AND CONTINUED THROUGH THE CANAANITE AND ISRAELITE TRADITIONS INTO THE KABALISTIC TREE OF LIFE, AND REMAINS TO THIS DAY (TL: 37, Fig. 213). * SEE STONE VASE FROM KHAFAJE: (TL: 37, Fig. 213; RGS.) (LOCATION: SEE ABOVE.)

NOTE 2:

ALSO, ASHERAH’S ICONOGRAPHY IS ALL FORMS OF THE TREE MANIFESTED IN RITUAL GROVES, TREES, MAY POLES, TEMPLE PILLARS, PRIMEVAL FORESTS, AND GODDESS PILLAR FIGURES WITH FULL NOURISHING BREASTS (AMST: 42-44; AH: 398; COA; APL; RGS).

NOTE 3: *ASHERIM, ICON REPRESENTATIONS OF ASHERAH.

NOTE 4: * FOR FURTHER INTERPRETATIONS OF THE ASHERIM, SEE AH: 385-408, PLUS:13 AND 2 KINGS 21:7.)

NOTE 5: FIELDWORK PROJECT 1998-2002.

IMAGE: SEVEN BRANCHED MENORAH ENGRAVED ON THE ARCH OF TITUS, ROME, ITALY.

PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION: MENORAH (TREE – OF – LIFE), RE. TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM.

SLIDE LOCATION MSC. ITALY/PHOTOS TBD, SHEET , ROW , SLEEVE , SLIDE #, 81CE.

CO_MIT_S_R_SL_S.jpg

NOTE 1: “THE TRIUMPHAL ARCH OF TITUS IN ROME, EMPHASIZES THE PLIGHT OF THE JEWS LOSING THEIR HOME AND GOING INTO SLAVERY IN 70 CE, AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE” (ATLM: 24).

SHOT ON LOCATION: ROME, ITALY, 2016. ZD.

IMAGE: SEVEN BRANCHED MENORAH ENGRAVED ON THE ARCH OF TITUS, ROME, ITALY.

PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION: MENORAH (TREE – OF – LIFE), RE. TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM.

SLIDE LOCATION MSC. ITALY/PHOTOS TBD, SHEET , ROW , SLEEVE , SLIDE #, 81CE.

CO_MIT_S_R_SL_S.jpg

CLOSE-UP SHOT ON LOCATION: ROME, ITALY, 2016. ZD.

NOTE 1: “THE TRIUMPHAL ARCH OF TITUS IN ROME, EMPHASIZES THE PLIGHT OF THE JEWS LOSING THEIR HOME AND GOING INTO SLAVERY IN 70 CE, AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE” (ATLM: 24).

SHOT ON LOCATION: ROME, ITALY, 2016. ZD.

IMAGE: PILLAR GODDESS ASHERAH PRESENTING HER BREASTS: ANCIENT IRAN.

PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION: A FURTHER EXAMPLE OF ASHERIM IS ICONIC PILLAR GODDESS ASHERAH HOLDING HER NOURISHING, LIFE GIVING BREASTS. (FOR FURTHER INTERPRETATIONS OF ASHERIM SEE, AH: 385-408, PLUS 1 KINGS 15:13 AND 2 KINGS 21:7.)

SLIDE LOCATION NEAR EAST, SHEET 12, ROW 2, SLEEVE 3, SLIDE #31, BCE.

CU_NEA_S12_R2_SL3_S31.jpg

SHOT ON LOCATION: BRITISH MUSEUM: LONDON, ENGLAND.

NOTE 1:

ASHERAH’S ICONOGRAPHY IS ALL FORMS OF THE TREE MANIFESTED IN RITUAL GROVES, TREES, MAY POLES, TEMPLE PILLARS, PRIMEVAL

FORESTS, AND GODDESS PILLAR FIGURES WITH FULL NOURISHING
BREASTS (AMST: 42-44; AH: 398; COA: APL; RGS).

NOTE 2: DURING IRON AGE II, ICONS OF ASHERAH PRESENTING HER BREASTS WAS
WELL KNOWN (GAT: 43-44; RGS).

NOTE 3: IMAGE MAY BE GODDESS PINIKIR OR KIRIRISHA, ANCIENT IRAN (WA: 222;
RGS).

NOTE 3: FIELDWORK PROJECT 2002.