

## 164. 970, First Temple, Menorah, and Weavings

*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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### *Asherah Worship.*

Asherah was worshipped  
before there was a temple.  
(Jg 3.5-7; UTI: 131.)

### *Asherah's Battim.*

Women had a special recognition in the temple  
and were actively engaged in the cult [culture] of Asherah,  
including the weaving of the *battim* as  
possibly a type of *baldachin* (canopy).  
(II K 23.7.) (COA: 29; II K 23.7; GHW: 213.) (WRSA.)

King Solomon began preparations for the construction of the First Temple in 970 BCE in the old city of Jerusalem. This was done in conjunction with Hiram, King of Tyre, who provided timber from as far as Lebanon. The temple was to house numerous treasures including the menorah, the Ark of the Covenant, and the goddess Shekinah who dwelt in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. In Yamashita's dissertation, *The Goddess Asherah*, he also discusses that sacred prostitution was practiced. (GA: 128.) Women had a special recognition in the temple and were actively engaged in the cult [culture] of Asherah, including the weaving of the *battim* as possibly a type of *baldachin* (canopy). (II K 23.7.) (COA: 29; II K 23.7; GHW: 213.) (WRSA.)

Although there are numerous discussions and theories about the temple weavings, Hadley suggests that they were temple partitions that housed Asherah.

In my opinion, the most likely explanation is that the women wove partitions to section off an area of the temple in which to house the cultic

statue of Asherah. This division of the temple into separate areas would give the illusion of a house within the larger temple building (COA: 74).

Jewish scholar Leon Yarden believes that the menorah was pre-exilic rather than a post-exilic priestly invention. It is his contention that the use of the “menorah as a ritual candelabrum by the priestly school resulted from the priest’s struggle against goddess worship” and in this case goddess Asherah. (RDW: 129.) By translating Asherah’s sacred tree symbols into an abstracted, highly stylized menorah, hopefully Asherah and her living trees would fade. Jenny Kien suggests that “while the goddess was weakened by the loss of her visible body, loss of the menorah’s tree form freed it for reinterpretation, allowing it to be incorporated into the Jahweh cult [culture] and survive.” (RDW: 129-130.) (TL; LEA; CST; UA; ATML; ATML/N.)

Solomon’s Temple survived until 586 BCE when destroyed by the Babylonians who also sacked the city and subsequently exiled the Jews to Babylon in Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq). The menorah was returned to the Second Temple, but not the Shekinah. As a footnote to this theory, Raphael Patai says the female Shekinah is apparent in third century CE synagogue murals and therefore is clearly evidenced in rabbinic times. (HG: 283-294.)

Although the remains of Solomon’s Temple and sanctuary have yet to be found, the recently discovered ‘Ain Dara Temple in Northern Syria’ is thought to be the closest parallel in many aspects. Architectural and decorative similarities include: a tripartite layout; entry porch with two columns; his/her inner shrine or Holy of Holies; plus extensive correlations in the decorative order that also described Solomon’s Temple in I K 6.29.

Further ‘Ain Dara Temple research:

Stone, Elizabeth Caecilia and Paul E. Zimansky. *The Iron Age Settlement at ‘Ain Dara, Syria: Survey and Soundings*. BAR International Series, 786. Oxford, England: J. and E. Hedges, 1999. (IAS.)

Further research on temple weavings:

Dever, William G. *Did God Have a Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2005. 213-214. (GHW.)

Harvey, Graham. “Huldah’s Scroll: A Pagan Reading.” *Patriarchs, Prophets and Other Villains*. Ed. Lisa Isherwood. London, England: Equinox, 2007. 86-88. (HS.)

Also recommend Diakonoff’s article “Women in Old Babylonia not under Patriarchal Authority” that includes weaver–women and the god El of the Amorites:

Diakonoff, I. M. “Women in Old Babylonia not under Patriarchal Authority.” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 29.3 (Oct. 1986): 225-238. (WOB.)

Further considerations on temple prostitution:

Budin, Stephanie Lynn. *The Myth of Sacred Prostitution in Antiquity*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008. (MSP.)

For biblical reference to the destruction of the house in the temple where women wove battim—houses or a type of canopy for Asherah, see: II K 23.7.

Recommended summary of the Davidic through First and Second Temple historical transitions: 1000-600, Solomon, Philistines, and Temple Transitions. (RGS.)

Further Solomon's and First Temple research: 2000-1200, Ras Shamra. (RGS.) (Also see CE entry: 70, Destruction of Jerusalem Temple.) (RG.)

Further Asherah research: 2000, Bethel, Almond City, and Asherah; 2000, Asherah; 2000-1200, Ras Shamra; 1500, Lachish Ewer, Triangle, and Menorah; 900, Taanach, Canaanite Libation Stand; 800-700, Kuntillet Ajrud and Khirbet El-Qom; 600-398, Astarte/Anat/Ashtaroth/Asherah/Ishtar and Yahweh, Egypt; and 538 BCE-70 CE Second Temple Period. (RGS.)

Further Menorah research: 3000, Earliest Menorah Finds; 2000, Bethel, Almond City, and Asherah; 2200, Nahariyah and Ashrath-Yam; 2000, Asherah; 1500, Lachish Ewer, Triangle, and Menorah; 900, Taanach, Canaanite Libation Stand; and 586, Destruction of the First Temple, Jerusalem Exile. (RGS.)

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Hestrin, Ruth. "The Lachish Ewer and the Asherah." *Israel Exploration Journal* 37.4 (1987): 212-223. (LEA.)

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Meyers, Carol L. *The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult*. Missoula, MT; Scholars Press, 1976. (TTM.)

Taylor, J. E. "The Asherah, the Menorah and the Sacred Tree." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* No. 66 (Jun. 1995): 29-54. (AMST.)

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IMAGE: MADABA MAP OF HOLY LAND: MADABA, JORDAN.  
 PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION: THE MADABA MOSAIC MAP IN THE CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE IN MADABA, JORDAN 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.  
 CO\_PET\_S11\_R2\_SL4\_S11J. VS. > CO\_PET\_S11\_R3\_SL4\_S7J.  
 SHOT ON LOCATION: CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE IN MADABA, JORDAN AND BRITISH MUSEUM: LONDON, ENGLAND.  
 NOTE 1: FIELDWORK PROJECT 1989 AND 2002.

IMAGE: MADABA MAP OF HOLY LAND: MADABA, JORDAN.  
 PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION: THE MADABA MOSAIC MAP IN THE CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE IN MADABA, JORDAN 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: HEROD’S TEMPLE.  
 PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION: REPLICA OF HEROD’S TEMPLE.  
 SLIDE LOCATION BIB ARCH, SHEET 2, ROW 4, SLEEVE 1, SLIDE #18, BCE.  
 BIB ARCH, SHEET 2, ROW 4, SLEEVE 1, SLIDE #18,  
 CO\_BAR\_S2\_R4\_SL1\_S18\_ILL.jpg  
 SHOT ON LOCATION: BRITISH MUSEUM: LONDON, ENGLAND.  
 NOTE 1: FIELDWORK PROJECT 2002.  
 PHOTO NOTE: ILLUSTRATION TBD, CHRISI KARVONIDES’ TEAM.

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  
 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 1st CE, CITY OF MAGDALA NEAR GALILEE.

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: ILLUSTRATION ENHANCEMENT, CHRISI KARVONIDES.

PHOTO NOTE: © BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY (1989).

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:

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 2: ASHERIM,\* ICONOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF ASHERAH.

NOTE 3: \* FOR FURTHER INTERPRETATIONS OF THE ASHERIM, SEE AH: 385-408, PLUS 1 KINGS 15:13 AND 2 KINGS 21:7.)

NOTE 4: FIRST STYLIZED 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).

\* SEE STONE VASE FROM KHAFAJE: (TL: 37, Fig. 213; RGS.) (LOCATION: SEE ABOVE.)

NOTE 5: FIELDWORK PROJECT 1998-2002.

IMAGE: SEVEN BRANCHED MENORAH ENGRAVED ON 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

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

IMAGE: SEVEN BRANCHED MENORAH ENGRAVED ON 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

IMAGE: ASHERAH–DEITIES PRESENTING THEIR BREASTS: NEAR EAST.



PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION MULTIPLE ASHERAH–DEITIES HOLDING THEIR BREASTS: POSSIBLY INANNA FROM SYRIA OR PERSIA (IRAN). OTHER CONSIDERATIONS ARE WISDOM GODDESS PINIKIR/KIRIRISHA (WA: 222) OR ASHERAH. (GAT: 43-44; RGS).  
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: FIELDWORK PROJECT 1998-2002.

IMAGE: MOTIF OF ASHERAH’S LIVING TREE-OF-LIFE, URUK, SUMER.  
PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION: ASHERAH, A LIVING TREE–OF–LIFE, URUK SUMER.  
SLIDE LOCATION NEAR EAST, SHEET 7, ROW 4, SLEEVE 3, SLIDE #7, BCE.  
CU\_NEA\_S7\_R4\_SL3\_S7.jpg  
SHOT ON LOCATION: BRITISH MUSEUM: LONDON, ENGLAND.  
NOTE 1: “[GODDESS] ASHERAH WAS ALWAYS A LIVING TREE, OR GROVE, AS HER LIVINGNESS WAS INTEGRAL TO HER RE-CREATRIX, LIFE GIVING FERTILITY ATTRIBUTES (AMST: 42; RGS).” (SOURCE: RGS.)  
NOTE 2: ASHERIM, \*AN ICONOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF ASHERAH.  
NOTE 3: \* FOR FURTHER INTERPRETATIONS OF THE ASHERIM, SEE AH: 385-408, PLUS 1 KINGS 15:13 AND 2 KINGS 21:7.)  
NOTE 4: “THE SACRED QUALITY OF TREES LIES IN THE FACT OF THEIR EMBODIMENT OF THE LIFE PRINCIPLE (TTM: 95-96; ATLM: 15-16). (ST: 111; RAB: 238; SOTB: 430; RDW: 146-8, 160; STP: 91-93; CDBL: 130-1; MTPC: 6-7; STCC).”  
NOTE 5: FIELDWORK PROJECT 1998-2002.