

# Asherah in the Old Testament

~tbCm;ta>!WcTti ~tXBzmita, yKÜ<sup>WTT</sup> Exodus 34:13  
 `!Wt)k.Ti wyrVae]ta>!WbE;T.

**Exodus 34:13** You shall tear down their (pre-Israelite inhabitants of the land) altars, break their pillars, and cut down their sacred poles

~hjtXBzmi ~hd' Wf[ ]t; hKÜ~aiyK<sup>WTT</sup> Deuteronomy 7:5  
 ~hpl yspW !W[ Dg;T. ~hrVae]r. WbE;T. ~tbCm; WcTti  
 `vaB' !Wpif.Ti

**Deuteronomy 7:5** But this is how you must deal with them: break down their altars, smash their pillars, hew down their sacred poles, and burn their idols with fire.

'~TrBvii>~tXBzmita, ~Tc.Tni><sup>WTT</sup> Deuteronomy 12:3  
 ~hphd ]a/ ylyspW vaB' !Wpif.Ti ~hrVae]r. ~tbCm;ta,  
 `avhh; ~AqMh; !mi ~mE;ta, ~TdBain>!W[ Dg;T.

**Deuteronomy 12:3** Break down their altars, smash their pillars, burn their sacred poles with fire, and hew down the idols of their gods, and thus blot out their name from their places.

I cae# [el K' hrVae] ^E [Jitfal] <sup>WTT</sup> Deuteronomy 16:21  
 s `%L)hf, [T; rvae] ^yh] ]a/ hwhy>xBzmi

**Deuteronomy 16:21** You shall not plant any tree as a sacred pole beside the altar that you make for YAHWEH your God; The verb "plant" is used of nails, a tent, and people. Were Asherim stylized trees?

hwhy>yn] [B. '[rh'-ta, I aB' fyl-ynb. Wf[ ]w. <sup>WTT</sup> Judges 3:7  
 ~yl [Bh;ta, Wdb.[Yw. ~hphd ]a/ hwhy>ta, WkK.vYh)  
 `tAr)ah'-ta>

**Judges 3:7** The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of YAHWEH, forgetting YAHWEH their God, and worshipping the Baals and the Asherahs. Elsewhere the Baals are associated with the Ashtaroth.

xqÜ hwhy>Al ærmaVae. avhh; hlyB; ghijw. <sup>WTT</sup> Judges 6:25  
 Tsrh] >~ynk' [bvä ynb/h; rpW ^ybäl. rvae] 'rAVh; rP; ta,  
 wyl [ '-rva] hrVah'-ta> ^ybäl. rvae] 'I [Bh; xBzmita,  
 `trk.Ti

**Judges 6:25** That night YAHWEH said to him, "Take your father's bull, the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father, and cut down the sacred pole that is beside it;

zA [Mh; varô I [ä ^yh] ]a/ hwhyl; xBzmi tynbW <sup>WTT</sup> Judges 6:26  
 ycd [B; hI A [ tyl [ ]h > ynb/h; rPh; ta, Txql ( > hkr [MB; hZB;  
 `trk.Ti rvae] hrVah'

**Judges 6:26** and build an altar to YAHWEH your God on the top of the stronghold here, in proper order; then take the second bull, and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the sacred pole that you shall cut down."

xBzmi #TnJhNhi>rqBB; 'ry[h' yvBa; WmyKöw. <sup>WTT</sup> Judges 6:28  
 hI [ ]h > ynb/h; rPh; 'ta> htrKöwyl [ '-rva] hrVah] > I [Bh;

ˈyWbH; xBmH; I [;

**Judges 6:28** When the townspeople rose early in the morning, the **altar of Baal** was broken down, and **the sacred pole beside it** was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar that had been built.

^BBit-a, acAh vaAy-la, 'ry[h' yvBa; WraYt. WTT **Judges 6:30**  
hr'vah' trk' yki>I [Bh; xBmi-ta, #tr" yKU tmyl>  
ˈwyl ['-rva]

**Judges 6:30** Then the townspeople said to Joash, "Bring out your son, so that he may die, for he has pulled down **the altar of Baal** and cut down **the sacred pole** beside it."

hnQh; dWg' rvaK; lae'fy-ta, hwh>hKh> WTT **1 Kings 14:15**  
rvä] 'taZb; hbUJh; hmd'ah' I [mä lae'fy-ta, vtäl>è-yMB;  
WF[' rva] ! [y. rhW ; rb, [ne ~rB] > -hêtAbal] ; '!tr"  
ˈhwh>ta, ~ysp [km; ~hÿrvä] ta,

**1 Kings 14:15** "YAHWEH will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water; he will root up Israel out of this good land that he gave to their ancestors, and scatter them beyond the Euphrates, because they have made **their sacred poles**, provoking YAHWEH to anger.

~yr'vah: tAbBmW tAmB' ~hP' hMhó~g; WbYh. WTT **1 Kings 14:23**  
ˈ!n[r: # [èl K' txt] > h h b g > h [ b g - l K' I [ ; ..

**1 Kings 14:23** For they (Judeans) also built for themselves high places, pillars, and **sacred poles** on every high hill and **under every green tree**; hence **Asherah is not a tree**. Cf. **2 Kgs 17:10**.

hrÿbGmi 'hrsÿm: AMai hk[ ]m; ta, Y~gü WTT **1 Kings 15:13**  
HTè.l pmi-ta, 'asa' trkYh: hr'va] ' tc.l pmi htif. [-rva]  
ˈ!Ar]dqi I xñB. @r'fYh:

**1 Kings 15:13** He also removed his mother Maacah from being queen mother, because she had made **an abominable image for Asherah**; Asa cut down her image and burned it at the Wadi Kidron.

'Hrysh/ %l Mh; asa' Y~aä hk[ ]m; ~gü WTT **2 Chronicles 15:16**  
'asa' trkYh: tc.l pmi hr'va] ; htif. [-rva] hrÿbGmi  
ˈ!Ar]dqi I xñB. @r'fYh: qdYh: HTè.l pmi-ta,

**2 Chronicles 15:16** King Asa even removed his mother Maacah from being queen mother because she had made **an abominable image for Asherah**. Asa cut down her image, crushed it, and burned it at the Wadi Kidron. **This is the only time when Kings and Chronicles mention Asherah at the same place.**

bakä; @sAYh: hr'vah'-ta, bakä; f [Yh: WTT **1 Kings 16:33**  
ykä m; I Kni I ae'fyl yhd a/ 'hAh>ta, 'sy[kh:l. tAf[ ] ;  
ˈwynb'l. Wjh' rva] I ae'fyl

**1 Kings 16:33** Ahab also made **a sacred pole**. Ahab did more to provoke the anger of YAHWEH, the God of Israel, than had all the kings of Israel who were before him.

I ae'fyl-I K'-ta, yl äe #bq. xl v. hT[ ] WTT **1 Kings 18:19**  
~yVmix: tAaë [Bä; I [Bä; ya]bi>ta] > I m r Kh; rhäl a,  
ˈl bz]ai ! xil .vuy] kao tAaë [Bä; 'hr'vah' (ya]biW

**1 Kings 18:19** Now therefore have all Israel assemble for me at Mount Carmel, with the **four hundred fifty prophets of Baal** and the **four hundred prophets of Asherah**, who eat at Jezebel's table." (These prophets are not part of the original LXX and may be secondary since they play no role on Mt. Carmel. But whoever added this understood Asherah as a divine name.)

~[Bry"-tyBe twa Jôkme Wrsôal } %aü<sup>WTT</sup> **2 Kings 13:6**  
 hr'vəh' '~qm>%l h' HBä l ab'fyt-ta, îayj xhð ;yj xhA-rva]  
 `!Ar)m.vB. hdh.['

**2 Kings 13:6** Nevertheless they (in the days of Jehoahaz) did not depart from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, which he caused Israel to sin, but walked in them; **the sacred pole** also remained in Samaria.

h[bgf-IK' I [;...~yr'vəh'r. tAbBēn; ~h'f' VbCm<sup>WTT</sup> **2 Kings 17:10**  
 `!n]r: # [ēl K' ttxt]hbbg>

**2 Kings 17:10** they set up for themselves pillars and **sacred poles** on every high hill and **under every green tree**;

Wfi[Yw: ~hghē ā/ hwhy>'twōmi-I K'-ta, VbZfYw<sup>WTT</sup> **2 Kings 17:16**  
 Wwx]T.vYw: hr'və] Wfā[Yw: ~yl g'[] îynā/ð ;~ynā/Ā hkBēn; ~h'f'  
 `I [Bh;-ta, Vdb.[Yw: ~ymā/h; abē.-I k'l.

**2 Kings 17:16** They rejected all the commandments of YAHWEH their God and made for themselves cast images of two calves; they made **a sacred pole**, **worshiped all the host of heaven**, and served **Baal**. The host of heaven = the sons of El (God). See 2 Kgs 21:31 (2 Chr 33:3), 23:4, 6-7.

tbCm/h;-ta, 'rBvi>tAmBh;-ta, rystne Yallhā<sup>WTT</sup> **2 Kings 18:4**  
 yKā hv'mo hfā[-rva] tvx]bb; vx]t>tTki>hr'vəh'(ta, trkl>  
 Al àar'qYw: Al ē ~yr'vqm. 'l ac'fyt-ynb. Wyh' 'hM'hē' ~ymā/h;-d[;  
 `!T]vx]d>

**2 Kings 18:4** He (Hezekiah) removed the high places, broke down the pillars, and cut down **the sacred pole**. He broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it; it was called Nehushtan.

Wny]qixi dBai rva] tAmBh;-ta, 'bYw: bvYw<sup>WTT</sup> **2 Kings 21:3**  
 'baxa; hf' rva]K; 'hr'və] f[Yw: I [Bf; tx]Bzmi ~qYw: wybā'  
 `~tāo db[Yw) ~ymā/h; abē.-I k'l. WxT.vYw: l ac'fyt %l mā

**2 Kings 21:3** For he (Manasseh) rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he erected altars for **Baal**, made **a sacred pole**, as King Ahab of Israel had done, worshiped **all the host of heaven**, and served them.

tyBB; hf' rva] hr'vəh' l spī-ta, ~fYw: <sup>WTT</sup> **2 Kings 21:7**  
 hZk; tyBB; Anb. hmd (v:-l ay]d'dwD:-l a, 'hwhy>rmā' rva]  
 ymbv;-ta, ~yfa' l ac'fyt yj bvi 'l Kmi yTrxB' rva] ~il vWrybW  
 `~l A[ I.

**2 Kings 21:7** The **carved image of Asherah** that he had made he set in the house of which YAHWEH said to David and to his son Solomon, "In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name forever; **2 Chr 33:7 the image of the idol. This implies in both cases an anthropomorphic image.**

I Adēn; !hKb; Wny]qil xi-ta, %l Mh; wCjw<sup>WTT</sup> **2 Kings 23:4**  
 hwhy>l k]hne'aycAl. @Sh; yr'invetay]d'vMh; ynh]Kōtay]

abē. I kō W hr'vā] (>I [Bā; 'yWf[h( ~yI Kē; I K' taä  
 afh!Arēqj tAmāyB. 'il vWryli #Vxthi ~pōfYh) ~ymVh;  
 'I aētyBē ~rō'[-]ta,

**2 Kings 23:4** The king commanded the high priest Hilkiah, the priests of the second order, and the guardians of the threshold, to bring out of the temple of YAHWEH **all the vessels made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven**; he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel. **Chronicler abbreviates account of Josiah and leaves out this reference to Asherah and the one in v. 7.**

#Vxthi hWfay>tyBāi hr'vāh'-ta, acW. <sup>WTT</sup> **2 Kings 23:6**  
 qdYh: !Arēqj I xpB. Htāo @rōfYh: !Arēqj I xpāI a, 'il vWryli  
 ~[h' ynB. rbq&I [-; Hrō'[-]ta, %I vYh: rp'[-]I.

**2 Kings 23:6** He brought out the **image of Asherah** from the **house of YAHWEH**, outside Jerusalem, to the Wadi Kidron, burned it at the Wadi Kidron, beat it to dust and threw the dust of it upon the graves of the common people.

hWfay>tyB. rvā] ~yvēDh; yTB'-ta, #TW. <sup>WTT</sup> **2 Kings 23:7**  
 'hr'vā] ' ~yTB' ~v<sup>2</sup>tAgōao ~yvWf; rvā]

**2 Kings 23:7** He broke down the houses of the male temple prostitutes that were in the **house of YAHWEH**, where **the women did weaving for Asherah**.

~yr'vāh'-ta, tr&Yh: tAbēMh;-ta, 'rBvī <sup>WTT</sup> **2 Kings 23:14**  
 ~dā' tAmīc.[-; ~māqm;-ta, aLēnyw:

**2 Kings 23:14** He broke the pillars in pieces, **cut down the sacred poles**, and covered the sites with human bones.

rvā] 'hmBh; I aētybē. rvā] xBāMh;-ta, ~gī <sup>WTT</sup> **2 Kings 23:15**  
 ~Gā I aē'fyt-ta, ayj ikh, rvā] 'j bh>I B, ~[br'y" hfē  
 qdhe hmBh;-ta, @rōfYh: #th" hmBh;-ta >allhā; xBāMh;-ta,  
 'hr'vā] @rifw>rp'[-]I.

**2 Kings 23:15** Moreover, the altar at **Bethel**, the high place erected by Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin-- he (Josiah) pulled down that altar along with the high place. He burned the high place, crushing it to dust; **he also burned the sacred pole**.

'rBēy: tAmBh; >rkMh; tAxBzmi-ta, rsY. <sup>WTT</sup> **2 Chronicles 14:2**  
 ~yr'vāh'-ta, [Dhy: tAbēMh;-ta,

**2 Chronicles 14:3** He (Asa) took away the foreign altars and the high places, broke down the pillars, **hewed down the sacred poles**, (Chronicles never refers to the goddess herself, except 2 Chr 15:16, which is taken from Kings)

rysHe dA [v> hWfay>ykōdēB. ABi i HBōYh: <sup>WTT</sup> **2 Chronicles 17:6**  
 'hdWymī ~yr'vāh'-ta >tAmBh;-ta,

**2 Chronicles 17:6** His (Jehoshaphat's) heart was courageous in the ways of YAHWEH; and furthermore he removed the high places and **the sacred poles from Judah**.

%M'[-i Wācmnl ~ybAj ~yrbD>I bā] <sup>WTT</sup> **2 Chronicles 19:3**  
 vrōti ^bb'. tAmōkh; #rah'-!mi 'Arvāh' Tr[-]bi-yK  
 ~yhī āh(

**2 Chronicles 19:3** Nevertheless, some good is found in you (Jehoshaphat), for you destroyed the sacred poles (fem. pl.) out of the land, and have set your heart to seek God."

~h̄tAba] yh̄ ǎ / 'h̄w̄hy> tyB̄ta, Wb̄z̄[Yr. <sup>WTT</sup> 2 Chronicles 24:18  
 'hd̄w̄hy>I [; @cq̄; yhiȳ) ~yB̄c; [h̄{taw̄> ~yr̄v̄ah'-ta, Wdb̄.[Yr:  
 `taz̄0 ~th̄vaB. ~il ǎ/W̄r̄ḡw̄l

**2 Chronicles 24:18** They abandoned the house of YAHWEH (in the later years of Joash), the God of their ancestors, and served **the sacred poles** and the idols. And wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this guilt of theirs.

I ǎr̄Fyl-I K' Wacy" taz̄0 K' tALkkW <sup>WTT</sup> 2 Chronicles 31:1  
 ~yr̄v̄ah' W[ Dgȳ: tAb̄CMh; W̄r̄B̄.vȳ: ǎhd̄w̄hy>yr̄[ 'I. ǎ-yaicmN̄h)  
 !m̄h̄W hd̄w̄hy>I Kmi tx̄B̄z̄Mh{taw̄> tAm̄B̄h̄-ta, Wc̄ā n̄ȳ:  
 vyai I ǎr̄Fyl yn̄B̄.-I K' Wb̄w̄v̄h̄. hLk̄:l-d [; hV̄m̄W ~yr̄pab̄W  
 s `~h̄yr̄[ 'I. At̄B̄x̄a]l ;

**2 Chronicles 31:1** Now when all this was finished (in the time of Hezekiah), all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah and broke down the pillars, **hewed down the sacred poles**, and pulled down the high places and the altars throughout all Judah and Benjamin, and in Ephraim and Manasseh, until they had destroyed them all. Then all the people of Israel returned to their cities, all to their individual properties.

#Th̄l rv̄a] tAm̄B̄h̄-ta, '!b̄ylr̄. bv̄ylr̄. <sup>WTT</sup> 2 Chronicles 33:3  
 tAr̄v̄a] f[Yr̄: '-yl i[B̄:l; tAx̄B̄z̄mi ~q̄ylr̄. wyb̄ā' W̄h̄Yb̄ix̄ij>  
 `~t̄āo db̄[ Yr̄) ~ym̄v̄h; ab̄c̄.-I k'l. W̄x̄T̄v̄ylr̄:

**2 Chronicles 33:3** For he (Manasseh) rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had pulled down, and erected altars to the **Baals**, made **sacred poles** (fem. pl.), **worshiped all the host of heaven**, and served them.

ǎI [m̄W At̄ā Jx̄;-I k̄l>ǎI -rt, [h̄{At̄ē pitW <sup>WTT</sup> 2 Chronicles 33:19  
 ~yr̄v̄ah' 'dym̄i[h̄y> 'tAm̄B̄' ~h̄b̄' hn̄B' r̄va] tAm̄q̄M̄h̄y>  
 'yz̄Ax̄ yr̄b̄DI I [p̄ ~yb̄w̄tK. ~N̄hi A [n̄k̄hi yn̄p̄.l i ~yl ǎPh̄y>

**2 Chronicles 33:19** His (Manasseh's) prayer, and how God received his entreaty, all his sin and his faithlessness, the sites on which he built high places and set up **the sacred poles** and the images, before he humbled himself, these are written in the records of the seers.

r [n̄ē W̄c̄ā [ 'aW̄h̄y>Ak̄r̄ m'l. ~yn̄k̄' hn̄Am̄v̄b̄W <sup>WTT</sup> 2 Chronicles 34:3  
 'I x̄h̄e hn̄v̄' hr̄f̄.[, ~yT̄v̄b̄W wyb̄ā' dym̄D" yh̄ ǎ l e v̄Ar̄s̄t̄i I x̄h̄e  
 ~yl ǎPh̄y> ~yr̄v̄ah̄y> 'tAm̄B̄h̄; !mi ~il ǎ/W̄r̄ḡw̄l 'hd̄w̄hy>ta, rh̄ḡ;l.  
 `tAk̄S̄M̄h̄y>

**2 Chronicles 34:3** For in the eighth year of his (Josiah's) reign, while he was still a boy, he began to seek the God of his ancestor David, and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, **the sacred poles**, and the carved and the cast images.

~yl ǎB̄h; tAx̄B̄z̄mi tae. w̄yn̄p̄'l. Wc̄ā n̄ȳ: <sup>WTT</sup> 2 Chronicles 34:4  
 ~yl ǎPh̄y> ~yr̄v̄ah̄y> [D̄Ḡl ~h̄yl ǎ[me h̄l [mil̄.-r̄va] ~yn̄M̄x̄h̄y>  
 ~yx̄b̄z̄h; ~yr̄b̄Q̄h; yn̄P̄.-I [; 'qr̄v̄h̄. qd̄h̄y>r̄B̄vi 'tAk̄S̄M̄h̄y>  
 `~h̄l'

**2 Chronicles 34:4** In his presence they pulled down the altars of the **Baals**; he demolished the incense altars that stood above them. He broke down **the sacred poles** and the carved and the cast images; he made dust of them and scattered it over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.

~yrVah'-ta] > tAxBzAh(-ta, #Täy: WTT 2 Chronicles 34:7  
 #raäl KB. [DBI ~ynMxh(-l kl > qdnd. tTKi ~yl isPh] >  
 s ~il (Vlryli bvYr. l ar'Fyl

**2 Chronicles 34:7** he broke down the altars, beat **the sacred poles** and the images into powder, and demolished all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

rvajr: wydy" hfq]m; tAxBzAh(-la, h[äyl al (- > WTT Isaiah 17:8  
 ~ynMxh(- ~yrVah] > har'yl al (- wyt' [Bca, WfU'

**Isaiah 17:8** they will not have regard for the altars, the work of their hands, and they will not look to what their own fingers have made, either **the sacred poles** or the altars of incense.

rsh' yrP-I K' hzi > bq[y: !wQ] rPk] > 'tazB. !k' WTT Isaiah 27:9  
 tAcPhh. 'rgl-ynbaK. xBani ynba; I K' YAmWfB. AtaJx;  
 ~ynMx] > ~yrVae] Wmq](-al)

**Isaiah 27:9** Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be expiated, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces, **no sacred poles** or incense altars **will remain standing**.

#[äl (; ~hprVajr: ~tAxBzmi ~hynB. rKiki WTT Jeremiah 17:2  
 tAhböh; tA[bG>I [p !n'f]r(

**Jeremiah 17:2** while their children remember their altars **and their sacred poles, beside every green tree**, and on the high hills,

^yr( ' yTdmvhi] ^Brömi ^yrVae] yTiv.tnl] > WTT Micah 5:13

**Micah 5:14** and I will uproot **your sacred poles** from among you and destroy your towns.

Wrvajr: ytynd[ ' ynba] ~yBc: [I] ( dA [ByLi-hm; ~yrPa, WTT Hosea 14:9  
 ac(mnl ^yP, yNMni !n'f]r( vArbKi ynba]

**Hosea 14:8** O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you (pun on Anat and Asherah?). I am like an evergreen cypress; your faithfulness comes from me.

Ralph W. Klein  
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