

Appendix B

DATE PALM DEITY

Deity. noun. de-i-ty plural deities. 1, a: the rank or essential nature of a god : DIVINITY. b: a god or goddess. 2, one exalted or revered as supremely good or powerful. Example given:

*“When archaeologists began to dig up cuneiform texts in the 19th century, a further peculiarity emerged: Esther and her cousin Mordecai shared names with **Ishtar** and her cousin **Marduk**, two of the most prominent deities in ancient Mesopotamia. - Esther Brownsmith, The Conversation, 03-21-2024.”*

This appendix compiles the historiographic record of worship and reverence of the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*), the Judean Date Palm specifically, and the evolution of this ancient, divine botanical plant into the esoteric Sefirotic Tree, known as the Kabbalist *Tree of Life*. Many books have been written attesting to the metamorphic iconography of the *Tree of Life* and its layered meaning over time. Repeating such is not the intent here. This work is to provide the reader summary understanding of how, even going through this evolution, the date palm and its parts represent symbolic meanings and associations with those who visited Oak Island long ago.

Without delving into deep discussion or explanation of terms, personalities, places and cultural significance, this appendix will highlight how the Judean Date Palm, and its cultivar brethren, have impacted the metaphysical divinity in pagan cultures and religions from antiquity to those of the 1400s, through symbolic iconography and writings. With perhaps finding of a megalithic boulder *Tree of Life* covering a good portion of Oak Island, we prepare the reader for the symbiotic affiliation with the mystery fiber found there as “symbolic sisters” esoterically sharing a buried message. This message has been passed around through secret societies as part of sacred knowledge and sacred numerology and espoused through the *Kabbalah Tree of Knowledge*, becoming the *Tree of life*. Helping to expose these sacred secrets was Sir Francis Bacon and his minion, as opposed by Freemasonry worldwide. *Let’s begin.*

Location! Location! Location!

Archeological evidence suggests that nomadic human tribes began farming during the Neolithic period, and so it is often referred to as the Neolithic Revolution. “About 12000 years ago, one of the first attempts at farming began in the **Fertile Crescent**, the Levant region of the Near East that includes the interior areas of present-day Turkey, Israel, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Turkmenistan, and Asia Minor. The ancient inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent were known as Natufians.”¹

Yet the date palm had been surviving in the Fertile Crescent for 50 million years and was a critical part to making the desert and these arid regions survivable. The sight of a date palm signaled a desert oasis, which meant water, shade, food (dates), shelter and more. Date palms were seen as literally *trees of life* to those Natufians who traveled out of central Africa, over one hundred thousand years ago.²

Had written occidental history developed in a cooler, temperate zone, the *Tree of Life* may have been centered around the oak (*Quercus*). Indeed, as philosophical questions of man’s connection with the stars and God were later adopted and written by the west and the east, the *Tree of Life* did morph into plants amenable to their geographically relatable botanics. Since it is in this location of the sprawling Near East swath of land of the Fertile Crescent, made up of the Levant, Phoenicia and Mesopotamia; where this story was blossomed, the date palm tree (*Phoenix dactylifera*) was front and center. The date palm of that desolate region was domesticated, provided delicious sustenance and developed into a cultural deity. So, as the genesis of understanding our place in the universe was defined back in antiquity, the “Phoenix” tree of the desert held the best - *location, location, location!*

The following pages compile noted artifacts, historical comments, and ecclesiastical excerpts which track the divination of the Judean Date Palm specifically, and the date palm tree as a physical, metaphysical, metaphorical and even mystical presence in our collective understanding of life and God. This compilation of examples shows how *Phoenix dactylifera* over time, became a tremendously popular symbol. The evolution of this initial Egyptian deity would continue transforming into important relationships with various religions and concepts; later attracting those *ancient voyagers* to bring its symbolism to Oak Island. In the text are **bolded** names of deities associated with the date palm, and in [blue](#), are attributions assigned or related to it.

Egyptian Evidence Engraved

The Date Palm's Latin name is *Phoenix dactylifera*. The genus name *Phoenix* is from the mythical sun-bird that rises from its ashes. This “sun-bird” comes from the ancient Egyptian god **Bennu** which means “palm tree” and “purple heron.” This deity is linked to both **creation** and the never-ending **cycle of the sun**. When new leaves (fronds) grow on singular trunks, they appear to reach toward the sun. Old fronds will die and remain to shield the trunk, as new ones sprout and reach for the cosmos.

The second half of the Latin name is *dactylifera* which means “date-bearing.” A combination of the Greek word *daktylos* (digit) and *fero* (to bear) was due to the fruit of the date palm (dates) resemble fingers on the hands (as digits). Daktylony, or finger counting, was first recorded by the ancient Egyptians who created a base 10 (decimal) numbering system in 3000 BC.^{3,4} Having 10 fingers and 10 toes was inspiration to create a finger/digit standard unit of measurement with a finger equaling 1 ‘inch.’ A palm [hand] was the width of 4 fingers, totaling 4 inches. Similarly, the ‘foot’ measurement was the length of a human foot totaling 12 fingers, thus 12 inches. Other measurements included from the fingertips to the elbow, equaled a ‘cubit.’ A ‘decan’ was a unit of 10 which organized time within a day and a year. And a decade’ was a unit of ten years. Ten became the unit of measurement for time and space.⁵



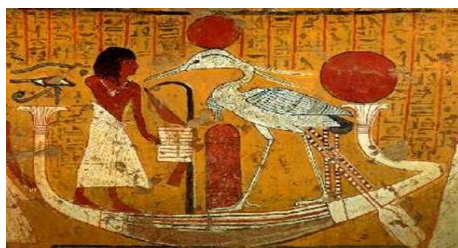
Wauters, “Return to the Garden.”

Laural Virtues Wauters in *Return to the Garden*, discussed the reach of early Egyptian astronomers to understand the stars. She wrote,

*“They looked into the night sky and noticed two stars that circled around a stationary void in the center of the cosmos. They named these circumpolar stars ‘the indestructibles’. Today we known them as **Kochab**, (in the bowl of the Little Dipper – Ursa Minor) and **Mizar**, (in the handle of the Big Dipper – Ursa Major). This void, that all other stars revolved around, led them to believe that this was a portal to the afterlife. Iunu ‘city of pillars’ or ‘city of the sun’, later named Heliopolis*

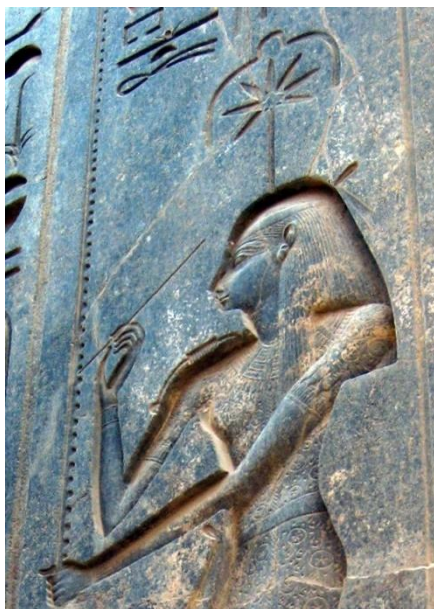
*(for **Helios** the Greek sun god), was located in northern Egypt. This was a land of date palms and desert near the delta of the Nile River. It attracted seekers and scribes who functioned as mathematicians, astronomers, architects and builders. Inspired by the sight of date palms seeming to touch the stars, they began to construct tapered stones and mud pillars to replicate them. These pillars helped the early scribes of Heliopolis to record the movements of the stars that rotated around the 'north portal'. They believed it to be the place where the soul's 'ba' could travel after death and be reborn in the afterlife. These pillars, modeled after the date palm, also allowed them to measure the sun's shadows from sunrise to sunset."*

She added, "This gave birth to one of Egypt's most important creation myths, the **Ennead**. The Ennead 'nine gods' of Heliopolis, builds upon the **Ogdoad** 'eight gods' of Hermopolis, which focused on the eight primordial gods of the Nile River. In the Ennead, **Atum-Ra** (creator god) emerged (at sunrise) from the watery world of **Nu** (Nile) to release his 'ba' (soul) in the form of the **Bennu bird** (sun-bird/Phoenix). This act of releasing the **Bennu bird** separated the star-filled heavens from the watery world below. At sunset **Atum-Ra** disappeared into the darkness of night, leaving the **Bennu** to rest on a **Benben** (sacred mound of dirt where the date palm grew). Miraculously the **Bennu** arose on the **Benben** as **Atum-Ra** rose in the east the following morning. The **Bennu** (ba of **Ra**) had successfully separated light from dark, while the **Benben** (container of **Ra**) defined the sun rays by day and the stars by night. **Atum-Ra** then created: **Tefnut** (moist air/rain) and **Shu** (dry air/wind). **Tefnut** and **Shu** created: **Geb** (earth) and **Nut** (sky). **Geb** and **Nut** hold each other so tightly that **Shu** must separate them to live and breathe. **Geb** and **Nut** created: **Osiris** (god of fertility and regeneration), **Isis** (goddess of motherhood and magic), **Set** (god of chaos and magic) and **Nephthys** (goddess of air and protection)."⁶



← A scribe on a solar barge is flanked by two date palms columns. On the left is the Wadjet – Eye of **Ra**, and on the right is the solar symbol of **Ra**. The **Bennu bird**, the ba/soul of **Ra**, is guiding the ship as the scribe holds the renpet (date palm rib) staff to record the journey.⁷

These ancient Egyptian scribes, astronomers and royal diviners were deified in the form of the self-created goddess **Seshat** ‘female scribe.’ **Seshat** can be identified by a stylized seven-leaf date palm tree growing from her head, in the form of a seven-pointed star under a domed crescent with a central bubble or shaft. This “star” represents a date palm pointing toward the seven stars in the Big and Little Dipper. The crescent dome is the northern sky and the bubble or shaft is the portal to the afterlife.⁸



↑ **Seshat** notching a date palm frond rib called a renpet during the Sed festival of Rameses II – Amun temple at Luxor c. 1250 BC.



↑ Obelisk of King Senusret (1971-1926 BC) - Heliopolis

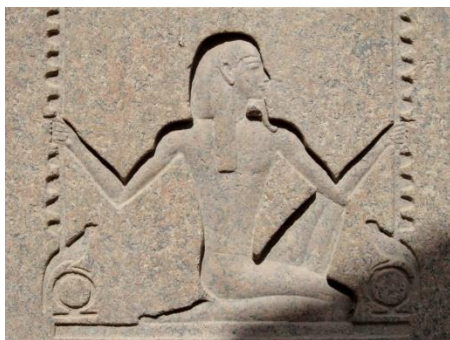
Around 3150 BC, before the construction of pyramids, Heliopolis was known for its tall four-sided stone obelisks. Egyptians called them *tekhenut*, which meant “to pierce the sky.” The word “obelisk” is based on the Greek word *obeliskos*, meaning “skewer.” In Arabic it’s *masalla*, meaning “needle.” Obelisks were inspired by date palms, which became monuments in honor of Egypt’s great Kings, Queens & Pharaohs. These early rulers believed so strongly in life after death that they erected obelisks to record their divine rule and to help them on their journey to the afterlife.⁹



King Sahure (2458-2446 BC) was the first to build a pyramid complex that included a separate solar temple, he was also the first to introduce palm columns that resembled date palms. His temple complex, “the rising of the ba of Sahure” was built in Abusir near Heliopolis. Palm capitals and columns became a staple in Egyptian architecture.

← Detail of a palm column from the temple of King Sahure – c. 2458 – 2446 BC – Abu Sir, Egypt.

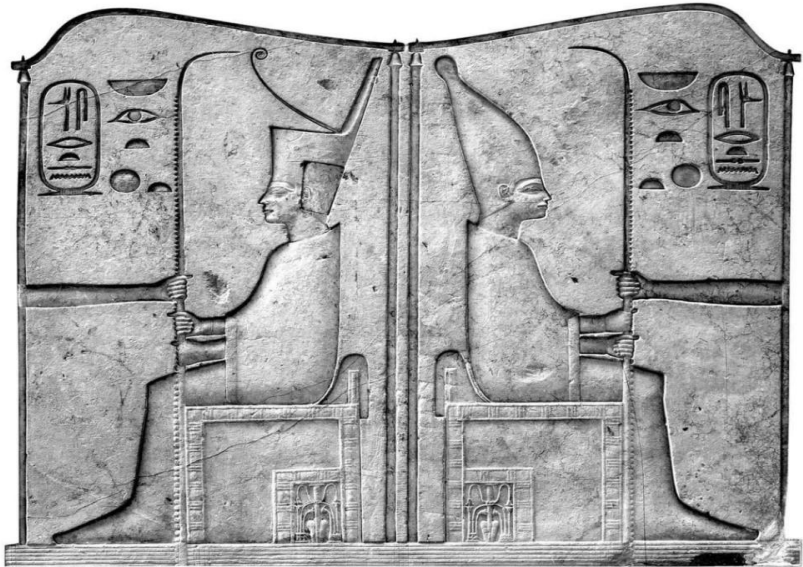
Again, Laural V. Wauters explains the imagery which has confused many viewers. For clarification, *“A notched date palm rib, a palm frond stripped bare of its leaves, was called a renpet. The word renpet meant “to renew life”. It functioned as a ruler that recorded the number of years in a “rulers” reign, which in turn mirrored their time in the afterlife. A circular ring at the base of the date palm rib was called a shen ring, which represented **eternity** or **eternal protection**, as it mimicked the mesh/sheath protective fiber on a date palm. After a Pharaoh died, the soul of “ba” would travel in a solar barge into the underworld. The Pharaoh was typically accompanied by **Ra** in the form of the **Bennu bird**, or **Horus**, **Thoth**, **Seshat**, etc.... depending on the gods and goddesses they most aligned with. The renpet, which counted the years of the Pharaoh’s reign was also carried on the journey into the afterlife.”¹⁰*



← **Heh** (god of eternity) holding two renpets, date palm ribs. This was the symbol of a million years – Temple of Ramesses II in Abydos – c. 1279 – 1213 BC.

“Offering a renpet, or actual date palm frond to a king, queen or pharaoh was done during Sed festivals and coronations. Sed festivals typically took place after a

ruler sat on the throne for thirty years. This was a time to celebrate and rejuvenate the ruler’s strength and stamina for their continued reign. Once they reached thirty years, they could request a Sed festival every three to four years.”¹¹



↑ King Senusret III, holding a notched renpet (date palm rib) and wearing the crown of Lower Egypt (left) and Upper Egypt (right) during his Heb Sed festival – c. 1878-1839 BC. Image, courtesy of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

In 46 BC, after returning to Rome, Julius Caesar threw a quadruple triumph based on his military accomplishments. He carried a date palm frond as a **symbol of his victories**.

Julius Caesar, carrying a date palm frond as a symbol of **victory**, during his Triumph in 46 BC. – by Andrea Mantegna c. 1488. →



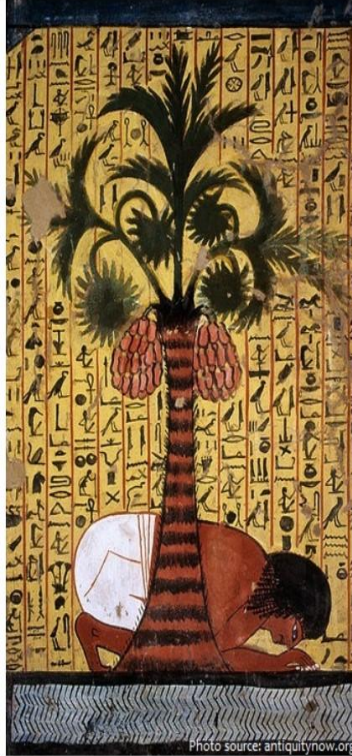
Caesar would have a golden statue of Cleopatra placed next to the statue of Venus in the Temple of Venus Genetrix. This officially symbolized the merge of Cleopatra as **Isis**, with the Greco-Roman goddess **Venus/Aphrodite**. **Venus** (planet/star/goddess) had been associated with the ancient Sumerian and Mesopotamian goddess **Inanna/Ishtar** since 4000-3100 BC. The “Queen of the Heavens” embodied the Date Palm as a goddess of **fertility**, **power** and **justice**. She was later known as **Astarte**, **Asherah** and **Aphrodite** until the Romans named her **Venus**.¹²

Inanna's twin brother was the sun god **Utu/Shamash**. Her father was the moon god **Nanna**. Her husband was **Dumuzi/Tammuz**, who embodied the fruit/seed of the Date Palm. Their **fertility story** was similar to the Egyptian **fertility story** of **Isis & Osiris** as each one was used as a way to explain the merging of male (seed) and female (womb/earth) energy. These stories helped to inspire the creation of solar calendars that could track the cycles of the agricultural year.¹³

Tomb of Pashedu, Deir- el-Medina →



↑ **Ishtar/Inanna** as a date palm
Akkadian Empire seal – c. 2350-2150 BC.



← Ramesses II in the sacred *Tree of Life* before **Ptah** and **Sekhmet**, with **Thoth** behind him with a renpet. Relief on the north wall of the second pillared hall in the Temple

of Derr on Lake Nasser, Egypt. The Temple of Derr is a rock-cut temple built by Ramesses II (r. 1279-1213 BC) and dedicated to **Ra-Harakhte**, **Amun-Ra** and **Ptah**.¹⁴

The Date Palm (DP) held significant importance to ancient Egyptians in their iconography dating back to predynastic times. The DP symbolized **victory over death**, **resurrection**, while its trunk notches were believed to **mark divine years**. DP was considered a *Tree of Life* and associated with deities **Nut**, **Hathor**, **Isis** and **Iusaas**; known as “Ladies of the Date Palm.”¹⁵

These divine ladies were believed to reside within the DP's canopy, **providing sustenance to the deceased**. In addition, the date palm served as a symbol of Upper Egypt (A. Wilkinson, 1998); and its significance was correlated with other deities such as *Sepa*, *Osiris*, *Min* and *Thoth* of Hermopolis Magna (Lurker, 1991).¹⁶

Renpet Reflections

When one rifles through the array of god and goddesses of Pharaonic dynastic culture, one indeed needs to take notes; and perhaps a renpet is it. Or is it “he” is it... or “she” is it.

*Will the real **renpet**, please stand up!*



If you were to glance at most definitions of a renpet, you get the god who can also be a goddess, “personifying **fertility**, **spring** and **youth** and known as the ‘**Mistress of Eternity**.’ And her name was to express the term ‘year’.”¹⁷ Then again, “**Renpet** specifically governed the passage of time and the transitions between different phases.”¹⁸ “**This goddess of time**, played a pivotal role in the ancient Egyptian understanding of the cosmos and often depicted as a young woman holding a DP rib [renpet], where she notched events and milestones. She was believed to have **control over the spiritual realm as well**, **guiding souls through their journey in the afterlife**.”¹⁹ And yet... **Renpet** in “hieroglyphics was figuratively depicted in art as a woman wearing a date palm shoot [renpet] (symbolizing time) over her head. This glyph regularly appears on monuments and documents throughout Egyptian history.”²⁰ But wait! **Renpet** is the god of



time and transitions, and not just an ordinary deity. “He” plays a crucial role in the **organization and progression of the cosmos**. **Renpet** held an ankh, the symbol of life, and a DP rib (renpet), **symbolizing time**. His role was as guardian of **life and time**!²¹

Perhaps this image helps to clarify - which includes the “eye” image of **Renpet**, and the “young girl” image of **Renpet**, sitting under a renpet with an ankh in her hands, with a *Tree of Life* above. *Are we clear on this?*

Dating Dates of Deity

Archaeological evidence of date cultivation in Arabia begins in 6th millennium BC (Zohary and Hopf, 2000). Earliest recording of DP symbology is evident in the 4th millennium BC. By the 2nd millennium BC, the image or ‘stylized design’ of the date palm tree is found everywhere within the orbit of the ancient Near Eastern oikumene [the inhabited earth], including Egypt, Greece, and the Indus civilization.^{’22}

Bass Relief. Titled, “**A Date Palm Plantation and Aššurnasirpal II’s Stemma.**” Courtesy British Museum, (© Photo by N. Franklin)^{’23}



Depicted in center of the Bass Relief above, found in the North Palace of Assyrian Ruler Ashurnasirpal II (r. 883-859 BC), is the *Assyrian Sacred Tree (AST)*.^{’24} This “Stylized” version of the Sacred Tree depicts a DP tree surrounded by ‘palmettes’ representing offshoot clones of the mother plant (God). Tethered by a single root stalk, they symbolize God’s replication of man in his image, as the progenitor of the human race. Assyrian Kings, immediately on both sides, tend to the Sacred Tree’s needs and instructions; depicting their direct divine connection (to God) and invoking their royal line of supremacy. The outer two images, which oftentimes depict genies or mythic animals, are shown pollenating the DP. One holds an applicator or male pollen flower, the other, carries a bucket, or carrier of collected male pollen.

Sir Edward Burnett Tylor—often called the “Father of anthropology” — suggested that the figures flanking the AST, which he identified as a date palm, were artificially pollinating it with the aid of a *banduddû* and *mullilu*.^{’25} See Glossary for definitions.

Here, as in Chapter 1, “Clues to My Curse,” sex between consulting date palm trees is brought up again. The phoeniculture aspect of this research is what links the agronomy of the *Phoenix dactylifera* to the history of the Judean Date Palm specifically, and then connecting to the Knights Templar geographically, and eventually, symbolically, to Oak Island. Norma Franklin, author of *The Assyrian Stylized Tree: A Date Palm Plantation and Aššurnaširpal II's Stemma*, is frequently quoted in this volume. Her research helps tie these issues together...

“It is important to understand that a date palm with a single trunk is not the natural form of the tree; instead, it is a cultivated DP that is constantly tended to. A DP left to nature is not economically valuable, is rarely found, and, of specific relevance to this paper, is not depicted on any known Assyrian reliefs [or numismatic depictions]. The easily recognizable, realistic-looking date palms portrayed on reliefs are cultivated DP, featuring a single visible trunk, a date droop, and two basal offshoots. In fact, these reliefs prove that only the female date palms, with a controlled number of offshoots were being cultivated in Assyria. The stylized DP tree, on the other hand, is a stylized image of a date palm plantation or DP grove. This idea was first proposed by Edith Porada (Porada 1946: 32), she suggested that the network of wavy lines linking the palm’s central trunk to the surrounding palmettes represent canals, and thus proving the Assyrian stylized tree represented a well-watered DP grove. This proposal was adopted by both Barbara Nevling Porter (Porter 2003: 23–24, 34–35) and Irene Winter (Winter 2003: 253). Therefore, in any analysis of the stylized tree it is essential to understand the important botanical reasons why the DP is sometimes depicted as an easily recognizable cultivated DP and sometimes as a stylized (date palm) tree, or, rather, a stylized DP plantation.”*

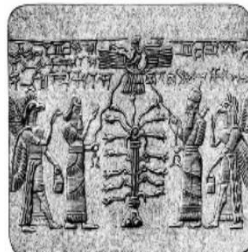
*The palmettes or offshoots, would have been detached and planted in a DP plantation, ensuring that the date palm’s valuable genetic data was preserved and endlessly replicated. This method of reproduction by offshoots [phoeniculture] was well known in the 3rd millennium, as illustrated on a stone vessel fragment from the Shamash Temple in Mari dating to ca. 2550-2250 BC, showing a figure tending to one of the two basal offshoots growing on a date palm. The ease that offshoots could be transported for planting appears to account for the spread of DP cultivation in the ancient near east (Tengberg 2012: 144), DP offshoots are referred to in Sumerian and early Babylonian texts as *peš/libbu*. “Transplanted offshoots” and “young and productive*

offshoots” are *peš-tur-zi* (Landsberger 1967: 27) which is also used for “descendant” (Landsberger 1967: 15). The term *libbi-libbi*, “offshoot of offshoots,” described “the continuation of life from one to the other generation,” (Landsberger 1967: 28, 35) which became *liblibbu*, “descendant.” That is, the knowledge that the **date palm never died—it simply replicated itself**, again and again, for eternity, was well known. “The Date Palm tree here represents the **divine world order**” (Parpola 1993: 167).”

As we will continue to demonstrate, the worshipping and deification of the date palm tree was not limited to a single ruler or culture or region within the Fertile Crescent. Franklin points out...

“The Assyrian King List names one hundred kings who ruled consecutively prior to Aššurnāṣirpal II, the 101st monarch; however, due to incomplete preservation, there are only ninety-six stylized trees in Room I, not the requisite one hundred. Yet, this disparity of numbers is not necessarily deemed a problem by Richardson, who explains why some kings may appear on the Assyrian King List and why four stylized trees may be missing from Room I. [...] The Assyrian stylized (palm) tree, as depicted at the Northwest Palace, is representative of a date palm plantation. It captures the unique ability of the date palm to replicate itself by producing offshoots, which are exact genetic clones, meaning a date palm never dies. Just as the date palm is eternal, so too was Aššurnāṣirpal II by establishing his new palace which he built for his “lordly leisure for eternity” and “for the eternal admiration of rulers and princes.” He also was an offshoot of the Assyrian dynastic tree, a liblibbu. That is, Aššurnāṣirpal II was not simply another king; he was a replication of the kings before him.”

When one considers the deities of ancient Egypt, with similarities between Assyrian gods, a remarkable comparison can be drawn. And yet, an evolution can be detected as time advances – thank you **Renpet**. But are we to believe this stylized, symbolic image of a DP, shown here, is the precursor to what the Knights Templar understood of the *Tree of Life*, with its sacred knowledge and sacred numbers, rose from?



26 The King as the Distributor of the Divine Stream →

Courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum.
Cylinder Seal Impression retraced. Image: IStock.com

Mystic Mesopotamia

Making up the largest portion of the Fertile Crescent, Mesopotamia is one of five “cradles of civilizations” in the Old World, including Ancient Egypt, Ancient India and China, as well as home to the Garden of Eden. In regards to this reportage, Mesopotamia has all the - *location, location, location*.



↑ Bas-relief marble slab representing King Aššurnāṣirpal. From Northwest Palace, Nimrod, 884 BC. Courtesy IStock.com ²⁷



↑ Cylinder Seal impression of Darius, King of Persia (522-486 BC). Image, courtesy of British Museum, London. ²⁸

The date palm has been praised in many ancient civilizations such as the Sumerians, Akkadians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Phoenicians, Greeks, Egyptians and Hebrews as shown through cultural drawings and sculptures. Moreover, the DP is still considered as **sacred tree** among all three major religions of the world, today. The timeline of history with which the DP had risen into the status of a divine symbol, may have originated as early as the Garden of Eden. Evidence of DP cultivation in the Upper Arabian Gulf and Mesopotamia were found to date as much as 6700 to 6000 ybp, making this region the centers of the ancient origin of DP domestication (Sallon*, 2020).



← Assyrian Scribes at
Palace of Sennacherib,
640-615 BC.²⁹
Courtesy: British Museum,
London. Melinda Kolk,
Photographer

With a Heavy influence in
the Date Palm divinity as
the Stylized Sacred Tree,
Kar Tukulti Ninurta artwork,
circa 1243-1207 BC.
Credit: Pergamon Museum,
Berlin. ↓³⁰



The depiction of a DP motif was not new, as variations were prevalent in Assyrian art from the Middle Assyrian period onward (Reade 1965: 129), with the Late Assyrian stylized date palm appearing in the 2nd millennium, during the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243-1207 BC) (Parpola 1993: 163-164).³¹ The king built a new cult center and capital surrounding Assur/Aššur (pronounced Ashur) – the East Semitic god and head of the Assyrian pantheon in Mesopotamian religion. Aššur the city, dates from the mid-3rd millennium BC and was the capital of the Old Assyrian kingdom. The Assyrian stylized (palm) tree is actually the stylized image of a DP plantation that appears more than 190 times in the Northwest Palace.³²

The Assyrian/Babylonian (2500 BC) Sacred Tree, with its nodes (palmettes) forming vertical columns in each side of the central trunk of the date palm, becomes the original structure that all future *Tree of Life* motifs emulate and build upon.



“About the middle of the 2nd millennium, a new development in the iconography the date palm tree becomes noticeable leading to the emergence of the so-called Late Assyrian Sacred Tree (AST) under Tukulti-Ninurta I. This form of the AST is principally characterized by the “garland” of cones, pomegranates and/or palmettes surrounding its crown and/or trunk. Its formal development through the Middle Assyrian period can be traced from dated seal impressions and datable seals (Moortgat and Beran in ZA 47 (1941), 48 (1944), and 52 (1957)). The earliest examples which can be dated with certainty are dated to Tukulti-Ninurta (1243 BC). With the rise of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, this form of the AST spreads throughout the entire Near East and continues to be seen down to the end of the 1st millennium. The hundreds of available specimens of the Late Assyrian Sacred Tree exhibit a great deal of individual variation reflecting the fact that the motif and most of its iconography were inherited from earlier Periods. This new AST characteristic features consist of a trunk with a palmette crown standing on the stone base and surrounded by a network of horizontal or intersecting lines fringed with palmettes, pinecones, or pomegranates. These represent a universal symbol of **regeneration, self-renewal**, and **victory over death** (see Baldock, *Elements* p. 105, and de Vries, *Dictionary* p. 356).”³³

Interestingly, there are no depictions of naturally growing, multi-trunk date palms in any Egyptian, Sumerian, Assyrian or Babylonian reliefs, or later in Greek, Roman, Carthaginian or Judaic numismatic or seal motifs. As for DP imagery found in the Assyrian palaces of *Sennacherib* and *Aššurnasirpal* discussed earlier, a straight trunk, with date droop and one or two basal offshoots are present. This specifically indicates, only the cultivated female DP will uniquely symbolize the divine link between man and God.³⁴

- “From their ashes shall be reared, A Phoenix that shall make all France affear'd.”

W. Shakespeare, Henry VI, Part 1 (1623) iv. vii. 93



← Sacred Date Palm Given to Founder of the 3rd Dynasty of Ur, King Ur-Nammu of Sumer (r. 2112-2095 BC).
Credit. Public Domain

Two Egyptian Pharaonic Figures carved in ivory, with a stylized sacred date palm (circa 9th -8th BC).
Courtesy MET Museum.³⁵ ↓

Molded plaque of two **Kusarikku** (bull-men), holding a Sacred Palm Tree surmounted by the eight-pointed star of **Ištar**. Horned headdresses indicate divinity. From Eshnunna (Tell Asmar near Baghdad, Iraq). Early 2nd millennium BC. ↓³⁶



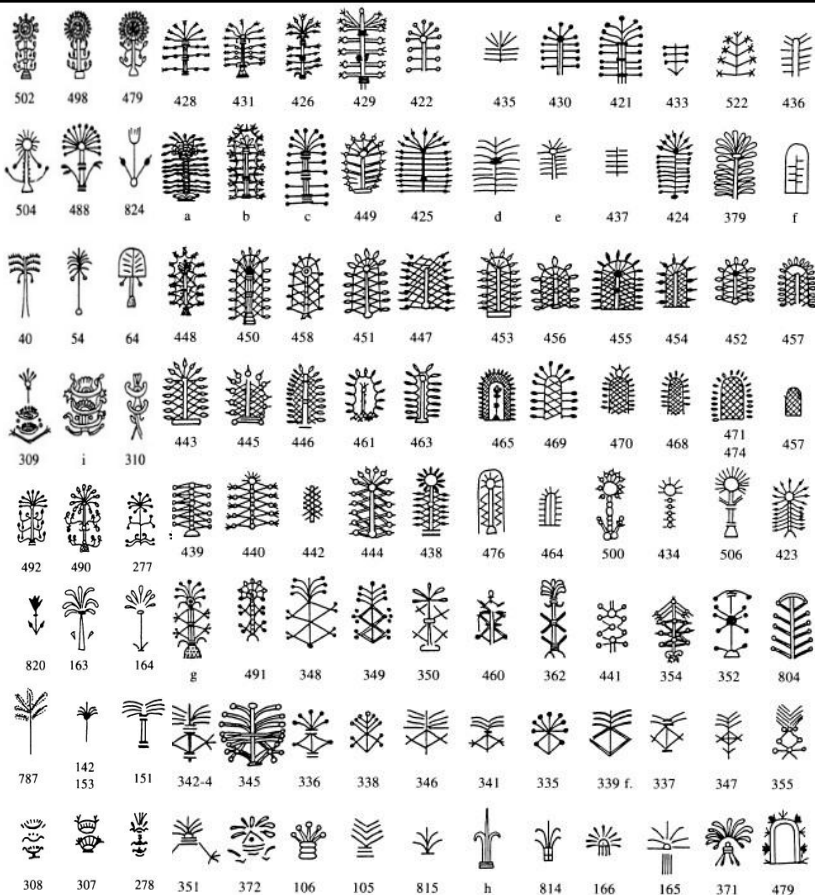
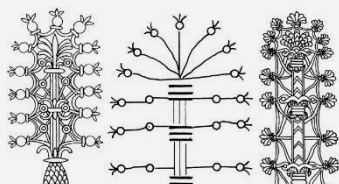
"The hundreds of available examples of the Late Assyrian Sacred Tree exhibit a great deal of individual variation reflecting the fact that the

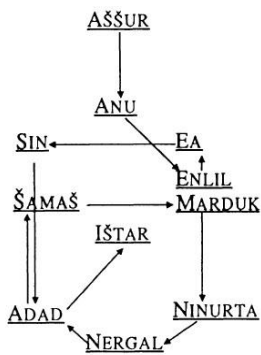
motif and most of its iconography were inherited from earlier periods. Nevertheless its characteristic features stand out even in the crudest forms and make it generally easy to distinguish it from its predecessors. Essentially, it consists of a date palm trunk with a palmette crown standing on the stone base and surrounded by a network of horizontal or intersecting lines fringed with palmettes, pinecones, or pomegranates. In more elaborate renditions, the DP trunk regularly has joints or nodes at its top, middle, and base and a corresponding number of small circles to the right and left of the trunk. See variations shown. Antithetically posed animal, human, or supernatural figures usually flank the tree, while a winged disk hovers over the whole. Even the most schematic representations are executed with meticulous attention to

overall symmetry and axial balance.” Simo Parpola explaining to us the basic shape emanating as the “stylized” version of the deification of the date palm, in his historic research called, *THE ASSYRIAN TREE OF LIFE: TRACING THE ORIGINS OF JEWISH MONOTHEISM AND GREEK PHILOSOPHY*.³⁷

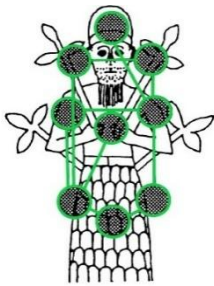
Most of the anthropological and archaeobotanical understandings of this cosmological, ontological and religious evolution of the *Tree of Life*, centers on his landmark, 1993 writing. Below are just a selected few of the many early morphologic configurations of the stylized date palm into a *Tree of Life* motif.

These are the primary Triadic configurations → nodes, volutes, and circles found on most **AST** motifs, of which many variations are shown ↓.
Courtesy: Parpolo, 1993. Pgs. 162 & 200.³⁸

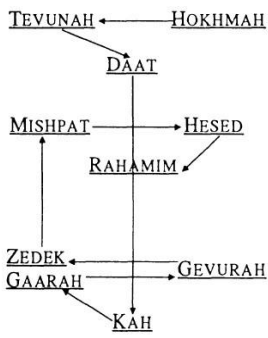




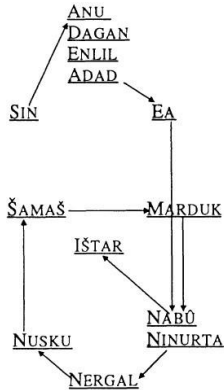
a. Grayson, *ARI* 2, §§ 486 and 646 (reigns of Tukulti-Ninurta II and Ashurnasirpal II).



b. The same plotted on the body of the Divine anthropos. After A. Parrot, *Nineveh and Babylon* (London, 1961).

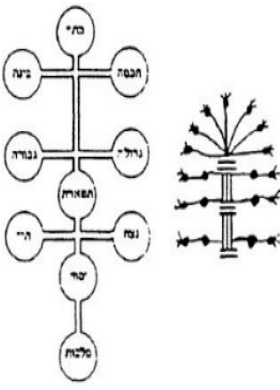


c. KAR 25 (see Excursus 2). In this list, Adad exceptionally appears among gods of the Upper Face to make possible the clockwise round of the Lower Face.

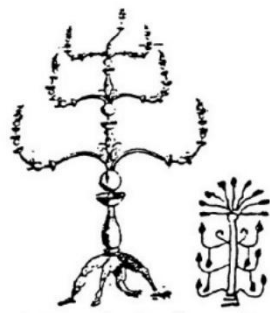


d. Rav's list of creative powers

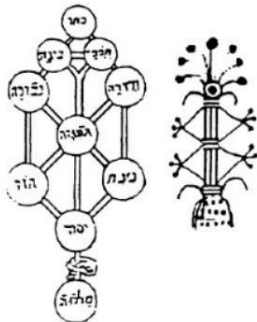
These diagrams and structures were attempts to arrange the enumerations of gods and divine powers into symbolic imagery, perhaps to justify the powers amassed and utilize the doctrine of “unity in multiplicity.”³⁹



f. Tree of Eternal Life



b. Tree in the form of a Menorah. From *Or Nerot ha-Menorah* (Venice, 1548; Halevi, *Kabbalah*,



g. The Sefirotic Tree of Paus Ricius, *Porta Lucis* (Augsburg, 1516; Poncé, *Kabbalah*,

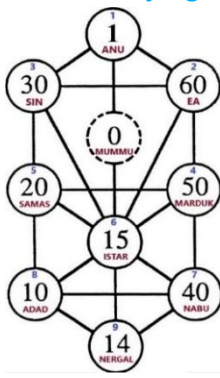
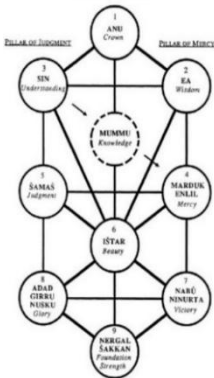
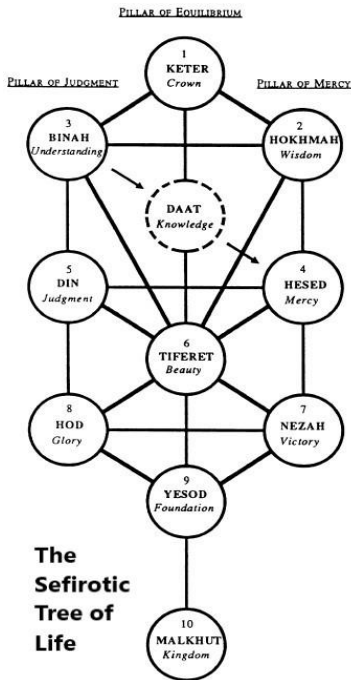
“Otto Lehto, in 2018 comments on Parpola’s, *Tree of Life*, as a universal symbol of human cultures everywhere, represented in myths and iconography as well as sagas and fairy tales. In the motifs of Assyrian, Canaanite and, more broadly, Middle Eastern religions the Tree figures as part of early Semitic (as well as non-Semitic) cultures and their symbolism. The common belief ties the idea of a life-giving-sustaining-rejuvenation godly tree with various forms of ‘fertility cults’ and polytheistic agrarian ritual practice. Parpola offers an analysis of the AST as a symbol of an early form of ‘Kabbalistic’ mystical knowledge which would not only stand as a bridge

between the earlier ‘Oriental’ polytheism and Abrahamic* monotheism, but also offers an explanation of the roots of *Tree of Life* imagery in Medieval Jewish mysticism.”⁴⁰

*‘Abrahamic’ here, stands for the triad of Biblical monotheisms: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Speaking of Abraham, we should not forget that the Bible claims he was born in ‘Ur of Chaldea,’ i.e., Mesopotamia.⁴¹

The Sacred Tree, representing the **Divine Order**, also represents this teleological extremity of reality, and the place of creation. It is the telos of reality, in that it is both the place from **which the creation emanates**, and the place to which the king seeks to effect a return by means of **moral exercise and judgement**.⁴² Here, early *Tree of Life*

motifs emerge signifying the ontological **concepts of sacred knowledge & sacred numbers**, as interpreted from prior writers, philosophers and cultural leaders deep within Mesopotamia. However, for this effort, it is not important the veracity or verifiability of what makes up hermeneutical attributes of any version of the *Tree of Life*, and not the intent of this work.



However, to help the reader follow the logical evolution of how the revered date palm tree deity of Egypt and Mesopotamian culture, became stylized as the central motif of the *Assyrian Sacred Tree* (AST), and then evolved even further into the Kabbalistic teachings of the *Sefirotic Tree of Life*... we turn to Simo Parpola's explanation of how the *Tree of Life* was formed.⁴³

"The Tree was common knowledge, while the more sophisticated details of its interpretation were accessible to a few select initiates only. The existence of an extensive esoteric lore in 1st- and 2nd-millennium Mesopotamia is amply documented, and the few extant written specimens of such lore prove that mystical exegesis of religious symbolism played a prominent part in it."

The Sefirotic Tree

*Mesopotamian esoteric lore has a remarkable parallel in Jewish Kabbalah, and, more importantly from the standpoint of the present topic, so does the Assyrian Sacred Tree. A schematic design known as the Sefirotic Tree of Life [SToL] figures prominently in both practical and theoretical Kabbalah. In fact, it can be said that the entire doctrinal structure of Kabbalah revolves around this diagram (previous page) a form which strikingly resembles the AST [see previous box]. The SToL derives its name from elements called Sefirot, literally "countings" or "numbers," represented in the diagram by circles numbered from one to ten. They are defined as divine powers or attributes through which the transcendent God, not shown in the diagram, manifests Himself. Each has a name associated with its number. The SToL has a central trunk and horizontal branches spreading to the right and left on which the Sefirot are arranged in the symmetrical fashion: three to the left, four on the trunk, and three to the right. The vertical alignments of the Sefirot on the right and left represent the polar opposites of masculine and feminine, positive and negative, active and passive, dark and light, etc. The balance of the SToL is maintained by the trunk, also called the Pillar of Equilibrium. Like the AST, the SToL has a dual function. On the one hand, it is a picture of the macrocosm. I gives an account of the creation of the world, accompanied in three successive stages by the Sefirot emanating from the transcendent God. It also charts the cosmic harmony of the universe upheld by the Sefirot under the constraining influence of the polar system of opposites. In short, it is a model of the **divine world order**, and in*

manifesting the invisible God through His attributes, it is also in a way, an image of God. On the other hand, the SToL, like the AST, can also refer to man as a microcosm, the **ideal man** created in the image of God. Interpreted in this way, it becomes a way of **salvation** for the mystic seeking deliverance from the bonds of flesh through the soul's [ba's] union with God. The arrangement of the Sefirot from the bottom to the top of the diagram marks the path which he has to follow in order to attain the ultimate goal, the crown of heaven represented by the Sefirah number one, **Keter**.

Tradition says that the doctrines about the SToL were originally revealed to the patriarch Abraham, who transmitted them orally to his son. In actual fact, the earliest surviving kabbalistic manuscripts date from the 10th century AD.

It is generally agreed however, that the “foundation stone” of Kabbalism, the *Sefer Yezirah*, was composed sometime between the 3rd and 6th centuries, and the emergence of Kabbalah as a doctrinal structure can now be reliably traced to the 1st century AD. The renowned rabbinical schools of Babylonia were the major centers from which the Kabbalistic doctrines spread to Europe during the high Middle Ages. Altogether, the SToL displays a remarkable similarity to the AST in both its symbolic content and external appearance. In addition, given the fact that it seems to have originated on Babylonian soil, the likelihood that it is based on a Mesopotamian model appears considerable.”



← Rosicrucian
Tree of Life,
circa 1574

Rosicrucian →
Tree of Good
And Evil,
Circa 1574



Please donate to the Francis Bacon Art Academy to support new recruits.

But not all interest in DP was based on divine inspiration nor mystical cosmology. Hellenistic interest in Judean Date Palms, as reflected in the Greek and Latin authors, may help to explain how this image was understood to non-Jewish authors (Fine, 1989: 107).⁴⁴ Here is some commentary by Fine, on this point...

“Theophrastus (372-288 BC), the first Greek author to discuss Palestinian [Israeli] dates, describes the date plantations of Coele-Syria [Jordan Rift Valley]. Like the authors who followed him, Theophrastus was impressed by the Judean Date Palm groves, but mostly by the product of the trees: *the dates*. In describing the Mediterranean coast, Lucanus (AD 35-65) notes poetically the date plantations of Idume [Judea], and compares it with neighboring cities: *“Idume, rich in palm-plantations, tottering Tyre, and Sidon precious for its purple.”* Our sources suggest that Judaeon [Judean] dates had a considerable following by non-Palestinians, and these dates were even the object of some intrigue. Josephus notes that Herod’s lucrative plantations at Jericho were much coveted by Cleopatra, who procured them through the help of Antony in AD 31. In the autumn of 30, after Cleopatra’s death, Herod regained them through the intervention of Octavian. Anecdotes regarding Judean dates, and their use in international diplomacy, survive in the writings of Athenaeus and Plutarch. According to both authors, Nicholas of Damascus, court historian of Herod the Great, sent dates to Augustus in order to further Herod’s relationship with the emperor. Athenaeus notes that Augustus therefore called them ‘nicholas dates’ in honor of the historian. Plutarch tells a slightly different story: Herod conferred Nicholas’ name upon the dates because Nicholas resembled them in sweetness, slenderness and ruddiness. By the 4th century AD the Rabbis did not know why this variety was called ‘nicholas dates’. The most comprehensive treatment of Judean dates occurs in the writing of Pliny the Elder (AD 23/24-79).⁴⁵

“But Judaea is even more famous for its date palm trees, the nature of which will now be described. It is true that there are palms in Europe, and they are common in Italy, but these are barren. In the coastal regions of Spain [Elche] they do bear fruit, but it does not ripen, and in Africa [Egypt] the fruit is sweet, but will not keep for any time. On the other hand, in the east the palm supplies the native races with wine, and some of them with bread, while a very large number rely on it for cattle fodder. For this reason we are justified in describing the palms of foreign countries... There are several kinds of palms... the other

kinds are rounded and tall, and have compact rows of knobs or circles in their bark which render them easy for the eastern races to climb... Next to these the most famous is the caryotae [Fishtail palm] which supply a great deal of food but also of juice, and from them the principle wines of the East are made. But not only are these trees abundant and bear largely in Judaea, but also the most famous are found there, and not in the whole country, but especially in Jericho, though those growing in the valleys of Archaelais [ancient Cappadocia] and Phaselis [Tekirova, Turkey] and Livias [12 miles from Jericho] in the same country are spoken of. Their outstanding property is the unctuous juice which they exude and an extremely sweet sort of wine-flavor like honey. The 'nicholas' date, belonging to this class, is not so juicy but exceptionally large in size, four put end to end making a length of eighteen inches. The date that comes next in sweetness is less attractive to look at, but in flavor is the sister of the caryotae and consequently it is called in Greek the sister date... Of the many drier dates the 'finger-date' forms a class of its own: it is a very long slender date, sometimes of a curved shape. The variety of this class which we offer to honor the gods is called 'chydaeus' by the Jews, a race remarkable for their contempt for the divine powers."

In fact, the date palm and its fruit, became the nationally recognized symbol for Judea, (or the other names ascribed to this region, to include Syria, Palestine, Phoenicia) and to the Jewish people as a whole. This can be seen in the numismatic products of that period. Except for Phoenicia proper, whose national symbols were the bee, stag and date palm, the Judean Date Palm and fruit would prove a blessing and a curse for this divine iconographic symbol.

A Cornucopia of Coins

As a symbol of their importance to both economic, cultural and country identification, the date palm image was frequently found on coins. In fact, the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) was noted on 86 coin types which bear the date palm tree as the only or most important symbol on one of their faces. Another 69 exemplars show the DP combined with some other symbol – so says L. Anson in his book *Numismata Graeca: Greek Coin Types*.⁴⁶ Anson writes,



"The date palm coin type seems to have appeared for the first time between 480-445 BC in Carystus. During the 4th century the date palm one of several symbols used extensively in Phoenicia, was particularly popular in the Punic colonies. From the end of the 3rd century BC until well into the 2nd century AD, the palm, laden with two clumps of dates, was a particularly important Tyrian coin type. Five, seven and nine branched palms are represented, but seven-frondded date palms predominate. The Greek



phoenix means both palm tree and Phoenician (or Carthaginian). Of Anson's 128 palm type coins, 69 derive from Phoenicia or the Punic colonies."



He further describes those coins... "Palma, the date palm tree, or a branch of it, may be remarked on an infinity of ancient medals and other monuments. It is the numismatic symbol of Phoenicia; and also offers itself as the token of **fecundity** because the date palm constantly fructifies as long as it lives. It was, moreover, the symbol of Judea, as is shown (Spanheim), not only on coins struck by the Roman mint, after the conquest of that country, under Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, but likewise on much older medals. The Date Palm serves as the symbol of **victory**, because, on the crown, bore a palm-branch; at other times it signified the **duration** and **permanence** of the empire, because the **date palm lives a long time**. Date palm branches were born before a victor on his reception at the gate of a city. The date palm sometimes denotes **joy** (hilarities), **abundance**, **equity**, **piety**, **health**, and **felicity**. We also see it on coins in the hand of **Hercules**, of **Jupiter**, of **Juno**, of **Mars**, of **Mercury**, of **Venus**, and especially of **Pallas** (or **Minerva**). It is given to Rome, **to victory**, **to Fortune**, **to Liberty**, and **to Peace**. The Emperors Julius Caesar, Augustus, Trajan, Elagabalus, Alexander Servus Probus, are represented with a date palm branch in their hand."⁴⁷



Yet not all date palm images on a coin do make them famous. Rivka Ben-Sasson, author of *“Botanics and Iconography: Images of the Lulav and the Etrog,”* explains how too much symbolism can kill an images’ divineness. She writes, “Though many fruit trees are depicted in Christian mosaics, usually interpreted as symbolizing the Garden of Eden, there is no palm tree among them, although the palm tree is frequently considered a symbol of Eden in early and later Christian iconography. It is remarkable that in a church named “The Church of the Palm Tree” the tree is hardly identifiable as a palm because it does not have the usual cluster of dates (fig. 9 below).”⁴⁸

“The same few depictions of palm trees occur in the synagogue mosaics at Bet-Alfa, where is a row of stylized palm trees which separates the scene of the Sacrifice of Isaac and the Zodiac. The only known synagogue mosaic which depicts two big palm trees and two



Fig. 9. Amphora with “Palm tree.” “Church of the Palm Tree”, Jordan.

lions facing the central menorah is in ancient Ma’on, near Nirim, which is also from the sixth century. These few depictions of palms are in great contrast to the fact that the date palm grew along the Jordan Valley, and around the Dead Sea down to Zo’ar, as attested in the Talmud. Returning to the relatively few depictions of date palm in mosaics in the Land of Israel, I can make an assumption. In Jewish consciousness, the date palm represented Judea and its independence, as symbolized on the Roman coins of *Judaea Capta* struck in Rome from AD 70 to 80, after the destruction of the Temple... (see here →)

On these coins Judea is represented by a palm tree, and the people by a mourning woman. Perhaps the Bar-Kokhba revolts’ use of the same symbol to awaken the national feelings of the people of Judea, followed by the disastrous consequences of that uprising, led to the [self-imposed] limitation in the use of this visual symbol. One may speculate that the date palm was no longer portrayed as one of the trees of the Garden of Eden found in those early Byzantine mosaics, because it continued to be more a geographic sign and place-marker for Judea, and thus was not yet a symbol of Heaven and Paradise.”



Many argue in fact, the image is of a woman chained to the date palm tree – further alienating and tarnishing the sacred symbolism with which it had been transmitted from previous cultural deification, into the ongoing “pause” of development of a Jewish cultural iconography.



The coins or seals presented in this appendix are described and references provided, in order of their appearance, See Endnote No.⁴⁹

Boundaries and Biblical Babble

Between the west of Egypt and east of Mesopotamia, lie the lands known as the Levant, which geographically covered the land area west of Zagros Mountains, south of Taurus Mountains and north of the Sinai Peninsula. Moldenke (1952) stated that part of the Levant was known to the Greeks and Romans by the name “Phoenicia,” which means “land of palms,” and in classic days, the date palm symbolized **richness, procreation, victory,** and **light.**⁵⁰ This area had a wide variation of ecological and climatic biomes as it was nestled on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The unusually high temperatures and extremely low humidity levels that were present in the Levant areas of the Dead Sea, Jordan Valley and Jericho during both spring and summer, furnished optimal environments for date palm development and enhancement in addition to the perfection of the crops (Sonneveld, et al., 2018).⁵¹

This following section will expand the evidence relating to the deification of the Date Palm up through the end of the Middle Ages. A simple array of quoted prominent testimonials, textual hermeneutics, artwork and imagery, and other commentary is organized on the following pages, along with their cited references. These anecdotes are in no particular chronological order nor grouped in geographic regions. However, it is this available commentary at that time which may have led the Knights Templar to understand the date palms sacredness and association with the type of esoteric mysticism and monotheistic dualism qualities with which they wanted to associate and even recreate, in a New Jerusalem, in a New World.

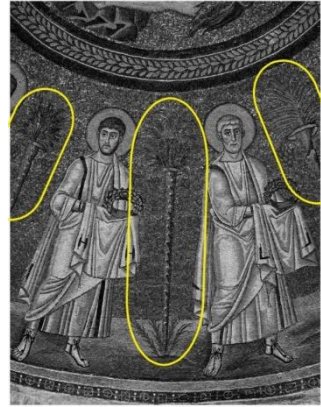
Anecdotes

Highlighted in yellow →

“Figures of the Apostles with the crown of martyrdom and date palm trees,” detail of early 6th century CE mosaics of the dome, Arian Baptistry, Ravenna, Italy.

“Christians, too, began to adorn their churches with palm branches in the first centuries of the Christian Era, as an emblem of **righteousness**, **love** and **good harvests**; and on feast days they bore palm leaves into their shrines.”⁵²

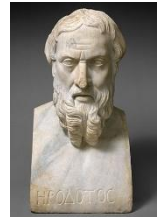
Courtesy: C DEA/A. DAGLI ORTI. Getty Images.



Wilfred H. Schoff – “the first mention of the date palm in Egypt has yet been found but deals not with the fruit but with wine made from the sap-the “Drink of Life” of old Babylonia- which is mentioned as an Egyptian product shipped up the Nile to Negro Land, in an inscription of the reign of Mernere in the sixth dynasty, about 2600 BC.”⁵³

Mohammed – “I declare it a **holy tree**. Devout believers must not uproot that whereon they subsisted, in whose shade they dwelt, whose leaves and wood they turned to such good uses in their daily lives.”⁵⁴

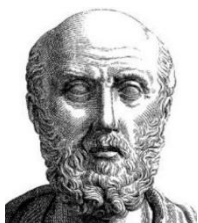
Herodotus – (484-425 BC), “has much to say (Book II, Chap. 6, paragraph 2): “In [Judea] where most of the dates are, it is claimed that they only grow in three areas, two of which are of salty soil and the fruit is good for storing (the Jordan Valley, Jericho and the environs of the Dead Sea).”⁵⁵



Mohammed – “Honor the date palm, for it is the brother of your father. It is taken from the earth that remained after Man was created. The date palm resembles **Man**: it is tall and upright, it is male and female. He that cuts off the head of the date palm, shall die; he that wounds its heart, shall himself wither. If its offshoots are cut away, no others will come forth in their place. So, too, the hands of a man do not grow again if they are cut off. The date palm is covered with fibres like human hair. Is not Man then just like the date palm?”⁵⁶

Angel Gabriel – He appeared to him and pointed with his finger at the date palm and said to the man... “This tree was created from the same matter whence thou wast created, and it will sustain thee.”⁵⁷





Hippocrates – (460-360 BC), “esteemed the Judean dates highly as medicine.”⁵⁸

Diodorus – (60 BC), “in Book XIX, Chapter C, paragraph 98, remarks: The Dead Sea region is extensively planted with date palms wherever there are watercourses.”⁵⁹

Rhea Silvia – “mother of **Romulus** and **Remus**, saw in a dream two date palms growing before the altar of **Vesta**, one of which shaded the whole earth and touched the sky with its crown of leaves, is evidently of late invention, imitated from the vine that, springing from the lap of **Mandane**, daughter of **Astysages**, grew till it covered all Asia; or from the olive tree seen by **Xerxes** in a dream, which spread over the entire earth; and these in turn perhaps borrowed from the *Tree of Life* in **Ea's** sanctuary at Eridu, which later found its way with Adam and Eve into the Garden of Eden.”⁶⁰

Plutarch – (AD 46-120), “says that Mark Anthony gave Cleopatra the date district of Jericho as a gift and that Augustus enjoyed a Judaeen date called - nicolvisin.”⁶¹

Serranus, Olivier de Marseille and **Johannes Eurenus** – “botanists of no less authority, ascribed the origin of the Judean Date Palm tree to Israel.”⁶²

Warburg – (botanist), “in his *“The Scientific Work of Aaron Aaronsohn”* (1944), considers the origin was along the banks of the Jordan and in the proximity of the Dead Sea, as the wild date is a denizen of rock crevices and hillsides in that region.”⁶³



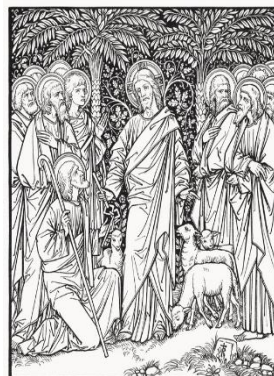
Josephus – (AD 37-85), “gives biblical references and precedents for the importance of the date in Israelitish history, and minute descriptions of Jericho and the Dead Sea: Here (in Jericho) is the richest region of Judaea in which are grown many date palms of excellent quality (Antiquities, Book XV, Chapter IV, paragraph 2).”⁶⁴

Pere Anastase-Marie de St. Elie – “O.C., of Baghdad, has called my attention to a date-palm in Najran which was treated in all respects as a god: each year the populace celebrated the feast of this deity by attaching new clothes and jewels to the palm.”⁶⁵

Strabo – (63-20 BC), “Here is a ‘phoenikon,’ an expanse of plantations of date palms and other fruit trees. The principal growth in Jericho is the date, and the groves are over a hundred stadia (17 kilometres) long, watered throughout from springs. The fruit is better than the Babylonian, and only here do you find the special variety ‘caryotae’ (of. ‘creiti’ and also ‘cureiti’ supra). The income from the grove is very high indeed (‘Geography,’ Books XV and XVI).”⁶⁶



Jesus – “came to Jerusalem, and they took branches of palms and went forth to greet Him and they cried, Hosanna, Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord” (John, 12, 13); people clothed in white robes and palm leaves in their hands” (Rev., 7, 9).⁶⁷

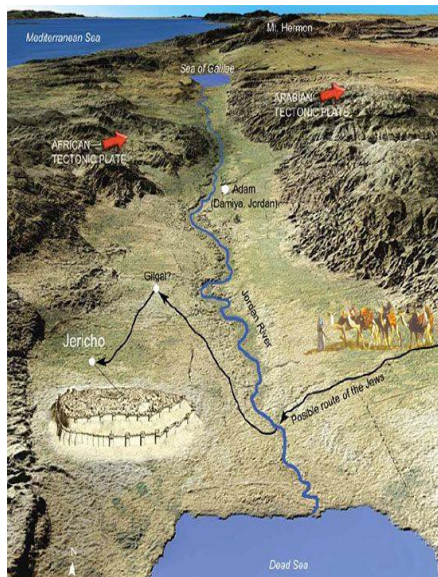


The Elder Pliny – “In other respects Egypt is of all the countries in the world the best adapted for the production of unguents, although Campania with its abundance of roses runs it close. But Judaea is even more famous for its palm trees - (XIII, u 26).⁶⁸

Claudius Galen, – (AD 130-200) “The physician who did professional research into the flora of the Holy Land, praises its dates of surpassing value in his prescriptions for diet and as a drug (Book IV C 19 of his monumental treatises *De Simpl. Medic. Faculty*).⁶⁹

Pausanias – “a Greek traveler of the 2nd century, contrasts the date of Judea, which he visited, with the Ionian: to him the Ionian are inedible, the fruit from Israel is more delicate and sweet and retains its savor and beauty.”⁷⁰

Adamnanus, Abbot of Iona – “telling of the travels of the Bishop of Arculf (AD 623-704) in *De Locis Sanctis*, refers to vast groves of palms between Jericho in the Jordan Valley and Elisha's Spring-sixty stadia long, twenty stadia wide, an unbroken stretch of delightful garden, its divers kinds of palms embellish and enrich it.”⁷¹



Ibn Hudadbeh – (about AD 864), “an Arab traveler, speaks of the dates of Zoar: A type called ‘alanquila’ (which is a typically Arabic inversion of ‘nolcolai’), tastier and lovelier than any I saw in Iraq or anywhere else.”⁷²

Nasiri Husru – “in AD 1047, the Persian records palms at Haifa and Caesarea and, in AD 1063, Antaki, describing the Ghor valley between Jericho, Beth-She'an and Tiberias, speaks of villages, streams and date palms.”⁷³

Istahari – “mentions palms in Elath, and coming to the palms of Bethlehem, says: "Here Jesus was born and here he found the lonely palm. For the most part dates do not ripen in this region, but in Bethlehem it symbolizes a miracle." This was repeated by Yakut (about AD 1225), by the unknown author of a book on Al Marsid (AD 1300), by Ibn-Batuta (about AD 1355).”⁷⁴



The Crusaders – (AD 1098-1291), “This period damaged the Holy Land in many ways, as Arab rule had done; date palm plantations suffered most.”⁷⁵

Fulcher of Chartres – “In his book on the First Crusade, *Gesta Franeorum Iherusalem Peregrinantium* (AD 1101-1127), says: "Segor, pleasantly situated and very rich in the fruits of the date-palm, very sweet to taste and which we lived on, for we could get nothing else.”⁷⁶

Saewulf – “In AD 1102, saw dates in Jericho.”⁷⁷

Bishop Daniel – “In AD 1106, the Russian, saw dense groves in Beth-She'an and was impressed by the richness and fertility of Jericho with its numerous palms (*Vie et Pelerinage*).”⁷⁸

Al-Idrisi – “in AD 1154, describes craft on the Dead Sea conveying cargo, different varieties of dates included, from Zoar to Jericho and elsewhere.”⁷⁹

Jacques de Vitry, Bishop of Acre – (AD 1210-1240) “quotes (in Book I, Chapter 85) Josephus and earlier writers with approval on the lovely, profitable dates of Zoar, but says: "The trees are now very rare in the Land of Israel, being found, in number, in Zoar and Jericho only; and the fruit is exported, as it always was." Yakut (1225).”⁸⁰

A. H. Sayee – explains, "The sacred tree whose branches reached the heaven while its roots were nourished by the primeval deep was the tree which supported the world. It was emphatically a *Tree of Life* and is accordingly, represented time after time on the monuments of Babylonia and Assyria.”⁸¹



Palms, so worshipped by pre-dynastic Egyptians, who saw the branches touch the stars in the cosmos and believed they brought knowledge from there to the people. Similar looking indeed, to a straight-branched menorah drawn by Maimonides.

Jacopo da Verona – (AD 1230), “tells of a spring that watered a great garden beside the monastery of St. Jerome; he tasted its dates and they were very good. Near Elam he counted more than 70 fruiting palm trees and a large plantation stretching for five or more miles, with many springs on the hillsides: infinitely more trees than Jews beheld in their staging at the oasis some 3000 years before. At St. Catherine Monastery on Sinai, he reported enough trees to supply dates for monks over a twelvemonth.”⁸²

Burchard of Mr. Zion – (AD 1280), “notes the groves of Ginossar and Ein Gedi.”⁸³

William of Tyre – (AD 1130-1190), “writes of the great groves of Zoar, using the Crusader name for them—palmer or “palmier?”⁸⁴

“Jericho and adjacent Zoar were dignified as “cities of dates” (Zoar in Mishna Yabamot, 16,7.) and Ezekiel 47, 19) and (Jericho in II Chronicles , 28, 15; in Deuteronomy and In Judges, 20, 33). Tamar in the Negev, we find “Baal-Tamar” a date palm sanctuary. The Land of Israel is a Garden of Eden on earth, and Beth-She’an (which still is rich in dates) is the gateway to Paradise.”⁸⁵



Deborah – “a prophetess, wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at the time. And she dwelt under the “Palm Tree of Deborah” between Ramah and Bethel in mount of Ephraim; and children of Israel came up to her for Judgement (Old Testament, Judges, Chap. 4, Verses 4–5).”⁸⁶

Solomon – “commissioned from Tyre from the skilled Hiram... pillars about which there was filigree interwoven with small palms of brass, engravings of palm trees within a pattern of two hundred pomegranates (ibid., VIII, III, 4 and 6).”⁸⁷

Mohammad – “Honor your paternal aunt, the date-palm,” enjoined his followers. “I call it your paternal aunt because it was created out of the earth left over after the creation of Adam (on whom be peace).”⁸⁸

St. Peter – “As symbols of victory over evil, palms are also symbols of martyrdom, and those who've died for the cause of the Faith are often depicted in art holding palm branches. Because of this, another custom involving palms is the blessing of palms on April 29, the feast of St. Peter of Verona, also known as St. Peter Martyr, a Dominican who, in AD 1252, was murdered by Cathar heretics for defending the holy Faith. His last words were “Credo in unum Deum,” the first words of the Nicene Creed.”



George A. Barton – “It gradually became identified with the primitive Semitic goddess, later personified as **Ishtar** or **Astarte**, who particularly embodied **nature's creative forces**. In short, the paternal aunt had made her way into the Pantheon. The earliest records of the date palm cult show it centered at Eridu, only a few miles from that Ur of the Chaldees (Mughair of modern maps) whence Abram migrated to Palestine.”⁸⁹

← **Astarte, Anat, Asherah, Qedeset?** →

“In the Middle East, the date palm was a symbol of **fertility**: **Osiris** is decked out in palm leaves and palm branches are in his hand; **Ishtar**, goddess of **Mother-Earth** and of **love**, and her Tyrian namesake, **Astarte**, divinity of **lust** and **fruitfulness**, are similarly portrayed.”⁹⁰



“There has been a shift away from the paradigm of *Israel versus Canaan* since the seventies, culminating in the *Festschrift* for Cross (Miller *et al.* 1987) and the Asherah studies of the nineties. That the culture and cult of the so-called “Canaanites” were not so different from those of the ancient Hebrews or Israelites of the Early Iron Age has now been accepted. The Israelites were “Canaanites” and “Israelite religion” a *subset* of Canaanite religion as the *matrix* of Israelite religion (Coogan 1987a:115-116; Niehr 1990:181ff., 2001:294, 306-307)26, which formed part of a *common theology* (van der Toorn 1995:2043).”⁹¹

ISHTAR



ANAT



ASHERAH



QEDESSET



Q: What do Palm fertility gods have in Common?

A: Palm fiber!

“In Israel, it should be observed that from Haifa northwards, and slightly to the south, coastal palms yield an immature fruit, because there is not enough heat for ripening. In Jaffa, further south, and round Gaza, the fruit ripens but, only in certain soft-date varieties which do not require many heat units, nor last.”⁹²

"In Syria (which, in this context, means the Land of Israel) where most of the dates are, it is claimed that they only grow in three areas, two of which are of salty soil and the fruit is good for storing (Beit She'an, the Jordan Valley, Jericho and the environs of the Dead Sea). But the dates that grow in other parts (Gaza and the coast) do not keep well and they rot, being soft, although they are sweet and can be eaten fresh.”⁹³

"Although there must have been many date palm trees in ancient Egypt, yet the Egyptians were keenly interested in 'Palestine' varieties: most native varieties were soft; but the Jordan kind were semi-dry. wall painting in Karnak (1500 BC) Illustrates flora brought back by a conquering Pharaoh. The date palm is one of them, and we may infer that Thutmose III took the opportunity to introduce certain cultivated varieties as yet un known in Egypt."⁹⁴

"For thousands of years the palm and its date were highly valued by the inhabitants from India through North Africa to the Atlantic Ocean; it was a sweet fruit and, fresh or dried, fed them in all seasons, a part from the profit of countless uses of palm leaves and wood. No wonder the palm was Holy. The only dates that will keep, they say, are those which grow in the valley of Syria, while those that grow in Egypt, Cyprus and elsewhere are eaten when fresh." This explains why dates from Israel were so prized and were shipped to Greece in preference to the Egyptian and Cypriot fruit that rotted on the way."⁹⁵



"So universally renowned were these date palms that Virgil, Georgics III, could say: *"Primus Idumaeas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas"*-- Let me be the first to present to thee, my birthplace Mantua, the palms of Idumea (Edom, a poetic license for all of Palestine). Hebrew exegesis written between the 2nd century BC and the 4th century AD confirms the date's significance in the Holy Land, Babylon, Persia, and Egypt. The Hebrews [had] learned the value and art of date pollination from Egyptian and Babylonian experts. They understood that there were male and female palms and that there could be no dates without fertilization."⁹⁶

"According to Muslim tradition: God created the date palm from dust left over after Adam was made, and Arabs consequently call it the *"Tree of Life"*; even nowadays, there is a superstition that the variety *"hayani,"* a name plainly derived from the Semitic word for "life," is especially **life-giving**, and childless Arab women still swallow *"Hayanis"* to **cure their barrenness**."⁹⁷

"The Hebrews regarded the palm unreservedly as a status symbol of the **righteous, honorable and beautiful** is seen in the Songs of Songs (7, 7, F): "This thy stature is like to a palm tree." Psalm 92, 12: "The **righteous** shall flourish like the palm tree."⁹⁸

"Phoenician traders had carried the cult to all parts of the Mediterranean as early as the Neolithic period. In graves of this age in Spain and Portugal clear evidence of it has been found. While the palm was well established in these countries

before the commencement of the Christian era and may have grown there several thousand years before, its fruit was inferior, as it is to-day, and it seems unlikely that it could have become an object of veneration, save as the cult was imported by Levantine vessels coming for tin."⁹⁹

"The date palm can tolerate water salinity better than any other fruit tree. Date palms can produce full crop if irrigated with saline water up to 2000 ppm. They can tolerate levels of salinity up to 6000–7000 and 12-BdSm–1."¹⁰⁰

"The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea shows that there was a large export of dates from eastern Arabia to the west coast of India, about 80 AD."¹⁰¹

"Leaves (fronds) and trunk bast (fibers) of date palm remain intact after they die, to act as heat insulators, so under cultivation old leaves have to be removed manually. Date palms can survive under harsh conditions such as extended drought, high salinity levels and heat (Al-Yahyai & Manickavasagan 2012)."¹⁰²

"Date palm tree has been considered a symbol of the Kingdom of Israel and was mentioned in connection with the architectural ornaments of Solomon's Temple."¹⁰³

"The Caliphs were given Ten Commandments of Mohammed whenever they went forth to do battle, to govern their conduct in conquered territory. One was. Neither shall you cut down palm trees nor burn them." Istahari (about AD 951) mentions the great date groves in the Jordan Valley, and Al-Maqdisi (about AD 985) saw groves near Haifa, Caesarea and Ramla, and at Beth-She'an, "dates... and date-honey"; he was particularly excited at what he found in the district of Jerusalem (including Jericho)."¹⁰⁴

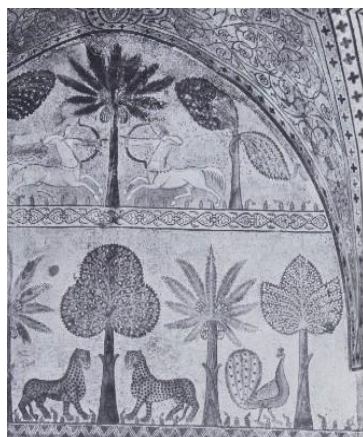
"In Arabia and Assyria, this date palm tree that appears as a natural habitat has been considered "sacred" in the earliest ages and has historically penetrated the cultural traditions of local communities who have inhabited the sacred lands of the Middle East where Judaism, Christianity and Islam have been incarnated and coexisted for centuries in Historic Palestine, Assyria, Arabian Desert, Ethiopia and Egypt."¹⁰⁵

"And ye shall take you on the first day... branches of the palm trees... and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. - (Leviticus, 23, 40). To this very day, during the Feast of Tabernacles, Jews bless the four "species"—citron, date palm, myrtle and willow - (Leviticus, 23, 40)."¹⁰⁶

"Date palms were everywhere in Egypt and on the borders of the Holy Land. Their first ascription to the Holy Land in the ancient Egyptian literature is in Papyrus Anastasi IV, 12, 5, and Anastasi V, written during the reign of Rameses II (1298-1235 BC)."¹⁰⁷

“The ancient Judean date palms show significantly more genetic mix of the Cretan palm tree (*Phoenix theophrastus*) than modern dates, and the older they are, the more they have of these genes.”¹⁰⁸

“And it was made with cherubim and palm trees, so that a palm tree was between a cherub and a cherub; and every cherub had two faces: so that the face of a man was toward the palm tree on the one side, and the face of a young lion toward the palm tree on the other side. It was made through all the house round about” (Old Testament, Ezekiel, Chap. 41, Verses 1, 16, 18, 19). Plural of “cherub,” which refers to a celestial winged being with human, animal, or birdlike characteristics who functions as a throne bearer of the palm Deity. Derived from ancient Middle Eastern mythology and iconography, these celestial beings serve important liturgical and intercessory functions in the hierarchy of angels. The term most likely derives from the Akkadian verb **karabu** meaning ‘to pray’ or ‘to bless’ [refer to <https://www.britannica.com/topic/cherub>].¹⁰⁹



“The righteous shall flourish like the “Palm Tree”; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God” (Old Testament, Psalms 92, Verses 12–13).¹¹⁰

“Here, at a somewhat later date, was a famous oracle tree, known as the *Tree of Life*, whose position in a garden near the town marked the center of the world. This tree was a date-palm.”¹¹¹

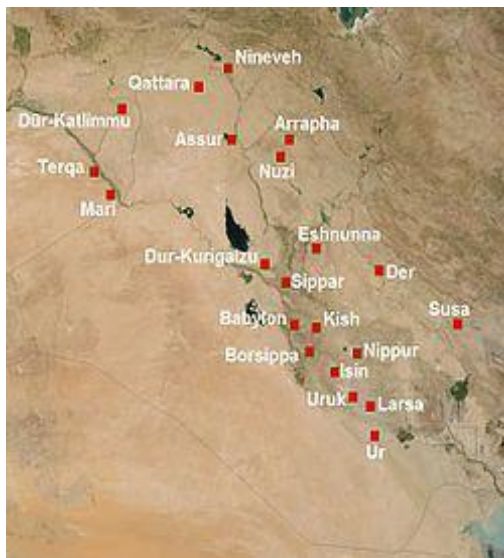
Hymn...

*“In Eridu a palm-stem grew overshadowing: in a holy place did it become green; its root was of bright lapis lazuli which stretched toward the deep: [before] the god **Ea** was its growth in Eridu, teeming with fertility: its seat was the [central] place of the earth; its foliage was the couch of **Zikum**, the [primeval] mother.*

*Into the heart of the holy house which spread its shade like a forest hath no man entered. [There is the Home] of the mighty mother who passes across the sky. [In] the midst of it was the god **Tammuz**.”¹¹²*

"The plain of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, where the worship of the palm originated, was known to its early dwellers as Edin, and it was long ago suggested that the Biblical legend of the Garden of Eden, with its sacred trees, is but a version of Babylonian legends concerning the palm god. "The garden with the *Tree of Life* in the midst was planted 'in Eden, eastward,' for such is the correct rendering of the Hebrew text," declares Dr. Sayce, "and not 'eastward in Eden,' as the Authorized Version has it. Not only the garden, but Eden also, lay to the east of the land where the writer lived. The garden stood hard by Eridu, 'the good city,' and thus in the very region where the salt 'river' of the Persian Gulf was divided into its four heads," mentioned in Genesis ii, 10-14. The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, mentioned more prominently in the Biblical account, must be regarded as derived from the interpolation of a second legend. Whatever the latter tree may have been, it is fairly clear that the *Tree of Life* represented the date-palm; and this supposition is distinctly confirmed by the Apocrypha. In the oldest portion of the Ethiopian Book of Enoch (Chapter 24) it is related that the prophet visited Paradise and found the *Tree of Life* itself-and it was a date-palm."¹¹³

"The palm cult rapidly became widespread and organized. It extended gradually northward, reaching Phoenicia and Syria; residents of the former region carried it to the western Mediterranean. In all these regions, **Aššur**, the *Tree of Life*, and the date-palm, became a common factor in decorative art, and reached its greatest vogue, perhaps in the kingdom of Assyria, 9th century BC, when the huge palaces of Nimrod (Nineveh) were constructed, in which the palm and the palm god figure at every turn."¹¹⁴



"The date palm cult, probably carried northward from Babylonia, found no lack of adherents among the Phoenicians and Syrians. It is frequently to be detected among the heathen gods to whom the Old Testament prophets animadvert. None of these objects of superstition is better known, by name at least, than **Baal**, who was originally the god of **unirrigated land** as contrasted with Ishtar (**Astarte**), the goddess of **irrigated soil and fertility**. **Baal** is an old Semitic word which, even today in Arabic, means an unirrigated palm; and its metamorphosis into the execrated divinity of the idolaters is traced fascinatingly by Dr. Barton."¹¹⁵

"The date palm near the temple of Phoebus in Delos, to which Ulysses refers, was one of the most famous in classical history: at its foot, clasping the trunk with her arms, **Leta** was fabled to have given birth to her son **Apollo**. Much evidence has been brought together by L. Siret and others to show that **Apollo** was originally an oriental **palm-god**."¹¹⁶

"Arab historians, the germ pore on the back of the seed is due to Solomon the son of David (on both of whom be peace), who impressed it with his famous seal ring, of mingled iron and brass, inscribed with the secret name of God, by virtue of which he possessed control of all **animal life and the spirit world**."¹¹⁷

"Archaeologists, C.F. and I. Grant, remark on this point: Even the popularity of the Seal of Solomon pales before that of the palm, or the palm leaf, as a symbol in North Africa. It may be safely said that there is hardly any building upon which it is not somewhere to be found, in some form or other.... The palm appears upon nearly all the Carthaginian stelae, especially upon those dedicated to the great African god **Hammon**, but it has also been found upon objects dating from a civilization earlier than the Punic. M. Ohnefalsch-Richter thinks that it is a **Mycenean symbol**. It was certainly an ancient Libyan one before the foundation of Carthage (880 BC). The palm was also the great Libyan totem."¹¹⁸

Muhammad – "The virtuous man is like a palm: he stands erect before his Lord; in every action he follows the impulse received from above; and his whole life is devoted to the welfare of his fellow-creatures."¹¹⁹ "The Hadith of the Prophet Mohammed, cited the date palm 300 times, making it the highest cited plant."¹²⁰

"Harappan forms of Stylized Tree, found in pottery, glyptic and script since 2400 BC, depict Proto-Elamite and Akkadian influence. The earliest Egyptian examples date from 16th century BC and reveal an affinity with forms contemporary to Babylonian forms. Examples: see (Kepinski *L'Arbre Stylisé* Vol. 3, nos. 924-36); see (Roger Cook, *The Tree of Life: Image for the Cosmos*, London, 1978); see (*The Great Cross of the Lateran, early Christian, with confronted animals*); see (Pacino da Bonaguido, *Christ on the Tree of Life, early 14th century*); see (*Saracen Mosaic at Palermo, 12th century Tree of Life with confronted centaurs*); see (*Menorah as Tree of Life, Hebrew Bible*, Perpignan, 1299); see (*Tree of Life and Knowledge flanked by two bulls, India, Vijayanagar period, 1336-1546*); see also (H. Schmokel, *Ziegen am Lebensbaum*, AfO 18 (1957-58): 373 ff)."¹²¹



7-8 (pp. 12, 35)

"The Sacred Tree takes the place of the king as he takes the human personification of the Tree, and in the scenes he is being purified by **apkallus** genies. The apkallus were the of mythical equivalent of court scholars (ummânu), whose primary function was to protect the king and attend to his moral integrity, i.e., purify his soul."¹²²

"The Sacred Tree symbolized the divine order, then the king himself represented realization of that order in man, in other words, a true of God, the Perfect Man."¹²³

"A stylized rendition of the *Tree of Life*, the Menorah, was the symbol of Judaism in the 1st century AD and still functions (see Israeli Knesset rostrum) as a state symbol in modern Israel. On the Menorah, see (L. Yarden, *The Tree of Light: A Study of the Menorah, the Seven-branched Lampstand*, Uppsala, 1972)."¹²⁴

"The Sefirotic Tree like the Assyrian Tree is attested in several variant forms reflecting the various symbolic meanings of the diagram, The diagram produced represents the most common form of the *Tree of Life* in Kabbalistic literature and is attested in this form since the 17th century."¹²⁵

"The Torah text explains that the menorah is to have six "qanim" coming out of the central shaft: Exodus, 25:32 and there shall be six branches (or "stalks") going out of its sides, three branches of the lampstand out of one side of it and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side of it; The standard translation of qanim is "branches," based on the image of menorah as having looked like a plant, a near-eastern palm or *Tree of Life*."¹²⁶

"Moses Maimonides, Commentary to Mishnah Menahot 3:7 according to a manuscript at Oxford University, after Ed. Y. Kapah, 2:78-90. "Six qanim"—the qanim (are like) branches that extend from the base of the lampstand towards its head in a straight line, just as my father of blessed memory drew it, and not in an arc, like others have drawn it. Rambam's image was copied diligently in later generations. Manuscripts are preserved from medieval Spain and from Yemen. These scribes copied the menorah as Maimonides drew it, with straight branches."¹²⁷

"In *The Life of Moses*, Philo goes further in associating the menorah with the cosmos: "The candlestick he [Moses] placed at the south [of the Tabernacle] figuring thereby the movements of the luminaries above; for the sun and the moon and the others run their courses in the south far away from the north. And therefore six branches, three on each side, issue from the central candlestick, bringing up the number to seven, and on all these are set seven lamps and candle bearers, symbols of what the men of science call planets. For the sun, like the candlestick, has the fourth place in the middle of the six and gives light to the three above and the three below it, so tuning to harmony an instrument of music truly divine."¹²⁸

"Thus the *menorah*, characterized by its arms or branches turned upwards reproduced the features of a tree. It seems, therefore, that the earliest *menorah* could have been the mimesis of the Tree of Life. In fact, Late Bronze Canaanite clay vessels depict two ibexes flanking a palm tree quite similar to the *menorah*, with branches sprouting on both sides of the central stem. This tradition, which was later on preserved in the *kabbalah*, portrays the original *Tree of Life* as a palm tree."¹²⁹

"During the late Second Temple period, the date palm tree was depicted on the reverse of various coins as a seven-branched tree not unlike the *menorah*."¹³⁰

"From there, the *menorah* as the main element of Jewish iconography shifted to the Land of Israel, where it became dominant only slightly later. While, all along the third century, the dominant artistic trend amongst the Jewish elite in Rome was characterized by the unconditioned absorption of Pagan figurative elements, however, it is possible to assist to a dramatic shift in Jewish iconography in Roman Italy all along the third century and at the beginning of the fourth century."¹³¹

"The seven parallel arms of the candlestick were topped by seven lamps. Last, but not least, the *Septuaginta* states that the object shall be a graven work."¹³²

"According to the astral meaning of the candlestick, the seven lamps symbolized the six planets, which turned around the Sun, mirroring the centrality of G-d in the Universe and the centrality of Israel on the earth. However, Josephus observes that there is a further meaning to the *menorah*. He states that the "lamps were in number seven and represented the dignity of the number seven among the Jews." This number could be associated to the seven days of the week. Thus, the central lamp, standing between the six others, could possibly symbolize the dignity of the Shabbath, a meaning attested in Late Antiquity. Last but not least, the palm tree as symbol of Judaea characterized the reverse of some of the main issues of the *Judaea Capta* series, the issue minted by Vespasian and Titus that celebrated the conquest of Judaea. On these coins, often, the palm tree is portrayed with seven branches, six on each side, and two clusters of dates. Thus, the date palm tree symbolized the religious and secular ideals of the Jewish leadership at the end of the Second Temple period."¹³³

"The palm tree together with baskets of fruits is symbol of both Judaea and righteousness (Ps. 92: 13). The Midrash on Numbers 3:1 shows that date palm tree was used to symbolize the various attributes of the people of Israel."¹³⁴

"A fragmentary sarcophagus was found in the Vigna Randanini Catacombs. The sarcophagus was decorated in the middle with a *menorah*, which was framed on each side by two palm trees."¹³⁵

During the Templars' sojourn in the Holy Land, they became acquainted with the Kabbalah and learned the mysterious teachings of various other Jewish and Sufi sects. In Hermetic Kabbalah, the skull and bones relate to the Chi-Rho, symbolizing time, death, and rebirth. According to Egyptologist Sir Flinders Petrie, the Chi-Rho was the emblem of the Egyptian god, Horus. On the coinage during and after Constantine's death, we see the Chi-Rho, underlined with the serpent, a symbol used throughout time, and especially by the Gnostics and alchemists, for wisdom and the enlightenment process.



"Mol & Morford point out that the most well-known example of a straight-armed menorah was believed created by the Knights Templar. Those renditions were found on the walls in the guardhouse of the castle at Domme in southern France. There, at the start of the 14th century AD, a group of 70 Templars were held prior to being put on trial. [...]

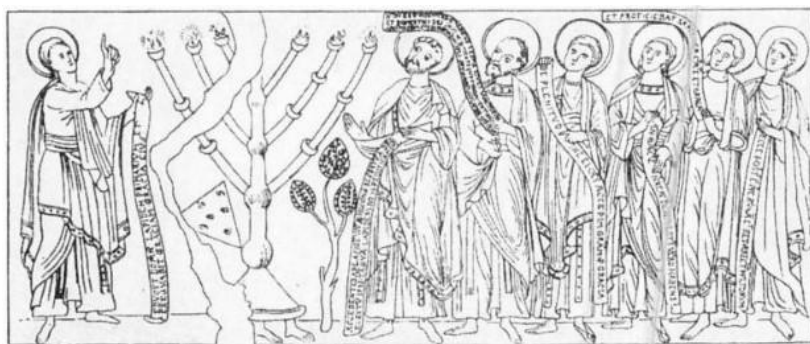
this depiction of the menorah were cognizant of the original form of the menorah and its significance in the Temple of Solomon. And, *"that they chose to carve it in those rocks, shows it was a design they held close to their hearts."*¹³⁶

"A chapel was built at the commandery in AD 1180, during the tenure of Knights Templar Commander Ariol d'Aspet. His family had been involved in the crusades since AD 1160. He intermarried with powerful Counts of Commings. This commandery was well connected to the early core of the Knights Templar, with one of its commanders fighting alongside its elusive first grand master Hugues de Payns himself, in the Holy Land. Mol & Morford identify this as the Church of Montsaunès, Saint-Christophe-des-Templiers, with much of the original decoration by the Templars intact."¹³⁷

"It is a curious amalgam of symbolism and hidden meaning that provides an illuminating insight into the minds of the Templars. Rather than depicting biblical scenes, there is a proliferation of geometric, esoteric, and astronomical symbols, along with wheels, grids, checkerboard patterns, and a whole host of symbols that hint at Kabbalistic knowledge. When confronted with such a hodgepodge of symbolism, the overriding sense you are left with is that someone was trying to encode a great secret on those walls."

"The design is bold and deliberate and indicates that the Templars had intimate and precise knowledge of the design of the Holy Lampstand. We believe that this truly was the original form of the menorah and the curved-branch version that we see today came much later. The straight-armed menorah was the Tree of Life, the Asherah Pole, the light of the Shekinah, the secret fire of knowledge or gnosis, which leads later to the arrival of the wisdom goddess Ariadne, Mistress of the Labyrinth, the silk-weaving spider and Princess of Knossos

(Gnosis), Crete the place of bull worship. [...] The conclusions are there for all to see, we believe. The Knights Templar had become guardians of this sacred knowledge, either through direct contact with the treasures of Solomon's Temple or via communication with those who knew of the true nature of these sacred objects. Wherever we see this ancient symbol – the straight-armed menorah – we must acknowledge that those involved in depicting it were inheritors of the same secret knowledge that Maimonides was passing on, and there is more than a nagging suspicion that they might even have seen the true menorah, the mother menorah, with their own eyes."



"See Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem 1997, pp. 342-345. **On the Tree of Life as a palm tree see the timmorot of the First Temple, First Book of Kings 6:29.** See also Ethiopic Enoch, xxiv, 4.3. See also W. Zwickel, *Der salomonische Tempel, Kultgeschichte der Antiken Welt* 83, Verlag Philipp von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein 1999, pp. 149-152."¹³¹



The Tree and the Cross

Since Judaeo-Christian times, before it spread to the Graeco-Roman world, Christianity has recognized a profound mystical link between the Cross of Christ and the Tree of Life. Uniting the Alpha and the Omega, past and future, beginning and end, the Tree of the Cross stands between the Tree of Life in Paradise (Genesis 2:9) and the Tree of Life in the world to come (Revelation 22:1-2.)

It is at once the Tree of Suffering, through which the tragic tensions and polarities of existence are revealed, like the tree of which Adam originally ate, and the Tree of Salvation, by means of which the perpetual crisis of existence, the estrangement, suffering and guilt caused by Adam's 'sin', are accepted and overcome.

"Pliny mentions the large size of these Judean dates: Six of them were a cubit in length; i.e., stretching from the elbow to the tip of the third finger."¹³²

"Several types of Judean Date Palms are also described in antiquity including the exceptionally large 'Nicolai' variety, measuring up to 11 centimeters in length."¹³³

Cited References and Endnotes

1. *"The Origins of Agriculture."* By Teresa Friedrich Finnern. Published online with Libretexts.org, Biology. Accessed 04-04-2024.

[https://bio.libretexts.org/Courses/Norco_College/BIO_5%3A_General_Botany_\(Friedrich_Finnern\)/23%3A_Agriculture/23.01%3A_The_Origins_of_Agriculture](https://bio.libretexts.org/Courses/Norco_College/BIO_5%3A_General_Botany_(Friedrich_Finnern)/23%3A_Agriculture/23.01%3A_The_Origins_of_Agriculture)

2. *"July – Date Palm."* By Laural Virtues Wauters. Return to the Garden, Published online. Accessed 03-28-2024. <https://treespiritwisdom.com/>.

3. *"Dactylonomy."* World Wide Words Online. Accessed 04-04-2024.

<https://www.worldwidewords.org/weirdwords/ww-dac1.htm>.

"Paintings exist from more than four thousand years ago showing Egyptians counting in this way, and we know it was common in classical Greece and Rome."

4. *"Egyptian Numerals."* By J.J. O'Connor and E.F. Robertson, 2000. Published online at M T MacTutor. Accessed 04-04-2024. https://mathshistory.st-andrews.ac.uk/HistTopics/Egyptian_numerals/

5. *"July – Date Palm."* By Laural Virtues Wauters. Return to the Garden, Published online. Accessed 03-28-2024. <https://treespiritwisdom.com/>.

6. *"July – Date Palm."* By Laural Virtues Wauters. Return to the Garden, Published online. Accessed 03-28-2024. <https://treespiritwisdom.com/>.

7. *"July – Date Palm."* By Laural Virtues Wauters. Return to the Garden, Published online. Accessed 03-28-2024. <https://treespiritwisdom.com/>.

8. *"July – Date Palm."* By Laural Virtues Wauters. Return to the Garden, Published online. Accessed 03-28-2024. <https://treespiritwisdom.com/>.

9. *"July – Date Palm."* By Laural Virtues Wauters. Return to the Garden, Published online. Accessed 03-28-2024. <https://treespiritwisdom.com/>.

10. *"July – Date Palm."* By Laural Virtues Wauters. Return to the Garden, Published online. Accessed 03-28-2024. <https://treespiritwisdom.com/>.

11. *"July – Date Palm."* By Laural Virtues Wauters. Return to the Garden, Published online. Accessed 03-28-2024. <https://treespiritwisdom.com/>.

12. *"July – Date Palm."* By Laural Virtues Wauters. Return to the Garden, Published online. Accessed 03-28-2024. <https://treespiritwisdom.com/>.

13. *"July – Date Palm."* By Laural Virtues Wauters. Return to the Garden, Published online. Accessed 03-28-2024. <https://treespiritwisdom.com/>.

14. Figure. “*Ramesses II in the Sacred Tree of Life*.” By Olaf Tausch and uploaded by Carole Raddato. Published March 13, 2022. Accessed 03-11-2024.

<https://www.worldhistory.org/image/15418/ramesses-ii-in-the-tree-of-life/>

“A depiction of Ramesses II in the sacred Tree of Life before **Ptah** and **Sekhmet**, with **Thoth** behind him. Relief on the north wall of the second pillared hall in the Temple of Derr on Lake Nasser, Egypt. The Temple of Derr is a rock-cut temple built by Ramesses II (r. 1279-1213 BC) and dedicated to **Ra-Harakhte**, **Amun-Ra** and **Ptah**.”

15. “*What Does the Date Palm Represent for the Ancient Egyptians?*” Published online by Historicaeve. Accessed March 24, 2024. See Pg. 4. <https://historicaeve.com/>

16. “*What Does the Date Palm Represent for the Ancient Egyptians?*” Published online by Historicaeve. Accessed March 24, 2024. See Pg. 4. <https://historicaeve.com/>

17. “**Renpet**.” By J. Hill, 2016. Published on Ancient Egypt Online.

<https://ancientegyptonline.co.uk/renpet/>

“**Renpet** was the ancient Egyptian goddess who personified fertility, spring, and youth. She was often known as the “**Mistress of Eternity**” and her name was used to express the term “year”. She is depicted as a young woman wearing a date palm shoot over her head. The date palm shoot (rib) represented “time” and this glyph regularly appears on monuments and documents throughout Egyptian history as the beginning of the phrase recording the regnal year of the pharaoh. **Renpet** was worshipped in Memphis and Crocodilopolis and was considered to be an aspect of **Isis**.”

18. “**Renpet: The Egyptian God of Time and Transitions**.” By Spencer Lanoue, in Egyptian Gods. Feb. 01, 2024. See [The Role of Deities in Ancient Egyptian Cosmology](#).

19. “**Renpet: The Egyptian God of Time and Transitions**.” By Spencer Lanoue, in Egyptian Gods. Feb. 01, 2024. See [The Mythology of Renpet](#).

20. “**Renpet**.” Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renpet>

“**Renpet** was, in the Egyptian language, the word for “year”. Its hieroglyph was figuratively depicted in art as a woman wearing a palm shoot (symbolizing time) over her head.”

21. “**Renpet: The Egyptian God of Time and Transitions**.” By Spencer Lanoue, in Egyptian Gods. Feb. 01, 2024. See [The Mythology of Renpet & The Iconography of Renpet](#).

22. “*The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy*.” By Simo Parpola. University of Helsinki. Published in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Jul 1993). University of Chicago Press. Introduction.

23. Image - “*A Date Plantation and Aššurnasirpal II Stemma*.” Courtesy of British Museum, (no. 124531). (© Photo by N. Franklin)

“An example of one of the more famous stylized trees from the Northwest Palace on Slab B-23 in the Throne Room. Slab B-23 is 195 cm high and 432.80 cm wide. The height of the tree is approximately 150 cm. The relief was originally located immediately behind the throne.” Or view @ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Ashurnasirpal_II

24. "*The Assyrian Sacred Tree: A History of Interpretations.*" By Mariana Giovino, 2007. Zurich Open Repository and Archive. University of Zurich. [Page 5](#). See [A. S. T.](#)

25. "*The Assyrian Stylized Tree: A Date Palm Plantation and Aššurnāṣirpal II's Stemma.*" By Norma Franklin*, University of Haifa. Published in *Ash-sharq*, Vol. 5, 2021: [Pg. 79](#).

26. Image – "*The King as Distributor of the Divine Stream.*" Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum. "Cylinder Seal Impression retraced. Licensed from IStock.com.

"Illustration of the Tree of Life with Assyrian Kings and with winged creature as guardian and fertilizer of the tree." [Also see...](#)

"*The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy.*" By Simo Parpola. University of Helsinki. Published in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Jul 1993). University of Chicago Press. [Page 183](#).

27. Image - "*Assyrian Ornament.*" Court of King Aššurnāṣirpal. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum, London. Licensed from IStock.com.

"Bas-relief from a marble slab representing King Aššurnāṣirpal (Assur-Nazir-pal) seated on a throne or stool, between officers of the court holding fans or fly-flaps, one of whom presents a wine cup. From Northwest Palace, Nimrod, 884 BC."

28. Image - "*Cylinder Seal Impression of Darius, King of Persia (522-486 BC).*" Image, courtesy of British Museum, London. Commentary – By Radu Cristian. Published online World History Encyclopedia, April 10, 2017. https://www.worldhistory.org/Darius_I/

"Darius I (550-486 BC) also known as Darius the Great, was the third Persian King of the Achaemenid Empire. His reign was during the time the Persian Empire reached its peak. Darius led military campaigns in Europe, Greece, and even in the Indus Valley, conquering lands and expanding his empire. Not only resuming to military prowess. Darius also improved the legal and economic system and conducted impressive construction projects across the Persian Empire."

29. Image – "*Assyrian Scribes at Palace of Sennacherib, 640-615 BC.*" Photographer, Melinda Kolk. British Museum, London.

"A well-documented period of dynastic control, Sennacherib created 'prisms' of cuneiform known as annals. Most famous event documented is the military campaign against the Kingdom of Judah and its capital, Jerusalem. This event is also discussed in the biblical Book of Kings and the Book of Isaiah. In the story, Jerusalem is besieged but the city was miraculously spared. The Assyrian king writes that he received tribute from King Hezekiah of Judah. The claim of tribute and extent of Assyrian victory is disputed and interpreted differently in historical and biblical texts."

30. Image – "*Stylized Sacred Date Palm Tree of Kar Tukulti Ninurta.*" Ninurta artwork, circa 1243-1207 BC. Credit: Pergamon Museum, Berlin.

31. "*The Assyrian Stylized Tree: A Date Palm Plantation and Aššurnāṣirpal II's Stemma.*" By Norma Franklin*, University of Haifa. Published in *Ash-sharq*, Volume 5, 2021: [Pgs. 77-78](#). See next page...

"Malcolm Russell noted that the stylized trees played an important apotropaic role in the palace (Russell 2008: 189); however, this role appears to have become less important in Assyria following Aššurnāṣirpal II.7 The stylized tree, used in the Northwest Palace, disappeared from the walls of later palaces except for a very small number of similar trees carved on monolithic corner slabs in some of the larger rooms in the palaces of Tiglath-Pileser III (r. 745–727 BC) and Sargon II (r. 722–705 BC)."

- 32.** "Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta." By Harman Patil. Updated Dec. 29, 2023. Accessed 04-10-2024. [https://alchetron.com/Ashur-\(god\)](https://alchetron.com/Ashur-(god)) or <https://alchetron.com/Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta>

"See, (modern Tulul ul Aqar in Salah al-Din Governorate, Iraq). Its name meant "Port Tukulti-Ninurta". Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta was a totally new foundation about three kilometers North of Assur, which was the old capital of the Assyrian empire. The temple complex, measuring about 53 by 90 meters had a zikkurat on its western side. In the zikkurat was found a text identifying the temple as the temple of Ashur and also providing an identification of the city (the city was already before the excavations known from other texts). From further texts it is known that the cult image of the god was moved from Assur to this temple. The city was abandoned after the death of king Tukulti-Ninurta I.

- 33.** "The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy." By Simo Parpola. University of Helsinki. Published in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Jul 1993). University of Chicago Press. Pgs. 163-165 & Note #21.

- 34.** "The Assyrian Stylized Tree: A Date Palm Plantation and Aššurnāṣirpal II's Stemma." By Norma Franklin*, University of Haifa. Published in *Ash-sharq*, Volume 5, 2021: Pgs. 77-96. Abstract: Aššurnāṣirpal II (r. 883–859 BC) moved his capital. See Page 81, *The Image of a Date Palm*, and Note #19.

- 35.** Image - "Egyptianizing Figures on Either Side of a Sacred Palm Tree with a winged disk, 8th – 7th ce BC." Neo-Assyrian Mesopotamia, Nimrud (ancient Kalhu) Ivory. MET Museum. <http://www.iperity.com/doc/laurieannie/24664967>

"This plaque, once part of a piece of furniture, is carved in high relief in a typical Phoenician style with Egyptian themes and motifs. Two pharaoh-like figures, standing on either side of a sacred branching palm tree, wear a version of the double crown of Egypt with the rearing cobra, or uraeus, emblem in front. They also wear a beard, necklace, and pleated short skirt belted at the waist with a central panel decorated with a chevron pattern and uraeus on either side. An ankle-length pleated apron with patterned border falls from behind the figures. Each man holds a ram-headed scepter in his right hand while the figure at left holds a ewer in his left hand; it is unclear what the other man holds. Framed above the scene is a winged sun disk surmounted by a horizontal panel with ten uraei supporting sun disks. Text from: www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/62.269.3

- 36.** Image - "Molded plaque: Bull-men Flanking a Palm Trunk Surrounded by a Sun Disc." Babylonian, circa 2000-1600 BC. Louvre Museum, # AO12446. Public Domain Provenance uncovered by intrepid researcher – Dale Pressley.

"**Kusarikku** ("Bull-Man") were ancient Mesopotamian mythological demon shown in artistic representation from the earliest (late Uruk period) times with the arms, torso and

head of a human and the ears, horns and hindquarters of a bull. They are portrayed as walking upright and characterized as a door keeper to protect the inhabitants from malevolent intruders. One of the demons which represented mountains. Pictured in late iconography holding a banduddû, "bucket" used to hold male pollen to pollenate the Sacred Date Palm Tree. **Kusarikku** is one of the seven mythological **apkallû** or "sages" shown on neo-Assyrian palace reliefs, and with figurines – to guard against the influence of evil spirits - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kusarikku>

37. "The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy." By Simo Parpola. University of Helsinki. Published in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Jul 1993). University of Chicago Press. Introduction & notation.

"The Harappan forms of the Tree, attested in pottery, glyptic, and script since 2400 BC, display Proto-Elamite and Akkadian influence. The earliest Egyptian examples date from the 16th century BC and reveal an affinity with contemporary Babylonian forms (see Kepinski, *L'Arbre stylisé*, vol. 3, nos. 924-36); they appear to represent an import from the Levant connected with the Hyksos invasion and Egypt's expansion under Thutmose I, as also indicated by the **Osiris** myth explicitly associating the Tree with the city of Byblos. The earliest Greek examples from the 15th century, are even more pronouncedly Babylonian."

38. "The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy." By Simo Parpola. University of Helsinki. Published in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Jul 1993). University of Chicago Press. Pgs. 162, 175 & 186.

39. "The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy." By Simo Parpola. University of Helsinki. Published in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Jul 1993). University of Chicago Press. Pgs. 189-190, note #106.

40. "Parpola's 'Tree if Life' Revisited: Mysteries and Myths of Assyrian Kabbalah." By Otto Lehto, 2018. 23 Pages.

41. "Parpola's 'Tree if Life' Revisited: Mysteries and Myths of Assyrian Kabbalah." By Otto Lehto, 2018. Pg. 1, Note 2.

42. "Being, Kabbalah, and the Assyrian Sacred Tree."

<https://zenodo.org/record/1247536/files/BeingKabbalahandtheAssyrianSacredTree.pdf>

43. "The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy." By Simo Parpola. University of Helsinki. Published in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Jul 1993). University of Chicago Press. Pgs. 169-174.

44. "On the Development of a Symbol: The Date Palm in Roman Palestine and the Jews." By Steven Fine. Jerusalem, Israel. 1989.

45. "Historia Naturalis, by Pliny the Elder." 13.26-45, translated by H. Rackham, in M. Stem, *Greek and Latin Authors* Vol. 1, pp. 490-94. H. Kohl and C. Watzinger, *Antike Synagogen in Galilaea* (Leipzig, 1916), pp. 186-187; Hart, *Rome and Jerusalem*, p. 185; J.

Meyschan, (an unknown variant and date of the Judaea Capta Coins), *Essays in Jewish Numismatics* (Jerusalem, 1968), Pg. 137.

46. “*Numismata Graeca: Greek Coin-Types, For Immediate Identification*.” By Leo Anson, 1911. London. 68 pages.

47. “*Forum Ancient Coins – Palm*.” Published on Numiswiki Online.
<https://www.forumancientcoins.com/numiswiki/view.asp?key=palm> for comment below...

48. “*Botanics and Iconography: Images of the Lulav and the Etrog*.” By Rivka Ben-Sasson. Academia, ARSJudaica, 2012 7. Pg. 14.
<https://www.academia.edu/8120355/ArSJudaica20127BotanicsandIconographyImagesoftheLulavandtheEtrog>

49. Images – “*Various Coins*.” Top Row (L to R): 1. Iona - 202-150 BC, 2. Sepphoris - AD 1st ce, 3. Seleucid Kings - 175-164 BC, Second Row: 4. Carthage - 410-146 BC, 5. Sicily - 407-398 BC, Third Row: 6. Zeugitana - 350-320 BC, 7. Roman - 70 AD, 8. Ephesus - 390-40 BC, Fourth Row: 9. Judea - AD 132-135, 10. Babylonian Seal. Fifth Row: 11. Abdera, Trace - 411 BC, 12. Zeugitana - AD 260, 13. Judea - AD 71. Sixth Row: 14.

50. “*The Date Palm (Phoenix dactylifera L.): Overview of Biology, Uses and Cultivation*.” By Chih Cheng, T. Chao and Robert R. Krueger. Online Publication in HortScience, Aug 2007. Vol. 42, Issue 5.

51. “*The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy*.” By Simo Parpola. University of Helsinki. Published in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Jul 1993). University of Chicago Press. Pgs. 161-208.

The following references are related to evidence shown in the ***Anecdotes*** section of this appendix. The referenced source will be listed alphabetically by Title. All citations for the referenced source will be listed here in numerical order, for brevity.

“*Cultural and Ecological Significance of the Date Palm*.” By Hamed El-Mousley and Mohammed Midani*. Chapter – May 2023. DOI: 10.1007/978-981-99-0475-4_1
 86, 100, 105, 109, 110

“*How King Solomon and the Romans shaped the Judean Date Palm*.” By Sarah Sallon*.
<https://www.haaretz.com/archaeology/2022-03-20/ty-article/how-king-solomon-and-the-romans-shaped-the-judean-date-palm/00000180-5bc7-db1e-a1d4-dfe71c180000>
 132

“*In The Shadow of the Temple: Depicting the Menorah in Ancient Art*.” By Samuele Rocca, 2017. Bar Ilan University, Israel.
 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135

"Menorah, Its 'Branches' and Their Cosmic Significance." By Prof. Steven Fine.
<https://www.thetorah.com/article/menorah-its-branches-and-their-cosmic-significance>
 126, 127, 128

"The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy." By Simo Parpola. University of Helsinki. Published in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Jul 1993). University of Chicago Press.
 121, 122, 123, 124, 125

"The Date Palm: A Special Plant from the Old World." (Accessed 02-13-2024)
<https://blogs.reading.ac.uk/tropical-biodiversity/2014/12/the-date-palm-a-special-plant-from-the-old-world/>
 102, 120

"The Date Palm in Antiquity." By Paul Popenoe, Sep. 1924. Published in *Scientific Monthly*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Sep. 1924, pp 313-325). Publisher, American Association for the Advancement of Science. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/7328>
 53, 60, 65, 81, 88, 89, 99, 101, 103, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119

"The Genomes of Ancient Date Palms Germinated from 2,000 yr old Seeds." By Muriel Gros-Balthazard*, May, 3, 2021. Published Online at PNAS.
<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2025337118> or...
<https://www.pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.2025337118>
 108

"The History of the Date Through the Ages in the Holy Land." By Asaph Goor. Ministry of Agriculture, Jerusalem, Israel.
 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 104, 106, 107

"The Jerusalem Files: The Secret Journey of the Menorah to Oak Island." By Corjan Mol and Christopher Morford, 2024. Watkins Publishing.
 136, 137

"The Many Faces of the Goddess: The iconography of the Syro-Palestinian Goddesses Anat, Astarte, Qadesheth and Asherah, c. 1500-1000 BC." By Izak Cornelius. Academic Press Fribourg Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Gottingen.
 91

"Origins and Insights into the Historic Judean Date Palm based on Genetic Analysis of Germinated Ancient Seeds and Morphometric Studies." By Sarah Sallon*, Emma Cherif, Nathalie Chabrilange, Elaine Solowey*, Muriel Gros-Balthazard*, Sarah Ivorra, Jean-Frédéric Terral, Markus Egli, Frédérique Aberlenc (7 February 2020).
 133