That Which Was Lost: The Third Pillar
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W.M. — Bro S.W., What was that which was lost?
S.W. — The genuine secrets of a Master Mason, which by your instruction, and our own endeavours, we hope to find...
W.M. — Then Brethren, we will assist you to repair that loss, and may heaven aid our united endeavours.

Thesis

As well as the two named and free-standing “pillars” at the porch or entrance to KST, there was a third in the Sanctum Sanctorum. The third “pillar” was called Asherah, after the Hebrew goddess. The import of her name is “Stability,” for God said, “In Strength will I Establish this mine house, that it Stand Fast forever.”

Background

To begin, please contrast the rudimentary bigradal system described in The Early Masonic Catechisms with our elaborate trigradal system, described in later exposures. We find more emphasis on pillars, another ancient penalty, a Solomonic context, the Hiramic legend, notions of lost and substituted secrets, and a tradition of three grand masters.

Please consider how, in a minimally furnished lodge room, there are three pedestals (behind which the principal officers are seated) and columns upon two. The Wardens’ columns are raised and lowered. On their own they are not stable. Conspicuous by its absence in such a room is a column of stability upon the WM’s pedestal.

In our search for the genuine secrets of the third degree, they have come to be understood by many as an allegory of the human condition, as we look for some ineffable, existential purpose and meaning in our lives. However, as with many symbols there may be more than one meaning and, as with many questions the answer may be hidden in plain sight.

It is a poor symbol that has but one meaning.
Bro. Carl Claudy

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1 Harry Carr, An Examination of the Early Masonic Catechisms, Lodge of Research Leicester, 2429 (EC), 1946.
That Which Was Lost

The Mason Word\textsuperscript{2} had been communicated among operative masons as their genuine word and was communicated among speculative masons as our substituted word/s.\textsuperscript{3} The “lost” word of the new degree was genuine only in the context of the theme Established In Strength by the newly reorganised first two degrees, and the creation of the Third or Sublime Degree.

The Biblical content of this theme required some exegeses, from which we may deduce it was introduced to masonry by pious and scholarly members of our premier grand lodge.

The theme was presumably a mortal lesson about religious intolerance, exemplifying a need for the novel First Charge, Of God and Religion, in Anderson’s new Constitutions and demonstrating that we should always be cautious about hyperbole directed against one sect by another — A lesson especially needful following the Wars of Religion.

Ritual Quest\textsuperscript{4}

The theme was made clear in our ritual quest, in which we Entered from the porch or entrance between two named and free-standing pillars, where we met our ancient J.W. We then ascended a W.S., Passed our ancient S.W., into the middle chamber, where we received our wages.

Thus, after two degrees we have three words\textsuperscript{5} — two with strained eponyms and a third, dubiously said to be a conjunction — In the third degree we are given as a substitute the operatives’ genuine Mason Word. Had we taken a further regular step, (simply repeating the pattern established in the first two degrees), we would have entered the Sanctum Sanctorum.

There we would presumably have found our ancient W.M., and a third free-standing “pillar”\textsuperscript{6}, having a namesake which, like the Egyptian Djed (with which it had a near affinity), signified “stability” — its name was Asherah. The name “Asher’ah” is the feminine form of “asher,” meaning: Happy, Straight, Level, Upright, Square, and Stable.\textsuperscript{7} The plural of asher is “asher’im.” And arguably, the Hebrew root was Latinised, with an exemplar of asher being called an “ashlar.”

\textsuperscript{2} C. Bruce Hunter ‘Marrow in the Bone’ and the Origin of the Masters World [sic]: An Etymological Problem, \textit{Ars Quatuor Coronatum}, vol. 113, 2000, pp.15/165. \\
\textsuperscript{3} Harry Carr, “Hebraic Aspects of the Ritual”, \textit{Ars Quatuor Coronatum}, vol. 97, 1984, p.81. \\
\textsuperscript{4} Of interest to the legend outlined is this quest are 1) the place of Makeda, the Mistress of Kush, and Queen of Sheba; and 2) the confusion between the several Hirams in the Bible and in Josephus. For example, we note that upon completion of KST, King Hiram returned to Tyre, where he: “… dedicated the golden pillar which is in Jupiter’s temple [and] … built the temple of Hercules and that of Astarte ...” (Josephus, Ant., VIII:145 & 146). \\
\textsuperscript{5} If not significant in its own right, the mention of “stability” seems almost as if the ceremony was adjourned for a doubtful lesson in etymology. As well as this “strained conjoint significance,” there is no biblical reason to suppose they were named after anyone. That said, the ashera was named after Asherah and the awkward earlier attributions opened the way to emphasising that eponymous significance. \\
\textsuperscript{6} II Kings 21:7 & 23:4; II Chronicles 33:7; Jeremiah 7:30 & 32:34; etc. \\
\textsuperscript{7} \textit{Strong’s Hebrew Dictionary}, #833 & #842.
“Asherah” was the Hebrew name for the *Magna Mater* (meaning “great mother”), who was commonly depicted in pillar-form and was widely venerated throughout the ancient world. In *The Hebrew Goddess*, Raphael Patai tells us that:

> Of the 370 years during which the Solomonic Temple stood in Jerusalem, for no less than 236 years (or almost two-thirds of the time) the statue of Asherah was present in the Temple.\(^8\)

**Asherah**\(^9\)

There was much syncretism between the various goddess cults and, before a universal male deity was widely accepted, it was understood that we all shared a universal mother — Nature.\(^11\)

However, as Prof. William Dever wrote:\(^12\)

> The only goddess whose name is well attested in the Hebrew Bible (or in Ancient Israel generally) is Asherah.

She was revered as Queen of Heaven; Lady of the Sea; Goddess of the Moon; Mother of the Gods; Mistress of Beasts; She Who Builds;\(^13\) Patron of Arts, Crafts, and Agriculture; and Guardian of Cities.\(^14\)

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\(^{9}\) "They helped every one his neighbour; and everyone said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer, him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the sodering; and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved." - Isaiah 41: 6 / 7.

\(^{10}\) "Asherah ’asherah (Hebrew) A Syrian goddess of fortune having close similarities with the Roman divinity Venus, and connected by analogy of attributes with Ashthoreth or Astarte, another Syrian divinity. Also a sacred wooden pole or image standing close to the massebah and altar in early Shemitic sanctuaries, part of the equipment of the temple of Jehovah in Jerusalem till the Deuteronomic reformation of Josiah (2 Kings 23:6). The plural, 'asherim, denotes statues, images, columns, or pillars; translated in the Bible by "groves." Maachah, the grandmother of Asa, King of Jerusalem, is accused of having made for herself such an idol, which was a lingham -- for centuries a religious rite in Judaea. Sometimes called the Assyrian Tree of Life, "the original Asherah was a pillar with seven branches on each side surmounted by a globular flower with three projecting rays, and no phallic stone, as the Jews made of it, but a metaphysical symbol. 'Merciful One, who dead to life raises!' was the prayer uttered before the Asherah, on the banks of the Euphrates. The 'Merciful One,' was . . . the higher triad in man symbolized by the globular flower with its three rays" (TG 37).” Kenneth Sublett, *Ancient Near East (Babylonia) Glossary and Texts*, Piney.com, Hohenwald, Tennessee. See also ASTARTE.

\(^{11}\) Elsewhere she was called Cybele. Caitlin Matthews said of her: "Cybele is primarily associated with the earth, specifically a rock. Her cult constellation around the black meteorite enshrined at Pergamum. She was chiefly venerated in her cities in Troy, Pergamum, and Pessinus by the people of Phrygia, where her name was originally Kubaba, "Lady of the Cube," later Hellenised to Cybele.” C. Matthews, *Sophia Goddess of Wisdom*, 2001, Wheaton, p.16. Elsewhere we read: “In Ephesus, Artemis was considered as one and the same as Cybele, the goddess from whom the land of Anatolia is said to have been born. She is depicted as a multi-breasted figure with many facets, and bears the model of a temple on her head, in the form of a crown. This triple-storeyed crown indicates that she is the protector of cities, while the crescent on her forehead indicates that she is the moon goddess.” Ilhan Aksit, *Ephesus Ruins and Museum*, 1987, Istanbul, p.10.


\(^{13}\) “In her sacred groves, they knew Her as She Who Builds, providing the timber of Her trees. Teaching Her people the art of carpentry. On the flatness of the land, they knew Her as She Who Builds, providing the clay of the earth, teaching Her people the knowledge of the bricks. So it was that Asherah taught those who revered Her how to build shelters from the heat and cold, and how to build the sacred shrines in which they called upon Her name.” Prof. Merlin Stone, *Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood: A treasury of goddess and heroine lore from around the world*, 1984, Boston, p.119.
The original Biblical writers and redactors demonised her, and then translators deliberately fudged her name — obscuring her existence. Only when independent scholars began comparing these translations with the original Hebrew was the cover-up revealed and the goddess was unveiled.

**Image of Jealousy**

Asherah was depicted by a tutelary statue or xoanon, the earliest of which in literature was Troy’s diminutive, protective figurine — The Palladium, meaning “little maiden,” and coming to mean “guardian,” and applied to all such figures. The Palladium itself was claimed to be possessed by several cities, including Ephesus, Athens, & Rome. Over time, the iconography was both elaborated and abstracted. Towering statues came to be popular, with cities trying to outdo each other.

These statues were objects of civic and moral instruction rather than idols and we may equate the regard shown for them with our reverence for national flags, military standards, and state monuments, such as the Statue of Liberty. Indeed, we still like to identify with idealistic female figures: From Britannia in the U.K., to Columbia in the U.S., and on to Marianne in France, etc.

**Grove**

Asherah is mentioned over 40 times in the Bible but her name has been rendered as “grove” by many translators. Asherah was often worshipped in groves, which were sacred to her (as were trees and animals generally).

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14 Asherah was a patron of artisans and among her epithets were ‘Merciful One, who dead to life raises!’ and ‘She who builds.’ However, one cannot be sure the extent to which such things were known in the 1720’s.

15 Asherah was depicted as being partnered with Ba’al, of whom we read: “BAAL, plural BALIM, the supreme male deity of the Shemites; probably originally bisexual – the progress of anthropomorphism naturally involving the ascription of sex. Baal means ‘Lord,’ ‘possessor’; therefore Baal is an attributive, not a proper name. At first Baal and Jehovah were identical, hence Saul and David had sons whose names had Baal as a constitutive element (1 Chr. 8.33, 9.39, 14.7).” W. Ewing & J.E.H. Thomson, *Temple Dictionary of the Bible*, 1910, London, pp.42/3. Elsewhere we read, “Based only on an examination of the biblical sources, we argue that the asherah was a legitimate part of the cult of Yahweh both in the north and in the south, in state religion and in popular religion, finding opposition in deuteronomistic circles. We suggest that the association of Asherah and her symbol with Baal is the result of a deuteronomistic polemic against the asherah in Yahweh’s cult.” Prof. Saul M. Olyan, *Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel*, Atlanta, 1988, pp.13 & 14.

16 “GROVE (1.) Heb. ‘asherah, properly a wooden image, or a pillar representing Ashtoreth, a sensual Canaanitish goddess, probably usually set up in a grove (2 Kings 21:17; 23:4). In the Revised Version the word “Asherah” (q.v.) is introduced as a proper noun, the name of the wooden symbol of a goddess, with the plurals Asherim (Ex. 34:13) and Asheroth (Judg. 3:13). The LXX. have rendered _asherah_ in 2 Chr. 15:16 by "Astarte." The Vulgate has done this also in Judg. 3:7.” Matthew G. Easton, 1897 Easton’s Bible Dictionary.

17 Hebraic worship in groves continues to this day in Ethiopia (wither, as depicted in some US workings, refugees from The Levant and Egypt were wont to flee) in their fraternal associations (each called a mahebar) and described by Prof. Frederick C. Gamst in *The Qemant: A Pagan-Hebraic Peasantry of Ethiopia*, 1969, New York, pp. 34/8 & 76/7.
However, there is a perfectly good Hebrew word for a “grove”, as such, where that was the intended meaning; namely, "éshel." As Prof. Long said of Asherah: “She is worshipped ’beneath any green tree, on any high hill’.”

Prof. Long says:

It is important to emphasise that the AV, ... has, by the use of the word ‘grove’, completely obscured any knowledge that a goddess Asherah might ever have existed.

ILLUSTRATION: Crypt - Royal Master (SLIDE 48)

This mistranslation caused some confusion leading to depictions of literal groves growing within the deep darkness of the Sanctum Sanctorum or subterranean crypt.

Prof. Joseph Campbell, said of Kings 22 to 25:

It is hard to imagine how it might have been stated more clearly that until the eighteenth year of the reign of King Josiah of Judah neither kings nor people had paid any attention whatsoever to the law of Moses, which, indeed, they had not even known.

They had been devoted to the normal deities of the nuclear Near East, with all the usual cults, which are described clearly enough in this passage to be recognised. King Solomon himself, the son of David, had built sanctuaries to the gods and had placed their images in his temple.

Masonic Iconography

Turning to masonic iconography, we note that where several female figures are featured, they typically form a trinity, with “Masonry” as the principle figure, supported by two less prominent figures. Dr. Carl Jung noted:

The archaic triads in the religions of antiquity and of the East are too numerous to be mentioned here.

As Dr. Bob James tells us of 19th C. fraternal societies: “The single female figure in a protective role ... can almost be taken as exemplar of the whole ethos.”

ILLUSTRATION: Ashtoreth (SLIDE 59)

18 Strong’s Hebrew Dictionary, #815.
20 Ibid., p.218.
22 Dr. Carl Jung, A Psychological Approach to the Dogma of the Trinity.
23 Bob James, PhD, Carnival, Discipline and Labour History, University of Newcastle (NSW), 1993, p.339.
This illustration depicts devotions to the statue of a single tutelary goddess called “Ashtoreth” (this is a puerile pun conflating “Asherah” with “bosheth” meaning shame.

ILLUSTRATION: Masonry Helping Humanity (SLIDE 62)

Here we have Pillars with ‘J’ and ‘B’; Masonry stands as the third pillar on a pedestal bearing the initials ‘M’ and ‘B’; A hammer, broken shackles, and a shattered demonic mask lie at the base, having been liberated and revealed; All are facing her in reverence, bar a figure dressed as a monk, glancing back while carrying a stiletto, a laden satchel, a flail, and a rosary.

ILLUSTRATION: The Historical Birthplace of the Freemasonry Mysteries (SLIDE 63)

The presence of Asherah, as the Tree of Life, and the Brazen Serpent, in an enclosure, gave rise to the idea of the Sanctum Sanctorum being a model of Eden, the primordial paradise, and the High Priest entering as a repentant Adam to tend the garden. This idea was embraced by our fraternal cousins, the Free Gardeners, whose principle emblems were the square and compasses, and the pruning knife. For them Solomon succeeded Adam & Noah.

A Huguenot influence on masonic ritual most likely drew upon the well-established Compagnonnage of France. Among them, we find a Solomonic context; a legend similar to that of Hiram; and some graphic clues that the Magna Mater was central to their mysteries.

ILLUSTRATION: The Spirit of Brotherhood Makes the Earth Turn (SLIDE 70)

Please note this detail from the previous illustration: There is the Magna Mater as Cybele in her chariot drawn by lions and the three traditional Grand Masters of the Compagnonnage.

In Paris this iconography is central to the monument of The Triumph of the Republic: Framed by pillars, Marianne stands triumphant upon the world; Liberty directs her lions, and her chariot is attended by Justice and Labour; while Peace and Abundance follow in her train.

ILLUSTRATION: The Masonic Universe (SLIDE 73)

Here we have an elaboration of the ‘widow’ / ‘virgin’ theme featuring the following elements: Unveiling (Magna Mater as Isis); Pointing to a pyramid (Egypt); Mirror (‘Know thy Self’) — Reflecting light upon the world; Seated on a lion (signifies the Magna Mater, esp. as Cybele); Between two broken columns (signifying the ruined temple). She is the third pillar, revealed by time (Kronos) and wisdom (Athena).

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25 “Either ... The masons borrowed from the Compagnons, or ... the traditions of both ... are inherited from a common original.” - Robert Freke Gould, History of Freemasonry, London, 1882, v.1, p.58.
Here we have the Monument: A popular masonic motif, especially in the U.S.A., featuring a woman with a broken column, arguably signifying the fate of the asherim; Kronos (time) is featured, reminiscent of the hope of a Master Mason that time and circumstance should restore the genuine secrets; The woman’s loose hair (often held and thereby emphasised by Kronos) signifies a maiden (virgin), although she is usually connected with masonic widows. This may allude to the widow of the harvest sacrifice becoming the bride of his successor; She holds aloft a sprig of acacia, associated with the initial, indecent internment of Hiram Abiff and also associated with the branch which, in a vision, Ezekiel saw each participant holding to their nose, in the temple (Ezekiel 8:17).

The Magna Mater

Anders Sandberg wrote:

The Cult of Magna Mater, the Great Mother, is probably the oldest religion of all. The earliest stone-age sculptures depict the mother-goddess, and an idol found in Catal Hüyük, 6000 years old, depict her in the form she later became worshipped as Cybele in Phrygia, as a seated woman flanked by two leopards ... in her incarnation as Cybele in ancient Phrygia she started the cult which would later evolve into the cult of Magna Mater in Rome ... The links between this story and the cult of Inanna/Ishtar/Asherah are quite obvious, and both cults influenced each other heavily.

Writing in the 2nd C. CE, Lucian reported on the rites of Atargatis, the Syrian goddess. In *De Dea Syria*, while noting the many names of the goddess, he observed that:

There was still a prevailing similarity between the essential attributes and worship of the nature-goddess throughout Western Asia.

Apuleius, a contemporary of Lucian, in *The Golden Ass*, also noted the many names of the goddess and concluded that it is only the Ethiopians and Egyptians who ... “worship me with my own rites, and call me by my true name, royal Isis.” Writing about the same rites at the same time, Lucian considered them to
be scandalous, while Apuleius considered found them to have a high moral tendency. The difference being that Lucian was a satirical outsider, while Apuleius appears to have been an initiate.

There was also a wider, if less detailed body of witnesses. Both the Rites of Isis and those of Cybele were popular in Rome, with those of Isis being beyond reproach and practiced throughout the Empire as a major competitor of Christianity and of Mithraism. The Rites of Cybele had exotic elements which scandalised Roman sensibilities, such as self-castration of male priests. However, Cybele was depicted as a Vestal Virgin, the very epitome of Roman virtue.

Commenting on the imposition of hard-line monotheism in Judah, Finkelstein & Silberman wrote:29

Thus, ironically, what was most genuinely Judahite was labelled as Canaanite heresy. In the area of religious debate and polemic, what was old was suddenly seen as foreign and what was new was suddenly seen as true.

Prof. Tikva Frymer-Kensky corroborated this opinion, saying:30

In fact, the complex of altar, tree, hill, and megalith that characterised this worship was an ancient and integral part of Israel’s religious life, and the ‘reforms’ of Hezekiah and Josiah that destroyed this complex were a radical innovation rather than a return to some pristine purity.31

The goddess had come to be fiercely opposed. Thus, we read in Acts:32

So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

ILLUSTRATION: Djed (SLIDE 95)

Here we have the Egyptian pillar called the Djed (signifying “stability”) being raised and “dressed” by Pharaoh Seti I at Abydos. We may consider the “dressing” in the context of II Kings 23:7, where women in festive booths wove hanging for the grove (Asherah).

Minerva; in sea-girt Cyprus I am Paphian Venus; Dictynna-Diana to the Cretan archers; Stygian Proserpine to the three-tongued Sicilians; at Eleusis, ancient Ceres; Juno to some, to others Bellona, Hecate, Rhamnusia; while the races of both Ethiopias, first to be lit at dawn by the risen Sun’s divine rays, and the Egyptians too, deep in arcane lore, worship me with my own rites, and call me by my true name, royal Isis.” Lucius Apuleius, The Golden Ass (“Asinus aureus”), The Metamorphoses of Apuleius, c. 160 / 180 CE, Book XI:5 (ironically, Isis was the Hellenised version of her true Egyptian name Au Set).

31 Archaeologists have excavated over three thousand of what they call “pillar figurines.” They are found only from what was Judah and Israel and are dated only from the Hebraic monarchical period. Each is said to represent Asherah, and was the principal feature of most family shrines.
32 Acts 19:27.
Ancient Brethren

In our Sectional Lectures we find the following catechismal exchange:

Q. Before our ancient brethren had the advantage of such regular, well-formed, constituted Lodges as we now enjoy, where did they assemble?
A. On high hills and low vales, even in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and many other secret places.

This is a peculiar exchange if referring to builders, who would have been quick to erect sheds or tents in which to gather and to lodge their tools. From what Prof. Stone tells us, we might identify our high hills and low vales with the places the Bible tells us Asherah was worshipped, she wrote:

Many Bible passages report that idols of the female deity, referred to as asherah ... were to be found on every high hill, under every green tree and alongside altars in the temples.

Priests & Knights Kadosh

Those who venerated Asherah on every high hill and under every green tree had their own priesthood, distinct from the centralized, priestly caste which supplanted their own priests.

The priesthood of Asherah was the Kadoshim. Each was “Kadosh,” meaning “holy. They were the “Holy Ones.” However, instead of “Holy Ones,” translators of the Hebrew text have rendered this unambiguously positive title as “sodomites” and prostitutes. In Deuteronomy (23:17) the people were commanded that: “None of the daughters of Israel shall be a kedeshah, nor shall any of the sons of Israel be a kadesh.”

Like the Knights Templar and others, the priests Kadosh were falsely reviled and persecuted. And, like our Grand Elect Knights Kadosh, they were conspicuously “elect,” being elected of the

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33 Prof. Merlin Stone, When God Was A Woman, 1976, San Diego, p.175.
34 “The word qdsbm [kadoshim], “consecrated ones,” designated important functionaries: “... we find [them] listed second after the khmn `priests’ “ ... Qdsbm had high status, could marry and establish families, and could hold other offices. There is no suggestion that the ritual role of the qdsbm was sexual, nor, indeed, is there any evidence to date of “sacred prostitution” at Ugarit. ”Tragically,” says one contemporary scholar, ”scholarship suffered from scholars being unable to imagine any cultic role for women in antiquity that did not involve sexual intercourse”. However, recent scholars are fast setting the record straight. Even if ancient priestesses were involved in ritual sex, even if they received offerings for their temples, they were not prostitutes but devotees worshipping their deity.” Prof. Johanna Stuckey, Sacred Prostitutes.
35 The Hebraic worship of the goddess continued among refugees in Egypt. We read, ”These passages reflect both the worship of Asherah and efforts to stamp out her cult during the Iron Age. But it was only in the succeeding Persian period, after the fall of Judah in 586 B.C. and the exile in Babylon, that Asherah virtually disappeared.” Dr. Sandra Scham, “The Lost Goddess of Israel” in Archaeology (Archaeological Institute of America), Vol. 58, No. 2, March/April 2005. Even then, we read, “[The early Israelite religion] ... is described in documents ... from the Jewish colony at Elephantine, an island in the Nile below the First Cataract ... dated towards the end of the fifth century BC, just at the time the Persians were setting up their temple state in Yehud. The Jews of that colony happily worshipped five deities, including Yah’s consort, Anath. The Persians eliminated
people, by the people, for the people, as distinct from the hereditary Kohanim priests of the monotheistic Deuteronomists.

During the radical Deuteronomistic revolution, the Kadoshim and their congregations were slaughtered. The formulaic penalty being that they were to be left where they fell, to be consumed by scavengers. Eleven Biblical passages direct that:

37

Him that dies ... in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dies in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.

Our Lady of the Pillar

Prof. Long noted:

38

As time went on, the idea of a divine female figure at the core of Judaism was totally forgotten except within the Kabbalah, a secret mystical form of the religion ... I have suggested that we may reasonably perceive resonances between the Menorah and the biblical figure of Asherah, herself ...

The appeal of the Magna Mater persisted. As the epitome of Wisdom and Virtue, she continued to be revered. However, as Edgar Quinet observed:

40

The gods of one religion become the demons of the next.

Not only do religions demonize the gods of religions they displace, they also appropriate them — As with Mary. As Elinor Gadon observed: "Women offered the Virgin 'cakes and wine at the shrine where their ancestors had worshiped the Goddess Ashtoreth.'"

the Israelites’ goddess and their gods, and recognized Yah (or Yao), a god known to the Canaanites, as the patron god of their temple.” Dr. M. D. Magee, Hellenization of Judaism, academia.edu.


38 Prof. Asphodel P. Long, Asherah, the Tree of Life and the Menorah, 1996, Plymouth.

39 Although a hostile witness, the Bible mostly shows her worship was benign. Despite this, the original writers demonised her, and then translators deliberately fudged her name — obscuring her existence. Jeremiah (44:17/9) tells us: “But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But ever since we stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings to her, we have had nothing and have been perishing by sword and famine. And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drunk offerings unto her, without our men?”

40 Prof. Edgar Quinet, Religions of Antiquity Misunderstood

41 Biblically proscribed activities attributed to the Hebrew religion: “Frequenting local shrines (bāmōt); Setting up standing stones (massēbōt); Making of images of various deities; Venerating the goddesses; Burning incense; Baking cakes for the “Queen of Heaven”; Making vows; “Weeping for Tammuz”; Performing rituals having to do with childbirth and children; Holding marzēah feasts; Conducting funeral rites, “feeding the dead”; Making pilgrimages to holy places and saints’ festivals; Engaging in various aspects of astral and solar worship; Divining and “magic,” except by priests; Sacrificing children (?) [no evidence / “blood libel”]” William G. Dever, Did God Have a Wife?, 2005, Grand Rapid, p.237.
ILLUSTRATION: *Our Lady of the Pillar* (SLIDE 128)
[Note the form of the Cross]

Mary’s first alleged apparition was atop a pillar before the apostle at Zaragoza, Spain, in 40 CE, before she had even died! Legend says she left the pillar in remembrance of her visit, (like the pillar left with the Giblimites or stone squarers in *The Lamentations of Isis*), together with a small statue of herself, like the first Palladium.

In the *Legion of Mary*, Legionnaires are told of their emblem: “*The pillar is Mary who saved the world by her faith*” And elsewhere: “*The pillar is the symbol of the stability of faith.*” In the Society of Mary (Marianists), in addition to the usual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, novitiates of the Society, are required to vow “stability.”

Thus, Our Lady of the Pillar persists in the Catholic Church. However, among Protestants Marianism was added to their contentions used to distance themselves from Catholicism.

Within our Craft, we find *Our Lady of the Pillar* is preserved in our Third or Sublime Degree, where she too signifies Stability.

**Conclusion**

The main point is that there was a third, figurative & free-standing pillar in KST, with an eponymous name signifying “stability” — the rest has been commentary. Asherah’s pillar and the import of her name were Established in Strength in the peculiar system of our Craft degrees:

*May She Stand Fast Forever*

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42 Dr. Elinor Gadon, *The Once and Future Goddess*, 1989, New York, p.194
43 Osiris was tricked by his brother Set into being sealed in a casket which was then cast into the Nile, drifted to sea, and finally came ashore at Byblos, then called Gebal — the home of the Giblimites, signifying “stone-squarers.” An imposing tree grew up around the casket. This tree was admired by the local king and queen, who selected it to be a pillar in their palace. Isis, the grieving widow, eventually found the pillar, opened it and recovered the casket containing the body of her husband Osiris. She returned to Egypt with the body, leaving the pillar itself, where it was placed in the Byblos temple to commemorate the goddess. Accordingly, we read: “The tutelary goddess of Byblos was known to the Egyptians and identified with their own Hathor, who in this manner became known to the Egyptians as the mistress of the Syrian lands.” G. Steindorff & K.C. Seele, *When Egypt Ruled the East*, 1957, London, p.50.
44 *Legion of Mary*, Melbourne Senatus
45 *Consilium Legionis Mariae*, Legion Prayers
46 *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Society of Mary (Marist Fathers)