

Encyclopaedia, Britannica, Inc.. Encyclopedia of World Religions, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 2006. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/fullerton/detail.action?docID=361916>.

Asherah: ancient West Semitic goddess. Her full name was probably “She Who Walks in the Sea,” but she was also called “Holiness,” and, occasionally, Elath, “the Goddess.” In Ugaritic tradition, Asherah’s consort was EL , and by him she was the mother of 70 gods. As MOTHER GODDESS she was widely worshiped throughout Syria and Palestine, although she was frequently paired with BAAL , who often took the place of El in practical cult; as Baal’s consort, Asherah was usually given the name BAALAT . The word asherah in the OLD TESTAMENT was used in reference to the goddess and to a wooden cult object associated with her worship.

Astarte: great goddess of the ancient Near East, chief deity of Tyre, Sidon, and Elath. She was worshiped as Astarte in Egypt and UGARIT and among the Hittites, as well as in CANAAN . Her Akkadian counterpart was ISHTAR . Later she became assimilated with the Egyptian deities ISIS and HATHOR , and in the Greco-Roman world with APHRODITE , ARTEMIS , and JUNO . Astarte, goddess of love and war, shared so many qualities with her sister, ANATH , that they may originally have been seen as a single deity. Hebrew scholars now feel that the goddess Ashtoreth mentioned so often in the BIBLE is a deliberate compilation of the Greek name Astarte and the Hebrew word boshet, “shame,” indicating contempt for her cult. Ashtaroth, the plural form of the goddess’s name in Hebrew, became a term denoting goddesses and paganism. SOLOMON , married to foreign wives, “went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians” (1 Kings 11:5). Later the cult places dedicated to Ashtoreth were destroyed by JO - SIAH . Astarte/Ashtoreth is the Queen of Heaven to whom the Canaanites had burned incense and poured LIBATIONS (Jeremiah 44).