millennium BCE have been found at Lachish and Tel Qiri.[26] A ninth-century-BCE open air sanctuary is known from Tel Reḥov that featured a raised platform with two stelai, an offering table, a pottery altar, and a large number of animal bones (Mazar 2015, 27–28). The offering of food and the ritual sharing of meals before these stelai suggest the presence and participation of the indexed agents.[27]

Another potential means of presencing generic divine agency that has long eluded scholarly consensus is the use of free-standing clay figurines known today as Judean Pillar Figurines, or JPFs (Kletter 1996; Byrne 2004; Darby 2014).[28] These objects were long assumed to represent the deity Asherah and to facilitate fertility and successful childbirth, but the lack of any representation of the genitals complicates the assumption. Erin Darby's recent reanalysis of the archaeological contexts and the comparative data suggests they exercised somewhat generic apotropaic and healing functions, and show no signs of identification with specific deities.[29] They may also have functioned for some to facilitate access to divine agency for those excluded from participating in—or who otherwise lacked access to—temple ritual.[30] With their form likely developing from the earlier naked

[26] See Ben-Tor and Portugali 1987, 82–90 (the authors note the abundance of animal bones, and particularly right forelimbs, which they suggest indicates their use in cultic activity [89–90]); Zukerman 2012; Garfinkel, Ganor, and Hasel 2018, 144–45, and nn. 9–11 (I exclude Megiddo room 2081 [see Bloch-Smith 2007, 33–35]). Some refer to these installations as "cult corners" (Zevit 2001, 123; Hitchcock 2011).

[27] 1 Sam 9:12–13, in which Saul seeks help in the recovery of lost donkeys, provide a biblical perspective on this context. He asks if the seer is around, and the locals respond, "He is. Look, just ahead of you. Hurry up. He's come to the town today because there's a sacrifice for the people today at the shrine [*bāmâ*]. As soon as you enter the town, find him before he goes up to the shrine to eat. See, the people won't eat until he arrives, since he's the one who blesses the sacrifice. After that, those who are invited can eat. Now head on up. Now's the time to find him."

[28] As the name suggests, these figurines were most prominent in Judah, and were particularly prolific from the eighth through the sixth centuries BCE. There have been around 1,000 JPFs discovered in the region. They were small (13–16 cm) free-standing figurines that depicted a female with hands holding or supporting the breasts and a pillar base extending from below the breasts. The figurines had heads made of two types: a hand-made type that was executed by pinching the clay to roughly form a nose and eye sockets, and a molded type connected to the body by a clay tang. Some are also depicted holding a disc or a child.

[29] Francesca Stavrakopoulou (2016, 356–57) suggests they were tied in domestic contexts to lactation rituals and signaled the transformation of the personhood of the mother/feeder and the child.

[30] Darby (2014, 390) appeals to Hector Avalos's (1995) analysis of healing ritual, favorably summarizing: "The sick may have originally travelled to shrines where rites took place. At some point, perhaps as early as the Iron IIB, the sick were excluded from temple space; and healing rituals must have taken place in the home."