

The Rape of Lilith: *From Dark Mother to Demonic Matriarch*
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FOREWORD

Lilith Reloaded

This is not the first time I have written Lilith's story. In fact, this is not even the first book I have written with the *Rape of Lilith* title. This monograph (this work is a bit too short in page length to be called a book) is a rewrite of an original manuscript that began as my master's thesis. I would like to take a moment to explain a few things about my relationship with Lilith, and my reasons for publishing this rewrite of her story.

The original version of *The Rape of Lilith* was published while I was still in grad school, and by an academic publisher. Unfortunately, it was not until after I had agreed to let them print the work that I found out they would be charging 40 Euros per copy (roughly 70 US Dollars), which I felt to be a ridiculous price for what accounted to a 100-page paperback monograph. I believe that Lilith's story should be for everyone, not just those who can afford to pay such an exorbitant price. So my first reason for doing this rewrite was to make Lilith's story affordably available to anyone who wished to read it.

Secondly, the original manuscript was written for an academic audience. Therefore, I had to write under the usual constraints of academic writing. For example, doing the usual academic "two-step"—no apologetic wording

(which I felt gave the first version an air of arrogance) and the use of as many obscure, multisyllabic words as possible (seriously, who wants to read a book that requires them to have a dictionary on hand?). So my second reason for this rewrite was due to “readability.” The previous manuscript of *The Rape of Lilith* simply was not written in such a way that anyone could read and absorb it. I believe that his new version, however, is far more readable.

My third and final reason for this rewrite is also associated with the fact that it was originally written for an academic audience. For me, Lilith is closely attached to my personal and spiritual growth—to my view of God, the Universe, and ... yeah ... everything. Her very existence has challenged many of my preconceived beliefs and ideas—about masculinity and sexuality, about the natures of God and Humanity, and about my own self. In short ... I wasn’t done. I had more to say. However, much of what I had to say did not fit within the neat confines of academic writing. Well, seeing as how my days in academia are now over, the rest of what I had to say will be written within these pages.

This is my real tribute to the dark side of the divine feminine. This is Lilith’s whole story. No bullshit. No sugarcoating. No gaps. This work is both my analysis of

and tribute to **Her**, to this ancient, enduring, and wrathful manifestation of the divine feminine, as well as to all those who have been Man's mad, passionate, and often selfless guides through the deadliest of labyrinths, only to be later rejected and cast out when they no longer fit into the mold as He demands.

From beginning to end, this is *The Rape of Lilith* as I intended it to be. This book is a tribute to this beautiful yet terrifying figure, who continues to snarl in the faces of those who have and would punish, degrade, and destroy her ... as she continues to cry out to them from the shadows, as another writer so elegantly put it:

“Rape me into ashes if you will ... I can take it.”

It is time for humanity to open its eyes to the truth about Lilith ... or have them ripped out.

INTRODUCTION

The Queen of Spades

When I first approached the subject of Lilith, I saw her as little more than a mythical character. An extremely important mythical figure, mind you, but I viewed her only as an archetype, a mythical symbol or cosmological metaphor. In those times, when I first began composing the original version of *The Rape of Lilith*, and when my study of mythology had begun to focus more and more on the myths and religious traditions surrounding the topic of demons (later leading me to pursue the study of demonology), I had actually ceased to believe in the existence of demons. I saw them as metaphors and archetypes, reflecting the darker sides of the human psyche. And while I still view demonic myths in this way, I do not feel the same about demons themselves (or about a number of spiritual entities). Back then, however, I had no idea that my beliefs about demons would soon change. And that I would soon realize all too well that the study of demons seems far less dangerous when you are able to reduce them to strictly fictional entities.

I had a number of unusual experiences during my writing of the original *Rape of Lilith*. Two of them, however, shattered my perception of Lilith as a strictly mythical being. And it is these two experiences that I wish

to share with my readers. I did not include them in the original version of this work, namely because I feared my professors would begin to doubt my sanity ... and also due to the fact that such topics are not normally seen as appropriate for an academic thesis. So, hoping to avoid being put in a straightjacket and/or (God forbid) sent back to the drawing board on my thesis, I chose the safe route and decided to introduce it by writing about how Lilith's story applied to my academic and personal life (though in a strictly non-spiritual sense). This is the first time that I have ever shared these stories publicly. While I know longer have to concern myself with academic constraints or thesis requirements, I still hope to avoid the straightjacket. I guess only time will reveal whether I succeed in that regard.

One of the first strange, and somewhat terrifying, experiences that occurred during the original composition of *The Rape of Lilith* came in the form of a late night apparition (yeah, I said it ... an apparition). At the time, I was a newlywed to a fellow grad student and had just recently moved from my one-bedroom bachelor pad to her apartment. One night, something awoke me from my slumber. Now, this may not seem like a big deal. However, let me explain something. I am perhaps one of the most difficult people in the world to wake up. Just ask anyone

who has had to do it. When I sleep, I sleep hard. So, needless to say, I am not the kind of guy who just wakes up for no reason.

As I opened my eyes, I noticed something moving at the foot of the bed. In the shadows I was saw a figure with long black hair. At first, I thought perhaps my stepdaughter was sleepwalking again. I whispered her name, but received no response. I propped up on my elbows and tried to focus my eyes. At that point, something registered in my half-awake mind: the figure was well over five feet tall ... far taller than my then 7-year-old stepdaughter. Something or someone was in our room.

Now, normally, the realization that someone was in my home would have sent me grabbing for any one of the bedside weapons I keep nearby ... often swords ... my theory being that intruders who suddenly find themselves faced with the sight of a naked, chubby, 30-something guy coming at them with a broadsword and screaming at the top of his lungs will be enough to send them into a retreat. However, this time was different. I did not go into protector mode. I did not reach for a weapon. In fact, I could not even move. I was terror-struck as my eyes focused upon a tall female figure with long, flowing black hair that concealed most of her face. I tried to speak, but could not

... that is, until she took a step towards me. As you can imagine, this helped me get some words out. I began to call out to my new wife, who had been sleeping beside me this whole time. “Who is that?” I called out, tapping on my wife’s side with one hand. Then, to the figure “Who are you? What are you doing in this house?” My wife awoke, looked to the direction in which I was now pointing, and said “What are you looking at? Who do you see?”

“Don’t you see her?” I said, still pointing. “She’s right there.”

Then the figure began to bounce up and down, as if hopping on one leg, and I was able to the glint of teeth, turned up at the corners as if in a smile. To put it simply ... I freaked out.

“I don’t see anything,” my wife replied. “Nathan, you’re dreaming. There’s nothing there.” Then, just as suddenly, the apparition took a step back and disappeared in the shadows. My body was left shaking with the adrenaline and, needless to say, I was unable to go back to sleep for the rest of the night. I tried to dismiss the encounter as just a waking nightmare or just some strange sleepwalking experience. In my mind, however, I knew this was not the truth. It was not until later that I realized the identity of my late night visitor—Lilith.

By this time, I was nearing the final pages of *The Rape of Lilith*. The manuscript was nearly ready for final approval as my master's thesis, and I was working through a Saturday night (as I often did in those days) in my campus office so that I could have it ready for review before the following Monday. I enjoyed the privacy and distraction free environment that came with working in the completely empty building that was the English Department on weekends. The night time janitors thought I was nuts for working so much, but were nice enough to leave me to my work. Any random professors who came into the staff lounge to discover me sleeping on the couch, wrapped up in a sleeping bag, were kind enough to just ignore me. On this particular Saturday night, however, the building was completely empty and I refused to allow myself to have any sleep until my work was done.

Around 2:00 am the following morning, I filled up my "spill-proof" (yeah, nice wish) coffee cup for the third time that night with the nectar of life, returned to my office, and shut the door behind me. At around 4:00am, I was ecstatic as I composed the final words of the manuscript. I stood up from my chair and did my usual yawn and stretch, followed by a little self-indulgent "happy dance" (like I said, the building was empty ... and that almost kind of requires a

happy dance, doesn't it?). Realizing that I was out of coffee (gasp!), I grabbed up my coffee cup and opened the door to my office. As I propped the door open on the mutilated wedge of wood that we used as a pathetic excuse for a doorstop, something on the floor caught my eye. At first, I thought I was seeing things. As I looked closer, I realized I wasn't. There on the floor, right in front of my office door, was a single playing card—the Queen of Spades.

For a moment, I thought I someone was pulling a prank. Of course, then I remembered how loud the doors to the building were when anyone came in ... especially when the place was empty. However, just in case, I searched the building from end-to-end, and from floor-to-floor. Not a creature was stirring. I was alone. I hadn't heard so much as a rustle outside my office door, and the card had not been there two hours ago. Besides, how in the world could a single playing card find its way to my office door all by itself?

To this day, I consider the appearance of the card to have been a token of Lilith's approval—her endorsement, if you will, of my approach to her story. That's right ... I believe Lilith left the card for me (again, I hope this does not land me in a straightjacket), to let me know that I got her story right.

To this day, I still have the card. What follows is the historical, mythical, and spiritual story of Lilith: the “Queen of Spades.”

CHAPTER 1

LILITH'S ANCIENT STRUGGLE

“Lilith. The screech-owl voice shrieking in the twilight, crouched over the edge of sanity, stealing the breath of babies and whisking away the dreamers’ seed” (Brucato 4).

Lilith. This dark female icon has remained a part of Middle and Near Eastern religious mythologies for roughly 5,000 years. Though she has existed in myths for thousands of years, the question of Lilith’s true origins remains a mystery from the ancient past, and one to which many continue to search for answers. The solution to the enigma surrounding the “birth” of Lilith may suggest that her name was at one point used to refer to a widely worshipped creator goddess. However, her divinity came to be continually diminished in the myths of male-dominated cultures with developed written languages. Lilith’s fall has been long and hard—from creator goddess to destroyer goddess, from deity to human, and from human to succubus-like demon. The Lilith of modern religious perception is little more than a diminished and tainted shadow of her original form as a sovereign goddess that was once likely worshipped by such prehistoric peoples as the Al-Ubaidians, Sumerians, and perhaps even the lost people of *Çatalhöyük*. Although Lilith’s true origins as a

creator goddess cannot be concretely supported by any ancient texts, one can still make strong assumptions about her original divinity by piecing together suggested references to her powers from the earliest texts in which she is mentioned, and by examining how she has been diminished (but never fully vanished) by the myths of male-dominated cultures.

For years, Lilith was a mythical character thought to be solely of Judaic origin. However, the translations and transcriptions of newfound Mesopotamian tablets, written in cuneiform (the original Sumerian written language of ancient Mesopotamia, meaning “wedge form”), eventually debunked this misconception. The Babylonian and Sumerian texts that mention Lilith predate those of the Assyrian and Judaic Semites, who later conquered that region.

The oldest known mention of lilith (as far as written material is concerned) is found in the ancient *Inanna* tablets, among some of the oldest written works known to man, and depicts her as a destroyer figure who takes up residence in a sacred tree, called the *huluppu*. In her translation (in collaboration with Samuel Noah Kramer) of the *Inanna* tablets, Diane Wolkstein writes that “a serpent who could not be charmed / Made its nest in the roots in the

huluppu-tree. The *Anzu* bird [a mythical bird often depicted as either a lion-headed bird or a winged lion] set his young in the branches of the tree. And the dark maid Lilith built her home in the trunk” (6, brackets added). Lilith’s destroyer nature in this myth follows her throughout all of her later portrayals in religious mythology. Also, the figures of the bird/screech-owl and snake, in addition to the feline (likely a manifestation of the lion nature of the *Anzu*), would continue to be associated with her in later myths. Even according to Brucato’s updated pop culture version of Lilith, in *Revelations of the Dark Mother*, “While many animals have been regarded as sacred to the Dark Mother [Lilith], the owl, cat, and serpent are generally considered her emblem beasts” (114, brackets added).

Though Lilith is referred to as the “dark maiden” in the *Inanna* tablets, it would appear that at this point she had still retained her power as a goddess. In the myth, the goddess Inanna wishes to use the wood of the *huluppu*-tree in order to create a bridal bed. However, when Inanna finds the tree inhabited by Lilith and her animal counterparts, she simply breaks down in grief. The truth of Lilith’s previous goddess status becomes evident when one acknowledges Inanna’s grief at her inability to remove Lilith from her home in the *huluppu*-tree’s trunk. Why would such a

popular and powerful goddess as Inanna not have the power to remove Lilith, if she were not a goddess as well? In addition, it would seem Lilith is being portrayed as more powerful than Inanna. Such a portrayal suggests that Lilith may have been the primary goddess of some preexisting culture (most likely, the people of Al-Ubaid) who were conquered and/or absorbed by the Sumerians, who were in turn later overtaken by the Semitic tribes. The fact of Inanna's goddess status is well known; and yet, she does not appear to have the power to remove neither Lilith nor her animal familiars (the serpent and *Anzu*) from the *huluppu*-tree on her own. In fact, Lilith is not successfully driven from the *huluppu*-tree until Inanna's relative, the warrior-god Gilgamesh (or *Bilgarmes* in Sumerian) decides to intervene, as Kramer writes:

He lifted his bronze ax, the ax of the road,

[...] / He entered Inanna's holy garden.

Gilgamesh struck the serpent who could not be charmed.

The *Anzu*-bird flew with his young to the mountains;

And Lilith smashed her home and flew to the wild, uninhabited places.

Gilgamesh loosened the roots of the *huluppu*-tree;

And the sons of the city, who accompanied him, cut off the branches. (9)

Once again, one should pay close attention to the language that is used here. Lilith does not simply abandon the *huluppu*-tree; instead, she is forced to leave “her home,” which exists within the tree’s trunk.

I believe that this myth was written in order to show the conquered peoples who worshipped her that this particular goddess, Lilith, had been vanquished by the male gods of the conquering Akkadian culture group’s pantheon and had therefore fled the inhabited lands of the city. This would mean that, in order to continue worshipping this exiled goddess, those of her cult would have no choice but travel away from the protection of the city and into the “wild, uninhabited places.” In ancient times, such an act (leaving the protection and order provided by cities and/or civilization) would have been incredibly perilous to say the least—and nothing short of suicide if undertaken alone.

While the *Inanna* tablets’ reference to Lilith is evidence of her existence in myths that predate her appearance in later Judaic lore, there are those who argue that Lilith’s presence this is nothing more than a mistranslation by Kramer and/or Wolkstein. For example, according to Gustav Davidson, “Lilith is in fact drawn from the *lili*,

female demonic spirits in Mesopotamian demonology, and known as *ardat lili*” (174). The first problem with Davidson’s argument, however, is that *ardat lili* is now known to have been the name/title of a lesser servant figure/deity that later became integrated with her mistress, Lilith. As scholar Raphael Patai explains in *The Hebrew Goddess*, originally it was “Ardat Lili (or Lilith’s handmaid), who visited men by night and bore them ghostly children” (223).

In addition to the abovementioned discrepancy in defining *ardat lili*, Davidson’s claim does not match up linguistically either. Lilith is spoken of in the singular form in the *huluppu*-tree myth. I have been unable to locate any valid academic resources concerning the exact form used in the cuneiform tablets from which the text was originally translated. However, in all existing translations of the myth, Lilith is referred to in the *huluppu*-tree myth as a single, independent, and sovereign entity. None of the existing translations refer to her as “a Lilith,” which would at least suggest she is a member of a larger group of “demonic spirits,” as Davidson claims. Of course, Davidson’s claim could simply be the result of a misunderstanding on his part. Perhaps by some fault in his research, Davidson appears to have mistaken the lore surrounding the *lilin* /

lilum (meaning “that group which is of / from Lilith”) from the lore of the later Semitic culture groups (the ancient ancestors of the ethnic Jews who would further demonize her) with those of the earlier Lilith written of in the *Inanna* tablets, which most scholars agree to have been copied from myths that predate the rise of the Akkadian Dynasty (dating the story to as far back as the fourth millennium BCE), at least in the form of an oral tradition. Davidson fails to acknowledge, as Kramer explains in *Sumerian Mythology*, that the Sumerians of ancient Mesopotamia “were a non-Semitic, Indo-European people who probably entered Mesopotamia from the east prior to the fourth millenium” Kramer 6). Most scholars agree that little can be said for sure in regards to the religious beliefs of Mesopotamia prior to the beginning of the third millennium BCE; a McIntosh explains, “The information is most elusive before the beginning of writing around 3000 BCE” (199).

The likelihood that Davidson is mistaken in his claim is further solidified by the research of Lilith scholar and Judaic mysticism expert Siegmund Hurwitz, a close student of Carl Jung (founder of the school of study known as psychoanalytical mythology), who explains that, in the *Talmud*, there are references to “a female demon called

Argat [*Lilitu*], daughter of Machlat, who is related to Lilith” (88). The phonetic similarity between *Argat Lilitu* and *ardat lili* is unmistakable. Also, in Hebraic linguistics that word *lili* is the singular form, while *lilim*, *lilin*, and *lilum* represent the possible plural forms of the word. *Lili* cannot, therefore, refer to a group of demonic spirits. However, I must admit that at least one of my sources concurs with the claim that *ardat lili* is a Babylonian term that means something like “maid of desolation,” which would certainly suggest an association with Lilith (Leach 622). However, this does not support the idea that the word *lili* referred to a class of demons and not to a sovereign entity. Considering all of the previously mentioned facts, one can see how Davidson could have easily become confused.

While Lilith and Inanna can most certainly be seen as related, at least in the sense that Lilith is written of in the abovementioned excerpt from the *huluppu*-tree myth, it is my firm belief that this has led to a number of mistakes in the interpretations of certain pictorial representations from ancient Mesopotamia, especially those from the Akkadian Period. Too often, it would seem that whenever a goddess is depicted in ancient Mesopotamian art and cannot be readily identified, many scholars rush to the hasty

conclusion that it must be Inanna or Ishtar (Inanna's later Babylonian counterpart). However, in my research I have discovered a number of discrepancies with the reasoning behind claims such as these, and which I shall discuss in depth in the following Chapters 2 and 3.

CHAPTER 2

SEARCHING FOR LILITH IN THE AKKADIAN PERIOD

Taking into account the amount of written (cuneiform) material that is available on the Inanna/Ishtar figure, it is unlikely that she would be so often depicted in visual art. Cuneiform tablets, you see, were not the easiest things to write. A small flat stick, or stylus, was used to make indentations in wet clay tablets that were then dried, making their production both difficult and time consuming. Therefore, pictorial representations were rarely used to depict stories that had already been written down. Considering this, I am of the opinion that a number of artistic depictions of Lilith have been hastily and/or mistakenly mislabeled as being of Inanna/Ishtar. Too often, it would appear that certain scholars have tried to forcefully match up pictorial descriptions with what is known of the particular culture group's written mythology. This represents a serious problem, however, since these depictions commonly illustrate scenes from lost texts and/or stories that existed only in oral traditions, as McIntosh explains:

Cylinder seals often bore images with a religious content: the owner being introduced by his personal god to a senior deity; scenes of demons being

defeated; or episodes from legends. While some portray well-known stories such as the tale of Etana, others remain impenetrable, illustrating tales of which there is no surviving literary account. The durable nature of much artwork and the vagaries of the survival of literary material also mean that many myths are known in written versions that [...] do not necessarily match the visual iconography [...] over the course of history. (209)

I will illustrate my point by first examining a series of four depictions from cylinder seals (small stone cylinders with images carved into them, which could then be rolled across wet clay to create a sort of banner or scene) of the Akkadian Period, the first three of which I believe to be of Lilith (though many have not been labeled as such, or are vague in claiming so). I will then follow this with a presentation of a fourth cylinder seal that offers what I believe to be a properly labeled depiction of Inanna/Ishtar. By doing so, I will offer a new pictorial timeline that illustrates what I believe to be the ancient fate of both the lost pre-Akkadian goddess *lil/kal* (the names by which she is believed to have been called by the pre-Akkadian culture groups) and the members of her cult (a subject which will also be discussed further in Chapter 4). Please note that

these representations predate at least the initial inscribing of the *huluppu*-tree myth (which most scholars agree occurred around roughly 2000 BCE) by well over three centuries.

CHAPTER 2.1

CYLINDER SEAL 1

The following cylinder seal impression depiction (Figure 1) dates from the Akkadian Period (2334-2154 BCE), an age during which the Sumerian world found itself completely under the rule of the Akkadian Semites. This cylinder, if I am correct in my conclusions, is likely the oldest (or, at the least, one of the first in a series) of cylinder seals depicting the fate of Lilith in ancient Sumer-Akkad.



FIGURE 1: LILITH, QUEEN OF THE ANZU

Elizabeth Williams-Forte, in her annotations of the art used in Diane Wolkstein's and Samuel Noah Kramer's *Inanna*, labels this cylinder seal as "*Radiant Inanna*" (193). However, after doing extensive research into all available myths involving Inanna and/or Ishtar (commonly considered Inanna's Babylonian equivalent), I have come

to disagree with Williams-Forte's claim that this is a depiction of a radiant Inanna. In not even a single myth or text involving Inanna was I able to find as much as a single description of Inanna/Ishtar as a "winged goddess." Not in any of the myths of Inanna/Ishtar, whether Sumerian, Akkadian, or Babylonian, is there any mention of her having wings. It is true, however, that in lines 80 and 81 of "Tablet IV" of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, it is written "The goddess Ishtar ... she went up to heaven in a furious rage" (George 50). However, this passage is the closest I could find to a reference of Inanna/Ishtar flying or having wings (but neither of these are confirmed by this passage, since a number of deities and demigods in the same pantheon are said to travel between heaven and earth, and are able to do so without the use of an actual pair of wings). I am not alone in this opinion, which has been put forward similarly by Hurwitz, who states "It is true that a series of winged male and female demons exists within the Sumerian-Babylonian culture group. Pictorial representations of a winged Ishtar are not known, however" (82).

Williams-Forte likely assumed that her labeling of this cylinder seal was correct because of the presence of the lion that is reined by the female figure in the depiction, and which is an animal known to have been of special

importance to the cult of Ishtar. However, there is a flaw in her reasoning (if, in fact, this is truly the line of thought that brought her to this conclusion). The lion was indeed a sacred animal in the Ishtar cult, but it was not exclusive to that cult. Hurwitz writes of this in the following passage:

It is correct that lions belong among Ishtar's cult animals, as emerges from numerous illustrations in her work on Mesopotamian clay figurines. [...] Against all this, however, there is the objection that lions do not belong exclusively among Ishtar's cult animals. In Egypt, the lion is the animal sacred to Sachmet. [...] In the Babylonian-Assyrian culture group, lions are sacred to Ningirsu and Shamash. Lamashtu also has a connection with lions, as the Labartu texts clearly indicate. (81-82)

When you take the above into consideration, there are two far more likely possibilities: that this is a representation of the demonic female figure known as Lamashtu, or one of Lilith. The possibility that this is a depiction of the child-eating, malevolent female deity Lamashtu is unlikely, however, since she is described in texts from the Akkadian and Old-Babylonian Periods, as quoted by Hurwitz, as having “the ‘head of a lion’ and a ‘terrible appearance’” (84). In the cylinder seal impression depicted in Figure 1,

the female figure depicted has neither of these attributes; on the contrary, her head is neither that of a lion nor particularly terrible in appearance.

If cylinder seal impression depicted in Figure 1 is considered in comparison to what is known about Lilith, Williams-Forte's misidentification of the cylinder seal (as well as the truth of the depiction) becomes clear. Lilith is strongly associated with the *Anzu* bird in the *huluppu*-tree myth. I have found three unique yet similar descriptions of the *Anzu* bird. One description, which comes from Williams-Forte, is of a "lion-headed thunderbird" (Wolkstein 177). Another (somewhat contradicting) description, also from Williams-Forte and from the same work, explains that the *Anzu* is simply a winged lion or, as she puts it, a "lion-bird" (Wolkstein 194). Jane R. McIntosh offers the most recent description of the *Anzu*, as "A monstrous lion-headed bird, the flapping of whose wings created whirlwinds and sandstorms" (321). From these descriptions, it can be deduced that the *Anzu* is an integration of the natures/attributes of two animals—the eagle "thunderbird" and the lion—though which of the two attributes is dominant would seem to have been somewhat interchangeable, especially in visual depictions.

Lilith, commonly depicted in later periods (as will be shown later in this book) as a Queen of Beasts, would not only have been seen as related to the *Anzu*, but also its lord and mistress. I firmly believe that this cylinder seal represents how Lilith once reined the lion aspect of the *Anzu*, pinning it in submission beneath one foot. From her back extend the wings of the *Anzu*'s eagle/"thunderbird" aspect, the powers of which she has also mastered, to the point of taking those powers as her own.

CHAPTER 2.2 CYLINDER SEAL II

The below depiction of another cylinder seal impression (Figure 2) also dates from the Akkadian Period, and most accounts date its creation at between 2300 BCE and 2193 BCE (of course, I have to admit that some texts simply date it at the span of the Akkadian Period, which was from 2334 BCE to 2154 BCE).



FIGURE 2: LILITH UNDER SIEGE

This depiction is discussed at length by Samuel Noah Kramer in *Sumerian Mythology*. In his explanation, Kramer refers to the depiction as that of “Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Nether World” (32). However, by Kramer’s own admission this label does not seem to match up correctly with the depiction:

Three of the deities can be identified with reasonable certainty. Second from the right is the water-god Enki, with the flowing streams of water and the swimming fishes. Immediately behind him is the Janus-faced messenger Isimud, who plays an

important role in several of our Enki myths. Seemingly rising out of the lower regions is Utu, the sun-god, with his saw-knife and fiery rays. The female figure standing at the top of the mountain, near what seems to be a rather desolate tree, may perhaps be Inanna. If the figure to the left with bow in hand is intended to be Gilgamesh, we have most of the protagonists of the tale “Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Nether World.” However, it is to be noted that Enkidu is missing, and Isimud, who is pictured in the design, plays no part in the story. And so any close connection between the design and the story is improbable. (32)

Interestingly enough, the answer to this problem comes from Kramer’s own words, in the commentary he gives in another work (*Inanna*). Kramer explains that “The leading deities of this pantheon [Sumerian-Babylonian] were the creating gods controlling the four major components of the universe: the Sky God An; Earth Goddess Ki [...]; Air God Enlil [...]; and Water God Enki” (Wolkstein 123). I believe that at least three of these four gods are present in the depiction. I do agree with Kramer’s claim that the figure “second from the right” is Enki. However, I believe that the figure behind Enki is not Isimud, but instead An (the sky

god, from whose hand I believe the eagle has just launched). I also agree that the figure to the left could be Gilgamesh/*Bilgarmes*, but only because of his involvement in the *huluppu*-tree myth. I also concede to Hurwitz's claim that the figure arising from the depths is the sun god Utu, not only due to the absence of any contradictory evidence, but also because Lilith is commonly associated with darkness. By this rationale, it stands to reason that a Sun God such as Utu would be a necessary presence in the battle to banish her.

Lastly, I disagree with Kramer's claim that the female figure "may perhaps be Inanna." I strongly believe that the female figure in this depiction is meant to be Lilith. This cylinder seal impression, I assert, depicts an attack upon the goddess Lilith by four of the most powerful male figures in the Akkadian pantheon—Enki, An, Gilgamesh/*Bilgarmes* (possibly Enlil), and Utu. Just as Gilgamesh/*Bilgarmes* chased Lilith from the *huluppu*-tree, this seal depicts four powerful male gods pursuing Lilith past what could be the mountains of Sirion and Lebanon, perhaps across the Zargos Mountains in general, which lie to the northwestern border of Mesopotamia.

In the cylinder seal depicted in Figure 2, there are again present a number of aspects directly related to Lilith. The

Anzu bird's aspects (lion and eagle/"thunderbird") have been split into two separate entities, and are both turned in her direction as though in attack. Perhaps this is done in order to illustrate that even the aspects of the *Anzu*, a creature of which Lilith was once lord and mistress, have now sided with the male sky gods of the new pantheon.

To the immediate left of Lilith is a withering tree, perhaps to illustrate that she is now an enemy of nature or to further drive home her participation in the violation of the sacred *huluppu*-tree in the known myth (of course, Lilith was not the one who destroyed it ... Inanna and Gilgamesh did that). The serpentine curls around her neck may represent her relationship with the "serpent who could not be charmed" that is written of in the *huluppu*-tree myth.

In consideration of all that has been put forth in this chapter I believe that this seal should be more appropriately relabeled, perhaps as "Lilith Under Siege."

CHAPTER 2.3 CYLINDER SEAL III



FIGURE 3: LILITH DEFEATED

The above depiction in Figure 3 is perhaps one of the most hastily and vaguely labeled of the cylinder seals I have investigated and examined for this book (though I openly admit that I am doing so only by viewing the available photographs of these seals, and have not had the opportunity to examine the original works). The cylinder seal depiction in Figure 3 is based on an original seal found in the Pierpont Morgan Library's collection, which is also dated from the Akkadian Period (2334-2154 BCE). In *Inanna*, Williams-Forte labels this depiction as simply "Rain Goddess" (Wolkstein 94).

I would like to take a moment to apologize in advance if the next few paragraphs come off as overly critical. However, I assure you that my criticisms are not without merit. While Williams-Forte's vague "Rain Goddess" label

alone would be at least acceptable (in the sense that it could be dismissed as an understandable misinterpretation), her provided explanation for it is at best ill-supported ... if not downright irresponsible. According to Williams-Forte's following description:

Inanna/Ishtar may appear on this seal in her manifestation as Rain or Thunderstorm Goddess, as suggested by Elizabeth Douglas Van Buren. Nude except for her horned crown, she stands between the wings of a lion-bird or griffin, probably a manifestation of the embodiment of the thunder-bird *Anzu*. Streams of rain are held by the goddess and vomited by the lion-bird as it draws the chariot of the Weather God, who snaps his lightning whip. The clatter of the wooden wheels may be accompanied by the roar of the lion-bird as thunder. This scene gives mythopoeic form to the visual phenomena of rain, lightning, and thunder—its aural accompaniment in nature. (Wolkstein 194)

I see this as yet another instance where a scholar has rushed to label an unidentified female figure as Inanna/Ishtar, apparently for no other reason than her popularity in the pantheon (as well as her popularity among many of today's scholars). While Williams-Forte vaguely references a suggestion by Van Buren, she fails to cite a

specific source. As a result, I could only presume that Williams-Forte is referring to a long series of articles on the subject written by Elizabeth Douglas Van Buren between 1936 and 1951, a good number of which had already been successfully challenged by the time Williams-Forte's annotations were published in Kramer's and Wolkstein's *Inanna* text in 1983. Since her citation of Van Buren's comment is not at all specific, failing to offer so much as a title of the work to which she refers, I feel that I should refrain from commenting on it any further.

I again do not agree with Williams-Forte's assumption that this cylinder seal depicts Inanna/Ishtar. This cylinder seal offers the depiction of Lilith that would eventually become her enduring image in the view of all later Semitic culture groups—naked, emaciated, and frightening in appearance. Williams-Forte claims in the previously cited excerpt that the female figure is holding “streams of rain” that are being “vomited by the lion-bird.” However, the tightly spaced nature of these curving lines does not coincide with other depictions of water in many cylinder seals from the same period (for an example, refer back to the depictions of water and fire in Figure 2), or even with the depiction of water being poured from the jug in the very same cylinder seal. Upon closer inspection and

investigation of other such cylinder seals from the Akkadian Period, I found that a tightly packed series of lines usually represents fire, not water as Williams-Forte claims. Again, Hurwitz's observations of this cylinder seal are of the same opinion as my own, at least on this one point regarding whether these lines depict fire and/or water (though he, like Williams-Forte, also believes this to be a depiction of Inanna/Ishtar). Hurwitz describes this depiction as "a naked Ishtar on a chariot drawn by a winged, fire-spitting lion and in which stands the erect figure of a god (Adad or Enlil?)" (81).

Considering Lilith's association, as already discussed, with the snake, the lines she holds could also be symbolic of this serpentine relationship (though I admit this is purely speculation on my part). However, I concede to the possibility that this might simply be a fluke, and that this could just be a unique representation of water (though I believe this to be unlikely).

I do agree with Williams-Forte on at least one point—that the mythical animal depicted is a manifestation of the *Anzu*. I believe that this cylinder seal is meant to portray Lilith in a state of total defeat, illustrating powerfully to the observer that she is no longer the lord and mistress of the *Anzu*, which now displays its lion (masculine) nature in

majority, and its eagle/“thunderbird” nature in the minority. The *Anzu* is once again reined, though no longer in the service of the fallen goddess’s power. Instead the creature has been forced into the service of the male sky god’s chariot, whom I believe to be either An or Enlil, reduced (like its former master) to a domesticated beast of burden. The idea that the god in the chariot is Adad, God of Storms, likely stems from Williams-Forte’s assumption that this is a depiction of a weather deity. However, I am not at all convinced that this is the case. Also, even in my closest inspections of available photos of this cylinder seal, I was unable to verify Williams-Forte’s claim that the “Weather God” is snapping a “lightning whip” (hence the reason why the whip is not included in the depiction provided in Figure 3). I will concede to the idea that the male-god-charioteer is, indeed, likely cracking a whip of some kind ... I am just not convinced that it is one of lightning.

The figure to the far left (which Williams-Forte chooses to ignore altogether in her explanation) I believe to be either the Goddess of the Watery Deep, Nammu (An’s wife), or Enki, God of the Waters and Knowledge (An’s son). Unfortunately, the available image is too badly deteriorated for me to confidently confirm the figure’s gender. My reason for identifying the left side figure as one

of these two water deities is quite simple. When one considers Williams-Forte's explanation that the lion is vomiting up water, then it should lead one to ask a very simple question: "What, exactly, is the purpose of the figure to the far left pouring water on top of water?" If mine and Hurwitz's opinions are correct, and Lilith and the *Anzu* are indeed sending forth fire, the presence of a water deity standing before the chariot to constantly douse the flames makes perfect sense. He or she is not pouring water on water, but water on fire. The fire may be a symbolic representation meant to illustrate the danger posed by Lilith and the *Anzu* (and possibly the serpent), as they have now become symbols of chaos, destruction, and rebellion (demonstrated further in the ruling mythical tradition by their roles in the *Huluppu*-Tree myth). These destructive powers are shown as being not only defeated by the power of a male sky god (An), but as forced into slavery by it and rendered impotent by the powers of a water deity (Nammu or Enki).

Perhaps even more interesting is the existence of a previous cylinder seal with an altogether different depiction. This cylinder seal (Figure 4) depicts what appears to be a female deity, whom I believe to be Lilith (or a manifestation of her) in her original Sumerian form

(or close to it), riding a winged lion/*Anzu*, and holding what appears to be a snake in both hands. What is of most important note is how this cylinder seal, which a majority of scholars appear to agree (based primarily on the style) was likely created prior to the Akkadian Period, seems to depict a polar opposite situation from that of the Akkadian seal from Figure 3.



FIGURE 4: A Preexisting, Comparable Cylinder Seal

Note that the *Anzu* in this depiction also spits fire, yet there is no water deity present to extinguish the flames. In addition, another (possibly male) deity behind the female deity also rides an *Anzu*, instead of lashing both creature and goddess from a chariot. To the right and in front of the fire-spewing creature is a male figure, facing away as if either leading a procession. Perhaps this seal, showing a triumphant Lilith standing at the front of a male deity, or at least assuming a role of equal standing, inspired Akkadian artisans to portray a reversal of the situation after they

conquered the Sumer and sought to do away with the worship of the preexisting goddess Lilith.

CHAPTER 2.4 CYLINDER SEAL IV

The cylinder seal below is dated from the Akkadian Period (2334-2154 BCE), the same period as the previous three seals (the creation is officially dated as having occurred between 2330 and 2150 BCE). It is also thought to have come from the same geographic region. The location in which it was unearthed cannot be verified, however, most likely because it is currently part of a private collection.



FIGURE 5: INANNA

I offer this depiction of Inanna/Ishtar for no other reason than to further support my previous arguments regarding the mislabeling of Lilith depictions. I do not seek to contest Williams-Forte's explanations or claims in this particular case. On the contrary, I am in full agreement with her assessment of this cylinder seal's depiction, which is as follows:

During the period of Akkadian control of Mesopotamia (2334-2154 BCE), the early Sumerian “Lady of Heaven” and fertility goddess Inanna merged with the Semitic Ishtar, a warrior goddess. The goddess Inanna/Ishtar appears on this Akkadian seal, seated on a throne decorated by two crossed lions. Weapons, including a scimitar and a mace, rise from her shoulders as she gestures to two worshippers and looks full-face at the viewer. Her flounced garment covers only one shoulder, and her long hair falls in curls down to her elbows. To the left of Inanna/Ishtar stands an attendant goddess wearing a single-horned miter. To her right a female figure gestures in worship and pours a libation into a vessel. (Wolkstein 189)

This cylinder seal may well have played a role in the mislabeling of at least the first two cylinder seals. The similarities between the face and mode of dress of this Inanna and those of the figures I believe to be depictions of Lilith are undeniable. Each carries an arsenal of weapons on her back; each has a horned crown upon her head; and each wears the same style of garment. However, none of these items are unique to Inanna, Ishtar, or Lilith. In fact, the presence of weapons, a horned crown, and/or stylized

garments can be found in at least one depiction of nearly every god in the Sumer-Akkad pantheon.

What is of most important note in this cylinder seal is the absence of the elements specific to Lilith. First of all, it does not stand to reason that Inanna/Ishtar would be depicted with wings in two other depictions from the same time period, yet not in this one. This inconsistency would seem to support the hypothesis that the first two seals are actually depictions of a winged Lilith. Also, there is neither the presence of the combined nor dichotomized attributes/natures of the *Anzu*. Lions are depicted, without wings, as mere images engraved on a throne. As already stated, lions were a special animal in the cult of Ishtar (though the *Anzu* was not). Therefore, their presence as throne decorations is not surprising.

CHAPTER 3

LILITH IN THE NEO-SUMERIAN AND ISIN-LARSA PERIODS

In order to understand the cultural situation that led to a shift in portrayals of Lilith, it is first necessary to briefly discuss the historical events that took place between the Akkadian Period and 2000 BCE. Though this period in ancient Mesopotamian history spans little more than 150 years, it was a very eventful and turbulent time that spawned a number of paradigm shifts and cultural developments. Simply to discuss the depictions of Lilith dated from 2000 BCE, without first examining how the world that created them had changed, would not offer a complete analysis. What follows is only a brief summarization of the years between the end of the Akkadian Period (2154 BCE) and the Isin-Larsa/Old Babylonian Period (2004-1750 BCE).

By 2154 BCE, the Akkadian Empire had fallen, primarily as a result of natural disasters and constant conflicts with invading Gutti raiders from the central-eastern border. As a result, control of nearly all of Sumer's city-states briefly returned to the Sumerians for a span of roughly forty years. However, the land was still plagued by famine and hardship, caused largely by the continuation of widespread raids from the Gutti people, who are believed to

have been nomadic warrior “hill tribes from the east” (McIntosh 79). This period, which spanned from around 2154 to 2113 BCE, is referred to by scholars as either the “Sumerian Revival” or “Neo-Sumerian” Period.

The Gutí did manage to gain control of a handful of Mesopotamian city-states, but only for a short time. Though the available tablet records of the period claim they were under Gutí control for somewhere between 91 and 124 years, McIntosh believes this is likely a clerical error or perhaps includes years in which the Sumerians were still at war with but no longer occupied by the Gutí, and she asserts that “the period when they [the Gutí] ruled in Mesopotamia was probably relatively short, around thirty to seventy years, and they dominated only a part of the region—Lagash, for instance, seems to have been totally unaffected by them” (79, brackets added).

The Gutí (luckily for the Sumerians) appear to have been rather disorganized and lacked the ambition for conquest, and so did not venture into any of the outlying regions beyond central river valley region of Mesopotamia. As a result, many of the large Sumerian city-states that were located in the regions to the far south—Lagash, Kish, Ur, Uruk, and Eridu, for example—enjoyed a period of blissful return to their original Sumerian religious practices

and ways of life, now that they were free from the influences of their Akkadian Semite rulers. The most dominant (or, at least, ambitious) leader of this return to Sumerian culture was Gudea, who reigned in Lagash from 2141 BCE until 2122 BCE. McIntosh describes this brief but important period as follows:

These years saw a revival in the south. Dynasties were reestablished or reemerged, their ideology consciously recalling earlier days when each city was independent and existed as the estate of its tutelary deity. Best documented is the state of Lagash, with its capital at Girsu. Its pious king, Gudea, is well-known from the many...statues that he had dedicated in its temples, of which he rebuilt fifteen. On the temple of the city's god, Ningirsu, Gudea lavished foreign imported materials such as cedarwood, silver, and carnelian—an indication that trade still flourished after the fall of the Akkadian dynasty. (79)

By 2119 BCE, the Sumerians had almost completely unified as a people, rallying behind Utu-hegal, the warrior king of Uruk. Under the leadership of Utu-hegal, the Sumerians were able to expel the Gutis from the few city-states still held by them. By 2112 BCE, Utu-hegal's predecessor, Ur-Nammu, forged a new Sumerian empire

that is commonly referred to as the “Third Dynasty of Ur (Ur III)” (McIntosh 81). According to McIntosh, “soon after his accession as king of Uruk, Ur-Nammu defeated Lagash, taking the title ‘King of Sumer and Akkad,’ and within a few years he had gained full control of the south [Sumer]” (81, brackets added). So it was that the Sumerian Revival Period gave way to the Third Dynasty of Ur, and the land was unified and renamed by Ur-Nammu as Sumer-Akkad. Ur-Nammu died in battle against Gutí raiders around 2095 BCE, and was succeeded by his son Shulgi.

Despite the change in name, one element remaining from the Sumerian Revival was the expansion of Sumerian practices and the reconstruction of religious centers. The developments of writing, government, and commerce also flourished under the rule of the new Sumer-Akkad dynasty. McIntosh describes the Third Dynasty of Ur as follows:

The Ur III state was theological in principle, giving the king control over all of the temple estates, their revenues, produce, industries, and personnel. But it was also secular in its reach, controlling many aspects of citizens’ lives with a bureaucracy that probably became increasingly stifling. Shulgi promulgated one of the first law codes, laying down rules of conduct and punishments for crime: Apart from a few serious

crimes like murder, which were capital offenses, crimes generally attracted financial penalties, a more civilized approach than the many “eye-for-an-eye”-style punishments laid down in the more famous code of Hammurabi. (83)

Shulgi is also responsible for the creation of a new cosmology that asserted the divinity of his kingship, going so far as to declare himself a god-king. He is also likely responsible for the commission of many of the myth tablets, including those of Gilgamesh and Inanna. According to McIntosh, King Shulgi had a deep devotion to the Sumerian Inanna:

The relationship between the ruler and the gods became closer when Shulgi proclaimed himself a god. Temples to his cult were maintained in every city. The Ur III dynasty traced a family relationship to the First Dynasty of Uruk, whose deeds they glorified by committing to writing the traditional stories of Gilgamesh and his forebears. Uruk was the spiritual home of the dynasty, and Ur was their capital. Their close involvement with the goddess Inanna, patron of Uruk, was particularly emphasized by Shulgi, who performed the sacred marriage ritual with the goddess. (81)

From the above information it may be deduced with some certainty that the tale of Lilith's expulsion from the *Huluppu* was commissioned during Shulgi's reign. Perhaps as a result of the violent reaction the Lilith cult had spurned from the Akkadian Semites, Shulgi chose to find some way in which to explain, mythically at least, why her cult had been removed even after the fall of the Akkadian dynasty by portraying her as counter to civilization and order. Also of note is the fact that no pictorial representations of Lilith, neither in reliefs nor cylinder seals, have yet been found that can be directly attributed to the period of the Third Dynasty of Ur (from 2112 to 2004 BCE).

The ousted Gutti and Akkad-Semitic culture groups, the Ur III rulers discovered, were not going to be kept at bay for long. Environmental disasters had already pushed the Semitic pastoral tribes of the Amorites into Sumer-Akkad territories from somewhere in the northwest. Less than a century after the rise of the Ur III Dynasty, Amorite raids and caravan attacks had completely disrupted the routes of commerce and communication. The stability and prosperity of the Ur III dynasty had become heavily dependent upon the efficient transport of revenues and supplies. In 2004 BCE, according to lines 353 and 354 of the *Sumerian King*

List, as quoted by McIntosh, “The very foundation of Sumer was torn out” (84).

The Gutis, forced to return to the eastern regions, had by this point lived under the harsh treatment of Ur III for almost a century. They joined forces with the Semitic Elamite tribe, located in the marshy southeast regions near what is now the Persian Gulf (the tip of the ancient gulf coastline stood roughly 150 miles further inland than it is today), and together they attacked from the entire eastern border of Sumer-Akkad. Ur III now found itself under attack from both sides—by the Amorites from the northwest, the Gutis from the east, and the Elamites from the southeast. Plagued by famines, compromised lines of communication, and general civil unrest, the Sumerian rulers were once again overtaken by invading Semitic tribes. The Elamites, upon reaching Ur, sacked and completely destroyed this capital city of Sumer-Akkad. Any remnants of the Sumer-Akkad world (left behind by Ur III) that somehow survived the Elamite/Amorite/Guti invasion were now fragmented into a number of primary city-states—Isin, ruled by Ishbi-Erra from 2017-1985 BCE (and for another fifty years by his descendants); Larsa, ruled by Naplanum from 2025-2005 BCE (and for roughly sixty more years by his descendants); Assur, the last city-

state still ruled by the lineage of the Semitic “Old Assyrian Kings”; and Elam, home to the newly established Shimashki Dynasty and now the central city-state of the Semitic Elamite tribes (McIntosh 352).

The era of the Third Dynasty of Ur had ended, thus marking the beginning of a period referred to by some scholars as the “Isin-Larsa Period” (so-named for two of the most influential of the period’s primary city-states) and by others as the “Old Babylonian Period” (so-named because it was during this period that the new city-state of Babylon arose and would eventually come to rule nearly all of Mesopotamia). The western regions were now under the control of the Semitic Amorites. The Elamites ruled the majority of the southern and eastern regions. Most of the northern regions had united under the leadership of Shamshi-Adad, the king of the (Assyrian-Semitic) city-state of Assur. It is during the Isin-Larsa/Old-Babylonian Period that Lilith resurfaces in pictorial representations—in one Hematite cylinder seal and in the so-called terracotta “Burney Relief.” What follows are my own examinations of all three depictions, as well as my comparative analyses of their similarities and contrasts with those from the earlier Akkadian Period.

CHAPTER 3.1

CYLINDER SEAL V



FIGURE 6: LILITH IN HEMATITE

The above depiction in Figure 6 is based on an impression from a Hematite cylinder seal that has been dated as being from the Isin-Larsa period (between 2000 and 1600 BCE). Unfortunately, my continued attempts to uncover the exact details of the seal's origins have met with very little success. This seal, it appears, was allowed to enter into the hands of private collectors before the appropriate archeological data could be recorded—primarily the date and manner in which it was excavated, as well as the specific geographic location in which it was found (which was, unfortunately, an all too common occurrence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century). I was unable to locate any records that could offer further details than those offered by Williams-Forte in her *Inanna* annotations, which describes its archeological data as “Cylinder Seal. Isin-Larsa—Old Babylonian period, Mesopotamia. c. 2000-1600 B.C. Hematite” (Wolkstein 189). Unfortunately, to simply say that this seal comes

from “Mesopotamia” does not explain much, since the land was home to at least three specific and very unique culture groups during the Isin-Larsa/Old Babylonian Period—namely the Sumerian, Semitic (Akkadian, Assyrian, Elamite, and Amorite), and Guti peoples. Certain scholars, especially those from schools of feminist literature, have been quick to claim this as a depiction of Inanna/Ishtar and violently oppose any opinions to the contrary. Often, these scholars seem to approach such depictions from a standpoint that is based more on speculation than on what is known regarding the unique natures and attributes of Lilith and Inanna/Ishtar, as previously explained in Chapter 2 *Searching for Lilith in the Akkadian Period*, Section 2.1’s “Cylinder Seal 1.”

Williams-Forte, at least in her *Inanna* annotations, refuses to take a definite stance either way in regards to the identity of the central figure depicted in this cylinder seal, neither claiming that it is indeed Inanna/Ishtar nor acknowledging that this is an obvious depiction of Lilith. Her description of the cylinder seal, which she vaguely labels “Goddess from the Other World,” is as follows:

An enormous winged bird-footed goddess stands frontally with hands clasped. A double register scene appears alongside her. In the upper register a nude

goddess and bearded deity receive homage from human worshippers. A row of composite beings appear in the lower register. A fly, a hedgehog (?), and a human head appear above the creatures in the field.

This goddess with bird features has been identified with Lilith. She may represent the chthonic aspect of Inanna/Ishtar derived from her association with the demonic and frequently bird-like creatures and gods that inhabit the underworld. Here, the goddess's horned head appears alongside deities and their human worshippers while her bird-feet appear beside demonic creatures. The hierarchical arrangement of this scene may signify her dual nature, partially of "heaven and earth" and partially of the underworld. (Wolkstein 189)

Another pair of feminist literary scholars with similar tendencies to Williams-Forte is Frances Devlin-Glass and Lyn McCredden, co-authors of *Feminist Poetics of the Sacred*. In this work, Devlin-Glass and McCredden attempt to argue against the assertion of scholar Raphael Patai that this cylinder seal (as well as other works, such as the "Burney Relief," which will be discussed in the next section) is a depiction of Lilith. The authors adamantly

claim that identifying Lilith as a single entity for the word/name *lilitu* is actually a mistranslation, and claim that this is a word for a “group of demons” (Devlin-Glass 98). Strangely enough, they seem to argue their point in reverse order (chronologically speaking), claiming that scholars have mistakenly missed the point that this “Mesopotamian demon [*lilitu*] was the ancestor of Lilith, in much later Jewish myth, the vilified first wife of Adam” (98, brackets added). I was further disturbed to find that the authors make such a bold claim about what they see as a linguistic error in the translation of the word/name *lilitu*, yet fail to go into any details, linguistically speaking, as to how or why this translation should be considered incorrect (aside from the fact that doing so supports their hypothesis). Accepting the validity of the authors’ claim becomes even more problematic because of the fact that, in the languages of the period that had been adapted to available phonetic forms of writing, such as cuneiform and quadratic script, words that are plural almost never end in a vowel (and especially not with a *-U* or *-I*), but with either the consonant *-N* or *-M*, commonly preceded by the short vowel form of *I* or *U*. Therefore, a group of Lilith-associated demons, or even a group of demons that would be called “Liliths” (to which they claim the word/name *lilitu* refers), as already

discussed in Chapter 1, would have to be written as *lilin*, *lilim*, or *lilum* in order for the readers/scribes of the material, in the time that it was written, to understand that a group of entities was being implied.

However, even the plural *lilin*, which is a title for a specific group of demons, still does not provide an appropriate plural form for the word/name “Lilith.” Hurwitz widely supports this same assertion, and he cites the supporting opinion of Levi, from his article “Lilit et Lilin,” published in *Revue des Etudes Juives* in 1914, that there is only one appropriate wording for Lilith in the plural—“*Lilin est et ne peut etre qu’un pluriel masculin... Le pluriel of lilith serait liliatha... il en resulte, que les Juifs connaissaient a la fois des lilin et une lilith*” (73). Roughly translated from the original French, Levi settles the issue by explaining that the word *lilin* is not plural for Lilith, but instead refers to a grouping of related entities. Levi claims that the appropriate plural form of Lilith, were one to be used, would have to be *liliatha* (a form of the Lilith name that, by the way, has never been found in any ancient writings), since this would suggest multiple branches of a single and/or sovereign entity. Unfortunately, almost a century later, certain scholars continue to ignore

this (or, at least, they have refused to accept the validity of Levi's explanation).

Devlin-Glass and McCredden retreat into heavy speculation and ill-supported arguments in their discussion of this cylinder seal, the only supporting citation for which comes from the Williams-Forte annotations of Wolkstein's and Kramer's *Inanna* text, which have already been shown to be relatively flawed (or at least vague, speculative, and poorly supported) and which I have previously cited. Devlin-Glass's and McCredden's explanation as to why the central figure of this cylinder seal is Inanna/Ishtar, and not Lilith, is as follows:

The top register displays deities and human worshippers, the bottom "demonic creatures." Some scholars have identified this winged figure with Lilith and thus with the *lilitu*, although it seems clear that the figure is that of Inanna (Williams-Forte 1983:189; Wolkstein & Kramer 1983:51). Over time, Mesopotamian society probably separated Inanna's underworld aspects, originally integral to her being as goddess of life, from her other traits and turned them into a demon, the *lilitu*.

The seal also adds another piece to the puzzle of Inanna's nature. Not only does its two-register

arrangement attest to the goddess's duality, her head in the realm of deities and her feet in the underworld, but it also argues that it is she who makes the connection among the realms. Like the *Huluppu*-tree, she stands with feet, roots, in the underworld and head, branches, in the heavens, her body, the trunk with its *lilitu*, serving to join them. (98)

I find it odd that the authors of the above citation make the claim that, "it seems clear that the figure is that of Inanna" and follow it up with two citations that actually come from the same text. The citation from Williams-Forte is the very same description from the Wolkstein & Kramer text that was cited earlier in this chapter. Williams-Forte, as one can see from my previous citation of her description, makes no such statement that would be supportive of the authors' claim that this is clearly a depiction of Inanna, aside from mentioning that "She may represent the chthonic aspect of Inanna/Ishtar." When I looked up the authors' only other supporting citation, which also comes from Wolkstein's and Kramer's *Inanna* text (*Feminist Poetics of the Sacred*, 51), it turned out to be nothing more than a picture of the cylinder seal impression being discussed, and offered no additional evidence whatsoever to support their argument.

The authors then argue that the two-tiered arrangement symbolizes Inanna as a connector of worlds and that this can be further supported by her connection with the *huluppu*-tree myth. However, Lilith is just as related to the *huluppu*-tree myth as is Inanna, and it would appear that Devlin-Glass and McCredden have overlooked one very specific and contradictory detail from the very myth which they claim supports their argument—the *huluppu*-tree was Lilith's home, not Inanna's. In fact, Inanna was one of the main parties responsible for the tree's destruction. This would leave one to ask, "If Inanna is a connector of worlds because she is at one with the *huluppu*-tree, then why would she have had it destroyed?" I do not see any such *huluppu*-tree symbolism as that claimed by these authors, and I would further argue that any such symbolism would be far more supportive of the hypothesis that this is a depiction of Lilith, not Inanna. Lilith lived in the *huluppu*, while Inanna had it destroyed so that its wood could be exploited to make various tools, luxuries, and other material objects.

The presence of the winged lion, or *Anzu*, the natures of which are always present in Lilith's depictions, is altogether ignored in both the descriptions of Williams-Forte as well as Devlin-Glass and McCredden. If the

authors wish to use the *huluppu*-tree myth as support, then why do they ignore the fact that the *Anzu* is associated with Lilith, who is depicted in that myth as an enemy of Inanna? My own examination and analysis of this cylinder seal brought me to the conclusion that this depiction is more than likely of Semitic origin, possibly meant to be used as a charm against the formerly sovereign Sumerian (likely pre-Akkadian) goddess Lilith, who has now become fully demonized in the Akkad-Semitic view. The gods above may be present to show that they offer protection for humans against Lilith and her brood of demons, which dwell below. The use of this type of sympathetic magic, where talismans of fabricated depictions were believed to invoke divine influence over physical events, was not uncommon to the region or time period.

CHAPTER 3.2 THE BURNEY RELIEF

The so-called “Burney Relief” depicted in Figure 7 has in recent years become more commonly referred to as either the “Queen of the Night” plaque or “British Museum Plaque.” No matter the name, it stands as perhaps the most well-preserved and beautifully crafted among the surviving depictions of Lilith. In this relief, one may look upon Lilith as she was viewed, I believe, by the last remnants of the Sumerian (possibly even Ubaid) culture group who once worshipped her as a primary deity before being conquered by the Semitic tribes.



FIGURE 7: THE LILITH “BURNEY” RELIEF

Dating this piece is problematic at best, since it spent the majority of the last century in the private collection of Sydney Burney (after whom it was originally dubbed the “Burney” relief). Dating such pieces is important in order to understand the events that were taking place at the time

of its creation. Unfortunately, this relief stands as yet another piece of ancient Mesopotamian art that was not properly excavated and/or documented beforehand. As a result, little is known about its origins.

This is at least one situation in which I found myself in complete disagreement with Hurwitz, who offered me a false sense of hope with his claim that “There are no controversies as regards the age and origin of the relief. As has generally been accepted, it is of Sumerian origin and appears to date from the Isin-Larsa Period, i.e., some time around 1950 BC” (80). In my research, I found this was not the case (despite my most sincere hopes to the contrary). Controversies abound regarding both the dating of the piece and the identification of the figure it presents.

Claims regarding the date of the piece are wide ranging. A number of less than credible sources date the piece as far back as 2300 BCE, likely because this supports the popular opinion that the relief is a Sumerian depiction of Lilith (since the Sumerian culture group had been all but wiped out by 2004 BCE). Hurwitz, along with the majority of other scholars, believes it to date from between 2000 and 1950 BCE. More recently, however, the results of a previously unpublished thermoluminescence (TL) test, conducted in 1975 (during which time it was still in the

private possession of Sydney Burney) by the Department of Scientific Research at the British Museum of London, came to light in a 2005 article by Pauline Albenda that was published in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. These findings (which are now over thirty years old) “indicate the age for the plaque between 2000 and 3700 years” (Albenda 171). This would, as Albenda clarifies, give the plaque “a TL date between 1725 BC and 25 BC” (171). Even these results are not accepted as conclusive, however, since the exact manner in which the piece was maintained prior to and during its placement in Burney’s private collection is unknown.¹

After carefully considering the current ongoing controversies regarding the date of this piece, I decided it best not to further exacerbate the problem by adding to the pot yet another speculative hypothesis of my own. What should be discussed, however, is the way in which this relief has become yet another target of “Inanna/Ishtar

¹ TL dating, in extreme layman’s terms, works by examining the arrangement of crystalline particles as they occurred within a piece at the last moment it was heated “to 350 degrees Celsius,” and is therefore used almost exclusively for the dating of “ceramics, cooking hearths, incidentally fire-cracked rocks and deliberately fire treated rocks such as flint or chert” (Wenner 1). This has led some scholars, usually those who feel that this TL date contradicts their own findings, to claim that the piece might have been repainted and/or re-fired at a far later date than that of its original creation. While this may be possible, it is nonetheless no more than unsupported speculation.

Mania,” as I have come to call it. That this piece depicts Lilith, something to which even the most prominent Assyriologists agree, is a claim that has come under repeated attacks from scholars who continue to insist (even in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary) that this is somehow an “alternative” version of Inanna/Ishtar.

Elisabeth Douglas Van Buren was the first to make the claim, one all too common in her body of work, that the Burney Relief is a depiction of a “winged Ishtar” in the 1951 *Analecta Orientalia* XX (60). However, as I have already pointed out in earlier chapters, this conclusion does not add up when the written descriptions and myths of Inanna/Ishtar are compared with the figure in the relief. Primarily, Inanna/Ishtar is not known ever to have been described or depicted as having physical wings. Van Buren offers only one piece of evidence that supports her hypothesis that this is a winged Ishtar, which is from a 1914 liturgical text translation by Langdon, a copy of which I was unsuccessful in locating.

Of all Lilith depictions, the Burney Relief is especially interesting in that it encompasses all her animalistic glory by portraying her in an anthropomorphic form. In addition to her wings, the Lilith of the Burney Relief has the feet and talons of a predatory bird. This feature is another

strong piece of evidence that this is not a depiction of a winged Inanna/Ishtar, as Van Buren claims. I am in agreement with Hurwitz's claim "no Ishtar figures have so far been discovered in which the goddess has the feet of a bird with the talons of a bird of prey" (82).

Van Buren also claims that the presence of owls is evidence of Ishtar because of her relationship with the evening star. However, her claim is yet another which appears to be based purely on her personal speculation. Hurwitz concurs with this opinion, and in the following passage he points out that the presence of owls is not conclusive support that a figure is Inanna/Ishtar:

Owls are most definitely night creatures and would, therefore, be far more suitable for a goddess who carried out her deeds at night. Although Ishtar has connections with the evening star, she nevertheless has no links with owls as a consequence. And so, they would be far more suitable for Lilith, who is, of course, a goddess of the night. (82)

It should be noted that wings and talons are traits which can also be found in two other deities from the pantheon of the Old Babylonian Period—Pazuzu and Lamashtu. Some might pose the argument that, since these traits are not exclusive to Lilith, her identification in the Burney Relief

cannot be concluded with any certainty. When the Lilith of the Burney Relief is considered in her entirety, however, such an argument quickly falls apart.

The Burney Relief is certainly not meant to be a depiction of Pazuzu, as this wrathful Old Babylonian deity from the *Uttuke* class of gods is commonly depicted as male in gender. Hurwitz describes Pazuzu as follows:

Pazuzu is a half human, half animal creature, with a dog's head and a man's body. His feet are covered with birds' feathers and end in the talons of a bird of prey. However, he has to be ruled out because he appears as a male god in almost all the texts. (83)

McIntosh offers the following, more detailed, description of Pazuzu:

God of the winds. Despite his grotesque and forbidding appearance, he was benevolent, warding off harmful winds and driving away the demoness Lamashtu who threatened infants and unborn children. Amulets of Pazuzu were often worn by pregnant women. (338)

As far as the bird/*Anzu*'s traits and gender are concerned, it is true Lamashtu has a number of parallels in common with the Burney Lilith. McIntosh defines Lamashtu as "daughter of the god Anu, who attacked

unborn children and young babies and brought disease more generally” (333). In the case of Lamashtu, Hurwitz offers the most detailed definition of her traits, especially in relation to the Lilith of the Burney Relief:

The assumption that Lamashtu is the goddess on the Burney Relief cannot be upheld. The goddess on our relief has a human head which is not in the least terrifying but extremely attractive, even seductive. In contrast, it is said of Lamashtu that she has the “head of a lion” and a “terrible appearance.” At all events, the goddess of the Burney Relief must be a goddess of the darkness or the night, as is confirmed by the presence of the two owls. (84)

Hurwitz also cites Frederic Thureau-Dangin’s following translation of one magic incantation, or *Shiptu*, from an ancient amulet meant to provide the bearer protection against Lamashtu:

Dreadful is she, headstrong is she, she is a goddess, terrible is she. She is like a leopard (?), the daughter of Anu. Her feet are those of (the bird) Zu [*Anzu*], her hands are dirty, her face is that of a powerful lion. She rises out of the reedbed. Her hair is loose, her breasts are bare. Her hands are caked with flesh and blood. She forces an entry into the window, she

slides like a snake. She enters the house, she leaves
the house again. (43, brackets added)

CHAPTER 4

FROM CONFUSION TO INTEGRATION

When one considers all that has been discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 regarding Lilith's depictions in Ancient Mesopotamian art, a new question arises: What occurred between the Babylonian Period (1750-1600 BCE) and 600 BCE that gave rise to Lilith's beastly portrayal, by which she is now most commonly known, in Judaic folklore and Kabbalistic mysticism? The answer to such a question becomes most important because it may offer a new hypothesis for what is perhaps the ultimate enigma in the mythos of the Lilith timeline—how she came to be seen and portrayed as a terrible, bloodthirsty, infanticidal demon that despises both the God of the Jews, the world created by that god, and humankind as a whole. Finding the answer requires examination of at least three main elements, each of which is covered in the following sections:

1. The Sumer-Akkad language shift and the Babylonian culture shift
2. The resulting confusion in the Semitic view of Lilith with Lamashtu
3. The so-called “cult reforms” of King Josiah and the revival of Nehemiah, leading to the demotion and/or demonization of the “old gods” by the monotheistic Hebrews

CHAPTER 4.1

THE SUMER-AKKAD LANGUAGE & BABYLONIAN CULTURE SHIFTS

One is unlikely to find any two scholars who are in complete agreement on the correct identification, interpretation, and/or explanation of the Lilith figure as she existed in ancient Mesopotamia. Despite these numerous academic conflicts, all scholars (Assyriologists, anthropologists, linguists, historians, and mythologists alike) appear to be in complete agreement on at least one element in the research of this topic—the use of Sumerian cuneiform as a medium for transcribing the Akkadian language has caused a multitude of headaches in the interpretations of a great majority of the tablets that have been uncovered. To give a more comprehensive treatment of the issue would easily require an entire manuscript of its own (as well as a great many more years of intense study). This section is only offered as support for my argument regarding the causes that may have led to a confusion of two female, formerly separate, Sumerian deities—Lilith and Lamashtu. Sigmund Hurwitz refers to this as Lilith’s “Lamashtu Aspect,” a concept which will be discussed further later in the next section.

Sumerian, as a spoken language, ceased to exist shortly after 2000 BCE (along with the people who spoke it).

Sumerian was replaced by *Agade* (Akkadian), the dialect of the conquering Semites, as the primary spoken language of ancient Mesopotamia. These two languages (Sumerian and *Agade*), it is now well understood, are completely unrelated, with extreme differences in both form and pronunciation that make them utterly incompatible. Kramer, in *Sumerian Mythology*, explains the severity of their differences as follows:

Accadian and Sumerian are as divergent in vocabulary and structure as two languages can be, and the seeming correspondences in the ancient dictionaries and interlinears frequently proved very misleading, especially since not a few of the earlier decipherers, for one reason or another, tended to draw hasty and superficial conclusions. As a consequence so many errors crept into Sumerian grammar and vocabulary that when scholars were presented with some of our *unilingual* literary tablets, that is with the tablets inscribed in Sumerian only, the resulting efforts proved largely unproductive. Indeed in many cases the attempted translations were almost entirely untrustworthy and dangerously misleading. (22)

This incompatibility, of course, did not stop the Akkadian-speaking Semites from forcibly adapting

Sumerian cuneiform to their own language. However, expressing the *Agade*/Akkadian language was not the role for which cuneiform was originally designed, and one for which it proved ill-suited in a number of problematic ways. As McIntosh explains, “Sumerian is the language for which the first script was devised, and it persisted in literature and royal inscriptions long after Akkadian became the main language of Babylonia, although it [Sumerian] ceased to be spoken by the early second millennium” (277). Kramer supports this, and explains the spoken language of the Sumerians as follows:

Sumerian is neither a Semitic nor an Indo-European language. It belongs to the so-called agglutinative type of languages exemplified by Turkish, Hungarian, and Finnish. None of these languages, however, seems to have any closer affiliation to Sumerian, and the latter, therefore, as yet stands alone and unrelated to any known language living or dead. Its decipherment [...] would have been an impossible task, were it not for the fortunate fact [...] that the Semitic conquerors of Sumer not only adapted its script to their own Semitic tongue, but also retained it as their literary and religious language. (Kramer 21)

However, from both the cultural and contextual points of view, the use of cuneiform in writing the Akkadian language appears to have been as much of an obstacle for the ancient Mesopotamian scribes as it has for modern scholars attempting to interpret the works that survived them. Problems and conflicts arose when it came to the issues of numerical agreement, tense, and the meaning of certain nouns or phrases. Christopher Walker, Deputy Keeper in the Department of Ancient Near East in the British Museum, in his work *Cuneiform*, offers the following example of just one of the many problems (in this case, of consistent vocabulary) encountered by ancient scribes:

No single cuneiform sign could carry the meaning of an Akkadian word, and the practical solution was to write words out phonetically. To a large extent this happened, but additionally Akkadian-speaking scribes used Sumerian signs to express Akkadian terms, e.g. Sumerian *udu-mes* [was used] for Akkadian *imмерu*, ‘sheep,’ or mixed the two, e.g. Sumerian [word] *gal* = ‘great,’ but *gal-u* = Akkadian *rabu*, ‘great.’ (For clarity Assyriologists write Sumerian in normal script or capitals and Akkadian in Italics). (16, brackets added)

Cuneiform would eventually be replaced by more appropriately designed written forms such as Assyrian quadratic script and Aramaic. However, it seems to have continued to be used as a kind of “language of the educated,” not dissimilar from the academic and religious usages of both Latin and Classical Greek that continued into recent centuries, long after their uses as commonly spoken languages had ceased. Kramer explains how the use of Sumerian cuneiform managed to survive its spoken form, in academic and religious arenas, as follows:

The scribal schools in Babylon and Assyria made the study of Sumerian their basic discipline. They therefore compiled what may be described as *bilingual* syllabaries or dictionaries in which the Sumerian words or phrases were translated into their own language, Accadian. In addition, they also drew up *interlinears* of the Sumerian literary compositions in which each Sumerian line is followed by its Accadian translation. (21)

In fact, cuneiform continued to be used, though in a much diminished degree, even beyond the dawn of the Hellenistic Age. This would be the last age of cuneiform, however, and one in which its use was reduced to a kind of shorthand script. Once it had been replaced with more

convenient and appropriate media, the use of cuneiform would never again be revived; as Walker explains:

From the time of Alexander the Great onwards the use of cuneiform is increasingly restricted, being superseded by Aramaic; a few legal and literary texts were still written in cuneiform as late as 40 BC, and the last astronomical text is datable to 75 AD. The latest texts have a very cursive script and can be extremely difficult to read. (Walker 17-18)

The aforementioned problems caused by the Sumer-Akkad linguistic shift would be only further exacerbated when followed by a very sudden and violent culture shift. By 1750 BCE, one powerful city-state reigned supreme in Mesopotamia—Babylon. The Babylonian warrior-king, Hammurabi, succeeded in conquering the most desirable and prosperous territories along the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers. His empire stretched from the northern city of Mari (formerly the capital city-state of the Assur, which Hammurabi quickly seized upon the death of their ruler Shamshi Adad in 1792) to the southern city of Ur (which at that time was located near the gulf coastline). The land that had for so long been called Sumer-Akkad by its inhabitants now ceased to be, replaced by the new empire of Babylonia.

The land called Sumer was now but a memory, the Akkadian territories had been reduced to a mere shadow of their once vast and powerful empire, and nearly all of the remaining Semitic tribes either served or (at the very least) paid tribute and/or allegiance to the will of Hammurabi. Those who did not, namely the Semitic tribes of Judah, were exiled to the west. Semitic control of Mesopotamia was now absolute, and would continue as such for close to a thousand years. As a result, a number of modifications (or, perhaps, errors) were inflicted upon pre-existing Sumerian cosmology during this period. It is during this period of time that I believe the “rape of Lilith,” as I have come to call it, truly began to take shape—namely with her confusion and integration with Lamashtu.

CHAPTER 4.2

THE LAMASHTU CONFUSION

In the beginning, Lamashtu and Lilith were completely separate female deities in the Sumerian pantheon. The powerful and sovereign mother goddess was called *Lil* in the Sumerian language, and later became Lilith in the Akkadian dialect. “During the third millennium BC in Sumer, she was at first *Lil* [...]. Among the Semites of Mesopotamia, she was *Lilith*” (Koltuv iii). Lamashtu at first went by three names—*Lamassu* and *Lama* in Agade/Akkadian and *Kal* in Sumerian—each of which later found their ways into other languages and culture groups. *Lamassu* became Lamashtu in the pantheon of the Babylonians, *Lama* was eventually transformed into the vampiric figure Lamia in Greek (who was originally a Queen in Persia, according to myth), and some believe that the myths of *Kal* found their way into those of the Hindus (it is now evident that trade existed between India and Mesopotamia from at least as far back as the reign of Gudea, around 2140 BCE) and was transformed into the frightening goddess Kali (who is nearly identical to Lamashtu in role, if not in physical appearance).

In the Sumerian culture group, neither Lilith nor Lamashtu were thought of as demons. While the Sumerian Lamashtu, as a killer of infants and a bringer of plague,

would definitely fit the modern definition of the word demon, she could not have been so labeled. In fact, such a label would have been quite impossible at that time, since the concept of “demons” did not exist in the ancient Sumerian mind. McIntosh explains this view as follows:

In early times, misfortune was seen as the hostile action of lesser supernatural beings, the embodiment of harmful and dangerous forces, greater in power than people but inferior to the gods. These are commonly referred to as “demons,” although the Mesopotamians themselves had no such term. Acting without provocation, these malevolent spirits were deemed responsible for illness, untimely death, and other disasters and ill fortune. (216)

However, as the language of Mesopotamia shifted from Sumerian to *Agade/Akkadian*, it is feasible that the resulting problems caused by the continued use of cuneiform led first to a confusion of Lilith with Lamashtu (and the reverse), and later to an integration of the two into a single cult group. In fact, early twentieth century scholars long believed that the two were one and the same, often basing such conclusions on the already known uses of the names in Semitic/Judaic lore. As the Sumerian culture group had already disappeared, this mistake went unnoticed

and/or unchallenged even in the ancient world, until it became commonplace and, as Koltuv explains, “By the eighth century BC in Syria, Lilith, the succubus, was joined to what had originally been a quite distinct demonic figure of the child killing witch Lamashtu” (iii).

Lamashtu, likely due to her original malevolent role as the Sumerian *Lamassu*, is often labeled in modern texts with such terms as “demoness,” “she-demon,” or “succubus,” terms the use of which I have already shown to be misnomers. Most available descriptions of Lamashtu have the same general theme, labeling her as an “evil she-demon, daughter of the god Anu, who attacked unborn children and young babies and brought disease more generally” (McIntosh 333). The fact that her father is a high-ranking sky god only further supports the claim that she was never a demon in any of the ancient Mesopotamian pantheons before the reign of the Jewish king Josiah. Lilith’s typical description in Jewish lore, as a long haired, demonic seductress of any man foolish enough to sleep alone, who steals the breath of infants and torments pregnant women, is nearly identical. In fact, if one were to remove the mention of Anu from McIntosh’s above Lamashtu definition, it would be easy to assume that she is discussing Lilith.

Between 2000 BCE and 700 BCE, Lilith and Lamashtu gradually came to be thought of as one and the same in the view of the Semitic culture groups, especially those who adhered to the YHVH cult. The most significant steps in the rape of Lilith took place during this time. As already demonstrated, she was torn down from her place as a Sumerian fertility or mother goddess, shown as defeated and/or exiled in the pictorial depictions of the conquering Akkadians. When new written cosmologies were created around 2000 BCE, she suffered further degradation, being shown as the destructive and dark enemy of progress/civilization, defeated and banished by the frightening axe of the demigod warrior-hero Gilgamesh/*Bilgarmes* in the *Huluppu*-Tree myth. During the Old Babylonian period, she was stripped completely of her status as a goddess (whether benevolent or malevolent), integrated with her servant *ardat lili*, reshaped to fit the role that had formerly been exclusive to Lamashtu, and thereby was reduced to nothing more than a supernatural seductress and a baby-killing demon, a despicable form from which she would never escape.

By the eighth century BCE, I believe that the few remaining cults of both Lilith and Lamashtu had also become integrated, either by the mistaken belief that they

were the same or simply in order to preserve their numbers, and found themselves continually pushed further away from the major population centers along the Tigris-Euphrates River Valley. The Lilith/Lamashtu cult sects that were pushed westward would have eventually found themselves at the Mediterranean coast, as can be seen from the map below. Some likely came into contact with the seafaring Phoenician culture group that had settled in the central coastal regions of Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos (see Figure 9). As a result of violent religious persecution, it is reasonable to assume that a good number of adherents of the Lilith/Lamashtu cult traveled out of Mesopotamia by way of the Mediterranean Sea. Evidence of this can be found in two primary forms. First would be the statues of the so-called “Minoan snake goddess” from the island of Crete, shown in Figure 10.

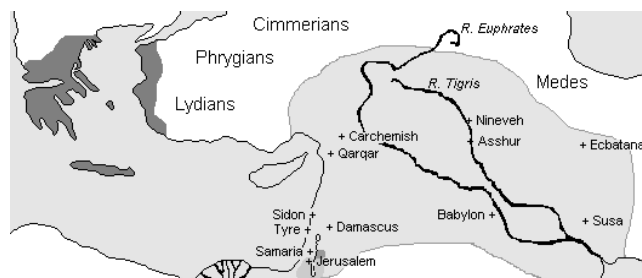


FIGURE 8: MAP OF MESOPOTAMIA
EIGHTH CENTURY BCE

If I am indeed correct in my assertions that the female entities depicted in Figures 3 and 4 are Lilith, then the similarity is undeniable when the entity in Figure 10 is compared to those cylinder seals. Her stance is nearly identical, including the presence of snakes in her hands, only she is now depicted in a Minoan mode of dress. I do not presume to claim that this figure is Lilith, of course. However, I would assert that an alternative version of her found its way to the island of Crete, likely by the seafaring members of her cult who traveled across the Mediterranean with the Phoenicians. They quite easily could have made their way to the island of Cyprus and perhaps beyond, I would say at least as far as Minoan Crete.



FIGURE 9: MINOAN SNAKE GODDESS OF CRETE

The question must now be raised as to why the members of a Lilith/Lamashtu cult would be forced to go so far as to leave their homeland for an unknown world

across the sea? I believe that the answer may be found in one very simple statement, that “in the Jewish consciousness above all, Lamashtu and Lilith are almost identical” (Hurwitz 35). Upon reaching the Mediterranean coast, the Lilith/Lamashtu cult would also have, in the comparatively modest southern coastal region of Judah, encountered another culture group aside from the Phoenicians—the ancient Jews.

As will be discussed in the next section, the ancient Jews were a culture group far different from the Semitic tribes from the Tigris-Euphrates regions. The ancient Judaic culture group would also prove to be, as the Lilith/Lamashtu cults would soon discover, far more violently opposed to any religious beliefs not their own.

CHAPTER 4.3

THE “CULT REFORMS” OF JOSIAH & YHVH REVIVAL OF NEHEMIAH

King Josiah, the first of the Old Testament Jewish kings whose existence can be historically verified with any degree of certainty, instituted a number of so-called “cult reforms” during his reign over the empire of Judah. The land of Judah was then located on the southern half of the eastern Mediterranean coast, now known as Israel. Hurwitz explains Josiah’s impact on the cults of the period as follows:

In the course of the Deuteronomic *cult reform* under King Josiah, around 600 BCE at the latest, all cults of foreign gods and demons were definitively eliminated. Perhaps this formed the point of departure for that specific development which finally led to the shaping of an emphatically patriarchal and spiritual image of God which has continued in the Talmudic-Rabbinic Judaism. On the other hand, it also brought about the *demythologization* of Judaism, of which the imagelessness of the YHWH cult is but one example. (224)

There are those in the Jewish rabbinical tradition who would still argue that the cults destroyed during Josiah’s reforms (though perhaps “persecution” would be a more

appropriate term, considering the violence of Josiah's actions) were solely those from "foreign" influences, meaning that these cults (particularly those worshipping goddess figures) were not Hebraic. Of course, the fact that they were at least part of the ancient Semitic culture group must be conceded. Renowned anthropologist Raphael Patai opposes this view that such cults were "foreign" to the land of Judah, and claims that the Hebrews loyally adhered to a number of goddess cults prior to the reign of Josiah. As Patai explains in *The Hebrew Goddess*:

There can be no doubt that the goddess to whom the Hebrews clung with such tenacity down to the days of Josiah, and to whom they returned with such remorse following the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple was, whatever the prophets had to say about her, no foreign seductress, but a Hebrew goddess, the best divine mother the people had had to that time. (32)

Josiah's violent campaign against all facets of the non-YHWH cults is recorded in great detail in the book of 2 *Kings* in the Old Testament. I believe that, during this time, the sects of the Lilith/Lamashtu cult (and likely others) fled north along the coast from the lands of Judah and, though only briefly, found safety among the Phoenicians (and, in the end, the only available means of escaping their

persecution). Josiah's campaign, it appears, did not stay contained within the borders of Judah for long, as is written in the following excerpt from *2 Kings 23:13-14*:

The king also desecrated the high places that were east of Jerusalem on the south of the Hill of Corruption—the ones Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the vile goddess of the Sidonians [the Phoenicians], for Chemosh the vile god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the people of Ammon. Josiah smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles and covered the sites with human bones. (291, brackets added)

The following additional summary of Josiah's iconoclastic campaign comes from *2 Chronicles 34:3-7*:

In his twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of high places, Asherah poles, carved idols and cast images. [...] he cut to pieces the incense altars that were above them, and smashed the Asherah poles, the idols and the images. These he broke to pieces and scattered over the graves the ashes of those who had sacrificed to them. He burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and so he purged Judah and Jerusalem. In the towns of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, as far as Naphtali, and in the ruins around

them, he tore down the altars ... and crushed the idols to powder and cut to pieces all the incense altars throughout Israel. Then he went back to Jerusalem. (344)

According to Patai, despite such violent persecution, worship by the Semitic goddess cults did not end until the days of the Jewish prophet Nehemiah during the reign of Artaxerxes I (for whom Nehemiah worked as a wine bearer). During this period, Lilith, along with a great many of Mesopotamia's "old gods," was transformed into a demonic succubus. The *Agade/Akkadian* word *Shedu*, a lower class of gods, was transformed into the Hebraic term *Shed*, or *Shedim* in plural form, which now became a specific category in ancient Hebrew demonology, with Lilith now the most horrible female among them. Hurwitz explains that, "The Hebrew word *Shed* can almost certainly be traced back to the Akkadian word *Shedu*, which for its part corresponds to the Sumerian word *Aladu*" (33).

This demonic version of Lilith, whether as a born succubus or as the exiled and damned first woman of Eden, would prove to be the only one to survive the fires of Josiah's iconoclastic campaign and the later revival of the YHVH cult by the Jewish prophet Nehemiah. This demonized form of Lilith remains as almost the sole

version of her post-ancient depictions. It is this Lilith, as well, that continues to exist in Jewish folklore (though not in the religious canon) to this day.

CHAPTER 5

LILITH AS THE FIRST WOMAN

The *midrash* of Ben Sira's so-called *Alphabet* text (also referred to as the *Alpha Beta* manuscript), in which the whole of his version of the Lilith story exists, has yet to be fully translated into English. Of course, a number of texts claim to quote, summarize, and/or paraphrase from the work, but sadly it would appear that the authors are usually either duplicating what they have heard/read elsewhere, quoting the summaries of others, and/or simply committing blatant plagiarism. I have learned that an English translation is currently underway, but that it will be released as a private work and not as public domain. While certain, usually insignificant details differ from one summary of the *Ben Sira* Lilith story to the next, the basic story remains the same.

Lilith is formed from the earth in the same manner as Adam, and problems seem to arise between the two inhabitants of Eden almost immediately. When Adam demands that Lilith lay beneath him during sex, she refuses to obey him. Adam then attempts to force himself upon Lilith, but she escapes by crying out the ineffable name, or "Holy Name," of God, allowing her to be rescued from Adam's violent attempt at rape by the hand of

YHVH/Elohim (Kvam 204). However, YHVH/Elohim insists that she return to Eden and be subservient to Adam. In the presence of the almighty, she refuses to obey even the commands of God. For her rebellious disobedience, YHVH/Elohim casts Lilith from his presence, exiles her to the terrible wastelands beyond the paradise of Eden, and (in most versions) curses her with the delivery of 100 stillborn offspring each day.

In order that Lilith might be allowed a chance to repent of her “crimes,” YHVH/Elohim sends three angels—*Sanvi*, *Sansanvi*, and *Semangelaf*—to offer her the opportunity to return to Eden, accept the will of YHVH/Elohim, and obey the commands of Adam. She refuses the offers of all three angels and, as if in retribution for YHVH/Elohim’s curse, Lilith proclaims that she will become the enemy of mothers, wives, pregnant women, and children (both born and unborn). In order to counter this, and perhaps offer humans at least some form of protection against her, the final angel (or, in some versions, all three angels collectively) places upon Lilith the condition that she may not harm any man, woman, or child who wears an amulet inscribed with their names along with Adam’s (and, according to some versions, Eve’s name as well), telling her to stay away. She is also barred from entering any

room, structure, or dwelling that is marked with similar inscriptions. This exchange of curses between Lilith and the angels, acting as emissaries of YHVH/Elohim's will, appears to transform Lilith into a demon.²

Lilith begins to wander (most stories claim to the east), and her curse of one-hundred stillbirths a day seems at least suggested to be of such a design that it will continue to follow her until she is able to reach the Red Sea. Kristen E. Kvam, in her citation of Ben Sira's Lilith tale in *Eve and Adam*, claims that the angels catch up to Lilith as she reaches or dwells in or near the Red Sea, and she narrates this odd negotiation of curses/rules between Lilith and the three angels in the following excerpt:

God immediately sent three angels and told them:
 "Go and fetch Lilith; if she agrees to come, bring her,
 and if she does not, bring her by force." The three
 angels went ... and caught up with her in the [Red]
 Sea, in the place where the Egyptians were destined

² I composed this summary of Ben Sira's tale by integrating three sources—Kvam, Leach, and Hurwitz. After reading several differing versions, I concluded this was the only way to offer a fairly complete version of the story. For example, Leach's version claims the angels come individually to Lilith while on her way to the Sea, while Kvam claims that they catch up with her collectively at the Sea. Hurwitz neither provides the names of the three angels nor a narration of their negotiation of curses/rules with Lilith. Likewise, Kvam's citation of Ben Sira's text makes no mention Lilith being cursed with 100 stillbirths a day, while it is included in both Leach's and Hurwitz's citations.

to die. They seized her and told her: “If you agree to come with us, come, and if not, we shall drown you in the sea.” She answered: “Darlings, I know myself that God created me only to afflict babies with fatal disease when they are eight days old; I shall have permission to harm them from their birth to the eighth day and no longer, when it is a male baby; but when it is a female baby, I shall have permission for twelve days.” The angels would not leave her alone, until she swore by God’s name that wherever she would see them or their names in an amulet, she would not possess the baby. They then left her immediately. (204)

The above excerpt is of great importance, and through close analysis I have discovered that it closely connects Ben Sira’s tale to Lilith’s ancient role in the *Huluppu*-Tree myth. A number of specific pieces of information are to be derived from the above citation, primarily regarding the nature and abilities of Lilith. If I am to assume that Kvam’s citation is for the most part accurate (as I have already stated, no English translation of the text currently exists), then I believe that this myth stands as a metaphor for the Jewish treatment of the goddess figure (for example, in the cult reforms of Josiah), just as I believe the *Huluppu*-

Tree to be a mythic telling of the Lilith cult's expulsion by the Akkadian Semites.

Ben Sira's Eden version of Lilith, much like her *Huluppu*-Tree predecessor, flies away in order to escape the violent brute force of a male entity. In this myth, however, she is fleeing Adam's attempts at forced sexual dominance instead of Gilgamesh's axe, or so it would seem at first glance. In every citation of this myth, the wording regarding Lilith's escape remains the same, claiming she "flew into the air and fled" (Kvam 204). This is significant for two main reasons: first because this could certainly be viewed as a reference to Lilith's pre-Judaic form as a winged goddess; second, because Adam seems completely powerless to stop or even pursue her. The first point is obvious, and requires no further examination. The second point regarding Adam begs further examination.

How is it that Lilith knows how to "utter the Holy Name," while Adam appears unable to do the same? The answer to this question is to be found by looking for the one common element of both the *Huluppu*-Tree and *Genesis* myths—a Tree. I find it odd that something as crucial to the Eden myths as a Tree would not be mentioned in Ben Sira's tale. In find it even odder that none

of the English summarizations of this tale I consulted mention the Eden Tree either.

The trees of Eden, such as the infamous “Tree of Knowledge,” give those who eat of their fruits certain abilities and/or understandings. It may certainly be speculated that Lilith, perhaps in some earlier but lost version of the Eden myth (I believe Ben Sira’s story is likely his own recollection of an older version kept alive through oral tradition), was charged with naming and tending the trees of Eden, just as Adam names and organizes the beasts of the field in the existing *Genesis* myth. After all, this paradise is referred to as the “Garden of Eden,” not the “Forest of Eden.”

If Eden is a garden, then it would seem to leave the question “Who is its gardener?” If this gardener was indeed Lilith, as I seek to claim, then it may be deduced that she would have eaten fruits that Adam had not. If Lilith’s power and knowledge stems from her eating of the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, then this would explain why, after creating Eve, YHVH strictly forbids both she and Adam from doing so. This would also certainly explain how it is that Lilith has the power to fly, and how she not only knows but is able to recite the secret and unutterable Holy Name of God—all of these are things Adam seems

incapable of doing, as evidenced by his inability to stop her. In fact, Adam seems totally perplexed by the power(s) of Lilith.

Though created in identical fashion, I would not say Lilith and Adam are created equal. If anything, Lilith would appear to be (in knowledge and ability, at least) superior to Adam. In fact, Adam's only avenue for regaining her is to complain to YHVH/Elohim, crying out like a disappointed child, "Master of the universe, see how the woman you gave me has already fled away" (Kvam 204). This statement further proves my point. Adam, it would seem, is informing God of his wayward wife's flight from Eden, something of which (one would assume) God would be well aware since Lilith called out his name in order to flee. With this plea, Adam shows himself to be ignorant to the truth behind Lilith's actions, aside from the fact that she has flown away.

Next should be addressed Lilith's statement to the angels in the previous citation—"I know myself that God created me only to afflict babies with fatal disease." How does she know this? Also, since her statement proves to be true, why don't the angels know it? Better yet, why would God send them if it were true that He created her for this purpose? I found the answers to such questions by

examining the two names by which the God of *Genesis* is addressed—Elohim and YHVH.

In the rabbinical Talmudic tradition, there exists a multitude of *Midrash* explanations about why, in *Genesis*, the one God is referred to by two names. Most of the canonical explanations seek to reconcile this by claiming that Elohim, the masculine plural form of *El*, the proper noun for “God,” is meant to represent the multiple facets of God that were used during creation—for example, there is first the concept of an omnipresent/“unknowable” God, which cannot be named; next there is YHVH, often called “God the Father,” and often viewed as that facet which conveys and/or carries out the Will of God; and there is the concept of God as *Adonai*, often translated as “Lord” or “King.” However, the Talmudic tradition does not consider these different facets as separate entities or as evidence of early Hebrew polytheism (as many scholars claim). A Jewish acquaintance of mine explained to me the commonly accepted view of the multiple/plural *Genesis* names in the following manner: Neither the word *Elohim* nor its use to refer to YHVH/God can be considered sovereign or individual entities, and are also not considered (in Judaism) evidence of multiple Gods—just as the pieces of one engine cannot become multiple engines, and cannot

be seen as evidence of more than one engine. With all respect to my colleague, as well as to Jewish beliefs, from my stance as a mythologist I believe this is an elaborate attempt to reconcile what later came to be seen as an ancient mistake (Lilith's deletion from the original story, without proper editing after).

I hold firm to the common mythologist view that the use of these two names in *Genesis* illustrates how the rise of Jewish monotheism sought to integrate the existing views/manifestations of the divine. In this case, the monotheistic YHVH cult sought to integrate two preexisting sky gods—the Thunder/Storm God *Yahweh* and the Sun God *El*. In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell supports this view, explaining that the “synthesis of sun-god and storm-god is familiar. We know it through the Hebrew mythology of *Yahweh*, in whom the traits of two gods are united (*Yahweh*, a storm-god, and *El*, a solar)” (146). Robert Graves, in *The White Goddess*, further supports the idea that integrating a preexisting polytheistic tradition led to the use of the plural *Elohim* (341). He offers the following statement that *El*, though perhaps in a different form, was also associated with the Sacred Oak by some Semitic tribes: “*El* is both the common word for ‘god’ in Syria and a proper name for

theoak-god El” (341). Therefore, one might conclude that the use of Elohim, the plural of *El*, was originally meant to refer to an integration of the sun-god with the oak-god. Such an occurrence is not unheard of, as already stated by Campbell, and is somewhat similar to the use of the integrated name Zeus-Ammon during the time of Alexander the Great (functionally speaking, of course, though not linguistically).

If the view is assumed that Elohim represents an integrated solar/oak god, and that Yahweh represents a thunder/storm god, then it becomes even clearer that Ben Sira’s tale is likely a recollection of an original Hebrew creation myth that was later changed when the rabbinical canon was compiled. This more than likely would have transpired during the reign of King Josiah, whom some historians suspect may have commissioned the revision and/or composition of the *Torah*, since it was during his reign that these “lost books” are claimed to have been found by one of his chief temple advisors/priests, the story of which may be found in the book of *2 Kings*, chapters 23 and 24. This view answers the questions that arise from Lilith’s statement that she knows the purpose of her creation while the angels do not. The God who sent the

three angels, simply speaking, is not the same God who created her.

As stated earlier, I am of the belief that the original Jewish creation myth had Lilith in the role of naming and tending the plants, just as Adam named and organized the animals. I also believe that the original myth had Adam and Lilith being created separately and by two respective deities. That they were created by Elohim, then, continues to be true, though it would be safe to assume that Adam was created by the sun-god form of *El* and Lilith by the oak-god *El*. However, this does not explain the separate use of the name YHVH.

In the original Jewish creation myth, I have come to believe that Yahweh, a god of thunder and storm, represents the common ground between plants and animals—both depend on the waters of Yahweh in order to survive. For this reason, Yahweh acts as a divine referee between them. However, it would appear that the thunder deity is not aware of his counterpart's true intentions for creating Lilith. This would explain why Yahweh sent angels to retrieve her, as well as why the three angels accept what she says as true. None of them knew what Lilith did. In this sense, in that she possesses knowledge above Yahweh and his angels, Lilith could even be seen as

superior to them (which may have had much to do with why she was removed). Even further supporting this idea is the fact that the three angels threaten Lilith with death by drowning, but are stopped by her words and unable to follow through. In addition, Yahweh issues the angels a very specific command, sending them on a mission to return with Lilith by force if necessary. This is one mission they miserably fail at carrying out. This is probably because in the original myth these gods were considered equal, and neither of them could trump the will or proclamations of another.

After Lilith's encounter with the three angels, she completes her demonic transformation by plunging into the watery depths of the Red Sea. According to Jewish folklore (but probably not in Ben Sira's *Alphabet*, however), it is in the dark depths of the Sea that she becomes the consort or wife of the demon lord Samael in his form as the "Slant Serpent," called Leviathon, to which she becomes the feminine counterpart Leviathan. Their union leads to the birth of countless demon offspring, called the *lilim*. Most references to this stage in Lilith's lore come from such mystic texts as the Kabbalistic *Zohar*, or "Book of Splendor." Raphael Patai, in his book *Gates to the Old*

City, explains the demonic union of the Leviathans as follows:

And we found it written that the wicked Samael and the evil Lilith have the likeness of a couple which, with the intermediacy of a groomsman the Blind Dragon, receives an emanation of evil and insolence, flowing from one to the other. And about this mystery it is written 'And on that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword will punish Leviathon the Slant Serpent, and he will slay the Dragon that is in the sea' (Isa. 27:1). Leviathan is the connection and coupling between the two who have the likeness of serpents. Therefore it is doubled: the Slant Serpent corresponding to Samael, and the Tortuous Serpent corresponding to Lilith. (465)

Samael is a very high ranking member of Jewish demonology, a Demon King, and is credited in Jewish lore as the serpent spoken of in *Genesis*. He, most sources agree, is the evil serpent that deceived Eve into eating the forbidden fruit. As a result of her close relationship with Samael, some scholars, such as Koltuv, have gone so far as to claim that Lilith is the serpent of Eden. In fact, there would seem to be an equal amount of support for both claims. However, if I am to continue to hold that my above

assertions are true, then I must take the position that Lilith, not Samael, was the Serpent of Eden in the original version of the myth. This would explain why the serpent knows so much about the forbidden fruit. In addition, one might view this as an act of revenge upon Adam for both denying her independence/equality as well as his role in her expulsion from paradise.

Lilith is also said to be the consort of another high ranking demon, also a Demon King, named Ashmodai. It would appear that her nature was at some point torn into two separate entities by her possessive demon lovers, Samael and Ashmodai. This begins Lilith's initial dichotomization, which leads to her being further fragmented into what eventually becomes an obvious form of the triple-goddess—Grandmother Lilith, Lilith the Maiden, and Lilith the Demon Queen/Mother. In the following excerpt, Koltuv paraphrases one of Patai's explanations of Lilith's fragmentation:

The ancient ones have written that there are two Liliths, one little and one great. The great one, Grandmother Lilith, is the spouse of Samael, King of the Demons, and she is a Woman of Harlotry. The little one, Lilith the Maiden, is the spouse of Ashmodai, also a King of the Demons. There is great

jealousy between Samael, the greatest prince of all, and Ashmodai over Lilith. There is strife and warfare also between Lilith the Daughter (or Maiden) and Grandmother Lilith. On the Day of Atonement, Lilith and the four hundred and twenty legions of demons she controls go forth into the deserts. They march, and she screeches the Kabbalists say, for she is the princess of screeching, and there are no good intentions in her. She wishes only to arouse wars and [...] destruction. She is nothing but a fornication in the world. (34)

Lilith the Maiden is the version found in Ben Sira's Eden story, which explains why she is paired with Samael. The Grandmother Lilith would appear to be a crone-like seductress, as can be seen from her title as a "Woman of Harlotry." However, both Grandmother and Maiden Lilith are paired with a respective Demon King. These forms are not spoken of as active on the Day of Atonement. It is the last Lilith, the Demon Queen/Mother, who leads from the front of her terrible brood, emerging from the desert wasteland, ready to destroy that which she hates most of all—Creation.

Considering the horrific depictions of Lilith in available Judaic folklore, perhaps her most recent form should be no

surprise. As has occurred many times before, modern pop culture has given her a new face (along with a new set of sharp fangs), along with a brand new mythos, as the damned, wrathful matriarch of vampires. In her new fanged form, the Vampire Lilith is portrayed as the tutor of Cain as he wandered Nod, a powerful and ancient creature, and a harbinger of chaos who hates God, order, and civilization above all things.

CHAPTER 6

LILITH'S VAMPIRIC REBIRTH

Lilith survives in the literature and pop culture of today in two primary manifestations—as an icon of gender equality and as the pseudo-mythical matriarch of vampires. The former appears to be based almost solely on the Lilith myth as found in the *Alphabet of Ben Sira* text. This version of Lilith has become a figure of honor among many recent facets of the Women's Movement. In the 1990s, her myths even inspired a concert series made up exclusively of female performers, called the “Lilith Fair.” There have even been very recent attempts to revive the concert series, according to an article by M. Ayers, published in *Billboard* Magazine on September 27th 2008. Referred to as “Lilith 2.0,” the eleven-show series, “10 of which were sell-outs,” grossed roughly \$198,000 (9).

The latter version of the modern Lilith, as the pseudo-mythical matriarch of vampires, is far more fantastic and interesting than her modern feminist counterpart. What makes this “Vampire Lilith” so noteworthy is that her story offers a unique situation in the modern treatment of mythological analyses in pop culture. The story of the vampiric Lilith is very much a mosaic, integrating nearly all of her known myths while using elements of fantasy and vampiric lore to fill in the blanks of the long and fairly

fragmented Lilith timeline. From her portrayals in Sumerian art to Babylonian myth, from her tales in the *Alphabet of Ben Sira* to her references in the *Zohar*, even from the obscure biblical references to her as a “screech owl” to the Judaic folklore about her that still exists—all are held together as bricks, the mortar being the new vampiric elements inserted by modern authors. However, aside from Lilith’s relationship with night/darkness, there is little evidence to suggest that Lilith should have come to be so closely associated with vampires in modern times. Indeed, Lilith’s attributes definitely bear certain parallels with those of vampires (at least, those of Victorian and Post-Victorian literature):

1. Rebellion/Nonconformity
2. Exile/Alienation/Damnation
3. Disease/Death
4. Violence
5. Darkness
6. Seduction/Sexuality

Despite the presence of the above attributes, however, one very specific element is absent (especially from the ancient Mesopotamian Lilith)—a direct relationship with blood. This problem, however, may be resolved by the

confusion of the so-called “Lamashtu Aspect” discussed in Chapter 5.2.

This new myth of the Vampiric Lilith stands as a fabricated historical/mythical background for the dark and fictional world of the role-playing game *Vampire: The Masquerade*®. At first, the story is much like that told in Ben Sira’s *Alphabet*. According to the book *Revelations of the Dark Mother*, which serves as a supplement to the game, Lilith refuses to have intercourse with Adam at first because she is “repulsed by Adam, for he had mated with beasts” (37). Then he insists that she lie beneath him, and she refuses. Adam then forces Lilith onto her back, beats her, and begins to rape her, at which point she calls out the secret name of God (just as in Ben Sira’s version) and is rescued. However, at this point the story moves away from the *Alphabet* version. Having spoken the name of God, Lilith joins with Jehovah in a type of sexual union. According to the story, “He took her there in Heaven, and He knew her as a mate. For seven days and seven nights, she sat upon His lap and He sat within hers” (39).

Lilith’s time as the consort of God (this idea may have been inspired by a similar idea presented by Patai, regarding the divine union of the male and female divine natures, in *The Hebrew Goddess*), however, is short lived.

When Lilith claims to be Elohim's/YHVH's equal, she is cast down from Heaven into the wastelands. She wanders the desert, her womb growing with the divine seed planted there by her union with Jehovah (YHVH). While in the desert, Lilith survives by drinking her own blood. When she reaches the sea, she spews forth from her mouth a brood of demonic creatures.

Eventually, Lilith returns to Eden and finds an angel guarding the entrance. This is Lucifer before his fall, still a beautiful angel, the Morning Star and dutiful protector of Eden and its inhabitants. Struck by Lilith's beauty, Lucifer nearly allows her to enter Eden, yet she is convinced by his loving kindness to remain outside, not wishing to bring him trouble. The two fall in love and have a passionate affair, during which Lucifer bestows many gifts, secrets, and abilities upon his beloved Lilith, not the least of which is a garment made from the night sky. The following excerpt of the fictional "Genesis Fragment," also from *Revelations of the Dark Mother*, tells of Lilith's first encounter with the angelic Lucifer:

But before Lilith went in, the Lightbringer offered her a gift. Lucifer said, "As I am Lord of Light, I have dominion over those spheres which illuminate the sky. And so I do give to thee this garment of Night,

dearest sister, upon which are sewn the moon and the stars and all that appears in the night sky. Wear it and rule the Night as I now rule the Day.”

And Lilith did take up the garment...and her eyes shone with the soft light of the moon.

Abashed and amazed, Lilith stopped. “I love the gifts, as I now love the giver,” she said. “I shall not trouble our brother, but shall raise up my own Garden; and thou shalt perchance come visit me there; and I will show thee all its splendors.” (46)

Lilith’s repeated attempts to create a garden of her own that is as wondrous as Eden prove unsuccessful. She realizes that, without seeds from Eden, she will never be able to produce such trees as the Tree of Life and Knowledge. So she shape shifts into the form of a serpent, an ability she has learned from Lucifer, and enters the Garden of Eden. She encounters Eve and seduces her, then tricks her into eating the forbidden fruit, thus leading to humankind’s expulsion from paradise. God also curses the relationship of Lilith and her angel lover, confining Lilith and Lucifer to the darkness of night (basically, turning her into a vampire and stripping Lucifer of his angelic rank). Alone once more, Lilith wanders into the wasteland. This

time, however, she has both the power and knowledge she needs to survive.

The *Masquerade*TM background myths follow a very common theme in that they manage to include almost every “black sheep” character of the Genesis myth. As time passes, Lilith encounters a young man wandering in a nearby region known as “Nod.” This is Caine (as his name is spelled in the books of this series), who has been cursed like Lilith to wander alone as punishment for the murder of his brother Abel. In *The Book of Nod*, written by authors Sam Chupp and Andrew Greenberg, another supplement text for the same game, is an epic poem which (according to the game) was written by Caine’s own immortal hand, and in his own words. In the following excerpt from the same text, Caine tells of his first encounter with Lilith:

I was alone in the Darkness

And I grew hungry.

I was alone in the Darkness

And I grew cold.

I was alone in the Darkness

And I cried.

Then there came to me

a sweet voice,

a honey voice

Words of succor.

Words of surcease.

A woman, dark and
 lovely,
 with eyes that
 pierced the
 Darkness
 came to
 me. (26)

Lilith instructs Caine just as Lucifer had once instructed her, first teaching him the basic arts of magic. Soon, she “embraces” Caine and transforms him into a vampire. This would prove to be the most regrettable mistake of Lilith’s existence. Soon, Caine leaves her and founds a great city of his own. He turns all of his followers into undead and powerful immortals, and rules over them as his clan. However, Caine eventually comes to curse and loathe Lilith for granting him immortality and vows to take vengeance.

During Caine’s absence, Lilith creates a new Garden, naming it *D’hainu*, and mothers her own collection of followers and vampires. Also, Lucifer finds his way back to her and for a time they live in a pseudo-paradise of eternal night. Their paradise is destroyed, quite tragically, by the

violent return of Caine and his clan of vampires. Caine's act of vengeance is recorded in the following lament:

On a day as black as ashes, the killer returned
 When Lucifer carried the sky through the storms.
 Caine's hands bore the hate stones and the blade of
 revenge.

His childer followed in a locust-cloud behind him.
 Like jackals, they fell upon the children of D'hainu.
 Like wolves, they feasted on flesh.
 Like beetles, they carried away the fruits of the
 garden

And burned D'hainu to embers.

Di halla Lilitu

D'hainu is no more. (Brucato 87)

The myths of the Vampire Lilith come to an end shortly after this, claiming that Lilith has returned to the depths of the Sea (perhaps the Red Sea?) so that she might slumber through the ages until the coming of the vampire version of Armageddon, called *Gehenna* (Chupp 111). The truth is that, while Lilith is responsible for Caine's vampirism, and Caine in turn created his own vampires, the story claims that she is something else entirely, something far more powerful and potentially dangerous than a vampire. Lilith,

they claim, is a “true immortal.” With this statement, at least, I could not agree more.

CHAPTER 7

LILITH AND THE PSYCHE

I believe that Lilith, in all her forms, both ancient and modern, positive and negative, is more than just a manifestation of the *anima*. She is the *anima*, the divine mother of the same sons of Man who, like the Caine of her modern mythos, grew to despise and betray her. In both the male and female psyches, she has as much capacity for healing as for destruction. Her presence in the human dreamscape is jarring at best, and frequently disturbing to the dreamer. However, she often appears to the dreamer who needs to be disturbed. Her presence, though it may be frightening, can also be the “slap in the face” that the dreamer needs in order to resolve internal matters in the deepest, and certainly darkest, recesses of his or her mind.

In the male psyche, Lilith represents the male fear of a return to early childhood/infancy, to being dominated by and helpless against the feminine power she represents. In the male unconscious, Lilith is the ultimate potential of raw female power in both its creative and destructive forms—womb and tomb, wet dream and nightmare, lover and destroyer, mother and murderess. She is the male fear of being controlled by a woman as he was once controlled and disciplined by his mother during childhood. Lilith is the woman who, in appearance, is all that a man could desire.

However, she is also fully capable of overpowering that same man and spanking him.

At the same time, Lilith represents the acknowledgment in the male psyche of the sexual power that women hold. Men generally understand that they must have a woman's consent in order to engage in sex, as the quite unacceptable alternative would be rape. Also, most men would agree that they have, at one time or another, gone to great pains to secure the sexual consent of a desired female. Women, on the other hand, experience the opposite. This is something of which men are well aware, and a power that they subconsciously fear. In this regard, Lilith represents man's fear of being fooled, manipulated, or taken advantage of by a woman due to his own weakness in controlling his sexual desires. In Jewish folklore, a story exists explaining how, after his expulsion from Eden, Adam did not sleep with Eve for many years. During this time, he was repeatedly seduced by Lilith and their union led to the birth of her demonic brood, the *lilin*.

In the female psyche, Lilith plays a role very similar to that of the Jungian *Shadow*. However, she does not fit so neatly into Jung's concept. The Lilith archetype's occurrence in analytical psychology has become increasingly common in recent times, as women find

themselves at liberty to participate in once forbidden behaviors. Unlike men, who have long been allowed far more freedom to explore the multiple facets of their individual Selves—travel, adventure, male rites of passage, premarital exploits into sexuality, etc.—women have long been restricted from such activities. For example, there has existed for untold ages a double standard which promotes the idea that sexually promiscuous men are “virile studs,” whereas women participating in any non-sanctioned sexual activities are immediately labeled as “sluts” or “whores.” Lilith has been treated no differently in her mythos, as has already been shown. Therefore, it is no mystery why her archetypes and symbols have begun to manifest in the psyches of many modern women, who enjoy social, financial, and sexual freedoms considered highly taboo by their predecessors. However, the Lilith mythos also illustrates one hidden yet harsh truth—freedom always comes at a price.

Joseph Campbell once said, “The myth is the public dream and the dream is the private myth” (Power 48). In this regard, at least, even Lilith is not exempt. Dr. Barbara Black Koltuv, Ph. D., a feminist mythology scholar and Jungian psychoanalyst, has spent years studying occurrences of the Lilith archetype in the dreams of her

female patients. Almost always, these dreams expressed the patients' fears of paying a price for their journeys into the previously male-dominated realms of sexual exploration, marital infidelity, and independence. One such dream was had by a married female patient of Koltuv's, who had recently made seductive advances toward a younger, sexually inexperienced, man. Koltuv explains the dream, which the patient viewed in the third person, observing a central figure she names "Lila," as follows:

A young woman named Lila with long, black flowing hair ... dressed in a soft, sheer white dress is involved in a ... plot by her partner, a tall dark man ... in a black tuxedo. [He] tells her to put her hand through a plate glass window ... to create a diversion while he commits a crime. Lila follows his instructions, but is surprised to find that her act hurts her. When she complains of pain to her man, he is indifferent. She wanders through the rest of the dream bleeding and in pain, but unable to seek help from the doctors and nurses she passes. Finally, as she lies dying from loss of blood, her man reappears. He now wears a black top hat and cape and looks evil. He announces, "I am Carnage," and tries to kill the doctors and policemen attending to her. Although he is captured, Lila dies,

but is mourned by a young doctor who says, “I never got to know her.” (31-32)

The married woman who experienced the above dream was, in fact, married to a doctor. From the beginning of puberty and into her twenties, the woman had been in a futile struggle with her weight, which often bordered on obesity. Later, she received hormone treatments from a fertility specialist, and learned that her endocrine system had been thrown out of balance during puberty and never corrected itself. The treatments led her to conceive and give birth to twins—a boy and a girl. After delivering the twins, and breastfeeding them for a time, her body began to slim into a more flattering shape. For the first time since puberty, she saw herself as attractive.

With this realization, the woman must have gradually but steadily become aware of the seductive power she was beginning to wield, perhaps unconsciously at first, and with which she was very unfamiliar. She began to entertain thoughts of affairs and enjoyed flirtations. Soon, her innocent flirtations grew increasingly bolder and she felt, as Koltuv explains, “inflated and fascinated with Lilith’s seductive powers and began acting out her newly realized female nature in an unconscious and power motivated manner” (32). However, this power must have seemed

beyond the woman's control, and likely turned from a source of fascination to one of terror. In a way, her own willingness to use this newfound allure to seduce a younger man led the woman to feel as though under the control of some kind of possessing, even demonic, force. This would explain why the woman viewed the abovementioned dream in the third person, an element which Koltuv fails to address in her analysis.

Koltuv claims that the figure of Lila represents a dream manifestation of the pure-Lilith archetype. After my own analysis, I have come to disagree with at least a portion of her conclusions in this case. However, I freely admit that my own conclusions rely solely on my limited experience with Jungian-styled dream interpretations and mythological archetypes.

While I gladly concede to Koltuv's conclusion that the figure of Lila is related to the dreamer's newfound "Lilith Nature," I do not view her as being solely a pure-Lilith archetype. In the dream, the tortured and conflicted figure of Lila is actually a manifestation of an inner conflict within the dreamer—her "Eve Nature" versus her "Lilith Nature." In her role as a wife, the woman dreamer feared that she had so drastically changed, in both appearance and personality, that she was no longer the same woman her

husband first fell in love with and married. This would explain the final words of the young doctor, an obvious representation of her husband, lamenting that she has died and that he “never got to know her.”

This dream is caused by a struggle taking place within the woman’s psyche, and it illustrates an unconscious acknowledgment of the dire consequences that could occur if the dreamer does not find some way by which to strike a balance between her preexisting “Eve Nature” as a wife and mother and her newfound “Lilith Nature” arising from her new and growing awareness of her own sexuality and seductive potential. Lila’s lover, an obvious manifestation of her recent temptations to commit marital infidelity, tells her to break the pane of glass. Lila obeys him without question. This, needless to say, is an extremely non-Lilith behavior. Immediate obedience to a male figure is certainly not in line with the Lilith archetype. The attributes of subservience and falling prey to temptation, especially in terms of her mythology, do not belong to Lilith. In fact, such behavior would be far more fitting of Eve, not Lilith. The dream lover, for all intents and purposes, represents “the devil within,” which is Man. Men likely denied the dreamer in the past due to her weight, and now she found herself in a polar opposite

position. Lila, eager to please her lover, follows his commands without question.

The window represents the invisible barrier between the woman's familiar and safe Eve Nature and her new Lilith Nature. By forcibly punching her hand through the barrier, she slices her own wrist. This could be seen as a stigmatic wound, and indeed this is a sacrificial act. The dream illustrates the consequences of the woman sacrificing her Eve Nature for the sake of her Lilith Nature. The death of her Eve Nature will cause her to lose her relationship with her husband and, symbolically at least, lead to a "demonic marriage." This is represented in the dream by the return of the dark lover, now evil in demeanor, wearing a black hat and cape. This is similar to Lilith's demonic marriage to the demon lords, Samael and Ashmodai. Having refused the role Adam attempted to force on her, she became barren and deformed until she herself had become a demon. Lila is a warning from the woman dreamer's psyche, that she must either reconcile the woman she has become (partly of Lilith Nature) with who she has always been (purely of Eve Nature), or risk losing herself (or, at least, her identity) entirely.

More broadly, in terms of the collective unconscious, Lilith is the human acknowledgment of a part of the cosmic

nature—both divine and human—that we have suppressed after centuries of violence and fear. As our human understanding of our own cosmic existence grows, however, we have slowly begun to approach Lilith once more. But we fear that she may return to punish us. The violent and wrathful, as well as masculine, YHVH of the Old Testament contrasts sharply with the teaching of love and forgiveness taught by the New Testament. Lilith, in a similar fashion, represents the same potential for violent wrath in the divine feminine nature.

Lilith is very much the antithesis of the benevolent and fertile Triple Goddess—maiden (innocence), mother (creation), and crone (wisdom). She is the banished night maiden (rebellion/seduction), barren and infanticidal (destruction), and the demonic bride (witch). In the Jewish view, she represents the rejected elements of the *Shekhina*, the long banished female counterpart, the “Mother Goddess,” once joined to YHVH, “God the Father.” Jewish lore claims that, in the final days, Lilith will disappear as she yet again becomes one with *Shekhina*.

No matter what Lilith was, has become, or will become in later years, one thing is certain—she is not going anywhere. For thousands of years, she has survived, and will likely continue to do so for the entire span of human

history. Lilith has survived against all odds. Even in the face of ancient theocratic propaganda, mythical exile by altered cosmologies, integration with a horrific lesser goddess, and demonization in Jewish folklore, she has prevailed. Lilith's victory is complete, in that she has made good on her promise that she will never be ruled by anything but her own will, and will submit to the will of neither gods nor men. Lilith calls out to us from the deepest recesses of our minds, telling us to live so that we might learn, to learn so that we might suffer, and to suffer so that we might transcend. After at least five millennia, she has already delivered well on the challenge put forth so boldly by her modern-day vampiric manifestation:

“Rape me into ashes if you will. I can take it.”

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