

SEMIRAMIS, QUEEN OF BABYLON

by Bryce Self

Any effort to trace the origins of the myth, legend, and lore of goddess-worship will eventually lead one back to a single historical figure--Semiramis, wife of Nimrod and queen of Babylon, and this is especially true when considering the goddess/planet Venus. Before we can begin to deal with Semiramis though, we must (as with any historical figure) gain at least a general understanding of her cultural and temporal setting. Since I have found in my researches that neither proven scientific truth nor gleanings of fact from the body of ancient legends in any way contradicts a proper understanding of biblical revelation, I will use the scriptural framework of history as a basis upon which to reconstruct the story of Semiramis the woman.

When Noah and his family left the ark after the flood, they settled first at the northern feet of Ararat facing what is today Georgia, USSR. From here, these eight souls began to spread out into the surrounding districts of northern Iran and Syria, as well as eastern Turkey. After a considerable period (perhaps 5 to 6 hundred years), the families of Noah's descendants began to scatter a bit more widely due to increasing population, and perhaps some degree of rivalry or even enmity between the families of Japheth, Shem, and Ham. In this way we find that within about half a millenium the entire "fertile crescent", as well as the Nile valley, the Anatolian and Iranian plateaus, Arabia, and Ethiopia have been sparsely settled--but with a decided majority of Noah's descendants living in the lower regions of Mesopotamia (which would come to be called Sumer and Akkad).

Modern archaeology has confirmed the fact that the first inhabitants of these areas were homogeneous in both race and culture, and the most reliable researches indicate that it was from here that population, animal husbandry, metallurgy, agriculture, and "citification" spread throughout the earth. The scientific and scriptural views are in exact agreement upon the origin and spread of races and civilization--the only point of difference is the time scale involved! Whereas the scriptures clearly indicate the existence of all these elements of civilization long before the flood; orthodox science, by it's denial of the bible is required to construct a mythical stone age several millennia long in order to account for the same phenomena.

It was in Mesopotamia that the first cities were built after the flood, and the first of these was quite naturally named after the very first city built by man before the flood--Enoch. Due to vagaries of linguistic permutation, this name has come down to us as Erech or Uruk in Sumeria. In all there were seven major cities built near the head of the Persian Gulf, leading to the name "Land of the Seven Cities" commonly found in the early mythologies of the world. These seven cities are enumerated in Genesis as those which were conquered by Nimrod, establishing the world's first empire. The earliest Babylonian legends tell of a conquering people who came up out of the Persian Gulf and established an empire from these cities. This seems to fit well with what we know of the movements of Nimrod in his early career. He was a native of Ethiopia and was widely traveled among the few populated areas of those days. When he set out to build himself an army of conquest, he recruited from his "cousins" the descendants of Sheba and Dedan who had come up through Arabia to settle on the Asian mainland at the Strait of Hormuz and on the Indus river in what is now Afghanistan (these people were the Dravidians who were driven southward into India by the later Aryan invasion). After raising his army, Nimrod ferried them up the gulf in the world's first naval armada, and conquered his empire. The best estimates place the time of the conquest as about 4000 to 3500 BC, and about 1000 years after the flood of Noah.

In the midst of the tumult of war Nimrod and Semiramis met--and in none too savory circumstances, for tradition states that she was an inn/brothel keeper in the city of Erech--leading one to speculate upon the nature of their initial acquaintance. Semiramis was a native of Erech, which as evidenced by it's name seems to have been built by a Hamitic family (Ham's wife was said to have been descended from Cain who built the first Erech in honor of his son). The name Semiramis is a later, Hellenized form of the Sumerian name "Sammur-amat", or "gift of the sea."

The initial element "sammur" when translated into Hebrew becomes "Shinar" (the biblical name for lower Mesopotamia), and is the word from which we derive "Sumeria". This one tarnished woman then, had such a lasting impact upon world history that not only do we call by her name the land from which civilization flowed, but God himself through the sacred writer has let us know that its distinguishing characteristic was that it was "the Land of Shinar," or Semiramis. Very little has come down to us through the millennia concerning Semiramis' rise to power, but it is safe to assume that it was initially upon Nimrod's coattails that she rode, although later in life as well as throughout history her influence overwhelmingly obscured that of her husband. Of course, it would not do to have an ex-harlot upon the throne, so the "polite fiction" was invented that she was a virgin sprung from the sea at Nimrod's landing, and hence a suitable bride for the emperor (thus the title Semiramis which has totally obscured her original name).

Semiramis was the instigator in forming the false religion aimed at supporting their rule, and of course her suggestion fell upon open ears. The religion she invented was based primarily upon a corruption of the primeval astronomy formulated by Noah's righteous ancestors before the flood. In the original this system depicted by means of constellations the story of Satan's rebellion and the war in the heavens, his subversion of mankind, the fall of Adam and Eve, the promise of One to come who would suffer and die to relieve man from the curse of sin then be installed as Lord of Creation, and the final re-subjugation of the cosmos to God through Him.

These eternal truths were corrupted by her (rather, quite obviously, by the evil one controlling her) into a mythic cycle wherein the great dragon is depicted as the rightful lord of the universe whose throne has been temporarily usurped by One whom we can recognize as the God of the Bible. The serpent creates man in his present miserable state, but promises that a child would one day born of a divine mother--which child would supplant God, become a god himself, and return rulership of the Earth to the serpent. These fables were based upon the then widely-known story of the constellations, and were introduced under the guise of revealing the hidden esoteric knowledge concealed in them (regardless of the fact that the original was quite straightforward).

Although this esotericism was the second element in Semiramis' cult, it only masked the actual goal which was the worship of the "heavenly host," which the Bible equates with Satan's army of fallen angels. Satan was quite willing to receive worship "by proxy", hence the third major element of the mystery religion was emperor-worship. This religion was propagated by a hierarchy of priests and priestesses, to whom were assigned the task of initiating the populace at large into its ascending degrees of revelation, culminating at the highest level in both direct worship of Satan and demon-possession.

Although Nimrod was a brilliant strategist, he made a fatal blunder when he allowed Semiramis to retain full control over this religious hierarchy, and through it the minds and hearts of the people; for when a schism occurred between them she was able to turn it from a tool of support into a deadly weapon. The rift between husband and wife occurred when the queen bore an illegitimate son, and the king threatened her with both dethronement and exposure of her true origin. Semiramis, of course would not allow this to take place, and devised a plot to overthrow Nimrod.

During the course of the New Year's festivities at which the advent of Nimrod's rule was celebrated, there was a certain feast exclusively for the royal family and the upper echelons of the priesthood. During this feast, which included "courses" of psychedelic and hallucinogenic drugs, a year-old ram was traditionally sacrificed by being torn limb-from-limb while still alive, and its flesh eaten raw. This ram symbolized the old year passing into the heavens to allow room for the new year. A new-born lamb was then presented which, symbolizing the new year, would be kept and fattened for the next year's ceremonies. This year Semiramis directed the ritual according to the formula, with the exception that when the time came for the ram to be slaughtered, it was the king who was torn to pieces at the hands of the drug-crazed priesthood and Semiramis' bastard son was installed as king. Thus Nimrod, the mighty hunter, died a horrible death as a trapped beast himself.

Semiramis named her son Damu (from the Sumerian "dam," or blood), which in the later Babylonian language became Dammuzi, in Hebrew Tammuz, and in Greek Adonis. Of course, Semiramis assumed the regency for her infant son, and ruled as absolute monarch for 42 more years. In order to avoid having to kill her son on the next New Year's Day, she instituted an annual nationwide sports competition, the winner of which would have the "honor" of taking Damu's place and ascending into heaven to become a god.

Semiramis was not unopposed in her arrogation of the regency, however, or her rule as a woman. The military arm of the government was divided into two camps for and against her, and a short war ensued which ended when the populace (roused by the priesthood) not only refused to support the "rebels" but actively opposed them. In the course of this war, though, things became so close that Semiramis was forced to build a system of walls, towers, and gates around Babylon to defend herself. She was thus the first to build fortifications and her crown afterwards was in the form of the turreted walls of Babylon. To oppose the accusations of "mere" womanhood laid against her, she had herself deified as the mother of the god Damu (since only a god can beget a god) , and installed as "The Queen of Heaven" pictured in the constellation Cassiopeia, which the ancients had intended as a corporate representation of those people faithful to God who will be enthroned by Him after the end of the age.

In spite of her cleverness, though, she also sowed the seeds of her own destruction. As she raised her son, she imbued him with divinity in the eyes of the priests and people as the means of retaining control as the divine mother without seeming to aggrandize herself. As Damu grew he became used to having every whim instantly gratified by a subservient, indeed groveling, populace. For safety's sake he had a personal bodyguard/companion group which he was never without, and which formed an elite corps of soldiery loyal and accountable to him alone. Upon coming to maturity and demanding of his mother to be installed as king, she not only refused him this--but, seeing him now as a challenge to her rule, slated him for the same death she had meted to his father. Damu caught on to her scheme, and pre-empted his "assumption" by slaying his mother with his own sword, and putting down any priestly protests by purging the hierarchy of all who would not vow allegiance to him. Thus Semiramis died after reigning as queen over Babylon for 102 years.

These events laid the groundwork for all of the pagan religious systems of antiquity, as well as many alive today. Semiramis, in particular was the model and original of every goddess and female cult figure in the ancient and modern worlds (either directly or by derivation); and thus it essential to know her story in order to discern what is factual legend and what is merely myth.

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