

there seems to have been a princess in Assyria (not in Bablyon), who was called Semiramis. Very little is known about her, but a number of popular legends sprang up around her person. Some of these legends may perhaps have been brought from Asia Minor, and have been then combined with her name. But they do not play any part in the official religion of Babylon or of Assyria.

I myself studied the Babylonian language for two and a half years at the University of Berlin in Germany, and also attended many courses in this field under the leading Babylonian scholars of the United States. I took my Ph.D. in the study of Babylonian antiquities at the University of Pennsylvania, and my thesis, part of which dealt with Babylonian religion, was published by the University of Chicago. I have heard hundreds of lectures by experts in the field of Babylonian language and antiquities. Never in any one of them, either in Europe or in America, did I ever hear a reference to worship of a Mother Goddess or of Semiramis.

The second question in your letter reads: "What scholarship can I present, what authentic material, to prove that the Hebrew "Mary" was not merely a refinement of Mother Goddess Rhea (Semiramis) of Babylon?" Your question is so specific that it seems to me that it must rest back upon some very definite source. Since there is no conceivable similarity between the biblical picture of Mary and any pagan Mother Goddess, and since Rhea has no connection at all with Semiramis, and since neither one of them was connected with Babylon, I wish I could know the exact source from which the question came. If you could send me a page reference in a specific book, I would be very glad to look it up and see just how trustworthy it is in other regards. If such a book is having a definite effect among your friends, or was used in your own course in college, it might be a real service for me to check into it and to get the true facts as to its reliability or unreliability.

In what I have already written, I have made references to Babylonian religion and similar matters, and I need to make a number more before I am through. Since this is the case, it is important that I explain a rather vital matter about the accepted terminology. It is not usual for experts in the field of Near Eastern studies to use the term "Babylonian" in this way, since Babylon did not become a great city until the culture of Mesopotamia