

had already had a long history. The modern study of the language and literature of Mesopotamia really began over a century ago, through discoveries in the area known as Assyria, quite a distance north of Babylon. Consequently, during the last century and the early part of this one, the language was called "Assyrian" and the study was called Assyriology. Then it came to be realized that actually the Assyrians spoke a particular dialect, as did also the Babylonians. In some of our universities there are now special courses in "Old Babylonian" in "Middle Babylonian" or in "Neo-Babylonian" and also in "Old Assyrian" "Middle Assyrian" or "Neo-Assyrian" in which the various linguistic features of each of these periods are studied. Since we have material in the general language from a time long before either Assyria or Babylon was important, it is now customary to name the language after an earlier city known as "Agade" (sometimes represented as "Akkad"). The language is, therefore, now usually called "Akkadian" and the whole study is spoken of as the study of Akkadian. In my opinion it is a rather unfortunate development, because if you speak of "Akkadian" to a person outside the field, he has no idea what you are talking about. If you say "Babylonian" he understands in general what you mean. But if one were to use the term Babylonian thus in speaking to those who are experts in this field, they would be apt to think him an ignoramus, since it is customary among scholars today to restrict that term to the small section of the study that is related to the city of Babylon.

In the Babylonian religion there is a very important goddess named Ishtar. She is not particularly thought of as a mother, but rather as a ferocious and licentious young-woman type. The Gilgamesh epic describes one of its heroes as accusing Ishtar of all sorts of wickedness and meanness. She was a figure of whom the people were more apt to be afraid of than ever to think of her in such a capacity as a Mother Goddess. She was by far the leading female deity of Babylon. In fact I do not think of any other female deity that played a great part in the Babylonian religion. There were numerous male deities that played such a part.

You mention the alleged fact that "the Japanese were worshipping a madonna and child long before being contacted by the Roman Catholic missionaries." I do not know enough about the Japanese religion to be able to say whether there is any truth to