The Hebrew Goddess

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The Hebrew Goddess proves that the Jewish religion, far from being purely monotheistic, in the early days included marked polytheistic elements, the main one being the cult of the mother goddess. In particular, the centrality of the Goddess in Jewish esotericism (\*), Kabbalah, that is to say in the most profound and fundamental part of Judaism, is highlighted. This allows us to better understand what is hidden in the ideology of Abrahamisms and their modern derivatives, which are among others liberalism and communism.

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In the beginning God created […]

This God is the Supernatural Mother who rides and rises in a triumphant cry.

Tikouné HaZohar, 47a.

The Matronite - The Goddess of Kabbalah

Let us turn our attention to the fourth person of the Kabbalistic tetrad, the Daughter, who, in addition to the ancient Talmudic name of Shekhinah, is referred to by a profusion of names, epithets and appellations in Jewish mystical literature, but most frequently by the Latin assumed name Matronita, that is to say "Matronite", or Matron. Of the four persons of the Kabbalistic tetrad, it is she who plays the greatest role, a central figure both in divine relations and events as well as in the circumstances on which human destiny and in particular the destiny of Israel depend. It is the central link between the Top and the Bottom. She is the person who most easily enables man to grasp the ineffable mystery of the deity and who most fully identifies with the interests, joys and misfortunes of Israel.

Then again - and this is a vivid example of what is perhaps the most fascinating facet of the history of religious and mythical ideas, there is a precise similarity between the story of life, the character, the acts and feelings attributed by Jewish mysticism to the Matronite and the testimonies of ancient Near Eastern mythologies about the goddesses of their pantheons. In myths, epics, stories and visual representations, these ancient Near Eastern goddesses are described and portrayed in a clear, realistic, concrete manner, while Kabbalah, due to its mystical orientation, tends to distort the character of the goddess. However, a glance at these goddesses will allow us to understand significantly better and characterize the goddess of Kabbalah, the Matronite.

I) The goddess of love and war

Three or four examples will suffice to present the goddess who played a central role in religious ritual as well as in the popular consciousness of all the peoples of the ancient Near East. Its name varied from culture to culture - Inanna in Sumer, Ishtar in Akkad, Anath in Canaan - but its character remained the same for centuries, if not millennia. The areas of life in which she primarily manifested were love and war, and her personality everywhere exhibited the same four basic traits of chastity and promiscuity, motherhood and cruelty.

The oldest of these was Inanna, the great Sumerian goddess of love and war, the tutelary deity of Uruk (the Biblical Erech), whose prominence in the Sumerian pantheon was well established in the third millennium BC. . It is clear from the two epithets that accompany her name that she was considered a virgin: in myths and other texts, she is most often called "the virgin Inanna" and "the pure Inanna. ". Nonetheless, during Sumerian history, she was primarily the goddess of sexual love, procreation and fertility, who freely gave herself to Dumuzi (Tammuz), the first mythological ruler of Sumer, and she eventually became following the wife of all the Sumerian kings. She was also not insensitive to the advances of mere mortals: an ancient Sumerian story tells that a gardener manages to make love to Inanna one night while taking advantage of her exhaustion. When she woke up in the morning, Inanna was furious at the outrage and the revenge she performed seems to us to have been totally unreasonable. But her behavior was in keeping with her character, because she was the goddess of boundless fury and ruthless destruction, "the lady of battles and strife", who had "great fury in her wrathful heart." It was she who equipped King Hammurabi (circa 1728-1686 BC) with powerful weapons and was his "graceful protective genius". More than a millennium later, during the time of Nabonidus (555-539 BC), she was still worshiped in Uruk in a gold-plated cella, driving a chariot to which were harnessed seven lions ( 1).

Inanna's direct heir to Mesopotamia was Ishtar, the great goddess of love and war of the Akkadian pantheon. The identity of the two is attested by the fact that in some Akkadian texts the two names are used interchangeably. In the Babylonian Ishtar, however, a certain shift occurs in the balance between the virginal pole and the impure pole of her personality: her virginal aspect was minimized, while her promiscuity was so emphasized that she became a prostitute. Divine. In many texts, Ishtar is referred to as "Cow of the Moon-God Sin" and, as such, she ruled over the plants, watered them and made them grow. An incantation to be uttered during childbirth says of this "Cow of Sin" that she was impregnated by a "restless young bull" and had great difficulty in carrying her child, before receiving the help of two celestial spirits. In her human form, her love was easily transformed into hatred: she loved, before destroying them, a long series of divine lovers, humans and animals, including a lion, a horse, a bird, a gardener, several shepherds, the heroes Gilgamesh, Tammuz, etc. She was also the wife of human kings, such as Sargon of Agade. Its influence was exerted on all mankind and on all the animal kingdom: when it entered the world of the dead, neither men nor beasts mated; when she left it, all were seized again by the sexual desire. But she was also the mother of the country (she says of herself: "It is I myself who gave birth to my people") and the mother of many gods; the god of fire was his firstborn. One of her titles was "Mistress of the Soft-Voice Gods." Yet she was also "the most impressive of goddesses", "Ishtar of the battlefields", clothed with divine fire, haloed withmelammu , which rained fire on enemies. It was she who granted victory to her lovers, the Babylonian kings, by entrusting them with her mighty armies. Of all the arts of war the one that interested her the most was the chariot: at the beginning of her career, she tried to make herself loved by Gilgamesh, by promising him "a chariot of lapis and gold" and; more than a millennium later, in the Ptolemaic era, she was still known as "mistress of horses, lady of chariots". When she was not making love or war, she was seated, imposing, on a throne supported by two lions (2a).

The Canaanite Anath, whose exploits we discovered in chapter II, is so close to Inanna in her personality and attributes that she must be seen as a simple Western variant of the great Mesopotamian goddess.

The Persian counterpart of the great virginal-shameless-maternal-warrior goddess was Anahita. Although the phonemic resemblance between "Anath" and "Anahita" is pure coincidence, the veneration of Anath may have spread as early as the first millennium BC. AD from the shores of the Mediterranean as far to the east as the upper course of the Euphrates, as indicated by the name of an Assyrian town, Anat (today Ana), a few kilometers downstream from Doura-Europos. It is the Persians, informs us Herodotus (in a passage in which he makes the curious error of writing “Mithras” instead of “Anahita”), who transmitted to the Assyrians a veneration of Anahita.

In the Avesta, sacred writings that the ancient Iranian tradition attributes to Zoroaster (who probably lived in the tenth century BC), but which did not take their final form until the beginning of the Sassanid period ( 3rd-4th centuries AD), an entire chapter (Yasht V) is dedicated to him. Her full name was Ardvi Sura Anahita, or "The Most High, the Almighty, the Immaculate" and she is described as a "beautiful, strong, majestic virgin, encircled with a high belt ... adorned with a cloak. of the most attractive aspect, covered with ornaments of gold (and wearing) a garment (of skin) of beaver (made of skins) of three hundred beavers ”(2b). She is therefore undoubtedly a virgin goddess, like her Sumerian, Akkadian and Canaanite counterparts. Yet her virginity, like theirs, did not prevent her from also being the goddess of fertility: she was the goddess of fertilizing waters, of a supernatural spring, located in the region of the stars, from which all the rivers of the world flow. She was the one who multiplies flocks and wealth, brings fertility, facilitates childbirth and breastfeeding and purifies the semen of men. She was invoked by nubile girls and parturients. She was also endowed with many attributes of the prostitute, and in her sanctuary in Erez in Akilisene, which housed her golden statue, the daughters of noble families in Armenia used to prostitute themselves to strangers before their marriage. . In Lydia, where she was identified with Cybele, the Great Mother, as well as in Armenia and Cappadocia, she was confused with Artemis Tauropolos, because the bull was sacred to him. And finally, just like Inanna, Ishtar and Anath, Anahita was also the goddess of war, who drove a chariot drawn by four white horses, Wind, Rain, Clouds and Hail, granted victory to the fighters and gave them strong troops and brave companions. Because of her warlike character, she was also identified by the Greeks with Athena, while as a goddess of fertility she appeared to them to be identical to Aphrodite. However, in the Hellenic world she was more commonly referred to as the "Persian Diana" or the "Persian Artemis". In astrology, the Iranians themselves considered her to be the personification of the planet Venus. His cult, according to Berosus, was introduced to the Persians by Artaxerxes II (404-362 BC. J.-C. ) who had altars built and statues erected in his honor in Babylon, Susa, Ecbatana, Persepolis, Baktra, Damascus (?), and Sardis. It was from these places that the Persian influence carried its worship towards the west in the Greco-Roman world. At a later time, she was regarded as the daughter of Ormuzd and the benefactress of all mankind, mother of all wisdom and queen (3).

II) The Matronite from the mythical-popular point of view

The same four characters of chastity and promiscuity, motherhood and cruelty characterize the Matronite, the daughter-goddess of Kabbalistic literature.

According to Kabbalistic theory, the Matronite is the least important of the ten Sephiroth, mystical aspects, or emanations of the Godhead, which to some extent correspond to the Gnostic eons. Nevertheless, whatever the primary meaning and the origin of the Matronite as a theosophical concept, it became, in Kabbalistic literature and in particular in the Zohar - the most sacred book of Kabbalah - at the end of the thirteenth century. , an individuumconcrete whose actions, words and feelings have meaning only if considered as a true mythological deity. Whatever the intention of the authors of the Kabbalistic treatises in creating or developing the divine female character of the Matronite, one thing is certain: there can only have been very few Kabbalists who, by reading or listening to her exploits, unabashedly described, were able to see that she was nothing more than an aspect of the manifest nature of the one and only Deity. For most Kabbalists - and Kabbalism was a mass religious movement among Jews from the 15th to 18th centuries - it undoubtedly had the characteristics of a distinct divinity; in other words, she was taken for a goddess, separate and distinct from the male deity, who was named as her husband, the King. The mythical-popular vision, unlike the mystical-intellectual vision, of the Matronite closely resembled the popular mariolatry of Latin countries, where the Virgin is not considered as the Jewess in whose womb God chooses to reincarnate under human form - as official Catholic doctrine asserts - but the Mother of God, herself a goddess, who over the centuries never ceased to perform miracles and to whom is due, therefore, adoration direct and personal. It was precisely in this light that the Matronite appeared to more or less uneducated Jewish Kabbalists; unlike the divine King, who, following the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, withdrew to the distant heights of heaven and made himself inaccessible, the Matronite remained on earth, continued to be directly concerned with the welfare of her people and could be approached directly, anytime, anywhere. It thus provides the divine feminine figure of Judaism, so important psychologically in a religion where, before the appearance of Kabbalism, this element had been submerged for several centuries.

The relatively late reappearance of the goddess - I say reappearance because, as we saw in the first two chapters, goddesses featured prominently in popular Hebrew religion in biblical times - is in itself a resurgence. remarkable religious. Even more remarkable, however, is the reappearance in the figure of the Matronite of the four basic characters of chastity, promiscuity, motherhood, and cruelty, which place her right next to the ancient great Near Eastern goddesses of love.

III) La Matronite virginale

There is not much to say about the first of these fundamental functions in the portrayal of the divine Matronite. Virginity, after all, is a condition common to all women and goddesses early in life. It only becomes remarkable if, after having reached marriageable age, a woman prefers to remain a virgin and indeed remains a virgin in an environment, earthly or Olympian, where there is an atmosphere of intense sexual activity, even promiscuity. It becomes even more remarkable, if the female figure in question indulges herself without restraint in the pleasures of the flesh, while retaining her virginity. Nevertheless, it is precisely this paradoxical chastity which characterizes several ancient Near Eastern goddesses and which they share with the Matronite (3). The epithet " nu-nig "" Which also qualifies Inanna, Aruru / Ninmaḥ, Nanaya and Nininsina) means "the immaculate". Another objection is that "virgin" in this context is to be understood, not in the physical sense, but in the spiritual sense. It comes up against the fact that the young virgins consecrated to Ishtar lost their virginity in the temples in a little metaphorical way)

The Virgin Mary, to whom we have already referred, also belongs to this category of female deities and her veneration can be cited as an additional example which will allow us to understand even better the paradoxical virginity of the Matronite. Mary bore Jesus for God and several other sons and daughters for her earthly husband Joseph, but nonetheless she remained “The Virgin” and has been adored as such to this day. It is the same for the Matronite, who paradoxically preserved her virginity, while being the lover of gods and men. The Zoharevokes her virginity both through figurative expressions and explicit affirmations. We apply to the Matronite the biblical verse on the "red cow, without spot, without bodily blemish, and which (has) not borne the yoke" (4), to explain that the forces of Evil ("neither Satan nor the Destroyer, nor the Angel of Death ”, who represent all the forces of Hell) will never be able to overcome it (5). Unlike the pagan goddesses who are said to have all succumbed to Satan, she, the Shekhina, is a cup filled with blessings, which no one has yet tasted, intact, that is to say virginal (6). No stranger is allowed to approach her, anyone who tries it is condemned to the death penalty (7). In one aspect, the Shekhinah is identical to the Holy Land and, as such,

IV) The lover of men and gods

To this image of the virgin Shekhinah is logically opposed, so to speak, that of a goddess who was known, not only by the divine King with whom she was legally married, but also by Satan, others. gods, heroes of biblical history and many other men. However, another specificity that she has in common with the goddesses of love of the ancient Near East is that none of these various unions is criticized for her. A goddess behaves in accordance with her divine nature, and human laws of sexual morality simply do not apply to her - this is a common attitude in the ancient Near East as well as in Kabbalistic myths. As the father-god El says in a mythical Ugarite poem: “[…] goddesses do not know restraint. "(9)

TheZohar tells us that in mythical times Jacob became the Matronite's first husband. However, as long as Jacob was alive, the union was not consummated, for, an inveterate polygamist, he continued to have relations with his two wives and his two concubines, even after the goddess had become attached to him. Therefore, it was not until after his death, when his spirit entered the Hereafter, that Jacob mated with the Matronite (10).

With her second husband, things were different. This was none other than Moses who, once she became his wife, parted ways with his earthly bride, Zipporah, after which he was allowed to do what Jacob had never done: mate with the Matronite in her carnal form (11).

We no longer hear of the Matronite of the death of Moses - whom she carried on her wings from Mount Nebo, to bury her in an unknown place 6.5 kilometers away (12) - until the time of the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem. While Solomon was busy building the Sanctuary, the Matronite was busy with the preparations for her union with her divine husband, the King: she was preparing the house where he could take up residence with her and which, in a mystical way, was identical to the Temple of Jerusalem. When the big day arrived, her father and mother adorned her so that her future young husband wanted her (13).

The King and the Matronite were not only brother and sister, they were twins; in fact, they were Siamese; they had come out of the Supernatural Mother's womb in the androgynous form of a male and female body tied back to back. Soon, however, the King removed his sister from his back and the latter, after unsuccessfully trying to attach herself to his back again, resigned herself to parting from him and standing at a certain distance in front of him. (14).

According to human standards, a marriage between a brother and a sister would have been incestuous; this was not the case in the kingdom of heaven: there, a text from the Zohar informs us , incest is not prohibited and it was thus perfectly acceptable and legitimate for the King and the Matronite to marry (15 ).

The wedding, true hieros gamos, was celebrated with great pomp. The Matronite, surrounded by her virgins, went to the Temple, where, in the bed which had been installed there, she awaited the arrival of her young husband. The curtains were adorned with a myriad of precious stones and pearls. At midnight, the ringing of the bells he wore around his ankles heralded the King's arrival. He was accompanied by a group of sublime teenagers, and the virgins of the Matronite greeted them, flapping their wings with joy. After singing a prayer to the King, the virgins of the Matronite withdrew, and the young men who accompanied the King did the same. Alone, the King and the Matronite hugged and kissed, then he led her to his bed. He placed his left arm under his head, his right arm hugged him and made him enjoy his strength. The pleasure that their union gave to the King and the Matronite was indescribable. Lying down, They hugged each other so tightly that she etched her image into her body like a seal makes its mark appear on the page it is applied to, as her fingers frolic between her breasts and, madly in love, he swore he would never abandon her (16).

Some say that as long as the Temple remained standing, the King, every night at midnight, came down from his heavenly abode, to come and find the Matronite and make love to her in the bedroom of the Temple. The Sacred Marriage thus recurred every day, or rather every midnight, according to a ritual which was performed, not by the human representatives of the god or the goddess who usually took part in the rituals of the New Year of the ancient Near East, but by the two deities themselves. This divine union had an incomparable cosmic significance: the well-being of the whole world depended on it (17).

Others say that the King and the Matronite mated only once a week, on the night from Friday to Saturday. This weekly divine union served as a prototype, in other words as a mythic confirmation, for the traditional weekly union of pious wives and husbands (18). When the cabbalists, who were well acquainted with the mysteries of the heavens, mated with their wives on Friday night, they were fully aware that they were performing the all-important act of directly imitating the simultaneous union of the Supernatural Couple. If the woman were to become pregnant at midnight, the child's earthly father and mother could be sure that he would receive a soul from above, one of those pure souls that are procreated during the divine coupling of the King and of the Matronite (19).

That's not all. When a pious earthly couple performs the act, it thereby sets in motion all the generating forces of the mythico-mystical universe. The human sexual act causes the King to emit the fluid through his divine male genitals and fertilizes the Matronite, who thus gives birth to human souls and angels (20). The passage of the Zoharwhere this particular thought (or mythologeme) is located is so filled with symbolic expressions made to obscure its true meaning that it feels like they were worded ambiguously on purpose, so as not to offend sensibilities. The King's seminal fluid is considered a "river"; the Shekhina or Matronite as "The Sea" or "The Living Creature"; the King's genitals are called "the sign of the covenant" and so on. The meaning of the entire passage is no less clear: it deals with the sexual union between the King and the Matronite and the resulting procreation of souls and angels.

However, another version, which is also concerned with the moments when the divine couple mates, speaks not of a weekly cycle, but an annual cycle. Each year, we are told, the people of Israel sin with a tragic inevitability that allows Samael, the Satan (or Azazel), to impose his will on the Matronite. Samael, in the form of a serpent, or riding a serpent, constantly prowls near the private parts of the Matronite, in the hope of being able to penetrate her. Whether or not he succeeds in satisfying his desires depends on Israel's conduct. As long as Israel remains righteous, Samael's lustful designs are thwarted. But, as soon as Israel sins, as, alas, he cannot help but do every year, his sins increase the strength of Samael,

Once he has defiled her, the Matronite's husband, the King, leaves her and retires to the solitude of his heavenly abode. This unfortunate situation continues until the Day of Atonement, when the scapegoat, which is intended for Azazel (22), is thrown from the top of a cliff in the Judean Desert. Samël, attracted by the animal which is sacrificed to him, lets go of the Matronite, who can then rise to the heavens and find her husband, the King (23).

The union between the Matronite and the king is described more vividly in a manuscript titled Sefer Tashaq, written at the beginning of the 14th century by a Spanish Kabbalist named R. Josef. The central part of this book is a mystical interpretation of the meaning of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet (including the Tetragrammaton) and an abstruse description of the body of the Matronite. The following brief extracts are taken from the study of the mystical meaning of the letters zayin (ז) and het (ח).

“After the realization of the sacred body of the Saint, blessed be he who is the Covenant (24) of the Holy One, blessed be he, he sprinkles the good oil (25) on the Matronite […] The letter het is open to receive the male, that is to say the letter zayin, which is called the Alliance […] The letter het alludes to the Matronite: just as the woman is closed on three sides, only the fourth being open to receive her husband, thus the letter het, which is the Matronite, is open to receive the vav, the King, the Lord of hosts. The branches of the het are the legs of the Matronite, which are open and the upper bar is the body of the matronite. And zayin is the Covenant in relation to het and he is perfect; and the letter het looks like the two spread legs of the human body and the body which is above is the bar and this is its image:

image

Moreover, the woman is also like the letter he (ה), but, in the letter he, the son is not attached to her (26), while in the het he is attached to her and the head. Likewise, when the Metatron, the great and precious prince, does not suckle the Matronite, he is called he - there is a space between the legs, because he is not attached to the Matronite. But, when he suckles the Matronite and is attached closely to her, he is called het and Metatron (27). So far it is with the mystery of the het. And each letter has many sacred chariots, for each letter is in the image of the Holy One, blessed be He. "(28)

A new chapter opened in the Matronite's life when her bedroom, the Temple in Jerusalem, was destroyed. Since her husband, the King, used to mate with her only in the Temple, her destruction meant the sudden termination of the intense romantic relationship that had been theirs until then (29). This event was an absolute tragedy for the divine lovers. The Matronite was banished from her sacred abode and from the Land of Israel, the King uttered a bitter lament over her great loss and the Sun and the Moon as well as all that is Above and Below lamented and wept with it. him (30). The separation of the King and the Matronite denuded each other and both remained in a state of "shameful nudity" (31). In addition,

Soon, however, the king, who was not a man for nothing, was no longer able to endure the torment of loneliness and let a slave goddess take the place of his true queen. She was one of the servants of the Matronite, who "once sat behind the hand-mill." This slave-concubine, who was none other than Lilith, now exercised power over the Holy Land over which Matronite had once reigned. This act, more than any other, made the King lose his honor (33).

As far as the Matronite is concerned, not only did she suffer from having lost her husband and having been banished from her palace and her land, but, in exile, she had to resign herself to allowing herself to be raped by the gods. And even if she had not consented to these unions, once the other gods had mated to her, she was bound to them and the children of these other gods, the Gentiles, could suckle her just like the children of Israel. had done so when the Temple was still standing (34).

Yet, at home as in exile, the Matronite is irresistibly drawn to the pious men of Israel, especially when they engage in one or the other of the two most meritorious activities of all: studying the Law and doing good deeds. Men of this caliber make it a rule to only sleep with their wives on Friday night: on six days of the week, they live as if they had been castrated and devote themselves to their holy works. But in doing so, do they not run the risk of showing ungodliness, since "blessings are only possible where the masculine and the feminine are united"? No, because whenever these men are away from their wives, the Shekhinah mates with them. Likewise, when these wise men stay away from their wives because of menstrual impurity, or when they are traveling, the Shekhina accompanies them; they are never deprived of the blessed state of union of male and female (35).

Above (p. 128) we have seen that, from a Kabbalistic point of view, Rachel, Jacob's beloved wife, was identified with the Shekhina. Since Rachel is the suffering mother of Israel and the Shekhinah (or Matronite) is the personification of the community of Israel (see below, section 5), Rachel's identification with the Shekhinah touched deep sensitivity. Isaac Luria (1534-1572), great Kabbalist of the city of Safed, recommended the practice of a certain mystical kavvana, that is to say a form of intense concentration, as a means of reuniting the Rachel-Matronite in exile in her husband, God the King. This Lurianic Kavvana is described by Jacob ben Hayyim Tzemah (died after 1665), kabbalist and physician, in his anthology of the practices of Luria:

“He will have to focus totally on two things, as a result of which he will be cherished Above and much loved Below and a thread of charm will be placed around him that day and he will be accepted into the Matronite's room. He will first have to concentrate on this: at the beginning of the night, when going to bed, he will have to think about concentrating to raise his soul to the mystery of the Matronite and to the mystery of the Feminine Waters, so Leah mates with Jacob. And, at midnight, he will no longer need to turn up the Feminine Waters and therefore he will then have to concentrate a second time, this time to take part in Rachel's anguish, for that is when it is. there she descends here, in [the world of] [physical] creation. Therefore, at that time, he will have to cry for half an hour or more, thinking of Rachel's anguish, her banishment and exile, and the destruction [of the Temple]. And it is especially worth focusing on this: since we have sinned, we threw souls into the pods [that is, into the unclean physical world] and forced Rachel, the Shekhinah, into exile here- down to collect these souls. […] Because of our many sins she was forced into exile here below and so it is we who are responsible. And it is above all he who descends from Cain, in whom much of the serpent's dirt is concentrated [see below, p. 242], in which souls are stuck, which does well to cry and to lament so much, because it has a more important part in this perfidious act [which caused the exile of the Matronite] than the other stocks. […] And, then, from midnight, let it be absorbed in the Torah until dawn. And you will have to concentrate on satisfying and uplifting the Shekhinah, Rachel - who remains aloof. And you will have to proceed to its restoration through the Torah, in which you will be absorbed at that time, so that it will be restored before dawn, [and be able to and ready to] uplift yourself as it rises. morning prayer, to mate with her bridegroom [God] through the power you brought her during the night. And then you will be called the Matronite's best man, if you focus on this tirelessly, to take away her anguish and restore her (36). And you will have to proceed to its restoration through the Torah, in which you will be absorbed at that time, so that it will be restored before dawn, [and be able to and ready to] uplift yourself as it rises. morning prayer, to mate with her bridegroom [God] through the power you brought her during the night. And then you will be called the Matronite's best man, if you focus on this tirelessly, to take away her anguish and restore her (36). And you will have to proceed to its restoration through the Torah, in which you will be absorbed at that time, so that it will be restored before dawn, [and be able to and ready to] uplift yourself as it rises. morning prayer, to mate with her bridegroom [God] through the power you brought her during the night. And then you will be called the Matronite's best man, if you focus on this tirelessly, to take away her anguish and restore her (36).

V) The maternal Matronite

The third character of the goddess of virginal and shameless love of the ancient Near Eastern religions, let us remember, is their motherhood. By a seemingly paradoxical combination of traits, the same goddess, who remains eternally a virgin and has an insatiable sexual appetite, is also the image of the mother, of the woman who bears, nurses, raises and protects both gods and women. men.

In Kabbalistic mythology, motherhood was a character that originally belonged to the second character of the tetrad, the mother goddess, the grandmother of both the Son-King and the Daughter-Shekhina (37), but it was transferred to the Girl, as some references will show. The Shekhina-Matronite, do we read in the Zohar, is the (spiritual) mother of Israel and as such is the embodiment of the “community of Israel” (the Hebrew term, Knesseth Yisrael, is feminine). She lovingly breastfeeds all the children of Israel, providing them not only with food, but also complete well-being. In fact, she is called the “Lower Mother” in relation to her people and as opposed to her own mother, who is the “Supernatural Mother” or “Superior”. The maternal fiber of the Matronite is so strong that she is unable to turn away from the kind children imposed on her: following her exile from Jerusalem, when the "other gods", that is to say the deities “pagans”, their will dictated to her, she nursed the “pagans” just as she had breastfed Israel (38).

VI) The warrior Matronite

The fourth characteristic of the ancient virgin-harlot-maternal Near Eastern goddesses is their thirst for blood. In ancient mythological texts, the virgin goddess of sexual love is often described as possessing the most appalling cruelty. The three millennia that have passed between these myths and the time in which the Matronite of Kabbalah developed have obviously left their mark. In medieval sources, the warlike features of the Matronite are drawn with more restraint. Nonetheless, the archaic character of her bloodthirsty aspect is clearly recognizable in the Kabbalistic references to the Matronite as the leader of divine armies and mistress of supernatural forces opposed to antagonistic human and infernal evil powers.

For the moment, it would be futile to seek filiations between the bloodthirsty goddesses of the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC. AD and the warrior Matronite of the 13th century AD. There was obviously nothing strange about the Hebrew biblical faith in giving birth to the idea of ​​a warrior deity, but, in keeping with the monotheism that the Hebrews had officially adopted, all supernatural aggressiveness was attributed to Yahweh, which explains why he is qualified as a “man of war”, a slayer of dragons and a conqueror of human enemies whose blood colors his clothes (39). In the Talmudic period (1st-5th centuries AD), although, stigmatized and oppressed, the Judaism of the Roman and Byzantine eras had long ceased to regard God as a warrior, one of the traits attributed to the Shekhinah, the personified Presence of God, imagined as a female entity, undoubtedly constitutes a distant echo of the ancient pagan goddesses of destruction. Indeed, it was said that she took the souls of exceptionally deserving individuals, who were thus spared the bitterness of being mown down by the Angel of Death (40). What is remarkable about this idea is not the association of compassion with the extinction of human life, it is the attribution of this function, that is, murder out of compassion. , to Shekhinah, the feminine principle. However, it is only in Kabbalah that the Shekhinah, conceived at that time as a truly mythical female deity, took on a character reminiscent of the ancient bloodthirsty goddesses of the Near East. is no doubt a distant echo of the ancient pagan goddesses of destruction. Indeed, it was said that she took the souls of exceptionally deserving individuals, who were thus spared the bitterness of being mown down by the Angel of Death (40). What is remarkable about this idea is not the association of compassion with the extinction of human life, it is the attribution of this function, that is, murder out of compassion. , to Shekhinah, the feminine principle. However, it is only in Kabbalah that the Shekhinah, conceived at that time as a truly mythical female deity, took on a character reminiscent of the ancient bloodthirsty goddesses of the Near East. is no doubt a distant echo of the ancient pagan goddesses of destruction. Indeed, it was said that she took the souls of exceptionally deserving individuals, who were thus spared the bitterness of being mown down by the Angel of Death (40). What is remarkable about this idea is not the association of compassion and the extinction of human life, it is the attribution of this function, that is, murder out of compassion. , to Shekhinah, the feminine principle. However, it is only in Kabbalah that the Shekhinah, conceived at that time as a truly mythical female deity, took on a character reminiscent of the ancient bloodthirsty goddesses of the Near East. who was thus spared the bitterness of being mown down by the Angel of Death (40). What is remarkable about this idea is not the association of compassion and the extinction of human life, it is the attribution of this function, that is, murder out of compassion. , to Shekhinah, the feminine principle. However, it is only in Kabbalah that the Shekhinah, conceived at that time as a truly mythical female deity, took on a character reminiscent of the ancient bloodthirsty goddesses of the Near East. who was thus spared the bitterness of being mown down by the Angel of Death (40). What is remarkable about this idea is not the association of compassion and the extinction of human life, it is the attribution of this function, that is, murder out of compassion. , to Shekhinah, the feminine principle. However, it is only in Kabbalah that the Shekhinah, conceived at that time as a truly mythical female deity, took on a character reminiscent of the ancient bloodthirsty goddesses of the Near East.

In the Zohar, it is to the Shekhina-Matronite that the King entrusts all his warlike activities: when he wants to take revenge on the idolatrous nations, the forces of Evil are awakened and the Shekhina is gorged with blood and inflicts a bloody punishment on sinners (41 ). In her wars against the pagans, the Matronite commands myriads of supernatural soldiers of various kinds, such as, for example, the "lords of supernatural faces", the "lords of the eyes", the "lords of arms", the "lords of the lamentations ”, the“ lords of quakes ”and other armed warriors with six faces and six wings, all girded with fearful swords, all clothed in blazing fire and whose flaming sabers fly from end to end of the world. This was the army that the Matronite led against the Egyptians at the time of the Exodus (42).

In fact, the King completely renounced commanding his forces himself and placed them under the command of the Matronite. He entrusted him with all his weapons, his spears, his scimitars, his bows, his arrows, his swords, his catapults as well as all his fortifications, his wood, his stones, placed all his military leaders under his orders and said to him: "A from now on, you will be responsible for fighting all my wars. In accordance with this mandate, when the Grand Overlord of the Egyptians, who was none other than Samael, at the head of his six hundred chariots ridden by angry warriors (or "accusers", because this battle was obviously a spiritual battle rather than physical combat), charged the fleeing Israelites, it was the Matronite who took care of the defense and threw the attackers into the sea.

In a Midrash which constitutes a later Hebrew version of the apocryphal Book of Enoch (written probably in 150 BC), a passage deals with the theme of the warrior Matronite. The Hebrew book in question is called Sefer Hekhalot ("Book of the Heavenly Halls") as well as Sefer Hanokh ("Book of Enoch"); it belongs to the abundant Hekhalot literature, which developed at the beginning of the Talmudic period; he was known to the author of the Zohar and other Kabbalists. Its setting is the visit that Rabbi Yishma'el paid to the heavenly halls, where he was welcomed and then guided by the one who, after being taken up to heaven, had been called the "angel of the Face", the Metatron, who is none other than Enoch. Here is the passage:

“Rabbi Ishmael said: The angel Metatron, the Prince of the Face, said to me: In the seven palaces, four chariots of the Shekhina stand up, in front of each of them stand the four camps of the Shekhina. Between one camp and the other flows and passes a river of fire. Between a river of fire and the other is a circle of luminous clouds. Between each of them stand fixedly columns of sulfur. Between each column stands a circle of flaming wheels. Between each wheel flaming sparks form a circle […] ”(44)

Even though the author, like most of the Hekhalot, focuses on the description of the wonders that can be seen in the celestial halls, this passage clearly confirms the prezoharic character of the idea that the Shekhina-Matronite is responsible for the heavenly chariots and camps.

In the mystical present of the long exile, the miserable Galuth, as in glorious times, the Shekhina-Matronite is the bellicose defender and liberator of Israel. But its ability to defeat Israel's enemies ultimately depends on Israel itself. The Shekhina-Matronite is always in the midst of Israel, ready to protect it from all sides and against all nations. But when Israel sins, the Shekhinah's hands no longer have as much energy, she lacks strength and the great rulers of other nations, i.e. their heavenly guardians, gain the upper hand. But as soon as Israel repents, the Shekhinah is filled with strength; it neutralizes all these great leaders, destroys the armies of the enemies of Israel and takes revenge on them (45).

Closely related to the warlike aspect of the Zoharic Shekhina-Matronite is her immense and monstrous aspect, which is described by the author of the Zoharin terms borrowed from the midrashic image of the Behemoth. The Midrash says of this mythical cosmic animal that it eats the grass of the Thousand Mountains every day and devours the many beasts that graze on their flanks, that it drinks the waters of the Jordan in one sip and quenches its thirst by drinking it. immense Jubal river, whose source is located in Paradise (46). This mythologeme is elaborated in two zoharic passages which describe the Shekhina-Matronite as a monstrous cosmic woman who engulfs the Thousand Mountains in one mouthful, who swallows in one sip the waters of a thousand rivers, whose terrifying arms stretch out in 24,000. (or 25,000) directions and whose claws are always ready to tear or kill. Thousands of shields are caught in her hair, while her hair itself hangs out on the ground, which earned him the epithets of "Moon with hair" and "Comet tail". From that long Lilith-like hair emerges hordes of frightening and menacing warlords who each bear singular names such as "Lords of Weights," "Lords of Severity," "Lords of Insolence" and "Lords of Insolence". of the lords ”, and which, taken as a whole, bear that of“ lords of the purple ”. No one can escape the cruel punishments inflicted by these warlords or by the Shekhina herself. "Lords of insolence" and "lords of lords", and who, taken as a whole, bear that of "lords of purple". No one can escape the cruel punishments inflicted by these warlords or by the Shekhina herself. "Lords of insolence" and "lords of lords", and who, taken as a whole, bear that of "lords of purple". No one can escape the cruel punishments inflicted by these warlords or by the Shekhina herself.

From between the terrifying monster woman's legs emerges an equally terrifying son, the first angel Metatron, who stretches from one end of the world to the other, along with two daughters who are none other than the two. infamous demon queens, Lilith and Naamah.

The terrible aspect of the Shekhina-Matronite makes it logical that the writers of The Zohar remembered the role of death-bearer that she had in the Talmud; the Zohar , repeatedly asserts that the words of the Book of Proverbs (5: 5) "His feet go down to death" refer to the Shekhinah, symbolically represented by the forbidden tree which, for Adam, was a "tree of death ”(47).

The warlike, monstrous and bloodthirsty aspect of the Matronite brings us back, for a moment at least, to the question of the link between Kabbalah and Hinduism (cf. above, pp. 132-33). The likelihood of a connection between the two and particularly between Kabbalah and the Tantric and Shaiva teachings of India has been further developed in my book The Jewish Mind (1977), in which, among many other topics, I examines Kali, the beautiful, but at the same time, monstrous Hindu goddess, who is one of the many manifestations of Shakti and who has only been mentioned in passing here (p. 121). Just as Kali is correctly described as black, to emphasize her frightening character, so is the Shekhinah, says the Zohar, "Tastes at times the other aspect, cruelty and his face turns black" (48) Marvin H. Pope, in the monumental commentary he has just published on the Song of Songs (in which he also dedicates 26 pages [p. 153-79] to a summary of the argument presented in the first edition of this work), goes even further, drawing attention to the similarities between the tantric hymns to the beautiful black goddess Kali and some passages from the Song of Songs (especially 1: 5) (49). After an in-depth and interesting study of the "black and beautiful", Pope gives an overview of the surprisingly many black goddesses and expands on the "most famous of them", the Indian Kali who is "beautiful, always. young and virgin, and at the same time dreadful, violent, destructive and insatiable in her thirst for blood and flesh, for wine and for sex. "Undoubtedly, the verse" I am black and beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem "(Canticle 1: 5) strongly recalls certain Hindu hymns dedicated to the black beauty of Kali and in particular the lines “You are dark like the blue-black cloud whose face is beautiful like that of Samkarshana [Shiva]” (50). These comparisons add a new dimension, an unsuspected historical depth, to the relationship between Kabbalism and Hinduism.

Another aspect of this relationship is that, despite the geographic distance that separated Spanish Jews from India, intrepid Jewish writers like the Kabbalist traveler Abraham Abulafia (see p. 132), his contemporary the Kabbalist translator and author Isaac Albalag, and others, familiarized the Spanish Kabbalists to some extent with Hindu thought and doctrines (51).

VII) Mary and the Matronite

An interesting parallel to the warlike aspect of the Matronite is the evolution of the Virgin Mary, not only into a ruler of the world, but also into a patroness, or goddess, of Christian armed power. At the opening of the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD. AD, Cyril of Alexandria gave a sermon in which he described Mary as the mother and the virgin "by (whom) the Trinity is sanctified […] the Cross is precious, celebrated and adored throughout the globe of the earth) . By you heaven trembles, angels and archangels rejoice, demons are routed, the tempter is overcome and man is called back to heaven. "(52)

In case one thinks that the triumph of heaven and the expulsion of demons attributed to Mary were considered to have taken place on a spiritual plane alone, let us refer to Narses (vers. 478- vers. 573), general and Byzantine officer of the Emperor Justinian, who, on the battlefields, expected Mary to guide him, to reveal the moment and hour of the attack (53); let us also refer to the emperor Heraclitus (ca. 575-641) who carried his image on his banner (54). As early as 438, a portrait of the Virgin, attributed to Saint Luke, was sent from Jerusalem to Pulchérie, and this portrait subsequently came to be considered a kind of palladium and accompanied the Byzantine emperors in battle, until their capture. from Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 (55). In Occident,

Pope, in her commentary on the Song of Songs, pointed out that the Virgin Mary's role as the goddess of war and the use of her image as a palladium and military standard "resulted from the outset in identification with the goddess Athena. Victoria. Emperor Constantine worshiped Athena and Apollo, who appeared to him in Autun before the Battle of Milvian Bridge. Constantine's labarum, under the sign of which Christianity became a religion of conquest, was terminated in its lower part by a saltire, or pectoral girdle, which was also worn by warriors and by the goddess of war. This continues to be the symbol of the Queen of Battles on military flags and uniforms to this day. "(57)

Mary, like the Matronite, was considered to have replaced God in the sovereign function of government and control, so much so that her sovereignty in fact eclipsed that of God. She was seen as the empress of the universe, the sovereign of the world, the mistress who commands and the queen of the heavens and the earth (58). John of Damascus (c. 750) called her the sovereign lady, to whom the entire creation had been subjected by her son, so that she could preserve it (59). Saint Peter Damien (1007-72), Italian cardinal and doctor of the Church, calls her deificata , "she who was deified", and, two centuries later, the German mystic Mathilde of Magdeburg (c. 1210- c. . 1258) goes so far as to call her "goddess" (60).

The parallel between Mary and the Matronite also extends to other aspects. Like the Matronite, Mary was also considered the bride of God; like her, she came to be seen as the mother of men in a general, mystical sense; and like her, she played the role of intermediary between God and men, she was regarded, if not as the only means, at least as the best and easiest, to reach God. The ancient pagan goddess to whom the Israelites sacrificed cakes (61) reappeared among Christians in the form of Mary, whom the Collyridians, a sect of zealous women of the fifth century, venerated, by offering her some cakes (62) and, among the Jews, under that of the Shekhina-Matronite, whose similarity to Asherah was recognized by Moses Cordovero in the 16th century in Safed. (63)

VIII) The meaning of the Matronite

We have examined some of the characteristics of the four aspects of the Matronite - her chastity, promiscuity, motherhood, and bellicosity (or cruelty) - which are the most important components of her personality. The fact that these are precisely the same four aspects that also characterize the ancient Near Eastern goddesses of love and that we can find an echo of these in the Virgin Mary is sobering. Where does, do we feel obliged to ask ourselves, the persistence of this paradoxical figure of the goddess in officially and openly monotheistic religions? To try to answer this question, two alternatives are immediately available. Either there has been diffusion, or there has been independent invention. The possibility of a diffusion obviously exists: the prototype was the Sumerian Inanna, whose characters can be clearly recognized in the Babylonian Ishtar, Canaanite Anath and Persian Anahita. It may be that Hebrew monotheism was unable to exorcise the stubborn goddess and it is not at all impossible that, although she slumbered for several centuries, she woke up and claimed some of her ancient rights in the figure. of the Mary of Christianity and that of the Shekhina-Matronite of Talmudic and Kabbalistic Judaism. Indeed, not at all impossible. But how can we prove it without carrying out extremely extensive research? And if there was a link, would we be further along? It remains to be seen exactly why, of all the goddesses of the rich pantheons of the ancient Near East, this is the one who found such a formidable second wind. (64) To answer this question, we must move from the field of comparative mythology to that of psychology, where the question no longer arises as to whether this figure was disseminated or invented independently. Whether or not the Matronite (and Mary) finds her origin in Inanna or not, her advent in new religious environments and radically different from what they had been shows that she responded to a psychological need of Ashkenazi or medieval Sephardic Jewry, such as it had done so in Sumer in the 3rd millennium BC. How can this psychological need manifest itself? Whether or not the Matronite (and Mary) finds her origin in Inanna or not, her advent in new religious environments and radically different from what they had been shows that she responded to a psychological need of Ashkenazi or medieval Sephardic Jewry, such as it had done so in Sumer in the 3rd millennium BC. How can this psychological need manifest itself? Whether or not the Matronite (and Mary) finds her origin in Inanna or not, her advent in new religious environments and radically different from what they had been shows that she responded to a psychological need of Ashkenazi or medieval Sephardic Jewry, such as it had done so in Sumer in the 3rd millennium BC. How can this psychological need manifest itself?

To try to answer this question, we must, necessarily, focus on, the figure of the medieval kabbalistic goddess that this chapter deals with, the Matronite-Shekhina. If we are to realize what the Matronite-Shekhinah meant psychologically, we have to consider as a whole the four main characters that we have examined of this mythical character. They show that the Matronite-Shekhinah is the mythologically objectified projection of the absolute woman, the woman who takes all the forms, all the aspects and all the appearances of the woman that the man needs, not only for his biological survival, but also for its psychological existence. The character of his need, which accompanies him from birth to death, from cradle to grave, changes over the years it is given to live. No sooner had he been born to her than he wanted her to hold him to her opulent maternal bosom and to breastfeed him. As he grows up, he needs his protection and guidance. As soon as he realizes that the woman is the opposite sex, she must affectively appear to him as a pure virgin. When he has to fight against enemies or is tested by adversity, he relies, concretely or imaginatively, on her to fight the forces of evil that oppose him. When he is overwhelmed by frustration or disheartened by failure, he imagines her as a furious woman capable of doing for him what she herself is incapable of, fearlessly throwing herself into the fray and fighting his battles. In the routine of regulated marital sex, it gives a metaphysical, even cosmic, meaning to the act. When life at home becomes monotonous and trivial, it is there, with the thousand faces painted with its charm and the continual promise of its presence. And when life ends up leaving him, it is the hope of his last kiss that makes him forget the bitterness of death and instead see death as the beginning of a new life in a blissful Hereafter.

The Matronite is thus the projection of all that a woman can be as a protector for a man. It symbolizes in its many aspects the great affirmation of life, the elementary satisfactions that we derive from existence, the comfort that we find in the mother, the nurse, the lover, the fiancée, the woman, the shameless seductress, the warrior protector and the one who opens doors to the Hereafter.

The fact that the image does not lack contradictions betrays more or less the ambivalence of the relationship between men and women (65). The Matronite, like the ancient great goddess of love, is both virginal and immodest. Virgin, because man must idealize woman: he wants his wife to be a virgin, to have waited for him for countless eons and to remain virgin and chaste even as she gives in to his embrace and to his alone. Shameless, because he imagines at the same time the woman, whose body constitutes for him a promise of pleasure, as the incarnation of desirability, as the one who, loved by men and gods, does not only yield to him, but excites him, draws him into the labyrinthine mysteries of love. And, paradoxically, but, due to its deep nature, inevitably, he imagines his virgin fiancée and his shameless wife as one and the same person and projects the two contradictory characters into one and the same goddess. The third idealizing character of the goddess is that of mother. It expresses, if not necessarily oedipal inclinations, at least the desire to find in the embrace of the beloved a little of the happy security of the child coaxed in the arms of his mother.

And as if that were not enough, the mother-fornication-virgin amalgamation itself appears to be only one of the two general aspects which are united in the goddess: the loving aspect, opposed to another aspect, cruel. and frightening, that of the merciless warrior goddess who sheds blood, destroys life and loves to do it as she makes love. And what is also paradoxical is that man feels drawn to the wrathful figure of this goddess of battle and blood as much as to the shameless virgin who beckons him to approach with a chaste and warned smile, or than by the mother who presents her opulent and nourishing breasts to her.

The goddess therefore gives four speeches to man: stand aside because I am a Virgin; love me because I am available to everyone; come and snuggle up against my maternal breast; and die in me because I thirst for your blood. Whichever of these aspects momentarily takes precedence, the male psyche is deeply sensitive to it. The voices of the goddess penetrate man and move him; they oblige man to pay homage to it and incite man to lose himself in it, whether in love or in death.

Raphael Patai, The Hebrew Goddess , chapter VI: La Matronite - La Déesse de la Kabbalale, 1990, translated from the American by JB

(\*) Regarding the centrality of the Goddess in Freemasonry, Muslim esotericism and Christian esotericism, see respectively William Bond, Freemasonry And The Hidden Goddess , <http://masongoddess.blogspot.fr/> ; Laurence Galian, The Centrality Of The Divine Feminine In Sufism , <http://home.earthlink.net/~drmljg/id8.html> ; Timothy Freke, Peter Gandy, Jesus and the Lost Goddess: The Secret Teachings of the Original Christians , <https://books.google.fr/books?id=swM_6ufZ2P4C> .

(1) James B. Pritchard (ed.), ANET, ed. unspecified, p. 41, 44, 54, 55, 56, 57, 159, 178, 309; Samuel Noah Kramer, The Sumerians, University. of Chicago Press, 1963, p. 122, 140-1, 153, 161-2, 197, 205-6, 262.

(2a) Stephen H. Langdon, Semitic (The Mythology of All Races, vol. V), Boston, 1931, p. 25-8, 94, 97; id., Babylonian Liturgies, Paris, 1913, p. 43, 95; James B. Pritchard (ed.), Op. cit., p. 83, 84, 94, 108, 111, 113, 118, 119, 123, 205, 250, 294, 298, 299, 383, 427, 449, 451.

(2b) We translate this passage after Charles de Harlez, Avesta: sacred book of Zoroastrianism: Translated from the Zend text, accompanied by explanatory notes and, Maisonneuve, 1881

(3) Cf. Emil GH Kraeling, Rand McNally Bible Atlas, New York, 1956, p. 305 and cards iii and xi; Herodotus I. 131; Eduard Meyer, «Anaitis», In WH Roscher, Ausführliches Lexikon der greechischen und römischen Mythologie, BG Teubner, 1897; Strabo XI. 532c; Franz Cumont, «Anahita». In James Hastings, Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics, vol. 1, T. & T. Clark, 1910; Geo Widengren, "Status and Task of Iranian Religious History". In Numen I, 1954), p. 72 et idem, «Status and Task of Iranian Religious History». In Numbers 2, 1955a, p. 92, 122-23. The Anahita was considered as the daughter of Ormuzd is mentioned by the Armenian history of the IV century ap. J.-C. Agathengelus, cf. Friedrich Heinrich Hugo Windischmann, The Persian Anahita or Anaitis, Abhandlungen der Philosophisch-Philologischen Classe der Königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Munich, vol. 8, 1858, p. 85-128 (Some - see, for example, Ruth Rusca, Feminine Mysteries in the Bible, Bear & Company, 2008, have recently asserted, without any evidence whatsoever, that the term 'virgin' does not mean here 'who does not has never had sex, ”but“ unmarried. ”Not only is this statement therefore gratuitous, but it is formally contradicted by the fact that any priestess of Ishtar, who, like the goddess herself, was considered to be times as a virgin ( that the term "virgin" does not mean here "who has never had sex", but "not married". Not only is this claim therefore gratuitous, but it is formally contradicted by the fact that any priestess of Ishtar, who, like the goddess herself, was considered both as a virgin ( that the term "virgin" does not mean here "who has never had sex", but "not married". Not only is this claim therefore gratuitous, but it is formally contradicted by the fact that any priestess of Ishtar, who, like the goddess herself, was considered both as a virgin (nu-gig) et impudique, pouvaient se marier (voir Stephen Langdon, Tammuz and Ishtar: A Monograph Upon Babylonian Religion and Theology, Containing Extensive Extracts from the Tammuz Liturgies and All of the Arbela Oracles, Clarendon Press, 1914 -p. 81 [N.d.E.])

(4) Nombres 19:2.

(5) Zohar iii. 180b, Raaya Mehemna.

(6) Zohar iii. 89b-90a, Raaya Mehemna.

(7) Zohar iii. 267a, Raaya Mehemna.

(8) Zohar iii. 189a.

(9) Cyrus H. Gordon, « Canaanite mythology ». In Samuel Noah Kramer (éd.), Mythologies of the Ancient World, 1961, p. 204.

(10) Zohar i. 21b-22a.

(11) Zohar i. 21b-22a.

(12) B. Sota 13b ; Sifré Deutéronome, 355.

(13) Zohar i. 49a, iii. 74b.

(14) Zohar i. 30b-31a.

(15) Tiqqune haZohar, Tiqqun 34, p. 77; quoted from Isaiah Tishby, Mishnat haZohar, vol. 2, 1949–61, p 623.

(16) Zohar Hadash, Midrash ha-Neelam, Warsaw, 1870., p. 183.

(17) Ibid.

(18) Zohar iii. 296a.

(19) Zohar ii. 89a-b.

(20) Zohar i. 12b.

(21) Zohar ii. 219b; 1. 64a.

(22) Leviticus 16: 8-10.

(23) Zohar iii 79a; 1. 64a.

(24) That is to say, the sign of the Covenant, circumcision. In this case, the divine phallus, as in the passage from the Zohar (I: 12b) which has just been quoted.

(25) That is to say his seed, which was called above “river”.

(26) In the letter he (ה), the left “branch” is not attached to the upper horizontal part, the “bar”, which represents the body; while, in the het (ח), it is attached to it. Note that here the imagery has changed: the “branch” has become the son of the Matronite.

(27) Below (p. 150) we will again meet the Metatron, head of all angels, depicted as the son of the Matronite coming out from between her legs.

(28) Extracts from folios 38b-40a of the Sefer Tashaq manuscript by R. Yosef, a photocopy which was kindly made available to me by prof. Jeremy Zwelling of Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, who is preparing a critical edition of the book, based on several existing manuscripts. My translation was made from the original in Hebrew.

(29) Zohar iii. 42a-b.

(30) Zohar i. 210a-b.

(31) Zohar iii. 17a-b, 74b.

(32) Zohar iii. 69a.

(33) Ibid.

(34) Zohar i. 84b.

(35) Zohar i. 49b-50a, 66b; Moses Cordovero (1522-1570), Pardes Rimonim, entry 16, section 6.

(36) Jacob ben Hayyim Tzema, Sefer Nagid u-Meẓawweh, Amsterdam, 1712, p. 5b-6a.

(37) See above, chapter V, “The Kabbalistic Tetrad”.

(38) Zohar i. 84b, iii. 17a-b, 186b.

(39) Exodus 15: 3; Isaiah 51: 9; Psalm 89:11; Isaiah 63: 1-6.

(40) Baba Batra 17a; B. Sota 13b; Sifre Deuteronomy. 355; cf. Deuteronomy Rabba, 11:10-end; Canticle Rabba 1 and 3.

(41) Zohar ii. 29a.

(42) Zohar ii. 50b.

(43) Zohar ii. 51a-b.

(44) Sefer Hekhalot, included in Jellinek, Bet haMidrash, 5: 183-84 (see, for the French translation, Moshé Idel and Charles Mopsik, Le livre hebreeu d'Hénoch, ou Livre des Palais, Verdier, 1989, p 133)

(45) Zohar iii. 75a-b.

(46) An allusion to the "Behemoth over the Thousand Mountains" was detected by the writers of the Midrash in Psalm 50:10, where God says: "For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle (Hebrew: Behemoth ) over a thousand mountains. »Cf. Midrash Konen 25; Pesiqta Rabbati 80b-81a; Leviticus Rabba 13.3; 22.10; Numeri Rabba 21.18; Pirqe diRabbi Eliezer, c. 11; see also Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, The Hebrew Myths, 6.n, o, and p.

(47) The main passages are Zohar I. 223a-b and III. 60. Proverbs 5: 5 is quoted in Zohar I. 35b, 221b, and II. 48b. See the excellent analysis of these passages by G. Scholem in his Von der mystischen Gestalt der Gottheit, Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1962, p. 186.

(48) Cf. Raphael Patai, The Jewish Mind, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1977, p. 134-50, and in particular p. 144, who quotes G. Scholem, On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism, Schocken, New York, 1965, p. 107.

(49) Marvin H. Pope, Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary,, Doubleday, Garden City, NY, 1977, p. 167.

(50) Ibid., P. 317-8; cf. also p. 191-2.

(51) Raphael Patai, op. cit., p. 147-8.

(52) Cf. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, «Mary». In Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed. (we translate the passage from after Vincent Davin, Saint Grégoire VII, Casterman, 1861, p. 26)

(53) Cf. Evagrius, Ecclesiastical History, iv. 24.

(54) Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, op. cit.

(55) JB Mayor, «Mary». In James Hastings, John A. Selbie, John Chisholm Lambert, et Shailer Mathews (eds.), Dictionary of the Bible, C. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1909, p. 292.

(56) «Maria '. In Johann Jakob Herzog (ed.), Real-Encyclopädie für Protestantische Theologie und Kirche, vol. 12, p. 319.

(57) Marvin H. Pope, op. cit., p. 170-71.

(58) James Hastings, John A. Selbie, John Chisholm Lambert, and Shailer Mathews (eds.), Op. cit., p. 290, 292; Johann Jakob Herzog (ed.), Op. cit., p. 316-7.

(59) Encyclopaedia Britannica, ibid. ; Johann Jakob Herzog (ed.), Op. cit., p. 316.

(60) Johann Jakob Herzog (ed.), Ibid. ; "Marienverehrung". In Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 3rd ed., Vol. 4, Tübingen, 1960, p. 764,

(61) Cf. above, p. 63-4.

(62) Johann Jakob Herzog (ed.), Op. cit., p. 315.

(63) Moses Cordovero, Pardes Rimmonim, Sha'ar 'Erkhe haKinuyim, Koretz, 1780, ch. 3, p. 120c (one of the aspects of the “Virgin” Mary that the author does not mention here is sexual immorality. In the proto-Gospel, that is to say the Gospel supposed to have served as a source for the three Synoptic Gospels, Mary is called kadesha (Arabic: qadisha ; the term is used in the Quran to designate the wealthy wife of Mohammed, whose money was used to finance the business of the Prophet of Islam), a term designating precisely the sacred prostitutes in Palestine, Canaan and Babylon [Ed] ).

(64) The author unnecessarily complicates the question for failing to draw all the consequences from the fact, which he could not ignore, that most of the goddesses of the Near Eastern pantheons were only variants, so to speak kaleidoscopic, of the figure of the mother goddess.

(65) Let us say, more precisely, "the ambivalence of the relationship between men and women". Indeed, the type of man in question is one whose "principle is not self-sufficient." On the material plane, it has value only as an instrument of generation; either he submits to the woman's bond, or he is obscured by the mother's Demetrius luminosity. Spiritually, it is only through a Dionysian ecstasy fostered by sensualist and feminine elements that one can get an idea of ​​what is eternal and immutable, that one can sense immortality — an immortality. which, however, has nothing to do with the celestial immortality of Olympians and Heroes (see Julius Evola, Le Madri e la Virilità Olimpica: Storia segreta dell'antico mondo mediterraneo, ed. Electronics, Mediterranee, 2013), since it consists in the quality of that which is perpetuated indefinitely by the single generation, through an uninterrupted succession of similar organisms. The woman, here, is perceived as a manifestation of what Aristotle called ὕλη, of the "materia prima", two expressions that R. Guénon sought to render by that of "universal substance", specifying precisely on the one hand that it "is not situated only below our world (substance , out of stateThe “maternal mystery of the physical generation” is found at the foundation of religious systems specific to matriarchal societies. In gynecocracy, which is the political expression of matriarchy, “the individual does not exist in himself; it is transitory, ephemeral and only the universal cosmic matrix is ​​eternal, where it will dissolve again, but from which it will be reborn eternally, just as a tree which has lost its leaves blooms again ”(Julius Evola, Metafisica del sesso, 4th ed., Mediterranee, Rome, 2006, p. 75). The matriarchal-type societies to which the Italian author reports such religious conceptions in this passage from Metaphysics of Sex ”belong to the pre-Hellenic Pelasgian civilization, but these conceptions, as he points out elsewhere,

The ambivalence of the feelings of the feminine man towards the woman is ultimately the very same of the attitude of the Semitic man towards the woman (see Sigrid Hunke, Le Soleil d'Allah shines on the West, chapters Original models of the gnädige Frau and Servant of God and the beloved). However, it is not said that two opposing vocations, namely sexual immorality and motherhood, can exist simultaneously in a certain female type.