LILITH UNBOUND
SESSION 1: THE WOMAN OF THE WILD

Lilith - The First Eve (Siegmund Hurwitz, 1980 - expanded in 1992)

The Hebrew word Lilith – Lilita in Aramaic – makes its first appearance in a fragment of a Sumerian version of the Gilgamesh epic...during the Isin Larsa period (c. 1950-1700 B.C.). The original itself must be appreciably older... The passage relating to Lilith reads as follows:

> After heaven and earth had been separated and mankind had been created, after Anû, Enlil and Ereskigal had taken possession of heaven, earth and the underworld; after Enki had set sail for the underworld and the sea ebbed and flowed in honor of its lord; on this day, a huluppu tree (probably a linden tree), which had been planted on the bank of the Euphrates and nourished by its waters, was uprooted by the south wind and carried away by the Euphrates. A goddess, who was wandering along the banks seized the swaying tree and – at the behest of Anû and Enlil – brought it to Inanna's garden in Uruk. Inanna tended the tree carefully and lovingly; she hoped to have a throne and a bed made for herself from its wood. After ten years, the tree had matured. But in the meantime, she found to her dismay that her hopes could not be fulfilled. Because during that time, a dragon had built its nest at the foot of the tree, the Zu-bird was raising its young in the crown, and the demon Lilith had built her house in the middle. But Gilgamesh, who had heard of Inanna's plight, came to her rescue. He took his heavy shield, killed the dragon with his gigantic bronze axe, which weighed seven talents and seven minas. Then the Zu-bird flew into the mountains with its young, while Lilith, petrified with fear, tore down her house and fled into the wilderness.

The name used for Lilith here is *Ki-sikil-lil-la-ke*, i.e., the maiden Lilith. It goes on to say of her in the text that she is a "maiden who screeches constantly" and a "gladdener of all hearts." ...The meaning of the word *Lila* or *Lilu* is disputed. If it is derived from the Sumerian, which appears to be correct, then *Lila* means a kind of storm or wind god.

...It is continually suggested that the name Lilith is connected with the Hebrew word *laila*, i.e., night. This derivation recommends itself all the more, since Lilith is, indeed, regarded as the goddess or demon of the night. Even the Rabbis seem to have assumed such a connection, because on the one hand, they depicted Lilith as a seductive woman, and on the other, as a kind of winged nightmare being or owl-like creature. This interpretation had already been accepted in Sumer. However, from the etymological point of view, the derivation from *laila* does not stand up and even less so does a connection with the Assyrian *lilatu*…

***Isaiah* 34:14**
Circa 8th Century BCE

Wildcats shall meet hyenas,	וּפָגְשׁוּ צִיִּים אֶת־אִיִּים
Goat-demons shall greet each other;	וְשָׂעִיר עַל־רֵעֵהוּ יִקְרָא
There too the ***lilit*** shall repose	אַךְ־שָׁם הִרְגִּיעָה **לִילִית**
And find herself a resting place.	וּמָצְאָה לָהּ מָנוֹחַ׃

(JPS translation notes: "Most of the creatures in v.14-15 cannot be identified with certainty.")

Materials toward a History of Witchcraft, vol. 1 (Henry Charles Lea, 1890)

Lamia was a queen of Libya, renowned for beauty. According to one legend she captivated Zeus, whence Hera, out of jealousy, slew the children born to them and Lamia in despair robbed others of their children. According to Diodorus, her cruelty caused her beauty to change to the semblance of a wild beast. She lost her children, and her jealousy of more fortunate mothers led her to seize their children and put them to death. This story, he says, has come down to our times, and children are frightened by threatening them with Lamia.

The word proved a too convenient one for the Latin translators of the Hebrew scriptures, who rendered by it the "Lilith" of Isaiah, xxxiv, 14...in the Douay: "And demons and monsters shall meet and the hairy ones shall cry out one to another, there hath the lamia lain down and found rest for herself."

4Q510 *(The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English)*
3rd Century BCE - 1st Century CE

And I, the Master, proclaim the glory of His splendor so to frighten and to te[rrify] all the spirits of the destroying angels, spirits of the bastards, the demons, Lilith, the howlers(?), and [yelpers/desert dwellers…] those which fall upon men without warning to lead astray the spirit of understanding and to make their heart and their […] in the age of the domination of wickedness and appointed times of humiliations of the sons of lig[ht], in the guilt of the ages of [those] smitten by iniquity – not for eternal destruction, [bu]t for the humiliation of transgressions.

"Lilith Rises from the Deep" (*The Tree of Souls,* Howard Schwartz)

From the crevice of the deep there came a certain evil female spirit whose name was Lilith. She had been condemned to imprisonment deep beneath the waves. But God's anger at the time of the Fall was so great that God decided to let Lilith go. So the dark Lilith, also known as the First Eve, was set free. She hides during the day in caves and other dark places. But at night she is free to roam the world.

That is why it is written that a man may not sleep alone in a house, for Lilith will attempt to seduce him. She will slip in if the window is open a crack, slip beneath the door and beneath the sheets. Her long hair is jet black. Many a man has felt it hanging in his face as he lay asleep, dreaming lustful dreams. After she steals his seed, Lilith gives birth to mutant demons, half human and half demon, who are destined to be outcasts. Humans will hate them, because they are half demon, and demons will hate them because they are half human.

To lead the hearts of men astray, Lilith adorns herself with all manner of decorations, and stands at the entrance to roads and paths. She dresses for seduction, with earrings from Egypt and jewels hung around her neck. Her hair is long and red, her face white and pink, with six pendants hanging from her ears and all the ornaments of the East encircling her neck. Her mouth is like a tiny door, her lips beautiful, her words smooth as oil, and her tongue sharp as a sword.

They will encounter her in a forest or a ruin, or in the cellar where an innkeeper takes his naps. One fool after another runs after her, drinks from her cup of wine, sleeps on her bed of Egyptian flax. And when he wakes up, thinking to sport with her, she takes off her finery and turns into a fierce warrior, her garment of flaming fire, her eyes horrific, and causes his body and soul to tremble, her sword sharpened with drops of poison. Then she kills him with a poisoned sword and casts him into the pit of hell.

> This account of Lilith views her as a murderous demon who uses her sexual powers to destroy men. In the Zohar, Lilith is viewed as the primary feminine force of evil, while Samael is the primary male force. While in the Talmud (B. Eruvin 100b) Lilith is generally described as having long, black hair, there are other sources, such as this one, where her hair is described as red. Some sources even assert that Lilith has wings (B. Nidah 24b). This links Lilith even closer to the Babylonian night demonesses Lilitu and Lamashtu.
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> *Sources: B. Shabbat 151b; B. Eruvin 100b; Zohar 1:148a-b; Zohar 3:19a.*

“Lilith’s Children” (*Ibid)*

In his travels, Rabbah bar Bar Hannah reached the city of Mehuza. There he saw Hurmin, the son of Lilith, running along the battlements of the walls of the city. A cavalryman was chasing him from below, but even though he was riding on horseback, he could not catch up with him.

Once Hurmin had two mules saddled and stood them on two bridges of the Rognag River. As Rabbah watched, Hurmin jumped back and forth from one to the other, holding two glasses of wine in his hand, pouring wine from one to the other, without spilling a drop. When the king of Mehuza heard about Hurmin’s stunts, he had him executed, for the king feared that Hurmin would try to depose him.

As for Lilith's daughters, they are just as dangerous as she is. Their names are Na'amah, Agrat, Irit, and the Queen of Sheba.

Some say that Na'amah is Lilith's daughter, and some say that she is her sister. In any case, they are like evil twins, for they work in exactly the same way. They lure grooms into their web, and marry them not to their intended brides, but to their demonic doubles.

Watch out for Agrat. She roams about in the company of eighteen myriads of angels of death, all of whom kill by strangulation. It is dangerous to go out on Wednesday night or the eve of the Sabbath because of them.

As for the Queen of Sheba, she seeks out men to seduce, just like her mother. She comes to them whether awake or asleep and steals their seed and bears them demonic offspring.

> …While Lilith is undoubtedly the primary Jewish demoness, there are several other demonesses who make their mark in Jewish lore, especially Na'amah, Agrat, and the Queen of Sheba. So it is not surprising that they are sometimes identified as the daughters of Lilith. Their functions are virtually identical to those of Lilith: seducing men and leading them astray, and giving birth to demons, including mutant demons fathered by human men...
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> *Sources: B. Bava Batra 73a; Numbers Rabbah 12:1; Tzefunot ve-Aggadot.*

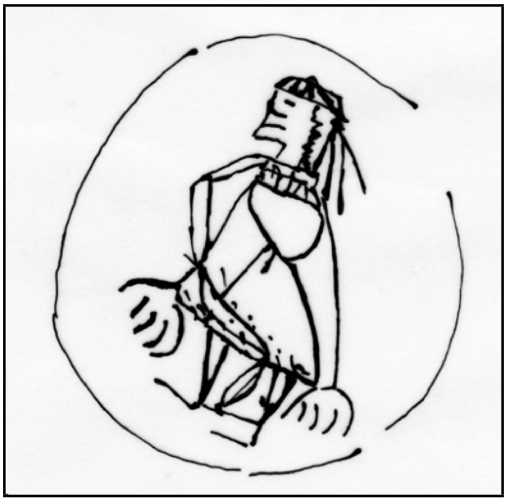
"Lilith's Hair and Ashmedai's Horns" (Naama Vilozny from *The Archaeology and Material Culture of the Babylonian Talmud,* vol. 16, 2015)

During Late Antiquity (3rd to the 7th centuries), a rich magic literature flourished in Palestine and in Babylonia. This literature was accompanied by fascinating figurative and decorative iconography, unique in style, appearing most frequently on Babylonian incantation bowls. Such bowls have been discovered in archaeological excavations all around Mesopotamia and western Iran...

Looking at the bowls, one can say they are of simple design, inscribed for the most part in ink in a spiral pattern. Some have figurative decorations at the centre of the bowl or on its sides. The decorations refer to the demonic world to which the incantation inscribed on the bowls is addressed, besides a few representations of the sorcerer. Only rarely, however, can a direct link be demonstrated between the text on a bowl and the painting on it, so that the text contributes very little to our understanding of the painting.

The similarity of demons to people is also highlighted in the incantation bowls, in which Lilith appears in human form. In a bowl of the Schoyen collection (no. 1927-38) we see a painting of a woman depicted standing in profile, and bound. The text begins with the description of the action of binding the demonesses dwelling in the client's house:

Bound and sealed are you, Lilith and evil Mavhalta and the supernatural voice that resides in the house of Papa son of Hormizdukh and in the dwelling of Bibi daughter of Mahlafta, who call at night like a man and appear to them as human beings.



This description of Lilith and Mavhalta evokes various descriptions in the Babylonian Talmud, in which demons are said to appear in human form. Another bowl should be mentioned in this context. The bowl was read and published by Montgomery and later on by Isbell. In lines 14-15 the demons are described as follows:

And now, Demons and Demonesses and Lilis and Liliths and Plagues and evil Satans and all evil Tormentors, which appear - and all evil injurers - in the likeness of vermin and reptile and in the likeness of beast and bird and in the likeness of man and woman, and in every likeness and in all fashions....