

Student Essay on The Goddess Astarte

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Essay

The Goddess Astarte is believed to have appeared for the first time in Egyptian mythology, as the daughter of the God Re or Ptah in the 18th dynasty. Her prime association was with horses and chariots at first, but soon became a widely worshipped goddess of love, sex, fertility, war, and the battlefield. As the Goddesses popularity spread, her name changed several times into different variations of her original name. She has come to be known also as Astarat, Astoreth, and may be the inspiration behind later famous Goddesses, such as Inanna, Ishtar, Demeter, Artemis, and Aphrodite. She was worshipped by the Philistines, the Greeks, the Romans, the Sicilians, and in many parts of Europe and Africa. Her popularity may have even spread to the Norse, with the worship of Freya, and the Celts as Danu. Astarte has been identified as being the consort of many male deities, including Baal, Seth, and the God of the sea Yamm. Astarte's primary symbol are the bull horns she wears on her head, which symbolizes fertility and dominance. Another symbol of the Goddess is the star. According to legends, Astarte fell from the stars to earth, and is the "Queen of the Stars." Other symbols are the lotus, the bull, the egg, and the dove. She is also characterized as having a bow and arrows, like the Greek Goddess Artemis. Astarte's name has been recorded as far back as 1478 BC, but it is believed that her religious followers were already known and established well before that time. Astarte continued her reign as a primary Goddess in the Middle East and Mediterranean until the



rise of Christianity. She is mentioned in the bible, in Kings 11:5 as "the goddess of the Sidonians," and "The abomination." She and her followers began to catch flack with the Christians, and was condemned because the worship of this particular Goddess included

sexual rituals, and the sacrifice of children and newborn animals. However, scholars now

believe that Astarte may be the ancient prototype for the Virgin Mary. Astarte's rebirth of the solar god, celebrated by Egyptians and Syrians was typically done on the 25th of December, the present day celebration of Jesus' birth.