

Aspects of the Mesopotamian god, Sin, in relation to Genesis 29-31

[all text below is quoted from Aino Häätinen : *The Moon God Sin in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Times* (Zaphon, 2021, Münster, Germany)

KINGSHIP

the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian sources describe him as a deity who is able to endow kingship, to protect the king, and to secure his reign. Sîn's abilities are often described as working in co-operation with those of his son, the sun god Šamaš. (196)

FERTILITY

The moon god Sîn himself bears the appellation "Fruit", which stresses his monthly renewal and growth. Undoubtedly in association with notions of growth and renewal, he had the ability to create abundance in the land and give people offspring. In relation to this idea, but also in connection with the celestial appearance of the crescent moon with its horns, he was widely associated with cattle – an aspect that is particularly distinct in his cult city Ur. (230)

In Assyria and Babylonia, the moon god Sîn was perceived as a creator god and a father of other deities, especially in his cult cities Ur and Harran. This local theological aspect underlines notions about local authority: as a father figure, the moon god was the paternal authority in his household, which consisted of his wife, his children, and his servants. (230)

Sîn's creative power is also linked to his pastoral aspect, since the same line praises him as "the one who extends the sheepfold" for him. It is possible that further references to the moon god's ability to bring about prosperity existed ...he is celebrated as the source of offspring and giver of children on multiple occasions. (238)

the importance of the moon god for women who experience difficulties becoming pregnant is an important theme in this prayer. (239)

the moon god is associated with cattle and other horned animals. A focal point for this association can be found in Ur (240)

In respect to cattle, the moon's horns are the most important aspect of the celestial phenomenon. The noun *qarnu* (Sum. *si*) was used to refer both to the horns of animals and to the horns of the moon and other celestial objects. According to the creation epic *Enuma eliš*, the horns of the moon were seen in the sky during the first days of the lunar cycle. Marduk's command to the moon god was: "In the very beginning of the month, as (you) light up above the land, you (244)

Like the moon's horns, the sheepfold (Akk. *supuru*; Sum. *amaš*) together with *tarbašu* (Sum. *tùr*), "cattle pen", has both celestial and pastoral connotations. As designations of physical locations, they denote the enclosed areas where sheep and cattle were gathered together. On the other hand, they can have (246)

WORSHIP

Due to Sîn's nature as a celestial deity, his sphere of influence was not restricted to the urban centres or rural villages, but he was present everywhere, also outside of the areas settled by humans. Like the sun, the moon can be seen from anywhere and he can be sought out even in the midst of the wilderness. (247) The core of the Ḫarranian pantheon is wellknown. Like Ur in southern Mesopotamia, the city's tutelary deities were the moon god Sîn and his wife Ningal. (387)

The Sumero-Babylonian moon god's **transfer from southern Mesopotamia to the North has been explained as the product of commercial connections or political ties**, although no direct evidence for such a transfer exists. (387)

The **temple of the moon god in Ḫarran** was known by the name É-ḫúl-ḫúl, "House of Joy". (396)

In Ḫarran, an **akitu-festival of the moon god** was celebrated much like in other Assyrian cities. According to Mark Cohen's interpretation of the Mesopotamian *akitu*-festival, the main objective of this festival procession was to **celebrate the return of the city's deities from the akitu-house back to the city...** This would explain the existence of such a festival in strategically significant cities, such as Ḫarran, which was an important military garrison. (410)

At Harran a long **inscription was found on a stele, which commemorates Addaguppi, the mother of Nabonidus, and which celebrates her reverence of the moon god**. Another stele inscription from Harran describes Nabonidus' accession to the throne, which is here described as being at the will of Su'en, and that he rebuilt the é-ḫúl-ḫúl temple ([Gadd 1958](#)).