

Goddesses and Trees, New Moon and Yahweh

**Ancient Near Eastern Art
and the Hebrew Bible**

Othmar Keel

**Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
Supplement Series 261**



CONTENTS

Preface	11
Abbreviations	12

Part I

EARTH AND TREE GODDESSES IN ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART AND IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

Chapter 1	
INTRODUCTION	16
Chapter 2	
VEGETATION, TREES AND GODDESSES IN THE BRONZE AGE	20
Vegetation, Trees and Goddesses in the Early Bronze Age and in the Middle Bronze Age IIA	20
Trees and Goddesses in the Middle Bronze Age IIB	24
Trees and Goddesses in the Late Bronze Age	30
Egyptian Tree Goddesses of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages in Image and Name	36
Chapter 3	
IRON AGE TREE CULTS	39
Tree Cult in Iron Age I	39
Iron Age II A (Tenth Century)	41
Iron Age II B (c. 930–730)	42
Iron Age II C (c. 730–600)	45
Chapter 4	
TREE GODDESS IN EGYPT, AND EARTH OR PROSPERITY GODDESS IN PALESTINE	47

Chapter 5

BIBLICAL RESPONSES	49
Biblical Texts Mentioning Tree Cult and Mother Earth Cult	49
The Problem of the Traditio-Historical Background of Yahweh's Wife in Hosea 2.4-14	50
Polemic against Tree Cults	54
Symbolism Maintained	55

Part II

**THE LUNAR EMBLEM OF HARRAN ON STELAE AND SEALS
AND THE CULT OF THE NEW MOON IN THE HEBREW BIBLE**

Chapter 6

INTRODUCTION: LOOKING FOR MAJOR ARAMAEAN DEITIES	60
---	----

Chapter 7

THE ARAMAEANS, THE MOON SANCTUARY OF HARRAN AND ITS EMBLEM IN MONUMENTAL ART	62
The Lunar Emblem Alone	63
The Lunar Emblem Flanked by Two Male Figures	65
The Lunar Emblem and the Anthropomorphic Moon God	66
The Lunar Emblem as Attribute and Object of Worship	68
Summary and Interpretation	69

Chapter 8

THE LUNAR EMBLEM OF HARRAN IN MINIATURE ART	73
The Eastern or Assyro-Babylonian Group	73
The Intermediate Group from the Harran Region	76
The Western or Northern Syrian-Phoenician-Palestinian Group	78

Chapter 9

THE ORIGIN OF THE LUNAR EMBLEM AND THE CRESCENT ON A POLE	87
The Crescent, Respectively the Crescent and Full Moon on a Pole in Palestine-Syria in the Second Millennium	87
The Lunar Emblem or the Crescent on a Pole Dating from the Old Babylonian to the Ur III Period, and Some Isolated Earlier Evidence	89

The Crescent on a Pole in the Failaka Glyptic of the First Half of the Second Millennium	91
Summary and Interpretation	92
 Chapter 10	
NORTH-WESTERN SEMITIC NAME SEALS AND THE ARAMAIC ASTRAL CULT	94
The Lunar Emblem on Aramaean Name Seals	94
The Anthropomorphic Moon God on the Crescent Boat	95
Two Men beneath the Crescent	97
The Astral Deities of the Night	100
 Chapter 11	
THE NEW MOON IN THE HEBREW BIBLE	102
What is the Reason for the Flourishing of Astral Cults in Seventh-Century Judah?	102
The New Moon in Israelite and Judaeon Tradition before and after the Seventh Century	104
 Appendix I	110
Appendix II	113
Appendix III	115
Figures for Part I	121
Figures for Part II and Appendices	149
Bibliography	176
Index of References	201
Index of Authors	204