

The Treasures of Darkness

In his important 1976 book, *The Treasures of Darkness*, Thorkild Jacobsen presents a compelling history of religion in ancient Mesopotamia. Dividing the book into millennia, Jacobsen begins with an analysis of religious metaphors of the fourth millennium B.C. with a focus on the cult of Dumuzi/Tammuz with its stages of courtship and wedding, death and lamentations, and the search for and return of the scattered parts which Jacobsen equates to fertility. The third millennium brings the gods closer as rulers of mankind, and metaphors are drawn between war, divine houses and offices, as well as the pantheon of gods known as the 70 Sons of El. An is discussed and may be equatable to the Canaanite god of creation, known as El or El-Elyon. The role of Enki is discussed especially in his role of speaking with the reed hut during the flood narrative of Atrahasis. Further discussions focus on Baal/Ninurta, Utu/Shamash, Ishkur/Hadad, and Inanna/Isis. Second millennium metaphors cover the gods as parents and the rise of personal religion, which includes a chapter devoted to the enigmatic Enuma Elish creation story. Other beliefs of the second millennium relate to tales of the heroes and death, which are gathered in the Epic of Gilgamesh.

1. Thorkild Jacobsen, and Yale University Press. *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion*. New Haven, Conn.; London, Yale University Press, 1976.
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/0300022913>.