

Isabel Cranz

Atonement and Purification

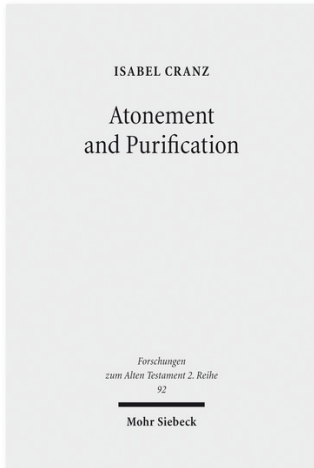
Priestly and Assyro-Babylonian Perspectives on Sin and its Consequences

[Sühne und rituelle Reinigung. Priesterliche und assyrisch-babylonische Perspektiven auf Sünde und deren Konsequenzen.]

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Biblical scholars frequently attempt to contextualize the Priestly ritual corpus by comparing it to other ancient Near Eastern ritual traditions. This comparative approach tends to detect a hidden polemic at work in the Priestly Source (P) which was meant to highlight its distinctly monotheistic outlook. Isabel Cranz reframes current understandings of P by comparing Priestly rituals of atonement to their Assyro-Babylonian counterparts. In this way she shows how the Priestly ritual corpus is highly specialized and concerns itself primarily with sanctuary maintenance. Viewing P in this new light in turn helps to demonstrate that the authors of P were not interested in discrediting foreign rituals or pushing a monotheistic agenda. Instead P primarily aimed to confirm the Aaronide priests as the only legitimate priestly group fit for service at the altar. Subsequently if a polemical agenda is present in P it can be shown to be directed against rivals and critics of the Aaronide priesthood, not other rituals of the ancient Near East.

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