

Matthew Lynch

Monotheism and Institutions in the Book of Chronicles

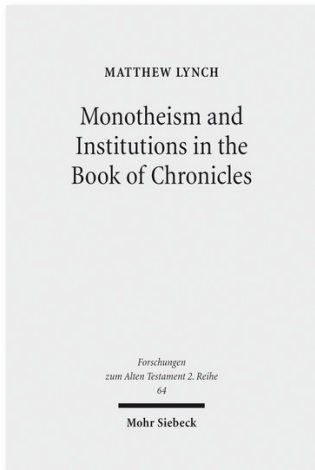
Temple, Priesthood, and Kingship in Post-Exilic Perspective. Studies of the Sofja Kovalevskaja Research Group on Early Jewish Monotheism. Vol. I

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Matthew Lynch examines ways that the one God became known and experienced through institutions according to the book of Chronicles. Chronicles recasts Israel's earlier histories from the vantage point of vigorous commitments to the temple and its supporting institutions (the priesthood and royal house), and draws out the numerous ways that those institutions mediate divine power and inspire national unity. By understanding and participating in the reestablishment of these institutions, Chronicles suggests that post-exilic Judeans could reconnect to the powerful God of the past despite the appallingly impoverished state of post-exilic life. However, Chronicles contends that God was not beholden by those participating in the temple system. As such, it constitutes a via media between two regnant perspectives on the relationship between biblical monotheism and particularism, one which sees in monotheism an inherent move beyond particularism, and another which sees a problematic appeal to monotheism to legitimate powerful institutions. While Chronicles gives expression to the profound resonances between institutional and divine greatness, it is also careful to resist linking divine power and institutional power in absolute terms.

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