



Of God and Gods: Egypt, Israel, and the Rise of Monotheism (George L. Mosse Series)

Jan Assmann

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For thousands of years, our world has been shaped by biblical monotheism. But its hallmark—a distinction between one true God and many false gods—was once a new and radical idea. *Of God and Gods* explores the revolutionary newness of biblical theology against a background of the polytheism that was once so commonplace.

Jan Assmann, one of the most distinguished scholars of ancient Egypt working today, traces the concept of a true religion back to its earliest beginnings in Egypt and describes how this new idea took shape in the context of the older polytheistic world that it rejected. He offers readers a deepened understanding of Egyptian polytheism and elaborates on his concept of the “Mosaic distinction,” which conceives an exclusive and emphatic Truth that sets religion apart from beliefs shunned as superstition, paganism, or heresy.

Without a theory of polytheism, Assmann contends, any adequate understanding of monotheism is impossible.

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