

The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts

By Mark S. Smith

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Review
"Brilliant, well-documented, well-organized, and very discomforting. Biblical scholars now recognize that in the pre-exilic era Asherah worship, infant sacrifice, solar veneration, and other religious practices attacked by biblical authors represented normal Israelite worship, while monotheism was a late development in the Babylonian Exile and subsequent years. Smith and others led the charge in this new scholarly perception of Israelite religion. But with this volume Smith has thrown down a gauntlet to challenge our understandings even more. Smith has produced a seminal work with which scholars must come to grips for years."

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About the Author

Mark S. Smith is Skirball Professor of Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at New York University. His publications include *The Pilgrimage Pattern in Exodus* (1997), *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (1994), *The Early History of God* (1990), as well as several other books on the Hebrew Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and West Semitic mythology and literature.

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