

MATTHEW LYNCH

# Monotheism and Institutions in the Book of Chronicles

*Forschungen  
zum Alten Testament 2. Reihe*

64

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**Mohr Siebeck**

# Forschungen zum Alten Testament

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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

Mohr Siebeck

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## Preface

The following study is a revised version of my doctoral dissertation, entitled “Agents of Exaltation: Monotheism, Divine Supremacy, and Focal Institutions in the Book of Chronicles,” completed at Emory University in 2012 under the supervision of David Petersen. I am grateful to the *Forschungen zum Alten Testament II* series editors Bernd Janowski, Hermann Spieckermann, and Mark Smith for accepting this work for publication, and to Dr. Smith for providing extensive editorial feedback.

This book has benefitted tremendously from the wise guidance and expertise of many individuals, and from the support of several institutions. I would like to start by recognizing my supervisor David Petersen. I have worked under Dr. Petersen in several capacities, as a student, a teaching assistant, on the Common English Bible translation project, and as a supervisee. Dr. Petersen’s attentiveness to my work, availability for discussion, intellectual precision, thought-provoking comments, and encouragement are only a few of the ways that I have profited from his guidance. In addition, this book has profited significantly from the many helpful comments and conversations with my committee member Jacob Wright. Dr. Wright’s personal encouragement has helped sustain this project. I am also grateful for the valuable input from my committee member Brent Strawn. Pat Graham of Pitts Theology Library also lent me his wisdom in things Chronicistic by reading and offering helpful comments on my first two chapters.

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At the completion of this study on institutions in the book of Chronicles, I am keenly aware of my benefit from several exceptional educational and research institutions. Emory University is one of the most supportive and generous institutions at which one could possibly study. Its first-rate faculty, library resources, collegiality, and financial support have proved tremendous and sustaining. In addition, I am privileged to have worked within the Graduate Division of Religion's Hebrew Bible department. My professors and colleagues shaped me for the better.

I also wish to thank the Educational and Cultural Affairs Scholarship committee, the generous support of Sy Gitin, and the Albright Institute for funding and facilitating my research in Jerusalem. Emory provided additional financial support to enable this research abroad. My wonderful colleagues at the institute constantly stimulated my thinking. Andrea Berlin deserves thanks for her guidance and feedback on the historical portion of my second chapter, as do others at the institute who encouraged me to sharpen my thinking about Chronicles' historical context(s).

I owe thanks to the German DAAD program for funding my first year of research at the University of Göttingen, and to Hermann Spieckermann and Nathan MacDonald for facilitating my stay and then year as a post-doc. With the support of the Alexander von Humboldt funded Sofja Kovalevskaja project, Nathan MacDonald created a highly stimulating research community around the topic of early Jewish monotheism. I thank the entire research group for their friendship and extensive feedback on my research.

Special thanks are also reserved for my wonderful colleagues at Westminster Theological Centre who generously provided me with time to finish this project.

My parents Wayne and Carol Lynch deserve special recognition for setting me on a path in which I would even consider biblical studies a meaningful and faith-building endeavor. They have always encouraged me to think deeply about the Bible, my faith, and education. I also wish to offer heartfelt thanks to my in-laws, Ron and Lois Raedeke, for their unflagging support and interest in my work.

I wish to dedicate this book to my wife, Abi Lynch, who created an environment in which writing this book was a delight, and putting it aside a joy. Her expert editorial eye looked over all details of the book at numerous stages of its development. Abi's wise and perceptive input, friendship, and encouraging spirit sustained me through this work.

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## Chapter 1

# Introduction

In his classic essay, “The Universal Horizon of Biblical Particularism,” Jon Levenson argues that there is nothing more “simplistic, grossly misleading, and even dangerous” than the oft-repeated contrast between “universalistic” and “particularistic” religions.<sup>1</sup> Levenson suggests that the Hebrew Bible bears witness to a “sophisticated interplay” between universal and particularist beliefs and features, and that according to none of its traditions can one reduce matters to one end of this polarizing contrast.<sup>2</sup> Despite Levenson’s important critique of the universalistic and particularistic polarity, and the subsequent studies offering similar critiques,<sup>3</sup> scholarly discussions of monotheism in the Hebrew Bible tend to cling vigorously to one or another end of the polarity Levenson critiques. One scholarly perspective conceives of development within monotheism in which Israelite religion moved away from institutional expressions of Yahwism in a universalizing direction. This perspective posits a radical shredding of the divine-institutional fabric that sustained the nation in the pre-exilic period. Another perspective suggests that even before the exile, monotheism had become inseparably and problematically wedded to particular institutions of authority like the monarchy or priesthood, such that those institutions become inalienable bearers of divine power. The post-exilic period merely continued this theme.

While each perspective captures something important and true about the institutional impact of monotheism, both fail to describe the complexity and creativity with which biblical writers conceived of the interaction between monotheism and the realities of Israel’s life. It is toward a fuller description of the “sophisticated interplay” Levenson discerns that this

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<sup>1</sup> J. D. LEVENSON, “The Universal Horizon of Biblical Particularism,” in *Ethnicity and the Bible* (ed. M. G. BRETT; BI 19; Leiden/New York: Brill, 1996) 143-69 (143).

<sup>2</sup> Idem, “The Universal,” 169.

<sup>3</sup> T. L. DONALDSON, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007); J. COTT, “The Biblical Problem of Election,” *JES* 21 (1984) 199-228; J. KAMINSKY, “Election Theology and the Problem of Universalism,” *HBT* 33/1 (2011) 34-44; J. N. LOHR, “Taming the Untamable: Christian Attempts to Make Israel’s Election Universal,” *HBT* 33/1 (2011) 24-33.

book examines the place of institutions<sup>4</sup> within biblical monotheism. To focus and contextualize this discussion, I elucidate how the book of Chronicles<sup>5</sup> construes the relationship between Yhwh's sole divinity and Judah's focal institutions—the temple, temple personnel, and its royal patron.<sup>6</sup> The post-exilic book of Chronicles provides an ideal test case for studying this issue because it re-casts Israel's history from the vantage point of vigorous commitments to the One God *and* to the absolute primacy of the temple. As many recognize, the priesthood and monarchy are likewise crucial institutions in Chronicles, though oriented toward the temple, their *raison d'être*. As such, Chronicles offers a valuable test case for examining how biblical writers negotiated beliefs in one deity and commitments to particular institutions.

In order to carry out this investigation, it is also necessary to understand how Chronicles conceptualizes Judah's divine-institutional world. Thus, I situate my examination of monotheism and institutions in a framework that addresses the question of how institutions relate to divine reality.<sup>7</sup> This is

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<sup>4</sup> Sociologists typically define institutions as the collectively recognized “rules of the game,” or the “humanly-devised constraints that shape human interactions” and provide stability and meaning to social life. Institutions are also described as stabilizing entities, designed to classify, organize, and interpret experience, and to minimize the “transaction costs” of social experience. As such, they are not always empirically visible, though they can nonetheless be experienced (e.g., “family”); see D. C. NORTH, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 3; cf. P. L. BERGER, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967) 21; P. L. BERGER and T. LUCKMANN, *Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1966) position 1587 of the Amazon Kindle ebook edition. In the present study, I work with a modified understanding of institutions for use in my discussion of the temple, cult, and monarchy in Chronicles by addressing the institution of the temple as a physical, and not just a social structure. However, the physical temple serves a socially *defining* purpose insofar as the Judeans derived their significance from its success or failure, and its physical condition was often perceived to be a measure of divine favor and national commitment. Thus, legitimating the temple as a physical structure is part of describing its normative societal importance. My contention is that the Chronicler's claims about institutional participation in divine reality are bound up with the book's efforts to legitimate the institutions and roles conferred upon the priesthood, king, and also Israel on the basis of the temple's unique physical and theological status.

<sup>5</sup> Throughout this book I use “Chronicles” and “the Chronicler” interchangeably as substitutes for referring to the author(s) and tradents that composed and purveyed the book of Chronicles.

<sup>6</sup> By *focal institutions* I refer to the central or emblematic systems that define Israel's roles, purposes, and identity, and that serve as orienting and organizing entities within the Chronicler's history.

<sup>7</sup> By *divine reality*, I refer to the Chronicler's conception of Yhwh's identity and domain—especially his personhood, kingdom, and throne—which overlap and intersect with, but are not synonymous with, Israel's kingdom and institutions.

part of an effort to move beyond labeling texts as monotheistic or non-monotheistic by describing the place and purpose of monotheistic discourse within the Chronicler's divine-institutional world. For Chronicles, which was likely written in the late Persian/early Hellenistic period,<sup>8</sup> one

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<sup>8</sup> A word is in order concerning the dating of the book of Chronicles. Dating the book of Chronicles depends on specifically datable points, theories of cultural influence, and literary redaction. As such, Chronicles' date of composition is very difficult to determine with any precision. Nonetheless, several points deserve mention. *First*, the decree of Cyrus in 2 Chr 26:22-23 suggests a *terminus a quo* of 538 B.C.E., and the mention of the Persian "Darc" (דַּרְכָּמון; 1 Chr 29:7) moves the *terminus a quo* even later, to around 515 B.C.E. (discussed by H. G. M. WILLIAMSON, *Studies in Persian Period History and Historiography* [FAT 1/38; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004] 169-70). There exist other Persian loanwords in the book as well, such as גִּזְזֹךְ ("treasury"; 1 Chr 28:11) and פֶּרֶבֶר ("colonnade"; 1 Chr 26:18). The time required for such Persian loanwords to make their way into the Chronicler's vocabulary renders unlikely the early post-exilic date proposed by Cross, Freedman, Newsome, and others. *Second*, 1 Chr 3:17-24 mentions the descendants of Jehoiachin, who was exiled in 597 B.C.E. The MT mentions *six* generations beyond Zerubbabel, which would date to around the late fifth or early fourth century. The LXX traces *eleven* generations beyond Zerubbabel, which would date this text—and possibly the book of Chr—to around the late fourth or early third century at the earliest. It is unclear whether the LXX reflects an earlier Hebrew, is a secondary rendering, or whether the passage is a late addition and therefore useless for dating the entire book of Chronicles (see the discussion in K. PELTONEN, "A Jigsaw without a Model? The Dating of Chronicles," in *Did Moses Speak Attic? Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001] 225-71 [226]). *Third*, Eupolemus (ca. 150 B.C.E.) cites the LXX of Chronicles, and Ben Sira (ca. 190 B.C.E.) presupposes David's appointing of temple singers (Sir 47:8-10; see S. S. TUELL, *First and Second Chronicles* [Interpretation; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001] 10). *Fourth*, some scholars examine the status of Levites vis-à-vis Ezra-Nehemiah to discern, e.g., whether Chronicles knows of events in Nehemiah's day, or whether it represents a more "advanced" stage in the development of priestly courses (S. JAPHET, *I & II Chronicles* [OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993] 26-27). However, it is not always clear when Chronicles depends on Nehemiah, vice-versa, or whether both represent independent developments (JAPHET, *I & II Chronicles*, 135-36; e.g., in 1 Chr 23-27; Neh 12). As such, this is a dubious enterprise. *Fifth*, scholars argue for or against knowledge of Hellenistic features in the book. However, Greek influence in Palestine began as early as the eighth century B.C.E., and was not limited to the periods after the conquests of Alexander. Moreover, as KNOPPERS (G. N. KNOPPERS, *I Chronicles 1-9* [AB 12; New York: Doubleday, 2004] 104) argues convincingly, Hellenistic influences in Yehud were far less pronounced than on the coast until well into the Hellenistic period. Thus, the presence or absence of Hellenistic features "should be discontinued as a benchmark to establish a *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the Chronicler's work." The attempt to see Chronicles as a reaction against the threat of Hellenism is not, in my view, convincing (see G. STEINS, *Die Chronik als kanonisches Abschlußphänomen: Studien zur Entstehung und Theologie von 1/2 Chronik* [BBB 93; Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum, 1995], who dates Chronicles to the Maccabean period). However, broad knowledge of Greek influences in Syro-Palestine provides opportunities for situating Chronicles generally in its larger Hellenistic milieu. See, e.g., the studies of A. ERLICH,

could hardly speak of God without speaking of the institutional forms in which he is known and experienced. Attending to the interaction between divine and institutional reality sheds light on the book's forms of theological "reasoning" and the ways that Chronicles conceives of divinity and its relationship to post-exilic Judean society. Thus, my book also addresses a most basic question, *How does Chronicles do theology?*

Furthermore, my book addresses the historical-rhetorical question: *Why does Chronicles advocate this particular configuration of the divine-institutional world through this historical medium?* I contend that Chronicles is not interested oft-cited existential question of whether the great God of Israel's past is still great. Rather, Chronicles addresses a more particular question that the post-exilic period implicitly raised: Is the great and powerful God of the past manifest in post-exilic society? The book of Chronicles is shaped by a question concerning the relationship between divine supremacy and Judean society. The Chronicler answers this question in the affirmative by pointing toward the historic and enduring relationship between Yhwh and Israel's primary institutions, and by doing so, affirms that divine greatness and power were still accessible despite deep rifts between past and present. Chronicles seeks to reaffirm yet also reweave the divine-institutional "canopy" torn by the experience of exile by legitimating the temple and its supporting institutions (the priesthood and monarchy) as worthy of loyalty and support *because they manifest and mediate the great God of Israel's past.*<sup>9</sup>

By exploring this tightly woven divine-institutional world, we find a sustained effort to distinguish and bolster the *few, centralized* institutions endowed with the tasks of manifesting divine supremacy and unifying the nation. The temple, priesthood, and monarchy share variously in the mani-

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*The Art of Hellenistic Palestine* (BARIS; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2009); E. STERN, *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period: 538–332 B.C.* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1982); idem, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: Volume II: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods 732–332 BCE* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 2001); C. L. MEYERS and E. M. MEYERS, *Zechariah 9–14* (AB 25C; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1993) 22–26.

<sup>9</sup> Because humanly arranged institutions come under threat, are often fragile, and frequently in competition, their survival requires *legitimation*. Legitimations are not just claims to power, existing for the sake of the institution itself. Nor are they purveyed only by their power holders. Rather, legitimations are part of a broader process by which humans seek to explain the ordering of the world in terms of the institutions that comprise their social world. That is, legitimations aim to connect institutions to the rest of the world with the ultimate goal of reality-maintenance. According to BERGER, "legitimation" is the attempt to answer the "whys" of institutional arrangements, and prove most effective insofar as institutions become self-evident, part of the structure of the world itself, such that one could say, "These institutions exist because that's just the way the world is" (BERGER, *Sacred Canopy*, 29).

festation of Yhwh's kingdom, and attain what I call "participatory exaltation," that is, an exalted status that derives from sharing in divine reality. At times, one may speak of a monotheistic configuration of divine and institutional reality, wherein Yhwh's sole divinity finds an analogical expression in the uniqueness of the temple, priesthood, and king.

However, the Chronicler was also careful to emphasize the provisional, partial, and limited nature of Yhwh's relationship to Israel's focal institutions. Israel's institutions did not possess an absolute, permanent, or exclusive claim to divine power and supremacy, despite the fact that they shared basic qualities with Yhwh. There were discontinuities between the expression of Yhwh's supremacy as such, and the institutions that bore his imprint and authority. My study thus examines (a) the shape of divine and institutional interactions in the book of Chronicles, (b) the ways that those institutions convey or embody divine realities and social hopes, and (c) the ways that Chronicles protects divine supremacy by differentiating between Yhwh and Israel's institutions.

I begin my study by reviewing scholarship on monotheism and institutions. This review reveals important points of tension and disagreement within biblical scholarship regarding the way that exalted claims about Yhwh purportedly interacted with Israel's socio-political life. I contend that the Chronicler's perspective on monotheism constitutes a *via media* between perspectives that pit monotheism and institutions against each other, and those that see them as absolutely wedded. After this, I delineate my primary thesis in more detail (section II.).

## I. Monotheism and Institutions: A Polarized Discussion

Scholars have tended to advance one of two diametrically opposed perspectives on the relationship between monotheism and Israel's institutions. Either monotheism dispenses with the need for religio-political particularities such as Israel's national institutions, or monotheism became inevitably aligned with the interests of powerful institutions and became a means of coercion. *Both* perspectives suggest that the relationship between monotheisms and institutions is fundamentally problematic, though in different terms.

### *A. Antagonism between Monotheism and Institutional Particularism?*

According to the first perspective, exile provided the social and institutional preconditions necessary for monotheism's emergence or full flowering. Shorn of its parochial, cultic, and nationalist "baggage," some suggest



that the exile forced Israel to reconceptualize its deity in universalistic terms. For example, Klaus Koch refers to the “trans-national” significance of Yhwh that emerged among the classical prophets, a significance which paved the way for Deutero-Isaiah’s monotheism. Koch does not specify what he means by “trans-national,” though one suspects he means something akin to “de-nationalized.” Koch states:

Polytheistic gods are essentially particular and regional. Because they are socialized in line with the community that worships them, they are dismissive, if not downright hostile, towards everything impure and foreign ... Consequential monotheism, by contrast, presupposes a deity accessible in all places and to all people. This entails an ethics that applies in equal measure to all, provided the monotheistic horizon is not *restricted by a closed society of the elect*. The more exclusive the deity, the more inclusive for humankind.<sup>10</sup>

Koch writes that Deutero-Isaiah’s monotheism is the “result of a long history of religious experience and mental wrestling over the true essence of divinity and its relation to human life.”<sup>11</sup> Monotheism thus transcends national and historical restrictions by assuming an ideational form that superseded the particularities of life as a nation. Ronald Clements echoes Koch’s sentiments:

By shedding its earlier national limitations, and the destructive intolerance which these brought, the biblical doctrine of God could accommodate the demands of a doctrine of a universal creation and of a wisdom that embraced all humankind.<sup>12</sup>

Koch’s and Clements’ descriptions sit uneasily with the realities of post-exilic Judaism, including the concerns for purity present in Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles, as well as the diminished interest in the plight of the nations in Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles when compared with Deutero-Isaiah. There is no indication that post-exilic Judaism saw an inherent conflict between one-God theology and its commitments to the law, the temple, the priesthood, the land, the Davidic line, and so on.

To explain the coexistence of monotheism and particularism in the post-exilic period, Rainer Albertz speaks of a “difficulty in detaching ... from long accustomed trains of thought and familiar patterns of religious con-

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<sup>10</sup> K. KOCH, “Monotheismus als Sündenbock?,” in *Mosaische Unterscheidung: oder der Preis der Monotheismus* (Munich/Vienna: Carl Hanser Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, 2003) 221-38 (229-30), cited by J. ASSMANN, *The Price of Monotheism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010) 16 (emphasis mine).

<sup>11</sup> K. KOCH, “Ugaritic Polytheism and Hebrew Monotheism in Isaiah 40-55,” in *The God of Israel* (ed. R. P. GORDON; UCOP 64; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 205-28 (224).

<sup>12</sup> R. E. CLEMENTS, “Monotheism and the God of Many Names,” in *The God of Israel*, 47-59 (58-59).

ceptuality” even though monotheism entailed “an opening up of Yahweh religion toward universalism.” According to Albertz, these trains of thought and religious conceptions were formed “in the circles of those engaged in the service of the Jerusalem temple with their nationalistic disposition,” in groups that had difficulty moving toward monotheism’s true universalistic openness.<sup>13</sup>

André Lemaire follows a line of argumentation similar to Albertz’s. Lemaire suggests that “old provincial Yahwism” persisted alongside the “new universal Yahwism” of Deutero-Isaiah.<sup>14</sup> However, by the first century, he argues, Yahwism eventually died out and was replaced by worship of the “God of Heaven,” the God of universal religion. For Lemaire, the destruction of the second temple marked the complete end of that “old provincial Yahwism.” Yahwism thus completed the process of moving “to other peoples ... outside the old territories of Israel and Judah, and disappeared as a particular form of worship.” In sum, “Yahwism ... fulfilled its historical role by giving birth to universal monotheism.”<sup>15</sup> The universality of monotheism eventually pushed out the particulars of Yahwism.

Theophile Meek is also representative in his claim that for “monotheism to be monotheism [it] must transcend national limitations; it must be supernational and universal”<sup>16</sup> The exile provided the ideal seedbed for monotheism because it enabled Israel to dissociate itself from particularist preoccupations like kingship, the land, and the temple system, and offered an opportunity to rethink divinity. Deutero-Isaiah’s “landless” historical context fostered a universal theology.<sup>17</sup> The post-exilic period, so the argument suggests, marks a period wherein the implications of exilic monotheism were in a restrictive holding pattern until the seeds of Deutero-Isaiah’s *universal* monotheism broke the bonds of the particular. As such, the possibility of mutual interactions between Yhwh’s preeminence and the “elect” institutions that dominate a book like Chronicles could only be conflictual.

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<sup>13</sup> R. ALBERTZ, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period: Volume II: From the Exile to the Maccabees* (trans. John Bowden; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992) 420.

<sup>14</sup> A. LEMAIRE, *The Birth of Monotheism: The Rise and Disappearance of Yahwism* (trans. J. MEINHARDT and A. LEMAIRE; Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2007) 112.

<sup>15</sup> LEMAIRE, *The Birth of Monotheism*, 113.

<sup>16</sup> N. MACDONALD, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of ‘Monotheism’* (FAT 2/1; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) 34, quoting T. J. MEEK, *Hebrew Origins* (New York: Harper, 1960) 214-15.

<sup>17</sup> Though certainly, and this is often ignored in discussions of Deutero-Isaiah and monontheism, Deutero-Isaiah was oriented toward Israel’s return to the land (e.g., Isa 44:28).

Approaching divine–institutional relationships from a different angle, Baruch Halpern traces the emergence of “radical monotheism” to a fundamental breakdown in Israelite social structures, traditional iconism, ritual patterns, and traditional temple worship.<sup>18</sup> Sennacherib’s destruction of the Israelite and Judean countryside along with the aniconic reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah weakened these traditional structures, enabling individualism, monotheism, and various other “monisms” to emerge in the late monarchic and exilic periods. As Israel moved from a “traditional to literate [i.e., literary]” culture, it abandoned its traditional institutions and embraced notions of one God, aniconism, and the “book.”<sup>19</sup>

Building on Halpern’s work, Mark Smith hypothesizes similarly that the breakdown of Israel’s social structures during the late monarchic and exilic periods led to a corresponding breakdown in the divine family:

A culture with a diminished lineage system, one less embedded in traditional family patrimonies due to societal changes in the eighth through sixth centuries, might be more predisposed both to hold to individual human accountability for behavior and to see an individual deity accountable for the cosmos. ... Accordingly, later Israelite monotheism was denuded of the divine family, perhaps reflecting Israel’s weakening family lineages and patrimonies.<sup>20</sup>

Israel’s defeats at the hands of major world empires, its “political and social reduction ... loss of Judean kingship ... [and] loss of identity as a na-

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<sup>18</sup> B. HALPERN, “Jerusalem and the Lineages in the 7th Century BCE: Kinship and the Rise of Individual Moral Liability,” in *Law and Ideology in Monarchic Israel* (ed. B. Halpern and D. W. Hobson; JSOTSup 124; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) 11–107; repr. in *From Gods to God: The Dynamics of Iron Age Cosmologies* (ed. M. J. ADAMS; FAT 1/63; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) 339–424 (415, cf. also p. 424). One wonders if Halpern oversteps the evidence, and perhaps takes the prophetic critique too literally, in his suggestion that “Hezekiah’s congeries [in the royal court] struggled not for subsistence or the accumulation of wealth, but for influence. In this struggle, lineage mates were the danger: half-brothers were rivals, cousins competitors, affinals potential foes. Hezekiah’s courtiers expressed their rapacity in the rasp of *Realpolitik*.” See also B. HALPERN, “‘Sybil, or the Two Nations?’ Alienation, Archaism, and the Elite Redefinition of Traditional Culture in Judah in the 8th–7th Centuries BCE,” in *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference* (ed. J. S. COOPER and G. M. SCHWARZ; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996) 291–338; Cf. R. SIMKINS (“Family in the Political Economy of Monarchic Judah,” *BCT* 1/1 [2004] 1–17), who argues that the extended family became important again within the post-exilic period. For a study on the *persistence* of traditional family structures and a strong centralized state, see D. M. MASTER, “State Formation Theory and the Kingdom of Ancient Israel,” *JNES* 60/2 (2001) 117–31.

<sup>19</sup> HALPERN, “Jerusalem and the Lineages,” 412–15.

<sup>20</sup> M. S. SMITH, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel’s Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) 164. See HALPERN, “Jerusalem and the Lineages in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century BCE,” 339–424.

tion,” prompted the nation to extend its “understanding of its deity’s mastery of the world even as the nation was being reduced.”<sup>21</sup> Smith also contends that “[m]onotheistic claims made sense in a world where political boundaries or institutions no longer offered any middle ground.”<sup>22</sup> In other words, the devastation of Israel’s socio-political structures provided the conditions necessary for, or at least conducive to, the emergence of monotheism.<sup>23</sup>

Implicit in these assessments is a teleology, according to which monotheism inevitably evolved beyond the elements of “national” life that restricted monotheism’s expression. However, there is no reason to assume that monotheism required, or was even prompted by, the dissolution of particularist societal institutions. Even Deutero-Isaiah attests to Israel’s resolute commitment to the land and its central institutions, even while it advances strong monotheistic rhetoric.<sup>24</sup> For example, the prophet asserts that Yhwh’s servant Cyrus would rebuild Jerusalem and its temple (44:24-28) and that Yhwh’s salvation would become established “in Zion” (46:13). Nathan MacDonald writes: “Land and the temple are certainly reconfigured in the post-exilic period, but neither is erased. Arguably the exile could be seen as making these realities even more important than they formerly were.”<sup>25</sup>

Even more problematic for those who would divide monotheism from “provincial Yahwism” is the simple fact that Judeans did return to the land to join the many who remained in seeking to re-organize society around the institutions that survived exile. Though configuring those institutions differently, many remained committed to Israel’s central institutions (e.g., the temple, priesthood, and kingship) while holding vigorously to the idea of Yhwh’s sole divinity (e.g., Neh 9:6; 1 Chr 16:8-36). Monotheistic rhetoric continued to take shape within societal frameworks committed to the uniqueness of Yhwh’s relationship with Israel, its institutions, and its land. Biblical writers such as the Chronicler saw congruency between divine supremacy and the assertion of particular institutions that deserves atten-

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<sup>21</sup> SMITH, *Origins*, 165.

<sup>22</sup> SMITH, *Origins*, 193.

<sup>23</sup> Smith also traces a move from the land and political institutions to the book (*Origins*, 194). HALPERN, “Jerusalem and the Lineages,” 404, argued earlier that the transition to a “literate culture” in the late seventh century B.C.E. coincided with a critique of “icons ... rituals ... the temple ... [and] subordinate gods.”

<sup>24</sup> See N. MACDONALD, “Monotheism and Isaiah,” in *Interpretation of Isaiah* (ed. H. G. M. WILLIAMSON and D. FIRTH; Leicester: IVP, 2009) 43-61 (46); H. CLIFFORD, “Deutero-Isaiah and Monotheism,” in *Prophecy and Prophets in Ancient Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (ed. J. Day; LHBOTS 531; New York/London: T&T Clark International, 2010) 267-89.

<sup>25</sup> MACDONALD, “Monotheism and Isaiah,” 55.

tion. Solomon states: “The temple that I build will be supreme, for our God is supreme above all the gods” (2 Chr 2:4[5]).<sup>26</sup> This congruency also applies to statements about Yhwh’s sole divinity (1 Chr 17:19-27//2 Sam 7:21-29).

However, if the exile proved formative in the articulation of monotheism, did the return to the land modify the way in which Israel espoused or conceptualized monotheism or divine supremacy? Surely the experience of exile prompted the emergence of various recalibrated perspectives on Israel’s primary institutions.<sup>27</sup> How did the returnees negotiate their understanding of Yhwh’s sole divinity and their commitments to the land, temple, priesthood, and other “provincial” concerns? Though a comprehensive answer to these questions is beyond the scope of the present study, I propose one step toward addressing such questions by taking an explicitly post-exilic corpus with clear monotheistic rhetoric *and* obvious commitments to “provincial” aspects of life in Yehud in order to explore their interaction. It is in this vein that the book of Chronicles warrants particular attention.

First, Chronicles allows for regular comparison with a work marked by the experience of exile—namely, the Deuteronomistic History (hereafter DH).<sup>28</sup> Chronicles thus enables one to detect rhetorical or conceptual shifts

<sup>26</sup> Translation mine, and throughout the present work, except where noted otherwise. In Chapter 2 I address how this verse assumes that the gods are non-gods by evoking Ps 135:5.

<sup>27</sup> D. M. CARR states: “We do see ... a move in Second Isaiah away from state structures, a move typical of groups experiencing prolonged displacement” (*The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011]). Carr sees the displacement of Davidic hopes onto Cyrus and the community, and a move toward and appeal to *pre-state* figures such as Abraham in the exilic period. None after Zerubbabel seem to be the object of hopes for the restoration of the Davidic dynasty, as I discuss in Chapter 5.

<sup>28</sup> While the DH may have been redacted into the post-exilic period, I nonetheless maintain that it bears the distinctive marks of Israel’s exilic and pre-exilic experiences, and that the majority of this work was available to Chr. See CARR, *Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 244. It is nevertheless important to exercise caution in ascribing too much intention to Chronicles’ revision of Samuel–Kings because of the possibility that the author(s) of Chronicles employed extra-biblical sources or earlier literary editions of Samuel–Kings. It is clear in some cases that Chronicles used a version of Samuel that differs from MT Samuel, and is of the Palestinian “text type” more akin to LXX Samuel or 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, on which see E. C. ULRICH, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus* (HSM 19; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978); Moreover, it appears that Chronicles used a version of Kings more akin to the MT, see S. L. MCKENZIE, *The Chronicler’s Use of the Deuteronomistic History* (HSM 33; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985). Others argue that where MT Chronicles and MT Samuel–Kings differ, they reflect later expansions of a shared original. See A. G. AULD, *Kings without Privilege: David and Moses in the Story of the Bible’s Kings* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994). Cf. G. N. KNOPPERS, review of A.

regarding divine supremacy between bodies of literature that took shape in the exilic and post-exilic periods. In this sense, a study of Chronicles offers an opportunity for investigation not available in other post-exilic literature (e.g., Ezra–Nehemiah, and to some extent P). Of course, the DH is also marked by the experience of the monarchy, which allows for further comparison of monotheizing discourse before and after the exile.<sup>29</sup>

Second, Chronicles maintains a clear focus on institutions (especially the temple, priesthood, and kingship), and as such allows one to explore one way that post-exilic Judeans negotiated exalted claims about Yhwh that were forged and inflected during exile and their commitment to rebuilding society in the tiny province of Yehud. While Samuel and Kings certainly take an interest in the temple and cultic reforms, the temple dominates Chronicles' narrative world, and its priestly personnel attracts unprecedented attention.<sup>30</sup> A study of the constructive interaction between these institutions and one-God rhetoric warrants investigation.

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G. AULD, *Kings Without Privilege: David and Moses in the Story of the Bible's Kings*, *ATJ* 27 (1995) 118–21; S. L. MCKENZIE, "The Chronicler as Redactor," in *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture* (JSOTSup 238; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1999) 70–90. Auld responds to McKenzie in "What Was the Main Source of the Book of Chronicles?," in *The Chronicler as Author*, 91–100. A recent elaboration of Auld's thesis can be found in the work of R. R. PERSON, Jr., *The Deuteronomistic History and the Book of Chronicles: Scribal Works in an Oral World* (SBLAIL 6; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2010). For additional studies on textual issues pertaining to Chronicles and its sources, and especially the relationship of MT Samuel–Kings to LXX Samuel–Kings, see D. BARTHÉLEMY, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, vol. 1, *Josué, Juges, Ruth, Samuel, Rois, Chroniques, Esdras, Néhémie, Esther* (OBO 50/1; Fribourg/Göttingen, 1982); J. C. T. BARRERA, "Kings (MT/LXX) and Chronicles: The Double and Triple Textual Tradition," in *Reflection and Refraction: Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld* (ed. R. REZETKO, T. H. LIM, and W. B. AUCKER; VTSup 113; Leiden: Brill, 2007) 483–501; S. L. MCKENZIE, "1 Kings 8: A Sample Study into the Texts of Kings Used by the Chronicler and Translated by the Old Greek," *BIOCS* 19 (1986) 15–34; G. GERLEMAN, *Studies in the Septuagint, II. Chronicles* (LUÅ 44/5; Lund: Gleerup, 1946); idem, *Synoptic Studies in the Old Testament* (Lund: Gleerup, 1948); J. D. SHENKEL, "A Comparative Study of the Synoptic Parallels in I Paraleipomena and I-II Reigns," *HTR* 62 (1969) 63–85. Shenkel notes how Paral. 1 is heavily dependent on 3 Reg, and that it precedes the *kaige* recension. See also T. M. LAW, "How Not to Use 3 Reigns: A Plea to Scholars of the Books of Kings," *VT* 61 (2011) 280–97.

<sup>29</sup> According to J. PAKKALA, however, the explicitly monotheistic texts in the DH are post-exilic (Deut 4:32–40; 7:7–11; 2 Sam 7:22–29; 1 Kgs 8:54–61; 18:21–40; 2 Kgs 19:15–19). Pakkala attributes all six monotheistic passages to the latest "nomistic," or post-nomistic, redactor ("The Monotheism of the Deuteronomistic History," *SJOT* 21:2 [2007] 159–78).

<sup>30</sup> For a comparative study on the temple in Samuel–Kings and Chronicles, see S. J. SCHWEITZER, "The Temple in Samuel–Kings and Chronicles," in *Rewriting Biblical History: Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira in Honor of Pancratius C. Beentjes* (ed. J.

Third, Chronicles bears witness to distinct ways of expressing Yhwh's supremacy and sole divinity vis-à-vis its primary sources, Samuel and Kings.<sup>31</sup> I do not suggest that Chronicles introduces monotheism to Israel's historical literature, or that it increases the number of monotheistic claims. Indeed, there is ample evidence that monotheistic ideology was thoroughly embedded within the final form of the DH.<sup>32</sup> Rather, I contend that monotheism in Chronicles fosters a different divine-institutional configuration than one finds in its *Primärvorlage* (Samuel-Kings). In particular, Chronicles proposes the temple as the organizing manifestation of Yhwh's supremacy, with the king and priesthood oriented toward the temple's augmentation. As such, Chronicles offers an important witness to the theological convictions nourishing hopes for the temple, priesthood, and monarchy within post-exilic Jewish society.<sup>33</sup> When compared with Samuel-Kings, Chronicles bears witness to the shift from a monarchy-oriented theology of divine preeminence to a temple-oriented theology.

However, the foregoing review prompts additional questions: Did monotheistic ideology become wedded absolutely and inalienably to institutions of power? Did Chronicles so align the temple and its subsidiary institutions with divinity that it became impossible to distinguish conceptually between divine and institutional claims to power and supremacy? This question requires some attention.

### *B. A Dangerous Alliance between Monotheism and Institutional Particularism?*

According to this second scholarly perspective, the close association between divine and institutional supremacy carried with it an "ideological

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CORLEY and H. van GROL; DCLS 7; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011) 123-38. Kingship, as I argue, does not loom larger in Chronicles, only differently.

<sup>31</sup> On the relationship between Chronicles and Samuel-Kings, see n. 28 above. Throughout the present work, I treat text-critical and ideological issues as they arise in connection with differences between the two histories.

<sup>32</sup> PAKKALA, "The Monotheism of the Deuteronomistic History"; idem, *Intolerant Monolatry in the Deuteronomistic History* (PFES 76; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

<sup>33</sup> If the temple did not yet form the religious center of Judaism when Chronicles was written, Chronicles certainly presents an argument in its favor. On the texts of Samuel-Kings available to the Chronicler, see L. C. ALLEN, *The Greek Chronicles: The Relation of the Septuagint of I and II Chronicles to the Masoretic Text, Part 1: The Translator's Craft* (VTSup 25; Leiden: Brill, 1974); idem, *The Greek Chronicles: The Relation of the Septuagint of I and II Chronicles to the Masoretic Text, Part 2: Textual Criticism* (VTSup 27; Leiden: Brill, 1974); MCKENZIE, *The Chronicler's Use of the Deuteronomistic History*.

temptation” to which Israel usually succumbed,<sup>34</sup> and which led to brute assertions of power.<sup>35</sup> This temptation, which Walter Brueggemann labels “*mono-ideology*,” insisted on “the singularity, peculiarity, and privilege of Israel as a political entity in the world,” and led Israel to “imagine itself as privileged, in every sphere of life, as Yahweh’s unrivaled and inalienable partner.”<sup>36</sup> When monotheistic theology became wedded to notions of election, the partnership became most susceptible to misuse. Writers advancing monotheism aligned absolutely divine and institutional power.

This idea that monotheism engendered absolutism finds early expression in David Hume’s *The Natural History of Religion*, in which he argued that polytheism’s ability to limit the powers and functions of its deities “naturally admits the gods of other sects and nations to share of divinity,” and thereby renders the “deities, as well as the rites, ceremonies, or traditions, compatible with each other.”<sup>37</sup> By contrast, monotheism engenders intolerance, setting up the unity of its “faith and ceremonies” in violent opposition to those of their adversaries. In other words, the beliefs, institutions, and culture of monotheism lead logically to the destruction of opposing forces. For Hume, “the intolerance of almost all religions which have

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<sup>34</sup> W. BRUEGGEMANN, “‘Exodus’ in the Plural (Amos 9:7),” in *Many Voices, One God: Being Faithful in a Pluralistic World* (ed. W. BRUEGGEMANN and G. W. STROUP; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998) 7-26.

<sup>35</sup> See J. MOLTSMANN, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (trans. M. KOHL; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981); L. BOFF, *Trinity and Society* (trans. Paul Burns; Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988) 20; ASSMANN, *The Price of Monotheism*; R. M. SCHWARTZ, *The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); L. C. SCHNEIDER, *Beyond Monotheism: A Theology of Multiplicity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008). See the critiques of such perspectives by R. W. L. MOBERLY, “Is Monotheism Bad for You? Some Reflections on God, the Bible, and Life in the Light of Regina Schwartz’s ‘The Curse of Cain’,” in *The God of Israel*, 94-112; M. S. SMITH, *God in Translation: Deities in Cross-Cultural Discourse in the Biblical World* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 25-29; J. G. MCCONVILLE, *God and Earthly Power: An Old Testament Political Theology* (London: T&T Clark International, 2008), 14-15. V. KUMAR, “Does Monotheism Cause Conflict?,” *Homo Oeconomicus* 29/1 (2012) 95-118, argues that there is no intrinsic link between monotheism and violence. See also H. BOERSMA, “The Feet of God: In Stomping Boots or Dancing Shoes? The Trinity as Answer to Violence,” in *Living in the LambLight: Christianity and Contemporary Challenges to the Gospel* (ed. H. BOERSMA; Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2001) 67-95; J. KAMINSKY, “Did Election Imply the Mistreatment of Non-Israelites?,” *HTR* 96/4 (2003) 397-425.

<sup>36</sup> BRUEGGEMANN, “‘Exodus’ in the Plural (Amos 9:7),” 16-19.

<sup>37</sup> D. HUME, *Natural History of Religion*, section IX, position 798 of the Amazon Kindle ebook edition. This material originally appeared in the *Online Library of Liberty* hosted by the Liberty Fund, Inc. URL: [http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com\\_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=340&Itemid=27](http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=340&Itemid=27).



maintained the unity of God is as remarkable as the contrary principle of polytheists.”<sup>38</sup>

Contemporary variations on Hume’s thesis abound. In her book, *The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism*, Regina Schwartz argues that although “worship of one deity need not necessarily produce this violent notion of identity; but monotheism has been *caught up with particularism*, with that production of collective identity as peoples set apart.”<sup>39</sup> Like Brueggemann, Schwartz contends that monotheism becomes violent when aligned with particularism and election. Schwartz does not allow for mediating positions. Either monotheism becomes dangerously allied with, or radically opposed to, particularism.

Taking up Schwartz’s critique, Robert Gnuse makes the normative claim that biblical theologians should avoid the violent and nationalistic implications of a monotheism that becomes aligned with particularist traditions. Instead, theologians need to “take our cue from the universal covenants of Adam, Noah, and (for Christians) the New Testament covenant.”<sup>40</sup> According to Gnuse, “Schwartz forgets, as do many Jewish and Christian believers, that earlier and cruder values are surpassed by later revelation and human religious insight.”<sup>41</sup> Monotheism, for Gnuse, is in the process of evolving beyond the ruthlessness of particularism toward the egalitarianism of universalism.

John Goldingay gives voice to both ends of the monotheism–institutionalism polarity. Like Brueggemann, Schwarz, and Gnuse, he perceives an inevitable danger when monotheism and human institutions convene, and like Koch, Lemaire, and others, he envisions social equality when they diverge:

Mono-Yahwism could be socially functional, but in more than one way. It could encourage the development of an egalitarian community. It could do the opposite. When there is one God and God is king, and this one God is brought into association with a human king as vice-regent, *that is a recipe for hierarchy and oppression*. Likewise monotheism could be a recipe for particularism or universalism. To insist that there is only one God could imply an openness to other peoples, whose worship must be the worship of this one God, or it could imply intolerance of them as a people who worship no-gods instead of the one God.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> HUME, *Natural History of Religion*, section IX, position 819 of the Amazon Kindle ebook edition.

<sup>39</sup> SCHWARTZ, *The Curse of Cain*, 31 (emphasis mine).

<sup>40</sup> R. GNUSE, “Breakthrough or Tyranny: Monotheism’s Contested Implications,” *Horizons* 34/1 (2007) 78–95 (82).

<sup>41</sup> GNUSE, “Breakthrough or Tyranny,” 83.

<sup>42</sup> J. GOLDINGAY, *Old Testament Theology: Volume 2: Israel’s Faith* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2006) 40 (emphasis mine).

While Goldingay resists limiting monotheism to *one* social configuration, he nevertheless suggests that “Mono-Yahwism” results in egalitarianism and tolerance *unless* brought into conjunction with Israelite institutions—and specifically, kingship. Here he follows the well-trodden intellectual path according to which the alliance of monotheism and institutional particularism becomes absolute, and results in violent assertions of power by hierarchically advantaged powers.

Though the ethical dimensions of institutionalism and monotheism are outside the purview of this book,<sup>43</sup> biblical monotheism was unashamedly aligned with particularism, but such an alliance was *not* typically perceived as absolute.<sup>44</sup> Chronicles offers one example of how the alliance between monotheism and particularism receives qualification *without* destroying the special relationship and privileges of Israel’s bond with Yhwh. Indeed, Chronicles follows Samuel–Kings in applying the language of divine “choosing” (בָּחַר) to the Davidic house and Jerusalem,<sup>45</sup> and even extends those privileges to Solomon as temple-builder,<sup>46</sup> the priesthood,<sup>47</sup> and the

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<sup>43</sup> See the important critique of Schwarz and especially Assmann in SMITH, *God in Translation*, 25–28. For a more general critique of the variously construed links between violence and religion, see D. MARTIN, *The Future of Christianity: Reflections on Violence and Democracy, Religion and Secularization* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011); idem, *Does Christianity Cause War?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). On the necessity of institutions for avoidance of oppression, see A. MACINTYRE’s *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (3d ed.; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007) 194–96.

<sup>44</sup> For an historical study to this effect, and especially the links between monotheism and violence, see R. STARK, *One True God: Historical Consequences of Monotheism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). According to Stark, monotheism has no inherent impulse toward violence, unless it is threatened as the dominant religion. When monotheism becomes the monopoly, and that monopoly becomes threatened, then it responds with violence. Stark also points out that religious pluralism tends to strengthen participation and increase religious civility, whereas monopolizing tends to result in weaker participation and increased violence. In the end, therefore, the question for Stark is not one of monotheism or polytheism, but of the extent to which a given power becomes a monopoly. Thus, it is interesting that in considering *biblical* monotheism, we never find a vision for a “one-world” empire. At best, biblical writers advance eschatological visions in which Israel would become a global legal adjudicator, and in which Yhwh would enact judgment on the nations, though never a monopoly of the sort that Stark describes. While we do see violence meted out against other nations in the Hebrew Bible, the origins and grounds for such acts need to be sought in places other than monotheism.

<sup>45</sup> 2 Chr 6:5–6; 12:13. Cf. the election of Judah in 1 Chr 28:4.

<sup>46</sup> Chronicles is the only book in the Hebrew Bible to mention Yhwh’s election of a post-Davidic king (1 Chr 28:5, 6, 10; 29:1). See BRAUN, “Solomon, the Chosen Temple Builder: The Significance of 1 Chronicles 22, 28, and 29 for the Theology of Chronicles,” *JBL* 95/4 (1976) 581–90.

temple itself.<sup>48</sup> The divine–institutional bond only strengthens in Chronicles.

However, the nature of Chronicles' divine–institutional configuration is more complex than an unqualified identification between divine preeminence and the prerogatives of the temple, priesthood, and king. While some texts in Chronicles, if taken on their own, seem to succumb to the temptation Brueggemann identifies, Chronicles shows that institutional participation in divine supremacy was possible within a framework that also allowed for, and at times demanded, differentiation between God and king/temple/priesthood, without destroying the elective uniqueness of those institutions. Throughout this book, I examine various ways that Chronicles expresses the tension between institutional participation in divine reality, and the fact that divine power exceeds or sometimes opposes Israel's focal institutions.

## II. Primary Questions and Argument

This book explores the interrelation of divine and institutional reality in Chronicles as a backdrop for understanding the coordination of claims about Yhwh's sole divinity and the exaltation of Israel's central institutions. My book thus addresses the following questions: *In what kind of theological world does monotheistic rhetoric emerge in the book of Chronicles? How does Chronicles portray the interrelation and interaction between Yhwh and the temple, priesthood, and kingship?* To address these questions, I advance four primary arguments.

First, Chronicles depicts a highly integrated divine and institutional world in which the temple, priesthood, and Davidic king exhibit qualities that are homologous with divinity.

Second, within this integrated narrative world, Chronicles portrays the oneness or unity of Israel's focal institutions, as well as the distinctiveness of those institutions, as derivative of and related to Yhwh's own distinctiveness.

Third, Yhwh's categorical supremacy and oneness were leveraged in various ways to assert the primacy of Israel's focal institutions. Conversely, exalting those institutions became primary ways of offering praise to

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<sup>47</sup> 1 Chr 15:2; 2 Chr 29:11; cf. Deut 10:8; 18:5. One possible exception from Psalms is 65:4. Cf. also the "election" of Eli's house, now nullified, in 1 Sam 2:28. See G. VON RAD, *Das Geschichtsbild des chronistischen Werkes* (BWANT 54; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1930) 64.

<sup>48</sup> 2 Chr 7:12, 16. See G. N. KNOPPERS, *1 Chronicles 10–29* (AB 12A. New York: Doubleday, 2004) 614.

Yhwh as supreme divinity. Israel's focal institutions were, for the Chronicler, vehicles of divine recognition and theological knowledge.

Finally, Chronicles offers a *via media* between a radical separation of monotheism and institutional particularism on the one hand, and an inalienable wedding of monotheism and institutional particularism on the other. It does so by asserting the limitations, provisionality, and partiality of the relationship between divine supremacy and institutional realities, while maintaining vigorously their interrelation.

To substantiate these claims, I detail the various ways that Chronicles integrates the divine and institutional world of Israel's past, both in its *Sondergut* and through the enrichment of the traditions it receives. With a constant view to the Chronicler's integration of divine and institutional spheres, I investigate the book's various claims about Yhwh's uniqueness, supremacy, and sole divinity. By setting such claims within an institutional field of vision, one gains a sense of how claims about Yhwh related to Israel's post-exilic socio-political existence. In turn, one also gains a deeper sense of the theological convictions undergirding the Chronicler's vision for Yehud's future, and how aspects of post-exilic society could maintain confidence in divine preeminence and presence despite contemporary realities.

Chronicles depicts a highly integrated divine and institutional world, such that expressions of divine supremacy have attendant manifestations in and through Israel's focal institutions. Chronicles exhibits consistent efforts to *forge bonds* between Yhwh and Israel's focal institutions, *forge divisions* between the institutions and non-Yahwistic institutions, and *exalt* those institutions as instantiations of Yhwh's own supremacy. As such, Chronicles engages in a struggle to "monotheize"<sup>49</sup> and to exalt Yhwh by exalting and distinguishing the institutions through which he is known and experienced—the temple, priesthood, and monarchy. *Broadly speaking, the structural, functional, and qualitative similarity between Yhwh and these institutions provides the Chronicler with a means of grounding its vision of the experience of divine grandeur in post-exilic society.*<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> J. A. SANDERS (*Canon and Community* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984] 52) uses the language of "monotheizing" to describe a "struggle within and against polytheistic contexts to affirm God's oneness" (cited in BAUCKHAM, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008] 84-85). Sanders points out that monotheizing does not denote evolution, but rather an ongoing effort to assert divine unity that continues "into the present day."

<sup>50</sup> At points in the book, however, the analogy breaks down, requiring other means of asserting and protecting divine preeminence and sole divinity.

Rhetorically, this divine–institutional homology plays a key role in Chronicles’ “doxological” history of Israel.<sup>51</sup> The Chronicler renders Yhwh praise by simultaneously exalting the visible instruments of Yhwh’s power and fidelity—the temple, the priesthood, and the Davidic king. However, Chronicles cannot simply praise the present state of affairs, especially given the dire state of life in the post-exilic period.<sup>52</sup> Rather, the Chronicler must turn to the past in order to construct an argument concerning the location and nature of divine supremacy in the present, and to cast his vision for a society unified around the temple—the visible connection between past, present, and future. Chronicles translates divine preeminence in and through the institutions central to Israel throughout its history, institutions which remained central to early Jewish realities and hopes in the post-exilic period. As such, Chronicles offers a constructive response to the rift between the pre- and post-exilic experience of divine power *in the land*. Chronicles advances a vision for the organization of “all Israel” around the institutions that mediate divine power and blessings, offering Israel the possibility of an encounter with the powerful God of the past, and of a society that sustains itself through ongoing participation in worship (i.e., connection to that powerful God).<sup>53</sup>

### III. Limitations

The decision to limit my analysis of Chronicles to an investigation of its institutions derives from a desire to understand divine exaltation and sole divinity in terms internal to the book itself. More broadly, my decision to focus on institutions is part of an effort to explain in detail a phenomenon sketched above, namely, *the identification of Yhwh with real-world entities, and the resultant exaltation of those entities as an expression of Yhwh’s own exaltation*. It is the interaction between divine and institutional exaltation, I argue, that constitutes Chronicles’ unique theological configuration. Therefore, my study will not attempt an exhaustive examination of Chronicles’ perspectives on the temple, the priesthood, and kingship. Rather, I examine passages where these institutions become closely identi-

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<sup>51</sup> Others have referred to Chronicles’ “theocentric historiography,” e.g., C. FREVEL, “Die Elimination der Götter aus dem Weltbild des Chronisten,” *ZAW* 103 (1991) 263–71 [264]. SCHWEITZER (“The Temple in Samuel-Kings and Chronicles,” 125) says that “with this focus on the temple and its operation, Chronicles becomes a cultic history rather than a royal one.”

<sup>52</sup> I discuss such historical circumstances in Chapter 2.

<sup>53</sup> On the importance of “all Israel” for Chr, see H. G. M. WILLIAMSON, *Israel in the Books of Chronicles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

fied with Yhwh, and where they instantiate aspects of Yhwh's uniqueness or sole divinity.

Each chapter will include broad overviews of ways that institutions in Chronicles relate to and express Yhwh's supremacy. Yet each chapter will also include focused textual studies (e.g., on 1 Chr 16; 29; 2 Chr 2; 13) in places where the connection between divine and institutional supremacy emerge most vividly.

I do not focus in this book on the significance of the intermediary divine figures in 1 Chr 21 or 2 Chr 32, or the Satan/satan, for monotheism.<sup>54</sup> These figures are brought into view only insofar as they impinge on the question of the monotheistic configuration of institutions in Chronicles.

Finally, although I will regularly compare texts in Chronicles with Samuel–Kings, I do not treat monotheism in Samuel–Kings as such. A full-scale comparison between monotheism in Chronicles and Samuel–Kings would require another lengthy analysis of Samuel–Kings (likely in conjunction with the entire DH) and the unique constellation of themes that emerge therein. However, I will identify several features pertaining to the monotheism–particularism dyad that may prove fruitful for future studies of monotheism in the DH.

#### IV. Shape of the Study

My examination of Chronicles' theology of divine exaltation proceeds as follows. In Chapter 2, I offer a broad-based and contextually sensitive approach to examining monotheism in biblical texts that I will use in my study of Chronicles. Moreover, I detail my approach to the examination of divine–institutional relationships, as well as the literary and historical context of Chronicles. Then, in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 I examine the temple, priesthood, and monarchy as exemplary institutional expressions of Yhwh's preeminence. Chapter 6 synthesizes the findings of this study.

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<sup>54</sup> See R. E. STOKES, "The Devil made David do it ... or did he? The Nature, Identity, and literary origins of Satan in 1 Chronicles 21:1," *JBL* 128/1 (2009) 91-106; P. C. BEENTJES, "Satan, God, and the angel(s) in 1 Chronicles 21," in *Tradition and Transformation in the Book of Chronicles* (SSN 52; Boston: Brill, 2008) 139-54; P. EVANS, "Divine Intermediaries in 1 Chronicles 21: An Overlooked Aspect of the Chronicler's Theology," *Biblica* 85/4 (2004).

## Chapter 2

# Conceptualizing Monotheism and Institutions in Chronicles

This chapter offers a broad-based approach to the study of the relationship between Yhwh's sole divinity and institutions in Chronicles. As stated in Chapter 1, this book argues that Chronicles integrates divine and institutional reality to a degree not present in Samuel-Kings. Because of Chronicles' tightly woven divine-institutional world, Judah's core institutions reflected Yhwh's oneness and supremacy. As a preliminary step, this chapter addresses the question of how to contextualize, define, and conceptualize monotheism. The next section offers a way of conceptualizing the relationship between divinity and institutions, and in particular, monotheism and the temple, priesthood, and kingship in Chronicles.

## I. Contextualizing Monotheism

It is important to emphasize that my study treats monotheism as a phenomenon embedded within a larger variegated process of divine exaltation. Though I use monotheism as a way of focusing on ways that Chronicles distinguishes Yhwh absolutely, I also explore the wider field of Yhwh-exaltation of which monotheizing is one part. Monotheizing is Yhwh-exaltation language of a "particularly potent stripe."<sup>1</sup> To treat Yhwh's sole divinity as rhetorically separate from his (general) exaltation would be to create an artificial divide. Monotheism is a focused and particular way of expressing divine supremacy (the larger category) that emphasizes divine oneness, supremacy, and sole agency. Monotheism is not simply a religious "stage" that a given body of literature does or does not achieve. In-

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<sup>1</sup> C. R. SEITZ, *Word Without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 255 (cited by SMITH, *Origins*, 154). Note, however, that Seitz refers to monotheistic rhetoric as "henotheistic language of a particularly potent stripe," though his use of the term henotheism is to avoid what he calls "sublime monotheism" (in contrast to "concrete henotheism"). His reaction is clearly against treating divine exaltation in abstract terms.

stead, monotheism is a part of a broad rhetorical strategy at work in the book of Chronicles, namely, a struggle to distinguish Yhwh in absolute terms and a correlated effort to emphasize ways that Israel's institutions embody Yhwh's character and qualities. In addition, my study proposes to set this rhetorical strategy within a broad historical context in which such a strategy took shape.

## II. Defining and Conceptualizing Monotheism

Defining monotheism is fraught with difficulties.<sup>2</sup> As Nathan MacDonald points out, "monotheism" is a relatively modern term, originating among the seventeenth-century Cambridge Platonists who sought to categorize all religions according to their propositional belief systems, including the number of deities thought to exist. This "intellectualization of religion," has a distorting effect when applied to ancient Israelite religion, for it introduces categories and dichotomies alien to ancient cultures and fails to deal with the relational dynamics presupposed, for example, by God's "oneness" in Deuteronomy.<sup>3</sup> MacDonald also expresses concern that monotheism "has generally been taken to entail a ... flat 'universalism', and an emphasis on the metaphysical reality of God, rather than his character, and that as such 'monotheism' does not provide a good description of Israelite religion."<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Walter Moberly wonders whether the term

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<sup>2</sup> Note also the inverse problem of defining polytheism, expressed well by SMITH (*Origins*, 13): "I have wondered if we now regard polytheism appropriately. Views of ancient polytheism seem to labor still under simplistic notions, such as the idea that polytheism was a system of division of powers corresponding to different deities. In this view, each deity has a prime characteristic or profile (e.g., Baal as a storm-god) and these characteristics, or at least the positive ones, cumulatively equal the total that monotheism claims for its single deity." Cf. similar statements by G. AHN, "'Monotheismus'—'Polytheismus': Grenzen und Möglichkeiten einer Klassifikation von Gottesvorstellungen," in *Mesopotamien-Ugaritica-Biblica: Festschrift für Kurt Bergenhof* (Kevelaer/Neunkirchen-Vluyn: Butzon & Bercker/Neukirchener Verlag, 1993) 1-24; K. SCHMID, "Differenzierungen und Konzeptualisierungen der Einheit Gottes in der Religions- und Literaturgeschichte Israels: Methodische, religionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Aspekte zur neueren Diskussion um den sogenannten 'Monotheismus' im antiken Israel," in *Der eine Gott und die Götter: Polytheismus und Monotheismus im antiken Israel* (ed. M. OEMING and K. SCHMID; AThANT; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2003) 11-38 (16-17).

<sup>3</sup> MACDONALD, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of 'Monotheism'* (FAT 2/1; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) 210. For a history of the term, see, "monotheism, n.," *OED Online*. Online: <http://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/121673>.

<sup>4</sup> MACDONALD, *Deuteronomy*, 218. Cf. idem, "The Origin of 'Monotheism'," in *Exploring Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism* (ed. L. T. STUCKENBRUCK and W. E.