

## Jan Assmann - Monothéisme et mémoire : le *Moïse* de Freud et la tradition biblique - XXI<sup>e</sup> Conférence Marc-Bloch, 8 juin 1999

Conférence publiée in : *Annales. Histoire, Sciences sociales*, 54 (5), 1999, p. 1011-1026 ; archive numérique sur [Persée](#).

### Abstract

*Monotheism and memory. Freud's Moses and biblical tradition.* – In his last book, *Moses and monotheism*, Sigmund Freud postulates a close correspondence between psychic phenomena such as trauma, repression, latency, return of the repressed and compulsion on the one hand and the history of monotheism on the other. Monotheism, the “religion of the father”, addresses the oedipal deep-structure of the human psyche. A close reading of some biblical and other texts reveals that Freud is right. His themes such as memory, trauma, repression and guilt determine in a surprising way the semantics of biblical monotheism. But this close correspondence destroys Freud’s methodological claim of bringing to light, by means of his analytical tools, hidden truths buried in the deep structure of the “archaic heritage”. There is no need for this assumption: it’s all on the surface. The traumatic implications of monotheism reside, not in any psychic depth, but in the distinction between true and false gods.