

Postcolonialism and Religions

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Postcolonialism and Religions

ISBN 978-3-319-55094-7

ISBN 978-3-319-55095-4 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-55095-4

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017939731

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Printed on acid-free paper

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The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

For Connie, Zechariah, and Mattya

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book began in the course of a major revision of a dissertation submitted to the Toronto School of Theology at the University of Toronto. In plodding along, I realized that my emerging vision for that work was leading to *another* book altogether—a (sometimes) happy circumstance not uncommon for writers, I'm told. And so I released for publication the dissertation with revisions of a more modest scale, and embarked with earnest on my new quest. My fascination with biblical prescription and the theoretical speculations of Wolfgang Iser are the two tethers to the earlier project. Then came a later shift in direction that almost prompted the genesis of a *third* work. I am happy to report that, this time, a desire to escape the charge of inveterate irresolution prevailed, and I persisted in the project in one piece. The fresh insight, if indeed insightful, would just have to wait. A shot of good sense in good time, one might say.

Through the twists of the road, many have aided in the book's precarious development. Earlier versions of its chapters were aired at various meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL). The Asian and Asian American Hermeneutics Section of the 2013 meeting of the society in Baltimore, Maryland, heard parts of [Chapter 5](#), as did the Asian Perspectives in Biblical Studies, Theology, and Religious Studies group gathered in St. Paul, Minnesota, for the Upper Mid-West Region meeting of the same society in the following year. Peers coming together at the Postcolonial Studies and Biblical Studies Section of the society's national meeting in San Diego, California (November 2014), responded to what is now a portion of the fourth chapter. I am grateful for the queries and

suggestions at these venues that have stimulated my thinking and pressed me toward clarity and precision in the execution of my task.

Chapter 2 is an updated and expanded form of “‘Face to Face’: Moses as Prophet in Exodus 11:1-12:28” in the volume *Prophets, Prophecy, and Ancient Israelite Historiography* (Eisenbrauns, 2013). I am grateful for the editorial ministrations of Mark Boda and Lissa Wray Beal in bringing that essay to completion. Thanks are due, also, to Jim Eisenbraun for the permission to reuse this material in the current volume.

In Baltimore, at the SBL meeting of 2013, I had the pleasure and the good fortune of meeting J. Jaykiran Sebastian. Kiran, as coeditor of the Postcolonialism and Religions Series (of Palgrave Macmillan) with Joseph Duggan (the founding editor of the series and the guiding hand behind the reconciling ministry of Postcolonial Networks), encouraged me to explore publication through the series. Together, their felicitations and facilitations have buoyed the spirits of this neophyte writer. Thank you, Joe and Kiran!

At times the technical aspects of getting a manuscript in order were daunting. The cheery, patient, and prompt guidance of, first, Alexis Nelson and, then, Amy Invernizzi saved me from several missteps.

No sustained writing engagement, of course, is possible without time tucked away in libraries and behind closed doors. For this I am thankful to the College of Arts and Sciences at Bethel University for three terms of leave from teaching and faculty governance—two January terms in 2013 and 2017, and the Spring semester of 2015. The college, also, was generous in the offer of a Faculty Development Grant in 2013, as was the Bethel University National Alumni Association with a Faculty Grant in the same year.

Angela Shannon, Scott Winter, Thomas Becknell, and Gary Long read portions of the manuscript. Jione Havea, Corrine Carvalho, and Mark Brett read the work in its entirety. Their critical prodding has sharpened the final product. Its remaining flaws, of course, are my responsibility.

My family has been most gracious in putting up with my suspended attention at the dining table and elsewhere. My wife Connie’s sustained humor and compassion, as always, were a balm through bouts of uncertainty in the undertaking. Zechariah and Mattya, our children, offered gibes of good nature through spells of misplaced, not to mention audible, rumination: ‘Mum, Daddy’s whispering again!’ I cherish these times. Connie, Zechariah, and Mattya, our life together is the measure of my joy, and I ask your pardon for the days I’ve been less able to see that. I dedicate this book to you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AHw Wolfram Von Soden, ed. *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*. 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1965–1981.
- BDB Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907.
- CAD Leo Oppenheim et al., ed. *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956–2006.
- DCH David J.A. Clines, ed. *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. 9 vols. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 1993–2014.
- HALOT Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, M.E.J. Richardson and Johann Jakob Stamm, ed. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. M.E.J. Richardson. 5 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–2000.
- NRSV New Revised Standard Version
- TDOT G. Johannes Botterweck et al., ed. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, trans. J.T. Willis, G.W. Bromiley and D.E. Green. 15 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974–2006.
- TWOT R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke, ed. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. 2 vols. Chicago: Moody, 1980.

A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSLATION

In the interest of ameliorating the experience of the nonspecialist reader, I have kept citations of texts in Hebrew (and other Semitic tongues) to a minimum. There are times, however, when lexicographical details or points of grammar are relevant to the argument at hand. Then, I have confined myself to referring to the transliterated values of the consonantal text, almost exclusively. In transliteration, I have followed the standard systematized practices of the Society of Biblical Literature's Handbook of Style (see Sections 5.1.1.1–2 of the second edition).

All texts in the ancient languages are accompanied by translations in English. With few exceptions (and then only for the sake of precision in making a point), I have stuck with the translations of the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).