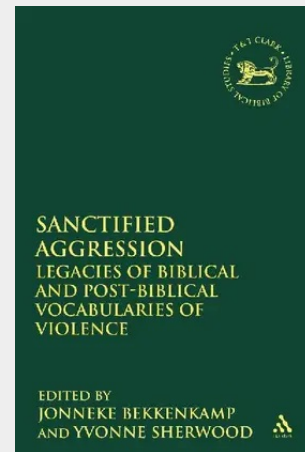


Sanctified Aggression

Legacies of Biblical and Post-Biblical Vocabularies of Violence

Sanctified Aggression allies itself neither with the easy assumption that religions are by definition violent (and that only the secular/humanist/humane can offer a place of refuge from the ravages of religious authority) nor with the equally facile opposing view that religion expresses the "best" of human aspirations and that this best is always capable of diffusing or sublating the worst. Rather, it works from the premise that biblical, Jewish and Christian vocabularies continue to resonate, inspire and misfire. Some of the essays here explore how these vocabularies and symbols have influenced, or resonate with, events such as the massacre of Jews in Jedwabne, Poland (1941), the Rwandan Massacre (1994), the tragedy at Columbine High School (1999) and the emergence of the "Phineas Priesthood" of white supremacists in North America. Other contributors examine how themes of martyrology, sacrifice and the messianic continue to circulate and mutate in literature, music, drama and film. The collective conclusion is that it is not possible to control biblical and religious violence by simply identifying canonical trouble-spots, then fencing them off with barbed wire or holding peace summits around them. Nor is it always possible to draw clear lines between problem and non-problem texts, witnesses and perpetrators, victims and aggressors or "reality" and "art".

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154,80 €

154,80 € (zzgl. MwSt.)

Lieferfrist: bis zu 10 Tage

Artikelnummer: 9780567080608

Medium: Buch

ISBN: 978-0-567-08060-8

Verlag: Continuum-3PL

Erscheinungstermin: 01.06.2004

Sprache(n): Englisch

Auflage: Erscheinungsjahr 2004

Serie: The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies

Produktform: Kartoniert

Gewicht: 404 g

Seiten: 256

Format (B x H): 156 x 234 mm

