WORKS WRITTEN BY BLACK OLD TESTAMENT SCHOLARS

by Charlie Trimm and Brittany Kim Last Updated: December 2020

Black scholars have been underrepresented in Old Testament scholarship, particularly in North America. Even though a few Black scholars wrote dissertations on the Old Testament in the early twentieth century, 1 their numbers were always small and had only marginally increased by the time Charles B. Copher received his Ph.D. in Old Testament at Boston University in 1947.² Not until 1989 did an African American woman complete a Ph.D. in Old Testament when Renita Weems graduated with her degree from Princeton Seminary. In 1991 Cain Hope Felder declared, "There are today just a little more than thirty Black North Americans with a completed Ph.D./Th.D. in biblical studies (less than one-fifth of 1 percent in North America alone). As of this writing, there are but two African American female Ph.D.'s in New Testament and two in Old Testament." The situation has improved since 1991, but the work of African American Old Testament scholars has still not been given sufficient attention within the broader scholarly guild. Moreover, although a much higher percentage of Old Testament scholars working in Africa are Black, their writings remain almost invisible to many Old Testament scholars in North America and Europe. Madipoane Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele) laments that "Africa is . . . a stranger in the global village, as it cannot participate as an equal partner. Hence, even within academia, resources developed in Africa are not always taken seriously, if at all, by the powerful."5

This bibliography seeks to address this problem by highlighting the work of Black Old Testament scholars to encourage others to use these publications in research and teaching. The bibliography is not designed to be comprehensive, but merely to illustrate the range of scholarship available from these Black scholars. Clearly many other sources could be added to this list, and works on the Old Testament have also been written by Black scholars with

¹ This group includes Pezavia O'Connell ("Synonyms of the Unclean and the Clean in Hebrew" at Pennsylvania University in 1898), James Leonard Farmer ("The Origin and Development of the Messianic Hope in Israel with Special Reference to Analogous Beliefs among Other Peoples" at Boston University in 1918), and Willis J. King ("The Book of Habakkuk from the Standpoint of Literary and Historical Criticism" at Boston University in 1921). For more details, see Abraham Smith, "Black/Africana Studies and Black/Africana Biblical Studies," *Brill Research Perspectives in Biblical Interpretation* 4.2 (2020): 46.

² Bailey, Randall C., and Jacquelyn Grant. "Preface." Page 7 in *The Recovery of Black Presence: An Interdisciplinary Exploration: Essays in Honor of Dr. Charles B. Copher*. Edited by Randall C. Bailey and Jacquelyn Grant. Nashville: Abingdon, 1995.

³ "Renita J. Weems, Ph.D." Ray of Hope Community Church. Online: https://www.rayofhopenashville.org/renita-weems-bio.

⁴ Cain Hope Felder, "Introduction," in *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Cain Hope Felder (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 1.

⁵ "Exiled in My Own Home: An African-South African Perspective on the Bible," in *The Africana Bible: Reading Israel's Scriptures from Africa and the African Diaspora*, ed. Hugh R. Page Jr. et al (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 20–21.

advanced degrees in other fields, such as New Testament or Theology, though they are not included here. The first section omits editorial work, though a later section contains some edited collections and metastudies that are focused particularly on African, African American, postcolonial, and Womanist interpretation. At times we have swapped the order of author names in order to highlight the Black author or Old Testament scholar.

While Black interpretation exhibits some common features, these scholars are writing from a wide variety of contexts with different approaches and aims. 6 In particular, African and North American scholarship are distinct worlds, so we have broken up the first section along those lines, categorizing scholars based on where they are currently working. However, considerable variation may also be found within those groups. The background and concerns of Afro-Caribbean scholars differ from those of African American scholars, even if both are currently teaching in the US. And the historical and cultural context for scholars in Nigeria is not the same as for those in South Africa. For this reason (and because some scholars have moved across continents), we have included the country of origin for each Black OT scholar in parentheses after their name.

To navigate to a particular section, click on the following links:

Categorized by Author

Scholars in Africa (and Europe)

Adamo, David Tuesday

Adamo, David Tuesday, and Erivwierho Francis Eghwubare

Ademiluka, Solomon Olusola

Akoto-(Abutiate), Dorothy B. E. A.

Akoto, Dorothy B. E. A., and Timothy J. Sandoval

Arulefela, Joseph O.

Bailey, Randall C., Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, Madipoane Masenya (ngwan'a

Mphahlele), and Rodney S. Sadler Jr.

Boniface-Malle, Anastasia

Bookholane, Lehlohonolo

Carew, Douglas M.

Chebet, Dorcas.

Chebet, Dorcas, and Beatrice Cherop

Davidson, Steed Vernyl, Justin Ukpong, and Gosnell Yorke

Farisani, Elelwani B.

Farisani, Elelwani B., and Dorothy Farisani

Githuku, Sammy

Habtu, Tewoldemedhin

Himbaza, Innocent

Himbaza, Innocent, and Adrian Schenker

Himbaza, Innocent, Adrian Schenker, and Jean Baptiste Édart

Himbaza, Innocent, François-Xavier Amherdt, and Félix Moser

⁶ See the introductory essays in The Africana Bible: Reading Israel's Scriptures from Africa and the African Diaspora, ed. Hugh R. Page Jr. et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), especially Randall C. Bailey, Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, Madipoane Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele), and Rodney S. Sadler, "African and African Diasporan Hermeneutics: Reading the Hebrew Bible as Journey, Exile, and Life through My/Our Place," 19-24.

Kalugila, Leonidas

Katho, (Robert) Bungishabaku

Kimilike, Lechion Peter

Kondemo, Marthe Maleke

Koudouguéret, David

Lokel, Philip

Lyimo-Mbowe, Hoyce Jacob

Mapfeka, Tsaurayi Kudakwashe

Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele), Madipoane J.

Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele), Madipoane J., and Hulisani Ramantswana

Masenya (Ngwan'a Mphahlele), Madipoane, and Kenneth Ngwa

Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele), Madipoane J., and Lehlohonolo Bookholane

Masenya (Ngwan'a Mphahele), Madipoane, and Marthe Maleke Kondemo

Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele), Madipoane J., and Rodney S. Sadler Jr.

Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele), Madipoane J., and V. Ndikhokele N. Mtshiselwa

Monsengwo Pasinya, Laurent

Mosala, Itumeleng J.

Mtshiselwa, V. Ndikho(kele) N.

Mtshiselwa, V. Ndikhokele N., and Madipoane J. Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele)

Murrell, Nathaniel Samuel, David T. Shannon, and David T. Adamo

Muthengi, Julius K.

Nadar, Sarojini

Naré, Laurent

Ndiokwere, Nathaniel I.

Ndjerareou, Abel Laoundoye

Nkabala, Helen Nambalirwa

Nkesela, Zephania Shila

Ntreh, Benjamin Abotchie

Nwaoru, Emmanuel O.

Nzambi, Philippe Dinzolele

Nzimande, Makhosazana K.

Odhiambo, Nicholas Ovugi

Ramantswana, Hulisani

Razafindrakoto, Georges

Tushima, Cephas, T. A.

Ukpong, Justin S.

Wabyanga, Robert Kuloba

Wafula, R. S.

Wambutda, Daniel N.

Weanzana, Nupanga

Yilpet, Yoilah

Zinkuratire, Victor

Zulu, Edwin

Scholars in North America

Anderson, Cheryl B.

Bailey, Randall C.

Bailey, Randall C., Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, Madipoane Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele), and Rodney S. Sadler Jr.

Bailey, Wilma Ann

Bennett, Harold V.

Bennett, Robert

Bridgeman, Valerie

Bridgeman, Valerie, and Cheryl Kirk-Duggan

Burgh, Theodore W.

Burgh, Theodore W., and Keith Mattingly

Callender, Dexter E. Jr.

Copher, Charles B.

Davidson, Steed Vernyl

Davidson, Steed Vernyl, Justin Ukpong, and Gosnell Yorke

Davis, Stacy

Day, Quonekuia

De-Whyte (Sarfo), Janice Pearl Ewurama

Emanuel, David

Fentress, Ken, Eric Redmond, and William Curtis

Fentress-Williams, Judy

Fentress-Williams, Judy, and Melody D. Knowles

Franklin, Naomi

Gafney, Wil(da) C. M.

Greene, John T.

Holder, John W. D.

Jacobs, Mignon R.

Jacobs, Mignon R., and Raymond F. Person Jr.

Johnson, Vivian L.

Johnson, Willa Mathis

Junior, Nyasha

Junior, Nyasha, and Amy Edwards

Junior, Nyasha, and Jeremy Schipper

Kemp, Joel

Lovelace, Vanessa

Mafico, Temba L. J.

Marbury, Herbert Robinson

Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele), Madipoane, and Kenneth Ngwa

Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele), Madipoane J., and Rodney S. Sadler Jr.

Mbuvi, Amanda Beckenstein

Mbuwayesango, Dora Rudo

Mbuwayesango, Dora Rudo, and Susanne Scholz

McClenney-Sadler, Madeline

Murrell, N(athaniel) Samuel

Murrell, Nathaniel Samuel, David T. Shannon, and David T. Adamo

Nash, Peter T.

Ngwa, Kenneth Numfor

Norton, Yolanda

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Ojwang, Gilbert Okuro
              Page, Hugh R. Jr.
              Peters, Melvin K. H.
              Rainey, Brian
              Reed, Justin Michael
              Reid, Stephen Breck
              Robertson, Cleotha
              Ross, Jerome Clayton
              Russaw, Kimberly Dawn
              Sadler, Rodney S. Jr.
              Sadler, Rodney S. Jr., and Emerson B. Powery
              Shannon, David T.
              Simbandumwe, Samuel S.
              Skinner, Jerome L.
             Taylor, Michelle Ellis
              Wafawanaka, Robert
              Wafawanaka, Robert, Andrew Mbuvi, James Ashmore, Alice Ogden Bellis,
                     Randall C. Bailey, Dora Mbuwayesango, and Michael Willett Newheart
              Waters, John W.
              Weems, Renita J.
              Wright, Edwina
Categorized by Topic
       Collections and Meta-Studies
              African Interpretation
              African-American and Afro-Caribbean Interpretation
              Historical-Critical Methods
             Liberationist and Postcolonial Interpretation
              Feminist and Womanist Interpretation
       Archaeology, History, and the Ancient Near East
       Hebrew Text and Ancient Versions
       Canonical Divisions
              Whole Old Testament
              Pentateuch
                     Genesis
                     Exodus
                     Leviticus
                     Numbers
                     Deuteronomy
             Historical Books
                     Joshua
                     Judges
                     Ruth
                     Samuel
                     Kings
                     Chronicles
                     Ezra-Nehemiah
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Esther Poetic and Wisdom Literature Job **Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes** Song of Songs **Prophets** Isaiah **Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel** Daniel Hosea Joel **Amos** Obadiah **Jonah** Micah **Nahum** Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi **Specific Themes** Africa in the Old Testament Barrenness **Biblical Authority** Church Covenant Creation and Ecological Ethics Death and Mourning Exile and Return Faith **Family** Gender and Women God and the Gods **HIV/AIDS** Justice and Criminal Justice Lament **Land and Inheritance** Law/Torah Leaders and Leadership Life and Survival Magic and Religious Practice

Myth

Nation, Empire, and Imperialism

Peace and War

Poetry

Poverty and Money

Prayer and Listening for God

Prophecy

Race and Ethnicity

Sacrifice

Salvation and Evangelism

Sex and Marriage

Sin, Repentance, and Reconciliation

Suffering

Violence

Wisdom

History of Interpretation/Reception History

Modern Translations

Teaching and Preaching

Categorized by Author

Scholars in Africa (and Europe)⁷

Adamo, David Tuesday (Nigeria).

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⁷ Aside from Innocent Himbaza, who teaches in Switzerland, the rest of the scholars in this category reside in Africa.

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Arulefela, Joseph O. (Nigeria)

Covenant in the Old Testament and in Yorubaland. Ibadan: Daystar, 1988.

Bailey, Randall C. (USA), Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, Madipoane Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele, South Africa), and **Rodney S. Sadler Jr.** (USA/Bermuda)

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Boniface-Malle, Anastasia (Tanzania).

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Bookholane, Lehlohonolo (South Africa).

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Carew, Douglas M. (Sierra Leone)

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Chebet, Dorcas (Kenya).

"Rereading Esther 1 & 2 for Equity and Women Leadership: A Reflection on Gender and Leadership in the Old Testament." Pages 56–64 in *The Quest for Gender Equity* in Leadership: Biblical Teachings on Gender Equity and Illustrations of Transformation in Africa. Edited by KeumJu Jewel Hyun and Diphus C. Chemorion. House of Prisca and Aquila Series. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016.

Chebet, Dorcas (Kenya), and Beatrice Cherop.

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Davidson, Steed Vernyl (Trinidad and Tobago), Justin Ukpong (Nigeria), and Gosnell Yorke.

"The Bible and Africana Life: A Problematic Relationship." Pages 39–44 in *The Africana* Bible: Reading Israel's Scriptures from Africa and the African Diaspora. Edited by Hugh R. Page Jr. et al. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010.

Farisani, Elelwani B. (South Africa)

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Categorized by Topic

Collections and Meta-Studies

The Collections and Meta-Studies section contains some works that were written and edited by non-Black authors as well as by scholars from other disciplines in order to offer a broader perspective on the fields of African and African American interpretation. Two major trends

within Black interpretation are (1) liberationist or postcolonial approaches and (2) feminist or Womanist approaches. To highlight these, we have devoted separate sections to them, and we have also drawn attention to a few essays discussing the place of historical criticism within Black interpretation.

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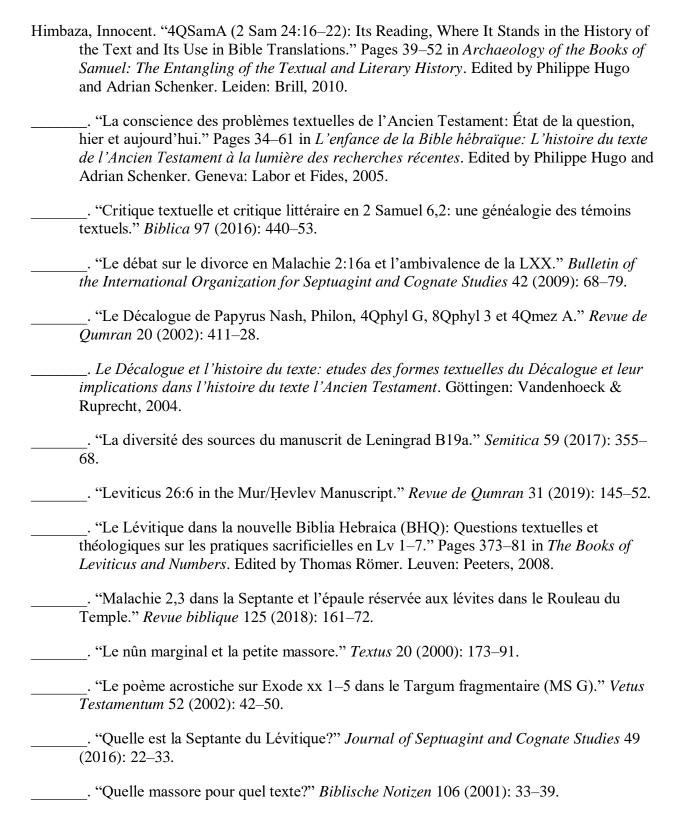
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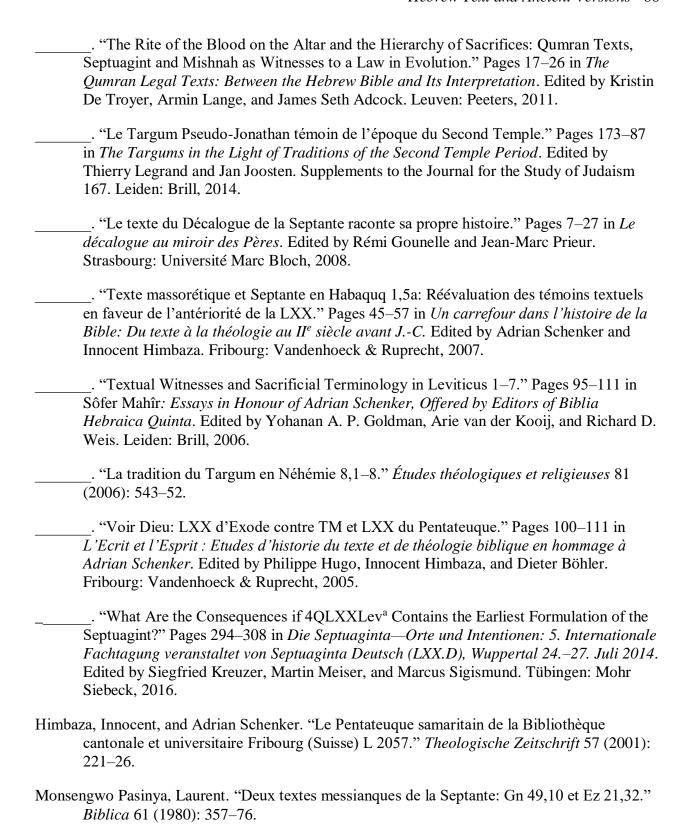
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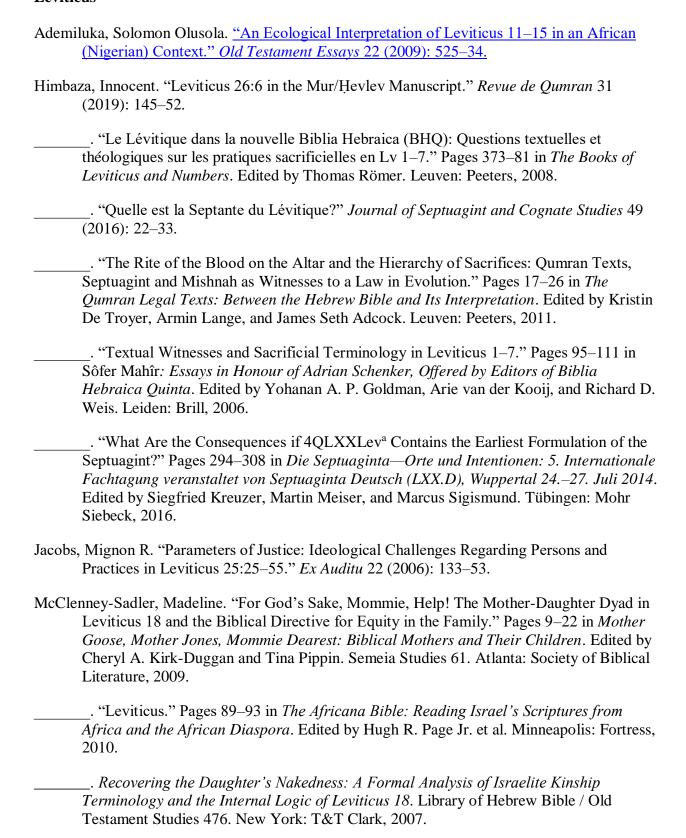
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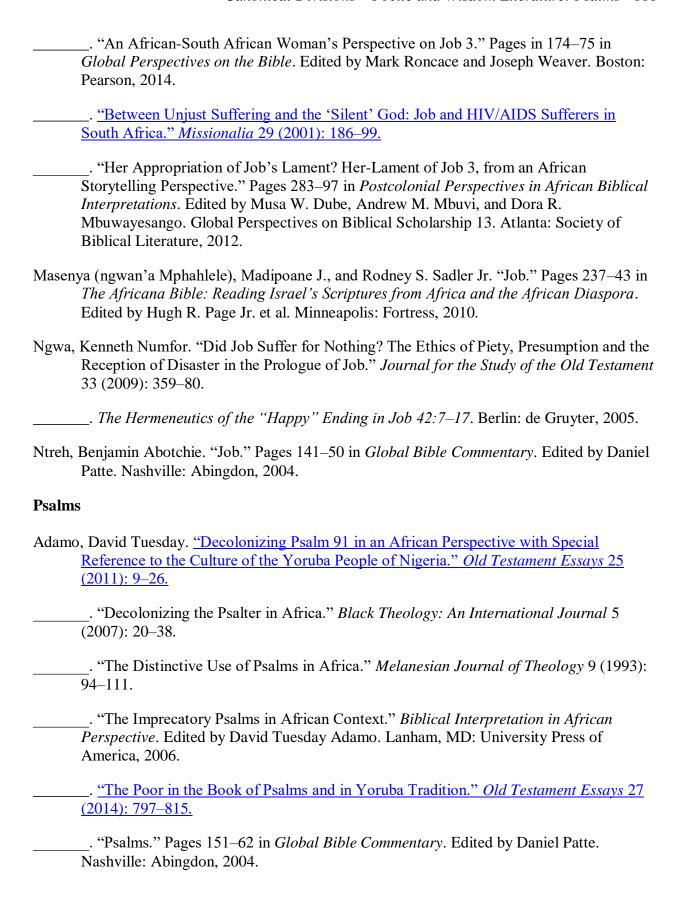
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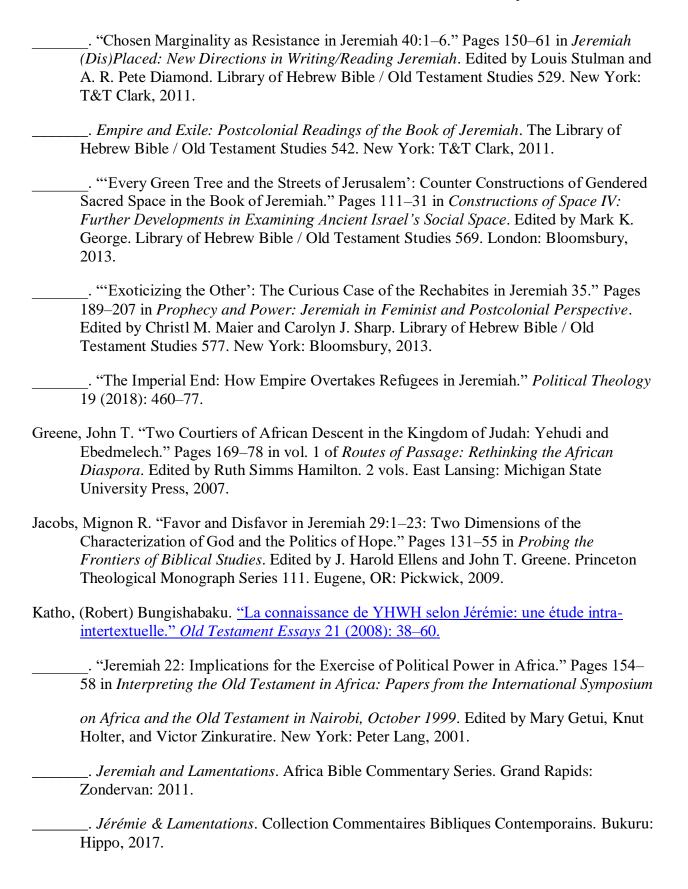
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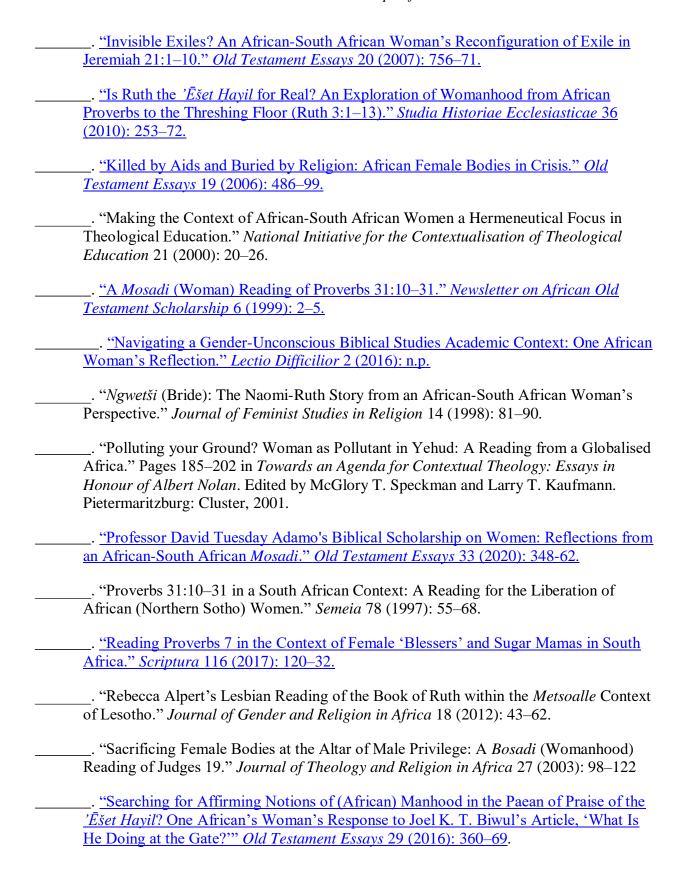
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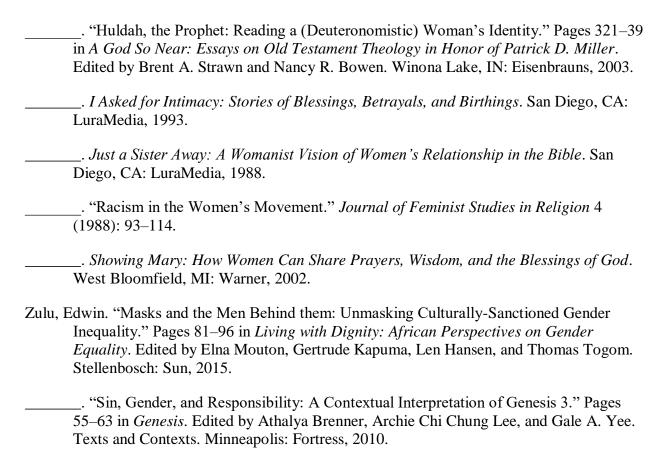
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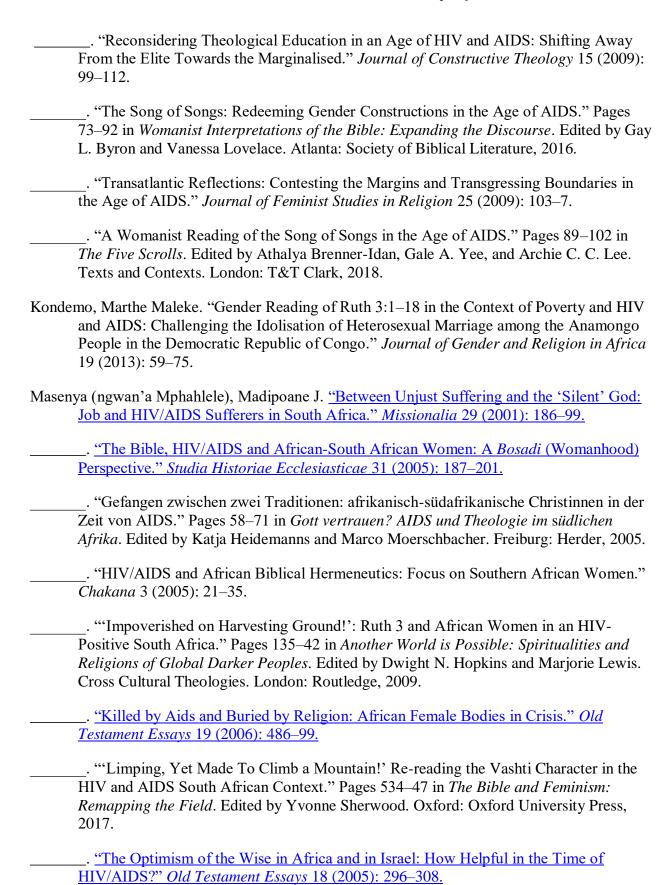
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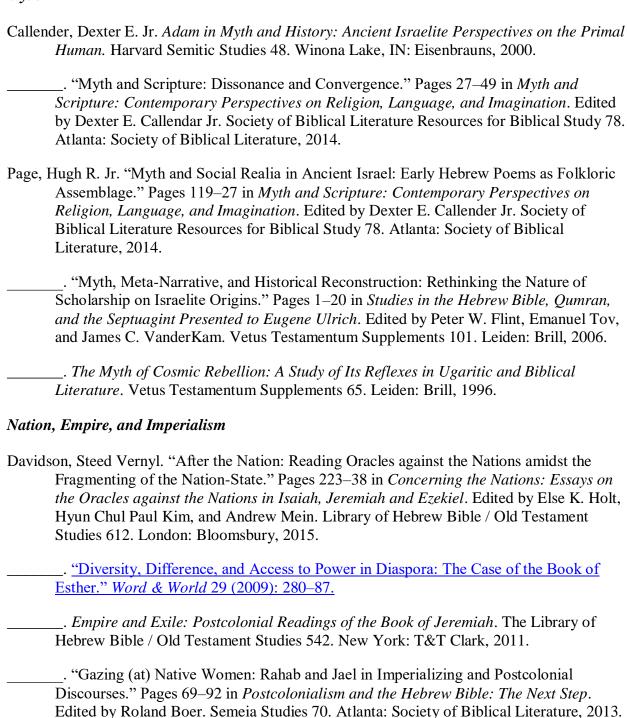
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