BIBLICAL BLASPHEMING

This book explores the strange persistence of 'blasphemy' in modern secular democracies by examining how accepted and prohibited ways of talking and thinking about the Bible and religion have changed over time. In a series of wide-ranging studies engaging disciplines such as politics, literature and visual theory, Yvonne Sherwood brings the Bible into dialogue with a host of interlocutors including John Locke, John Donne and the 9/11 hijackers, as well as artists such as Sarah Lucas and René Magritte. Questions addressed include:

- What is the origin of the common belief that the Bible, as opposed to the Qur'an, underpins liberal democratic values?
- What kind of artworks does the biblical God specialise in?
- If pre-modern Jewish, Christian and Islamic responses to scripture can be more 'critical' than contemporary speech about religion, how does this affect our understanding of secularity, modernity and critique?

YVONNE SHERWOOD is Professor of Bible, Religion and Culture at the University of Glasgow. She is author of *A Biblical Text and Its Afterlives: The Survival of Jonah in Western Culture* (Cambridge, 2000); *Derrida's Bible: Reading a Page of Scripture with a Little Help from Derrida* (2004); *The Prostitute and the Prophet* (2004) and, with Stephen Moore, of *The Invention of the Biblical Scholar: A Critical Manifesto* (2011). She is co-editor of *Sanctified Aggression: Legacies of Biblical and Post-Biblical Vocabularies of Violence* (with Jonneke Bekkenkamp, 2003) and, with Kevin Hart, of *Derrida and Religion: Other Testaments* (2004).

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A page from A Humument: A Treated Victorian Novel, by Tom Phillips.

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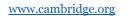
'Ceçi n'est pas une Bible.' Image courtesy of A. K. M. Adam.

BIBLICAL BLASPHEMING

Trials of the Sacred for a Secular Age

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To Richard and Adam, who occasionally make me curse/blaspheme, but mostly bless and thank my lucky stars.



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I am a consummate juggler but because between us we have four hands. I am, I know, hugely lucky to have been able to keep all loves – including writing – running at the same time. Adam, this is what mummy really does when she says that she is going off to the castle to see the giant. I hope you don't find the revelation too disenchanting.

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