

STUDIES IN IMPERIALISM

GENERAL EDITOR: Andrew S. Thompson FOUNDED EDITOR: John M. MacKenzie

CHOSEN PEOPLES

Chosen peoples demonstrates how biblical themes, ideas and metaphors shaped narratives of racial, national and imperial identity in the long nineteenth century. Amid spreading secularism, the development of professionalised science and the proclamation of 'modernity', biblical notions of lineage, descent and inheritance continued to inform understandings of race, nation and character at every level from the popular to the academic.

Although new ideas and discoveries were challenging the historicity of the Bible, even markedly secular thinkers chose to explain their complex and radical ideas through biblical analogy. Denizens of the seething industrial cities of America and Europe championed or criticised them as New Jerusalems and Modern Babylons, while modern nation states were contrasted with or likened to Egypt, Greece and Israel. Imperial expansion prompted people to draw scriptural parallels, as European settler movements portrayed 'new' territories across the seas as lands of Canaan. Yet such language did not just travel in one direction. If many colonised and conquered peoples resisted the imposition of biblical narratives, they also appropriated biblical tropes to their own ends.

These original case-studies, by emerging and established scholars, throw new light on familiar areas such as slavery, colonialism and the missionary project, while opening up exciting cross-comparisons between race, identity and the politics of biblical translation and interpretation in South Africa, Egypt, Australia, America and Ireland. The book will be essential reading for academic, graduate and undergraduate readers in empire, race and global religion in the long nineteenth century.

Gareth Atkins is Bye-Fellow and College Lecturer in History at Queens' College, Cambridge

Shinjini Das is Lecturer in Modern Extra-European History at the University of East Anglia

Brian H. Murray is Senior Lecturer in Nineteenth-Century Literature at King's College London