

recent years by Ch. Kooi, J. Pollmann, and others. The strength of this study, written with clear sympathy toward the Catholic minority, is in the extensive use of ego documents and other archival sources, which makes it rich and grounded. The detailed analysis of these firsthand sources lies at the core of this study, and the reader can appreciate the experience of the early modern Catholic in the Dutch Republic, though at times this analysis could benefit from a more critical view of these sources. The author creates a vivid picture of the period, illustrated by numerous pictures embedded in the text. Although written in Dutch, the language is accessible, and the line of argumentation well structured, making it a pleasure to read.

Michaël Green, *University of Lodz*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2021.251

Spinoza and Biblical Philology in the Dutch Republic, 1660–1710. Jetze Touber. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. xviii + 314 pp. \$98.

Jetze Touber's richly textured study places biblical philology at the center of an analysis of Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670) and the religious culture of the Dutch Republic that struggled to absorb it in the years surrounding its publication. While the radical conclusions that Spinoza drew left him isolated, Touber argues that his philological practice was hardly unique, demonstrating both the broad application and the unsettling influence of these practices in Dutch culture.

This excellent book accompanies two related, and mutually illuminating, works in this field: a book by Dirk Van Miert on biblical philology in Dutch culture from 1590 to 1670, and a collection of essays on related topics edited by Touber, Van Miert, Henk Nellen, and Piet Steenbakkens. In his introduction, Touber offers the coinage "scripturarian" to indicate the more particular orientation of his book's subjects: the scholars, clergymen, and philosophers who continued to apply philological tools to the Bible after the appearance of the States' Translation standardized the text for the Public Church in 1637, and who believed that this practice comprised the essence of Reformed Christianity. In the book's five chapters, he traces the distribution of this interpretive disposition as it cut across the more familiar binaries of Dutch religious politics in the period (i.e., dogmatists and Cartesian rationalists, Coccejans and Voetians). For scripturarians of various confessional orientations, Spinoza's philology served as a provocation and a warning, and established philology as the "arena" in which their subsequent conflicts were staged (12).

The opening chapter focuses closely on Spinoza's philology and its function in the argument of the *Tractatus*. While Touber joins recent scholars in situating Spinoza's philology within a confluence of rabbinical interpretive traditions and Reformed biblical scholarship, the chapter also makes a convincing argument that Spinoza's criticism of

the Bible was a genuine philological intervention with serious implications for the status of the discipline, not, as several influential scholars have long held, “a mere smoke-screen” for his radical philosophy (74).

The second chapter discusses several contemporary responses to the *Tractatus*. Many of the early ones dismissed Spinoza’s radical philological claims out of hand. Eventually, though, sophisticated readers like Jean Le Clerc recognized the powerful implications of Spinoza’s philology, acknowledged the validity of some of its claims, and, in addressing them, channeled Spinozistic ideas into the mainstream. In the third chapter, Toubert uncovers several less conventional responses to Spinoza from biblical antiquarians. In an interesting parallel to Spinoza’s critical *historia* of the biblical texts, these writers developed radical theses on the contingency of Hebrew institutions and laws, including various versions of an Egyptian hypothesis that posited the influence of Egyptian ceremonial practice on the Mosaic commandments. Such ideas percolated in a range of heterodox books, including works by amateur scholar and book dealer Willem Goeree, the Cambridge Hebraist John Spencer, and the anonymous author of “an unedited flow of observations” on philological topics preserved in an obscure notebook (165). Toubert’s brilliant readings show how these “exotic” speculations were able to flourish “under the surface of respectable theology” (269).

The final two chapters chart an institutional response to Spinoza and biblical philology. Here, Toubert discusses the Public Church’s attempts to stabilize the text of the Bible, and the incursions of scripturarians who undermined the effort from within in its own ministerial ranks. The final chapter discusses several philological responses, from inside and outside the Public Church, to a single biblical crux: the case of “Sunday rest,” the Fourth Commandment’s ambiguous stipulation to honor a weekly respite from work.

Each insightful chapter demonstrates how “the application of perfectly respectable methods of philological scholarship resulted in unacceptable conclusions” for institutional religion (175). The most disturbing example of these conclusions were Spinoza’s, but the potential for similarly radical ideas inhered in the work of orthodox scripturarians, too. Toubert’s rigorous examination of the scripturarian disposition suggests that even a radical biblical philology like Spinoza’s was as much involved with the efforts of *nadere reformatie*, or “further reformation,” as it was a prelude to Enlightenment. While his book will serve as an invaluable resource for scholars of Spinoza and Dutch religious culture, his archive and arguments should also interest scholars of this fascinating moment in intellectual history.

Tom Clayton, *Princeton University*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2021.252