

The Enlightenment University and the Creation of the Academic Bible: Michael Legaspi's *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies*

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“[H]istorical criticism is the form of biblical studies that corresponds to the classical liberal political ideal. It is the realization of the Enlightenment project in the realm of biblical scholarship.”

—Jon Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism*¹

BIBLICAL SCHOLARS rarely concern themselves with the history of their discipline. In part this is because the discipline of modern biblical studies has for so long styled itself on the hard sciences, and participates in what Pascal termed *l'esprit géométrique*, the spirit of geometry, whereby mathematics serves as the paradigm for true rationality. John Barton explains well historical criticism's original ostensible intent; it “was meant to be value-neutral, or disinterested. It tried, so far as possible, to approach the text without prejudice, and to ask not what it meant ‘for me’, but simply what it meant.”² In 1988, Pope Benedict XVI—then Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger—delivered his now famous lecture, “Biblical Interpretation in Crisis,” wherein he issued a clarion call for a “*Kritik der Kritik*,” a criticism of criticism; a self-criticism of historical critical

¹ Jon D. Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism: Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 118.

² John Barton, *The Old Testament: Canon, Literature and Theology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 203.

methodology.³ The debate about biblical exegesis, including the role of history and of theology in biblical interpretation, has continued to be a major theme in Pope Benedict's thought.⁴ Far from a lone voice, Pope Benedict has been joined by a number of scholars—Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic—in his concern over the present status of biblical interpretation. One important area of study, a field that needs many more laborers, is the history of biblical scholarship. Biblical scholarship should be encouraged to examine its own foundations, its own history, in part to understand better the philosophical and political influences that gave shape and texture to the methods that continue to be uncritically employed. The present volume under consideration, Michael Legaspi's

³ Josef Ratzinger, *Schriftauslegung im Widerstreit* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1989), 22.

⁴ Ibid., 15–44; J. Ratzinger, "Kirchliches Lehramt und Exegese. Reflexionen aus Anlass des 100-jährigen Bestehens der Päpstlichen Bibelkommission," *Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift: Communio* 32 (2003): 522–29; idem/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth, Part I: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), xi–xxiii; idem, *Verbum Domini*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2010), nos. 29–41; and idem, *Jesus of Nazareth, Part II: Holy Week: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011), xiv–xv. For important studies of Ratzinger/Benedict's thoughts on modern biblical criticism see, e.g., Scott W. Hahn, "The Authority of Mystery: The Biblical Theology of Benedict XVI," *Letter & Spirit* 2 (2006): 97–140; Frederic Raurell, "Mètode d'aproximació de la Bíblia en el *Jesús de Natzaret* de Joseph Ratzinger/Benet XVI," *Revista Catalana de Teologia* 32, no. 2 (2007): 435–58; Scott Hahn, "At the School of Truth: The Ecclesial Character of Theology and Exegesis in the Thought of Benedict XVI," in *The Bible and the University*, ed. David Lyle Jeffrey and C. Stephen Evans (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 80–115; idem, "The Hermeneutic of Faith: Pope Benedict XVI on Scripture, Liturgy, and Church," *The Incarnate Word* 1, no. 3 (2007): 415–40; and idem, *Covenant and Communion: The Biblical Theology of Pope Benedict XVI* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009), especially chapter 2, "The Critique of Criticism: Beginning the Search for a New Synthesis," 25–40, and chapter 3, "The Hermeneutic of Faith: Critical and Historical Foundations for a Biblical Theology," 41–62. When addressing the difficulties posed by the unrecognized philosophical presuppositions of modern biblical criticism, Ratzinger often brings up the example of Rudolf Bultmann. A number of important works situating Bultmann's hermeneutics in their broader intellectual/cultural/philosophical context have come out, e.g., Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity*, 3d ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001 [1958]), 320–40; Reiner Blank, *Analyse und Kritik der formgeschichtlichen Arbeiten von Martin Dibelius und Rudolf Bultmann* (Basel: F. Reinhardt, 1981); Michael Waldstein, "The Foundations of Bultmann's Work," *Communio* 2 (1987): 115–45; and idem, "Analogia Verbi: The Truth of Scripture in Rudolf Bultmann and Raymond Brown," *Letter & Spirit* 6 (2010): 93–140.

The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies, is a welcome contribution to this ongoing discussion.⁵ The pressures and influences exerted on the discipline of biblical studies as it developed that have been most neglected in scholarly discussions involve those exerted by the modern state. Legaspi brings this to the fore of his discussion in numerous enlightening ways, as when he underscores the importance of the state-sponsored Enlightenment universities. Commenting on “the fate of theology” among German scholars in the nineteenth century, he explains:

Striking a Faustian bargain with the growing power of the state, they maintained their religious and cultural inheritance by folding the authority of the Bible and of the Protestant theological tradition into the larger programs of *Verwissenschaftlichung* (scientization), *Entkonfessionalisierung* (deconfessionalization), *Professionalisierung* (professionalization), and *Verstaatlichung* (nationalization)—all programs centered at the university. (29)

I. A Brief History of the History of Biblical Scholarship: Situating Legaspi within the Context of the History of Scholarship

Over the past several decades, a number of important studies have been published highlighting the historical, political, theological, and philosophical contexts to the development of modern biblical criticism, from the medieval period to the twentieth century. Prior to the 1980s there had been some scholarship in this field, like Hans-Joachim Kraus's 1956 *Geschichte der historisch-kritischen Erforschung des Alten Testaments* and Hans Frei's 1974 *The Eclipse of the Biblical Narrative*.⁶ It was especially after the

⁵ Michael C. Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁶ Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Geschichte der historisch-kritischen Erforschung des Alten Testaments* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1956); and Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of the Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974). There were likewise a few specialized books that dealt with one or a few of the significant figures in this early history or with the scholarship of discrete biblical books, e.g., Jean Steinmann, *Richard Simon et les origines de l'exégèse biblique* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1960); Sylvain Zac, *Spinoza et l'interprétation de l'Écriture* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1965); Klaus Scholder, *Ursprünge und Probleme der Bibelkritik im 17. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Kaiser, 1966); André Malet, *Le traité théologico-politique de Spinoza et la pensée biblique* (Paris: Société les belles lettres, 1966); F. Saverio Mirri, *Richard Simon e il metodo storico-critico di B. Spinoza. Storia di un libro e di una polemica sullo sfondo delle lotte politico-religiose della Francia di Luigi XIV* (Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1972); W. Ward Gasque, *A History of the Criticism of the Acts of the Apostles* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1975); and Olivier Fatio and Pierre Fraenkel, ed., *Histoire*

end of the 1970s, however, that a scholarly focus on the history of modern biblical scholarship grew to become a field in its own right.⁷ Legaspi's *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies* fits within the context of these more recent studies in the history of scholarship. A brief select survey of the state of the field will help better situate Legaspi's project.

In 1980 Henning Graf Reventlow published *Bibelautorität und Geist der Moderne*.⁸ Reventlow's groundbreaking work demonstrated the importance of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England to the rise of modern biblical criticism. The idea that modern biblical criticism's roots can be traced to eighteenth- or nineteenth-century Germany remains the commonly received scholarly opinion. Reventlow's work, however, showed how Germany was a late-comer to modern biblical criticism; eighteenth-century German biblical criticism built upon the critical work of English biblical exegetes from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.⁹

de l'exégèse au XVII^e siècle (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1978). Some early studies existed as well in the form of scholarly articles and book chapters, but these were very rare, e.g., Paul Hazard, *La crise de la conscience européenne, 1680–1715* (Paris: Boivin et Cie, 1935), 2d part, chapter 3, "Richard Simon et l'exégèse biblique," 125–36; Raymond Delville, "Richard Simon critique catholique du Penta-teuque," *Nouvelle revue théologique* (1951): 723–39; and Arnaldo Momigliano, "La nuova storia romana di G. B. Vico," *Rivista storica italiana* 77 (1965): 773–90.

⁷ A large amount of scholarship in this field was already building in the 1970s in the form of scholarly articles. One important example here is the work on Isaac La Peyrère and Baruch Spinoza published by Richard Popkin, within the history of philosophy, e.g., his "Bible Criticism and Social Science," in *Methodological and Historical Essays in the Natural and Social Sciences*, ed. Robert S. Cohen and Marx W. Wartofsky (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1974), 339–60; "The Development of Religious Scepticism and the Influence of Isaac La Peyrère's Pre-Adamism and Bible Criticism," in *Classical Influences on European Culture, A.D. 1500–1700*, ed. Robert Ralf Bolgar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 271–80; and "Spinoza and La Peyrère," *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* 3 (1977): 172–95. Similarly important works had also been published by Bible scholars, but these were even rarer, e.g., M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, "Christianity, Judaism and Modern Bible Study," in *Congress Volume: Edinburgh 1974* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 69–88.

⁸ Henning Graf Reventlow, *Bibelautorität und Geist der Moderne. Die Bedeutung des Bibelverständnisses für die geistesgeschichtliche und politische Entwicklung in England von der Reformation bis zur Aufklärung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980).

⁹ The 1980s witnessed an incredibly rapid increase in scholarly literature, in the form of both books and articles, dealing with the history of modern biblical criticism in the early modern era, coming especially from historians of philosophy and Bible scholars interested in the history of their discipline. Examples include: Juan José Garrido, "El método histórico-crítico de interpretación de la Escritura según Spinoza," in *El método en teología. Actas del primer Simposio de Teología e Historia (29–31 mayo 1980)*, ed. The Faculty of Theology of Saint Vincent Ferrer (Valencia: The Faculty of Theology of Saint Vincent Ferrer, 1981), 269–81;

Although it is not primarily a work in the history of scholarship, mention should be made of the first installment, in 1982, of the soon-to-be five-volume series *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, edited by Dominique

Anthony Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship Volume I: Textual Criticism and Exegesis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983); M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, "The Textual Criticism of the Old Testament: Rise, Decline, Rebirth," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102, no. 3 (1983): 365–99; Nahum M. Sarna, "The Modern Study of the Bible in the Framework of Jewish Studies," *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (1983): 19–27; Aaron L. Katchen, *Christian Hebraists and Dutch Rabbis: Seventeenth Century Apologetics and the Study of Maimonides' Mishneh Torah* (Cambridge: Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies, 1984); François Laplanche, *L'écriture, le sacré et l'histoire: Érudits et politiques protestants devant la Bible en France au XVIIe siècle* (Amsterdam: Holland University Press, 1986); Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, "Foundations of Biblical Philology in the Seventeenth Century: Christian and Jewish Dimensions," in *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Isadore Twersky and Bernard Septimus, 77–94 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987); Richard H. Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère (1596–1676): His Life, Work and Influence* (Leiden: Brill, 1987); Jean Pierre Osier, "L'herméneutique de Hobbes et de Spinoza," *Studia Spinozana* 3 (1987): 319–47; Jacqueline Lagrée, "Louis Meyer et la *Philosophia S. Scripturae* interpres. Projet cartésien, horizon spinoziste," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 1 (1987): 31–44; *Christian Hebraism: The Study of Jewish Culture by Christian Scholars in Medieval and Early Modern Times*, ed. Charles Berlin and Aaron L. Katchen (Cambridge: Harvard University Library, 1988); Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, "The Revival of Hebraic Studies as Part of the Humanist Revival Around 1500," *Hebrew University Studies in Literature and the Arts* 16 (1988): 185–91; Pierre-François Moreau, "Le méthode d'interprétation de l'Écriture Sainte: déterminations et limites," in *Spinoza: science et religion*, ed. Renée Bouveresse (Paris: Vrin, 1988), 109–14; J. Garrido Zaragoza, "La desmitificación de la Escritura en Spinoza," *Taula* 9 (1988): 3–45; all of the articles in *Tôpoi* 7, no. 3 (1988), which include important pieces on Hobbes, Spinoza, and Simon; Jean-Robert Armogathe, ed., *Le Grand Siècle et la Bible* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1989); and Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretics*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). This decade also saw a number of important studies contextualizing later seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century scholarship, e.g., Georg Schwaiger, ed., *Historische Kritik in der Theologie: Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980); Rolf Rendtorff, "Die Hebräische Bibel als Grundlage christlich-theologischer Aussagen über das Judentum," in *Jüdische Existenz und die Erneuerung der christlichen Theologie. Versuch einer Bilanz des christlich-jüdischen Dialogs für die Systematische Theologie*, ed. Martin Stöhr (Munich: Kaiser, 1981), 32–47; Arnaldo Momigliano, "Religious History Without Frontiers: J. Wellhausen, U. Wilamowitz, and E. Schwartz," *History and Theory* 21, no. 4 (1982): 49–64; all of the articles in *Semeia* 25 (1982) devoted to Wellhausen; Yvon Belaval and Dominique Bourel, eds., *Le siècle des Lumières et la Bible* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1986); and Henning Graf Reventlow, Walter Sparr, and John Woodbridge, eds., *Historische Kritik und biblischer Kanon in der deutschen Aufklärung* (Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz, 1988).

Barthélemy.¹⁰ *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament* is the result of the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project Committee of the United Bible Societies, which began in 1969 and has resulted in the new *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* editions of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, which is in the process of replacing the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. The purpose of *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament* is to serve as a text-critical commentary on the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. Thus the focus is more on textual criticism than on historical criticism. In the first volume, however, Fr. Barthélemy wrote an introduction spanning more than 100 pages, roughly the first half of which he spent detailing the history of modern biblical scholarship, from the medieval period (including the important work of Judeo-Arabic exegesis) through the development of modern historical criticism, including a very good discussion of seventeenth-century figures like Spinoza and Simon. Regretably, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament* has been too little utilized by scholars, and Fr. Barthélemy's fine monograph-length essay has received even less attention.

1984 witnessed John Rogerson's *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century*.¹¹ Rogerson's important work, in a sense, picks up where Reventlow's earlier volume left off. Whereas Reventlow traced the early years of modern biblical criticism in England (especially among the Deists) to Germany, Rogerson focuses more on how biblical criticism then developed in Germany and how eventually German biblical criticism was received by England. In 1991, J. C. O'Neill published *The Bible's*

¹⁰ The volumes that have been published thus far include: Dominique Barthélemy, ed., *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament 1: Josué, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Rois, Chroniques, Esdras, Néhémie, Esther* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982); idem, ed., *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament 2: Isaïe, Jérémie, Lamentations* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986); idem, ed., *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament 3: Ezéchiël, Daniel et les 12 Prophètes* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992); and idem, ed., *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament 4: Psaumes* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005). The fifth volume, on the Pentateuch, is forthcoming. I owe James Sanders, who served on the committee with Fr. Barthélemy, tremendous gratitude for making me aware of this supremely important multi-volume work. Recently, the introductions to these volumes have been published in English in a single edition as Dominique Barthélemy, *Studies in the Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project: English Translation of the Introductions to Volumes 1, 2, and 3 Critique textuelle de l'ancien testament*, trans. Stephen Pisano and Peter A. Pettit for vol. 1, Joan E. Cook and Sarah Lind for vol. 2, and Sarah Lind for vol. 3 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012).

¹¹ John W. Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century: England and Germany* (London: SPCK, 1984).

Authority.¹² This was an important text, walking through several significant figures within the history of biblical scholarship from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. Most significantly, O'Neill placed these figures within their intellectual and historical contexts.

The following year, 1992, saw the publication of Hava Lazarus-Yafeh's tremendously important *Intertwined Worlds*.¹³ Lazarus-Yafeh showed how influential medieval Muslim biblical criticism was on significant medieval Jewish and Christian exegetes, likely making its way into the modern period.¹⁴ The same year Lazarus-Yafeh's work was published, Rogerson came out with his important study of one of the most significant early nineteenth-century biblical critics, *W. M. L. de Wette: Founder of Modern Biblical Criticism*.¹⁵ De Wette's work was foundational for nineteenth-century historical criticism of the Old Testament, and particularly pentateuchal criticism. Rogerson's intellectual biography places de Wette in his broader social, political, and historical context. Also in 1992, William Baird published his *History of New Testament Research Vol. I*.¹⁶ This volume placed many New Testament critics in their historical and intellectual contexts.

¹² J. C. O'Neill, *The Bible's Authority: A Portrait Gallery of Thinkers from Lessing to Bultmann* (London: T & T Clark, 1991).

¹³ Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). Some earlier scholarship exists that is in line with Lazarus-Yafeh's work, highlighting the importance of medieval Muslim biblical scholarship for what came later in the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment, e.g., Ernest Algermissen, "Die Pentateuchzitate Ibn Hazms. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der arabischen Bibelübersetzungen" (Thesis, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster, 1933); Roger Arnaldez, "Spinoza et la pensée arabe," *Revue de Synthèse* 89–91 (1978): 151–74; David S. Powers, "Reading/Misreading One Another's Scriptures: Ibn Hazm's Refutation of Ibn Nagrella al-Yahūdi," in *Studies in Islamic and Judaic Traditions: Papers Presented at the Institute for Islamic-Judaic Studies*, ed. William M. Brinner and Stephen D. Ricks (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 109–21; Camilla Adang, "Schriftvervalsing als thema in de islamitische polemiek tegen het jodendom," *Ter Herkenning* 16, no. 3 (1988): 197–98; and R. David Freedman, "The Father of Modern Biblical Scholarship," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 19 (1989): 31–38.

¹⁴ She also published important articles that would be well worth reading for Bible scholars interested in the probable influence of medieval Muslim biblical criticism and philosophy on medieval Jewish and Christian biblical exegesis, which likely contributed to the rise of modern biblical criticism in western European universities. See, e.g., her "Taḥrīf and Thirteen Scrolls of Torah," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 18 (1992): 81–88; and "Some Neglected Aspects of Medieval Polemics against Christianity," *Harvard Theological Review* 89, no. 1 (1996): 61–84.

¹⁵ John W. Rogerson, *W. M. L. de Wette: Founder of Modern Biblical Criticism: An Intellectual Biography* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992).

¹⁶ William Baird, *History of New Testament Research Volume I: From Deism to Tübingen* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992).

1995 witnessed another of Rogerson's volumes in the history of modern biblical scholarship, *The Bible and Criticism in Victorian England*, which highlighted, especially, William Robertson Smith's important place in bringing German biblical criticism back to the English-speaking world, where, ironically, the seeds of German biblical criticism had partially germinated a century and a half earlier.¹⁷ In 1999 David Dungan published *A History of the Synoptic Problem*.¹⁸ Dungan's volume has proved controver-

¹⁷ J. W. Rogerson, *The Bible and Criticism in Victorian England: Profiles of F. D. Maurice and William Robertson Smith* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

¹⁸ David Laird Dungan, *A History of the Synoptic Problem: The Canon, the Text, the Composition, and the Interpretation of the Gospels* (New York: Doubleday, 1999). In the 1990s a flood of scholarly literature continued to expand the field of the history of modern biblical criticism, e.g., James L. Kugel, "The Bible in the University," in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters*, ed. William Henry Propp, Baruch Halpern, and David Noel Freedman (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 143–65; Anthony T. Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450–1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), especially ch. 8, "Isaac La Peyrère and the Old Testament," 204–13; Pierre Gibert, *Petite histoire de l'exégèse biblique: De la lecture allégorique à l'exégèse critique* (Paris: Cerf, 1992); Anthony Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship Volume II: Historical Chronology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); *The Books of Nature and Scripture: Recent Essays on Natural Philosophy, Theology, and Biblical Criticism in the Netherlands of Spinoza's Time and the British Isles of Newton's Time*, ed. James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1994); Debora Kuller Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice, and Subjectivity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); *Biblical Studies and the Shifting of Paradigms, 1850–1914*, ed. Henning Graf Reventlow and William Farmer (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); *William Robertson Smith: Essays in Reassessment*, ed. William Johnstone (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); Manfred Walther, "Biblische Hermeneutik und historische Erklärung: Lodewijk Meyer und Benediktus de Spinoza über Norm, Methode und Ergebnis wissenschaftlicher Bibelauslegung," *Studia Spinozana* 11 (1995): 227–99; Daniel J. Elazar, "Spinoza and the Bible," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 7 (1995): 5–19; Harvey Shulman, "The Use and Abuse of the Bible in Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 7 (1995): 39–55; Suzanne Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Steven G. Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism to Jewish Studies: Johannes Buxtorf (1564–1629) and Hebrew Learning in the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Paul D. Cooke, *Hobbes and Christianity: Reassessing the Bible in Leviathan* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996); Gottfried Hornig, *Johann Salomo Semler: Studien zu Leben und Werk des Hallenser Aufklärungstheologen* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996); Heikki Räisänen, *Marcion, Muhammad and the Mahatma: Exegetical Perspectives on the Encounter of Cultures and Faith* (London: SCM, 1997), chap. 9, "The Bible and the Traditions of the Nations: Isaac La Peyrère as a Precursor of Biblical Criticism," 137–52; Guy G. Stroumsa, "Jewish Myth and Ritual and the Beginnings of Comparative

sial, but he includes a number of important chapters dealing with both ancient—e.g., Porphyry—and modern—e.g., Spinoza, Locke, Griesbach, and Holtzmann—figures who are significant within this broader history.

In 2001 Reventlow published his *Epochen der Bibelauslegung* 4.¹⁹ In this fourth volume in his impressive series on the history of biblical interpretation, Reventlow provides historical and biographical background to significant figures in early modern to contemporary biblical criticism, from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, including Hobbes, Spinoza, Simon, Reimarus, Lessing, Semler, Eichhorn, de Wette, Strauss, F. C. Baur, Ewald, Wellhausen, and Bultmann. Unlike so many others, however, Reventlow examines and summarizes the major works of each scholar. Reventlow's work, without a doubt, remains one of the most important of its kind. In 2005 Jonathan Sheehan published *The Enlightenment Bible*.²⁰ Sheehan's volume is, of all the available books thus far published, the most similar to Legaspi's. Johann David Michaelis, who is the main focus of Legaspi's own work, plays an important part in Sheehan's story. Sheehan's text describes the ways in which the Enlightenment changed the way in which the Bible was viewed, from a primarily theological text to a cultural-historical one which became foundational to the Western world.

In 2007, Rudolf Smend published his *From Astruc to Zimmerli*.²¹ Unlike O'Neill's earlier work, Smend focuses exclusively on Old Testament scholarship. Smend's portraits of each figure are highly illuminating and would be a very useful introduction to their historical contexts. In 2008 Magne

Religion: The Case of Richard Simon," *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 6 (1997): 19–35; idem, "Comparatisme et philologie: Richard Simon et la naissance de l'orientalisme," in *Le comparatisme en histoire des religions*, ed. François Boespflug and François Dunand (Paris: Cerf, 1997), 47–62; James Pasto, "Islam's 'Strange Secret Sharer': Orientalism, Judaism, and the Jewish Question," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40, no. 3 (1998): 437–74; idem, "When the End is the Beginning? Or When the Biblical Past is the Political Present: Some Thoughts on Ancient Israel, 'Post-Exilic Judaism,' and the Politics of Biblical Scholarship," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 1, no. 2 (1998): 157–202; Justin A. I. Champion, "Père Richard Simon and English Biblical Criticism, 1680–1700," in *Everything Connects: In Conference with Richard H. Popkin: Essays in His Honor*, ed. James E. Force and David S. Katz (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 39–61; and François Tricaud, "L'Ancien Testament et le *Léviathan* de Hobbes: Une cohabitation difficile," *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia* 54, no. 2 (1999): 229–38.

¹⁹ Henning Graf Reventlow, *Epochen der Bibelauslegung* 4. *Von der Aufklärung bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Beck, 2001).

²⁰ Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

²¹ Rudolf Smend, *From Astruc to Zimmerli: Old Testament Scholarship in Three Centuries* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

Sæbø published the edited volume *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation II*.²² The third installment of this important series, Sæbø's

²² *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation II: From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. Magne Sæbø (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008). The first decade of the twenty-first century saw an immense amount of scholarly literature develop within the history of modern biblical scholarship, e.g., Thomas Albert Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism: W. M. L. de Wette, Jacob Burckhardt, and the Theological Origins of Nineteenth-Century Historical Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Fausto Parente, "Isaac de La Peyrère e Richard Simon: Osservazioni preliminari ad uno studio del Ms. Chantilly, Musée de Condé, n. 191 (698): *De Iuifs Elus, Reietés, et Rapelés* di Isaac de La Peyrère," in *La geografia dei saperi: Scritti in memoria di Dino Pastine*, ed. Domenico Ferraro and Gianna Gigliotti (Florence: La Lettere, 2000), 161–82; Guy G. Stroumsa, "Homeros Hebraios: Homère et la Bible aux origines de la culture européenne (17e–18e siècles)," in *L'orient dans l'histoire religieuse de l'europe: L'invention des origines*, ed. Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi and John Scheid (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 87–100; J. Samuel Preus, *Spinoza and the Irrelevance of Biblical Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); R. H. Popkin, "Millenarianism and Nationalism—A Case Study: Isaac La Peyrère," in *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture Volume IV: Continental Millenarians: Protestants, Catholics, Heretics*, ed. John Christian Laursen and Richard H. Popkin (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2001), 74–84; Bill T. Arnold and David B. Weisberg, "A Centennial Review of Friedrich Delitzsch's 'Babel und Bibel' Lectures," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 121, no. 3 (2002): 441–57; Noel Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), chapter 12, "Hobbes, Ezra, and the Bible: The History of a Subversive Idea," 383–431; Michiel Wielemans, "Adriaan Koerbagh: Biblical Criticism and Enlightenment," in *The Early Enlightenment in the Dutch Republic, 1650–1750: Selected Papers of a Conference held at the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel 22–23 March 2001*, ed. Wiep van Bunge (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 61–80; Pierre Gibert, *L'Invention de l'exégèse moderne: Les "Livres de Moïse" de 1650 à 1750* (Paris: Cerf, 2003); James Pasto, "W. M. L. de Wette and the Invention of Post-Exilic Judaism: Political Historiography and Christian Allegory in Nineteenth-Century German Biblical Scholarship," in *Jews, Antiquity, and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination*, ed. Hayim Lapin and Dale Marin (Bethesda, MD: University Press of Maryland, 2003), 33–52; Allison Coudert, *Hebraica Veritas? Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Sascha Müller, *Kritik und Theologie: Christliche Glaubens- und Schriftthermeneutik nach Richard Simon (1638–1712)* (St. Ottilien: EOS, 2004); Frank M. Coleman, "Thomas Hobbes and the Hebraic Bible," *History of Political Thought* 25, no. 4 (2004): 642–69; Wayne A. Meeks, "A Nazi New Testament Professor Reads the Bible: The Strange Case of Gerhard Kittel," in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*, ed. H. Najman and J. H. Newman (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 513–44; Bill T. Arnold and David B. Weisberg, "Delitzsch in Context," in *God's Word for Our World Volume 2*, ed. J. Harold Ellens, Deborah L. Ellens, Rolf P. Knierim, and Isaac Kalimi (London T & T Clark, 2004), 37–45; Noel Malcolm, "Leviathan, the Pentateuch, and the Origins of Modern Biblical Criticism," in *Leviathan After 350 Years*, ed.

work provides very good brief essays on relevant themes from Old Testament scholarship from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, as well as on particular exegetes, giving brief biographical accounts which help situate them in their proper historical contexts. Themes include: the idea of history in the Renaissance; Scholasticism and medieval theological education; the rise of universities in medieval Europe; the quest for *Hebraica veritas*; Renaissance Jewish biblical scholarship; early modern Spanish biblical interpretation; polyglot Bibles; Waldensian, Lollard, and Hussite biblical interpretation; the Reformation in England and Scotland; biblical interpretation at the councils of Constance, Florence, and Trent; Deism; Hasidism

Tom Sorell and Luc Foisneau (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 241–64; *Geschichte der Hermeneutik und die Methodik der textinterpretierenden Disziplinen*, ed. Jörg Schönert and Friedrich Vollhardt (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005); John Van Seters, *The Edited Bible: The Curious History of the "Editor" in Biblical Criticism* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006); Travis L. Frampton, *Spinoza and the Rise of Historical Criticism of the Bible* (New York: T & T Clark, 2006); Sascha Müller, *Richard Simon (1638–1712): Exeget, Theologe, Philosoph und Historiker* (Bamberg: Echter, 2006); Eric Jorink, "Reading the Book of Nature in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic," in *The Book of Nature in Early Modern and Modern History*, ed. Klaas van Berkel and Arjo Vanderjagt (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 45–68; *Sacred Conjectures: The Context and Legacy of Robert Lowth and Jean Astruc*, ed. John Jarick (London: T & T Clark, 2007); Job Y. Jindo, "Revisiting Kaufmann: Fundamental Problems in Modern Biblical Scholarship," *Journal of the Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions* 3 (2007): 41–77; Marius Reiser, *Bibelkritik und Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), for the purposes of our present discussion, especially chapter 7, "Richard Simons biblische Hermeneutik," 185–217, and chapter 8, "Die Prinzipien der biblischen Hermeneutik und ihr Wandel unter dem Einfluß der Aufklärung," 219–76; Eric Jorink, "'Horrible and Blasphemous': Isaac La Peyrère, Isaac Vossius and the Emergence of Radical Biblical Criticism in the Dutch Republic," in *Nature and Scripture in the Abrahamic Religions: Up to 1700: Volume 1*, ed. Jitse M. van der Meer and Scott Mandelbrote (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 429–550; Diego Lucci, *Scripture and Deism: The Biblical Criticism of the Eighteenth-Century British Deists* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008); Michael M. Homan, "How Moses Gained and Lost the Reputation of Being the Torah's Author: Higher Criticism prior to Julius Wellhausen," in *Sacred History, Sacred Literature: Essays on Ancient Israel, the Bible, and Religion in Honor of R. E. Friedman on His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Shawna Dolansky (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 111–32; Antoine Fleyfel, "Richard Simon, critique de la sacralité biblique," *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 88, no. 4 (2008): 469–92; Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Reinhard G. Kratz, "Eyes and Spectacles: Wellhausen's Method of Higher Criticism," *Journal of Theological Studies* 60 (2009): 381–402; and Peter Machinist, "The Road Not Taken: Wellhausen and Assyriology," in *Homeland and Exile: Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of Bustenay Oded*, ed. Gershon Galil, Mark Geller, and Alan Millard (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 469–531.

and biblical interpretation; the French Revolution; etc. Figures examined include: Nicholas of Lyra; Gersonides; Marsilio Ficino; Pico della Mirandola; Isaac Abarbanel; Erasmus; Reuchlin; Levita; Wyclif; Hus; Luther; Zwingli; Calvin; Bucer; Melancthon; Cajetan; Bellarmine; a Lapide; Cappel; the Buxtorfs; Socinus; Grotius; La Peyrère; Descartes; Spinoza; Simon; Astruc; Toland; Reimarus; Lessing; Lowth; Geddes; Michaelis; Semler; Eichhorn; et al. Each entry includes very helpful select bibliographies.

More recently, in 2010, Pierre Gibert published *L'invention critique de la Bible*.²³ Gibert's important study focuses on the seventeenth century, and especially on the work of Spinoza and Richard Simon, but he also includes

²³ Pierre Gibert, *L'invention critique de la Bible: XVI–XVIII* (Paris: Gallimard, 2010). Of course I have left out many studies, and the examples I provide in the footnotes are far from exhaustive. There are a number of more popular treatments of the history of scholarship, as well, written by scholars like Levenson, *Hebrew Bible*; and the first chapter, "The Rise of Modern Biblical Scholarship," in James L. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 1–46. In this context, mention should be made of the fine, albeit controversial, work of Roy A. Harrisville and Walter Sundberg, *The Bible in Modern Culture: Baruch Spinoza to Brevard Childs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995). Presently, Scott W. Hahn and Benjamin Wiker have a mammoth volume forthcoming from Crossroad, entitled *Politicizing the Bible: The Roots of Historical Criticism and the Secularization of Scripture 1300–1700*, drafts of which I have read and greatly profited from, and which lead me to believe it will prove a milestone in the history of modern biblical scholarship, showing the important roles that numerous figures played in the rise of historical criticism, figures including Marsilius of Padua, William of Ockham, Wyclif, Machiavelli, Luther, King Henry VIII, Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Simon, Locke, and Toland, and situating each of these figures in their broader historical, political, philosophical, and theological contexts. Since 2010 a number of important studies have been published in this field, e.g.: Jean Bernier, *La critique du Pentateuque de Hobbes à Calmet* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2010); Nicolai Sinai, "Spinoza and Beyond: Some Reflections on Historical-Critical Method," in *Kritische Religionsphilosophie: Eine Gedenkschrift für Friedrich Niewöhner*, ed. Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann and Georges Tamer (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 193–213; James Arthur Diamond, "Maimonides, Spinoza, and Buber Read the Hebrew Bible: The Hermeneutical Keys of Divine 'Fire' and 'Spirit' (*Ruach*)," *Journal of Religion* 91 (2011): 320–43; Colette Nativel, "Isaac Vossius, entre Philologie et Philosophie," in *Isaac Vossius (1618–1689): Between Science and Scholarship*, ed. Eric Jorink and Dirk van Miert (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 243–54; Andreas Nikolaus Pietsch, *Isaac La Peyrère: Bibelkritik, Philosemitismus und Patronage in der Gelehrtenrepublik des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012); and *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation III: From Modernism to Post-Modernism (The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries) Part 1: The Nineteenth Century—A Century of Modernism and Historicism*, ed. Magne Sæbo (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), which includes a number of relevant topics, e.g.: the rise of historicism, ancient near eastern and cognate studies, Julius Wellhausen, the Roman Catholic Modernist Crisis, Wilhelm de Wette, Abraham Kuenen, and Hermann Gunkel.

very important discussions of earlier work (e.g., Lorenzo Valla, Elias Levita, Erasmus, Luther, and Isaac La Peyrère) and later work (especially Astruc). Michael Legaspi's *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies* fits within this stream of histories of modern biblical scholarship.

II. The Decomposition of the Scriptural Bible and the Rise of the Academic Bible

The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies, which has been published as part of Oxford University Press's Oxford Studies in Historical Theology series, began as Legaspi's 2006 Harvard University doctoral dissertation, entitled "Reviving the Dead Letter: Johann David Michaelis and the Quest for Hebrew Antiquity," which he completed in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations for a doctoral committee composed of Peter Machinist (co-director), Ann Blair (co-director), and Jon Levenson (reader). The dissertation, and thus the book, originated in a course Legaspi took on the history of biblical interpretation, taught by Machinist (xii). Machinist's influence, and that of Blair, a scholar of culture and intellectual history and the history of scholarship of early modern Europe, is detectable throughout, as is the influence of the other historians of biblical scholarship whom Legaspi acknowledges: Gary Anderson, James Kugel, Levenson, Jonathan Sheehan, Suzanne Marchand, Anthony Grafton, and Rudolf Smend (xii–xiii). Having read the original dissertation, which remains one of the most impressive I have read to date, I think this revised version is an improvement—better written, clearer, and with more punch.

Legaspi's preface (vii–xiv) opens with an elegantly written page-and-a-half comparison of two "Bibles," what he terms the "scriptural Bible"—the Bible as encountered in sacred liturgy—and what he labels the "academic Bible"—the Bible as studied at the university. As an example of the first, Legaspi uses his fine prose to paint a picture of an encounter with Scripture in the eastern liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.

From behind the icon screen, the priest comes into view, carrying overhead, in solemn procession, an ornately bound, gold-plated volume: the Book of the Gospels. All stand. There is incense in the air. Acolytes, candles in hand, stand by to illuminate the reading of the Gospel. In that moment, the people are told not to look, to follow texts with their eyes, but rather to listen. The priest proclaims, "Wisdom! Let us attend!" and the people go silent. (vii)

Turning to the second example, the "academic Bible," Legaspi depicts a scene, familiar to Bible scholars—the biblical studies seminar classroom in a university setting.

It too is filled with people. They sit, not stand. At the center is a long table. On it are many Bibles, various copies in assorted languages: Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, Latin. Some lie open, others are pushed aside into impromptu stacks. They share the table with other writings: teacher's notes, photocopies, reference works, dictionaries, grammars, commentaries. The atmosphere is sociable but cerebral, quiet but static. Heads are bowed, but over books. There are readers here too, but the oral performances are tracked closely by others whose eyes are attuned carefully to common texts. (vii)

What Legaspi hopes to do in his book is attend to the story of the origin of the "academic Bible." He locates the academic Bible's roots in the Reformation and its aftermath, "a moment when the scriptural Bible evoked by the liturgical scene above had already receded to the margins of modern Western cultural and public life" (viii). Although the stage had been set for the "academic Bible" prior to the Enlightenment, it was not born until the eighteenth century. What he argues is that "[t]he academic Bible was created by scholars who saw that the scriptural Bible, embedded as it was in confessional particularities, was inimical to the socio-political project from which Enlightenment universities drew their purpose and support" (viii). Legaspi's preface lucidly summarizes his work's overture. His basic thesis is: "The history of modern biblical criticism shows that the fundamental antitheses were not intellectual or theological, but rather social, moral, and political. Academic critics did not dispense with the authority of a Bible resonant with religion; they redeployed it" (xii).

The eighteenth-century biblical philologist Johann David Michaelis (1717–91) serves as Legaspi's case study. Michaelis proves to be important because he stands at the crossroads of the transformation Legaspi seeks to describe, but also because he is one of the most significant protagonists in the transformation itself. In effect, as Legaspi narrates the story, Michaelis is one of the figures most responsible for the creation of modern biblical studies. The fact that Michaelis's theological views were rather traditional—he even adhered to the Mosaic authorship not only of the Pentateuch but also of the Book of Job—allows him to serve as a case in point that simple dichotomies such as secular versus religious are insufficient to grasp what was taking place in the eighteenth century.

Legaspi's first chapter, "From Scripture to Text" (3–26), provides a fine introduction to the early history of modern biblical criticism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment.²⁴ The basic argument Legaspi puts

²⁴ In summary fashion I try to broaden this history from the late medieval period to the nineteenth century in Jeffrey L. Morrow, "The Politics of Biblical Interpretation: A 'Criticism of Criticism,'" *New Blackfriars* 91, no. 1035 (September

forward here is sure to be a controversial one, namely, that the Reformation killed Scripture, and that the Enlightenment attempted to revivify it.²⁵ Legaspi states that one of his main arguments is that “the development of biblical studies as an academic discipline in Germany more than two hundred years after the Reformation was an outworking of what might be called the ‘death of Scripture’” (4). This death was in part a result of the textualization of Scripture, wherein Scripture ceased to be thought of primarily as a living Word with its primary home in the Liturgy, and became transformed into a book, eventually a dead historical book, a letter without the living Spirit which inspired it.²⁶

In this context, Legaspi emphasizes that much of the criticism that is evidenced from the eighteenth century already existed in the seventeenth century, in the writings of Isaac La Peyrère, Thomas Hobbes, Baruch Spinoza, and Richard Simon.²⁷ Legaspi wants to underscore precisely how biblical studies began in German-speaking lands during the Enlightenment. The methods and skill sets honed in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German universities had already been developed in France, England, and the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century. German biblical criticism was somewhat of a late-comer to these critical methodologies; and yet, it was not until these methodologies were perfected at German Enlightenment universities that “an organized, institutional, and methodologically self-conscious critical program” was born (4). Part of the impetus to this process

2010): 528–45. Elsewhere I show how this history enters the Catholic world during the Modernist Crisis, idem, “The Modernist Crisis and the Shifting of Catholic Views on Biblical Inspiration,” *Letter & Spirit* 6 (2010): 265–80.

²⁵ In Legaspi’s words, “Scripture died a quiet death in Western Christendom some time in the sixteenth century. The death of scripture was attended by two ironies. First, those who brought the scriptural Bible to its death counted themselves among its defenders. Second, the power to revivify a moribund scriptural inheritance arose not from the churches but from the state. The first development was the Reformation, and the second was the rise, two hundred years later, of modern biblical scholarship” (3).

²⁶ I attempt to describe this same process in Jeffrey L. Morrow, “The Bible in Captivity: Hobbes, Spinoza and the Politics of Defining Religion,” *Pro Ecclesia* 19, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 285–99.

²⁷ On La Peyrère’s role in this history, see my “French Apocalyptic Messianism: Isaac La Peyrère and Political Biblical Criticism in the Seventeenth Century,” *Toronto Journal of Theology* 27, no. 2 (2011): 203–13. On Hobbes’s place in this discussion, see idem, “*Leviathan* and the Swallowing of Scripture: The Politics behind Thomas Hobbes’ Early Modern Biblical Criticism,” *Christianity & Literature* 61, no. 1 (2011): 33–54. On Spinoza’s importance, see idem, “The Early Modern Political Context to Spinoza’s Bible Criticism,” *Revista de Filosofía* 66, no. 3 (2010): 7–24.

was the splintering of Western Christendom at and following the Reformation. Scholastic and humanist debates within the Catholic world prior to the Reformation, and later Catholic and Protestant polemics, rendered the Bible opaque to would-be interpreters. Moreover, in the wake of the Reformation, and the skeptical erosion of biblical authority in works spanning La Peyrère on the one end and Voltaire on the other, the Bible ceased to function as Scripture for many intellectuals in Western Europe.

Legaspi thus drives home to his readers:

It was not simply deep curiosity about the language, form, and content of the Bible that spawned the ambitious research programs of eighteenth-century biblical scholars. In the decades surrounding the turn of the eighteenth century, the prestige of the Bible in the Western world was at an all-time low. Skeptics, rationalist critics, and proponents of the new science published widely and influentially on the state of its textual corruption, the unreliability of its historical narratives, the crudeness of its style, and, in some cases, the fanciful, even childish quality of its stories. . . . What developed in the mid-eighteenth century was not a new awareness of the “human” or “historical” character of the Bible. Rather, it was the realization that the Bible was no longer intelligible as scripture, that is, as a self-authorizing, unifying authority in European culture. . . . If the Bible was to find a place in a new political order committed to the unifying power of the state, it would have to do so as a common cultural inheritance. (4–5)

What German scholars in the newly formed Enlightenment universities did was redeploy the Bible for their cultural political projects, thus making it of contemporary relevance. Scholars like Michaelis essentially viewed the Bible as a dead historical text which informed modern audiences about a long dead historical civilization. Thus, its pages could be culled for clues that would aid the creation of a more robust German culture, along with well-trained civil servants, loyal subjects of the state. As Legaspi explains, “They used historical research to write the Bible’s death certificate while opening, simultaneously, a new avenue for recovering the biblical writings as ancient cultural products capable of reinforcing the values and aims of a new sociopolitical order. The Bible, once decomposed, could be used to fertilize modern culture” (5).

Following the work of Sheehan, Legaspi explains: “The efforts of biblical scholars in this period must be understood as part of a larger attempt to shore up the authority of the Bible by rearticulating its cultural relevance and . . . by creatively demonstrating its value as a philological, moral, aesthetic, and historical resource” (9). In effect, Legaspi argues that the Reformation rendered the Bible unintelligible as Catholic

Scripture, in that the Reformation left in its wake as many confessionally specific interpretations as denominations. Thus, the Enlightenment project attempted to create a new catholic (universal) Bible, by eschewing the various Scriptural Bibles born after the Reformation, and seeking instead a Bible as bedrock of Western civilization.

III. The Transformation of the University and of Classical Studies

Legaspi's second chapter, "Bible and Theology at an Enlightenment University" (27–51), is one of the most important, succinct discussions of the creation of modern Enlightenment universities I have ever read. His discussion here of the University of Göttingen, which became the paradigmatic Enlightenment university, would be of interest to anyone interested in the history of the modern university, the Enlightenment, as well as the advent of modern biblical studies and modern theology. Legaspi explains: "Over the course of the nineteenth century, academic theologians succeeded in assimilating theology to the realities of the modern state in order to ensure the continued survival of their discipline" (29).

Legaspi highlights the role of modern politics, not only in the creation of Enlightenment universities, but also in the transformed role theology began to play at the university, and in the creation of modern biblical studies. As he writes:

In the main, the guiding light of our eighteenth-century figures was not a beautiful vision of what criticism as a theological enterprise might look like. It was rather, for them, a matter of what biblical criticism, as a university subject, might *do*, what it might contribute to the education of men who would one day run the governments under which they themselves would have to live. (31)

The universities that originated or were reformed in the eighteenth century existed for the very purpose of serving the state. The *raison d'être* of German Enlightenment universities like Göttingen was to produce obedient civil servants. Following the work of Ian Hunter, whom he here quotes, Legaspi explains that the first of these new universities, Halle, was exemplary in "the way higher education in the period served the aims of 'a monarchical court bent on using [the university] to provide the state with a deconfessionalized ruling elite'" (40).²⁸

²⁸ Legaspi here is relying upon Ian Hunter, "Multiple Enlightenments: Rival *Aufklärer* at the University of Halle, 1690–1730," in *The Enlightenment World*, ed. Martin Fitzpatrick, Peter Jones, Christa Knellwolf, and Iain McCalman (London: Routledge, 2007), 576–95, at 579.

One of the most crucial figures within the history recounted in this chapter, who helped pave the way for Michaelis, was theologian Johann Lorenz Mosheim. Mosheim helped set the theological program for Göttingen, and unlike many of his theological predecessors, he took the radical skepticism of the late seventeenth century seriously. He envisioned and embodied a theology that was interdisciplinary, and, on theological grounds, advocated a broad interdisciplinarity at the university. Mosheim was completely opposed to theological controversies and debates, which he understood as internecine Christian polemics. As Spinoza had striven, at least ostensibly, for a scientific method of biblical interpretation that would end what he identified as religious conflict, so Mosheim sought to assess theological and religious matters with scientific precision. As Legaspi demonstrates in later chapters, Michaelis would attempt to bring Mosheim's ideal into the realm of biblical scholarship. At the heart of this discussion is the turn to *Bildung* (culture).²⁹ Legaspi writes, "By turning to the category of culture, Göttingen scholars created a mode of *Wissenschaft* that also accorded with political gradualism, conservative reform, and a deep interest in what makes societies strong and distinct" (51). This was a scholarship bent on transforming all of German society by forming elite, classically trained civil servants who would help the state direct the engines of modernity.

The third chapter of Legaspi's book, "The Study of Classical Antiquity at Göttingen" (53–78), is another groundbreaking treatment which he handles deftly and succinctly. This chapter would be of interest not only to those concerned with the history of biblical scholarship, but also those who read in the history of classical scholarship and in modernity in general. The parallels between biblical studies and classical studies have been selectively commented upon in the scholarly literature, but such discussions have been rather sparse.³⁰ More and more scholarly literature,

²⁹ Legaspi describes the sense of *Bildung* in this context as "education and formation for the whole person" (43).

³⁰ Some of the scholarly works that discuss a few of the connections between classical and biblical studies include Umberto Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch: Eight Lectures* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2006 [1941]), 11–14; Edwin Yamauchi, *Composition and Corroboration in Classical and Biblical Studies* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1966); Anthony Grafton, "Prolegomena to Friedrich August Wolf," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 44 (1981): 101–29 (ch. 9 of Grafton's *Defenders of the Text*); Baruch Halpern, *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996 [1988]), 18; Van Seters, *Edited Bible*, xiv, 12, 19, 23–24, 27, 133–63, and 185–243; and Bertram Eugene Schwarzbach, "The Eighteenth Century Confronts Job," *History of Universities* 22, no. 1 (2007): 141–97.

however, has been demonstrating the importance of understanding the eighteenth-century German turn to classical antiquity and pre-Christian Germanic culture to supplant any Catholic or Jewish heritage.³¹ Legaspi's third chapter examines the key period in this history, in which German philhellenism influenced and completely transformed classical studies at the University of Göttingen.

Legaspi explains how "German scholars, writers, and intellectuals looking beyond the Christian tradition turned to ancient Greece to recover an integrative vision of life. For several decades, Greek antiquity seemed to exercise a 'tyranny' over these figures and over German literature, philosophy, and religious thought" (54). This is how Göttingen became central to this story prior to Michaelis, precisely through the philological seminar, which became the paradigmatic means of studying classical antiquity and served as a model for later universities, like Berlin. As Legaspi observes, "... Göttingen at midcentury was not merely a way station on the road from seventeenth-century pedantry to nineteenth-century *Wissenschaft*. Rather, Göttingen must be seen as the site of an academic program with its own account of culture and belief, one shaped by the realities of the Enlightenment university" (55).

The thrust of the neo-humanist movement, which was born from philhellenism, was to refashion classical antiquity to serve as a practical model to reform contemporary cultural and political problems. The scientific study of classical antiquity, *Alterthumswissenschaft*, epitomized by Friedrich August Wolf among others, required the mastery of the history and philology of Greek culture in order to dominate the material and redeploy it for contemporary German culture. The early German adherents of the philhellenism movement sought to delve into the world of ancient Greece. At the other end of this movement, neo-humanism sought to appropriate the gold of Athens, as it were, for the German present. The core of this neo-humanist project at Göttingen was "aimed at a renewal of culture based on a return to classical sources in their original languages" (61).

The first figure Legaspi examines in detail in this chapter is Johann Matthias Gesner, who pioneered his famous Philological Seminar. For

³¹ E.g., Marchand, *Down from Olympus*; Brian Vick, "Greek Origins and Organic Metaphors: Ideals of Cultural Autonomy in Neo-Humanist Germany from Winckelmann to Curtius," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 63, no. 3 (2002): 483–500; and George Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany: Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). Legaspi explains, "German philhellenism was not simply a movement: it was a 'faith.' To its proponents, it entailed the monumental task of replacing Christianity with a new form of life derived from an imaginative engagement with Greek antiquity" (55).

Gesner, the study of ancient languages was merely a tool to enable students and scholars to make the content of texts accessible and thus usable for present cultural and political purposes. Gesner's approach would be very influential on Michaelis after the latter became his university colleague and the two became very good friends, and in fact Michaelis temporarily took over Gesner's Philological Seminar. Eventually, Gesner was replaced by Christian Gottlob Heyne, who was responsible for transforming classical studies in a totalistic and holistic way. Heyne's approach to the investigation of classical antiquity was to employ every scholarly tool: art history, epigraphy, archaeology, mythology, religious and political history, etc. Michaelis would bring this methodology into the study of the Bible, creating the discipline of modern biblical studies.

IV. The Premier German Philologist: Johann David Michaelis and the Birth of Modern Biblical Studies

In Legaspi's fourth chapter, "Michaelis and the Dead Hebrew Language" (79–104), he begins his treatment of Michaelis. Prior to Michaelis, the study of the Bible, even the study of Hebrew, had been primarily ancillary to theology. Michaelis's genius made Hebrew philology and biblical studies their own separate and distinct disciplines severed from theological inquiry. Legaspi explains: "Far from being an effort to promote abstractions like 'rationalism' or 'criticism,' Michaelis's recovery of Hebrew was an attempt to move beyond confessional interpretation and to render the Bible relevant as a new but old sort of cultural authority" (81). The rationale of Hebrew study for Michaelis was not primarily about correct biblical interpretation, but instead the enrichment of "European intellectual culture" (84).

One of Michaelis's fundamental moves was to emphasize the deadness of the Hebrew language. Prior to Michaelis, Christian Hebraism (the study of Hebrew and Jewish learning among Christians) had made recourse to Jewish learning on matters of Hebrew and related areas of knowledge. The assumption was that Jewish learning on Hebrew was superior to what Christians could learn on their own, because, in some way Hebrew was viewed as still a living language among European Jewry.³² Even if Hebrew was not the "native" language of educated Euro-

³² Even as late as about 1880 (thus prior to the advent of Modern Hebrew as a living language), Isaac Margolis taught his son, Max Margolis (famous Jewish Bible scholar and 1923 President of the Society of Biblical Literature), trigonometry and logarithms from a textbook, which he himself wrote, written in Hebrew. See Leonard Greenspoon, *Max Leopold Margolis: A Scholar's Scholar* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 2.

pean Jews, since the study of the Hebrew Bible continued in Jewish communities, Christian scholars frequently sought out Jewish teachers.³³ With Michaelis's argument of the deadness of the Hebrew language, Christian scholars no longer needed the help of learned Jews. In fact, Michaelis brought a "periodization of Israelite and Jewish history" into the discussion, making a sharp separation within Israelite and Jewish history that would pave the way for later similar periodizations, which became fundamental to nineteenth-century historical critical schemata (88). Later Jewish history and learning was no longer important for understanding ancient Israelite texts.³⁴ What mattered, according to Michaelis, was not whether a scholar was Jewish or Christian; rather, insights into the workings of the Hebrew language were to be gained by comparing it with other Semitic analogues, especially Arabic, which was a living Semitic language (84–95).

According to Legaspi, "The systematic effort to interpret the Hebrew Bible ethnographically, in terms of present-day Arab language and culture, then, was one of the most distinctive features of Michaelis's program for Hebrew study and biblical interpretation" (95). Michaelis thus initiated an unprecedented state-sponsored expedition to Arabia.³⁵ This entire program

³³ Spinoza himself wrote a Hebrew grammar (which he never completed) for the aid of his non-Jewish friends; it was later used by a number of Hebrew grammarians, including Wilhelm Gesenius, whose grammar remains in use today. See the studies, A.J. Klijnsmit, *Spinoza and Grammatical Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 1986); idem, "Some Seventeenth-Century Grammatical Descriptions of Hebrew," *Histoire Épistémologie Langage* 12, no. 1 (1990): 77–101; idem, "Spinoza and the Grammarians of the Bible," in *The History of Linguistics in the Low Countries*, ed. Jan Noordegraaf, Kees Versteegh, and E. F. K. Koerner (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1992), 155–200; and M. A. Rodrigues, "Algumas notas sobre o *Compendium Grammatices Hebraeae* de Baruch Spinoza," *Helmantica* 49 (1998): 111–29. For Spinoza's grammar, *Compendium Grammatices Linguae Hebraeae*, see Baruch Spinoza, *Opera*, 4 vols., ed. Carl Gebhardt (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1925), vol. 1.

³⁴ Legaspi observes, "In emphasizing the importance of ethnography and Near Eastern antiquities for the study of the Bible, Michaelis moved decisively away from what had been for centuries an obvious and important resource in biblical interpretation: Jews and Jewish literature. Christians had been learning Hebrew from Jewish teachers since the Middle Ages. . . . This situation lasted well into the eighteenth century, as even Michaelis's native Halle suggests. . . . It is striking, then, that Michaelis, who became the most eminent Orientalist and biblical commentator of his generation, flatly denied the relevance of Jewish learning to a *historical* or *philological* understanding of the Old Testament" (96).

³⁵ For more on the Danish Arabia Felix Expedition, see Sverker Sörlin, "National and International Aspects of Cross-Boundary Science: Scientific Travel in the 18th Century," in *Denationalizing Science: The Contexts of International Scientific Practice*, ed. Elisabeth Crawford, Terry Shinn, and Sverker Sörlin (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic,

had the effect of further separating his contemporary Jews from Christian Europeans (97–101).³⁶ For Michaelis, the Bible was to be viewed as any other ancient historical document, and thus could be accessible to the philologist apart from any theological standpoint. In this way, by imposing methodologies culled from classical studies, the Bible could be a source of enrichment, much like classical antiquity, for European culture.

In Legaspi's fifth chapter, "Lowth, Michaelis, and the Invention of Biblical Poetry" (105–28), he shows how Michaelis became a key means of importing English biblical criticism into the world of German scholarship. This is particularly the case with the English critic Robert Lowth, for whom the biblical prophets became Hebrew poets. After showing how Rudolf Smend argues that Michaelis's editing of Lowth in German filtered Lowth through Michaelis's thought—so that, in a sense, the German world got more Michaelis than Lowth—Legaspi demurs. Legaspi argues instead that "Michaelis had clear insight into the true value of Lowth's work and that, as far as he knew, he was fully sympathetic to it." In his argument he shows how thoroughly English thought and culture influenced Michaelis (117). As I read Legaspi's discussion of Michaelis's time in England and the influence of English thought on him, I cannot help but be reminded of the nineteenth-century Scottish biblical critic William Robertson Smith, whose travels to Germany were so influential. As Michaelis brought much English biblical criticism to

1993), 43–72, at 58–64; Han F. Vermeulen, "Anthropology in Colonial Contexts: The Second Kamchatka Expedition (1733–1743) and the Danish-German Arabia Expedition (1761–1767)," in *Anthropology and Colonialism in Asia and Oceania*, ed. Jan Van Bremen and Akitoshi Shimizu (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999), 13–39, at 23–26; Jonathan M. Hess, "Johann David Michaelis and the Colonial Imaginary: Orientalism and the Emergence of Racial Antisemitism in Eighteenth-Century Germany," *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 2 (2000): 56–101; Sverker Sörlin, "Ordering the World for Europe: Science As Intelligence and Information As Seen from the Northern Periphery," *Osiris* 15 (2000): 65–67; Michel-Pierre Detalle, "Die dänische Expedition nach Arabien, C. Niebuhr und Frankreich," *Historische Mitteilungen der Ranke-Gesellschaft* 16 (2003): 1–14; Michael C. Carhart, *The Science of Culture in Enlightenment Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 27–68; Hendrik Frederik Vermeulen, "Early History of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German Enlightenment: Anthropological Discourse in Europe and Asia, 1710–1808" (Ph.D. diss., Leiden University, 2008), 161–98; and Michel-Pierre Detalle and Renaud Detalle, "L'Islam vu par Carsten Niebuhr, voyageur en Orient (1761–1767)," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 225, no. 4 (2008): 487–543.

³⁶ For how this played out, again especially in German philological studies, in the nineteenth century as the field of comparative religion was born, see Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

German scholarship, so Smith would later bring German biblical criticism to the English-speaking world.³⁷

V. The Question of Moses and the Question of the Bible

Legaspi's final chapter, "Michaelis, Moses, and the Recovery of the Bible" (129–53), emphasizes debates concerning Moses in this history. Among other things, Legaspi analyzes Michaelis's mammoth six-volume work, *Mosaisches Recht*, Michaelis's magnum opus published over a span of five years (1770–75). For Michaelis, Moses, as the national leader of Old Testament Israel during the Exodus and wilderness period, would become the means of accessing and appropriating the cultural gold of Israel for Michaelis's Germanic present.

Legaspi begins with an overview of the central role Moses exercised in early modern political thought.³⁸ He explains: "The Pentateuch became a resource for the study of leadership, political change, and statecraft. Biblical narrative was often stripped of its specific theological content and generalized to apply to contemporary political situations" (131). Legaspi proceeds to review the pivotal role of Moses in the thought of Machiavelli and Spinoza before turning to thorny questions surrounding the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. For Machiavelli, Moses was especially important as an exemplar for how to achieve a successful state.³⁹ For Spinoza, as Legaspi points out, "Moses then became an absolute ruler" (133). Spinoza detected a "separation of powers" in the Mosaic legislation, which matched his own views.

³⁷ See, e.g., Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism*; idem, *Bible and Criticism*; the essays in Johnstone, ed., *William Robertson Smith*; Gillian M. Bediako, *Primal Religion and the Bible: William Robertson Smith and His Heritage* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), especially 106–35; and Bernhard Maier, *William Robertson Smith: His Life, His Work and His Times* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), especially 86–122.

³⁸ The role of Moses, and of Hebraic learning in general, in early modern European political thought, has thankfully become the focus of a whole host of recent scholarship. E.g., the essays in *Political Hebraism: Judaic Sources in Early Modern Political Thought*, ed. Gordon Schochet, Fania Oz-Salzberger, and Meirav Jones (Jerusalem: Shalem Press, 2008); and Eric Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

³⁹ See especially Steven Marx, "Moses and Machiavellism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 65, no. 3 (1997): 551–71; John H. Geerken, "Machiavelli's Moses and Renaissance Politics," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60, no. 4 (1999): 579–95; Christopher Lynch, "Machiavelli on Reading the Bible Judiciously," in *Political Hebraism*, ed. Schochet, Oz-Salzberger, and Jones, 29–55; and Gary Remer, "After Machiavelli and Hobbes: James Harrington's Commonwealth of Israel," in *Political Hebraism*, ed. Schochet, Oz-Salzberger, and Jones, 207–15 and 223–24.

Legaspi criticizes Spinoza's exegesis in places, most notably Spinoza's reading of Exodus 32, which Legaspi understands as "a willful misreading of the Golden Calf incident" (133). I would agree with Legaspi against Spinoza that what the text describes is not a case of "the vengeance of the biblical god." But I do think Spinoza's exegesis of the replacement of the firstborn sons as priests with the Levites is correct. Legaspi writes:

On the basis of a willful misreading of the Golden Calf incident (Ex 32), Spinoza attributes the decline of Israel to the vengeful, capricious character of the biblical god. Prior to the incident, he explains, Moses had entrusted religious leadership to firstborn sons throughout the tribes (Num 8:17). But after witnessing the idolatrous behavior of the Israelites, the biblical god lashed out against the people with the aid of sword-bearing Levites. He then stripped the firstborn of their ministry and made the Levites the priests of Israel, requiring that the people support them with gifts and offerings associated with the 'redemption' of the firstborn. . . . Though it was Moses and not God in Ex 32 who rallied the Levites and executed idolaters without explicit instructions to do so, Spinoza attributes the rise of the Levites and the concomitant decline of Israel to the vengeance of the biblical god. In this way, he makes the biblical god the author of priestcraft and political disorder while saving the reputation of Moses as a philosopher attuned to the wisdom of the true God. (133–34)

Legaspi is right to criticize Spinoza here for his subtle attempt to justify his own political reading by denigrating the God of Israel in Exodus 32. Spinoza's fundamental exegesis of the passage, however—where first-born sons serve as priests on account of their primogeniture, and are then replaced (after the fall of the golden calf) by/because of the actions of the sword-wielding Levites—does appear to be the case in the final canonical form in which the text has come down to us. No one has made a better case for this than Scott Hahn in his rewritten doctoral dissertation, *Kinship by Covenant*.⁴⁰ Fathers and their firstborn sons apparently functioned as priests in the canonical Pentateuch prior to the golden calf incident.⁴¹ Indeed, at the Passover in Egypt, God ransoms the firstborn sons of Israel. At the initial covenant God makes with Israel at Mt. Sinai in Exodus 24,

⁴⁰ Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2009), especially ch. 6, "The Levitical Grant-Type Covenant," 136–75.

⁴¹ See *ibid.*, 39–40 on the role of fathers as priests in the Old Testament and in the ancient Near East; and 136–42 on the priestly primogeniture of firstborn sons in Genesis and Exodus.

we find “elders” functioning as priests (24:1 and 5), whom much of the Targumic literature interpreted as firstborn sons.⁴² What the Levites did, by splitting around 3,000 of their fellows in half, was, on this reading, enact the covenant curses (symbolized in the sacrificing of the animals and sprinkling of blood in Exodus 24:5–6) triggered by the idolatry.⁴³ Thus, when we come to the Book of Numbers, we find the Levites ritually replacing the firstborn sons: first all of the people of Israel (other than Levites) are counted (Nm 1); then the Levites are numbered separately from the people of Israel (Nm 3:14–39); finally, all of Israel’s firstborn sons (except from the Levites) are numbered (Nm 3:40–43), and we read: “the Lord said to Moses, ‘Take the Levites instead of all the first-born among the people of Israel’ ” (Nm 3:44–45, RSVCE), and money from the firstborn sons is handed over to the Levites (Nm 3:46–51).⁴⁴ It would seem that Spinoza was correct at least as far as the replacement of the firstborn son priests with Levitical priests is concerned.

After his discussion of Machiavelli and Spinoza, Legaspi briefly discusses the role Jean Astruc played in the denial of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Astruc’s anonymous 1753 *Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il paroît que Moïse s’est servi pour composer le Livre de la Genèse* was an attempt to defend the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch against earlier critics, namely La Peyrère, Hobbes, Spinoza, and Simon. What Astruc argued, however, was that Moses utilized ten minor sources, and two major ones, in composing Genesis through the beginning of Exodus. For Michaelis, Astruc had gone too far. Michaelis was suspicious of the neat-and-clean hypothetical sources Astruc deduced based on different names for God, etc. Michaelis conceded Moses’ reliance on earlier sources, as well as minor editing by Joshua. Michaelis feared, however, that denials of Mosaic authorship would weaken the authority of the text, which was important to him for his cultural and political humanistic program. Moses was important to Michaelis because, as with Machiavelli and Spinoza before him, Michaelis saw in Moses the political ideals of his own time and place: namely, the subordination of church to state. The irony is that it was through Michaelis’s critique of Astruc that Michaelis’s own student Johann Gottfried Eichhorn was made aware of Astruc’s arguments, upon which Eichhorn would build thus setting the stage for the Documentary Hypothesis, which came to full flower in the nineteenth century.

⁴² See *ibid.*, 44–48 on the covenant at Sinai in Exodus 24.

⁴³ See *ibid.*, 51–56 on covenant oaths/curses and their ritual enactments.

⁴⁴ See *ibid.*, 146–47 on the golden calf episode causing the firstborn sons of Israel to lose their priestly status and triggering their replacement by the Levites.

Legaspi's conclusion (155–69)—followed by useful endnotes (171–98) and bibliography (199–213)—summarizes his argument nicely, and it also clarifies what is at stake in such a project. He briefly describes the important heritage Michaelis bequeathed biblical studies, especially through his student Eichhorn, as well as the anti-Jewish baggage that carried through the eighteenth, nineteenth, and into the twentieth centuries in the German academy. Legaspi then examines Johann Georg Hamann's critique of Michaelis.⁴⁵ Legaspi concludes with what he has been arguing was the point of the Enlightenment creation of biblical studies:

The scattered researches of earlier skeptics and freethinkers, though every bit as critical, did not coalesce into a compelling interpretive program until unified at the university. Guided by methods and assumptions that reinforced the statism and irenicism of the Enlightenment cameralists, the new discipline of biblical studies allowed practitioners to create a *post*-confessional Bible by reconstructing a *pre*-confessional Israel. (165)

Legaspi's work is one of the freshest and most important in the field. No one interested in eighteenth-century biblical criticism or in Johann David Michaelis can safely ignore this volume. But, as I hope is already apparent from my comments in this review, Legaspi's work will prove important for the broader discipline of the history of biblical scholarship. Anyone interested in the origins of modern biblical criticism, the origins of biblical studies in the university setting, or even the debate about the role of history and theology in biblical interpretation—I am thinking here especially about those interested in theological exegesis—must read this book. Legaspi has written one of the most crucial studies on the early history of how the Bible began to be studied primarily as a cultural and historical document rather than as a theological wellspring, and he underscores the broader cultural and political concerns that aided this transformation. Eschewing the standard dichotomy of secular versus religious, and contrary to first impressions the stark title might give, Legaspi's discussion is one of the most nuanced yet, highlighting important historical developments that demonstrate how so many older dichotomies are problematic and no longer tenable. *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies* breaks new ground in the history of biblical scholarship, and justly belongs on the bookshelves of every biblical scholar interested in the history of their discipline. N V

⁴⁵ On Hamann and his critique of the new discipline of biblical studies, as well as of Michaelis specifically, see John R. Betz, *After Enlightenment: The Post-Secular Vision of J. G. Hamann* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), especially 93, 99–104, 114–25, and 136–37; and idem, “Glory(ing) in the Humility of the Word: The Kenotic Form of Revelation in J. G. Hamann,” *Letter & Spirit* 6 (2010): 141–79.