

*Spinoza and Biblical Philology in the Dutch Republic, 1660–1710* investigates the biblical criticism of Spinoza from the perspective of the Dutch Reformed society in which the philosopher lived and worked. Jetze Touber considers the philological investigation of the Bible: its words, its language, and the historical context in which it originated. He charts contested issues of biblical philology in mainstream Dutch Calvinism to determine if Spinoza's work on the Bible had any bearing on the Reformed understanding of the way society should handle Scripture.

Spinoza's interpretation of the Old Testament passages has been examined repeatedly during the past decades, as a contribution to 'radical' biblical criticism, against the backdrop of a society that is assumed to have been hostile, overwhelmed, static, and uniform. Touber attempts to inverse this perspective and looks at how the Dutch Republic digested biblical philology and biblical criticism, including that of Spinoza. In doing so, he takes into account the highly neglected area of the Dutch Reformed ministry and theology of the Dutch Golden Age. The book concludes that Spinoza—rather than simply pushing biblical scholarship in the direction of modernity—acted in an indirect way upon ongoing debates, shifting trends in those debates, but not always in the same direction, and not always equally profoundly at all times on all levels.