“The Untold History of Modern Biblical Scholarship’s Pre-Enlightenment Secular Origins.”

Jeffrey Morrow, Seton Hall University
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Scott Hahn and Benjamin Wiker have produced an incredibly valuable work that is both well researched and masterfully written. Their *Politicking the Bible* is the most important work to date in the history of modern biblical scholarship. These authors particularly have in mind the ways in which the interpretation and the study of Scripture have been secularized over the course of centuries, sometimes inadvertently, but often for the express purpose of being redeployed as a political tool. The role of politics and philosophy has been addressed only rarely or briefly in surveys of biblical scholarship, and never adequately.

Hahn and Wiker lucidly and eruditely demonstrate how various political concerns and undergirding philosophies shaped and guided the long process that led to the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation. They situate this process within historical, political, philosophical, and theological contexts, and through the biographies of the key figures, which prove so necessary for understanding this history. Moreover, they consider an expansive and often neglected period within the history of modern biblical criticism.

Excluding the introductory and concluding chapters, the book falls into two parts: chaps. 2–7 lay the groundwork for the advent of historical criticism, and chaps. 8–12 show key examples of the development of historical criticism throughout the 17th century, laying the essential groundwork for the biblical criticism of the 18th century and beyond. The first part sets the stage while the second illustrates how the drama unfolded within the intellectual and political world created by the figures discussed in the first part.