

## IS THERE PHILOSOPHY IN THE HEBREW BIBLE? SOME RECENT AFFIRMATIVE PERSPECTIVES<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

This article discusses a selection of the most recent examples from both biblical scholarship and Jewish philosophy of the construction of the Hebrew Bible as a philosophical resource. By way of a descriptive overview of the relevant ideas in the writings of exemplars such as Davies, Hazony, Gericke, Glouberman and Sekine, the study reveals a neglected albeit radical trend in the contemporary attempted return of philosophy to Hebrew Bible interpretation and vice-versa. These new developments are labelled “philosophical maximalism”, involving as they do the classification of the entire corpus of the Hebrew Bible as philosophical literature, in one sense or another.

### INTRODUCTION

In mainstream biblical scholarship and for most of the twentieth century, the Hebrew Bible was not considered to be a philosophical text (cf. Farr 1955:52-57; Barr 2000:27-28). Of course, marginalised opinions to the contrary have always existed, and yet most biblical scholars would not have dreamed of classifying the biblical corpus in its entirety as somehow also belonging to the genre of philosophy. It is therefore mostly unheard of (yet again) how over the last decade in both Hebrew Bible scholarship and (Jewish) philosophy the idea that the Hebrew Bible is in some sense philosophical is once more regaining currency in some circles. But where is this happening, who is doing it and what are they saying about the Hebrew Bible as a philosophical resource? These are the questions this study hopes to answer.

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In the discussion to follow, the objective or aim is to provide a brief overview of a selection of some of the most recent examples of what I would like to call “philosophical maximalism” (i.e., the view that the biblical discourse as a whole is somehow also philosophy). The methodology to be employed involves a descriptive summary of and meta-commentary on some of the recent writings of scholars potentially representative of various affirmative answers to the question of whether there is philosophy in the Hebrew Bible. Included in the discussion will be the views of Davies (c. 2011), Hazony (c. 2012), Gericke (c. 2012), Glouberman (c. 2013) and Sekine (c. 2014).

Though the basic idea of the Hebrew Bible being philosophical in some sense is hardly novel from a historical perspective (see, e.g., the pan-philosophical reading of Thompson [1999] and philosophical commentary all the way back to Philo), the views of the aforementioned scholars are assumed to represent some of the latest pro-philosophical viewpoints (spanning roughly the last five years), thus revealing something of the status quo of part of the debate concerning the relationship between the Hebrew Bible and philosophy. As the focus will be limited to current constructions of the biblical corpus as a philosophical resource, however, other less controversial, more narrowly-focused philosophical readings are beyond our scope, i.e., interpretations via, inter alia, ethics (e.g., Barton 2003); the history of Jewish philosophy (e.g., Carmy & Shatz 2005; Schweid 2008); philosophy of mind (e.g., Carasik 2006), epistemology (e.g., Healy and Parry 2007; Johnson 2013); political philosophy (e.g., Berman 2008); philosophy of science (e.g., Bishop Moore 2009), philosophy of law (e.g., Trigano 2011); and philosophy of literature (e.g., Sherwood & Moore 2008).

## **CONTEMPORARY AFFIRMATIVE PERSPECTIVES**

### **The Hebrew Bible as philosophical (intellectual) theories (Davies 2011)**

Our first example is a scholar usually associated with controversial issues other than

classifying the Hebrew Bible as philosophy. Having greater interest in his historical “minimalism”, many may have overlooked the fact that Philip Davies is also a philosophical maximalist. According to Davies (2005:n.p.), “You can hardly open a page of a Bible without being confronted with philosophical questions of almost every kind.” What exactly is meant by this is shown in other writings by Davies. For example, in the abstract of a conference paper titled “Introducing the Bible as philosophy”, Davies (2011a:n.p.) envisaged a secular alternative to “biblical theology”, arguing that:

... when the Bible is approached as a *philosophical response* to ancient and modern human problems, whether individual or social, biblical texts can be explored, challenged and appropriated rather than simply received (emphasis added).

Davies thinks that the Hebrew Bible is philosophical discourse in the sense of putting forward philosophical (“intellectual”) ideas about, inter alia, human nature, political theory, divine omnipotence, mercy and justice, history, ethics, etc. (see also Davies 2011b:153-162). That is, Davies sees much of the Hebrew canon as the product of Jewish intellectuals contemporary with ancient philosophers. He admits to there being something other than intellectual (his word for philosophical) ideas in the Hebrew Bible but still classifies it on the whole as philosophy, particularly since this might make for more “enjoyment” of the Bible at a “dinner party” (Davies 2011b:152). On this view the Hebrew Bible can be seen as a resource also for subsequent intellectuals, whether they share its theological assumptions or not (Davies 2011b:152). It offers a set of patterns of discourse, meant to be followed in whatever ways the contemporary human condition might invite (Davies 2011b:152). The Hebrew Bible is therefore not to be seen as a canon of authoritative texts but as a collection of writings that present a “model, an exemplar and cultural agenda” (Davies 2011b:152).

Why all the theological concerns in the biblical texts then? According to Davies, all ancient philosophers appealed to gods and revelation in putting forward their ideas because that is how it was done. Though the Hebrew Bible’s text centres around a single god, the lack of agreement among the authors on the divine nature, actions and

will shows the deity to be little more than a “philosophical principle” with which to communicate certain ideas (Davies 2011b:152). In other words, the character Yhwh is seen as an embedded “philosophical concept” as much as it is a cultural dogma (Davies 2011b:153). For this reason one may explore the Hebrew Bible’s insights, arguments and implications without necessarily having to accept the entire theological system and its details. In fact, Davies believes that some cultural distance is absolutely necessary to appreciate and obtain a fair view of the Hebrew Bible as philosophical (i.e., intellectual) literature (Davies 2011b:153).

In order to demonstrate his claims about the nature of the Hebrew Bible, Davies (2011b:153) turns to what he believes to be several philosophical issues on the agenda in the biblical corpus. These include what he takes to be philosophical ideas about “human nature” in Gn 1-11; “political theory” in Leviticus to Deuteronomy concerned with an ideal constitution; the philosophical-religious themes of omnipotence, mercy and justice in Genesis 18, Job and Jonah; a “philosophy of history” in Joshua-Kings and in some of the prophets, including Daniel; and “ethics” in the wisdom literature (see Davies 2011b:153-162). In the latter context, Davies even feels justified in equating philosophy with wisdom (*chokmah*).

In sum then, by the concept of the Hebrew Bible as “philosophical resource”, Davies (2011b:164) understands the texts as “intellectual nourishment”. He views the Hebrew Bible as chiefly philosophical and denies that it amounts only to myth, legend, prose and poetry, i.e., to religious texts. The Hebrew Bible is thus philosophy even though it does not look like the stereotypical versions of the modern subject, if only for the good reason that philosophy has no essential genre of its own from which to draw. Therefore one can conflate philosophy and myth, story, song, etc. To deny this would for Davies be tantamount to privileging the format of analytic philosophy, which in turn would be provincial (Davies 2011b:164).

### **The Hebrew Bible as a work of philosophy (reason) (Hazony 2012)**

Yoram Hazony is a Jewish philosopher whose book *The philosophy of Hebrew Scripture* (Hazony 2012) was reviewed in RBL. But it is also part of a larger

philosophical project which sees both the question of studying the biblical narratives as philosophy and the proposed relationship between biblical language and the metaphysics of the biblical authors as subjects that have inadequately been touched upon in the past by philosophers and theologians in the tradition of French and German philosophy.<sup>2</sup>

According to (Hazony 2012:1–20), the option of viewing the Hebrew Bible as a philosophical resource has been largely overlooked due to the influence of Greek philosophy and historical biases against the Hebrew Bible in the academy. Hence his thesis and purpose: to offer an introductory work providing a new and more relevant approach to the Hebrew Bible by seeking out its “philosophical content” and to bring these ideas into dialogue with the Western philosophical tradition (Hazony 2012:21–22). This classification of the Hebrew Bible as a work of philosophy (or reason) will aid in the elucidation of the various authors’ worldviews, ethics, and concepts of life and meaning. The framework also makes the Bible more accessible and attractive to diverse readers (Hazony 2012:22).

Hazony believes that the core texts of the Hebrew Scriptures are narrative in form – and because most philosophy is not conducted with respect to narrative genres, misconceptions abound. One of these is that the biblical texts are principally concerned with the particular and the particularistic, at the expense of truths that are of universal validity and interest. Assuming that philosophy is all about reason and arguments concerning generalities, Hazony then asks the question, “How does the Hebrew Bible make arguments of a general nature?” (Hazony 2012:66). In response he identifies the following as first and foremost philosophical genres in the texts: 1) instructional narratives, 2) prophetic orations and 3) law, torah and covenant (which include the rest, e.g., wisdom literature, legal codes, etc.) (see Hazony 2012:66–101). All of these genres are thought to represent forms of philosophical disputations with the aid of particular literary techniques to make the ideas accessible to the implied reader.

To illustrate the practical applicability of his theory, Hazony then discusses the

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://bibleandphilosophy.org/project-overview/>.

Hebrew Bible in relation to several philosophical disciplines. First there is “The ethics of a shepherd”, which contrasts shepherds and farmers to demonstrate an autonomous philosophy of living (Hazony 2012:102-139). Second Hazony presents “The history of Israel, Genesis-Kings” as “a political philosophy” that describes various related issues (Hazony 2012:140-160). Third comes “Jeremiah and the problem of knowing”, which involves viewing the prophet as similar to Plato in terms of how humans are influenced by “illusions” (Hazony 2012:161-193). Fourth there is a chapter on “Truth and being in the Hebrew Bible”, which focuses on the biblical conception of truth as “reliability” and the broad range of meaning ascribed to *dābār* as an object of understanding (Hazony 2012:193-218).

In the end, Hazony’s construal boils down to much the same as Davies’: since throughout its history philosophy has been written in a variety of genres, there is no reason why the Hebrew Bible’s sections of narrative, prophecy, law, and wisdom cannot be seen as major resources for philosophical reflection. In addition, since the Hebrew Bible argues for rather particular moral, political and assorted other philosophical stances, one is considered to be warranted to see it as a work of philosophy and human reason, and not (just), as was traditionally popular, pre-philosophical divine revelation.

### **The Hebrew Bible as folk-philosophical assumptions (Gericke 2012)**

Jaco Gericke’s work is primarily concerned with the use of philosophy of religion in the study of the Hebrew Bible (see Gericke 2012). On the one hand, he agrees with traditional critical scholarship that the Hebrew Bible is not a textbook of either philosophy or philosophy of religion. On the other hand, he is willing to concede the possibility that the discourse of the Hebrew Bible has some sort of nascent folk-philosophical content present in the worldview expressed by its ordinary language. It is in the context of the latter admission that Gericke too tries to argue in favour of the idea of there being philosophy in the Hebrew Bible (see Gericke 2012:155-159).

According to Gericke, and as Davies and Hazony also pointed out, biblical

scholars tend to view the concept of “philosophy” in stereotypical forms and, not finding any such discourse in the Hebrew Bible, deny the presence of philosophical data altogether:

The stereotypes absent from biblical discourse include Greek substantive philosophy, critical secular thought, scholastic metaphysics and formalized analytic arguments. However, the tendency to deny the Hebrew Bible anything philosophical when its rhetoric does not conform to Western varieties of philosophical systems, actually involves a colonialist ethnocentric hermeneutical fallacy. Meta-philosophers with historical consciousness and cross-cultural awareness know that the question of what makes philosophy philosophical does not have a single answer (Gericke 2012:155).

In addition, Gericke (2012:156) notes that:

In the ancient world, there were indeed no absolute differences between wisdom literature, theology, science, and philosophy (the love of wisdom). However, though one would not speak of philosophy in the stereotypical modern western sense in the Hebrew Bible, one can easily speak of folk-philosophical presuppositions in the texts. In other words, the biblical texts contain metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical assumptions about the nature of reality, existence, life, knowledge, truth, belief, good and evil, value, etc.

According to Gericke (2012:207-211), the presence of these assumptions can be illustrated with reference to the four philosophical categories. First, there is metaphysics: the Hebrew Bible is not a metaphysical treatise. Yet its discourse does contain taken-for-granted assumptions about metaphysical issues. Included here are presuppositions in the texts about the nature of existence, reality, being, substance, mereology, time and space, causality, identity and change, objecthood and relations (e.g., subject and object), essence and accident, properties and functions, necessity and possibility (modality), order, mind and matter, free will and determinism, and so on (see Gericke 2012:207-208)

Secondly, the Hebrew Bible is not an essay in epistemology, yet its discourse does

contain assumptions about the nature of knowledge, belief, truth, interpretation, understanding and cognitive processes. The language of the Hebrew Bible is also bound to contain implicit content on what knowledge was assumed to be; how it was thought to be acquired; what types of knowledge there were assumed to be; how knowledge was assumed to be justified; what its limits were assumed to be; what it was thought to amount to; what its purpose was assumed to be, and so on (see Gericke 2012:208-209).

Thirdly, the Hebrew Bible is not an ethical treatise, yet its discourse does contain assumptions about meta-ethical issues such as the meaning of good and evil, the nature of right and wrong, criteria for moral discernment, valid sources of morality, the origin and acquisition of moral beliefs, the ontological status of moral norms, moral authority, cultural pluralism, and so on (see Gericke 2012:209-210).

Fourthly, the Hebrew Bible is not a textbook on logic, yet its discourse does contain assumptions about valid arguments, the nature of language and its relation to reality, the nature of reasoning in religious thought, the warranting of beliefs, the justification of religious experience, strategies in polemical arguments, the nature of rational thinking, and the logic of belief revision (see Gericke 2012:210).

In sum, then, for Gericke the philosophy of the Hebrew Bible is not something overt or explicit. Neither does he think it is technically a philosophical text, when judged from a Western and modern philosophical perspective. He does, however, think that the biblical texts can be classified as containing unintended bits of folk-philosophy which he takes to be present in the assumptions behind the discourse and which relate to philosophical issues. This then is a softer or milder version of philosophical maximalism than that represented by views such as those of Davies and Hazony, although in the end the same or similar reconstructions of philosophical content might follow from philosophical analysis.

### **The Hebrew Bible as a philosophy of the particular (Glouberman 2013)**

Another Jewish philosopher who in his writings presents an extreme version of



philosophical maximalism is Mark Glouberman. First of all, Glouberman (2013b:504), points out that most people locate the Bible squarely in the category of religion (Hazony's "revelation"). Even professional philosophers are said to do the same and criticise the Hebrew Bible for the absence of what the philosophical impulse supposedly mandates, i.e., the close analysis of concepts and the justification with regard to the concepts' application. Thus the Bible is judged to be deficient for not being (in the analytical sense) philosophical, which implies that, *save per accidens*, analytic philosophical (in this sense) it is not.

However and by contrast, according to Glouberman (2013a:40-62) the Hebrew Bible is first and foremost a philosophical document. For Glouberman the Bible has a philosophical agenda because it represents an attempt to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term (in Wilfrid Sellars' formulation). Moreover, the texts are structured around teachings of the sort that are assumed to be the stock in trade of philosophers to the extent that the philosophy therein is the source of its unity (see also Glouberman 2013b:503-519).

Somewhat reminiscent of, yet also different from, Davies and Hazony, Glouberman (2013:511) suggests that the popular misconception that the Hebrew Bible is not primarily a philosophical text is as a result of the following: 1) the prominence in the Bible's pages of "God"; 2) the broadly accepted view of how the text of the Hebrew Bible as we know it came into existence; and 3) the Hebrew Bible's metaphysical focus on the particular rather than the general. By contrast and with regard to 3) above, Glouberman (2013:503) feels that the notion of a particular is what makes the Hebrew Bible an original position in philosophy.

Thus for Glouberman the philosophy of the Hebrew Bible is not a footnote to Plato whose metaphysical discourse cannot handle the particular. The biblical texts are thought to represent an irreducibly different, ontological, discourse which is what is considered to be needed for that. With regard to examples, Glouberman offers the following: 1) particularist philosophical anthropology in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2; 2) particularist moral philosophy in the commandments; 3) particularist political

philosophy in the story of the tower of Babel; 4) particularist metaphysics related to naming and being; and 5) a particularist philosophy of mind in the straddling of the Jordan.

According to Glouberman (2013:505), in “philosophy” as constituted in Greece and as taken up in the West, metaphysics has dominion over ontology. Supposedly free of that influence, the Hebrew Bible’s philosophy recognises as basic a principle that is distinctively ontological. Thus according to Glouberman (2013:506):

Metaphysics, for the Bible, belongs to Genesis 1. In effect: ‘Water, water, everywhere.’ We have general things: water. We have times (the beginning, and then, and then, etc.) and places (under the dome, above the dome, in the middle, etc.). That is all that we have. On the side of the non-general there is in Genesis 1 no philosophical principle. Abraham, in his inaugural lecture, calls out the name of God to the world that knows only metaphysics. God, whose name is the irreducibly particular ‘I AM,’ is the Bible’s proprietary principle, the principle of particularity.

For Glouberman, “paganism” is philosophically deficient, and its deficiency is presumed to have serious moral and political implications (see Glouberman 2013:508). The problem here is that pagans supposedly do not understand their own particularity. Thus the philosophy propounded in the Hebrew Bible can be said to be as much philosophy as are the exemplars of Platonic philosophy and Kantian philosophy. Glouberman proposes that the philosophy of the Bible involves the same elements as do those of Plato and Kant, and he attempts to show this by offering what he takes to be parallel yet presumably superior ontological viewpoints in the biblical texts (Glouberman 2013:510).

Glouberman’s writings on the Hebrew Bible as first and foremost a philosophical document is very dense and more reminiscent of the Continental style than of the analytic traditions the other scholars seem more familiar with. In sum, however, for Glouberman (2013:514) the Hebrew Bible is both the political charter of the emerging Israelites and a philosophical work. It only looks sectarian because the doctrine of Israelite exceptionalism is objectionably sectarian. And if the Hebrew Bible is a work

of philosophy, Glouberman concludes that Western religion rests on a mistake, i.e., the assumption or view that the philosophical position the Hebrew Bible propounds requires anything transcendent.

### **The Hebrew Bible as philosophical dialogue partner (Sekine 2014)**

According to a the most recent study by Seizo Sekine entitled *Philosophical interpretations of the Old Testament* (2014), Hebrew Bible scholarship can be seen as being based on either “faith-based theological approaches” or “value-free historical-critical methods” (Sekine 2014:1-2) Whatever we make of this dichotomy, Sekine questions both and seeks to promote the pursuit of what he calls “the middle path of philosophical hermeneutics” (Sekine 2014:2). And it is through hermeneutics that the biblical texts become philosophy, i.e., the point of philosophical dialogue. Drawing on philosophical writings from ancient to modern times, Sekine (2014) seeks to bring the Hebrew Bible into dialogue with philosophy/philosophers in order to offer original interpretive solutions to a range of popular biblical texts.

According to what is implicit in Sekine (2014), one will discover ancient philosophical constructions of monotheism, religious faith and identity, suffering and salvation, and modern and postmodern ethics in dialogue with the Hebrew Bible’s texts. This is argued by Sekine (2014:19-116) in his “Part I The Old Testament and philosophy”, which includes discussions of topics such as examples of philosophical interpretation vs historical interpretation, the relationship between the two approaches and the task of viewing monotheism in the context of contemporary philosophical challenges.

In Chapter 1 of the book Sekine (2014:19-72) deals with philosophical interpretations of the sacrifice of Isaac and what is supposed to be the true significance of the Akedah. Here Sekine turns the text into a philosophical object of thought from the perspectives of philosophers such as Kierkegaard, Buber, Levinas, Derrida, and Miyamoto. Philosophical, historical and literary issues are read in tandem, e.g., with the silence and dialogue as well as the feelings of Abraham and Isaac being related to logical structures. Also God is construed as a philosophical object discussed in

relation to doubt and self-negation. All of this is for Sekine a warrant for collaboration between Hebrew Bible studies and philosophy.

In Chapter 2, Sekine (2014:73-89) deals with the paradox of suffering by comparing Second Isaiah and Socrates. Commencing with a discussion of theodicy and suffering in Israelite religion, the analysis brings the views of Max Weber into play and shows how the Bible also reflects on despair in life. Egoism and suffering in Greek philosophy is brought to bear, for example the execution of Socrates, the relationship between love and suffering in Aristotle, hope in life and so on. Suffering is shown to be a starting point for the liberation of egoism which can be abandoned in devotion in the paradox that suffering is shown to be.

In Chapter 3, Sekine (2014:90-116) continues the idea of the Hebrew Bible as philosophical dialogue partner in that it deals with the concept of monotheism as perceived to be present in the context of the Bible. Monotheism is problematic and there are various views of God in the Hebrew Bible's self-understanding. On the one hand we find the representations of God who uses other nations to punish Israel's sins; on the other hand we find God who does not guide history. Monolatry and polytheism are also discussed as well as the formation and philosophical significance of monotheism. This is followed by philosophical reflections on the concept of God said to be implicit in the text in connection with atonement faith.

Sekine (2014:117-160) argues his case further. Part II commences with Chapter 4 and places the ideas of the Hebrew Bible in relation to the philosophies of the modern world. Here the sceptical wisdom of the Hebrew Bible (Job, Ecclesiastes) is put in dialogue with Schoenberg, Jung and Nietzsche. The Hebrew Bible is said to have a philosophical understanding of God that challenges the modern world which is seen as a specific kind of philosophical era involving doubts about the concept of God, a sensitivity towards suffering and taking for granted the givenness of existence (Sekine 2014:119-133).

In Chapter 5, Sekine (2014:134-160) commences with the idea of the Hebrew Bible as a resource for regenerating ethics via seeking an ordered path of joyful co-existence. This is shown against the backdrop of two attitudes towards ethics, and in

the context of what he calls “emotional draconianism”, “ethical education” and “theoretical ethical relativism and skepticism and aphasia (and working to overcome it)”. The Hebrew Bible is also said to offer two grounds for rejecting murder: awareness of order (*Ri*) via “ktisiological reason” and “soteriological reason”. Sekine also discerns seven paths (*Ro*) for arriving at the two understandings of order (*Ri*), i.e., religion, philosophy, the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer and Ricœur, Plato’s criticism of democracy, and wonder (*thaumazein*) as the beginning of philosophy (*philosophiā*), etc. The chapter ends with a revisiting of questions about authenticity and the task of philosophical interpretation.

In sum, then, Sekine (2014) seeks to combine the supposed merits of philosophical readings with constructing the Hebrew Bible as a philosophical resource. On his view, one cannot do the one without the other and by discussing how the texts have been read by philosophers and relate to philosophical ideas to which they can be compared, the biblical discourse is able to reveal its philosophical significance.

## **SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT**

Due to a lack of space and time and given the primarily descriptive nature of this study, a complete and critical assessment as to the pros and cons of each view reconstructed above as well as a list of parallels and divergences cannot be provided here. What is left to be discussed is merely the overall impression gained from a general and brief comparison.

From the overviews it would seem that depending on the particular aspect, issue, topic or detail, the various scholars both agree and differ with regard to what they understand by the concept of philosophy, how they see the Hebrew Bible as a philosophical resource, which philosophical fields they found necessary to bring to bear on the discussion, how they construe the Hebrew Bible in relation thereto, where in the Bible they discern philosophical content, how they do so and, finally, what they think regarding the possible contemporary significance of philosophy in/and the Bible.

In the context of the two Jewish philosophers there seems to be a totalising

tendency with little interest in philosophical engagement with the issues generated by literary and historical criticism. Also, for Hazony the Hebrew Bible's truths of a general nature is what makes the Hebrew Bible philosophically profound while for Glouberman it is precisely the opposite, namely the ontological prioritisation of the particular. The biblical scholars in turn appear to want to integrate philosophical questions and the Hebrew Bible in an indirect and reconstructive manner given their awareness of the findings of biblical criticism. Davies links philosophy with the Hebrew Bible only on the level of intellectual ideas, Gericke limits philosophical content to what is implicit in certain presuppositions, while Sekine deals with the text as emergent philosophy rather than as philosophical in itself.

What all of these scholars have in common is their attempt to catalyse some sort of philosophical turn in the genre construction of the Hebrew Bible as a whole. Once more in the history of biblical interpretation it has become possible and even fashionable in some circles to view the Hebrew Bible as part of the philosophical canon (and philosophy as relevant to biblical scholarship). Perhaps this is only an epiphenomenon of the general trends trying to safeguard the relevance of the biblical corpus in a technocratic world showing less and less interest therein for its own sake. Whatever the case may be, the selected examples of "philosophical maximalism" can be said to represent what are currently the very latest attempts to construe Hebrew Bible as a philosophical resource for posterity.

## **CONCLUSION**

The (re-)construction of the Hebrew Bible as a philosophical text represents what may be called a return to philosophy in Hebrew Bible studies, given the severe anti-philosophical sentiment at times during the previous century. Though new only in some of the details of the ways in which particular contemporary philosophical fields and issues are involved, these constructions of the Hebrew Bible as a philosophical resource need to be taken cognizance of as representing some of the latest development in this particular subgenre of reception history. The significance of this

for Hebrew Bible scholarship lies in the fact that the recent increase in returns to philosophy still has to be digested by mainstream scholarship. For amid the controversies surrounding the “collapse of history” continuing to this very day, the “rise of philosophy” is still largely something incognito.

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