

of 'moral culture' in a manner welcome to Ahnert's Moderates and compatible with the Evangelicals' belief in the need for sanctification. The fact that Robertson and Blair signed this work suggests their commitment to Scripture, revealed religion and basic Trinitarian doctrine; the fact that it parsed the Christian religion rather differently to the Westminster Confession is equally telling.

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*Prophecy, piety, and the problem of historicity. Interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures in Cotton Mather's Biblia Americana.* By Jan Stievermann. (Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, 179.) Pp. xiii + 494. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016. €120. 978 3 16 154270 1

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Cotton Mather's 'Biblia Americana: the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testament illustrated' was one of the largest and most significant unpublished manuscripts of the early modern period. From 1693 till his death in 1728 Mather filled over 4,500 folio pages with commentaries drawn from a wide range of contemporary works and his own annotations to 'reconcile new insights emerging from the nascent fields of textual-historical criticism, the natural sciences, and doctrinal teachings of his forbears' (p. 15). This was the first extensive commentary on the entire Bible prepared in America. It is currently being edited and published by a team headed by Reineer Smolinski and Jan Stievermann. The plan is for ten thick volumes comprising over 10,000 pages. Four volumes have already appeared. The overall project has prompted a reevaluation of Cotton Mather and his role in Atlantic Puritanism, as well as Protestant theology and biblical studies in an important transitional period of intellectual history.

Jan Stievermann is the editor of volume v in the series, *Proverbs–Jeremiah* (2015), and the book under review reflects what he has learned from Mather's work on those Old Testament books as well as Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs and Isaiah. Stievermann offers a three-fold perspective. First, he seeks to establish how Mather engaged with these Old Testament books as Christian Scripture. Secondly, he uses Mather's work to develop new insights into 'the development of New England theology and its engagement with the Bible, as well as the often misunderstood biblical orientation of American Puritan identity and culture during a period of change'. Third, the 'Biblia' commentaries on these five books of the Old Testament provide a window into

an understudied and underappreciated phase in the Protestant history of biblical interpretation situated before the rise of German 'Higher Criticism' but in which critical concerns and historical-textual methods were already well developed. (p.10)

Stievermann carefully guides the reader through the challenges to traditional readings of the Bible posed by Spinoza, Grotius and others and how Mather responded to them. He discusses the controversies over the authorship and provenance of the five books. He examines prefigurative approaches to the texts,

typological readings and allegorical readings. Part v focuses on Old Testament prophecies – those believed to concern the history of the Church, the messianic prophecies and the eschatological prophecies. According to Stievermann, in ‘its design and format, combining scholarly, speculative, apologetical, and practical inquiries’, it provides ‘countless new possibilities for studying the development of biblical interpretation in America, and Mather’s intellectual, cultural, and ecclesial world more broadly’ (p. 82). The popular judgement on Cotton Mather will be difficult to overturn. But in the course of this volume Stievermann makes a thoughtful case for Mather’s importance.

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*Saverio Mattei. Tradizione e invenzione.* By Milena Montanile and Renato Ricco. (Biblioteca del XVIII Secolo, 30.) Pp. xv + 208 incl. 6 colour and black-and-white ills. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2016. €38 (paper). 978 88 6372 954 2

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This is a volume of conference proceedings about Saverio Mattei (1743–95), the Neapolitan author of a vernacular translation of the Psalms: *I libri poetici della Bibbia tradotti dall'ebraico originale, ed adattati al gusto della poesia italiana* (1766–74). The volume is divided into ten contributions by twelve authors, with an introduction co-written by the editors. The scarlet thread uniting these contributions is an emphasis upon Mattei’s literary, poetic, theatrical and musicological works, as a counterweight to the legal and political focus of his more recent interpreters – particularly Francesca De Rosa’s *Civiltà degli antichi e diritti dei moderni: Saverio Mattei e l’esperienza giuridica postgenovesiana* (2007). As its title suggests, de Rosa’s work had examined Mattei’s experience as a jurist following the death of Antonio Genovesi (1713–69), the extraordinarily influential metaphysician and political economist who tutored Mattei at the University of Naples between about 1758 and about 1762. The question of Genovesi’s influence over the generation which followed his death – the accuracy of describing its concerns as ‘post-genovesian’ – remains a fixation within the historiography of the Neapolitan Enlightenment. Yet *Saverio Mattei: tradizione e invenzione* takes a refreshingly indifferent approach to this issue, and declines to discuss Genovesi at all. The resulting work will please historians of literature and music, and may have an incidental relevance to scholars of the Bible in Enlightenment Europe.

The volume is not structured in any schematic way, but instead shifts focus from chapter to chapter. Silvia Tatti (pp. 33–48) and Mario Valenti (pp. 49–61) write capably about Mattei’s biography of the poet Pietro Metastasio (1698–1782); Francesco Cotticelli (pp. 3–14) and Lucio Tufano (pp. 133–59) write engagingly about Mattei’s interest in dramaturgy; Paologiovanni Maione (pp. 161–70) and Milena Montanile (pp. 75–84) write with great assurance about Mattei’s libretti and musical compositions. The finest chapter, co-written by Rosa Cafiero, Marina Marino and Tommasina Boccia (pp. 85–131), excavates Mattei’s role in the foundation of a musical conservatory in Santa Maria della Pietà dei Turchini, a small church in central Naples. Readers of this *JOURNAL* will find the most interesting chapter to be Clara Leri’s (pp. 15–32) on ‘neopindarism’ and