

Cotton Mather

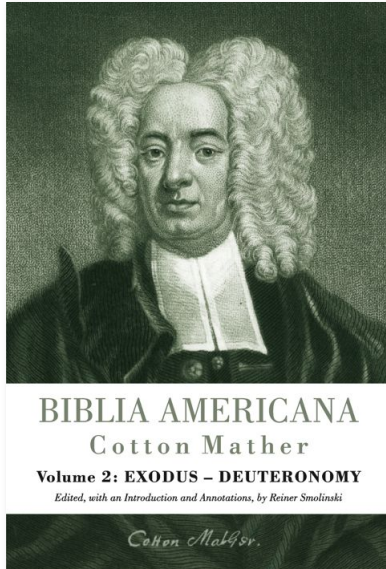
Biblia Americana

America's First Bible Commentary. A Synoptic Commentary on the Old and New Testaments. Volume 2: Exodus - Deuteronomy Edited by Reiner Smolinski

[Biblia Americana]

Published in English.

The first American commentary on all books of the Old and New Testaments, Cotton Mather's *Biblia Americana* (1693-1728) is a unique record of how European Enlightenment criticism (Newtonianism, Cartesianism, philosophical materialism, Spinozism, cultural historicism) of the Bible impacted Reformed theology and biblical hermeneutics in colonial New England before the American Revolution. *Biblia Americana* contains more than 3,000,000 words and represents Mather's collective thoughts on all manner of issues, from the Mosaic creation account to the Second Coming and Judgment Day. In Volume 2 (Exodus - Deuteronomy), Mather harmonizes miracles with natural philosophy, Israelite uniqueness with cultural archaeology, and textual variants and authenticity with up-to-date philological criticism. Particularly noteworthy is his comparative approach to Israelite rituals and iconography with those of their Egyptian and Canaanite neighbors, and the transmission of religious ideas from Egypt to Greece and Rome. He was fully vested in virtually every theological and scientific debate of his age, perhaps the last American of his generation to possess such all-encompassing knowledge. This never-before-published document demonstrates that Mather fully participated in the European debate as he disseminated his new ideas from his Boston pulpit and in his numerous publications.



Reiner Smolinski Born 1954; 1987 PhD in English and American Studies from The Pennsylvania State University; Professor of Early American Literature and Culture at Georgia State University (Atlanta).

Cotton Mather (1663-1728): The leading New England theologian of his period, Mather was both a defender of Reformed orthodoxy and an intellectual innovator, who propagated the Pietist renewal of Protestantism and embraced ideas of the Early Enlightenment. Best known for his *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702), he published more than 400 works in various fields including church history, natural theology, and medicine.

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