

Jan Stievermann

## Prophecy, Piety, and the Problem of Historicity

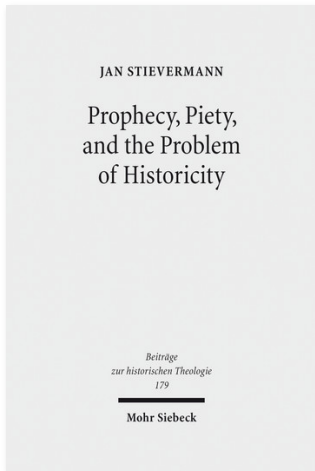
Interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures in Cotton Mather's 'Biblia Americana'

[Prophetie, Frömmigkeit und das Problem der Historizität. Deutungen der Hebräischen Bibel in Cotton Mathers *Biblia Americana*.]

Published in English.

Jan Stievermann's pioneering study of Cotton Mather's *Biblia Americana* examines this Puritan scholar's engagement with the Hebrew Bible as Old Testament. The author focuses specifically on Mather's struggle to uphold or modify traditional typological and allegorical readings in the face of a growing awareness of the historicity of Scriptures. Other key issues include Mather's interventions in the contemporary debates over the legitimacy of Christian interpretations of the prophets, as well as over the authorship, provenance, genre, and spiritual import of texts such as Ecclesiastes and Canticles. Stievermann's book yields fascinating insights into an underappreciated phase of exegesis that was at once traditionalist and innovative, apologetically oriented, pious, and open to new modes of historical-textual criticism. Moreover, it shows how Mather's biblical exegesis fits into the broader development of Puritan theology and identity.

**Jan Stievermann** Born 1975; 2005 PhD in American Studies from the University of Tübingen; since 2011 Professor for the History of Christianity in the USA at the University of Heidelberg.



2016. XIII, 493 pages. BHTh 179

ISBN 978-3-16-154271-8

DOI 10.1628/978-3-16-154271-8

eBook PDF 129,00 €

ISBN 978-3-16-154270-1

cloth 129,00 €

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