

THE ANTI-TRINITARIAN ORIGINS OF LIBERALISM

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In one of the great ironies of history, Desiderius Erasmus expressed his belief to Pope Leo X in April 1517 that they were on the verge of a new golden age. He had good reason for such hopes. The year before he had published his Greek *New Testament*, allowing access to the authentic teaching of the Bible; and his friend Thomas More had published *Utopia*. A few years earlier the roof of St. Peter's was finished, complementing the miraculous ceiling of the Sistine Chapel that had been completed a few years before that. Politically, matters could hardly have been more favorable. More had become a Privy Councilor to Henry VIII and Erasmus himself was an adviser to the young prince soon to become Charles V. Everything seemed to be moving in a positive direction. Only twenty-five years earlier the Moors had finally been driven out of Spain, and a new world had been discovered that opened up new realms for human exploration and new possibilities for the human imagination. And all these changes had been facilitated by the newly-invented printing press, which had vastly accelerated the spread of ideas and not incidentally made Erasmus, a man tainted by illegitimacy, the most widely-read and famous private man in Europe. How could the humanist project not succeed, and thus how could he not look forward to the future with extraordinary anticipation?

And yet ten years later things could hardly have looked worse. On October 31, 1517 Martin Luther had published his *95 Theses* and set off a controversy that was to grow increasingly acrimonious and violent, engulfing Europe in almost two centuries of internecine war. From 1524-1526 Erasmus found himself entangled in a bitter public debate with that same Luther whom he had welcomed as a fellow humanist but who had become a viper in his bosom. In 1524, 300,000 German peasants, emboldened by the apocalyptic leadership of the radical reformer Thomas Müntzer, had taken up arms against their princes. By 1525 over 100,000 of them were dead, many rushing into battle in the conviction that as soldiers of Christ they were immune to musket balls. More ominously, in 1526 the

Turks had defeated the Hungarian armies, breaching the frontier that had seemed to protect Europe against the advance of Islam. And finally in 1527, the armies of Charles V, including many Protestant knights, had sacked Rome and imprisoned Pope Clement VII. The Europe whose future Erasmus had so hopefully anticipated was torn by the Reformation and terrified by the Turks. The age of gold had become an age of iron, and the promises of peace and prosperity were giving way to the horrors of war and destruction.

In the early years of the Reformation, however, the disaster that was soon to encompass European life was not yet visible. Indeed, to many it was a time of great awakening. Nowhere was this more apparent than at the University of Paris, then still the center of European learning. Three men in particular stand out. The oldest was a former Spanish soldier who had been wounded in the leg and who walked with a decided limp. His Catholic faith was deep and unwavering. The second, a young Frenchman whose father had been an ecclesiastical notary, had already studied law at his father's behest but was much more interested in theology and philosophy. Both were members of the famous College Montaigu, which included among its alumni the illustrious Erasmus. The third was a young Spaniard, already deeply committed to reform but living under an assumed name and studying medicine. These three were Ignatius Loyola, John Calvin, and Michael Servetus. The first two were to become the guiding spirits of the opposing sides in the coming struggle.ⁱ The third, by contrast, was hated and hunted by Catholics and Protestants alike, forced to live in disguise, pretending to be someone and something he was not, until he was finally betrayed, imprisoned, tried, and slowly burned to death. This notwithstanding, as I will try to show, it was the anti-Trinitarianism that he defended that ultimately provided the answer to the intolerance and fanaticism at the heart of the Reformation conflict. Moreover, it was his thought, transmuted and transmitted by Italian humanists to Transylvania and Poland that came to play a decisive role in the development of a more liberal outlook in Holland, Britain, and America. In short, I will argue that Michael Servetus was the unacknowledged father or at least forefather of liberalism.

A full account of this history would obviously require a more comprehensive treatment, especially of Calvin and Loyola, than I can give here. I will thus focus on the less well-known development of anti-Trinitarianism. I will briefly discuss Servetus' life and thought but then focus more carefully on the reception of his thought in Italy and its initial political impact in Transylvania and Poland. I will show how this process produced the Edict of Torda (1568), the first edict of toleration in modern Europe, and led to the establishment of an anti-Trinitarian Church in Transylvania and Poland that promoted human freedom, dignity, and toleration—all key elements of the modern liberal outlook. I will then point briefly to their theological impact on the later development of liberal thought in Britain and America.

Sixteenth century Europe was shaped not merely by the religious struggles of the Reformation and but also by the threat posed by the expansion of Islam under the leadership of Suleiman the Magnificent (ruled 1520-1566). With the reconquest of Spain in 1492, the Muslim threat to Europe seemed to have subsided. But the gains of the Turks in the East were remarkable, culminating in the battle of Mohacs in 1526 in which the Hungarian king, most of the Hungarian nobility, and many leading ecclesiastics were killed.ⁱⁱ Most of the rest of Hungary was conquered by 1540 when the Turkish forces occupied Buda. The collapse of medieval Hungary led to a partition of the state between the Ottoman Empire, the Hapsburgs, and Prince of Transylvania.

While the military importance of the Turkish threat was obvious, it also greatly facilitated the Reformation, since even the most ardently Catholic princes could not risk alienating their Protestant subjects whom they desperately needed in the struggle against Islam. Thus Charles V agreed to limited religious toleration in 1532 in exchange for promises of military support against the Turks. However anxious the Church may have been to crush the reformers, princes who were face to face with the Turks recognized that civil war had to be avoided.ⁱⁱⁱ

The threat that the Reformation posed to political order, however, was also obvious, and Catholic sovereigns more distant from the front lines soon sought to suppress it. The crackdown on

Protestantism in France, Spain, and the Netherlands was particularly severe. The French king, Francis I, who at first had been willing to tolerate reform to placate his sister, Marguerite of Navarre, was outraged by the Affair of the Placards (1534) and issued orders to arrest its leaders and put an end to religious agitation. This effort to suppress reform drove many Protestants, including Calvin, into exile. He ultimately settled in Geneva where he established what at first was a safe haven for all religious dissidents but that increasingly became an authoritarian community, ruthlessly intolerant not merely of Catholics but of radical reformers as well. The danger of reform also galvanized ardent Catholics. In 1534, Loyola formed a group with several of his friends that in 1540 became the Society of Jesus—after 1550 the chief instrument of Catholicism in the Counter-Reformation.

While the stories of Calvin and Loyola are well known, that of Michael Servetus has been largely forgotten. Outside of the Unitarian church, he is remembered if at all only as an anti-Trinitarian heresiarch. Non-Trinitarianism, however, did not always occupy a detestable position within Christianity. Indeed, before the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD it is likely that most Christians, at least in the West, were not Trinitarians but Arians who thought of Jesus as a creature and not one with the creator. However, following Nicaea, Trinitarianism was gradually accepted as orthodoxy. A diverse Christendom in this way was replaced by a uniform Christianity.^{iv} While Trinitarianism was dogma within the Western Church for almost a thousand years, it was never easy to make sense of it, although scholastic realism, which sought to combine Augustine's thought with a neo-Platonic reading of Aristotle, made a strong effort to do so.^v This effort, however, was rendered deeply problematic by the rise of nominalism, which denied the real existence of universals in favor of ontological individualism, a move that inevitably undercut the idea of the Trinity.

The legitimacy of Trinitarianism was again called into question in the early sixteenth century in the context of the reformers' emphasis on the authority of scripture. While the anti-Trinitarians understood that their views contradicted prevailing Church doctrine, they believed they were supported by scripture. Erasmus' edition of the New Testament was particularly important to them because it

omitted the passage most frequently used to justify Trinitarianism on the grounds that Erasmus could not find it in any of the Greek manuscripts.^{vi} While this omission outraged many Catholics, the reformers fastened on it as another proof (analogous to the forgery of the Donation of Constantine) that the Church had distorted the true meaning of scripture and Christianity.

Anti-Trinitarianism was initially more prominent in Spain and Italy than in the rest of Europe. In Spain the development of anti-Trinitarianism was deeply influenced by the policy of forced conversion after 1492 that brought both Jews and Muslims into the Catholic Church.^{vii} While many of these *conversos* and *moriscos* continued to practice their religion in private, some became genuine Christians but interpreted Christianity in a way that brought Christianity closer to both Islam and Judaism.^{viii} Such an interpretation was particularly prominent among the Spanish Erasmians. John de Valdes is perhaps the best example.

John was born into an ancient Catholic family near Toledo in 1500, and studied under the Italian humanist Peter Martyr d' Anghiera. In 1529, Valdes published his "A Dialogue on Christian Doctrine" that deeply influenced Bernardino Ochino (whom he befriended during his ten years in Italy) and Faustus Socinus. He saw the death of God as a glorious, rather than a sorrowful event. He laid great weight on Erasmus' claim that the term 'God' should only be applied to God the Father, and interpreted this as support for anti-Trinitarianism. Spanish Erasmians also utilized Erasmus' opposition to monastic vows, his reconception of marriage, his understanding of baptism and communion, his pacifism, and his insistence upon the practical freedom of the will to craft a new and more moderate version of Christianity. The greatest product of this Spanish Erasmian tradition was Michael Servetus (1511-1553).

Servetus was a child prodigy. At 14, he began his studies at the University of Zaragoza with the Franciscan friar Juan de Quintana, who was an Erasmian.^{ix} By age fifteen he already knew Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic. He studied law at Toulouse, where he may have been influenced by the thought of Ockham and where he apparently first began to have doubts about the Trinity.^x The

university was a hotbed of reform, and Servetus was soon (correctly) suspected of secret meetings with Protestants.^{xi} In danger of arrest, he fled to Basel in 1530.^{xii} While there he read the works of the pre-Nicene fathers Irenaeus and Tertullian, which had recently been published, and they further undermined his belief in the Trinity.^{xiii} He also came into contact with a number of different reformers. Perhaps the most important was Johann Oecolampadius, Erasmus' old assistant, who had become a Protestant leader. He took the young Servetus under his wing, apparently hoping that the brilliant and passionate young man would help him consolidate his control of the city. Servetus, however, challenged Oecolampadius to foment a more fundamental theological revolution that called into question the Trinity. This led to increasing animosity between the two, and as a result, Servetus moved to Strasbourg in 1531, where he met Martin Bucer as well as a number of Anabaptists.^{xiv}

While many in the Reformation movement had questioned the status of Jesus, Servetus was the first to do so systematically.^{xv} He was deeply influenced by Erasmus' New Testament and came to believe that Trinitarianism rested upon a distortion that had been broadened by generations of Platonizing Greek fathers.^{xvi} The truth of original Christianity, which in Servetus' view had been much closer to Judaism and Islam, had thus been lost. Filled with youthful zeal, Servetus denounced Christian doctrine in unequivocal terms in his *On the Errors of the Trinity* (1531) and other works. He advocated returning to the simplicity of the Gospels and the teachings of the early Church fathers. Without such a return, he argued, there could be no true Christian belief or Church. Trinitarianism, as he saw it, was actually a form of tritheism. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in his view were not separate persons but merely different dispositions of God.^{xvii} In contrast to Jerome and Augustine, he thus argued that the Arian interpretation was more correct. He affirmed the divine logos but claimed it was not a separate person within the godhead. Rather, it was incarnated in human form when God's spirit came into Mary's womb. The son, therefore, was not co-eternal with God, but was a human being whom other humans could emulate.^{xviii}

This work caused a sensation among the younger reformers, but was regarded as heretical by

both orthodox Catholics and magisterial reformers. As a result, Servetus was forced to flee again, hiding under the name Michel De Villeneuve first in Paris, where he studied medicine, and then in Vienne where he went as a physician at the invitation of archbishop Paulmier.^{xix} While posing as a Catholic, Servetus read Calvin's *Institutes* and harshly criticized Calvin's thought in a new book, written and published in the highest secrecy, the *Restitution of Christianity*. He argued that Calvin was perverting Christian ethics every bit as much as the Pope.^{xx} With a characteristic lack of prudence, he sent the manuscript to Calvin, apparently under the impression that the great reformer would welcome his corrections. Instead Calvin betrayed him to the Inquisition. After a daring escape he fled toward Italy but was recognized while passing through Geneva, arrested, and tried by the authorities at Calvin's behest and with his assistance. The debate in the ensuing trial between the two greatest intellects of the Reformation was so much in Servetus' favor that Calvin ordered his jailors to deprive him of fresh clothes, the opportunity to bathe, and food until he was totally exhausted. Even then as he faced a slow and agonizing death in the flames, he was unwilling to renounce his beliefs.

Servetus saw Jesus not as God but as God's highest creation and messenger on earth, a moral exemplar for all men. He rejected notions of original sin and predestination, proclaiming that God does not condemn anyone who has not condemned himself through thought, word, or deed. Each individual in his view is given the same free will as Adam and Eve.^{xxi} Moreover, God wants all men to succeed, and his spirit is active in world, sustaining and assisting them.^{xxii} Like Luther, however, Servetus was convinced that time was short. The struggle for scriptural truth was a sign that the end was near. With the apocalypse at hand, his book was thus a declaration of war not merely against the Pope but against Calvin as well.^{xxiii} Given these claims and the brilliant scholarship behind them, it is not surprising that Calvin sought to destroy every copy of the work..^{xxiv} Fortunately, he did not succeed.

The trial and death of Michael Servetus did not put an end to anti-Trinitarianism, and in fact, helped to promote it.^{xxv} Among the reformers, it revealed Calvin's intolerance but also the possibility of a more radical reading of scripture than Luther, Calvin, or Zwingli had allowed. Sebastian Castellio

(1515-1563), for example, boldly expressed the revulsion at the persecution of Servetus that was widely shared among humanists.^{xxvi} Castellio first met Calvin in Strasbourg and at his request served as Rector of the College of Geneva. However, he split with Calvin on the question of religious persecution, arguing passionately for the separation of church and state, and he vehemently condemned Calvin for murdering Servetus.^{xxvii} Calvin's actions thus evoked considerable sympathy among humanistic reformers for Servetus and his ideas.

Servetus' ideas were especially well received in Italy.^{xxviii} The principal reason for this was the fact that his account of Christ comported so well with Italian humanism and its philosophical syncretism. Lorenzo Valla had already raised questions about the Trinity in the mid-fifteen century.^{xxix} The neo-Platonism of Marsilio Ficino (who like Servetus thought of Christ as merely the voice of God) and the semi-Pelagianism of Pico prepared the ground for the reception of Servetus' thought.

Servetus' work also had a direct relevance for the prevailing debate among the reformers about the mortality or immortality of the soul. In response to questions raised by the early humanists, the Church had declared the immortality of the soul canonical in the Council of Florence in 1439. The reformers, by contrast, advocated the sleep of the soul or even the death of the soul, referring to both as psychopannychism. The impetus to philosophical speculation on the mortality of the soul began with the neo-Platonist Gemistus Plethon, who in turn stimulated Ficino's work, but Aristotelians such as Pietro Pomponazzi were also deeply concerned with the question.^{xxx} The acceptance of the philosophical disproof of the immortality of the soul combined with a scriptural vindication of life after death was a mark of the coalescing movement of Italian reformers in general and anti-Trinitarians in particular. While psychopannychism was important in many ways, it played a decisive role in the elimination of the idea of purgatory, which vastly reduced the leverage the Church had over believers.

The reception of Servetus' thought in Italy was also facilitated by the long-standing willingness of Italian states to accept religious differences. Venice, Naples, and Rome, for example, had welcomed many of the Jews fleeing Spain after 1492.^{xxxi} Jewish thought had also been incorporated by humanists

into their syncretistic systems. Valdes also had a following in Italy. This made Servetus' views seem less radical.

The Venetians were especially tolerant in part because of their republicanism but also because of their recognition that the persecution of heretics would disrupt trade relations with German merchants. As a result, Italian Anabaptists and anti-Trinitarians were able to live more freely in the area controlled by Venice, and in fact, they held a synod in Venice in 1550 that declared Jesus to have been a natural human being. The growth of anti-Trinitarianism in Venice was so strong that Melanchthon, for example, felt compelled to urge the Venetian Senate to repress the teaching.^{xxxii}

The cases of individual Italian anti-Trinitarians give us some indication of how humanism and reform were combined in Italy. Bernardino Ochino (1496-1564), for example, was originally a Franciscan friar and Vicar General of the Capuchin Order, but like many Franciscans he was disgusted with the depravity of the Church. He was also deeply impressed with the Erasmian humanism of his Spanish friend John de Valdes, and became a supporter of free will and anti-Trinitarianism. In 1542, he was suspected by the Inquisition and forced to flee first to Geneva, then Augsburg, England, Zurich, and finally Poland, propagating anti-Trinitarian notions everywhere he went.

Matthew Gribaldi (1506-1564) was a distinguished professor of civil law at Padua. In September 1553, he wrote a letter about the trial of Servetus to the "Brethren of Vicenza," then a center of anti-Trinitarianism and Anabaptism.^{xxxiii} He may also have been the author of the pseudonymous *Apology for Michael Servetus*, which was at once an argument for toleration, a spirited attack on the legality of the trial itself, and an unequivocal espousal of the condemned doctrines of Servetus.^{xxxiv} With the intensification of the Inquisition in Padua, Gribaldi moved to the University of Tübingen in 1555. He was followed there by two Polish students: Michael Salecki and Peter Gonesius, who later played an important role in the spread of anti-Trinitarianism in Poland.

Giorgio Biandrata (or Blandrata) was born to a powerful family in Saluzzo and became a physician. He met the Italian anti-Trinitarian Giovanni Alciati in 1553 and thereafter turned to anti-

Trinitarianism. In 1557 he spent a year in Geneva in constant contact with Calvin, who distrusted him. Under growing suspicion, he fled to Poland in 1558 and soon became a leader of the anti-Trinitarian party and physician to the Italian-born queen.^{xxxv} In 1563 he moved to Transylvania when the daughter of his patroness married the ruling prince, and played a seminal role there before returning to Poland in 1576 in the train of the new king. Biandrata also played an important role in propagating Servetus' thought by republishing Servetus' *Restoration of Christianity*.^{xxxvi}

Laelius Socinus (1525-1562) was born in Siena, educated in law, and steeped in humanism. At an early age he joined the evangelical movement prominent in northern Italy. In 1547, he studied in Basel, where he kept company with Castellio and Ochino. Laelius traveled extensively and was in contact with reformers throughout Europe. He was also friends with Martin Cellarius, who was the first modern European to articulate an anti-Trinitarian doctrine. Despite his friendship with many of the magisterial reformers, he was secretly composing a revolutionary interpretation of 1 John, claiming that while Jesus was the Messiah and virgin-born son of God, he was not pre-existent with the father. His studies of Hebrew and Arabic had brought him into contact with anti-Trinitarianism and the monotheistic faiths of Judaism and Islam. While his works were not circulated until after his death, they had an important impact on the anti-Trinitarian movement.

Faustus Socinus (1539-1604) like his uncle Laelius was Siennese. He studied at the humanistic *Accademia degli Intronati*, then the center of Siennese intellectual life. In 1558 he was suspected of Lutheranism and fled to Geneva, but he seems to have had no relationship with Calvin. After his uncle's death Faustus inherited his manuscripts and wrote his own interpretation of the prologue to the gospel of John, which betrays the influence of Castellio. In this work he claims that Christ's divinity comes from his office not his nature, showing he was already on the way to anti-Trinitarianism.^{xxxvii} When he moved to Lyon in 1563 he was clearly an anti-Trinitarian.^{xxxviii} During the next twelve years Socinus was in the service of Isabella de Medici, daughter of grand duke of Florence, and while he outwardly conformed to Catholicism, he secretly wrote three works against the Trinity. He argued that

God can always punish or forgive whomever he wills because his actions are not based on a notion of debt.^{xxxix} As a result, Jesus's death on cross is purely exemplary and salvation comes not from divine election but from faithful obedience to Christ's teaching.^{xl} It is thus not the church and the sacraments that are important but leading a moral life. Baptism is thus similarly irrelevant.^{xli} Socinus in this way moved beyond Servetus. Servetus saw a combined divine and human nature in Christ. Faustus believed Jesus derived a single human nature from his mother, and thus deserved to be exalted by believers not because of his nature, but only because God had given him a glorified position.^{xlii} He was thus a moral model that humans could follow, not a God that they had to worship. In 1575 Faustus moved to Basel and published an essay on salvation that made him known to Biandrata, who called him to Transylvania. He moved on from there to Poland where he played a decisive role in the anti-Trinitarian movement that later bore his name.^{xliii}

Many, indeed, most of these Italian reformers spent some time in Geneva, and almost all of them were members of the same small Italian church. Many started out as Lutherans and then gradually migrated to Calvinism before becoming anti-Trinitarians. The decisive event that seems to have converted most of them to anti-Trinitarianism was the trial of Servetus. Gribaldi, for example, criticized Calvin for his lack of toleration and was exiled from the city, but he returned a year later promoting Servetus' anti-Trinitarianism.^{xliv} Calvin then had him hounded from place to place until he died in 1564. Servetus' teaching, however, was too powerful to simply disappear, and Gribaldi was replaced by Biandrata, Laelius Socinus, Ochino, Faustus Socinus, and others.^{xlv} It was here in discussion and debate that the anti-Trinitarian doctrines that later became so important were hammered out, and it was the men who were involved in these discussions who became the leaders of the anti-Trinitarian movement in the new center of religious freedom in Eastern Europe.

It was very difficult for radical reformers to find a safe haven in most of Catholic and Protestant Europe in the sixteenth century. In the 1520s and 1530s many found refuge in Moravia and Royal and Ducal Prussia.^{xlvi} Those fleeing the Schmalkaddic War in 1546 found a haven in Poland.^{xlvii} Thereafter

until the middle of the seventeenth century, non-Hapsburg Eastern Europe became the destination of choice for radical reformers, and it was here that anti-Trinitarianism became not merely an idea but a doctrine and practice embodied in a church that in the later seventeenth century spread to Britain, Holland, and America.

But why Eastern Europe? There were a number of factors that made this area particularly hospitable to radical religious groups. First, the Hussite rebellion in Bohemia a century before Luther had had a deep impact on Eastern Europe.^{xlviii} While Polish bishops condemned the Hussites, Polish kings saw them as allies against the Teutonic Knights.^{xlix} Second, Catholic clergy in Eastern Europe had been especially corrupt, and the nobility often supported reform both to purify religion and to amass political power and wealth by seizing Church lands.¹ Third, there were sizable Jewish populations as well as pockets of Muslims and Armenians in Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland. There was also a very large Orthodox population, especially among the peasantry.^{li} In fact, this was the only area in Europe in which two religious groups, the Catholics and Orthodox, had lived together at peace during most of the Middle Ages. Fourth, the Ottoman Empire, which competed in many of these countries for the loyalty of the inhabitants, was perhaps the most tolerant state in Europe. Already in the period before the conquest of Constantinople, Loukas Notaras, a high Byzantine official, famously remarked, “I would rather see a Muslim turban in the midst of the city [Constantinople] than a Latin miter.” Furthermore, the Ottoman Emperor, Suleiman the Magnificent, gave particular attention to the plight of his Christian subjects. He also protected the Jews and denounced the blood libel as a fraud. Finally, against all tradition he chose Roxelana, a harem girl, who was a Ruthian from Poland, as his wife. His liberality on matters of religion thus stood in sharp contrast to the resolutely intolerant Catholicism of Charles V. Finally, Italian humanism had had a powerful impact on the ruling classes in Eastern Europe, opening them up to a broader view of religious possibilities.^{lii} Matthias Corvinus, the King of Hungary, for example, had spent time in his youth with Francesco Sforza in Milan and was a dedicated reader of Ficino and other humanists.

The general toleration of different religions in Eastern Europe in the sixteenth century was also due in part to the political roles played by a series of remarkable women descended from the powerful Sforza family of Milan. They were deeply humanist, dedicated readers of Erasmus, and in possession of political skills that Machiavelli would have admired. They were undoubtedly also aided by their widely-recognized beauty. These women were all descended from Isabella Sforza (1470-1524), whom scholars have suggested was the model for the *Mona Lisa*, and her husband Gian Galeazzo Sforza, who was the rightful heir to authority in Milan.^{liii} Gian, however, was deposed by his uncle Ludovico Sforza and died, probably of poisoning, in 1494. Isabella returned to her Duchy of Bari where her court included figures such as Leonardo da Vinci, Vittorio Colonna, Donato Bramante, and the anti-Trinitarian Bernardino Ochino. In an effort to regain her political position, Isabella married her daughter Bona (1494-1557) in 1518 to Sigismund the Old, the widowed King of Poland (27 years her senior). Poland was at the time the largest country in Europe. Bona Sforza had been given a humanist education. Her confessor Francesco Lismanino (1504-1566) had studied in Italy and become a Franciscan, but during his time in Poland he leaned toward Reformed theology. Moreover, Bona's new husband had spent a great deal of his youth in Hungary and had become very interested in the art, architecture, and thought of the Italian Renaissance.^{liv}

Soon after arriving in Poland, Bona formed her own cabal on an Italian model, pursuing her political ends with great force and ability. She was a fierce opponent of the Hapsburgs and thus despite being Catholic, sympathetic to reform on political grounds. She also recognized the political necessities of her situation. After the Hungarian disaster at Mohacs, she supported John Zápolya as King of Hungary against the Hapsburg claimant and sought to maintain good relations with the Ottoman Empire through continuing contacts with the Suleiman and Roxelana. Bona's son Sigismund II Augustus reigned as King of Poland from 1548-69. He was very much influenced by the Erasmian idea of reconciliation and successfully mediated between the Catholics and Protestants in his kingdom for twenty years without alienating either side.^{lv} Bona's other children included Catherine (1526-1583),

who became Queen of Sweden; Anna (1523-1596), who married Stephen Báthory and ultimately became queen of Poland after he was chosen to ascend to the throne; and Isabella (1519-1559), who married John Zápolya (32 years her senior) and became Queen of Hungary and Princess of Transylvania.

While the family's tolerance of reform was in part dictated by political expediency, it went well beyond this. In 1539 Bona Sforza reluctantly had to preside over the burning of 80-year old Catherine Weygel for holding anti-Trinitarian views in order to placate Catholics in her realm. This event confirmed her hatred of orthodoxy, and after reading some of the work of Ochino she established a Calvinist Academy, and adopted a more tolerant and at times anti-Catholic position.

The Transylvanian portion of Hungary at the time was a microcosm of Eastern Europe. It was formed and given independence after the Turkish conquest as an independent but tributary state under Ottoman suzerainty. The Hapsburgs would happily have absorbed it into their empire but they were prevented from doing so by the skillful diplomacy of Bona and her daughter Isabella and by the threat of Muslim military power. The country was a union of three different nations that were separated both geographically and religiously. The Hungarians/Magyars were split between Catholicism and Calvinism; the Saxons were predominantly Lutheran; and the Skékelys almost all became Unitarian.^{lvi} Most of the peasants were Orthodox. There were also a considerable numbers of Jews, Armenians, and Muslims in the country.^{lvii} The capital Cluj was centrally located and unusual in having no dominant religious group.^{lviii} It was also one of the freest cities in Europe and the most important center in Europe for the printing of radical religious works.^{lix} During this period it was also the center of Hungarian intellectual life. Erasmian humanism had been well received in Transylvania, and many were pleased to note that Isabella had a well-worn copy of Erasmus with her when she arrived.^{lx}

John Zápolya (1487-1540) had become the warlord of Transylvania in 1511 and King of Hungary in 1526. To avoid Hapsburg domination he had pursued a Turkophilic policy. After years of struggle, however, he was forced to recognize Ferdinand, the brother of Charles V, as his successor in

the Treaty of Varad in 1538. The following year he married Isabella. Then in 1540, shortly after the birth of his heir, he died. Isabella continued to pursue a pro-Turkish policy although many in her government leaned toward the Hapsburgs. Her continuing authority as regent depended upon the support of her family and Suleiman, who was helpful but distant.

In the midst of her struggles, her mother sent her Giorgio Biandrata, the Italian physician and anti-Trinitarian, as an adviser and as tutor for her son, John II Sigismund Zápolya (1540-1571). The Hapsburgs though were relentless, and she was driven to seek a financial settlement in exchange for abdicating the throne, taking refuge in Poland during the time matters were worked out. The Hapsburgs, however, reneged on the agreement, and Isabella and her son were restored to power in Transylvania with the help of the Ottomans in 1556. Isabella served as regent until her death in 1559, when her son assumed the throne. To maintain peace with the Hapsburgs, he abdicated the Hungarian throne in favor of the Hapsburgs in 1570, but remained prince of Transylvania until his death in 1571.

Perhaps the most significant events of the reign of Isabella and John II Sigismund were two edicts of toleration, the first of their kind in modern Europe.^{lxi} Soon after her return to power, Queen Isabella, proclaimed in 1557, “By our royal station and office we are obliged to protect all religions.”^{lxii} She officially recognized Catholicism and Lutheranism, but allowed everyone to follow his or her individual beliefs as long as these beliefs did not injure those of others. She further specified that a national synod should be convened to deal with religious differences. This proclamation was a remarkable achievement that has gone largely unnoticed by historians.^{lxiii}

Her son inherited his mother's humanism and his father's Turkophilic policy. Like his mother, he also recognized that the stability of the state depended upon the tolerance of religious pluralism. In 1563 he thus extended his mother's edict to include Calvinists as well as Lutherans and Catholics, and he left open the possibility of extending it further.^{lxiv} He also called and presided over three debates in 1566, 1568, and 1569 to discuss religious differences between Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Unitarians. After the first debate ended inconclusively, he issued the Edict of Torda, officially

recognizing four sects: Catholicism, Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Unitarianism.^{lxv} Other religions and particularly Eastern Orthodoxy, Judaism, and Armenianism were tolerated but not officially recognized. The Unitarians were victorious in the other two debates, and as a result the king converted to Unitarianism.

The differences between the two edicts are significant. Isabella's statement guaranteed the rights of conscience for individuals as long as they did not harm those of others. This position is generally familiar to us. Her son's edict granted not individual freedom, but freedom for each community to choose its own minister or priest.^{lxvi} It thus prohibited landowners from introducing a priest contrary to the will of the local community and required communities to supply a place of worship for displaced minorities.^{lxvii} In practice many of the churches shared space. Religious differences thus persisted, but disputes were rare. Moreover, there was even an informal mechanism to deal with mixed marriages, with sons following fathers and girls mothers in their religious practice.^{lxviii}

One might think that the lack of protection for individual conscience in the Edict of Torda was a step backward from the earlier edict, but that would be a mistake.^{lxix} In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries granting freedom of conscience was often a way to delimit and destroy the actual practice of a religion.^{lxx} The treatment of Huguenots under the Edict of Nantes is a case in point. While they could believe what they wanted and practice as they chose in private, the prohibition of public practice effectively undermined their existence as a church. Despite its limitations, in an age of religious ferment and strife, the Edict of Torda was thus a shining example of a liberal stance toward religion.

While religious toleration in Transylvania was due in part to political and sociological factors, the impact of anti-Trinitarian thought provided the foundation that made this liberal policy possible. The ideas of Servetus were first brought to Hungary and Transylvania by Jacobus Palaelogus, who hoped to use them to establish the grounds for a universal religion that would allow for the peaceful co-existence of all monotheists. The first person in the country to espouse such anti-Trinitarian ideas in public was Thomas Aran, who denied the Trinity in print in 1558. His opinions were clearly shaped by

works of Servetus that had been smuggled into the country, translated, and published in the 1550s.^{lxxi} The real leaders of the anti-Trinitarian movement in Transylvania, however, were Giorgio Biandrata, whom we discussed above, and Francis Dávid (1510-1579).

Dávid was a native of Transylvania who began life as a Catholic and passed through almost all of the stages of the Reformation before coming to anti-Trinitarianism. In his early life he came under the tutelage of the Catholic bishop and Erasmian humanist Hadrian Wolphard.^{lxxii} Beginning in 1548, he studied at Wittenberg and there became a committed Lutheran. He was elected Protestant Bishop of the Hungarian Churches in Transylvania in 1555 and appointed court preacher for John II Sigismund the same year. By 1559 he had become a Calvinist. In 1565 during the first debate about the Trinity, Dávid admitted he could find no scriptural basis to support the notion, and in 1566 he rejected Trinitarianism.^{lxxiii} This decision was clearly influenced by his reading of Servetus and both Laelius and Fastus Socinus, but also by his discussions with Biandrata.^{lxxiv} He acted as the principal spokesman defending the Unitarian position in the three national debates and was widely recognized as the principal mover behind the policy of toleration. Dávid's and Biandrata's proximity to John II Sigismund also clearly played a role in the latter's conversion. Dávid's approach to the Bible throughout his life was deeply influenced by Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535), who saw reason not as an independent power but as the lantern of faith. Dávid also laid great weight on the internal coherence of the Bible and stressed the necessity of interpreting obscure passages by means of clearer ones.^{lxxv}

Following Servetus, Dávid argued that Christ's divinity derived from his function rather than his essence. As a result, he emphasized the necessity for obedience to and emulation of Christ.^{lxxvi} In 1567 he and Biandrata published a substantial compilation of extracts from Servetus' work and the writings of Polish anti-Trinitarians.^{lxxvii} At this time he also concluded that the existence of Christ began when he was conceived by the Virgin Mary through the operation of the Holy Spirit. For him Jesus was thus not God but an exemplary human being and moral model of neighborly charity and middle-class

moderation.^{lxxviii}

The urgency and passion of Dávid's teaching, like that of Servetus, arose from his belief in the imminence of the apocalypse. While Servetus had never given an exact date for the return of Christ Dávid was bolder, claiming that 1570 was the year Christ would return: this date, he argued, was forty years after the publication and neglect of *On the Errors of the Trinity*, thus corresponding to the forty years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness.^{lxxix}

John II Sigismund died in 1571, and was succeeded by his uncle, the Catholic King of Poland Stephen Báthory (1533-1586), who had broad support from Protestant and Unitarian nobles, in part because they believed he would defend them against the Hapsburgs who they feared would bring in the Counter-Reformation, but also because they were convinced that toleration was so deeply rooted in Transylvania that it was irreversible.^{lxxx} The Unitarians also recognized it would be difficult to outlaw their religion because they formed such a large portion of the Transylvanian middle class. They were not entirely wrong. Báthory was a pragmatic ruler and anxious to avoid a fight on religious matters, but he also believed that Catholicism needed more defenders and invited the Jesuits to return to his realm in 1571. He also forbade any further religious innovation.^{lxxxii} This limitation put pressure on the Unitarians who were divided between the moderate Biandrata faction, which was Christian and Unitarian, and the Dávid faction, which increasingly asked whether Jesus should be worshiped at all and which ultimately became a Sabbatarian sect that rejected the New Testament and returned to Judaism. Biandrata, who was closer to Báthory, tried to temper Dávid's radicalism for both theological and political reasons, but without success. Dávid had been driven throughout his life not by what was politically expedient but by what he saw as the clear meaning of scripture. As a last resort, Biandrata invited Faustus Socinus to come to Transylvania to try to convince Dávid that his reading of scripture was misguided and thus avoid both the ire of Báthory and a split in the anti-Trinitarian Church. Socinus spent six months in discussion with Dávid from 1578-1579, living in his home, but in the end it was to no avail.

The central point of an issue between them was the role that Christ played between his Ascension and his Second Coming.^{lxxxii} Given Dávid's reading of scripture, Christ had no current active role as priest or mediator, and thus it would be wrong to pray to him, a kind of idolatry.^{lxxxiii} Socinus insisted such non-adorationism put Dávid beyond the limits of Christianity.^{lxxxiv} But in the end Dávid remained intransigent. As a result he was arrested, tried, and put in prison, where he died in 1579.

Dávid's case is important because it shows us the limits of toleration in sixteenth-century Eastern Europe. Toleration and the liberal sentiment that underlay it were certainly limited, but those limits were wide indeed—wider, for example, than even Locke felt comfortable espousing more than a century later, and surpassed perhaps only in the late-eighteenth century. What is surprising are the substantial efforts Dávid's opponents made to try to save him, to keep him within the orbit of what they considered tolerable. In the absence of a Catholic king, it is not inconceivable that even his Sabbatarianism might have been tolerated.^{lxxxv} His fate, however, prefigured the fate that awaited much of Eastern Europe as the Counter-Reformation ran its course. Before we turn to that topic, however, we need to consider the further development of anti-Trinitarianism in Poland.

Sixteenth-century Poland has been called both the “Jewel of Religious Freedom” and the “Haven of Heretics,” and the anti-Trinitarians were at least partly responsible for both of these appellations.^{lxxxvi} The first anti-Trinitarian in Poland was the Italian Francesco Stancaro (1501-1574), who arrived in the 1540s and helped to found the sect that came to be known as the Polish Brethren.^{lxxxvii} In Poland as elsewhere the sect grew out of the Reformed church. The separation of the anti-Trinitarians from the dominant reformed group began in 1556 when Peter Gonesius spoke out against the Trinity during the general synod of the Reformed Church of Poland. Gonesius, as I mentioned earlier, developed his anti-Trinitarianism in Padua as a student and supporter of Gribaldi. When he returned to Poland in 1554, he had an immediate and profound impact. One of his first converts was Jan Kiszka, the second largest landowner in Poland, who owned 400 villages and 70 cities.^{lxxxviii} Kiszka set up a printing press to spread anti-Trinitarian teachings and converted twenty churches within his

territory.

Not surprisingly, the anti-Trinitarian movement in Poland was mainly comprised of Poles, but its numbers were augmented by foreigners, especially from Italy, who were looking for a safe haven. Many of these men played a leading role in the church. The arrival of Biandrata and other members of the Italian Church in Geneva brought both theological knowledge and organizational ability to the movement. In 1565 the anti-Trinitarians split with the Calvinists and organized their own synod, the Minor Reformed Church of Poland. They were weakened by the loss of Biandrata, who was called to Transylvania, but they continued to grow, although as in the case of the anti-Trinitarians in Transylvania their success led to further fractionalization. In 1567 the Minor Church split in two, with a breakaway Ditheist faction supporting the pre-existence of Christ forming a separate synod.^{lxxxix}

In the 1570s there was also a growing split between the pacifistic Arian faction, and the non-pacifistic Ebionite faction of the church. The reasons for this split were complicated. On a theological level, the split mirrored that in Transylvania between Biandrata and Dávid. The Arian faction, centered in Racow and Lubin, was closer to the Biandrata position. The Ebionite, non-adorationist faction was more concentrated in Lithuania, and was led by Symon Budny (1520-1593).^{xc} Budny rejected the pre-existence of the Word and the divinity of Christ. He praised Servetus for the progress he had made, but claimed to push his ideas further. Both groups were anti-Trinitarian and thus denied the pre-existence of Christ, but the Ebionite faction denied the virgin birth as well, and thus the necessity or even efficacy of adoring or worshiping Jesus. Along with Jacobus Palaeologus (1520-1585) and Francis Dávid, they thus seemed to the other anti-Trinitarians to abandon Christianity for Judaism.^{xcii}

The struggle between these two groups also concerned the question whether the use of force was morally or theologically justifiable if one lived a life in emulation of Christ. This question had both social and political implications. The social issue was whether the converts drawn, as often was the case, from among the noble class should renounce the use of force against their serfs and become their brothers in Christ. The egalitarian consequences are clear. The political question was whether

anti-Trinitarians should work for or fight on behalf of the state. In 1572, Jacob Palaeologus asserted on behalf of the Ebionite faction that it was the obligation of Christians to accept public office and to serve in the armed forces, for the refusal to do so “always smooths the road to the power of the godless.”^{xcii} Replying on behalf of the Arian faction, Gregory Paul appealed to the example of the humble Christ, arguing for an absolute separation of church and state.

In 1579 Faustus Socinus arrived in Poland and became a part of the Arian group. He eventually became predominant in their synods as the greatest defender of their pacifism. He also succeeded in convincing the Arians in the church to abandon their belief in the pre-existence of Christ, as well as convincing many Ebionites to moderate their non-adorationism, expelling those who did not.

His extreme pacifism led him to act mildly with respect to his opponents, although he did not adopt a theory of complete toleration.^{xciii} It also led him to believe that Christians not only should not serve in the military but also should not serve in any capacity in the government. His thought thus presupposes the complete separation of church and state. His constant aim was to reduce and simplify the fundamentals of Christianity by removing the metaphysical elements of theology that in his view had obscured the truth. His Christianity was thus not merely anti-Trinitarian but humanistic as well. He laid great importance in this context on both free will and reason and is generally remembered as a vindicator of human reason versus the supernatural.

Perhaps the preeminent accomplishments of the anti-Trinitarians in Poland were the foundation of the Racovian Academy (1602-38) and the publication of the Racovian Catechism (1605), which articulated their basic doctrines.^{xciv} Already in the prologue, the Catechism asserts that everyone should enjoy freedom of his or her own judgment and proclaim it; and that no one has special access to the truth, which can in fact only be attained by dialogue and discussion. It proclaims that scripture alone is the source of truth; that Jesus was not God but a human being who was made immortal and whose words and actions, along with the Ten Commandments, establish the ethical standards for a good life. Christians thus can serve in government only if they do not violate the laws of God. There is no

divine election because all humans were created for immortality and can attain it through faith and right action. Moreover, Christ's death was not a sacrifice, communion is merely memorial, and only rational adults may be baptized. Christians also cannot use force to maintain church discipline.

Those who wrote the Catechism were anxious to exclude one group that was close to them and that they recognized was also descended from the Polish Brethren, the rationalist Unitarians who were distinguished by the fact that they relied on human reason and logic above the Bible. They were thought to be humanist and at times agnostic for believing Christ was a real man and thus rejecting the virgin birth, and for believing that personal morality was a matter of individual conscience. These rationalist Unitarians were identified both with the Ebionite or non-adorationist faction and with more secularized anti-Trinitarians. They also obviously represent a further step in the direction of classical liberalism.

With the advent of the Counter-Reformation and the re-Catholicization of Eastern Europe, the anti-Trinitarians who had established their churches and homes in Poland, Transylvania and the rest of Eastern Europe were once again forced to emigrate. Most of them headed toward Prussia, Holland, or Britain, and from there a number passed on to America.^{xcv} The flight to Britain began early. Anti-Trinitarians came to London in 1550.^{xcvi} However, life was not easy for them in sixteenth-century Britain. Indeed, the last two people burned in Britain (in 1612) were anti-Trinitarians. Or to take a well-known example, John Biddle (1615-1652), who was one of the first educated proponents of anti-Trinitarianism in England, was imprisoned four times and exiled once.^{xcvii} These facts notwithstanding, anti-Trinitarianism made inroads in England. The Racovian Catechism (in Latin) was published in England in 1609 and dedicated to James I. The freedom of anti-Trinitarians to practice their religion increased during the Civil War, when many different sects flourished, but Socinianism, as it was then generally referred to, tested the limits of English toleration. In his initial attempts to form a united English Reformed Church, the Puritan John Owen thought that the Socinians would be useful in helping to emphasize the importance of a scripturally based theology, but when an English translation

of the Racovian Catechism was published in Britain in 1651 and he became more familiar with their thought, Owen concluded they were very dangerous. In his view, they distorted the words of scripture and passed beyond the limits of Christianity.

As a result of what we today would characterize as their liberal views, Owen believed it was necessary to suppress the Socinians. The attempt to do so, however, led to a surge in interest in anti-Trinitarianism. Also a new generation of undogmatic and more rationalistic Unitarians such as Samuel Crell offered a less threatening version of Unitarian thought that helped pave the way for more enlightened views, that deeply influenced thinkers like Hobbes.^{xcviii} Crell was in contact with Locke and Newton (and many other early Enlightenment figures as well), and the influence of Socinianism on their thought is incontestable.^{xcix}

Later Enlightenment thinkers also were influenced by anti-Trinitarianism. Bayle and Leibniz, for example, were deeply interested in anti-Trinitarian thought.^c Voltaire made Servetus the centerpiece of his argument for religious toleration.^{ci} Joseph II of Austria, who issued his own Patent of Tolerance in 1781, owned one of the few surviving copies of the original *Restitution of Christianity*.^{cii} And Joseph Priestly (1733-1804), the English scientist and friend of Benjamin Franklin, was also a Unitarian theologian.^{ciii} He was a strong supporter of religious toleration and the rights of free speech; he supported the American Revolution, opposed the slave trade, and also advocated for a repeal of the Tea and Corporation Acts.^{civ} When a mob, angry at his political and religious views, burned down his home, he moved to America, where he met and befriended Thomas Jefferson in 1791 and was a great force in the spread of Unitarianism, especially in Massachusetts.^{cv} The Unitarian movement that he strengthened was so successful that by 1822 all but one of Boston's churches were Unitarian and the movement, which included Ralph Waldo Emerson, had members as far south as South Carolina.

Of course, Unitarianism did not win the day in America, as many enlightened thinkers imagined it would. In fact, the growth of religious belief in America from 1820-1870 was largely shaped by the Second Great Awakening, which was largely Methodist and Baptist, and by the immigration of German

and Scandinavian Lutherans, and Irish, Italian, and Eastern European Catholics and Jews. Still, the early impact of anti-Trinitarianism or what came to be called Deism in America was profound and continues to shape our liberalism. That it is still at odds with various forms of evangelical Calvinism is a reflection of how deep the divide was and remains between the views of the world held by Calvin and Servetus. Since Vatican II, the differences with Catholicism have narrowed but not disappeared, and even here there are still at times profound disagreements.

The Reformation had many causes but among them was a fundamental disagreement about the nature of man and God. The Italian humanists imagined that man was the *imageo dei*, a Promethean being who could emulate God himself. Luther and later Calvin were aghast at such a notion. For Luther man was an ass who was ridden either by God or the devil and who was incapable of freely willing anything on his own. For Calvin man was a totally depraved being who could only hope to be saved by God's grace. Servetus and the anti-Trinitarians sought a path between that of the humanists and that of the reformers. Building on Erasmian humanism they imagined that human beings were neither godlike beings nor irredeemable sinners. In doing so, they created a notion of human freedom and dignity that became the foundation for a more liberal worldview.

Central to this effort was their attack on the Trinity. If the Son and the Holy Spirit were actually one and co-eternal with the Godhead, humans must either rise to titanic heights to equal them or recognize their utter insignificance and beg for their forgiveness and mercy. If, however, Jesus was not a co-eternal moment of the godhead but a human being who was the voice of God and bore his message to man, then it would be possible for human beings to lead a life that was neither titanic nor depraved, to choose a life that was morally good by emulating the life of Jesus and following his simple commandments. Christianity in this sense could be a religion not of fanatical faith but of reason.

The account of the development and transmission of anti-Trinitarian doctrines is thus the story of the transformation of Christianity into a religion that was capable of engendering and sustaining

something like liberalism. It is the story, I believe, of the victory of Erasmus and moderation over Reformation and Counter-Reformation fanaticism. What I have tried to uncover in this paper is the strange underground pathways that this thought took from Servetus through the Italian humanist reformers first to Transylvania and Poland, and then to Britain and America.

ENDNOTES

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- i Loyola was Calvin's mirror image. Both were spiritually intense, committed, indomitable, and convinced they were correct. Laurence and Nancy Goldstone, *Out of the Flames* (New York: Random House, 2002), 204. Calvin and Servetus knew one another but there is no evidence that either of them knew Loyola.
- ii Approximately 1000 Hungarian nobles were killed at Mohacs. After their victory in the naval Battle of Preveza in 1538, the Turks also controlled the Mediterranean until the Battle of Lepanto in 1571.
- iii It is important to note that there was little cooperation between the emperor and the papacy after the Sack of Rome in 1527 until the formation of a Holy League to oppose the Turks in 1538.
- iv Susan Richie, "Children of the Same God," Minns Lectures 2009, 5:9; available at http://www.minnslectures.org/archive/Ritchie/2009_series.htm. An aspect of the turn to Trinitarianism in the fourth century was the rise of anti-Semitism. Constantine thought it was important for Christians to separate themselves from detestable company of Jews. Richie, "Children," 1:2,10.
- v And of course the dispute over the meaning of the Trinity was central to the split between the Roman and the Eastern church.
- vi 1John 5:7 "For there are three that bear witness in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit. And these three are one." Goldstone, *Flames*, 3. Erasmus also often spoke out against other passages that seemed to support a Trinitarian reading. Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid and the Search for Bible Truth in Transylvania* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 43.
- vii Ibid, 45.
- viii The Spanish inquisition was established in 1478 to root out false *conversos*. Ibid, 45-46.
- ix He was later confessor to Charles V.
- x Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid*, 49; Mark M. Mattison, "Michael Servetus: Fountainhead of anti-Trinitarianism." *Journal From the Radical Reformation* 1 (Fall 1991): 27-28.
- xi Goldstone, *Flames*, 48.
- xii Ibid, 62.
- xiii Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid*, 50.
- xiv Ibid, 33.
- xv Ibid, 51.
- xvi For example, Servetus showed that the 53rd chapter of *Isaiah* referred only to Cyrus and not to Christ. Richie, "Children," 3:5.
- xvii Goldstone, *Flames*, 72.
- xviii His theology in this sense is closer to Adoptionism, Arianism, and Sabellianism.
- xix During this period of life, when he was forced into deep disguise, he did groundbreaking work in geography and medicine. He has been called the father of comparative geography and is now known to have correctly identified the method of the circulation of the blood.
- xx Goldstone, *Flames*, 157.
- xxi Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid*, 57.

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- xxii Ibid, 53.
- xxiii Goldstone, *Flames*, 158.
- xxiv He nearly succeeded, although interestingly he did not destroy the copy Servetus had sent to him.
- xxv Ibid, 200. On the role of Servetus in the development of freedom of conscience see Marian Hillar, *The Case of Michael Servetus (1511-1553) – The Turning point in the Struggle for Freedom of Conscience* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1997).
- xxvi Castellio, *Whether Heretics Should Be Persecuted* (1554). On the role of Castellio see Marian Hillar, “Sebastian Castellio and the Struggle for the Freedom of Conscience,” in *Essays in the Philosophy of Humanism* 10 (2002):31-57. Hillar has written extensively on the development of Anti-Trinitarianism and its transmission from Europe to America.
- xxvii Castellio, *On Hereticism and Tolerance and Peace in Constantinople* (1554).
- xxviii Williams argues that the radical reformers in Italy felt the need to simplify the doctrine of the Trinity and emphasize Christ’s humanity, in response to Calvin who had effaced all forgiveness from the image of Christ he deployed in defense of his treatment of Servetus. George Hurston Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 619.
- xxix Especially in reference to Boethius’ *De elegantis linguae Latinae* (1442).
- xxx *On the Immortality of the Soul* (1516) and *Apologia* (1517).
- xxxi Including such distinguished scholars as Isaac Abrahanel (1437-1505). Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid*, 47.
- xxxii Goldstone, *Flames*, 74. One of their own members betrayed them to the Inquisition, and they were forced to flee from Italy. Ibid, 48.
- xxxiii During the early stages of the trial of Servetus, the anti-Trinitarian Laelius Socinus was staying with Gribaldi at Farges. *Bibliographia Sociniana: A Bibliographical Reference Tool for the Study of Dutch Socinianism and Antitrinitarianism*, ed. Piet Visser (Amsterdam: Doopsgezinde Historische Kring, 2004), 11-12.
- xxxiv The *Apology* is the oldest fully explicit presentation of Servetus’ thought by an Italian.
- xxxv Goldstone, *Flames*, 225.
- xxxvi It was entitled *De Regno Christi Primus; De Regno Antichristi secundus* While his was not an exact edition, it was the principal form in which Servetus’ magnum opus became known to most anti-Trinitarians. Ibid, 232.
- xxxvii Goldstone, *Flames*, 61.
- xxxviii He rejected the immortality of the soul in favor of psychopannychism, a position he developed in a debate with Francesco Pucci, who at the time was a radical Pelagian but later became an anti-Trinitarian as well.
- xxxix Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid*, 61. The connection to Ockham’s famous claim that “God is no man’s debtor” is clear.
- xl Ibid, 61.
- xli Ibid, 61.
- xlii Ibid, 62.
- xliii Interestingly, his stance on baptism prevented him from ever becoming an official member of the religious movement named after him.
- xliv Goldstone, *Flames*, 224.
- xlv Ibid, 225.
- xlvi The Duke of East Prussia became the first Protestant prince in Europe 1525 when he converted to Lutheranism, and as a result East Prussia became a haven for Protestants, including those from Poland.
- xlvii Ibid 194.

- xlvi Ibid, 185. Ivan Jacob Heraclid (1511-63) became one of the first Protestant monarchs in Eastern Europe when he made Lutheranism the state church of Moldova. This offended the native Orthodox. In 1562 he founded the Cotnari School, which was intended to be a Renaissance academy led by Transylvanian scholar Johann Sommer (1542-15574), a Saxon Protestant who lived in Moldova. Sommer later led a similar school in Brasov, Transylvania from 1565-67, then moved on to the John Sigismund Unitarian Academy from 1570-74, where he married the daughter of Francis Dávid.
- xlix Ibid, 192.
- l Goldstone, *Flames*, 225.
- li Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid*, 188.
- lii Robert J. W. Evans, "Calvinism in East Central Europe: Hungary and Her Neighbours," in *International Calvinism 1541-1715*, ed. Menna Prestwich (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 173; Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid*, 107-98.
- liii Alicia Forsey, *Queen Isabella Sforza Szapolyai of Transylvania and Sultan Suleyman of the Ottoman Empire: A Case of Sixteenth Century Muslim-Christian Collaboration* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellon, 2009), 3.
- liv One of the royal secretaries of Sigismund the Old converted to Protestantism after the end of his service for the King.
- lv Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid*, 195.
- lvi József Ajtay, Benedek Jancsó, and Alois Kovács, *The Transylvanian Question* (New York: Steiger, 1921), 14.
- lvii Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid*, 9.
- lviii Ibid, 12.
- lix Ibid, 13.
- lx Ibid, 12; Richie, "Children," 2:4.
- lxi Earlier edicts granting limited toleration included the Edict of Milan by Constantine in 313, and the Statute of Kalisz in 1204 by the Duke of Greater Poland Boleslaus the Pious, which granted exclusive jurisdiction over Jewish affairs to Jewish courts and guaranteed safety and personal liberties such as freedom of religion, trade, and travel to the Jews. It was ratified in 1334, 1453 and 1539 (by Sigismund I of Poland). The latter is obviously of some significance in the case of Transylvania.
- lxii The text of the edict reads as follows: "That each person maintain whatever religious faith he wishes, with old or new rituals, while they at the same time to do as they please in the matter of faith, just so long, however, as they bring no harm to bear on anyone at all, lest the followers of a new religion be a source of irritation to the old profession of faith or become in some way injurious to its followers—therefore, Peers of the Realm, for the sake of procuring the peace of the churches and of stilling the controversies that have arisen in the gospel teaching, we have decreed to establish a national synod, wherein, in the presence of devoted ministers of the Word of God as well as men of other rank, genuine comparisons of doctrine may be made, under God's guidance, dissension and differences of opinion in religion may be remedied."
- lxiii The neglect of these edicts in Transylvania is in large measure due to the field being the province of Christian historians who reject anti-Trinitarianism. István Pásztori-Kupán, "Invocation of Biblical Authority in a Secular Decision: The Theocratic Relevance of the Torda Edict (1568)," *Reformatus Szemle* (Nov.-Dec. 2008):693-94. Graeme Murdock is a notable exception. See his, *Calvinism on the Frontier, 1600-1660: International Calvinism and the Reformed Church in Hungary and Transylvania* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2000), 110-126.
- lxiv Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid*, 24
- lxv The text of the Edict of Torda reads as follows: "His majesty, our lord, in what manner he—together with his realm—legislated in the matter or religion at the previous Diets, in the same manner now, in this Diet, reaffirms that in every place the preachers shall preach and explain the Gospel each

according to his understanding of it, and if the congregation like it, well. If not, no one shall compel them for their souls would not be satisfied, but they shall be permitted to keep a preacher whose teaching they approve. Therefore none of the superintendents or others shall abuse the preaching no one shall be reviled for his religion by anyone, according to the previous statutes, and it is not permitted that anyone should threaten anyone else by imprisonment or by removal from his post for his teaching. For faith is the gift of God and this comes from hearing, which hearing is by the word of God.”

lxvi Kupán, “Invocation,” 690.

lxvii Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid*, 25.

lxviii Kupán, “Invocation,” 695.

lxix The Treaty of Augsburg in 1555 authorized freedom of conscience for individuals but extended only to individual monarchs. Kupán, “Invocation,” 695.

lxx Ibid.

lxxi Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid*, 82.

lxxii Ibid, 70. The influence of the thought of Erasmus and Servetus was important. On this point see, Jaume de Marcos Anthrou, *The Influence of Erasmus on Michael Servetus’ Works* (Michael Servetus Institute, 2007).

lxxiii He used a Latin bible with annotations by Servetus and Erasmus’ Greek *New Testament*. Andrews,

Ferenc Dávid, 78.

lxxiv Ibid, 76.

lxxv Ibid, 79.

lxxvi Ibid, 85-86, 96.

lxxvii Ibid, 89-90.

lxxviii Ibid, 100.

lxxix Ibid, 90.

lxxx Ibid, 14.

lxxxi Ibid, 103.

lxxxii Ibid, 111.

lxxxiii Ibid, 113.

lxxxiv Ibid, 114.

lxxxv Ibid, 107-18. See also Mihaly Balazs, *Early Transylvanian Antitrinitarianism (1566-1571): From Servet to Palaeologus*, Bibliotheca dissidentium (Editions V. Koerner, 1996), 191-207. The success of the Reformation in Transylvania was extraordinary. By 1580, 80% of former kingdom of Hungary was Protestant and only 30 priests were left in Transylvania. The Skékely nation had become almost entirely anti-Trinitarian, perhaps because of reduction of their liberties in the sixteenth century. Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid*, 27-28. Toleration was so widely accepted that some Jews were no longer required to wear the Star of David. Moreover, the Jesuits were expelled from Transylvania from 1588-1606 because they were unwilling to tolerate other sects, and throughout the seventeenth century Transylvanian princes fought to maintain religious freedom versus the Hapsburgs. Kupán, “Invocation,” 20-21. This liberal and tolerant attitude had many different sources, but it was principally promoted by anti-Trinitarian thinkers who created an atmosphere of toleration in marked contrast to the intolerance of Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist countries. This penchant for toleration certainly owes a great deal to the absence of any imperative to compel non-believers within anti-Trinitarian thought. They thus did not need to fear that God’s wrath would descend on them if they tolerated heresy in their midst. Kaplan, “Coexistence,” 490-93.

lxxxvi See Janusz Tazbir, *A State without Stakes: Polish Religious Toleration in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. A. T. Jordan (New York: Kosciuszko Foundation, 1973); and Michal Stryszak “Heretic v. Idolater: The Struggle for Religious Toleration in Poland during the Reformation”

St. Louis-Warsaw Transatlantic Law Journal (2000).

lxxxvii Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid*, 64.

lxxxviii Goldstone, *Flames*, 225.

lxxxix Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid*, 66.

xc Budny received a humanist education, and gradually changed in succession from Catholic to a member of the Moravian Brethren, Lutheran, Calvinist, Anabaptist, Unitarian, and finally a member of the Polish Brethren.

xcii According to Richie, the Unitarians may also have felt the need to expel the Sabbatarians because of anti-Semitic sentiment in Poland at the time. The first Jesuits there noted that most Unitarians in Eastern Transylvania did not eat pork. Richie, "Children," 3:11.

xciii Williams, *Radical Reformation*, 735. Like Palaeologus, Budny was concerned with establishing a political basis not only for the maintenance of social and international peace and justice, but also for universal interfaith toleration.

xciv As his debate with Francis Dávid made clear.

xcv It is important to note that in the last decades of the sixteenth century, Arminius's doctrines came to Poland and were in part incorporated into the united Minor Church and embodied in the Racovian Catechism (1605). Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid*, 67-68.

xci Refugees also went in three other directions, to Prussia where Christopher Crell and his sons founded a number of churches; to the Netherlands where Andrzy Wiszowatny Sr. and Christopher Sand published Unitarian and anti-Trinitarian tracts; and to Transylvania where the Unitarian Church of Transylvania enjoyed freedom. Especially noteworthy in this context was Andrezey Wiszowity Jr., who taught at Unitarian College in Cluj.

xcvi *Ibid*, 125.

xcvii *Ibid*, 127.

xcviii Martin Muslow, "Samuel Crell—An Intellectual Profile," in *Faustus Socinus and his Heritage*, ed.

Lech Szczucki (Warsaw: Polska Akademia, 2005), 442. On the role of Socinianism in the English Revolution see Sarah Mortimer, *Reason and Religion in the English Revolution: The Challenge of Socinianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Leo Strauss points out the importance of Socinianism for Hobbes in his *Hobbes's Critique of Religion and Related Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 70.

xcix The literature on the influence of Socinianism on Locke is large. See, for example, John Marshall, "Locke, Socinianism, 'Socinianism', and Unitarianism" in M.A. Stewart, ed., *English Philosophy in the Age of Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 111-182; Stephen Snobelen, "Socinianism, Heresy and John Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity", in *Enlightenment and Dissent* 20 (2001): 88-125; John Higgins-Biddle, "Introduction" to *John Locke: The Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), xlii-lxxiv; and David Wootton, "John Locke: Socinian or natural law theorist?", in James E. Crimmins, ed., *Religion, Secularization and Political Thought: Thomas Hobbes to J.S. Mill* (London: Routledge, 1990), 39-67. On Newton and Socinianism, see Stephen David Snobelen, "Isaac Newton, Socinianism and 'The One Supreme God'," in *Socinianism and Cultural Exchange: the European Dimension of Anti-Trinitarian and Arminian Networks, 1650-1720*, ed. Martin Mulow and Jan Rohls (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 241-293.

c Goldstone, *Flames*, 246.

ci *Ibid*, 254-258.

cii *Ibid*, 273.

ciii In the eighteenth century the interaction of anti-Trinitarianism with Enlightenment thought led to Humanitarian Unitarianism, as in the case of Caleb Fleming (1689-1779), who was the source of Priestly's Unitarianism. Andrews, *Ferenc Dávid*, 128.

civ Goldstone, *Flames*, 290.
cv Ibid, 294.