BIBLIOTHECA BIBLIOGRAPHICA AURELIANA
CXX

BIBLIOTHECA DISSIDENTIUM

Repertoire des non-conformistes religieux
des seizième et dix-septième siècles

édité par André Séguenny
en collaboration avec
Irena Backus et Jean Rott

Tome XI

THE HEIDELBERG ANTITRINITARIANS

Johann Sylvan
Adam Neuser
Matthias Vehe
Jacob Suter
Johann Hasler

by

Christopher J. Burchill

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# The Heidelberg Antitrinitarians

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Outline of the Dossiers

A: Life and Work of the Subject.

B: List of Works by the Subject.
1) Printed works.
2) Manuscript works.
3) List of Correspondents.

C: Source Material concerning the Subject.
1) Primary sources.
2) Secondary sources.
3) Previous studies.

D: Annotated Bibliography of the Subject's Work.
1) Books published by the subject.
2) Editions and translations prepared by the subject.
3) Manuscript works extant during the subject's lifetime.
4) Poems and occasional pieces by or concerning the subject.
5) Register of the subject's correspondence.

E: List of Works cited by the Subject.

N.B. The names of persons mentioned in the text have been provided in the commonly accepted vernacular form as a means of indicating nationality. Likewise place-names have been modernized throughout and are rendered according to present day political boundaries. Where any confusion is likely to arise, as in the case of the Transylvanian towns, a full list of variant readings has been included in the general index to person and place names, which can be found at the end of the work.
The Heidelberg Antitrinitarians

Preface

The decision to publish a collection of dossiers all of which relate directly to a particular theme and set of circumstances, namely the Arian scandal that broke out in Heidelberg in 1570, has provided the opportunity to introduce a number of changes into the already established format of the Bibliotheca Dissidentium. Although in a strict sense each of the five articles here presented stands independent of the whole and can still be used in its own right, clearly the significance of much of the material will best be appreciated in relation to the events and characters discussed elsewhere in the work. Indeed, in the particular case of Jacob Suter, it would be difficult to justify his inclusion within a series devoted to the work of dissident intellectuals were it not for the fact that his career throws some additional light on the relations between other members of the group. It is partly for this reason, as well as to avoid an unnecessary repetition of material supplied elsewhere, that the reader has frequently been asked to refer to other sections of the work. Thus, for instance, the entry ‘See Sylvan: Primary Sources’, in the dossier relating to Neuser is to indicate that a description of the relevant entry is given within the section of primary sources concerning Sylvan - a full list of such references can be found in the outline of the dossiers immediately preceding. While it is clearly not possible thus to provide an exhaustive collation, it is hoped that this method of presentation will facilitate a better appreciation of the context of the material under discussion.

Aside from such points of convenience, the bulk of which will appear as self-explanatory, mention should be made of two substantial changes to the established format. In the first place, the distinction between sixteenth and post-sixteenth century material concerning the author has been replaced by the more familiar division into primary and secondary sources. It is true, of course, that any such attempt to categorize one's source material is a little arbitrary and the strict adherence to a temporal division will certainly have the advantage of clarity. However, since the underlying purpose of thus presenting the material in two sections has been to enable the reader to distinguish between contemporary sources and the evidence for a Wirkungsgeschichte, it may be felt that the present layout better responds to that intention. In effect this means that all extant or properly attested material concerning the life and work of the author has been ordered in strict chronology within the section of primary sources, while any discussion of this activity designed for the benefit of a third party is listed as secondary material. Since this latter category consists almost exclusively of published works, so here they have been listed where possible according to the date of the first edition in which the reference can be found. In the numerous instances where primary material has subsequently been published or is known only because mentioned in one of the secondary works, a cross reference has been supplied under either the author's name or the first word of the title, together with the date of publication. The reader will thus be able to locate the full title of the book where the source is published within the list of secondary material.
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The other notable change has been to the section previously described as ‘single works about the author’. In practice this has come to be regarded as little more than a rag-bag of notes and articles in which the author's name happens to appear somewhere within the title and provides no indication whatsoever as to the scholarly merit of such work. There can be little point in noting as specialist literature the kind of dictionary biographies that are entirely derivative and make no pretense to original research. It is for this reason that for the first time an entirely different if somewhat subjective criterion has been employed, namely that of listing only those works deemed essential for the preparation of any scholarly study on the author's life and work. Instead of attempting to summarize the content of the books and articles included within this category, the entries are supplied with what might be described as a critical review. In order not to disrupt the order of the Wirkungsgeschichte, these items are also included in their appropriate place in the list of secondary sources.

It is the customary pleasure of the author to record the legion of debts incurred in the composition of his work. For all that much of the source material concerning the Heidelberg Antitrinitarians has already been published, it is nonetheless true that the following study would not have been possible without the cooperation of archivists and librarians from places as far apart as Aurich and Debrecen. While much of this help must be acknowledged within a general phrase of thanks, the staffs of the University Library and the Library of New College in Edinburgh, as well as the Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg deserve particular mention, since it was here that most of the research was carried out. A draft version of the dossiers was read and corrected by Wacław Urban from the University of Krakow and Bálint Keserú in Szeged, who was also responsible for providing much of the material relating to the activity of Neuser and Vehe in Transylvania. Since money is also the sinews of scholarship, it may be noted that the study was undertaken with the aid of a generous research fellowship from the arts faculty at the University of Edinburgh, as well as a more limited form of travel grant from GRENEP. That the work actually came to be finished owes much to the enthusiasm of the series editor, who had the good sense to propose the idea over conversation in a pub in Mainz some six years ago.
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Sigla and Abbreviations

(→) = the author's work has or will feature in the Bibliotheca Dissidentium.
* = the copy of the work consulted and reproduced in the present text.
[ ] = additional information supplied by the editor.

A.M. Strasbourg: Archives Municipales de Strasbourg, 1 Place de l'Hôpital, F-67000 Strasbourg.
A.S.T. Strasbourg: Archives du Chapitre de St. Thomas, 1 Place de l'Hôpital, F-67000 Strasbourg.
B.B. Bern: Burgerbibliothek, Münstergasse 63, CH-3000 Bern 7.
B.E.M. Montpellier: Bibliothèque de l'École de Médecine, 2 rue de l'École de Médecine, F-34000 Montpellier.
B.L. London: British Library, Great Russell Street, GB-London WC1B 3DG.
B.M. Strasbourg: Bibliothèque Municipale, 3 rue Kuhn, F-67000 Strasbourg.
B.N.U. Strasbourg: Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire, 6 Place de la République, F-67070 Strasbourg.
C.W. Strasbourg: Bibliothèque du Séminaire Protestant (Collegium Wilhelmitanum), 1b Quai St. Thomas, F-67081 Strasbourg.
H.A.B. Wolfenbüttel: Herzog August Bibliothek, Lessingplatz 1, Postfach 1364, D-3340 Wolfenbüttel.
L.B. Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Marienallee 12, DDR-8060 Dresden.
L.B. Speyer: Pfälzische Landesbibliothek, Johannesstraße 22a, Postfach 1709, D-6720 Speyer.
# The Heidelberg Antitrinitarians

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INTRODUCTION

THE HEIDELBERG ANTITRINITARIANS

The discovery during the summer of 1570 of a group of ministers within the Palatine church, who were not only prepared to deny the eternal divinity of Christ, but secretly aspired to promote a further reformation of received doctrine with a view to restoring the pristine monotheism of the faith, was to have far reaching consequences within the history of the evangelical movement. Despite the prompt action of the Elector Friedrich in ordering the arrest and interrogation of those concerned, a policy carried out with a willing thoroughness by members of the church council, the real damage to the reputation of the newly-established reformed church had already been done. For all that every effort was made to keep details of the process a secret, so much so that even now the events leading up to the trial and execution of Johann Sylvan can be set forth on no more than a conjectural basis, it was clearly impossible to silence all discussion of the affair and the Arian scandal came to haunt the reformed tradition through the exaggerated importance which it gained in the popular imagination. In the immediate sense the revelation brought about the downfall of the Erastian party in Heidelberg and thwarted the development of the rationalist impulse in reformed theology, which was only able to reemerge during the seventeenth century under the protection of the States General and in the relatively liberal atmosphere of revolutionary England. It can thus be argued that this affair had more than a symbolic importance and was itself a significant turning point in the enduring dialectic of orthodoxy and dissent.

Notwithstanding the clearly voiced adherence of the Second Helvetic Confession to the doctrinal norms established during the period up till Chalcedon, the claim that the theological tradition emanating from Zurich and Geneva tended to undermine the orthodox consensus had an already secure parentage. What provided an extra intensity to the debate in Heidelberg was the political dimension, which resulted from the efforts of both Lutheran and Catholic members of the Diet to secure the expulsion of the Palatinate from the terms of the religious pacification earlier agreed at Augsburg. While it was possible for the Elector to maintain that the teaching of the Catechism represented a legitimate interpretation of the variata version of the Augsburg Confession favored by Melanchthon, it was clear that any explicit departure from the two natures Christology and all that that implied would be to place the young church outwith the pale. That this was precisely the problem was well reflected in the contemporary polemic, which was to continue unabated until the final hardening of divisions following the abortive colloquy at Montbéliard in 1586. It was largely in response to the criticism of Jacob Andrea and his colleagues in Tübingen that as early as 1574 the Heidelberg theologians felt obliged to draw up a full confession of faith on the doctrines of God, Christology and the eucharist, a statement which was made binding on all who sought to enter the ministry. The recent scandal, however, provided their opponents with a perfect example of a more sinister reality that served to belie such fine intentions.
It is interesting that the first references to the affair by theologians of northern Germany such as Wigand and Selneccer were generally sympathetic to the Elector and followed in the line of the advice earlier proffered by Duke August of Saxony in stressing the condign nature of Sylvan's punishment. It was not until the story of Neuser's dissolute life in Istanbul began to circulate through the reports of Stephen Gerlach that the potential value of the affair came to be realized. It was in the context of the debates over the reception of the Formula of Concord that the systematic connection between Calvinism and the Arian heresy was developed into a major plank of Lutheran polemic. Moreover, Neuser's convenient apostasy allowed for the even more damaging association of the reformed teaching with the ever-present menace of Islam. Somewhat later, as the religious divisions threatened to envelop the whole Empire in military conflict, a new dimension was provided by Philip Nicholai, who used the doctrine of the two kingdoms to challenge the legitimacy of civil interference in matters of heresy, accusing the reformed authorities of blood-lust in their prosecution of the dissident group.

For the most part Catholic accounts of the affair were largely derivative and sought merely to extend the argument concerning the Arian heresy to cover the evangelical movement as a whole. Such at least was the tone of the remarks by Georg Eder and the English exile William Gifford, whose work provided the basis for the much more popular if highly inaccurate version of events supplied by Florimond de Raymond and developed into the eighteenth century by Louis-Anastase Guichard. The notable exception to this pattern is to be found in the scattered references to the work of Matthias Vehe by Jesuit fathers such as Wilkowski and Possevino, both of whom had encountered at first hand his influence in parts of Poland and Transylvania. The seriousness with which this threat was then taken is reflected in the way Stanisław Reszka sought to attack the founder of the judaizing sect, who was unfortunately not otherwise identified with the former minister in the Palatinate. It is only recently that the importance of such studies for our understanding of the dissident group has come to be recognized.

The initial response of the Neustadt Academy, whence the reformed theologians had moved following the death of the Elector, was to try and deflect some of this criticism by emphasizing that Sylvan had enjoyed a long-standing association with the Tübingen school and even subscribed for a while to the doctrine of ubiquity. While this attempt thus to pass on the blame would have carried little weight at the best of times, it was completely discredited by the widespread publicity accorded to Neuser's calculated aside, 'qui timet ... Arianismum, caveat Calvinismum', a comment that must stand as one of the classic examples of impotent revenge. Although Hospinian sought to counter Gerlach's reports by dismissing them as mere invention, clearly the only effective response was further to discredit the apostate's character. To this end the accounts supplied by Heberer and Budovec, for all that they were both based on hearsay evidence, were deemed to be particularly useful. It was following the publication of these reports that Melchior Adam was able to produce what sounded like a definitive pronounce-
ment on the problem, when he insisted that Neuser's final addiction to alcohol was proof of a reprobate nature, one whose testimony could be accorded little authority. Thus the sometime minister of St. Peter's was able to join the ranks of such biblical archetypes as Esau and Saul as evidence of the revelation of God's justice in the damned.

In the high-noon of orthodoxy, when confidence in the value of such polemic had already taken a battering as a result of the Thirty Years War, it was this kind of moral argument that most clearly held sway. No longer content to insist that Calvinism led to apostasy, Lutheran writers such as Bergmann and Rango cited the example of Neuser as evidence of the fact that moral degeneracy was the inevitable consequence of the refusal to submit human reason to the authority of Scripture, a point felt to be as characteristic of Reformed as it was of Socinian writers. Given that variants on this theme can be found throughout the first half of the eighteenth century in the works of Cyprian, Löscher, Gerber and Klausing, so it must have been seen as a convincing presentation of the orthodox case. No one was this simply an additional aspect of the long-standing polemic, since much of this work was considered as Erbauungsliteratur for use both in private exhortation and in the provision of material for sermons. Lessing's remark that the case of Neuser was still being handled from the pulpit almost two hundred years after his death provides striking confirmation of this fact.

In the meantime, a new element had been provided to the debate through the painstaking research of a small number of writers broadly sympathetic to the dissident group. For all that Socinian leaders like Valentin Smalcius and Samuel Crell consistently rejected any suggestion that their movement was in any way indebted to the refugees from Heidelberg, whose influence was held to have been responsible for the emergence of the non-adorationist theology that provoked such tragic divisions within the Transylvanian church, it is undeniable that their concern led to the development clearly evident in the publications of Sandius and Lubieniecki, which despite their frequent lack of critical analysis, were yet marked by a determination to present a more balanced version of events. The character of Sylvan now appeared as something of a martyr, tricked into a false recantation before being summarily executed to serve as an example of the need for strict conformity and in blind obedience to the precepts of the Mosaic law. Although similar new insight was provided into the work of Neuser and Vehe through the subsequent research of Zeltner, it was this attempt to defend the reputation of Sylvan that provided the catalyst for much of the discussion during the following years.

Challenged for the first time to defend the execution of Sylvan, the apologists for the reformed tradition responded by emphasizing that he and his accomplices had been convicted of treason rather than heresy. Although this was a distinction the significance of which had earlier been perceived by Pareus, it was difficult to provide any convincing evidence in support of the case. It was for this reason that Alting's Historia, a work that had already been circulating for quite some time in manuscript form, was now published together with the so-called acts of the
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process, the surviving evidence for the prosecution carefully prepared by Beyrlin. For all that the report by the theologians continued to point to doctrinal aberrance as the main ground for Sylvan's condemnation, it also served to confirm that he had been in secret communication with a foreign power, the purpose of which had been to organize a more general defection from the Palatine church. Even more incriminating, however, was the published version of Neuser's letter to the Sultan, which at the very least appeared to suggest that members of the group were prepared to envisage an ideological reconciliation with the ‘evil empire’. Whether this was tantamount to treason is a question that retains a certain actuality today, though at a time when Turkish arms had barely retreated from the walls of Vienna, there were perhaps few who felt the problem worth debating.

All this was but a prelude to the historical renaissance associated with the Enlightenment. The ongoing research of Schelhorn and Bütt inghausen or the detailed compilation of one such as Bock were as nothing compared to the interest aroused in the affair following the publication of the great Lessing's Beyträge. Quite apart from the call for a dispassionate reassessment of Neuser's reputation, the presentation of the case as viewed from Istanbul inevitably gave an entirely new perspective. Setting aside any confessional prejudice and looking to provide no more than a critical assessment of the surviving evidence, the author was yet led to challenge assumptions that had long been taken for granted. The theory that the group had been involved in some form of treasonable conspiracy was shown to be an anachronism, which simply contradicted the declared intentions of the parties concerned, while even the story of Neuser's eventual apostasy to Islam had to be dismissed due to lack of any solid evidence. At a more constructive level, Lessing was able to demonstrate the identity of Vehe and Glirius, a point that really established the connection between Heidelberg and the development of radical dissent in the eastern reaches of the Empire.

The very success of Lessing's venture called forth a response from Wundt, already established as one of the leading authorities on the history of the Rhineland territory. Too careful an historian to challenge the material taken from the Wolfenbüttel library, he yet sought to demonstrate that the full story of the affair by no means cast the Elector and his advisors in as dim a light as had come to be assumed. Having at his disposal an array of source material, much of which has subsequently been lost, Wundt was able to introduce to the discussion a degree of professionalism that had hitherto been lacking. Thus in defending the decision to execute Sylvan it was pointed out that the scandal had placed the Elector in an impossible situation, where he had little option but to take firm action against the dissident group. The recognition that the policy of government was determined as much by political considerations as by any principle of moral right was in itself a notable advance and established the basis for all subsequent accounts of the affair.

It is a comment on the thoroughness with which the historians of the Enlightenment approached their task that there was to be no serious advance in the debate for over a hundred years. To a certain extent this was because none of the parties to emerge from revolutionary Europe saw much to gain from a further
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discussion of the affair. For the most part the language of sixteenth century
dissent had little appeal to the liberal historians, who took no interest in the story
of heresies long dead and best forgotten. At the same time it is clear that most
conservative scholars and churchmen were still somewhat ill at ease in defending
the actions of the reformed administration and even one such as Thelemann,
writing in the spirit of the Kulturkampf and with the sense of patriotic fervor
engendered by the Franco-Prussian war, had to refer to the spirit of the age in
justification of the process against Sylvan. It was rather through the steady
compilation of local studies and the publication of source material that important
new evidence gradually came to light. Although much of this was in itself
insignificant, such research provided the opportunity for a fully comprehensive
analysis of the problem, the various elements of which were bought together
earlier this century.

The fruits of this approach were revealed in a series of articles published in the
years preceding the outbreak of the Great War. No doubt pride of place must be
given to Rott's edition of a surviving minutes of the church council, which
together with Vehe's previously unknown account of the scandal and a number of
other pieces taken from the archives in Heidelberg and Zurich, provided the basis
for Horn's detailed analysis of the affair in terms of the ongoing tensions between
the Zwinglian and Calvinist parties in church and school. Here for the first time
the dissident group was seen as the product of circumstances peculiar to the
development of the reform movement in the Palatinate, where the bitter divisions
over the introduction of the presbyteral order of discipline forced the minority
party into a position of more and more overt opposition. It was this sense of
alienation that led to the growth of radical dissent, a movement which coalesced
around the anti-Trinitarian ideology adapted by Sylvan from his reading of the
recent literature from Transylvania. Meanwhile, the complex nature of such
dissent was in measure revealed in Pagenstecher's important study on the final
stages of Vehe's itinerant life. Useful material for comparison was made available
in a similarly detailed account of the fate of Hasler, which was published by
Bähler shortly after the conclusion of hostilities. It was now possible to view the
affair in its full complexity without seeking to take sides on the outworn issues of
confessional allegiance.

In the absence of any substantial new source material, it is perhaps not surprising
that little further work was carried out during the course of the following decades.
While the aftermath of the Second World War was to see the rise of American
scholarship, most of this work has been focused on the emergence of the baptist
movement and there has been little original research into the more radical wing of
the reformed tradition. It is rather to the parallel development of research in the
socialist countries of eastern Europe that we are indebted for the most recent
contributions to the debate. Starting with the valuable study by Pirnát, Hungarian
scholars such as Din and Keserü have sought to trace the contribution of the
German émigrés to the unfolding of radical thought in Transylvania, while similar
work has been carried out by figures such as Tazbir and Szczucki in Poland. It is
evident that for a while at least there was considerable interest in the radical
program outlined in the *Mattanjah*, the only surviving account of the views developed by the Heidelberg group. Even if the form of crypto-Judaism eventually espoused by Vehe must be seen as a retreat into the sectarian type of religious experience, it is interesting to note that the basic principles of his faith were notably similar to those that Locke came to define as the essence of a 'reasonable Christianity' more than a century later.

There are clearly many aspects of research that will require further investigation. For all that the present work aspires to provide a comprehensive analysis of all four ministers arrested in connection with the scandal, together with the dossier relating to the student Hasler, who was for a time at least a party to their deliberations, there were a number of other figures in and around the university that might equally merit attention. Here one thinks not only of Simon Simonius (→), whose life and work has already been described in this series, but of lesser known individuals such as Stanisław Farnowski (→), Martin Seidel (→), Johann Brunner, Melchior Petri and Johannes Matthæus, all of whom came to be involved in dissident activity. Nor can it be dismissed that virtually all of these figures enjoyed a close association with Thomas Erastus, the distinguished professor of medicine who according to reliable reports preferred to stay at home with the works of Caspar Schwenckfeld (→) than attending sermons in church. Surely the major desideratum, which could provide the key to a better understanding of the whole group and its relation to the reformed tradition, would be to undertake a serious study on the 'religio Erasti'. Until such problems have been settled, it is difficult to see how an entirely convincing explanation for the dissident movement can be found.

In the meantime even the intellectual dimensions of the affair must remain somewhat veiled. Here the most obvious difficulty is that with the single exception of the *Mattanjah*, a book whose originality was greatly exaggerated in the study by Dán, no member of the group published anything of theological importance. As a consequence most of our knowledge concerning their actual beliefs tends to be second-hand, based on contemporary comment rather than a detailed textual analysis. Given the habit of seeking to discredit radical ideas through their association with teaching long condemned within the church, it is not surprising that the views of the dissident group have been subsumed within the general heading of Arianism. The suggestion that Sylvan and his friends sought to revive the even earlier heresy of Sabellius in trying to resolve the enigma of Christ's person through reference to a form of modalism has the ring of truth, though the precise derivation of such ideas is difficult to trace. It was possibly under the influence of Simonius that the denial of the eternal generation of Christ came to provide one element of a common program, but it is doubtful whether this was ever central to the case in hand. In the absence of any firm evidence of a relation to figures such as Michael Servetus (→) or Valentin Gentili (→), all that can be said about the Heidelberg group is that they were at one with the main-line of dissident thought in adopting an open and critical attitude towards the dogmatic tradition of the church. As should be apparent from the
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following pages, this was important as much in terms of philosophy as in dealing with the problems posed by the exegesis of Scripture.

Yet if the present study cannot claim to provide the basis for a fully comprehensive treatment of these questions, it may still open up a number of perspectives worth pursuing. Despite the many lacunae evident to any close scrutiny of the five dossiers, they do serve to reveal several different if overlapping strains of religious dissidence. While an underlying debt to the humanist tradition may be seen as a common chord, there was yet a clear difference between the corrosive skepticism injected through discussions with Simonius and the strictly exegetical considerations that led both Neuser and Vehe to reject the orthodox presentation of the doctrine of God. Then there is the intriguing problem of the occult, which in its various forms aroused the curiosity of several members of the group. It is hardly necessary to demonstrate any direct connection between the rumors of Sylvan's dabbling in black magic and his eventual apostasy, since both formed part of the general intellectual profile. A knowledge of Hermetic philosophy was certainly more widespread than often imagined and perhaps testifies to little more than an eclectic attitude towards the problem of truth. Yet a more systematic relation between the development of religious dissidence and the alchemical tradition associated with Paracelsus seems hard to deny. In this context it would certainly be interesting to know more about Neuser's experiments with the coinage in Istanbul and Suter's secret conversations on occult philosophy with his later friend and confidant, the Abbot Bernard of Niederalteich. If it can be argued that such pseudo-scientific research responded to a need for intellectual certainty then this too might explain Hasler's decision to abandon theology in favor of the conceptually more exact discipline of astro-medicine. While such an hypothesis is impossible to establish, it yet suggests a valuable link in attempting to define the cultural history of the period.

Finally some attention should be paid to the existential dimensions of the affair. There is no doubt that the rigor with which the government decided to pursue the dissident ministers came as a shock to all concerned. The leaders of the group were all men of high standing in the Palatine service, none of whom can have reckoned with such an abrupt change of fortune as followed the disclosure of their plans. When notified of his arrest by the Faut, Sylvan's first reaction was to return home for a change of linen - hardly the attitude of one who expected to be placed on trial for his life! The seriousness of the situation only became apparent as members of the church council sought to press home their advantage to bring about the complete destruction of the opposition party. Deprived of a relatively secure material basis within the church and forced into exile, it is hardly surprising that Neuser's bitterness turned to despair or that Suter opted for conversion and a new life within the Catholic fold. Alone within the group Vehe was able to accept these conditions and continue with the development of his theological ideas. That these were in some measure influenced by such experience may be taken for granted. Here the real problem is to trace the psychological grounding of dissident behavior and its relation to the contemporary mentalité. To describe this relationship in terms of class-consciousness, as has been the
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tendency of some of the recent research, is unfortunately to say very little. In the end such case studies can provide no more than a series of unconnected dots, the pattern and sense to which will provide an even more challenging task for the historian.
JOHANN SYLVAN

A: LIFE AND WORK

Nothing is known of Sylvan's background other than that he came from a German speaking family from the Etschland in the Austrian Tirol and was thus raised within the diocese of Trent. According to Werner Seeling his original name was probably Holzer, though there is no firm evidence to support this claim. Other than to confirm the fact that he enjoyed a humanist training, it would be difficult to read very much into his decision to adopt the Latin style of address. He moved to study at the university of Vienna in 154$, where he met and befriended Paul Skalich, a member of the Croatian nobility with a pronounced interest in the occult. Having acquired the elements of a humanist training, it would appear that the two young men turned to the study of theology as a means of following a promising career within the church. It may be noted that the curriculum in Vienna was already strongly Thomist in character, a point that was to come across in some of Sylvan's later work. The fact that he went on to become a licentiate in theology provides not alone evidence of ability, but also an indication that he possessed sufficient financial resources to complete the seven year course. It is also significant that he never sought to enter a religious order, evidently preferring to seek promotion within the secular sphere.

An articulate and personable young man, it was on account of these gifts as much as his reputation as a scholar that he found service as chaplain to Melchior Zobel, the Prince Bishop of Würzburg. As part of this entourage he was present at the Diet of Regensburg in 1556, where he later recorded having been impressed by the preaching of Nicholas Gallus. It would seem that his only previous knowledge of Protestant teaching was with the form espoused by Balthasar Hubmaier and his radical followers in Lower Austria, a group whose social aspirations Sylvan clearly held in contempt. At this stage of his career, he was inclined to see the religious divide as a political problem that could be solved by making reasonable concessions to evangelical opinion on such questions as the celibacy of the priesthood and offering the chalice to the laity. This was certainly his position when the following summer he met for private discussions in Frankfurt with the Lutheran pastor Hartmann Beyer. It was hoped that the impending colloquy at Worms would at last bring about a reconciliation that could alone establish the conditions for a general reform of the Church.

The hopes of the evangelical group that Sylvan would use the opportunity to make clear his support for a measure of doctrinal reform, something that would have involved the revision of the Tridentine decree on justification, were to be disappointed. Shortly after his arrival in Worms he informed the president Julius Pflug that he could rely on his whole-hearted support for the catholic cause. Called to preach before the assembled dignitaries in the cathedral, he gave no indication of any plan to defect. Far from mentioning the promised concessions on matters of doctrine, he sought to use the evident divisions within the Protestant
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camp to discredit their claim to be taken as a serious alternative to the established church. Indeed, the circumstances in which this sermon was eventually published, following the walk-out of the Gnesio-Lutheran party, only served to confirm the impression that Sylvan remained as a committed member of the old guard.

Such impressions, however, could prove deceptive. Sylvan himself was later to claim that it was his sense of disillusion with the tactics employed by the curial interest in an effort to forestall any prospects of accord that led him to reconsider his position. It may well be true that an attempt was made to bribe influential political figures into disrupting the assembly. At the same time, his own freedom of expression was closely limited and it is by no means clear that his public stance really reflected his private convictions. Even so, it must be said that the letter written to Paul Skalich in February 1558, some two months after his return to Würzburg, in no sense betrayed a change of heart. While scathing in his criticism of the abuses that were rife within the church, he looked forward to sharing with his friend some of the benefits of episcopal patronage. The most ambitious project then considered was that of setting up a new seminary under their joint direction. Here would have been an excellent opportunity to work for the restoration of the church through the promotion of the values associated with humanist learning.

Two events then took place that were to force a change of mind. It is still not clear how the original of this letter came into the possession of Hartmann Beyer, though it may have been intercepted at Frankfurt while waiting to be passed on at the spring fair. At any event the decision to have the piece published, together with Beyer's account of their meeting prior to the colloquy, did much to undermine Sylvan's standing within the church. Even if, as seems likely, the discussions with Beyer had enjoyed a measure of official approval, it was more difficult to explain away the sardonic tone in which Sylvan had condemned the practice and personnel of the diocesan establishment. Nor was Skalich the sort of person whose reputation for orthodoxy would bear too close scrutiny. Already held suspect in some circles on account of his dabblings in Hermetic magic, by the time the letter was made public he had abandoned his post as court chaplain to seek refuge in Tübingen, whence he established contact with leading figures in the reformed tradition such as Heinrich Bullinger in Zurich. Such connections were bound to fuel speculation about the depth of Sylvan's own commitment to the faith.

More serious, however, were the consequences of the assassination of Bishop Zobel on 15 April 1558. His successor was Friedrich von Wirsberg, who as Dean of the Chapter had already shown a more forthright attitude towards the problem of dissent. This meant a certain disruption of the relatively tolerant atmosphere within which Sylvan had exercised his vocation as a preacher in the Franconian part of the diocese over the previous couple of years. He was now called to undertake a translation of Stanislaus Hosius' apologetic confession, which was intended to provide a handbook for the clergy in their struggle against the evangelical party. By now familiar with the main lines of the new doctrine through a reading of Melanchthon's Loci, Sylvan turned to the study of Scripture
as the proper basis to refute their claims. As was to be true on more then one occasion, this only served to exaggerate his sympathy for the opposing case, which he now saw as confirmed by the teaching of Romans. Since this problem of justification was central to the debate, so it was no longer possible to remain within the catholic fold.

Encouraged by the example of Skalich, with whom he presumably remained in contact, Sylvan himself sought asylum in Tübingen the following year. To begin with this move was greeted with some skepticism, especially in the light of the persistent rumors that he too had been involved in occult practices. Now challenged to take a definite stance, he drew up an apology for his recent conduct, which was presented to the Duke of Württemberg at the beginning of October 1559. While awaiting a response to this statement, he would seem to have visited Strasbourg in search of further evidence against the bishop's party. It was through the good offices of his personal contacts in the town that he may have obtained a temporary living in the parish at Duttenheim. Meanwhile the diocesan chancellor made several attempts to persuade him to change his mind, including the offer of a generous financial inducement to return to Würzburg. Then soon his fortunes changed. For all that Johann Brenz had criticized the intemperate tone of the confession, its commitment was unmistakable and opened the way for his nomination as pastor to the church in Calw. The eventual publication of the Bekantnus (1560) in Tübingen, together with his decision to marry Barbara Holdermann, the sister of a local book-binder, absolved any further possibility of retraction.

Little enough is known about the following couple of years of Sylvan's Life. It is possible that he was involved in an advisory capacity in the Freiherr von Schönbeck's grandiose scheme to smuggle evangelical literature behind Habsburg lines. Yet a substantial part of the time was presumably spent in study and it was now that he came to grips with some of the issues then dividing the Protestant camp. At the outset he fully subscribed to the Lutheran view of the eucharist, whose doctrine of the real presence closely related to assumptions he had long taken for granted. Only gradually did an awakening interest in the Christological debate lead him to depart from tradition on this issue as well. Still, by the time he came to publish the Neue Zeitung (1561), the reformed character of his convictions was clear. Here the forthright denunciation of the use of images in terms of the Decalogue shows that he was already familiar with the work of Zwingli and the school of Zurich. Yet it should be noted that the moralistic tone of the work was more redolent of the spiritualist tradition; the destruction of wood and stone, for all that it might be required according to the Law, could not in itself achieve the iconoclasm of the heart. This search for a spiritual rebirth was to remain a consistent element of Sylvan's work as a theologian.

The development of the reform movement in the Rhineland Palatinate created a range of new openings for which Sylvan was ideally suited. There is no evidence to suggest that he was in any way involved with the compilation of the Heidelberg Catechism, though as one of those who approved its teaching he was assured a
rapid promotion within the church. By the time the new Kirchenordnung was issued in November 1563, he was already active promoting the reformed settlement in the town of Kaiserslautern, which was under the effective jurisdiction of the Elector Friedrich. From the few references contained in the surviving council minutes, it is clear that Sylvan was seen by the burghers as representative of an increasingly intrusive central authority and much of the trouble that arose during the next three years may be explained on that account. Still it is also difficult to avoid the impression that Sylvan was less than wholly committed to his pastoral charge. A somewhat high-handed manner in dealing with ordinary parishioners combined with occasionally prolonged periods of absence in the service of the court to make for a degree of popular resentment. That this was revealed in terms of grudging acceptance rather than open conflict as in the case of the Upper Palatinate was simply due to political weakness and the lack of an effective opposition group in the Rhineland territory.

It was the need for a skilled apologist for the new order that really brought Sylvan into a position of some prominence. In common with his close contemporary Zacharias Ursinus from Wrocław in Silesia, he undertook to demonstrate the conformity of the reformed settlement with the teaching of the Augsburg Confession, the officially recognized norm for Protestant worship within the Empire. In two works of controversial theology directed against Johann Marbach, the dominant force within the church in Strasbourg and an antagonist since the time of the colloquy of Worms, he directed his attention to the issues raised by the supper-strife. Rejecting any suggestion that the reformed had revived the Nestorian heresy, it was argued that the teaching of the Tübingen school on the humanity of Christ as the object of worship was to revive the more serious error of Eutyches. While such a debate was clearly inconclusive, it well served the purposes of the Elector who appointed Sylvan as part of a diplomatic mission to the Low Countries. Following his return in the autumn of 1566, he moved to Heidelberg to help with the translation of the New Testament. Although he here acted as deputy to Caspar Olevian in the church of the Holy Ghost, a more lasting solution was found the next year with his appointment as superintendent in the district of Ladenburg. Here he enjoyed easy access to the court, as well as a certain freedom in the exercise of his ecclesiastical office.

A relative stability was achieved following the satisfactory outcome of the Diet of Augsburg, when the attempt to have the Palatinate excluded from the conditions of the Pacification failed to gain the necessary support. This enabled Sylvan to devote his attention to works of a didactic nature. His final publication, which was designed as an introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism, took the form of a commentary on Romans. Although intended far the use of the clergy, the fact that this work was produced in the vernacular is evidence that the author was little interested in a scholarly audience. Consciously avoiding the polemical tone of his earlier writing, he sought to demonstrate how the reformed teaching led to spiritual regeneration. It is interesting to note that he hoped to produce a series of commentaries of this genre as a compliment to the recently published New
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Testament. There is little doubt that at the time he was seen as a leading figure in the campaign to communicate the insights of the reform movement at parish level.

What happened to thwart this campaign was the enveloping controversy over church discipline. From the surviving correspondence with Zurich, it is evident that Sylvan stood full-square behind the Erastian party in their rejection of the presbyteral system, whose potentially divisive role could only be damaging for the church. Following the row over George Withers’ disputation, at which he was not able to be present, Sylvan was asked to submit a report on excommunication to the court. It was in the course of preparing this work, as well as in subsequent discussions with Erastus, that he came to clarify his views on the theology of the eucharist. It would seem that like many of his contemporaries, his initial conversion to the reformed teaching was the result of a forthright opposition to the doctrine of ubiquity. It was only now that Sylvan came to realize the danger of any attempt to represent the sacred in concrete form. Thus even the Calvinist teaching on the spiritual presence of Christ was liable to compromise the transcendence of God and open the way to idolatry. While this view clearly undermined the justification for excommunication, it was at the same time to present the paradox of the Incarnation in a new and troublesome light.

This controversy also served to concentrate Sylvan's mind on the problem of free will. Hitherto he had accepted the doctrine of predestination as the basis of the reformed teaching without really considering its implications for the call to repentance. Yet it was on this assumption, namely that the freedom to respond to the offer of grace was no more than an illusion, that the practice of excommunication was being justified as a form of declaratory act. Not only was this contradicted by Sylvan's experience in the pastoral ministry, but it went against his deeply-held conviction that the real task of the church was to promote the birth of the new man. It was in an attempt to restore this balance that Sylvan sought to develop a theory of free will based on the Ethics of Aristotle. The possibilities that this opened up for a new way of perceiving the prophetic life of Christ were not immediately grasped. Yet it is interesting to note that an insistence on the freedom of the will was common to most of the other members of the radical group.

It would seem that as early as the summer of 1569 Sylvan had contemplated taking refuge in flight. Although the new order for church discipline had yet to be resolved, it was already clear that the sympathies of the Elector lay with the Calvinist party, whose control of the all-important Church Council made any sustained opposition increasingly difficult. This growing sense of alienation only made the final break with the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity all the more comprehensible. Asked by Johann Lasicki to prepare a refutation of Giorgio Biandrata's (→) confession De Regno Christi, he soon found himself in broad agreement with the Transylvanian doctor. Although the treatise that he then drew up has not survived, its contents can largely be inferred from the title. Sylvan had come to the conclusion that the apostolic teaching on the messianic role of Christ had been corrupted by the intrusion of Greek philosophy. For all that he continued
to accept that in some sense Christ was divine, the doctrines of the Trinity and the
hypostatic union were meaningless constructs that had themselves become the
focus of idolatry. The true reformation of the church presupposed the rejection of
such notions in favor of the simple teaching of the New Testament.

Despite the fact that this treatise was written in the vernacular and designed for
eventual publication, it is doubtful whether Sylvan ever expected to find much
support for his point of view. Even though the decision to leave Heidelberg had
been taken some time before, he and his friends were still undecided as to their
ultimate destination when contact was established with members of the imperial
delagation during the meeting of the diet in Speyer in July 1570. Unfortunately
this was playing directly into the hands of the Church Council, who were able to
secure an order for the arrest of the ministers on trumped up charges of having
tried to defame the Elector. The investigation of Sylvan's study then revealed
more than enough material to justify his further detention. Although reluctant to
implicate his friends, when questioned under torture he proved compliant and
made a full confession of his errors. Anxious to avoid a prolonged imprisonment,
Sylvan now offered his full cooperation to the church authorities and drew up a
form of recantation or Bußlied, which he agreed to submit for publication. Despite
the general skepticism with which this statement was met, it should be noted that
he was able to convince both Girolamo Zanchi and Emanuele Tremilli, two
leading members of the theology faculty, as to his sincerity the following year.
The real reason for his continued detention was the political embarrassment the
affair had occasioned.

Sylvan was not alone in underestimating the seriousness of his predicament. As
late as November 1571 Erastus confidently expected that he would be granted a
conditional discharge. It was only after the Elector's personal decision to have the
prisoner transferred to the dungeons at Mannheim that the prospect of the death
penalty was raised. It would appear that the warrant was actually signed the
following April after the receipt of a letter of support from Herzog August of
Saxony. Even so a further eight months were to elapse before it was announced
that a trial would take place on 23 December. The fact that the scaffold was
erected on the market place the day before only serves to confirm that the verdict
was a foregone conclusion. The brief proceeding was held in camera early in the
morning and three hours later Sylvan was led out to face his executioner.
Although accounts vary, it does not seem likely that he made an undue scene at
the end. A more plausible interpretation of the evidence would be to suggest that
he was given an assurance that his wife and children would be looked after
provided he behaved properly to the end. After decapitation, his body was burned
together with the offensive manuscript and the remains were then dispatched in
the Neckar.
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B: LIST OF WORKS.

Printed works (See Sylvan: D/1 and 4).

Ein schöne and gantz christlich predig (Mainz, 1557).
Ein Sendbrieve Johannis Sylvani (Oberursel, 1558).
Christliche Bekantnus Johannis Sylvani (Tübingen, 1560).
Neuwe Zeitung, wie ein Bild geredt (Tübingen, 1561).
Kurtze Antwort auff Marbachs Unterricht (Heidelberg, 1565).
Warhafftige Ablainung der dreien Predigten Marbachii (Heidelberg, 1566).
Der apostolische ware Catechismus (Heidelberg, 1567).

Manuscript works (See Sylvan D/3).

De excommunicatione, 1568.
De divina gratia disputatio, 1569.
De libero arbitrio, 1569/1570.
Christliche Bekäntniss von dem einigen wahren Gott, 1570.
Bußlied, 1571.

List of correspondents (See Sylvan D/5).

Letters to and from Paul Skalich; Conrad Hubert; Bishop Friedrich of Würzburg; Herzog Christoph of Württemberg; the French Refugee Church in Strasbourg; Johann Willing; Johann Wolf; Matthias Vehe; Thomas Erastus; Christoph Prob; the Elector Palatine, Friedrich III; Giorgio Biandrata; the Church Council in Heidelberg; Peter Dathen and Girolamo Zanchi.
Primary Sources

UNIVERSITY MATRICULATION, Vienna, [Thursday], 17 February 1558. Published as Ein Sendbrieve (1558) B3-4, together with a German translation B3-C3. Reprinted in Schelhorn (1762) 582; Büttinghausen (1783) 22-3; and Horn (1913) 285-6. 
See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Andreas HYPERIUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Marburg, [Tuesday], 12 April 1558. 
Mention was made of ‘Sylvanus cuiusdam, qui tamen libellum suum emisit, nullo authoris, vel typographi, vel oppidi in quo excusus est, additio nomine’. The author sought to make capital out of the divisions within the evangelical party at the recent colloquy.

Herzog CHRISTOPH of WÜRTTEMBERG, letter to the Emperor Ferdinand, [Stuttgart, Wednesday], 4 October 1559. 
Published in Briefwechsel (1907) 702. 
Despite his leading role in events at Worms, Sylvan had now prepared a written confession in the hope of obtaining a position in Württemberg. A copy of this document, which was bound to irritate Friedrich Staphylus, was enclosed.

Herzog CHRISTOPH of WÜRTTEMBERG, letter to the Emperor Ferdinand, Stuttgart, [Monday], 30 October 1559. 
Published in Briefwechsel (1907) 708-9. 
Mentions that Sylvan was now doing quite well in Tübingen.

Johann BRENZ, letter to Herzog Christoph of Württemberg, Stuttgart, [Saturday], 16 December 1559. 
Published in Anecdota (1868) 67. 
The recent apology drawn up by Sylvan was ‘zu scharpff’ and gave the impression that he had been received in Württemberg on account of his attacks on the bishop. Brenz also objected to the association of his own name with that of Calvin. Yet, if properly revised, the work could be made into a useful book.

Johann SYLVAN, letter to Conrad Hubert, Duttlenheim, [Thursday], 8 February 1560. 
See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Johann SYLVAN, letter to the Bishop Friedrich of Würzburg, Tübingen, [Saturday], 13 April 1560. 
H.S.A. Stuttgart: Religionssachen Bündel 26. Published in Horn (1913) 287-94. 
See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).
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Johann SYLVAN, letter to Herzog Christoph of Württemberg, Tübingen, [Wednesday], 29 May 1560. 
H.S.A. Stuttgart: Religionssachen Bündel 26. Published in Horn (1913) 286-96. 
See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Johann SYLVAN, letter to Herzog Christoph of Württemberg, [Tübingen, Monday], 29 July 1560. 
See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

EPISTLE DEDICATORY to Balthasar von Gültlingen, Calw, [Tuesday], 27 August 1560. 
Published in \textit{Bekantnus} (1560). 
See Sylvan: Published Works (D/1).

Hans UNGNAD von SCHÖNECK, letter to Johann Marbach, Brach, [Thursday], 20 February 1561. 
Published in \textit{Historie} (1684) 125-6 and Schelhorn (1762) 598-600. 
Ungnad volunteered to pay for a second imprint of Sylvan's work, which had soon been sold out. It might be useful to have it translated into Wendish, Croatian and Syriac, the languages spoken in the Turkish empire. Since the presses in Tübingen were busy, a copy was being sent with the request that if the pastors approved the project it should be printed in Strasbourg.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY to Hans Ungnad von Schöneck, Calw, [Saturday], 31 May 1561. 
Published in \textit{Neuwe Zeitung} (1561). 
See Sylvan: Published Works (D/1).

Philipp GUGGER, letter to Anton Hermann, Brach, [Friday], 21 November 1561. 
Published in Schelhorn (1779) 285-9. 
The secretary of Hans Ungnad von Schöneck commended Sylvan's confession.

MEMORANDUM by Herzog CHRISTOPH of WÜRTTEMBERG, [Monday], 8 March 1563. 
Published in \textit{Briebe} (1868-72) 1/373. 
Having been expelled on account of his Calvinist sympathies, Sylvan had now been given employment in the Palatinate.

Caspar OLEVIAN, Johann SYLVAN and Francis MOSELLANUS, letter to the French Refugee Church in Strasbourg, Heidelberg, [Monday], 19 March 1565. 
B.P.U. Geneva: Ms. franc. 407, 6\textsuperscript{v}. Published in \textit{Bibliotheca} (1883) II/192-3. 
See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Monday], 7 May 1565. 
Mentioned in Büttinghausen (1774) 311.
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A complaint about Sylvan had been received from Kaiserslautern.

Joachim MORLIN, letter to Johann Marbach, Brunswick, [Saturday], 8 December 1565. Published in Historiae (1684) 214 and Schelhorn (1762) 604-5.
The personal attacks by Sylvan, who was described as a man ‘Simonicis aribus instructissimis’, were a disgrace.

Johann STREITBERGER, letter to Johann Marbach, Voigtland/Saxony, [Wednesday], 13 February 1566. Published in Historiae (1684) 219.
Marbach was encouraged to reply to recent works by Erastus and Sylvan.

MEMORANDUM by Herzog CHRISTOPH of WÜRTTEMBERG, [Saturday], 22 February [1566].
Published in Briefe (1868-72) 11/72.
It was noted that Sylvan had been sent with Olevian on a diplomatic mission to the Low Countries.

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Kaiserslautern, [Tuesday], 4 June 1566.
Published in Küchler (1905) 11 and Seeling (1965) 135.
Following the receipt of a letter from Sylvan requesting the formal interrogation of Balthasar Bender, it was decided that the Anabaptist should settle his differences with the minister or face expulsion from the town.

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Kaiserslautern, [Friday], 7 June 1566.
Kaiserslautern Ratsprotokoll (1566-71) 3. Published in Seeling (1965) 136.
At the request of Sylvan, a native of Speyer now living in the town was required to announce his banns of marriage to the servant girl with whom he had been cohabiting for some time.

Ulrich KOCH, letter to Johann Marbach, Basel, [Tuesday], 27 August 1566. Published in Historiae (1684) 229-30.
Despite having some reservations about the section on the humanity of Christ, Marbach's reply to the work of Sylvan was entirely justified.

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Kaiserslautern, [Thursday], 12 September 1566. Published in Seeling (1965) 137.
Bastian Gotz Wagner objected to Sylvan's refusal to baptize his child on the grounds that the proposed Godfather ‘sei ein turck, ein Judt’. Similar complaints had been made by Martin von Unckel, whose child had been given a name other than that chosen by the parents.

Lucas OSIANDER, letter to Johann Marbach, Stuttgart; [Saturday], 14 September 1566. Published in Historiae (1684) 231-2 and Schelhorn (1762) 605.
It was reported that Sylvan had been busy stirring up unrest in the Low Countries: ‘Catilinam ilium ... audio Gandivi docere, atque iam rem co perduxisse, ut subditi Magistratui civitatis claves eripuerint’.
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MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Kaiserslautern, [Monday], 7 October 1566. Published in Küchler (1905) 18-9 and Seeling (1965) 138-9.
In a sermon the previous day, Sylvan had attacked the attitude of members of the council. Those who did not attend the eucharist were unworthy of Christian burial and should rather be placed ‘uff die Eselsgruben’. Moreover, he refused to appear to explain his conduct in person, claiming that he had more important business in Heidelberg.

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Kaiserslautern, [Tuesday], 19 November 1566. Published in Küchler (1905) 19 and Seeling (1965) 139.
In reply to the complaint about the conduct of their minister, the Pfalzgraf Johann Casimir had written in support of Sylvan.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Wednesday, 29 January 1567. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/30 (KRP 7). Published in Rott (1911) 21-2.
In view of Sylvan's reluctance to return to Kaiserslautern, it would be necessary to find him an alternative calling. It was apparent that he would prefer to remain in Heidelberg, where he was already helping Olevian. Although he might be considered as a replacement for Brunner [in the chair of ethics], it was noted that the High Council was in favor of sending him to Ladenburg.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Friday, 31 January 1567. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/18. Published in Rott (1911) 22.
Olevian was deputized to take evening prayer on behalf of Sylvan, who had to be excused on the grounds of ill health.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Friday], 14 February 1567. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/31 (KRP 32). Published in Rott (1911) 22.
It was agreed that a petition from Sylvan for an augmentation to his salary on moving to Ladenburg should be referred with a positive recommendation.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 26 February 1567. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/32. Published in Rott (1911) 22.
Confirmation of Sylvan's transfer to Ladenburg.

Report of Sylvan's move to Ladenburg.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Friday, 28 [February] 1567. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/33 (KRP 53). Published in Rott (1911) 22.
A letter had been received from Sylvan asking to be accorded the services of Vehe as deacon, in default of which he would prefer to return to Kaiserslautern.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 26 March 1567. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/33 (KRP 81). Published in Rott (1911) 22.
The Elector had decided that there was really no alternative but to send Sylvan to Ladenburg, since a posting in Bretten would be seen as a provocation to Herzog Christoph of Württemberg.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY to the Elector Friedrich, Ladenburg, [Sunday], 31 August 1567.
Published in Catechismus (1567).
See Sylvan: Published Works (D/I).

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, 1568.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/35.
Records the payment of 10 florins to the surgeon Hans Ruprecht in the Burgweg, who had provided lodgings for Sylvan during the several months he had acted as Olevian's deputy in the church of the Holy Ghost.

Johann WILLING, letter to Johann Sylvan, [Heidelberg], [Tuesday], 25 May 1568.
S.A. Amberg: Oberpfälzisches Religionswesen 67/92. Published in Rott (1911) 54-5.
See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Johann SYLVAN, letter to Johann Wolf, [Ladenburg], [Wednesday], 1 September 1568.
Z.B. Zurich: Simlersammlung. Published in Horn (1913) 297-300.
See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Johann WOLF, letter to Johann Sylvan, Zurich, [Friday], 29 October 1568.
Z.B. Zurich: F 41, 456. Published in Horn (1913) 300-302.
See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Zacharias URSINUS, letter to Johann Crato, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 3 November 1568.
Mentioned in Gillet (1861) 500 and Rott (1910) 196.
Sylvan was one of those supporting Erastus in his stance against discipline.

Matthias VEHE, letter to Johann Sylvan, [Kaiserslautern, Saturday], 29 January 1569.
S.A. Amberg: Oberpfälzisches Religionswesen 67/142. Published in Rott (1911) 55-7.
See Vehe: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Johann SYLVAN, letter to Johann Wolf, Ladenburg, [Thursday], 31 March 1569.
S.A. Zurich: E II 345, 673. Published in Rott (1911) 57-61.
See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Johann SYLVAN, letter to Johann Wolf, Ladenburg, [Friday], 1 April 1569.
S.A. Zurich: E II 356, 855-6. Published in Horn (1913) 302-3.
See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Johann Sylvan, Heidelberg, [Tuesday], 21 June 1569.
S.A. Amberg: Oberpfälzisches Religionswesen 67/130. Published in Rott (1911) 61.
See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).
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Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Heidelberg, [Friday], 8 July 1569. S.A. Zurich: E II 346a, 551. Mentions action being taken against Sylvan.

Johann SYLVAN, letter to Johann Wolf, Ladenburg, [Sunday], 10 July 1569. Z.B. Zurich: F 40, 490. Published in Sudhoff (1857) 370-1; and Horn (1913) 304. See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Johann WOLF, letter to Johann Sylvan, Zurich, [Saturday], 23 July 1569. Z.B. Zurich: F 41, 460. Published in Horn (1913) 304-6. See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Johann WOLF, letter to Thomas Erastus, Zurich, [Monday], 25 July 1569. Z.B. Zurich: F 41, 304. Here it is reported that Sylvan was contemplating flight.

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Johann Sylvan, Heidelberg, [Thursday], 19 January 1570. S.A. Amberg: Oberpfläzisches Religionswesen 67/89. Published in Rott (1911) 61-2. See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Thursday], 30 March 1570. Mentioned in Wundt (1789) 135-6. Conrad Marius noted suspicions about the orthodoxy of the dissident group during the course of a discussion about proposals for a new school order that Sylvan had sent from Ladenburg.

Georg von STETTEN, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, [Tuesday], 11 April 1570. S.A. Zurich: E II 378, 1846r/v. Mention was made of Sylvan.

Johann SYLVAN, letter to [Chancellor Christoph PROB], Ladenburg, [Saturday], 15 April 1570. S.A. Amberg: Oberpfälzisches Religionswesen 67/98. Rott (1911) 62-4. See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Johann LASICKI, letter to Johann Wolf, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 10 May 1570. Z.B. Zurich: Simlersammlung. Published in Wotschke (1908) 327-8. Mentions giving Biandrata's book De Regno Christi to Sylvan, since Ursinus had been too busy to prepare a refutation. When he had finished he would turn to the second work on Antichrist.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Friday, 12 May 1570. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/10 (KRP 224). Published in Rott (1911) 26-7. Following a written complaint about Sylvan from the minister at Schriesheim, it was proposed that he should be suspended from office pending an explanation of his conduct.


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and a full visitation of the district. At any event something should be done before the meeting of the Diet.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/31 (KRP 265). Published in Rott (1911) 27.
Olevian suggested a visit to Sylvan in Ladenburg to discuss complaints about his ministry.

Johann SYLVAN, letter to the Elector Friedrich, Heidelberg, [Friday], 30 June [1570].
S.A. Amberg: Oberpfälzisches Religionswesen 67/95. Published in Rott (1911) 67-8.
See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Johann SYLVAN, letter to Giorgio Biandrata, Heidelberg, July 1570.
Summarized in Mieg (1701) 318-34; Struve (1721) 217-27; and Arnold (1741) 1125-33.
See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [July 1570].
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555 (KRP 308). Published in Rott (1911) 31.
In presenting a report to the Church Council, Tremilli insisted that his only concern in contacting Junius had been to preserve the unity of the church. He had heard from an Italian grocer named Bernard that Sylvan and Neuser had asked him to take them to the Viennese embassy, where they hoped to obtain help in moving out of the Palatinate. The reason was ‘quod non sentiant nobiscum in dem punct von der ewigen gottheit Christi’. It was also noted that Erastus and Xylander were due to visit Ladenburg. Finally mention was made of a student closely associated with the group, though Tremilli was reluctant to provide his name.

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Heidelberg, [Tuesday], 18 July 1570.
S.A. Zurich: E II 345, 730. Published in Rott (1910) 209.
Mentions the arrest of the ministers several days before. It appeared that they had been in touch with the Transylvanian ambassador in the hope of finding an alternative calling. This was taken to indicate a certain sympathy with the Arian position.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Wednesday, 19 July 1570.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555 (KRP 311). Published in Rott (1911) 32-3.
According to his assistant minister, Sylvan had lately changed his mind about a number of the chief heads of doctrine. In particular he had argued that the eucharist was no more than a memorial rite, while at the same time condemning the practice of excommunication as lacking scriptural warranty. Although less open during recent months, he had earlier made every effort to gain the support of influential figures in Ladenburg and a copy of his writing on the subject had been presented to the council. He had further argued that the individual was responsible for his own salvation, which depended on the exercise of free will rather than divine grace. Nor was he prepared to preach on either the Trinity or the two natures of Christ. Recently he had received visits from such as Xylander, Grynaeus, Neuser and Erastus, as well as a number of the latter's student lodgers. The last meeting had taken place on Tuesday of the previous week. The deacon did not personally know the young man who acted as ‘famulus’, though he had
hearing from Suter that Sylvan had just finished a treatise on free will. It appeared that his wife now blamed the ‘Niederländer’ for his arrest.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Saturday, 22 July 1570. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555 (KRP 316). Published in Rott (1911) 34.
In response to the offer of a sizable reward, Sylvan had reputedly informed ‘ein grosser herr’ that the problem of Christ's eternal divinity was insoluble.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Wednesday, 26 July 1570. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555 (KRP 317). Published in Rott (1911) 34-8.
According to the president, Wenzel Zuleger, the dissident group had been arrested on account of their Arian sympathies. From the writings impounded by the Elector, it was apparent they had intended defending their opinions in print. The only associates named by Sylvan were Neuser and Suter. Hasler was only responsible for producing the transcript, while the role of Vehe had yet to be clarified.

The theologian Pierre Boquin then made a statement about the doctrinal implications. Sylvan's confession, which was really derived from Servetus, was even more blasphemous than views circulating in Poland, since it left no room for the divinity of Christ. Not only was he clearly confirmed in these opinions, but he was also reported to have extolled the virtues of the Turkish system.

In the opinion of his colleague Tremilli, it would be necessary to act as a doctor when confronted with a grave illness. At all events the Elector must be dissuaded from leniency. In the meantime Sylvan and his associates should be questioned under torture. Concurring with these sentiments, Jean Taffin added that the crime of ‘majestas divina læsa’ was no less serious than when directed against human authority. Pierre de Cologne, on the other hand, sought to emphasize the political dimension to the problem. It was noted that Willing had already been to Speyer, trying to obtain the release of the prisoners on the grounds that contact with the Voivode in Transylvania had recently been endorsed by the church in Zurich, to whom he had written asking for the services of some sixteen ministers.

It was generally agreed that there was no point in holding discussions with Sylvan since he was unlikely to change his mind. Yet it would be necessary to have a detailed list of those whom he had corrupted. Here the recently dismissed school master from Neustadt and Engelbert Milander, the minister at Jugenheim, were both mentioned.

At this point Olevian suggested the Elector should be warned that God might not allow him to continue in office for very long if such blasphemies went unpunished. ‘Lange Hans’ had earlier promised to mend his ways and later shown himself to be untrustworthy. There was even less reason to trust the feigned recantations of those involved in such a serious case. Dathen also stressed that any promises of repentance were not to be believed, citing the examples of Biandrata and Gentili as sufficient evidence on that score. It was eventually agreed to send a delegation to impress these points on the Elector.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [after 26 July 1570]. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555125. Published in Rott (1911) 38-9.
The school boy Balthasar Fecker had taken a letter from Sylvan to his brother-in-law the previous Wednesday. This apparently contained a note for the attention of those at court,
but he had been barred from entry. Marius reported having read a letter of Sylvan to the Faut the day before, in which he was asked to encourage Hasler to prepare a good German translation of the work on free will for publication as soon as he got out of prison. This letter was to be shown to Erastus, who had already written to Sylvan. Further comment was made on Sylvan and Suter, who had visited a certain Nicholas three weeks before to their flight. In any case it was clear that Sylvan had a clear plan of campaign and hoped for the support of Erastus in putting it into practice.

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Johann Wolf, Heidelberg, [Sunday], 30 July 1570.
S.A. Zurich: E II 345a, 688frv.
Reported the arrest of Sylvan and the flight of Neuser, neither of whom he would ever have suspected of Arianism. The real reason for the problem was clearly the row over church discipline.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Monday, 31 July 1570.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555 (KRP 324). Published in Rott (1911) 39.
According to the statement made by Sylvan, the ministers of Feudenheim, Käfertal and Hohensachsen had been frequent visitors in Ladenburg, where he had also received several students not personally known to him. Ottheinrich Wonecker had been there a couple of times. It was Lasicki who had delivered the book from Transylvania. His other friends in Heidelberg were then mentioned.

Heinrich ALTING, letter to N. Alting, Leiselheim/Worms, July 1570.
Mentioned in Wundt (1789j 138-9.
Alting's relations were informed of the arrest of the ministers.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Friday, 4 August 1570.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555 (KRP 329). Published in Rott (1911) 40.
Under interrogation Wonecker admitted having been to Ladenburg some three months before. Although he had been surprised at Sylvan's support for a collection of heterodox theses brought by Hasler from Speyer, he had not subsequently raised the matter in college.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Wednesday, 9 August 1570.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555 (KRP 332). Published in Rott (1911) 40-1.
The minister of Käfertal admitted that Sylvan had told him of his intention of writing against the Antitrinitarians, though he had not been aware of any plans for flight. He remembered having been shown a copy of Peter Columna's *Opus de arcanis catholicæ veritatis*. When asked if he would help transcribe the work on the freedom of the will, he had refused. A treatise on the sacraments was also mentioned.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555144. Published in Rott (1911) 41.
Among those invited to dine and stay the night in Ladenburg was the minister of Hohensachsen.

Heinrich BULLINGER, letter to Thobias Egli, Zurich, [Friday], 18 August 1570.
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S.A. Zurich: E II 342a, 601. Published in Korrespondenz (1906) 208-9. Mentioned news of the planned flight and the arrest of Sylvan.

The COUNCIL of BERN, letter to the Elector Friedrich, Bern, [Saturday], 26 August 1570. S.A. Bern: AA III/32, Deutsch Missiven-Buch E E 1199-1200. See Hasler: Primary Sources (C/1).

Theodore BEZA, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Geneva, [Sunday], 27 August 1570. F.B. Gotha: A 404/119. Published in Correspondance (1983) 260-5. The problem with the Arian ministers in Heidelberg would not have arisen had there been a proper system of discipline.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Monday, 28 August 1570. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555 (KRP 349-50). Published in Rott (1911) 42-3. According to the ministers of Sandhofen and Mannheim, their colleague from Käfertal had insisted that only those doctrines that could be proven from the Old Testament should be read into the New. The Arian heresy had been condemned on no greater authority than that of the Pope. Meanwhile Sylvan recommended that they study the use of the word Jehovah in the Old Testament.

Johann HALLER, letter to Rudolf Gualter, Bern, [Thursday], 31 August 1570. S.A. Zurich: E II 370a, 430. Published in Horn (1913) 306-7. See Hasler: Primary Sources (C/1).

Heinrich BULLINGER, letter to Thobias Egli, Zurich, [Friday], 1 September 1570. S.A. Zurich: E II 342a, 603. Published in Korrespondenz (1906) 211-2. Sylvan had been corrupted by reading the works of such as Biandrata and Giampaolo Alciati (∨).

Matthias ERB, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, [Heidelberg, Sunday], 3 September 1570. S.A. Zurich: E II 361, 253r-253a f. See also A.S.T. Strasbourg: 139, 223. It was supposed, that Sylvan must have derived his views from Servetus.

Heinrich BULLINGER, letter to Conrad Ulmer, Zurich, [Sunday], 10 September 1570. S.B. Munich, Clm 11470a, 135-6. Discusses the evidence against Sylvan.

Johann LASICKI, letter to Johann Wolf; Frankfurt, [Tuesday], 12 September 1570. Published in Wotschke (1908) 332. Following his arrest Sylvan had apparently decided to recant.

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In his work against the Trinity Sylvan maintained that the doctrine was the product of the papal tyranny, though sure evidence for the orthodox position could be found in Tertulian.

Girolamo ZANCHI, letter to Ludwig Lavater, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 20 September 1570. Published in Zanchi (1609) II/342-4. See Neuser: Primary Sources (C/l).

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Heidelberg, [Thursday], 21 September 1570. S.A. Zurich: E II 361, 61°61a°. The extracts from the Genevan letters sent by Bullinger had indeed been shown to Sylvan and Neuser, both of whom he had regarded as stalwart members of the church. For the moment no certain news could be obtained about the prisoners, though it was rumored that Sylvan had made a full confession: ‘Si in consilium ego adhiberer, dimittendum ante non esse suaderem, quam scripto publice errorem damnavisset ac confutavisset’. Although it was claimed he had implicated a number of others, Mader and his friends denied all knowledge of the affair.

Heinrich BULLINGER, letter to Conrad Ulmer, Zurich, [Thursday], 5 October 1570. S.B. Munich: Clm 11470a, 137-8. Tired of imprisonment Sylvan had agreed to recant.

Johann SYLVAN, letter to Thomas Erastus, Heidelberg, (October) 1570. U.A. Heidelberg. A/10, 179. Published in Wundt (1789) 148-9; and Rott (1911) 14-6. See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Johann SYLVAN, letter to the Church Council, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 18 October 1570. Mentioned in Wundt (1789) 125-6. See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Heidelberg, [Sunday], 29 October 1570. S.A. Zurich: E II 345a, 741. Now that Sylvan had agreed to retract, the matter should soon be resolved.

Peter DATHEN, letter to Theodore Beza, Heidelberg, [Sunday], 5 November 1570. F.B. Gotha: A 405, 358. Published in Wotschke (1908) 334; and Correspondance (1983) 292-3. It was doubtful whether Sylvan's change of heart should be believed.

REPORT by the THEOLOGIANS, Heidelberg, [November 1570]. Published in Mieg (1701) 318-34; Struve (1721) 214-28; and Arnold (1741) 1125-33. In the light of the new evidence brought to light following the arrest and interrogation of Neuser, Dathen asked a number of the theologians to prepare a report on each of the
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prisoners. The resulting statement, which would seem to have been compiled before the return of the Elector to Heidelberg on 11 November, was mainly based on the letter to Biandrata, though reference was made to several other pieces as well. Aside from confessing his heresy, this showed that Sylvan had been instrumental in corrupting others and hoped to propagate his views through the press. Although the penalty for such conduct was clearly prescribed in Leviticus 24:14 and Deuteronomy 13:5-6, there were still a number of points which would have to be clarified before any final judgment could be made.

One of the two ministers arrested for denying the Trinity had made a genuine recantation, though the other was really a Turk at heart. In no way could they claim any support for their views from the work of Capito and Bucer. In practice the affair was closely related to the row over discipline.

Heinrich BULLINGER, letter to Theodore Beza, Zurich, (Friday), 22 December 1570. B.P.U. Geneva: Ms. lat. 120, 149. Published in Correspondance (1983) 298-9.
Whether or not Sylvan teas prepared to publish a retraction of his views, both he and Neuser deserved to die.

While in agreement that both Sylvan and Neuser fully merited the death penalty, Beza had reason to believe they would be protected by those advocating a policy of clemency.

In response to the request for advice on how to deal with the scandal, Beza cited the Servetus affair as evidence of the need for severity. It was important to remember that those such as Alciati, Gentili and Biandrata had merely feigned repentance and this in no way reduced the need to provide an example by imposing the death penalty.

Theodore BEZA, letter to [Peter Dathen], Geneva, [Tuesday], 6 February 1571. Published in early copies of Beza (1573) 214-7; and Correspondance (1986) 33-5.

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Johann SYLVAN, letter to Peter Dathen, Heidelberg, Monday, [9 April 1571]. Z.B. Zurich: F 77, 526b (copy). Published in Rott (1911) 68-70.
See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Zacharias URSINUS, letter to Johann Crato, Heidelberg, [Tuesday], 17 April 1571. Published in Sudhoff (1857) 360.
The recantation of the Samosatians could scarcely be taken seriously.

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Heidelberg, [Sunday], 5 August 1571. S.A. Zurich: E II 361, 78v.
Contrary to precedent the case of the dissidents was not being discussed at full meetings of the High Council.
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The Elector FRIEDRICH, letter to Herzog August of Saxony, Heidelberg, [Friday], 10 August 1571.
Published in Arnold (1741) 1133.
Conrad Marius was being sent with copies of the letter to Biandrata and the subsequent retraction of Sylvan to obtain the advice of members of the Saxon council on the advisability of exacting the death penalty.

Herzog AUGUST of SAXONY, letter to Conrad Marius, Lochau, [Friday], 21 September 1571.
S.A. Dresden. Published in Briefe (1868-72) II/424-5.
Pending further discussion with members of his council, it was noted that there was a strong bias in favor of imposing the death penalty.

MEMORANDUM of the SAXON COUNCIL, September 1571.
S.A. Dresden. Summarized in Briefe (1868-72) II/425.
In this draft memorandum, the members of the Council suggested that the penalty of burning at the stake should be commuted to beheading in view of Sylvan's recantation.

Girolamo ZANCHI, letter to Johann Sylvan, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 26 September 1571.
Z.B. Zurich: Simlersammlung. Published in Zanchi (1609) II/329-32.
See Sylvan: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Heidelberg, (Friday], 2 November 1571.
S.A. Zurich: E II 361 74rv.
After lengthy discussion and the presentation of a written confession, Sylvan had been able to satisfy both Zanchi and Tremilli on all points. Although the High Council was now in favor of granting a conditional discharge, the Elector was surprisingly unwilling to agree. He had taken it on his own initiative to have the prisoner transferred to Mannheim, where the insanitary conditions were undermining his health. Probably the real reason for his continued detention was the earlier opposition to the order of discipline. Meanwhile his wife and children had been reduced to a state of destitution.

The Elector FRIEDRICH, letter to Herzog August of Saxony, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 21 November 1571.
S.A. Dresden: Loc. 8515, 257. Published in Horn, (1913) 308-9.
Although grateful for the reply given to Marius, the Elector noted that the case posed serious legal problems. According to established practice, it should be held before a special court, where the accused had the right to defense counsel. Since Sylvan had recently prepared a number of additional submissions, the matter would probably take some time.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 8 October 1572.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/36r (KRP 226).
Sylvan's wife sought a stipendium for their eleven year-old son to attend the school at Neuhausen. He had already started his education at Ladenburg before spending the last
six months keeping his father company in the prison at Mannheim. Olevian and the majority of the Council were opposed to allowing the son to carry on with his studies, pointing out that it could easily give rise to further scandal. It would be necessary to await the eventual resolution of the father's case before taking any decision. In any case, as was pointed out by Zuleger, the boy was as yet too young to attend college.

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Heidelberg, [Sunday], 21 December 1572.
S.A. Zurich: E II 361, 20
Sylvan would be brought to trial in two days time, though it was not clear how it was to be conducted. He was reported to have been guilty of terrible blasphemy: ‘Sed qua in hac causa vera sint aut ficta, postea, puto, intelligemus’.

Christoph GEWOLD, letter to Herzog Maximilian of Bavaria, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 24 December 1572.
S.B. Munich: Clm 1613, 323. Published in Dürrwaechter (1913) 191.
See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C/3).

Three hours after his formal condemnation, Sylvan was led out in the company of Dathen and Reck and made a full confession before going to the block.

Girolamo ZANCHI, letter to Johann Crato, Heidelberg, [Friday], 26 December 1572.
Like the holy martyr Stephen, Sylvan had died professing his faith in Christ.

For more than twelve weeks prior to his execution, Sylvan had remained constant in the orthodox faith, while rejecting any suggestion that he had ever been guilty of crimes other than that of heresy. As the sword fell, he was heard to repeat the words ‘Verzeuche meinen feinden’. Unfortunately the trial had been held in secret and it was thus impossible to get any precise information.

There were still some who were unhappy at the execution of Sylvan.

Conrad ULMER, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Schaffhausen, ['Thursday'], 12 February 1573.
S.A. Zurich: E II 377, 2549
The victory of the reformed troops in the Low Countries the day after the execution of Sylvan proved that God favored those who held his name in reverence.
MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Friday], 13 February 1573.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/34\textsuperscript{r} and 35\textsuperscript{r}.
Records the payment of some nine florins to the Faut to cover the costs of hiring six horses for the excursion to Ladenburg to arrest the dissident ministers, the bill for which had been agreed the following August.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Friday], 20 February 1573.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/37\textsuperscript{r} - 38\textsuperscript{r} (KRP 78).
The problem of Sylvan's family was discussed in the light of the Elector's recent undertaking to look after the children, the eldest of which was to be sent to the Pædagogium. This immediately raised the question as to whether he might eventually be considered for the ministry. Although there was no intention of punishing the son for the errors of his father, Olevian remained convinced that the boy would prove a disruptive influence in the school. It was also rumored that Sylvan had enjoined his eldest son Samuel not to have anything to do with the ministry, but rather to concentrate on the study of medicine. If the boy was deemed suitable for study, he should be provided with a grant rather than the prospects of a subsidized place in the seminary. Meanwhile the family was agreed that the younger child should be set to learning a trade.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Monday], 23 February 1573.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/38\textsuperscript{r/v}. (KRP 226).
The Elector had agreed to the proposition concerning Sylvan's son, who was to be provided with a grant of twelve florins per annum.

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Heidelberg, [Monday], 23 March 1573.
S.A. Zurich: E II 361, 55\textsuperscript{r/v}.
See Neuser: Primary Sources (C/1).

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Monday], 29 June 1573.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/39\textsuperscript{r} (KRP 224).
The court chaplain Adrian Coleman reported the rumor that the Elector and Sylvan had come to an agreement as the result of private discussions prior to the execution. It was being suggested that the former in no way dissented from Sylvan's position, but had been obliged to carry out the death sentence for political reasons. It might now be necessary to publish the acts of the process to allay any such suspicion.

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Heidelberg, [Monday], 21 September 1573.
S.A. Zurich: E II 361, 60\textsuperscript{r}-60a\textsuperscript{r}.
In discussing the excommunication of Mader and his friends, Erastus noted Beza's comments on the affair in his recently published letters. At the time of his execution, Sylvan had expressly exonerated all but those who were arrested of any complicity in the scandal.

Girolamo ZANCHI, letter to Josias Simler, Heidelberg, [Tuesday], 22 September 1573.
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After discussing the problem of Neo-Arianism, it was noted that the Elector had shown his true commitment in ordering the execution of Sylvan.

DIARY of Stephen GERLACH, Istanbul, [Wednesday], 21 October 1573. Published in Tage-Buch (1674) 34-7. See Neuser: Primary Sources (C/1).

The Elector FRIEDRICH, letter to Landgraf Wilhelm of Hesse, [Heidelberg], [Wednesday], 30 June 1574. Published in Briefe (1868-72) 706.
There was no comparison between treatment of Sylvan and the persecution of the Crypto-Calvinist party in Saxony.

INTERROGATION of Antonio PIGAFETTA, Heidelberg, [Saturday], 8 January 1575. U.A. Heidelberg: A/10, 150-5. Here Erastus' connections with the dissident group were discussed. Not only had he gone out to see Sylvan a week before his arrest, but he had always maintained that the case had been a travesty of justice.

INTERROGATION of Thomas ERASTUS, Heidelberg, [Saturday], 26 February 1575. U.A. Heidelberg: A/10, 169. In response to the accusation of heterodoxy Erastus suggested that the only reason for his being held in suspicion was his friendship with Sylvan and Neuser.

INTERROGATION of Simon GRYNÆUS and Theophilus MADER, Heidelberg, U.A. Heidelberg: A/10, 172. Published in Rott (1911) 1-4. Both men denied any knowledge of the heterodox views entertained by the group. The only time Mader had seen Sylvan's treatise on the Trinity was when it had been placed on the scaffold prior to his execution. He had only ever met the author once in 1567 when he and Grynæus were invited to stay to dinner in Ladenburg, where they had gone to sort out some business for Erastus. He had later informed Neuser of the arrest of the ministers.

REPORT on the PIGAFETTA AFFAIR, Heidelberg, [Saturday], 30 April 1575. U.A. Heidelberg: A/10, 177-81. Published in Rott (1911) 9-17.
In view of the seriousness of the accusations raised by Pigafetta, the Elector had asked the university to consider the evidence against Erastus and decide whether there were grounds for further action. Not only did he admit to having suspected Sylvan of Arianism, but it was clear that he had been aware of the planned flight to Transylvania. It was not enough to say in his defense that he had tried to discourage his friend from such action. Moreover their correspondence was full of cryptic references to secret projects that were too dangerous to be discussed in the open. Although Erastus claimed this was a reference to Sylvan's treatise on the sixth book of Aristotle's Ethics, he later changed his story admitting to private discussions about the problem of discipline. Yet even this was not wholly convincing and the real meaning could only be inferred by
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comparing the letters with that of Sylvan to Biandrata. It was clear that Erastus had been troubled by exactly the same problems as the other members of the group.

Theodore BEZA, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Geneva, [Wednesday], 8 June 1575. 
S.A. Zurich: E II 368, 167-73.
In discussing the case arising out of the dismissal of Johannes Matthæus from Amberg, reference was made to his association with Sylvan and Neuser.

Rudolf GUALTER, letter to Graf Ludwig of Wittgenstein, Zurich, [Thursday], 25 August 1575. 
S.A. Zurich: E II 345a, 720-1.
It was apparent that Erastus and Mader had been excommunicated on no other grounds than that of their earlier friendship with Sylvan, who had always enjoyed a close association with the ministers in Zurich.

Rudolph GUALTER, letter to Theodore Beza, Zurich, [Thursday], 11 October 1576. 
S.A. Zurich: E II 368, 149.
Olevian had refused to accept Erastus' hand in friendship because of his support for the errors of Sylvan.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, 1578. 
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/36r (KRP 226).
Notes the settlement of Hans Buchenschreiber's claim for seventy florins in connection with the costs of Sylvan's imprisonment at Mannheim.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Monday], 26 September 1580. 
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/40f (KRP 19).
Members of the newly installed Lutheran council gave a sympathetic hearing to the petition of Michael Dobner, who asked that a place be found in one of the colleges for his stepson Samuel Sylvan. The present grant of eighteen florins was otherwise not sufficient to cover his costs.

Bernhard CONDERZ, letter to Graf Johann of Nassau, Heidelberg, [Sunday], 29 March 1590. 
See Vehe: Primary Sources (C/1).

REPORT by Matthias VEHE, Greetsiel, May 1590. 
See Vehe: Occasional Pieces (D/4).

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 26 August 1590. 
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms 555 (KRP 199). Published in Rott (1911) 44-6. 
In the course of discussing Vehe's account of the scandal, it was noted that the acts drawn up by Zuleger would have to be corrected on several points, notably where it was suggested that the Elector himself had pronounced the death sentence.
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HISTORY by Markus zum LAMB, Heidelberg, [1590].
L.B. Darmstadt: Thesaurus picturarum, Ms 1971, 104. Published in Rott (1910) 248-59. This contained a long report on the execution of Sylvan. The block had been set up the day before the trial. Both his two sons were brought to witness the event. Johann Reck of the church of the Holy Ghost had been deputized to accompany him to the gallows and heard his orthodox confession.
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Secondary Sources


Johann WIGAND, *De Servetianismo seu de Antitrinitariis* (Königsberg, 1575) 90-1. Notes the Elector's prompt action in preventing the spread of Arian views.

Nicolaus SELNECCER, *Paedagogiæ Christianæ pars prima* (Frankfurt, 1577) 186-7. In response to the question whether the Genevan authorities were justified in the burning of Servetus, Selneccer cited the case of Sylvan as proof that incorrigible heretics might legitimately be put to death.

Georg EDER, *Das guldene Fluß Christliches Gemain and Gesellschaft* (Ingolstadt, 1579) 338. The example of the two Arian preachers at Heidelberg showed that in the end the evangelical faith led to apostasy.

Johann SCHÜTZ, *Serpens Antiquus: das ist, der Sacraments Teuffel* (Eisleben, 1580) 192a. Here it is argued that Sylvan was following in the tradition of Servetus in moving from the Calvinist teaching on the eucharist to the Arian heresy.

Johann WIGAND, *De persecutione piorum ... ministrorum verbi* (Frankfurt, 1580) 201. Sylvan was mentioned in the section dealing with pseudomartyrs.

Conrad GESNER, *Bibliotheca instituta et collecta ... iam vero postremo amplificata per Johannem Frisium* (Zurich, 1583) 497. Mentions Sylvan's polemic against Marbach, as well as an unidentified apology dating from the Heidelberg period, a work that was apparently never published.

Wilhelm HOLDER, *Cuculus Calvinisticus, sive de gratitudine et modesti Calviniana, adversus blasphemam Ioannis Iacobi Grynei Apologiam* (Tübingen, 1585) 12. Mentions Sylvan and Neuser as an example of refusing to heed the warnings about the dangers of Calvinism.

Marcus BEUMLER, *Falco emissus ad deplumandum ullum Cuculum* (Neustadt, 1585) 16. Far from being representative of the reformed tradition, Sylvan had undertaken to defend the doctrine of ubiquity while acting as pastor at Calw.

Johann WIGAND, *De Sacramentariismo* (Leipzig, 1585) 361b-362a. See Neuser: Secondary Sources (C/2).
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Notes that Sylvan married in Tübingen.

Conrad SCHLÜSSELBURG, *Hæreticorum catalogus* (Frankfurt, 1597-9) I/3-4 and XI/16.
See Neuser: Secondary Sources (C/2).

Leonhard HUTTER, *Threnologia de vita ac obitu Ægidii Hunnii* (Wittenberg, 1604) 18.
See Neuser: Secondary Sources (C/2).


Florimond de RÆMOND, *Historia de ortu, progressu et ruina hæreseon* (Cologne, 1614) II/279.
See Neuser: Secondary Sources (C/2).

Records attending the execution of Sylvan in his capacity as a decurion in the second class at the Pædagogium.

Wenzel BUDOVEC, *Circulus horologii lunaris et solaris* (Hanau, 1616) 234.
See Neuser: Secondary Sources (C/2).

Philipp NICHOLAI, *Fundamentorum Calvinianæ sectæ cum ... detectio*, in: *Opera latina* ed. G. Dedekennus (Hamburg, 1617) 108 and 124.
The reformed were criticized for executing heretics like Sylvan.

Abraham CALOV, *Socinismus Profligatus, h.e. errorum Socinianorum luculentæ confutatio* (Wittenberg, 1652) 8 and 23. Reprinted in *Scripta anti-sociniana in unum corpus redacta* (Ulm, 1684) II/3 and 10, a work which includes the same comments in the author's *Dissertationum de pseudo-theologiae Socinianæ ortu, methodo et progressu* I/49.
The true Arians were those who insisted that Christ was created, ‘ut pote Erasmus Johannes cum complicibus in Transylvania, quæ hæresis etiam præ aliis Johanni Sylvano maxime placuit’.


Conrad Tibertius RANGO, *Brevis de origine & progressu Syncretismi Historia* (Stettin, [1674]) 861. See Neuser: Secondary Sources (C/2).

Christoph SANDIUS, *Nucleus historiae ecclesiastiae* (Amsterdam, 1676) 430. Mention was made of the Heidelberg group.

*Historiae ecclesiasticæ supplementum ... ex epistolis ad Marbachios depromptis constans* ed. Johann Fecht (Frankfurt, 1684) 125-6, 214, 218-9, 229-30 and 232.

Johann Adam SCHERTZER, *Collegii Antisociniani CLIV dissertationibus academicis absoluti* (Leipzig, 1684) 12. The Heidelberg group was representative of the Neo-Arianism that developed naturally from the teaching of Calvin.

Christoph SANDIUS, *Bibliotheca Anti-trinitariorum, sive catalogus scriptorum, & succincta narratio de vita eorum Auctorum, qui vulgo receptum dogma de tribus in unico Deo impugnarunt* ([Amsterdam], 1684) 60-61. Information on Sylvan's published work was taken from Gesner (1583).

Stanisław LUBIENIECKI, *Historia reformationis Polonicae, in qua tum reformatorum, tum antitrinitariorum origo & progressus narrantur* ([Amsterdam], 1685) 108. Here it is suggested that the Elector had been reluctant to proceed with the execution until spurred on by the advice received from Geneva.


Heinrich ALTING, *Historia ecclesiae Palatine*, in: *Monumenta pietatis ... selecta*, ed. C.L. Mieg (Frankfurt, 1701) 206-9. Reprinted in the *Historia de Ecclesiis Palatinis*, ed. U. Emmius (Groningen, 1728). Originally compiled in 1618 and long circulated in manuscript form, Alting's attempt to justify the action of the government soon came to be accepted as the standard account of the scandal.

Jacob BEYRLIN, *Antiquitatis Palatinae*, in: *Monumenta pietatis ... selecta*, ed. C.L. Mieg (Frankfurt, 1701) 318-44. Reprinted in Struve (1721); and Arnold (1741).
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The so-called ‘acta Sylvani et Neuseri betreffend’, which were here published on the basis of a transcript prepared by Johann Agricola, comprised the report drawn up by the theologians in November 1570, as well as a German version of Neuser's draft letter to the Sultan.

Friedrich SPANHEIM the Younger, *Elencus controversiarum ... cum Socinianis et Antitrinitaris*, in: *Opera Omnia* (Leiden, 1703) 111/799-800.
Here it was insisted against Sandius that Sylvan had been executed for treason rather than heresy. He and his associates had been guilty of ‘nefaria consilia cum Transylvanis’.

While accepting the version of events supplied by Alting as generally accurate, there were yet grounds for doubting whether Sylvan had been guilty of treason. It was at least possible that the decision to impose the death sentence had been due to the influence of Geneva, as suggested by Lubieniecki (1685).

Valentin Ernst LÖSCHER, *Historie Neuseri and Sylvani Abfalls vom Christlichen Glauben*, in: *Unschuldige Nachrichten von alten and neuen theologischen Sachen ... auff das Jahr 1702* (Leipzig, 1705) 571-5.
Designed to show the importance of maintaining doctrinal orthodoxy, it was suggested on the basis of the documents recently published in Beyrlin (1701) that the origins of the problem in Heidelberg went back to the influence of Erasmus and Franck.

Mathurin VEYSSIÈRE de la CROZE, *Dissertations historiques sur divers sujets* (Rotterdam, 1707) I/103-5 and 122-33. See Neuser: Secondary Sources (C/2).

In addition to the documents already published in Beyrlin (1701), Struve made use of the report already submitted in August 1571 to Herzog August of Saxony, which was here included within the acts.

*Compendium historiæ ecclesiasticæ ... in usum gymnasii Gothani*, ed. E.S. Cyprian (Gotha, 1723) 783.
Here it was argued that Sylvan was executed ‘Bezæ instinctu’.

In this highly inaccurate account based on Ræmond (1614) and Lubieniecki (1685), it was suggested that Sylvan followed Neuser to Istanbul, where he had apparently been converted to Judaism.
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Christian August SALIG, *Vollständige Historie der Augsburgischen Confession and derselben Apologie* III (Halle, 1735) 111/310. After his arrival in Worms for the sixth session of the colloquy, which began on 20 September 1557, Sylvan was required to take an oath of loyalty to the president Julius Pflug.

Gottfried ARNOLD, *Unpartyische Kirchen- and Ketzer Historien* (Schaffhausen, 1741) II/1125-33. This revised edition of Arnold's work included a copy of the acts taken from Struve (1721), as well as providing the opportunity to correct a number of errors contained in the original version published at Frankfurt in 1700.


Jakob Christoph ISELIN, *Neu vermehrtes ... Allgemeines Lexicon* VI (Basel, 1744) 630.


Heinrich KLAUSING, *Commentatio historica de hæreticis misera morte extinctis* (Frankfurt, 1757) 67-8. There was little substance to the accusation of treason.


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The introduction to the surviving transcript of the relevant part of the minutes of the Church Council provides a critique of the research of Schelhorn and Bütttinghausen. It is clear that the manuscript was originally intended for publication.

Carl Bütttinghausen, *Ergötzlichkeiten aus der pfälzischen and schweizerischen Geschichte and Literatur* (Zurich, 1768) II/33.

Carl Bütttinghausen, *Beyträge zur pfälzischen Geschichte* (Mannheim, 1773-4) II/162-6 and III/311.


See Neuser: Secondary Sources (C/2).


See Neuser: Secondary Sources (C/2).


Account based on Wundt (1789) and Schelhorn (1762-3).


Here it is suggested that Johannes Matthäus, the Superintendent of the church at Amberg, sought to publish a defense of Sylvan and the dissident group.


Friedrich Wittmann, *Geschichte der Reformation in der Oberpfalz* (Augsburg, 1847) 64.
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Max Göbel, Geschichte des christlichen Lebens in der rheinisch-westphalischen evangelischen Kirche (Koblenz, 1849) I/366.


Heinrich Heppe, Geschichte des deutschen Protestantismus in den Jahren 1555-1581 (Marburg, 1853) II/358-60.

Johann Friedrich Hautz, Geschichte des Pädagogiums zu Heidelberg in den Jahren 1565-1577 (Heidelberg, 1855) 5, 24-5 and 37.

Ludwig Haußser, Geschichte der rheinischen Pfalz (Heidelberg2, 1856), 45-50.


Friedrich Butters, Emanuel Tremilius, erster Rektor des Zweibrücker Gymnasiums (Zweibrücken, 1859) 19.

J. F. A. Gillet, Crato von Crafftheim and seine Freunde: ein Beiträg zur Kirchengeschichte (Frankfurt, 1861) II/141-2 and 500.

E. F. H. Medicus, Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche im königreich Bayern diesseits der Rhein (Erlangen, 1863-5) I/448-9 and II/42.

Johann Friedrich Hautz, Geschichte der Universität Heidelberg, II (Mannheim, 1864) 78-85.

Heinrich Ernst Ferdinand Guerike, Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte (Leipzig9, 1867) 111/3873.

Anecdota Brentiana: ungedruckte Briefe and Bedencken von Johannes Brenz, ed. T. Pressel (Tübingen, 1868) CCLXVII/467.

Briefe Friedrich des Frommen ... mit verwandten Schriftstücken, ed. A. Kluckhohn (Brunswick, 1868-72) 1/373 and II/72, 424-5 and 706.


Friedrich Back, Die evangelische Kirche im Lande zwischen Rhein, Mosel, Nahe and Glan (Bonn, 1873) II/377-9.
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The theologians were seen as responsible for demanding the death penalty.

George TAYLOR [A. Hausrath], *Klytia: a story of Heidelberg castle*, tr. S.F. Corkran (Leipzig, 1883) 1/150-73 and 200-17, as well as II/108-22 and 207-10.
Hausrath's romantic novel, which is loosely based on the downfall of the liberal party, makes no distinction between fact and fiction in combining the story with both an elaborate Jesuit conspiracy to discredit the reformed church and an unlikely heroine in the person of Erastus' fictitious daughter. Although the detailed presentation of the 'dramatis personae' shows that the book was well researched, the character sketches are largely the result of imagination.


Johann JANSSEN, *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters* (Freiburg12, 1885) IV/334-7.
It was again suggested that the scandal bore witness to the influence of Erasmus and Franck.

W.T. GÜMBEL, *Die Geschichte der protestantische Kirche der Pfalz* (Kaiserslautern, 1885) 17-8 and 753.

Here it was noted that heretical ideas were first introduced 'durch einige Italiener'.

Friedrich Wilhelm CUNO, *Blätter der Erinnerung an Dr. Kaspar Olevianus* (Barmen, 1887) 15.


August BONNARD, *Thomas Eraste (1524-1583) et la discipline ecclésiastique* (Lausanne, 1894) 45-103.
Mostly concerned with Sylvan's role in the discipline controversy.


Nicolaus PAULUS, *Johann Sylvan and sein tragisches Ende*, in: *Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland* 121 (1898) 250-266.
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See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C/3).

Friedrich Wilhelm CUNO, Daniel Tossanus der ältere (1541-1602) (Amsterdam, 1898) 1/77.


There was no evidence to support Büttinghausen's claim that Sylvan had been responsible for the omission of the johannine comma in the Heidelberg New Testament of 1565, which had probably been produced by a commission.

J. KÜCHLER, Chronik der Stadt Kaiserslautern (Kaiserslautern, 1905) 11 and 18-20.


Briefwechsel des Herzogs Christoph von Württemberg, ed. V. Ernst (Stuttgart, 1907) IV/702-9.

Theodor WOTSCHKE, Christoph Thretius, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Kampfes der reformierten Kirche gegen den Antitrinitarismus in Polen, in: Altpreussische Monatsschrift 44 (1907) 185-6.


Hans-Adam ROTT, Neue Quellen für eine Aktenrevision des Prozesses gegen Sylvan and seine Genossen, in: Neues Archiv für die Geschichte der Stadt Heidelberg and der rheinischen Pfalz 8 (1910) 184-259 and 9 (1911) 1-70.

See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C/3).


See Vehe: Previous Studies (C/3).

Nicolaus PAULUS, Protestantismus and Toleranz im 16. Jahrhundert (Freiburg, 1911) 300-8.

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Reproduced as Johann Sylvan and die Anfänge des Heidelberger Antitrinitarismus, in: Neue Heidelberger Jahrbücher 17 (1913) 219-310.
See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C/3).

See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C/3).


Herman de Vries, Genève, pépinière du calvinisme hollandais (The Hague, 1924) 11/188-94.

G. Biundo, Palatina Sacra: Pfälzisches Pfarrer and Schulmeisterbuch (Kaiserslautern, 1930) 249.

Curt Horn, Johann Sylvan, in: Die Religion in Geschichte and Gegenwart (Tübingen, 1931) V/935.


K. Bauer, Aus der großen Zeit der theologischen Fakultät zu Heidelberg (Baden-Baden, 1938) 50.

H. Neu, Pfarrerbuch der evangelischen Kirche Badens (Lahr, 1939) II/606-7.

E. Mayer, Pfälziche Kirchengeschichte (Kaiserslautern, 1939) 119-21.


E. Morse Wilbur, A History of Unitarianism, Socinianism and its Antecedents (Cambridge/Massachusetts, 1946) 258-64.

Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer: Baden and Kurpfalz, ed. M. Krebs (Gütersloh, 1951) 171.


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Antal PIRNÁT, Die Ideologie der Siebenburger Antitrinitarier in den 1570er Jahren (Budapest, 1961) 118-9 and 127.

E.G. LÉONARD, Histoire générale du protestantisme (Paris, 1961) II.


A. BROCK, Johann Sylvan, in: Lexikon für Theologie and Kirche (Freiburg, 1964) IX/1204.

Werner SEELING, Johannes Sylvan, Matthias Vehe and Justinus Beinhardt als Pfarrer in Kaiserslautern (1566-1570), in: Blätter für pfälzische Kirchengeschichte 34 (1965) 133-45. See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C/3).


Werner SEELING, Johannes Willing (1525-1572): ein Schicksal zwischen Luthertum and Calvinismus (Zweibrücken, 1972) 95 and 108.


See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C/3).

Robert DAN, Humanizmus, reformáció, antitrinitarizmus és a héber nyelv Magyarorzágen [Humanism, reformation, antitrinitarianism and the Hebrew language in Hungary (Budapest, 1973) 141.


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See Vehe: Previous Studies (C/3).


See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C/3).


Previous Studies

N. PAULUS, *Johann Sylvan and sein tragisches Ende: eine Episode aus dem 16. Jahrhundert*, in: *Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland* 121 (1898) 250-266. This first modern account of the life and work of Sylvan was undertaken by one of the leading Catholic apologists, whose principal aim was to discredit the claims of contemporary liberal historians seeking to demonstrate a connection between the reform movement and the development of the idea of toleration. Despite this confessional bias, the work is marked by a scholarly disposition that distinguishes it from that of previous Catholic writers such as Ræmond and Guichard. Although Paulus brought to light no new material from the archives, his extensive knowledge of the secondary literature makes the work invaluable as a source of reference. The discussion of events leading up to the trial and execution was mainly taken from Lessing and Wundt, the leading commentators at the time of the Enlightenment. Here were found the grounds for rejecting the views of Alting and the reformed party, who suggested Sylvan had been condemned for treason rather than heresy. While not seeking to deny the importance of the political background, it is argued that real responsibility for the tragedy lay with the theologians and their insistence that ‘majestas divina læsa’ was a capital offense under the Mosaic law.

H.-A. ROTT, *Neue Quellen für eine Aktenrevision des Prozesses gegen Sylvan and seine Genossen*, in: *Neues Archiv für die Geschichte der Stadt Heidelberg und der rheinischen Pfalz* 8 (1910) 184-259 and 9 (1911) 1-70. Drawing on his experience as archivist in Karlsruhe, the editor was able to bring together a wide range of new source material, including a surviving transcript of the minutes of the church council and the long report on the affair prepared by Vehe at the time of his imprisonment in Greetsiel. Given that all previous accounts of the scandal were either based exclusively on the secondary literature or on an analysis of the so-called acts as compiled by Beyrlin, so the importance of this work can easily be grasped. The originals of all of the sources here cited are still extant, though little new material of relevance has been discovered after nearly half a century of further research, a fact which may be taken as some tribute to the author's industry. For all that a number of corrections to detail have been noted in the present study, this work is likely always to remain as the point of departure for any serious treatment of the problem.

C. HORN, *Johann Sylvan and die Anfänge des Heidelberger Antitrinitarismus*, in: *Neue Heidelberger Jahrbücher* 17 (1913) 219-310. This was the published version of a dissertation submitted in Heidelberg the same year. In addition to the extensive new material recently made available through the work of Rott, the author had himself uncovered a number of hitherto unpublished letters of Sylvan in Zurich, documents that are reproduced in the appendix. In particular the correspondence with Johann Wolf served to shed more light on his role in the discipline controversy and the political background to the scandal. Given that this is the only detailed account of the affair to have been produced following the publication of these sources, so the work of Horn has come to provide the standard interpretation. The argument that the rationalizing tendency within reformed theology owed more to the influence of Zwingli than Calvin was by no means original, though it is here presented
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with a greater degree of conceptual clarity. While Olevian and his fellow ministers sought to defend the dogmatic basis of the Church, those who looked to Zurich for guidance adopted a more critical attitude towards tradition. Granted it had never been intended that this should be carried to the extent of denying the doctrine of the Trinity, this degree of intellectual openness yet provided the key to the eventual apostasy of Sylvan and his close friends in Heidelberg. It certainly appears to be true that the common platform of the opposition party was the symbolic interpretation of the eucharist and that this was closely related to the ongoing controversy with members of the Church Council. Yet if at first regard the thesis carries an air of conviction, it poses a number of problems that are simply not discussed. While the author rightly points to the role of Simon Simonius (→) in calling in question the credibility of the reformed case, this erstwhile colleague of Beza can hardly be described as a Zwinglian. The pietistic concern for a genuine conversion of the heart probably owed as much to Bucer as to the spiritualist tradition, though in the case of Sylvan this eventually led to a rejection of the teaching on predestination. Nor does Horn make any attempt to relate this form of skepticism with the exegetical grounds for denying the Athanasian creed. For all that the Averroëst philosopher may have exercised a certain influence in and around the university, it must not be forgotten that the majority of those implicated in the affair were members of the clergy whose primary concern was with the interpretation of Scripture. Not only does the author appear unaware of the difference between these two strains of dissident thought, but his determination to ascribe the development of a more liberal theology to the Zurich connection is in part belied by what we know about the other members of the group.


Here new evidence is presented concerning the execution of Sylvan in the form of a contemporary report found amongst the papers of Christoph Gewold, who was then secretary to Herzog Maximilian of Bavaria. This surviving transcript of a letter dated the day after the events it purports to describe was probably drawn up as part of the propaganda campaign against the Palatinate in the years leading up to the outbreak of the Thirty Years War. Be that as it may, the accuracy of the account provided can generally be substantiated from other sources. Only on one issue does the document flatly contradict the version accepted since the time of Alting. Contrary to the official view, it would seem that Sylvan went to his death in a state of some emotion and calling for vengeance on the reformed pastors. Dürrwaechter goes to considerable lengths to demonstrate the plausibility of this report, arguing that the official version supplied by Zanchi was a falsification designed to persuade contemporaries that the apostate had been won back to the faith. Unfortunately another contemporary report by Thomas van Til, an account of which the author was evidently unaware, fails to support this interpretation. Moreover, the supposed reference to the prophet Mohammed little tallies with our knowledge of Sylvan's earlier views and rather suggests that the transcript was edited in the light of subsequent discussions concerning the fate of Neuser.

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This study was based on the relevant minutes from the Kaiserslautern Ratsprotokoll, only part of which were published in Küchler (1905). Seen at their face value, these notes provide evidence of Sylvan's arrogant and frequently intemperate relations with the parish, though further research undertaken by the author enables a more balanced picture to emerge. Here Sylvan is presented less as a career-minded representative of central government than as a dedicated minister seeking to take a stand against moral laxity within the town. It is unfortunate that the evidence does not really extent to a parallel treatment of Vehe and provides no further information on his early relations with Sylvan. As it is the conclusions of the article are purely negative: it is emphasized that the only detailed evidence concerning the pastoral activity of the two men provides no indication of an attitude of radical dissent towards the established church.


In seeking to fill in some of the gaps in research, Seeling provided further information about Sylvan's early career in the service of the Bishop of Würzburg, material mostly taken from his published work. Mention is also made of the previously unremarked letter to Conrad Hubert in Strasbourg. The events leading up to the trial and execution are carefully analyzed, but without coming to any striking new conclusions. It is notable that the author was apparently unaware of the article by Dürrwaechter, though on the problem of Sylvan's final recantation he was cautious enough to reserve judgment on the official report of the affair.


Despite the promising title of this paper, it amounts to little more than a summary of the known connections between the Arian group in Heidelberg and the radical thinkers who had already found refuge in Transylvania. As Sylvan was never able to venture that far, the point is merely to draw a suggestive parallel as to what might have been had the relatively tolerant atmosphere of Siebenbürgen also prevailed in the Rhineland Palatinate.
Published works


According to Andreas Hyperius this sermon was published anonymously shortly after the break-up of the colloquy at the end of 1557. Not until the time of Würdtwein (1787) was it possible to identify Franz Behem as the publisher of the work, a copy of which was then to be found in the library at Mainz. Since it has not been possible to locate this copy, it is difficult to substantiate the suggestion of Seeling (1973) that despite the polemic tone of the sermon, it actually presented an eirenic perspective on the disputed issues of theology.


Copies in the L.B. Stuttgart, Theol. oct. 17737; H.A.B. Wolfenbüttel, 990.26 Theol. (¹); U.B. Tübingen, Gf 68 8°; S.B. Munich, 8° Polem. 2667 and Z.B. Zurich, E 322.

After a commendatory preface from Brenz, there followed a letter of dedication to Junker Balthasar von Gültlingen and his wife. This contained an attack on the Polish Confession of Hosius, whose earlier work against Brenz was little more than a repetition of the arguments advanced by Eck, Cochlæus and Nausea. If only the principle of *sola scriptura* could be established, the other differences could easily be resolved. It might then be possible to abolish common abuses and to appoint learned preachers to serve in all the parishes. His experience at Worms, where he had first come into contact with Gültlingen, had led Sylvan to a clearer perception of the truth. Evidence was still in his possession of attempts to bribe influential delegates with a view to preventing an accord. Moreover the Sorbonnist approach to theology only served to exaggerate the schism. Having thus decided to convert, it was only right that he should now publish a defense of his conduct.

The confession was divided into three books together with a conclusion.

a) Scripture and the Church: 1-137.

It was necessary to explain the reasons for his conversion lest the decision be regarded as lightly undertaken. Sylvan felt obliged to refute any suggestion that he left the Church out of ‘hitzigkeit oder neid’. Nor could he be accused of trying to provoke social unrest within the diocese. Under Bishop Melchior he had remained aloof from the religious controversy, only undertaking a brief perusal of Melanchthon's *Loci* out of curiosity. Yet after the succession of Friedrich von Wirsberg the situation had changed and the dean now required him to take a more active role in the debate. No longer satisfied with Hosius’ Confession, he then started to read Romans for himself and so came to grasp the truth about justification.
Christliche Bekantnus.

Iohannis Sylvani Athesini.

Darinn von unfremden streitigen Artickeln Christlicher Religion, so dieser Zeit im schwanck sein/gebhandelt/vnd erschaff angezeigt wird/warum ein jeglicher gutz Herziger Christ billich vom Babstumb ab treten/vnd aber sich der rainen lehr des Evangelij begeben solle.

Allen gutz Herzigen Christen/welche noch im Babstumb stecken zu einer Christlichen warnung also beschrieben.

Mit einer vorred Johannis Brenzen.

Galat. s.

So jemand euch Evangelium prediger/anders des jr empfangen habe/der sey verflucht.
Predige ich denn jetzt menschen oder Gott zu dienst? Oder gedencke ich menschenge fellig zu sein? Wenn ich den mensch noch gesellig werde so were ich Christius knecht nicht.
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In starting with the locus on scripture, he was merely following the pattern set down by Hosius as well as the order of debate adopted at Worms. It was not good enough to tell the laity simply to follow the teaching of the Church as had been suggested by one of the bishops the previous year. True faith had to be discovered for oneself, since the Christian would otherwise be no better off than an Arian or Turk [19] Salvation consisted in the knowledge of God and this could only be mediated through Scripture. Granted that the works such as those of Hermes Trismegistus might have predated the books of Moses, this in no way diminished from the authority of the Law [31]. Rational grounds could easily be adduced to establish that the Bible was the word of God, though this point was not at present in dispute. More important was to insist on the primacy of the sensus literalis against the claims of apologists such as Eck and Hosius. A proper understanding of Scripture presupposed the gift of the Spirit. There followed a long section dealing with the doctrine of the Church, which was here based on the idea of election. Reference was made to a wide range of patristic authorities to establish that the visible church was always mixed and therefore liable to err.

b) The Row over Justification; 139-290.
Prior to Luther justification was understood as the process by which the sinner became righteous without regard to the merits of Christ. Even if this position had latterly been revised in the works of Ferus and Hosius, it was still the case that the Roman teaching was based on an understanding of free will that led to the confusion of justification and sanctification and failed to grasp that Christ provided the sole ground of our righteousness. The true understanding of justification was contained in Romans and Galatians, where Paul showed that faith was in no way dependent on works. Although Sylvan had long been convinced by arguments taken from the epistle of James, he now recognized that it was a mistake to suppose this was concerned with the doctrine of justification. As had clearly been recognized by Bernard of Clairvaux, works were the fruits rather than the condition of rebirth. Not to perceive this truth simply led to a confusion of Law and Gospel that obscured the real freedom of the believer. After the Fall man remained free with respect to the organization of political and domestic affairs, but this could never lead to salvation. It was thus false to suppose that the virtue generally accorded to the pagan philosophers might have worked to their redemption. Finally the whole practice of monasticism was condemned as a search for a kind of works righteousness.

c) The Doctrine of the Sacraments: 292-426.
The proper point of departure for any discussion of the sacraments was the definition supplied by Augustine to the effect that they were an outward sign of an inward reality. This balanced attitude was threatened as much by the superstitious abuse of the sign as by a flagrant contempt for the reality. The received teaching on the sacraments as a work of merit led to widespread corruption within the church. The doctrine of baptism provided a good example of the way in which the truth had come to be obscured. Properly speaking it was a work of the Spirit that gave rise to the birth of the new Adam. While it was this that made possible the practice of infant baptism, it was important to realize that the abiding purpose of the sacrament lay in ‘die abtödung des fleisches in Christo’.
Turning to the theology of the eucharist, it was emphasized that the whole of Christ was offered under the elements of bread and wine. Although this was to imply that even the unworthy received the body of Christ, it did not justify many of the superstitious practices that the Roman church had simply taken over from the pagan tradition. The suggestion that the teaching of the established church had been confirmed by miracles such as that supposed to have taken place at Dettelbach in the diocese of Würzburg was countered by the claim that ‘alle mirackel die in falschen leer geschehen sein Teuffelsgespenst’. It was quite possible that such happenings were the result of black magic, a point confirmed by the fact that Sylvan had himself discovered a copy of Tritheim's work on the occult in the chapter-house at Würzburg. Nor was there any justification for the practice of offering communion in only one kind.

Unfortunately there were still many who felt that the evangelical teaching on justification tended to deny the need for repentance. It was not until hearing the preaching of Nicholas Gallus at Regensburg that he himself came to realize the underlying sincerity of their position. The true sense of μέτανοια was conversion and this implied the ‘tödung des fleisches’. It was only then that the Spirit came to operate within the new man, who would be led into the way of sanctification. Not only did this destroy the distinction between venial and deadly sin, but it also meant that auricular confession was unnecessary, since ‘wann einer aus waren glauben mit David das Miserere wainend bettet, ist wol behiebt’. It was this that the theologians of the Sorbonne failed to comprehend.

The final chapter of the work was concerned with the liberty of the Christian man [419-26]. Basically this could be reduced to three things: the freedom from sin and its penalties; the exemption accorded to believers from the precepts of the Mosaic Law; and the liberty of conscience in matters indifferent. While none of this was to open the way to licentious practice, it did contain a number of implications for political society. Granted that the faithful were bound to obey the law in so far as this did not conflict with the dictates of conscience, the civil authorities had yet no right to legislate in areas that impinged on this liberty. To accept this situation would be to restore the conditions prevalent under the law of Moses. This was in fact what the bishops now sought to impose.

Conclusion: 427-59.

The polemic tone of the work was justified by the need to warn against the dangers of episcopal tyranny over conscience. It was clear from the analysis that in no sense could the Roman hierarchy be regarded as the true church. In the face of such tyranny, Sylvan promised that he would soon prepare a ‘Trostbuchlein’ for the people of Karlstadt.
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Copies in the L.B. Stuttgart, Theol. oct. 18648(⁴) and U.B. Munich, Theol. pastor. 235f and S.B. Munich, Polem. 2785/2.

In the dedication to Hans Ungnad von Schöneck it was pointed out that real idolatry was the rejection of the ‘imago Dei’ in our daily lives. It was easy enough to preach about the grace of God, but much harder to bring to life the new man. Having recently read the anonymous *Neuwe Zeitung*, which had been written by ‘einem gelehrtten Man’, some time ago, Sylvan had decided that it should now be offered to the public.

Reason had but a limited role to play in matters of conscience. Scripture was the only authoritative source of theology and its teaching was binding even where this seemed to contradict the precepts of human wisdom. Thus, for all that the use of images might be justified as a visual expression of the faith for the benefit of the unlettered, the injunction of the Decalogue was both clear and binding. Acts 17 showed that this was meant to be continued under the new dispensation. According to Aristotle the practice of idolatry derived from the need for a sensual representation of the faith. While the use of images in church clearly fell within this category, the same was not true of the role ascribed to the Bible by the evangelical party. Here the Church should learn from the practice of Islam: ‘Der Turck ist in diesem faal vil frummer unnd aufrichtiger dann du dieweil er kein gemel kein bild weder in dem Tempel nach anderswo gestatten will’ [A₈]

It was precisely because of the Incarnation that it was wrong to have any representation of Christ. Since it was not possible to portray the divinity, to represent the humanity of Christ alone would be to deny the essential unity of the two natures. The body of the risen Lord was in heaven, where it was beyond the capacity of human reason to comprehend. The Vienna Confession of Balthasar Hubmaier was cited on the many examples of papist idolatry [B⁶]. Removing and destroying such images could hardly give offense to the pious.

There followed the satirical ‘Klag and Bekantnus der armen Götzten’, a series of verses condemning such enduring idols of mankind as gluttony [C¹⁻⁸].

Finally it was noted that the work had been prepared for publication during Easter Week in the hope of helping the faithful in the diocese of Würzburg.
Neuwe Zeitung.

Wie ein Bild ge
de/klage und Besanne
habe/zur warnung sich vor allem
	Gößenleben zu
		hütten.

Mit einer vorred Iohannis Syluani Athesini
darinn etwas von den Gößen gehandlet
fromen Christen zur Brüderlichen
warnung.

Psalmus. 115.

Die solch machen (vnd vterdidingen) seind
								auch also.

Gärncke zu Tübingen / Durch
Ulrich Mozhart.
1561.

Title page: Neuwe Zeitung (1561)
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Copies in the *C.W. Strasbourg, V R 395 (2); B.N.U. Strasbourg, E 146 490; H.A.B. Wolfenbüttel, 652.10 Theo1.(4) and 1164.40 Theo1.(3); S.B. Munich, 8° Pol. 900/1 and 1764/1; L.B. Stuttgart, Theo. oct. 17736; U.B. Tübingen, Gf 271 8° ang; Z.B. Zurich, D 324 940 and U.B. Basel, Ki. Ar. J. X. 43 No. 2.

Marbach's book on the eucharist was dismissed as ‘ungehobelten Scarteken’ based on an evident use of petitio principii. Indeed, it was only for the sake of the gullible that his thirteen fundaments of the Lutheran doctrine had to be refuted. It was crucial to understand that since the Ascension the humanity of Christ was in heaven, whilst the divinity remained ‘unbegriefflich and allenthalben’. The reformed accepted the use of reason only in so far as it was ‘vom himlischen liecht erleuchtet and mit heiligem Geist wiedergeboren’. Yet dialectic was essential to comprehend the content of revelation [A⁸-B¹]. In rejecting this point Marbach stood at one with Schwenckfeld. A literalist interpretation of Scripture was absurd and might give rise to the error of Arius, who could refer to Christ's claim that ‘the father is greater than I’ [B⁴]. Moreover, Marbach and his friends in Strasbourg ascribed too great authority both to Luther and the Augsburg Confession. They should learn about Christian freedom and not try to suppress the truth by burning books. Their doctrine of ubiquity was a complete innovation, which had no background in Apostolic or Patristic tradition. It yet appeared that any preacher who sought to maintain a simple form of the eucharist and to introduce church discipline was liable to summary dismissal. In all this it was clear that Marbach had departed from the tradition of Bucer despite all his claims to the contrary [C⁶-E¹]. Some thirteen passages of the Tetrapolitana and the Apology were cited to prove it was in the Palatine church that the original sense of the reformer's theology had been preserved.

Having thus replied to the preface of Marbach's work, Sylvan turned to consider his account of the development of the eucharistic controversy. A more reliable version of events had been published by Lavater the previous year. Still the use of historical argument only showed up the weakness of Marbach's case. It was pure calumny to compare the reformed with Islamic thought or that of the Talmudic Jews. Objection was also taken to a recent mandate in which a parallel had been drawn between their teaching and that of the Jorist sect [G⁷].

Two questions were regarded as particularly important:

a) As far as the interpretation of the Augsburg Confession was concerned, the reformed position had been well outlined in the Grundtlicher Bericht. It was clear that Melanchthon had rejected the doctrine of Ubiquity, a point readily confirmed through the work of Paul Eber. In this sense the Frankfurt Recess was much closer to the teaching of the Palatine theologians. Even so the confession could never be accorded a similar status to that of Scripture.

b) It was the great achievement of Luther to have expounded the evangelical teaching on justification. This did not, however, raise him above the level of other doctors within the Church. Other heads of doctrine, such as the Trinity, were much more difficult and required further clarification [H⁵]. Meanwhile, Marbach's attempt to distinguish between the person and office of Luther was dismissed as lacking any foundation. There were many aspects of the reformer's work that still required improvement.
Finally Sylvan turned to consider the thirteen fundaments of Marbach's attack on the Heidelberg Catechism [I²]. Here the Old Testament sources for the doctrine of the Covenant were examined. This consisted of two parts: God's promise and the debt of gratitude. In some respects the final point was the most interesting, where the question of anthropology was brought to the fore. In response to Marbach's suggestion that the reformed failed to comprehend the struggle within the life of the regenerate because of their determination to interpret Romans 7 'auff philosophischer Weise', Sylvan replied that they never sought to deny the continuity between the old and the new man, though preferring to examine the Pauline dialectic in the light of 2 Corinthians 4 [N²]. If this statement in defense of the reformed position was not enough then Sylvan was prepared to draw up an even sharper reply to his Lutheran critics.
Title pages: *Kurtze Antwort* (1565) and *Wahrhaftige Ablainung* (1566).
Sylvan had received a copy of Marbach's three sermons on 2 February. This amounted to little more than a repetition of his earlier work. Clearly the main problem was that of Christology, where he accused the reformed of adopting the Nestorian position. The church of Strasbourg would itself be well advised to stick by the confession of 1530 and the teaching of Bucer. The reformed teaching was then summarized under six points:

a) Christ was always present in the Church.

b) The substance of his divinity was omnipresent.

c) A belief in the personal union was an article of faith challenged by heretical leaders from the time of Arius to Servetus. The best analogy for the orthodox doctrine was the relationship between body and soul, a point designed to emphasize that the unity was personal rather than essential.

d) Accordingly the reformed were able to distinguish between the two natures without allowing them to be separated from each other. The communication of essential properties as between the two natures was thus merely figurative.

e) Only the divine nature was present in the eucharist. This position reflected a genuine respect for the humanity of Christ, which would otherwise appear like ‘Hans in allen Gassen’.

f) The attempt to subsume the finite within the infinite must logically deny any real distinction between the two natures. This would in turn undermine any functional distinction between the respective persons of the Trinity. This point was exemplified by showing that on no less than eighteen points Marbach's views on Christology simply led to absurdity.

The second part of the work was taken up with a lengthy discussion on the hypostatic union (72-196). To begin with an account was given of the Nestorian affair. His critics had been happy to describe the relation between the two natures in Christ as similar to that established by matrimonial alliance. By the same score the reformed were prepared to accept the use of the epithet θεοτοκός in the sense outlined at the council of Ephesus. However, the Eutychian controversy raised problems of a more fundamental order, since it tended to deny the very humanity of Christ. What Marbach meant by the majesty of the human nature was in practice the same as Schwenckfeld's vision of a glorified body transcending the attributes of corporeality. The refutation of this position was not based on Physics or Logic, but rather on the evident testimony of Scripture.

Sylvan then presented a personal confession of faith, rejecting the teaching of Nestorius and retracting what he had earlier written on the eucharistic dispute while still a Papist: ‘Ich ... weiß auch von den gnaden Gottes, daß mich von dieser Christlichen meinung nichts abscheiden wird unnd bin auch von den gnaden Gottes bereit, solche lere mit meinem blut, so es die not erfordert, zubestettigen’ [167]. Finally it was noted that this reply had been written in a hurry to try and have it ready for the Lenten fair at Frankfurt. He hoped to prepare a separate response to the many slanders
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contained in the sermons themselves. In the meantime he concluded with a prayer for
Marbach's conversion.
The work was dated at Kaiserslautern, 14 February 1566.

6. Der Apostolische ware Catechismus, das ist/ Christelicher unterricht/ des Heyligen
Apostels Pauli an die Romer (Heidelberg, Michæl Schirat: 1567). 378 pages; octavo; )(-
◊)3/A-Z/a-a4.
Copy in the *U.B. Heidelberg, Q 71635.

In the dedication to the Elector Friedrich it was emphasized that Satan always tried to
attack the Church through the article on justification. Amongst the many errors that had
arisen surrounding the doctrine were listed the idea of essential righteousness, as well as
the tendency to confuse the process with that of sanctification. It also led to trouble if the
Law and Gospel were not carefully distinguished. The civil authority had a clear
responsibility to promote the growth of piety through the punishment of such seducers
and any failure to live up to this task was as bad as tyranny.
As an individual Sylvan had always sought to avoid religious controversy since this did
little to help the laity. Instead he had composed a work which was in reality little more
than a commentary on the Heidelberg catechism. Romans likewise fell into three parts,
which dealt in turn with the recognition of sin (1-3); salvation through Christ (3-8) and
the response of gratitude (9-16). The foundation of the whole process was supplied by the
doctrine of election.
Since the work was designed for the benefit of the laity, he had divided the chapters up
into verses to make it easier to follow. This was a principle already established in the
recent edition of the New Testament and it was hoped that it would soon be possible to
publish the Old Testament along similar lines. Meanwhile, if his work was found to be
useful, he would be pleased to prepare a complete series of vernacular studies dealing
with the other Epistles.
Every chapter was introduced with a short resume of the argument, before Sylvan turned
to provide a paraphrase of each verse. Exegetical notes were kept to a minimum and were
generally included only where necessary to explain a point of doctrine. The following
summary is designed to do no more than list the main themes explored within the context
of the commentary.
From the outset the Christological debate was given due prominence. For all that both
justification and sanctification were grounded in the doctrine of election, the possibility
of redemption had only been established by God's taking on the fullness of our humanity
through the Incarnation. Yet following Paul the preacher had to begin with the
condemnation of the sinner under the Law, a knowledge of which was accessible to
natural man.
The debate with the Jews over the nature and scope of the Law provided the recurring
theme of the early part of the Epistle, a point that the commentator readily applied to
contemporary divisions within the Church. In reply to the Judo-Papist reliance on
ceremonial practice, Paul sought to establish the sole-sufficiency of divine grace. The
example of Abraham merely confirmed that sacramental practice had nothing to do with
salvation. Sylvan also went to considerable lengths to disclaim any pedagogic function to
the Law: ‘so kome auß dem Gesetz nur erkenntnuß and entdeckung unserer sünden,
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schanden und vermaledeyung’. Here he was clearly at one with the teaching of the Heidelberg catechism. Although central to the current debate with the Lutheran party, the interpretation of Romans 7 held few surprises. Following within the main stream of the evangelical tradition, Sylvan accepted that the Apostle was speaking of his own spiritual condition after the receipt of grace. Clearly the bondage to sin affected both the inner and the outer man. Without Christ the misery of this condition could never have been discerned. Thus the inner struggle only applied to the reborn and this in itself was the first stage in the process of sanctification. Sylvan was careful to qualify this interpretation, so strongly reminiscent of the views of Bucer, with the observation that during this life the old Adam would always remain.

The bulk of the work was taken up with explaining the fruits of faith in Christ. In the discussion on sanctification great emphasis was placed on the abiding nature of the ‘theologia crucis’, the point that really showed up the ‘Maulchristen’. The various stages of the Christian life were providence, calling, obedience, justification and sanctification. Yet the central idea remained the doctrine of predestination and it was this that constituted the major stumbling block for their adversaries. The point was simply to emphasize that the grounds of salvation lay in God’s free will rather than in membership of a chosen people.

The final chapters provided an opportunity for discussing the role of the Magistrate in promoting the affairs of the Church and the scope of Christian freedom. Although here a certain conflict might be apparent, in practice the two were reconciled in the duty of mutual love. The Apostle enjoined all parties to work for peace by showing an attitude of tolerance towards those still weak in the faith.
Title page: Der Apostolische Catechismus (1567).
It was generally recognized that Sylvan's abilities were those of an apologist and popularizer. Aside from preaching, his responsibilities within the diocese of Würzburg included the preparation of a vernacular translation of the works of Stanislaus Hosius. The only such text dating from the period prior to his flight to Tübingen was the *Dialogus, das ist, ein freundliches gespräch zwei person von den drey wichtigen punkten unserer Religion* (Mainz, Francis Behem: 1558), which dealt with the problems of communion in both kinds, clerical marriage and the use of the vernacular liturgy. While he was certainly aware of this text, there is unfortunately no evidence to suggest that Sylvan was himself the translator.

At another level, it is clear that the minister in Kaiserslautern was part of the commission established to prepare a vernacular version of the New Testament, a work which was eventually published on the Elector's authority at the press of Johann Meyer in 1567. Since nothing is known about the work of this commission, there is no means of establishing Sylvan's precise role in the affair.
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Manuscripts no longer extant

1. *De excommunicatione*, 1568.

Following the row in the theology faculty over the need for the presbyteral order of church discipline, Sylvan was summoned to court to advise the Elector on how best to proceed. For all that he was clearly regarded as one of the leading spokesmen for the reformed ministry, one who enjoyed strong associations with the French refugee church, he was also well aware of the difficulties to which such a system would give rise in practice. Probably his position was not far removed from that of Ursinus, who also drew up a memorandum that fell short of providing full support for the attitude of the Church Council. In the statement submitted at the end of August, Sylvan would appear to have questioned the theological justification for the Genevan order and suggested that the Elector should write to Zurich for further advice. Meanwhile a copy of this work was sent to Johann Wolf, as well as to a number of friends within the Palatine church. According to his deacon, he spent much of the following year trying to rouse support for his stance amongst politically influential circles in Ladenburg. It is notable that whilst Erastus' theses on excommunication were circulated around the university, the views of Sylvan formed the basis for the opposition group within the church.

2. *De divina gratia justificante, regenerante et obsignante disputatio*, 1569.

The only evidence for the existence of this work is taken from the letter to Wolf at the end of March 1569. By then it had become apparent that the real issue which divided the church was the doctrine of the eucharist, a point where members of the theology faculty stood full square behind the teaching of Calvin. Partly as a result of his conversations with Erastus, Sylvan had been able to clarify in his own mind the grounds for rejecting this middle position, which only served to confuse the fundamental problem of the theology of grace. This in turn obliged him to consider once again the question of anthropology earlier raised in the context of his commentary on Romans. It is significant that in the first of these two books, which he would appear to have finished and sent to Erastus at the end of June, Sylvan adopted the demonstrative method characteristic of scholastic theology.


Although no reference to this work can be found in any of the extant correspondence, its existence can be confirmed from the surviving minutes of the Church Council. According to critics such as Pierre Boquin, Sylvan's reaction to the controversy over discipline led him to defend a form of Pelagianism and there is no doubt that he had come to a more sympathetic understanding of Erasmus' earlier stance against Luther. Despite the comments of the assistant minister at Ladenburg, it should be remembered that the freedom of the will here in question was not the capacity to merit salvation through good works, but rather a cognitive function allowing the individual to respond to the presence of grace in such a way as to preserve a sense of moral responsibility. This understanding of grace as a challenge to the individual conscience, which was implicit in the Zwinglian doctrine of the eucharist, was now under threat from the increasingly determinist bias of
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reformed theology. It was probably thanks to his contacts with Simonius that Sylvan
discovered a solution to the problem in the discussion of the intellectual virtues contained
in the sixth book of Aristotle's *Ethics*. The manuscript was certainly shown to Erastus,
though it was only later when he had already decided on flight that Hasler was
commissioned to prepare a transcript for the press. It may be noted that this was possibly
one of the main sources for Vehe's strictures on the reformed teaching on predestination.

4. *Wahre christliche Bekänntniß des uhralten Glaubens von dem einigen wahren Gott und
von Messia Jesu des wahren Christus, wider den Dreypersönlichen Abgott und
Zweygenaturten Götzen des Widerchrists, aus Gottes Wort mit Fleiß zusammengetragen,*
1570.

Virtually all that is known about Sylvan's last major work is the title, which is recorded in
the contemporary correspondence, as well as in the history of the scandal drawn up by
Alting (1701). The seeds of doubt concerning the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity had
been sown long before he was asked to prepare a refutation of Biandrata's treatise *De
Regno Christi* in March 1570. It was under the influence of Simonius that he had come to
regard key elements of reformed teaching on the eucharist and predestination as both
philosophically untenable and containing residual features of idolatry. Having now
satisfied himself that there was no warrant in the Old Testament to justify the idea of the
eternal generation of the Christ, he began to look with a more critical eye at the whole
development of the dogmatic tradition. Given that Vehe remembered having seen a
manuscript described as the ‘antithesis of the Apostolic and Athanasian Creeds’, it may
be inferred that like the work of Servetus it was mainly concerned with providing a
refutation of established errors on the Trinity. Yet Sylvan's approach went beyond the
attempt to present a balance between the poles of traditional Christology and he clearly
saw the need to reexamine the very categories in which such dogma had been defined. It
was only against the background of the strict monotheism of the Jewish faith that the
original sense of the messianic identity of Jesus could be understood. Since the treatise
was prepared in the vernacular with the evident intention of publication once the author
had made good his escape, it seems reasonable to suppose that it also laid down the
groundwork of a new synthesis. Indeed, it is tempting to assume that many of the ideas
later expanded in the *Mattanjah* were at least implicit in this work consigned by the
authorities to the pyre.

5. *Bußlied*, 1571.

As early as October 1570 Sylvan let it be known that he was prepared to make a full and
public recantation of his views as the condition of his eventual release. It would seem that
such a statement was actually drawn up sometime between Easter the following year and
his meeting with Zanchi and Tremelli in the autumn. Although this apparently achieved
its purpose of convincing the theologians of his sincere adherence to the truth, there was
never any intention of allowing him to publish such a confession, which would only have
served to draw attention to the case. However, a copy of the retraction was sent for the
consideration of Herzog August of Saxony and his advisers. It is perhaps a little
surprising that no reference was made to this document at the time of his trial and
execution.
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Occasional Pieces


Beyer had been shocked to come across a copy of Sylvan's treatise attacking the evangelical party. Not only was Luther here criticized for promoting division within the church and encouraging the peasants' revolt, but Marbach was also held to censure for his conduct during the recent colloquy. It was clear that Sylvan must have prepared his work for publication the previous December, only a matter of weeks after he had approached Beyer with proposals for a general reconciliation, an offer which had duly been passed on to representatives of the Protestant side. This meeting had taken place on 6 September 1557 at Sylvan's hotel, the Golden Lion in Frankfurt. Only later did he hear from the Meissen delegation that the court chaplain had denounced him personally in a sermon held at Worms, openly describing him as a sophist in the presence of Peter Canisius. Sylvan was certainly not the only one who refused to acknowledge the truth for fear of losing his post, though it was doubtful whether such duplicity was compatible with the vocation of a preacher. It was for this reason that Beyer now felt obliged to make public a recent letter to Paul Skalich, where the complete hypocrisy of Sylvan's present stance was laid bare.

It was noted that the original of this letter, which was published together with a German translation undertaken by one of the students, was being retained by Beyer as proof of its authenticity.
Ein Sendbrieve

Johannis Sylvani, Hospes-
diger zu Würzburg, an Doctorem
Paulum Scalichium, mit einer
Vorrede Hartman Beyers/
Predigers zu Frankfu-
ft.

Gedruckt zu Vrzel / Nicolai
Denrich.

Title page: *Ein Sendbriefe* (1558)
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Register of Correspondence

1. Sylvan to Paul Skalich, Würzburg, [Friday], 17 February 1558. Published as Ein Sendbrieve (1558) B34-4, together with a German translation [B4-C2]. Reprinted in Schelhorn (1762) 582; Büttinghausen (1783) 22-3 and Horn (1913) 285-6. Sylvan wrote to his friend in Vienna to discover whether he would accept a calling to Würzburg, where the details of his prospective salary were outlined. It was rumored that Skalich had some sympathy for the new doctrine and was appalled by the ‘portentosis veteris ecclesiæ monstris et abusibus’. At any event it was hoped that his friend would trust him enough to let him know how he felt. Unless he was prepared to come then Sylvan himself was determined to leave, since he could no longer support the corruption and hypocrisy of his colleagues. In that case they might be able to find a common place of employment where they could profit from each other's learning. Then in a postscript he repeated his exhortation to accept the calling and come within a month. Even if he did not like Würzburg, there would doubtless be other possibilities for them to live together. The Bishop intended to set up a new seminary, whose direction was to be entrusted either to themselves or the Jesuits.

2. Sylvan to Conrad Hubert, Duttlenheim, [Friday], 8 February 1560. A.S.T. Strasbourg: 161/II, 641-2. Mention is made of their recent conversation on the state of religious affairs and a book that Hubert had given him to study. Sylvan bitterly attacked the modern Pharisees, who sought to justify their position without any regard to the teaching of Scripture. He requested any further information that might be of use in furthering his case.

3. Sylvan to Friedrich von Wirsberg, Bishop of Würzburg, Tübingen, [Sunday], 13 April 1560. H.S.A. Stuttgart: Religionssachen Bündel 26. Published in Horn (1913) 287-94. Here Sylvan mentions having written five tracts against Rome since his departure, one of which was designed as a reply to the rumors being spread against him by a certain Armruster, who was a member of the council. He had already sent a full apology for his conduct to the bishop and was now preparing three other pieces for the press. It was preferable to present a published confession, rather than trying to defend his views in person before a group of canons. If the bishop would only read the scriptures with an open mind, he too would come to recognize the papacy as Antichrist. Yet despite all the efforts of the papal party to thwart its progress, the Gospel was spreading quickly throughout Italy and France. It was a disgrace that there were still many canons who regarded it as demeaning to preach and teach. The average village preacher was better educated than the ‘Weihbishof der Glockentauffer zu Wirtzpurgk’. It was also noted that discipline had greatly improved in the evangelical lands. The decision to get married had been undertaken to ensure a properly chaste life and ‘damit auch den Papisten die hoffnung einer widerkerung abgeschnitten werde’. Sylvan was also anxious to correct reports to the effect that he had gone over to Zurich. His forthcoming confession would demonstrate that this was untrue. As a matter of fact he had never had any contact with Zwinglians. Finally it was hoped that his books and other property would be sent on through a third party.
Autograph letter to Conrad Hubert, 8 February 1560
4. Sylvan to Herzog Christoph of Württemberg, Tübingen, [Thursday], 29 May 1560.
H.S.A. Stuttgart: Religionssachen Bündel 26. Published in Horn (1913) 286-96.
This letter was sent to inform the Herzog of his recent dealings with the court at Würzburg. He had sent the enclosed letter on 13 April both as a reply to the rumors being spread against him and in the hope of receiving back his property. The messenger had returned two weeks later without a reply. Then on the morning of 12 May he had been summoned to a meeting with the diocesan chancellor in the back-room of the Three Crowns Inn. Here he was told that his affairs could be collected as soon as he chose to name an agent. Nor was it true that the Bishop accused him of Zwinglianism. They would be happy to pay a few hundred crowns to get him back within the church and would ensure that he did not require to make any public retraction. Moreover the abuses within the Church were now to be put right by means of a council, while the evangelical party was still not able to decide what they really did believe. Although he had agreed to have his affairs picked up within a few days, the other proposals had been rejected forthwith. Finally the visitor had taken to threats, warning that his new patron would not be able to protect him if he tried to write against either the Bishop or members of his court. Sylvan looked for advice before deciding how best to reply.

5. Sylvan to Herzog Christoph of Württemberg, [Tuesday], 29 July 1560.
Sylvan was still awaiting a reply to his request for permission to publish his apology in Tübingen, together with a short confession of faith.
[On 2 August it was decided that permission should be withheld until a copy of the accusations against Sylvan had been considered].

6. Caspar Olevian, Johann Sylvan and Francis Mosellanus to the French Refugee Church in Strasbourg, Heidelberg, [Monday], 19 March 1565.
B.P.U. Geneva: Ms. franc. 407, 6r/v. Published in Bibliotheca (1883) II/192-3.
The ministers wrote to warn the church about Casiodoro de Reina, who was due to leave that day for Strasbourg. Not only were his views on the Ascension and the eucharist highly suspect, but a series of grave accusations had been raised against him during his residence in England. Beza should also be informed.

7. Johann Willing to Sylvan, [Tuesday], 25 May 1568.
S.A. Amberg: Oberpfälzisches Religionswesen 67/92. Published in Rott (1911) 54-5.
The previous letter had been passed on by the student. Certainly it was necessary to deal firmly with the Anabaptists, though as a good pastor Sylvan would know to proceed with charity. Greetings were sent to his wife and family.

8. Sylvan to Johann Wolf, [Ladenburg, Wednesday], 1 September 1568.
Z.B. Zurich: Simlersammlung. Published in Horn (1913) 297-300.
The letter from Wolf had recently been received. It was expected that the bearer would be able to fill him in on the details of what was happening within the church. The ‘Dutch’ party had filled the Elector's head with a lot of nonsense about discipline. Still he had been persuaded not to take any action before consulting all the parties. Sylvan had accordingly been called to a meeting at court, where he had tried for a long time to
convince Friedrich not to do anything rash and was eventually asked to set down his point of view in writing. To establish a system of discipline would simply lead to discord and schism. He had presented the memorandum at court some two weeks ago. Erastus had also prepared a statement on the subject, which he intended to send for their consideration in Zurich. Sylvan had cause to believe that the Elector was going to write directly for their advice. It was for this reason that he enclosed a copy of his own statement, together with the covering letter sent to court. Meanwhile their opponents were lauding the authority of Geneva. This was simply because Olevian did not dare to condemn all the other churches lacking a system of discipline as deficient.

9. Johann Wolf to Sylvan, Zurich, [Friday], 29 October 1568.
Z.B. Zurich: F 41, 456. Published in Horn (1913) 300-302.
It was to be hoped that the affairs of Heidelberg would provide the occasion for a lasting friendship. The activities of the disciplinarian party had been reported by some of their students. Meanwhile he had read Sylvan's book, as well as the theses of Erastus. Only the Anabaptists called for the kind of discipline that was to be imposed in Heidelberg. In Zurich, where they were ruled by a Christian Magistrate, the sole power exercised by the ministry was that of preaching. Moral turpitude was properly punished by the civil authority. He was writing at greater length to Erastus, but wanted Sylvan to know that he approved his work.

10. Matthias Vehe to Sylvan, [Kaiserslautern, Saturday], 29 January 1569.
S.A. Amberg: Oberpfälzisches Religionswesen 67/142. Published in Rott (1911) 55-7.
See Vehe: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

11. Sylvan to Johann Wolf, Ladenburg, [Thursday], 31 March 1569.
S.A. Zurich: E II 345, 673. Published in Rott (1911) 57-61.
The delay in replying to Wolf's letter was simply because he had hoped to be able to enclose a further manuscript for their consideration. The comments on his earlier work were very welcome. Doubtless Erastus would keep them informed of the Elector's reaction to the advice from Zurich. The chief question concerned the authority accorded to the ministry, though it was hoped that they would also be able to discredit the superstitious attitude towards the eucharist. It was notable that their adversaries were now demanding that the translation of Calvin's *Institutes* currently being prepared should be given preference to the edition of the *Decades* already on sale. Bullinger's work was being attacked on account of his teaching on predestination, the descent into hell and the efficacy of the sacraments. The minister who reported this story also mentioned that he had been advised to refrain from buying the work and to read Beza's confession instead. Ursinus was now one of those in the forefront of this campaign. An anonymous book recently published at Basel was mentioned as characteristic of the works defaming the Zwinglian position.
It was in view of these attacks against them that he had composed a treatise in defense of the Zurich divines, which was designed to show up the weakness of the middle position. The first part set out to prove that the eucharist could not confer grace. This was followed by the section he was now sending, which contained an explanation of the true sense of the sacrament, together with a discussion of such concepts as signs and seals. Erastus was in favor of the project but felt that the question of justification might have received fuller
treatment. In the light of this comment he was considering a change of title in order to emphasize that the crucial issue was the theology of grace. He looked for Wolf's opinion before turning to use the same method against the papists. It was essentially that employed by Aquinas, the most authoritative exponent of scholastic theology. Aristotle could be used to defend the truth just as he had been to advance superstition. Bullinger's opinion would also be very welcome. In a footnote he added that he expected the copy to be returned as the original manuscript was incomplete.

12. Sylvan to Johann Wolf, Ladenburg, [Friday], 1 April 1569.
S.A. Zurich: E II 356/855-6. Published in Horn (1913) 302-3.
News had just arrived of Simonius' expulsion from the university. This was simply on account of his opposition to the Genevan party, whose ideas on discipline he had refuted in a series of private conferences. ‘Noster Diotrephes’ had accordingly denounced him to Beza. A fuss had been made over his views on creation ‘ex nihilo’, which he had discussed in the context of the Physics, as well as his treatment of the eternal generation of the Son. Yet on both issues Simonius had explained his position carefully. Still the Genevans regarded this as sufficient cause to accuse him of denying the Trinity. Despite the intercession of the Pfalzgraf Christoph, their opponents had secured his dismissal. This was exactly the same as had earlier happened to Brunner.

The marriage of the Elector would simply increase the circle of ‘Belgians’ working at court, a matter that could only have bad consequences for the church. Zuleger now claimed to have presented convincing arguments against the theses on excommunication during his recent visit to Zurich, but Bullinger's subsequent letter to Erastus gave the lie to such pretension. Sylvan felt that Zuleger had really been sent to inquire as to whether his own book on church discipline had been sent to Bullinger. He had in fact been summoned to explain his role in the affair at court, but had honestly replied that he had undertaken no correspondence with Bullinger on the matter. As a result of several recent conversations with Zanchi, it had become clear that the Italian lacked the necessary courage to explore the truth with an open mind. It was mentioned in a footnote that they were being forbidden to write to Zurich, since Beza was the only theologian whose views were considered orthodox.

13. Thomas Erastus to Sylvan, Heidelberg,, [Tuesday], 21 June 1569.
S.A. Amberg: Oberpfälzisches Religionswesen 67/134. Published in Rott (1911) 61.
Erastus was grateful to have received the book, which he hoped to be able to read within a couple of days. Meanwhile the letter had been passed on to ‘amico nostro’ and he would ensure that it received prompt attention. It was important not to get too personally involved in the struggle, since God would look after the fate of the Church. Hopefully nothing would come of the latest rumors about the introduction of a new system of discipline. Finally Erastus provided medical advice for Sylvan's wife.

14. Sylvan to Johann Wolf, Ladenburg, [Sunday], 10 July 1569.
Z.B. Zurich: F 40, 490. Published in Sudhoff (1857) 370-1 and Horn (1913) 304.
Sylvan could not allow the messenger to depart without sending a letter and a copy of his latest writing for their attention. The French church was busy setting up its own system of discipline in Heidelberg, something that was designed to place further pressure of the
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Elector. It was not yet clear what was going to happen, though he had lately been cautioned to preserve the peace. A full report would be given by the courier.

15. Johann Wolf to Sylvan, Zurich, [Saturday], 23 July 1569.  
Z.B. Zurich: F 41, 460. Published in Horn (1913) 304-6.  
Wolf had yet to receive the book promised at the end of March, something he put down to the fact that Sylvan had probably been too busy. The evidently malicious rumors of his intended flight were a matter of some concern. It was now clear that the imposition of discipline was merely a ploy of the devil. Hopefully it would not overthrow the consensus obtained in 1566. Sylvan was asked to keep these comments to himself and others such as Erastus.

16. Thomas Erastus to Sylvan, Heidelberg, [Thursday], 19 January 1570.  
S.A. Amberg: Oberpfälzisches Religionswesen 67/89. Published in Rott (1911) 61-2.  
In response to two letters about the medical problems of Sylvan's wife, Erastus outlined a dietary plan that should be followed. He was surprised not to have seen his friend at the recent festivities in Heidelberg. Meanwhile he had been informed of the latest arguments advanced by their adversaries and was now busy preparing a reply. The case against him was either stupid or malicious.

17. Sylvan to [Chancellor Christoph PROB], Ladenburg, [Saturday], 15 April 1570.  
Sylvan began by pointing out that he was quite indifferent to the attitude of the Church Council, though he would still be interested to have their response to his present complaint. While absent in Heidelberg on 9 April, he had left instructions for his deacon to take evening prayer and was angry to discover that this had been ignored. Obliged to return to town the previous Thursday to seek medical advice from Erastus, he had decided to stay the night expecting that the assistant would take charge of the sermon the following day. It was apparent that the neglect of these duties was simply designed to give the minister at Schriesheim a ready excuse to call for his dismissal. His opponents had already tried circulating malicious rumors about his intended flight the year before. As a matter of fact he would be delighted to get out and asked that Prob make as much effort on his behalf as he had done while still a member of the Church Council to secure his appointment. In any case Sylvan gave fair warning that he was no longer prepared to put up with such disobedience on the part of his assistant.

18. Sylvan to the Elector Friedrich, Heidelberg, [Friday], 30 June [1570].  
The decision to relieve Vehe of his duties showed how the Church Council was prepared to act against their enemies. At least those who were dismissed should be given some time to find an alternative calling. All this was simply on account of the row over discipline. Sylvan hoped that he would not be forced to leave the territory with his family during the winter. At the same time he asked that he should be given a good reference after ten years in the Palatine service.

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Summarized in Mieg (1701) 318-34; Struve (1721) 217-27; and Arnold (1741) 1125-33. This request for Biandrata's support in obtaining a place of asylum was given to the Transylvanian ambassador by Neuser and Sylvan during their visit to Speyer on 13 July. After the latter's arrest and interrogation by members of the Church Council, the Elector was persuaded to subpoena the document, which was duly passed on through the imperial court the following week. The suggestion made by Alting that Caspar Békés deliberately betrayed the ministers' confidence in order to strengthen the case for a military alliance with the Voivode is less than plausible. This letter provided the main evidence against Sylvan in the report drawn up by the theologians several months later.

Having volunteered to prepare a refutation of Biandrata's two books *De Regno Christi et Antichristi*, together with the tracts on baptism and circumcision, Sylvan had instead been won over by the argument. Recognizing that in all essentials he now agreed with the teaching of Servetus and Gentili, he had drawn up a separate confession on the doctrine of God, a summary account of which was subjoined to the letter. Here the process by which Christ had been ascribed with divine properties was compared with the hero worship common amongst the ancients.

It was hoped that the publication of this work would do much to win over those still convinced by the orthodox case. Not only had Jacob Suter been converted through reading Biandrata's work, but there were others learned in the sacred languages who were really on their side. Even so, they were obliged to act under considerable duress and it was for this reason that it had been decided to seek refuge elsewhere. Aware that there were a number of openings for ministers within the radical section of the church in Transylvania, Sylvan wrote asking for Biandrata's support in securing their appointment.

20. Sylvan to Thomas Erastus, Heidelberg, [October 1570].
U.A. Heidelberg A/10, 179. Published in Wundt (1789) 148-9 and Rott (1911)14-6.

He had been giving serious thought to the whole affair since his imprisonment and came to the conclusion that Cirler, Willing and Erastus had led them all to take a far too critical attitude towards the clergy. They had been motivated more by hatred of the Church Council than by a genuine love of true religion. Although Sylvan had initially believed all that Willing had told him, it was now clear that he too had been motivated through personal ambition. He had been determined to try and replace Olevian as the leading figure within the church and had tried to win the backing of Diller to this end. It was for this reason that he had sought to gain Neuser's position rather than accepting the post of superintendent in Neustadt.

There had been no good reason for declining the invitation of the Church Council several months before to come and discuss the whole Arian problem. Instead he had paid far too much attention to the advice of his friends, who had all now deserted him. He no longer even received help with his medical problems. In the interests of peace Erastus was encouraged to withdraw his work on excommunication and to cease from any further opposition to the church authorities.

21. Sylvan to the Church Council, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 18 October 1570.
Mentioned in Wundt (1789) 125-6.

Having reconsidered his position, he was now prepared to withdraw his controversial claims and submitted a form of retraction for their criticism.
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22. Sylvan to Peter Dathen, Heidelberg, Monday, [9 April 1571].
Z.B. Zurich: F 77, 526b (copy). Published in Rott (1911) 68-70.
Sylvan had had a chance to consider his retraction during the several weeks that had passed since Dathen's visit. Although he was prepared to make a published statement of his errors, he hoped that this would not be necessary. After all he had never defended the Arian teaching in public and it might also bring the church into disrepute. He felt that the questions of discipline and the sacrament were best forgotten, but was prepared to make a retraction here too if necessary. In this case, however, he asked that the Elector and the other churches should be consulted as well. He hoped soon to be freed to go back to his wife and family.

23. Girolamo Zanchi to Sylvan, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 26 September 1571.
Z.B. Zurich: Simlersammlung. Published in Zanchi (1609) II/329-32.
Now persuaded of the sincerity of his repentance, Zanchi was once again able to accept Sylvan as a brother. His sufferings in prison were simply designed to bring him back to a saving faith in the divinity of Christ. If he was truly a member of the elect this would be shown through the quality of perseverance. As promised both he and Tremelli had notified the Elector about his conversion and it was hoped that he could now await his release with patience.
Despite the fact that all trace of Sylvan's library and papers has disappeared, an attempt can be made to reconstruct its contents on the basis of the marginal annotations supplied to some of his works. Although, for the most part, it is only in the case of contemporary or otherwise little-known authors that it has been possible to identify the precise edition to which reference was thus made, this is not to say that the exercise ceases to be of value in providing a kind of barometer of intellectual change. At the same time, two other points should be borne in mind. Not only is it clear from the efforts made to recover his books after the flight from Würzburg that even as a young man he must have possessed a substantial collection, but he apparently had little difficulty undertaking work of a scholarly nature while exercised in the ministry at Calw and Kaiserslautern, neither of which was within easy reach of a good theological library. It would thus seem reasonable to conclude that he must either have had in his possession a copy of the works then cited or previously have devoted a considerable amount of time to acquiring an intimate knowledge of the text. It is in view of these considerations that the following list may be taken as a basic guide to Sylvan's reading during the ten-year period of his active ministry in the Palatine church.

I: Classic authors.

Since by the mid-century many of these authors were available in collected editions, the marginal notes contained in Sylvan's writings have generally not been sufficient to enable the precise identification of the work concerned. It is notable that there were surprisingly few references to the authors of classical antiquity, the names of Plato, Cicero and Livy appearing but once in the entire body of his published writing. Given the fact that most of this work was designed for a popular audience, this omission is perhaps not surprising, though it does serve to challenge the assumption that he was well trained in the humanist curriculum. At any event, it is clear that he was much more familiar with the corpus of Aristotle, which had doubtless supplied the basis of much of his own scholastic education. It was thanks to the peripatetic philosopher Simonius that he came to show a renewed interest in the relevance of natural philosophy to the study of theology, a point that may have had some impact on the growing radicalism of his final years. Most striking, however, was his apparent debt to the Hermetic tradition. On a number of occasions Sylvan referred to the Pimandras as indicative of the knowledge of God available outwith the confines of revealed religion.

II: Patristic authors.

The richness and variety of Sylvan's use of patristic authority makes this the most difficult section to reconstruct. While the convention of contemporary debate dictated that all possible proof texts should be listed in polemical works such as those directed against Marbach, in many cases these were taken out of context and can certainly not be used to suggest that the author was genuinely familiar with the work concerned. In a number of instances it would seem that Sylvan took over such material at second hand and he certainly made extensive use of compilations such as the Panarion of Epiphanius.
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Of course, it was a different matter in composing a treatise for popular instruction and it may be felt that the references supplied in the *Catechismus* (1567) give a more accurate indication of the scope of Sylvan's own reading. Yet here too a number of problems are apparent. The fact that he was familiar with the work of Augustine throughout his career is in no way surprising and is rather an indication of the ready availability of the Erasmus edition with its valuable indices. Since this was also true of the collected works of Ambrose and Jerome, it is perhaps more interesting to note that no similar use was made of Origen, an author to whom there is but one general reference in the *Bekenntnis* (1560). Here can certainly not to be found the roots of his subsequent dissent from the orthodox tradition.

One feature of Sylvan's debt to patristic authority was its strongly moral tone, much of which was derived from the experience of the early church in northern Africa. Even in his early works he was closely familiar with the tracts of Tertullian, which were then readily available in the Rhenanus edition published by Froben in Basel. This much is of some interest since he was later to make use of both the diatribe against Marcion on the abiding validity of the Old Testament and the equally strident attack on the Monarchian views of Praxeas, a point which underwrote some of the reservations that came to be expressed about the reformed doctrine of God. A concern for genuine repentance as the condition for spiritual rebirth was also apparent in his use of Cyprian of Carthage, as well as in a reference to the sermons of John Chrysostom. Not only does this confirm an important dimension of Sylvan's thought, but it is at least significant in trying to interpret his position in the controversy over discipline. It should be remembered that the Erastian party had little or nothing in common with the Libertine group in Calvin's Geneva.

There is little direct mention in any of Sylvan's surviving writing to the problem of the Trinity; although he was apparently aware of the major treatise on the subject by Hilary of Poitiers at the time he drew up the *Bekenntnis* (1560), like many others he would seem to have been content with the account of the doctrine as supplied by Augustine. The occasional references to the Arian controversy of the fourth century are either taken from this work or the well-known continuation of Eusebius' history of the church. Even in his later work there is no mention of the Cappadocian fathers, whose defense of orthodoxy was popular both with the humanist scholars and such leading exponents of the reformed faith as Beza and Zanchi. Although it would be wrong to draw conclusions from omission, this may at least be taken to indicate that he was never much interested in the kind of abstruse argument that underwrote certain parts of the Nicene Creed. His own views on the doctrine of God were more closely reflected in the writings of Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria.

Meanwhile, the eucharistic debate was the spawning ground for much patristic analysis and it is thus no surprise that the most revealing material is contained in the *Ablainung* (1566). In response to Marbach's suggestion that the reformed sought to revive the Nestorian heresy, it was essential for Sylvan to demonstrate the conformity of their teaching with the decisions of the Council of Ephesus. Numerous were the citations taken from the four-volume edition of the works of Cyril of Alexandria published by Herwagen of Basel in 1546, which is significantly the only source specifically identified in the text. In addition to his treatise on the incarnation and some of the early writings against the Arian party, several references were made to the commentary on the fourth gospel. Naturally Sylvan could not go along with any attempt to anathematize the school of Antioch and he always stressed that Cyril and his followers had exaggerated the need for
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an essential unity between the two natures of Christ. Meanwhile the reformed were happy
eight to embrace the understanding of θεότοκος accepted by Theodoret of Cyrrhus at
the time of Chalcedon and this was as far as speculation on the point should be allowed to
go.
The treatment of the later Monophysite heresy was radically different, since here the
Lutheran opponent was on the defensive. Not only did the fusion of the two distinct
natures in Christ threaten to overturn the reality of the Incarnation, but it also contained
the implicit danger of leading into a form of Sabellianism. The way to preserve a
consensus had been traced out both in the decisions of the councils and the work of Leo
the Great. The damage wrought by the inability of the Eutychian party to accept such
moderation was evident from the history of the church and such contemporary authorities
as Vigilius of Thapsus, whom Sylvan succeeded in confusing with the fourth century
bishop of Trent. Further evidence of an interest in the historical aspect of the debate was
provided by the reference to the recently published Compendium of the twelfth century
scholar and statesman Johannes Zonaras. It was such works as these rather than the
weighty tomes of dogmatic theology that were the norm of Sylvan's reading.
In many ways, of course, this was only to be expected in someone who was never
actually involved in teaching theology at university level. More pertinent to his own
purposes as a minister were commentaries on the Bible. Here Sylvan turned mainly to
Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine, the fathers of the western church, though he was also
well versed in the homilies of John Chrysostom, as well as the somewhat later Gospel
commentaries of Theophylact of Ochrida. While this may in part be explained on account
of the subject matter, it is at least notable that there was virtually no reference to any
exegetical work on the Old Testament. Aside from a number of commentaries on John,
the works most frequently cited were concerned with the interpretation of the Pauline
Epistles. Despite his eventual conviction that the teaching of the Messiah had been
corrupted in the Apostolic age, there is no evidence that Sylvan himself possessed the
knowledge necessary to redefine this tradition in the light of the Old Testament
experience.

III: Medieval authors.

At no point did Sylvan make any substantial use of works post-dating the final collapse
of the western empire. It is true that in the Bekenntnis (1560) reference was made
Bernard's sermons on the canticles, but this remains as the only example of a citation
taken from a medieval author. A certain knowledge of the canon law was evident on a
couple of occasions, though there was no indication whence this was derived. For all that
he was trained within the scholastic tradition and retained an enduring respect for
Aquinas, it is clear that he felt such work to have little relevance to the evangelical faith.

IV: Contemporary authors.

Broadly speaking the some twenty references to be found in Sylvan's writing to the work
of contemporary authors can be divided into two separate categories, namely confessional
literature and sacramental theology. In addition to the Confessio catholicae fidei, which
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was written for the church in Poland, reference was made to two other works by Stanislaus Hosius, the treatise *De expresso Dei verbo* (1559) and the *Confutatio prolegomenon Brenii* (1560). At the same time he was clearly familiar with the writings of a number of other apologists for the old order, most notably Eck, Cochlaeus and Nausea, as well as what was probably the Romans commentary of Domingo de Soto and the more recent work of the eirenicly disposed Johannes Ferus. It is known that his first introduction to the evangelical theology was through Melanchthon's *Loci*, before he then turned to a more intensive study of Luther's work on Romans and Galatians. It can come as little surprise that he later made use of Bullinger's *Hausbuch* and Calvin's *Institutio*, both of which were already standard compendia of reformed theology. What is perhaps more significant is that the latter's exegetical work was highly regarded and clearly provided the model for the paraphrastic method advocated for his own projected series of vernacular commentaries.

Yet the overwhelming bulk of his reading in contemporary theology would appear to have been concerned with the supper-strife. Here it is interesting to note that with the exception of the publications of his colleagues in Heidelberg, all of this material came from Zurich, starting with Joachim Vadian's *Aphorismorum libri sex de consideratione Eucharistiae* (1536) and going on to include Peter Martyr's *Defensio ... adversus Gardneri librum* (1562), as well as Ludwig Lavater's recent *Historia de origine et progressu controversiae sacramentarie* (1563). Although once again this is merely to confirm what is already known about his underlying convictions, this degree of conscious selectivity provides striking evidence of the extent to which divisions within the reformed tradition remained in force despite the apparent rapprochement brought about by the *Consensus Tigurinus*.

The only books actually cited by Sylvan that do not fall into one of these two categories are works of reference such as Guillaume Budé's *Lexicon Graeco-Latinum*. Obviously this can tell us nothing about his private reading at the time, concerning which there are only two works that can definitely be identified. It was noted in the minutes of the church council that a copy of Peter Columna's *Opus de arcanis catholicae veritatis* was being circulated within the group that had begun to meet at Ladenburg. Finally, mention must also be made of the two-part confession of the unitarian ministers in Transylvania *De regno Christi* and *De regno Antichristi*, which were published together with a series of other tracts on baptism and circumcision in Alba Julia in 1569. This work, for whose composition Giorgio Biandrata would seem to have been primarily responsible, was that which led to Sylvan's rejection of the orthodox teaching and thus helped to precipitate the Arian scandal.
ADAM NEUSER

A: LIFE AND WORK.

Despite the fact that Neuser was to prove the member of the dissident group best known to posterity, the details of his life remain veiled in almost total obscurity. All that is known of his background is that he was a native of Windsfeld near Gunzenhausen, a small market town situated between Augsburg and Nuremberg within the jurisdiction of the Margrave of Ansbach. Given that his brother was also to enter the ministry, it must be assumed that he was born within an evangelical family, probably during the early 1530s. Although he would appear not to have studied at university, this is not to say that he was lacking in formal education, which he must have obtained at one of the new humanist academies. The sweeping changes introduced in many parts of southern Germany as a result of the Interim settlement of 1548 may well have encouraged him to go elsewhere to complete his training and it is possible that he elected to follow the example of the reformer Wolfgang Musculus in moving to Bern. At any event it is clear that he gained a first-hand knowledge of the Swiss pattern of reformation at some stage during the 1550s. The fact that a number of the Bernese students were subsequently to be placed under Neuser's charge in Heidelberg may be taken as confirmation of his standing in the eyes of the clergy.

The first reference to his presence in the Palatinate concerns his candidature for the third chair of theology in succession to Paul Einhorn in 1560, a time when the Elector was seeking to place as many as possible of the recent émigrés to positions within the church. Understandably disappointed to have been passed over against the wishes of the Senate in favor of Caspar Olevian, there is yet no evidence to suggest that this led to any marked alienation from the establishment. Indeed, it seems that he found a more ready outlet for his talents as minister in charge of the town church of St. Peter in Heidelberg. The very fact that he was able to remain at this key post throughout the critical decade that saw the confirmation of the reformed settlement may be seen as some indication of his pastoral ability. For all that there was probably some truth in the accusation that he was too given to drink, this only appears to have become a problem in the wake of his conflict with the Calvinist party.

The nucleus of an opposition group had already taken form within the university following Erastus' withdrawal from the Church Council in response to the new church order of 1564, an order which envisaged the establishment of a form of discipline under the direction of a central committee. When the matter was again raised several years later in the context of George Withers' doctoral disputation, it was Neuser who undertook to refute the case for the presbyteral system. Although it would seem that both he and Sylvan had earlier collaborated in the production of the new bible translation, it was the resulting row over excommunication that really brought them together. Yet it was Neuser whose position was most exposed and the Church Council was able to secure his demission from office early the following year. For all that he was granted an alternative calling with responsibility for conducting morning prayer at the church of the Holy Ghost, it is difficult to see how he could have accepted a condition which placed him
under the effective direction of his long standing rival Olevian. Dogmatic problems aside, it is clear that he had little option but to consider leaving the Palatine service.

Even so, the decision to emigrate would appear to have been taken well before political events at home had confirmed the final ascendancy of the so-called Dutch party through a marital alliance with the house of Orange. As early as the summer of 1569 Neuser would seem to have used a period of home leave to journey on down the Danube as far as Preßburg (Bratislava) to inquire about job prospects amongst the German speaking communities in Transylvania. Thwarted as much by his lack of contacts as by his ignorance of the Hungarian language, he then returned to Heidelberg where further study only served to confirm his reservations concerning the patristic origins of the orthodox doctrine of God. It was this which lay behind the abortive project outlined in the draft letter to the Sultan of Turkey, the subsequent discovery of which was used to justify the accusation of treason against his accomplice Sylvan. It should be noted, however, that the letter eventually delivered to Caspar Békés, the Transylvanian ambassador at the diet of Speyer, gave no indication of apostasy to Islam and merely suggested that the dissident ministers were in broad sympathy with the position outlined in Biandrata's recent confession.

Tipped off about the detention of Sylvan and Vehe by his friend Simon Grynæus, Neuser was able to make good his escape from Heidelberg before the Church Council succeeded in obtaining a warrant for his own arrest. Retracing his route of the previous year, this time he made it as far as the frontier town of Komárom before being detained as he sought to get across the border to Buda. Handed over to the military commander, it would appear that negotiations were already afoot to secure his return to the Palatine jurisdiction when his release was obtained at the intercession of the rector of the evangelical school. Although he announced his intention of going on to Transylvania, after meeting up with a group of merchants from Debrecen it was decided to abandon this plan as too dangerous and he was left with little option but to return home. After consultation with a long-standing friend who was preacher in the town of Neuburg on the Danube, he agreed to give himself up and was placed in the custody of the Pfalzgraf Ludwig at Amberg. Here he made little secret of his radical ideas, even going as far as to circulate a series of theses supporting the Arian interpretation of the fourth gospel. Although in retrospect this might appear as a little foolhardy, it should be remembered that he was acting on the assumption that any incriminating evidence concerning his earlier work would already have been destroyed by his wife.

It was not until brought back to Heidelberg at the end of October that the potential gravity of the situation became clear. Confronted with the draft letter to the Sultan and subjected to interrogation under torture, Neuser then decided to make a full statement to the authorities, while in a further interview in the presence of the Elector it was pointed out that he had been led to his views by the exegetical principles of Calvin. According to a subsequent report by Gerlach, he had hoped thus to be reconciled with the other ministers and only balked at the idea of making a public retraction of his errors in the church of the Holy Ghost. In the event no such action was necessary, since he was able to escape from the Seltenlehr some six months later in May 1571. Quite how this was achieved without the connivance of the jailer is not very clear, though it has long been assumed that the
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Faut, Hartmann Hartmanni, who was known to have opposed the orthodox party over the imposition of a system of discipline, must himself have had a hand in the affair. This did in fact offer an easy solution to the problem, but it was one which little appealed either to the Elector or members of the Church Council. Neuser's escape was certainly one reason for the refusal to order the expected release of the other detainees.

It is almost impossible to retrace with any degree of exactitude the course of Neuser's Wanderleben during the following eighteen months, a problem in no way made easier by the contradictions contained in several of the reports. In the first instance, he decided to try his luck in the other direction and moved to London in the hope of finding employment amongst the rapidly growing refugee community. Frustrated by the lack of a testimonial, he returned to Paris where he was soon recognized and reported to the authorities. After a secretive trip back to see members of his family in the Palatinate, he went on to Cracow where he soon fell foul of the director of the reformed academy, Christoph Thretius. Poland was no longer the sure haven for religious refugees as had been the case some ten years before and he must have been genuinely concerned at the possibility of arrest and deportation. This notwithstanding, he was able to establish close contacts within the Minor (Antitrinitarian) Church in Smigiel, where his critical views on the authority of the New Testament found ready echo. Even after his eventual move to Istanbul this connection was maintained and it is possible that he could have obtained both patronage and employment had he chosen to move north into Lithuania.

Instead it was for Transylvania that Neuser started out in the middle of April 1572 in the company of the poet and historian Johann Sommer, who was soon to be appointed as lector in the Collegium Antitrinitarium at Cluj (Klausenburg), now a major center of unitarian activity. It was here in his capacity as preacher that Neuser's own theological work took form, both in the preparation of his short commentary on Romans 7 and in his active engagement in many of the debates dividing the radical movement at the time. The chief points of contention were his insistence that the authority of the New Testament was derivative from the Old and his equally forthright denial that the sinner could be justified through the alien righteousness of Christ, both of which were to be key features of the mature theology of Matthias Vehe. At the same time much attention has been placed on his developing friendship with Ferenc Dávid, though there is no evidence that this association had any direct bearing on the subsequent controversy over the non-adoration of Christ. It seems more likely that he used these months of study and reflection to help clarify his own views on the restructuring of the dogmatic tradition, the need for which had been emphasized in his earlier work on the Trinity.

It was with the intention of publishing a defense of his earlier career in Heidelberg against rumors of moral misconduct that he then ventured behind Turkish lines into the territory of the Pasha of Timisoara. Here he was arrested on a charge of spying and eventually sent on to the capital of the empire at Istanbul, where he must have arrived in the late summer of that year. According to Neuser's own account, he had himself circumcised in an effort to convince the authorities of his sincere adherence to the teaching of the Koran, though it is by no means clear that any such action was required. Here he was joined in the summer of the following year by Jacob Palæologus (→), who possibly helped with the work of tracing New Testament readings that confirmed
Neuser's radical interpretation of the Johannine prologue. Be that as it may, the very fact that he was allowed to continue with his research into the early traditions of the church would seem to belie any suggestion that he ever adopted either the beliefs or practices of Islam. While it is easy to see how the accusation of apostasy gained such wide credence, it is yet without justification. All that can be said in this respect is that his quest to rediscover the original message as proclaimed by Jesus left him open to a more positive evaluation of other forms of religious tradition.

Much of the evidence of moral laxity has a greater ring of truth. Although provided with a small pension from the court in return for his services as an occasional translator, the isolation from his family and friends, together with the loss of any degree of financial security, must certainly have had their effect on his character. There is nothing implausible in the surviving reports from Stephen Gerlach, either in the suggestion that he resorted to male prostitutes or dabbled in the occult as a consolation for lost fortune. It is perhaps more significant that at a personal level the preacher developed a certain respect for Neuser's sincerity and may have entertained hopes of his eventual conversion to the Lutheran faith. After he had demonstrated his willingness to act as a form of double-agent on behalf of the Freiherr David Ungrnad von Schöneck, the possibility of his return to the west was even considered. Whatever might have come of such a project, he was struck down by dysentery and died in the company of his drinking companions on 12 October 1576. There is no reason to doubt the report that his final words were to deny a belief in the after-life, since this was to be confirmed by a member of the Jewish community several years later. It is, however, misleading to read too much into the fact that he was cremated according to Turkish custom, which may simply be explained on the grounds of convenience and public hygiene.
B: LIST OF WORKS.

Printed works (See Neuser: D/1).


Manuscript works (See Neuser: D/3).

Statement on excommunication, 1568.

Two books on the Trinity, 1570.

Theses on Christology, 1570.

List of correspondents (See Neuser: D/5).

Letters to and from the Sultan of Turkey; Simon Ronemberg; Kaspar Baumann; and Piotr Witrousk.
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C: SOURCE MATERIAL

Primary Sources

Members of the Senate were in favor of Neuser's appointment to the third chair in theology, though this was eventually overruled by a mandate from the Elector naming Caspar Olevian to the vacant post.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Wednesday, 22 March 1570. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/7 (KRP 147). Published in Rott (1911) 23-4.
Since it was by no means clear that his suspension had been agreed with the court, Neuser announced his intention of continuing to preach three times a week until given formal notice to quit. Meanwhile, he was determined to find out who had accused him of drunkenness. Criticism of his sermons, where it was suggested that ‘er predige kalte erbsen und schläferig’, were clearly motivated by spite. Since his charge had simply been to hold morning service, it was decided that he must abstain from preaching until the views of the Elector were known.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 163). Published in Rott (1911) 24.
The meeting was informed of Neuser's supplication to the High Council.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 164). Published in Rott (1911) 24-5.
It is apparent that Neuser's supplication to the court had cost him any remaining sympathy on the part of his colleagues. In practice there would have been no problem had he stuck to the formula of doctrine agreed in 1564, which contained nothing to the effect that ‘disciplina distinctum munus von der obrigkeit sey’. Although his claims would have to be investigated, they amounted to little more than an attempt to arouse the populace against the other ministers. Only if he agreed to be bound by the established order for the church would it be possible for him to continue in office.

Adam NEUSER, draft letter to the Sultan Selim II, Heidelberg, March/April 1570. Published in Mieg (1701) 337-44; Struve (1721) 229-34; and Arnold (1740) 1133-6.
See Neuser: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Friday, 14 April 1570]. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 185). Published in Rott (1911) 25.
It was agreed that any further negotiations with Neuser should be conducted in the presence of a member of the High Council. In the meantime, the Elector was to be shown an example of his recent sermons, which were clearly designed to stir up feelings against themselves.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 214). Published in Rott (1911) 25-6.
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The other ministers in Heidelberg had now presented a formal complaint about Neuser's conduct. For all that the danger of provoking popular unrest had to be considered, it was clear that he could not be allowed to continue preaching against the catechism. Since he refused to appear before the Church Council, he should be summoned directly by the Elector.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [June 1570].
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 281). Published in Rott (1911) 29-30.
In view of his conflict with members of the Church Council, Neuser had written to the Elector requesting either demission or a transfer.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 309). Published in Rott (1911) 32.
Discussion concerning the replacement of Neuser.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 307). Published in Rott (1911) 30-1.
The authority of the Elector would be required to ensure that the replacement for Neuser at the church of the Holy Ghost was accepted by the congregation. The fact that he had missed morning prayer the day before provided a good opportunity to install the new minister.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [July 1570].
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 308). Published in Rott (1911) 31.
See Sylvan: Primary Sources (C/1).

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [after 15 July 1570].
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 316). Published in Rott (1911) 33-4.
It was reported that Neuser had fled in the company of Grynaeus the previous Saturday. Erastus and the Zurich students were part of the group that went to the gates to see them off.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Wednesday, 19 July 1570.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 311). Published in Rott (1911) 32-3.
See Sylvan: Primary Sources (C/1).

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Wednesday, 26 July 1570.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 317). Published in Rott (1911) 34-8.
From the statements already obtained, it would seem that Neuser was deeply implicated in the affair. According to Sylvan, they had consulted over questions of doctrine the previous Easter [26 March]. It was possible that Grynaeus had helped him secure incriminating manuscripts at the time of his flight.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 26 July 1570.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/25 (KRP 317). Published in Rott (1911) 39.
Neuser’s wife insisted that her husband had been misled by Sylvan.
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Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Johann Wolf, Heidelberg, [Sunday], 30 July 1570.
S.A. Zurich: E II 345a, 688r/v.
See Sylvan: Primary Sources (C/1).

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Monday, 31 July 1570.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 324). Published in Rott (1911) 39-40.
Sylvan now admitted his contacts with Neuser, whose brother in Oftersheim had provided further information of the meeting with the secretary to the Viennese delegation. While the problem of the Trinity had been raised in their discussions the following day, it had not been suggested that this was the reason for seeking to move. In any case he had simply gone home to Gunzenhausen and would probably be back within eight weeks.

Heinrich ALTING, letter to N. Alting, Leiselheim/Worms, July 1570.
Mentioned in Wundt (1789) 138-9.
See Sylvan: Primary Sources (C/1).

Heinrich BULLINGER, letter to Thobias Egli, Zurich, [Friday], 18 August 1570.
S.A. Zurich: E II 342a, 601. Published in Korrespondenz (1906) 208-9.
See Sylvan: Primary Sources (C/1).

Theodore BEZA, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Geneva, [Sunday], 27 August 1570.
Here it was mentioned that a manuscript by Neuser had earlier been sent for the consideration of the theologians in Zurich.

Johann HALLER, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Bern, [Thursday], 31 August 1570.
S.A. Zurich: E II 370a, 430.
See Hasler: Primary Sources (C/1).

Girolamo ZANCHI, letter to Ludwig Lavater, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 20 September 1570.
Published in Zanchi (1609) II/342-4.
The exposure of the Arian group revealed the providence of God. Fortunately the ring-leader, who was said to have written encouraging the Turk to invade, had now been captured.

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Heidelberg, [Thursday], 21 September 1570.
S.A. Zurich: E 11361, 61r-61av.
See Sylvan: Primary Sources (C/1).

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Heidelberg, [Sunday], 29 October 1570.
S.A. Zurich: E II 345a, 741.
Since the real culprit had been brought in from Amberg the day before, it was hoped that the matter would now soon be resolved.
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Peter DATHEN, letter to Theodore Beza, Heidelberg, [Sunday], 5 November 1570. F.B. Gotha: A 405/358. Published in Wotschke (1908) 334; and Correspondance (1983) 292-3. Neuser had been returned to Heidelberg some ten days before.

REPORT by the THEOLOGIANS, Heidelberg, November 1570. Published in Mieg (1701) 318-36; Struve (1721) 217-27; and Arnold (1741). In response to the request from the court for an opinion in the case, the theologians noted that the draft letter to the Sultan was in itself sufficient to convict Neuser. It was originally intended that he and Vehe undertake a trip to Transylvania to prepare the way for the defection of the other members of the group. Despite differences over their ultimate destination, it was clear that Neuser sought to find refuge under Turkish jurisdiction and even admitted during his interrogation that he had hoped to convert Sylvan to the teaching of Islam.

Heinrich BULLINGER, letter to Theodore Beza, Zurich, [Friday], 22 December 1570. B.P.U. Geneva: Ms. lat. 120, 149. Published in Correspondance (1983) 298-9. See Sylvan: Primary Sources (C/1).


Theodore BEZA, letter to Peter Dathen, Geneva, [Tuesday], 6 February 1571. Published in early copies of Beza (1573) 214-7; and Correspondance (1986) 33-6. See Sylvan: Primary Sources (C/1).

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Heidelberg, [Sunday], 27 May 1571. S.A. Zurich: E II 361, 19⅞. Neuser had managed to escape on the night of 14 May and had not yet been retaken. His views were more akin to Islam than the teaching of Arius.


The Elector FRIEDRICH, letter to the Town Council in Zurich, Heidelberg, [Tuesday], 24 July 1571. Z.B. Zurich: F 81, 455-6. Published in Horn (1913) 307-8. Doubtless they would already have heard how Neuser had escaped from prison with the connivance of his jailer several months previously. Given his close friendship with Johann Brunner, it seemed possible that he might have sought refuge within their jurisdiction. At any event, it was hoped that discrete inquiries might disclose his whereabouts and lead to his recapture.
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Johann Jacob GRYNÆUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Rötteln, [Sunday], 12 August 1571.
S.A. Zurich: E II 348, 479v.
Hopefully Neuser would be restored to a better mind following his escape.

Theodore BEZA, letter to Peter Dathen, Geneva, [Tuesday], 25 December 1571. Published in Beza (1573) 346-8; and Correspondance (1986) 266-8.
The fact that Neuser had now eluded justice merely confirmed the need for a resolute policy in dealing with those guilty of blasphemy.

DEPOSITION by Martin WANNER, [Heidelberg, Saturday], 23 February 1572.
Neuser's jailer denied having connived at his escape.

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Cluj, [Thursday, 22 May 1572]. Klausenburger Ratsprotokoll (1569-82), 62v. Published in Pirnát (1961) 120.
Rejecting a request for the dismissal of Neuser from the Voivode Stephen Báthory, the Council insisted that there was no reason to suppose the new minister would become a focus of dissent.

Martin PAXIUS, letter to Josias Simler, Heidelberg, [Thursday], 4 December 1572. Published in Miscellanea (1723) II/217-22.
No decision had yet been made concerning a plan to kidnap Neuser in Transylvania and bring him back to face justice.

Christoph GEWOLD, letter to Herzog Maximilian of Bavaria, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 24 December 1572.
S.B. Munich: Clm 1613, 323. Published in Dürrwaechter (1913) 191.
See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C/3).

See Neuser: Register of Correspondence (Dl5).

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Heidelberg, [Monday], 23 March [1573].
S.A. Zurich: E II 361, 55v. Both Gryneus and Mader had been excommunicated for no other reason than that they had given warning to Neuser following the arrest of Sylvan.

Johann PAPPUS, letter to Philipp Marbach, [Tübingen, Monday], 8 June 1573. Published in Historiae (1684) 459-60.
Confirmation of reports that Neuser had been circumcised in Istanbul.

Stephen GERLACH, letter to Jacob Heerbrand, Istanbul, (Sunday), 11 October 1573.
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In response to a request for information concerning the fate of the Heidelberg dissident, Gerlach had been in touch with the rector of the school at Komárom on the Danube, where Neuser had been staying some time before. Having been betrayed by a merchant as he tried to have himself smuggled in a large wine jar to Buda, he then took to wearing Hungarian dress in the hope of getting across the border. He was eventually caught and handed over to the military commander. Released as a result of the direct intervention of the rector, he had set off for Siebenbürgen. It was not until the previous year that he had turned up in Istanbul. Having been circumcised, he obtained a post as an ordinary Spahus in the service of the Sultan. His companions were mostly expatriates captured in war, though he also had recourse to male prostitutes. Having lost the money he had brought with him out of Germany and Transylvania, it was rumored that ‘eam per Magos recuperare frustra tentavit’. On 1 October he had asked his friend the barber to arrange a meeting with Gerlach, yet the time had not been convenient. It seemed that he was thinking of marrying one of the neighbors of the resident interpreter, but it was doubtful whether he could afford to support a wife.

Stephen GERLACH, letter to Jacob Andrea, Istanbul, [Sunday], 11 October 1573.
B.S.G. Paris: Epistolæ Haereticorum 1458\textsuperscript{143v-4v}. Published in Firpo (1977) 89-90.

Repeating much of the information contained in the letter written the same day to Jacob Heerbrand, it was emphasized that Neuser led a dissolute life and practiced sodomy.

DIARY of Stephen GERLACH, Istanbul, [Wednesday], 21 October 1573.
Published in Tage-Buch (1674) 34-1.

Notes visiting Neuser in the company of Peter von Eizing. The apostate recounted his version of the Heidelberg affair and mentioned his subsequent travels throughout Europe. He felt that he had been systematically persecuted by Beza.

REPORT by Stephen GERLACH, Istanbul, [Tuesday], 1 December 1573.
L.B. Darmstadt: Markus zum Lamb, Thesaurus picturarum, Ms. 1971, 124. Published in Rott (1911) 256-9.

Neuser had been retained as one of the Sultan's Spahi, though without being granted the use of a horse. Most of his time was spend at home thinking and writing. Gerlach had eventually agreed to visit him with a witness in the shop belonging to a German barber. Here he had given them a frank account of the whole story, mentioning how he had circumcised himself after his arrival in Istanbul. They had discussed the divinity of Christ for some two hours, at the end of which Neuser asked for a written statement of Gerlach's views. He would have been prepared to retract had the theologians in Heidelberg shown a little understanding. At Beza's instigation, however, they had insisted on public penance in the church of the Holy Ghost. Since his arrest in Komárom, he was fearful of going back to the west. In his present situation he enjoyed a pension of some 124 guilders per annum, which just about covered the cost of his lodgings with the family of the interpreter, who was a native of Passau.

ACTS concerning Johannes MATTHÆUS, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 23 December 1573.
S.A. Zurich: E II 381, 1364-7;and S.A. Basel:A 17, 31-4. Published in Rott (1911) 48-52.
Much of the evidence against Matthæus rested on his broad assent to a collection of theses on the humanity of Christ, the authorship of which has variously been ascribed to Neuser. It was also reported that in a private conversation he had criticized the latter for trying to push the debate too quickly by refusing to allow the use of the term ‘logos’.

Adam NEUSER, letter to Kaspar Baumann, Istanbul, [Wednesday], 7 April 1574.
See Neuser: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

DIARY of Pierre LESCALOPIER, Istanbul, [Tuesday], 1 June 1574.
B.E.M. Montpellier: Voyage fait de Venise à Constantinople, Ms. H 385, 41r-42r. Published in translation by L. Tardy and K. Benda, Pierre Lescalopier utazása Erdélybe (1574) (Budapest, 1982).
At a dinner with a number of other expatriates, Neuser was recognized by a member of the French delegation as one who had earlier been involved in the ministry to the refugee community in the Palatinate. During conversation he admitted having long been a convinced Calvinist, though he now recognized that the truth lay in the teachings of Mohammed. When asked for his opinion on the religious divisions in France, he replied that ‘la Papiste est moins mauvaise’. It was known that he committed adultery with the wife of his landlord.

Piotr WITROUSK, letter to Adam Neuser, Poland, [Friday], 2 July 1574.
Published in Struve (1721) 236-7; and Lessing (1774) 187-90.
See Neuser: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Stephen GERLACH, letter to Jacob Andreae, Istanbul, [Monday], 1 November 1574.
Gerlach was grateful for the warning about Neuser, though it now seemed that he was coming to regret his earlier stance. He had recently been of some service to his employer, the ambassador David Ungrad von Schöneck. It was noted that he no longer condemned the Christian faith and showed little further inclination to dispute about the doctrine of God. However, the letter from Piotr Witrousk, which was then quoted at some length, gave cause for concern. It seemed that the writings Neuser had left behind in Poland were having a corrupting effect.

DIARY of Stephen GERLACH, Istanbul, [Tuesday], 16 November 1574.
Published in Tage-Buch (1674) 66-8.
During a conversation Neuser mentioned the extreme melancholy to which Ursinus had often been subject. It was only at the direct behest of the Elector that he even agreed to take his doctorate or to preach at Court.

DIARY of Stephen GERLACH, Istanbul, [Tuesday], 7 December 1574.
Published in Tage-Buch (1674) 69.
Dined and spent the evening with Neuser.
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INTERROGATION of Antonio PIGAFETTA, Heidelberg, [Saturday], 8 January 1575.
See Sylvan: Primary Sources (C/1).

INTERROGATION of Thomas ERASTUS, Heidelberg, [Saturday), 26 February 1575.
See Sylvan: Primary Sources (C/1).

INTERROGATION of Simon GRYNÆUS and Theophilus MADER, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 2 March 1575.
U.A. Heidelberg: A 10/172. Published in Rott (1911) 1-4.
Grynæus admitted to having passed on a message to Neuser's wife asking that she destroy any incriminating papers and books. Despite having accompanied him at the start of his flight, he had never seen the works on the Gospel of John and the Trinity. Meanwhile Mader denied all knowledge of the affair. It was true that he had once been invited into Neuser's garden to watch the troops returning with Johann Casimir, but they had not spoken again until Vehe asked him to warn the pastor of their arrest.

REPORT on the PIGAFETTA affair, Heidelberg, [Saturday], 30 April 1575.
U.A. Heidelberg: A 10/177-81. Published in Rott (1911) 9-17.
Erastus' relations with Neuser were here discussed. It was not clear to whom the latter had referred when claiming that there were many in Heidelberg who sympathized with his understanding of the Koran. In any case it would appear that Erastus had been given a private reading of part of the Johannine commentary at his home.

Theodore BEZA, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Geneva, [Wednesday], 8 June 1575.
S.A. Zurich: E II 368, 167-73.
See Sylvan: Primary Sources (C/1).

DIARY of Stephen GERLACH, Istanbul, [Wednesday], 22 June 1575.
Published in Tage-Buch (1674) 98-9.
It was reported that Neuser had been given 100 florins by the Emperor:

DIARY of Stephen GERLACH, Istanbul, August 1575.
Published in Tage-Buch (1674) 103-4.
Neuser had expressed his hopes of being able to go back to Germany.

Rudolf GUALTER, letter to Graf Ludwig of Wittgenstein, Zurich, [Saturday], 22 October 1575.
S.A. Zurich: E II 345a, 722r/v.
Since there was no real evidence against Erastus, his adversaries were trying to establish a case on the basis of Neuser's revelations in Istanbul.

Extracts published in Chytræus (1580) 102.
Looking to have his work published in Timisoara, Neuser had been betrayed to the authorities shortly after his arrival from Cluj and sent against his will to Istanbul.
DIARY of Stephen GERLACH, Istanbul, April 1576.
Published in *Tage-Buch* (1674) 174-5.
Some of the diplomatic correspondence had been intercepted and then handed on to Neuser for translation, but he had dutifully given notice of the matter to David Ungnad von Schöneck.

DIARY of Stephen GERLACH, Istanbul, [Wednesday], 11 April 1576.
Published in *Tage-Buch* (1674) 176-7.
Neuser had written to David Ungnad von Schöneck about diplomatic affairs.

DIARY of Stephen GERLACH, Istanbul, [Saturday], 29 September 1576.
Published in *Tage-Buch* (1674) 249.
There was some concern at Neuser's corrupting influence amongst the German speaking community in Istanbul.

DIARY of Stephen GERLACH, Istanbul, [Friday], 12 October 1576.
Published in *Tage-Buch* (1674) 254.
Mention was made of Neuser's death and burial the following day ‘nach Turkischer Weise’.

DIARY of Stephen GERLACH, Istanbul, 1576.
Published in *Tage-Buch* (1674) 269.
Neuser had left 10 florins to cover the costs of his funeral.

DIARY of Stephen GERLACH, Istanbul, 1576.
Published in *Tage-Buch* (1674) 285.
Neuser had been completely intoxicated when he died. Some of his practical experiments were listed.

CHRONICLE of Abraham MUSCULUS, Bern, 1576.
B.B. Bern: Mss h.h. I. Published in Bährler (1921) 64.
Mention was made of Neuser's death of dysentery. It was noted that none of the Bernese students staying with Neuser in Heidelberg had been aware of his errors until the scandal broke out. When brought back to the Palatinate he was wearing Hungarian clothes. He later became some form of Islamic priest and took to counterfeiting money. It would appear that nothing came of his project to set up a press for the production of subversive literature.

DIARY of Stephen GERLACH, Istanbul, 1577.
Published in *Tage-Buch* (1674) 322.
The previous year David Ungnad von Schöneck had been convinced by Neuser's apparent sincerity.

Stephen GERLACH, letter to Jacob Heerbrand, Istanbul, [Friday], 1 February 1577.
A.S.T. Strasbourg: 180/22, 178*-80*.
After mentioning that Newer had died the previous October, his efforts to make a working automobile were discussed, as well as various attempts to counterfeit the coinage. He had latterly been occupied in drafting a reply to the Palatine theologians on the Trinity. Fortunately his efforts to find a publisher had failed. In the event he promised to pass on all his papers to Gerlach, who wanted to prevent them falling into the wrong hands. Yet when David Ungnad von Schöneck had refused to agree to the sum of 100 florins, it would seem that the offer was taken up by Ferenc Dávid. Even so, he had been able to get hold of a substantial number of documents, most of which were little intelligible. One of these papers was included with the letter in order that the Tübingen theologians might better understand the progress of heresy in Poland and Transylvania, where a similar book had just recently been published. Finally it was noted that Neuser had intended returning to Germany that very year.

REPORT by Matthias VEHE, Greetsiel, May 1590.
See Vehe: Occasional Pieces (D/4).

HISTORY by Markus zum LAMB, Heidelberg, 1590.
L.B. Darmstadt: Thesaurus picturarum, Ms. 1971, 104. Published in Rott (1911) 256-9.
Having been tipped off after the arrest of Sylvan, Neuser fled dressed as a Landesknecht. He had subsequently managed to escape from the Seltenlehr with the help of the Faut, who had been left in charge while the Elector was taking part in a disputation with the Anabaptists in Frankenthal.
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Secondary Sources


Georg EDER, *Das guldene Fluß Christliches Gemain* (Ingolstadt, 1579) 338.
See Sylvan: Secondary Sources (C/2)

David CHYTRÆUS, *Oratio de statu ecclesiarum hoc tempore in Græcia & Ungaria* (Wittenberg, 1580) 102.

Stephen GERLACH, *Antidanæus, sive responsio, qua Lamberti Danæi figmenta et calunnie, quas contra antisturium Osandi ... importenter evomuit, ... confutantur* (Tübingen, 1580) 38-9.
Records Neuser's life in Istanbul and mentions the marginal annotations to the letter from Poland, in which the apostate placed the blame for his problems on his earlier acceptance of the reformed teaching.

In the dedication Gerlach discussed the development of Neuser's views on the basis of their conversations in Istanbul. This served to demonstrate the systematic connection between Calvinism and the Arian heresy.

Wilhelm HOLDER, *Cuculus Calvinisticus* (Tübingen, 1585) 12.
See Sylvan: Secondary Sources (C/2).

Johann WIGAND, *De Sacramentariismo, dogmata & argumenta ex quatuor patriarchis sacramentariorum, Carlstadio, Zwinglio, Oecolampadio, Calvino potissimum, & quibusdam aliis* (Leipzig, 1585) 361b-362a.
Discussion of the affair based on the report supplied by Gerlach (1580).

Caspar ULENBERG, *Summaria descriptio privati colloquii inter sacerdotum catholicum et ministrum calvinianum* (Cologne, 1590) 51.

Neuser was proof of the relationship between Calvinism and Islam.

Stanislaw RESZKA, *De atheismis et phalarismis evanglicorum* (Naples, 1596) 425-6.
See Vehe: Secondary Sources (C/2).

William GIFFORD (Reginald), *Calvino-Turcismus, id est, Calvinistæ perfidieæ cum Mahumetana collatio, et dilucida utriusque sectæ confutatio* (Antwerp, 1597) 13-4.
Recent accounts of the scandal served to discredit the reformed tradition.
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Conrad SCHLÜSSELBURG, *Hæreticorum catalogus, omnium nostri sæculi Hæreticorum index perspicuus, aliquot libris comprehensus* (Frankfurt, 1597-9) I/3-4 and XI/16-17.

According to one of his sources, the jurist Johann Lubeck, who had himself studied in Heidelberg, it had been public knowledge that the Arian ministers refused to name Jesus in a sermon lest this should derogate from the respect due only to God. It was also suggested that Neuser converted to Judaism while living in Istanbul.

Johannes WOLFIUS, *Lectionum memorabilium et reconditarum centenarii XVI* (Lauingen, 1600) II/902-3.

Although he had early rejected any idea of a real presence in the eucharist, it was only in the light of the row over ubiquity that Neuser had been obliged to consider the problem of the Incarnation. Impressed by the confession received from Transylvania, he then started to look afresh at the evidence from Scripture. The very authority of revelation was then called in question by the subsequent debates in Siebenbürgen over the question of Christ's role in the process of justification.

Rudolph HOSPINIAN, *Historiae sacramentariae: de origine ac progressu controversiae sacramentariae de coena domine ... exorte* (Zurich, 1602) 347a.

The account supplied by Gerlach (1580) was dismissed as mere invention.

Lukas OSIANDER, *Epitomes historiæ ecclesiasticae centuriæ decimæ sextæ pars altera* (Tübingen, 1603), III/818.

After his defection Neuser joined the Sultan's imperial guard.


Report based on the comments recorded in Gerlach (1580).

Christoph PELARGUS, *Admonitio de Arianis recentibus eorumque blasphemis dogmatibus* (Leipzig, 1605) 3.

Cited in Gerhard (1655).

Heinrich LEUCHTER, *Antiqua Hessorum fides Christiana, das ist, historische Bericht vom alten and wahren christlichen Glaubens oder Religion des Hessen* (Darmstadt, 1607) 218 and 224.

References taken from Gerlach (1580) and Schlüsselburg (1599).


Michæl HEBERER, *Ægyptiaca Servitus: das ist, wahrhafte Beschreibung einer Dreyjährigen Dienstbarkeit, so zu ... Constantinople ihr Endschaft genommen* (Heidelberg; 1610) 348-51. Reprinted (Graz, 1967).

The author had been impressed by Neuser's preaching while a student in Heidelberg during the late 1560's. Himself brought to Istanbul as a slave some nineteen years later, he had been given an account of the apostate's activity by one of his former associates, who had earlier been persuaded to defect at the behest of two other refugees from...
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Heidelberg. Reports that Neuser's last words were to deny a belief in the after-life had also been confirmed by a member of the Jewish community.

Wolfgang FRANZ, *Augustanae Confessionis articuli priores decem ... breviter explicati* (Wittenberg, 1610) IX/62 and 149.
See Vehe: Secondary Sources (C/2).

Valentin SMALCIUS, *Refutatio thesium Wolfgangi Frantzii de præcipuis Christianæ Religionis capitibus* (Racow, 1614) IX/290.
See Vehe: Secondary Sources (C/2).

The authenticity of Gerlach's reports could be verified from copies in Tübingen. Neuser's five regular drinking companions were here named as Johann Gerber of Backnang; Alibeg Tragermann from Frankfurt; Marcus Beckner, who was a native of Siebenbürgen; Oswald the watchmaker; and a certain Georg from Hohenlöhe.

Florimond de RÆMOND, *Historia de ortu, progressu et ruina haereseon* (Cologne, 1614) II/279.
The case was cited as an example of the fruits of Zwinglian theology.

Friedrich BALDUIN, *Oratio panegyrica de synodo evangelicorum generali D. Pareo opposita* (Wittenberg, 1614).
Cited in Gerhard (1555).

Wenzel BUDOVEC, *Circulus horologii lunaris et solaris, hoc est, brevissima synopsis, historicæ, typica et mystica, variis figuris & emblemata illustrata, repraesentens ex vetero et novo testamento continuam seriem præcipuarum Ecclesiæ et Mundi mutationum* (Hanau, 1616) 184 and 234.
According to this former diplomat, who had arrived in Istanbul some three years after Neuser's death, which was supposedly occasioned by venereal disease, even the Mahommedans regarded him as the son of Satan. The teaching of the Heidelberg group led naturally to Socinianism.

Melchior ADAM, *Vitæ Germanorum Theologorum* (Heidelberg, 1620) 816.
The final addiction to alcohol proved Neuser's reprobate character.

Johann GISENIUS, *Pia & perspicua Catechismi Lutheri Defensio contra Jesuitas et Zwinglio-Calvinianos* (Strasbourg, 1620) 785.
Neuser's apostasy proved that Calvinism led to a form of Judeo-Arianism.

*Divi Irenæi ... adversus Valentini, & similium Gnosticorum Hæreses libri quinque*, ed. F. Feuardent O.F.M. (Cologne, 1625) 457.
Given that the reformed had always rejected the teaching of Irenæus on the redemptive value of the humanity of Christ, so it was hardly surprising that figures such as Neuser defected to the Turk.
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Samuel MARESIUS, *Biga fanaticorum eversa, sive dissertationes due, quarn prior continet vindicias pro SS. Trinitatis mysterio, adversus epistolam Andreea Duditii* (Groningen, 1647) 12. Cited in Hoornbeeck (1660).

Gisbert VOET, *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum pars prima* (Utrecht, 1648) 437. Neuser's conversion to Islam was mentioned in a disputation undertaken by one of the Hungarian students in February 1635.

Abraham CALOV, *Socinismus Profligatus, h.e. errorum Socinianorum luculenta confutatio* (Wittenberg, 1652) 32. Reprinted in *Scripta anti-sociniana in unum corpus redacta* (Ulm, 1684) II/12, a work which includes the same comments in the author's *Dissertationum de pseudo-theologiae Socinianae ortu, methodo et progressu I/41*. Neuser provided one of the best-known examples of an apostate to Islam.

Jan CLOPPENBURG, *Compendium Socinianismi Confutatum* (Franeker², 1652) 17-21. Neuser was one of those responsible for the row over non-adoration.

Johann GERHARD, *Disputationum theologicarum in Academia Jenensi partes tres* (Jena, 1655) 558-60 and 1123. Comments on the relation between Calvinism and the Arian heresy.


Wenzel BERGMANN, *Tremenda mortis hora, oder das böse Stundlein* (Wittenberg², 1664) I/13, 101. The desperation that lay behind Neuser's desire to be in a state of inebriation as he lay dying of dysentery stemmed from a bad conscience, a matter common amongst those of the reformed faith.

Georg HORNISIUS, *Historia Ecclesiastica cum annotationibus Danielis Hartnaccii Pomerani* (Leiden, 1666) 336-7. Reprinted in *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. J. Micraelius (Leipzig, 1699) 875-81. An account of the row over discipline was presented on the basis of Alting's unpublished lectures at Groningen. The eventual apostasy of Neuser, who had been the closest ally of Erastus, showed the opposition party in its true colors.

Johann LOMEIER, *De Bibliothecis liber singularis* (Zutphen, 1669) 293.
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The fact that Neuser had been able to consider publishing his work in Timisoara and Cluj was taken as evidence of the spread of printing.

Gottlieb SPITZEL, *Templum honoris reseratum* (Augsburg, 1673) 27.
Account based on the unpublished diary of Gerlach.


Conrad Tibertius RANGO, *Brevis de origine & progressu Syncretismi à mundo condito Historia* (Stettin, 1674) 861-80.
Following comments made by Matthæus, it was suggested that the errors of the Heidelberg group were the result of syncretism, which worked to exaggerate the natural tendency of reformed theology to collapse into a form of Arianism.

Neuser's apostasy had nothing to do with the stand against excommunication.

Christoph SANDIUS, *Nucleus historiae ecclesiasticae* (Amsterdam, 1676) 430.
See Vehe: Secondary Sources (C/2).

*Epistolarum Martini Ruari selectarum centuria* (Amsterdam, 1677) 47/225.
In a letter to Abraham Calov dated 3 April 1640, reproduced in Zeltner (1729) II/178, the unitarian scholar cast doubt on the story of Neuser's apostasy.

Martin KEMPIUS, *Bibliotheca Anglorum Theologica* (Hallervord, 1677) 383.
Neuser was cited as an example of a Socinian who defected to Islam.

Georg Matthias KÖNIG, *Bibliotheca vetus et nova ... ad annum 1678* (Altdorf, 1678) 572.
Mentions the publication of Neuser's commentary on Romans 7.

Alexander FELVINCZI, *Hæresiologia, id est, dissertatio de hæresibus* (Debrecen, 1683) 158-9 and 347.
Here Neuser's role in the discipline controversy was discussed in some depth. Mention was also made of his extradition to Istanbul, where he was circumcised before finding employment in the Sultan's army.

Johann Adam SCHERTZER, *Collegii antisociniani* (Leipzig, 1684) 12.
See Sylvan: Secondary Sources (C/2).

*Historiae ecclesiasticae supplementum ... ex epistolis ad Marbachios depromptis constans* ed. J. Fecht (Frankfurt, 1684) 459-60.

Christoph SANDIUS, *Bibliotheca Anti-trinitariorum* (Amsterdam, 1684) 61.
The account of Neuser's miraculous escape from prison as described in Stanislaus Budzyński's History ecclesiastica was here noted with some skepticism.


After a miraculous escape from prison, Neuser sought refuge in Cracow, before moving to Cluj in the spring of 1572 in the company of Johann Sommer.


See Sylvan: Secondary Sources (C/2).

Jacob BEYRLIN, *Antiquitates Palatinae*, in: *Monumenta pietatis ... selecta*, ed. C.L. Mieg (Frankfurt, 1701) 320 and 337-44. Reprinted in Struve (1721); and Arnold (1741).

See Sylvan: Secondary Sources (C/2).

Friedrich SPANHEIM the Younger, *Elenchum controversiarum cum Socinianis et Antitrinitariis*, in: *Opera Omnia* III (Leiden, 1703) 799-800.

See Sylvan: Secondary Sources (C/2).


The work of Alting was used to refute the claims of Sandius.


See Sylvan: Secondary Sources (C/2).

Caspar CALVOER, *De variis orbis religionibus opus historico-dogmaticus* (Leipzig, 1705) 449-50.

Comments based on Gerlach's *Tage-Buch* (1674).

Christian GERBER, *Fortsetzung der unerkannten Sünden der Welt* (Frankfort, 1705) 1/4, 81.

Cited in Goetze (1707).

Georg Heinrich GOETZE, *Meletemata Annebergensia, varies argumenti coniunctum nunc edita* (Lubeck, 1707) preface and 510. A review of this work was included in the *Acta Eruditorum* (Leipzig, 1707) 13.

It had earlier been noted in Gerber (1705) that Neuser's fate was commonly discussed from the pulpit. The apostate had been responsible for converting a native of Backnang, who subsequently joined him in exit. The case itself raised the problem of military service for the clergy.
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Mathurin VEYSSIÈRE de la CROZE, *Dissertations historiques sur divers sujets* (Rotterdam, 1707) I/102-33 and 177-8. An English translation was published as *Entertainments upon divers subjects of history* (London, 1711).
The Heidelberg affair showed up the close relation between Socinianism and Islam. However, in a letter received the previous year from Leibniz, cogent reasons were given for rejecting the view that Neuser's apostasy could be blamed on his debt to the reformed tradition.

Johann Friedrich MAYER, *Prælectiones academicæ Socinianismi recensentes historiam* (Gryphiswald, 1708) 8-10.
Alciati and Neuser were seen as the two chief examples of apostasy to Islam.

Johann Franz BUDDEUS, *Allgemeines historisches Lexikon* (Leipzig, 1709) Appendix. Cited in Miscellanea Tigurina (1723) and Klausing (1751).

Highly inaccurate account of Neuser's life based on Osiander (1603).

Brief account of Neuser's defection based on the original Latin version of Gerlach's Tage-Buch (1674), a copy of which had been obtained from a friend.

Michæl TREUGE, *Calvinisches Tod-Bette allen frommen hertzen zur Warnung* (? , 1711) 21-4.
The section entitled ‘Neuser saufft sich zu tode’ was based on information taken from Bergmann (1664) and Rango (1674), though the question was also raised as to how he had been able to obtain alcohol in an Islamic country.

Peter Adolf BOYSEN, *Dissertatio de apostate falso et merito suspectis* (Halle, 1714) 26.
The account by Lubieniecki (1685) was subjected to severe criticism.

See Sylvan: Secondary Sources (C/2).

In the course of reviewing the works by Schertzer (1684) and Alting (1701), the well-known bibliophile raised doubts about the reality of Neuser's apostasy.

*Miscellanea Tigurina ad profectum in eruditione et pietate utilia* (Zurich, 1723) II/217-22.

Most of the information about Neuser was taken from Sandius (1684), though reference was also made to the account supplied by Sponde (1641).

The apostasy of Neuser merely confirmed the dangers to which both Brenz and Andreæ had already drawn attention in their attack on the reformed tradition.

Comments based on information contained in Heberer (1610) and Alting (1701).

All the main sources were listed in the most detailed account yet produced of Neuser's relation to the Arian group. The author was highly skeptical on several points, noting that the escape from prison had been effected by the use of bed-clothes rather than divine intervention. It seems that Neuser stayed for a while in Smigiel before moving to Cracow, where he was the guest of one of the ministers. He and Sommer left for Cluj on 15 April 1572, where he was able to remain for a further three months. Doubt was also raised as to whether the commentary on Romans could really have been published in Ingolstadt, as suggested in Sandius (1684).

Henricus ab ALLWOERDEN, *Historia Michælis Serveti* (Helmstedt, 1728) 6.
The case of Servetus might be taken as evidence against Neuser's assertion that the antitrinitarian movement stemmed from the reformed tradition.

Casting doubt on the accuracy of the generally accepted version of Neuser's apostasy, it was noted that his real influence was to be seen in the emergence of the non-adorationist party in Transylvania.

Carl Ludwig de LAUNAY, *Der getreu and grundlich unterweisende Hofmeister* (Augsburg, 1738) I/225.


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Neuser was responsible for the spread of Arianism in Amberg through the circulation of his theses on Christology.


In one of his letters Samuel Crellius denied that Socinianism bore any direct relation to Islam. Neuser was the one really responsible for the idea that Christ should not be worshipped, a position which was then adopted by Ferenc Dávid.


Even before his demotion in the wake of the controversy over discipline, Neuser had come to reject the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. His mature views were described as a mixture of Islam and Photinianism.


Neuser's demise was recounted on the basis of Heberer (1610), Bergmann (1664) and Treuge (1711).


Neuser's attempt to seduce the other ministers was due to a sense of injured pride following his dismissal as minister of St. Peter's.


Carl BÜTTINGHAUSEN, *Beyträge zur pfälzische Geschichte* (Mannheim, 1773) II/165.

Notes the proposition to appoint Neuser to a chair in theology in 1561.


Much of the information was taken from Gerhard (1655).


See Neuser: Previous Studies (C/3).


Comments on the recent work of Lessing.
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Daniel Ludwig WUNDT, Grundriß der pfälzische Kirchengeschichte (Heidelberg, 1796) 55-7.

Biographie universelle ancienne et moderne (1822) XXXI/103-4.


Christian Theophil SCHUCH, Politischen- and Kirchen-Geschichte von Ladenburg (Heidelberg, 1843) 165-72. Here it was suggested that Neuser's alienation from the establishment began when he was overlooked for the chair of systematic theology rather than with his dismissal from St. Peter's.

Karl Friedrich VIERORDT, Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche in den Großherzogthum Baden (Karlsruhe, 1847) I/476.

Otto FOCK, Der Socinianismus nach seiner Stellung in der Gesamtentwicklung des christlichen Geistes (Kiel, 1847) 238-9.

Max GÖBEL, Geschichte des christlichen Lebens in der rheinisch-westphalischen evangelischen Kirche I (Koblenz, 1849) 366.

Karl WILD, Adam Neuser (Dresden, 1850). Reprinted as Adam Neuser oder Leben and Ende eines Lichtfreundes aus früheren Zeit (Schaffhausen, 1878). See Neuser: Previous Studies (C/3).

Robert WALLACE, Antitrinitarian Biography ... from the reformation to the close of the seventeenth century (London, 1850) II/85, 263-4, 272 and 281-5, as well as III/480. Despite his dependence on Gerlach (1574) and Zeltner (1729), the author rejected the story of Neuser's apostasy and concluded that the letter to the Sultan was probably a forgery. Mention was also made of the theses on Christology.

J.F. HAUTZ, Geschichte des Pädagogiums zu Heidelberg in den Jahren 1565-1577 (Heidelberg, 1855) 5, 24-5 and 37.
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Ludwig HÄUSSER, *Geschichte der rheinischen Pfalz* (Heidelberg², 1856) 45-50.


It was thanks to the court secretary that Neuser was able to circulate his theses on Christology while held in detention at Amberg.


*Briefe Friedrich des Frommen mit verwandten Schriftstücken*, ed. A. Kluckhohn (Brunswick, 1868-72) II/424².


See Neuser: Previous Studies (C/3).


See Sylvan: Secondary Sources (C/2).


See Sylvan: Secondary Sources (C/2).


Theodor WOTSCHKE *Der Briefwechsel der Schweizer mit den Polen*, in: *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* Sonderband 3 (1908) 334.

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See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C/3j).

The development of the non-adorationist group under the direction of Simon Budny owed much to the influence of Neuser and his contacts in Poland.


Henryk MERCZYNG, *Polscy deisci i wolnomysliciele za Jagiellonów* [Polish deists and free-thinkers under the Jagellon], in: *Przeglad Historyczny* 12 (1911) 257-84.

See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C/3).

Edouard BÄHLER, *Der bernische Antitrinitarier Johann Hasler*, in: *Neues Berner Taschenbuch* 27 (1921) 64.
See Hasler: Previous Studies (C/3).


E. Morse WILBUR, *A History of Unitarianism, Socinianism and its Antecedents* (Cambridge/Massachusetts, 1946) 258-64.


See Neuser: Previous Studies (C/3).


J.F.G. GOETERS, Arianismus, in: Pfälzisches Kirchenlexikon I (Göttingen, 1962) 107-9. Here it is suggested that Stanislaus Farnowski (→) may have been responsible for the development of Neuser's radical views.

Géza KATHONA, Megjegyzések Neuser Adám életrajzához és ideológiájához [Comments on the biography and ideology of Adam Neuser], in: Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények 67 (1963) 328-34.
See Neuser: Previous Studies (C/3).

Sándor DORNYEI, A XVI. századi simándi nyomda [The Simand presses in the sixteenth century], in: Magyar Könyvszemle (1964) 172-4.


Werner SEELING, Johannes Willing (1542-1574): ein Schicksal zwischen Lutherthum and Calvinismus (Zweibrücken, 1972) 95 and 108.


Robert DAN, Humanizmus, reformáció, antitrinitarizmus és a héber nyelv Magyarországen [Humanism, reformation, antitrinitarianism and the Hebrew language in Hungary] (Budapest, 1973) 127, 135 and 141.


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Previous studies


Confronted by the frequently inaccurate accounts of Neuser's life then in circulation, Lessing sought to provide a more balanced statement through the publication of new material and the critical evaluation of the accepted evidence. The most detailed account of his activity following the departure from Heidelberg was contained in a letter to Kaspar Baumann in Vienna, a copy of which could be found in the library at Wolfenbüttel. This provides little support for the view that Neuser was guilty of treason by conspiring to help the Turk. On the contrary, there were good grounds to suppose that certain parts of the letter published in Beyrlin (1701), that which had supplied the basis for the received interpretation, were the result of forgery. Neuser's original purpose in looking for permission to enter the territory of the Sultan, a project that had already been set aside before the scandal broke out, had been to search for material that would help to resolve his own doubts about some of the controversies of the early church. Only following the arrest and execution of Sylvan did a concern for his own safety oblige him to remain under Turkish protection. At no stage could he have been described as a genuine convert to Islam and even at the end it would appear that he had been looking forward to the prospect of someday returning to the west.

None of the evidence contained in the various reports drawn up by Gerlach directly contradicts this version of events. The real problem was that the polemic purpose of most previous interpreters had led to a conscious attempt to blacken both the man's character and outlook. Only when the accusations of treason and apostasy were laid aside did the real picture begin to emerge. While Lessing never sought to deny that Neuser came to reject the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, it in no way followed that he was responsible for persuading Dávid and his supporters to abandon the traditional assumption that worship should be offered to Christ. Nor did it make any sense to describe his views as Socinian. It would appear from the letter received from Poland, whose author Lessing was able to identify as Piotr Witrousk (?), that Neuser was well respected in the Minor Church both for his scholarship and integrity, a point which tended to confirm that his theology was by no means as radical as had often been supposed. In many respects there was a striking similarity with views espoused by the great Leibniz, who had been too easily seduced by the established legend of Neuser's moral depravity and turpitude.

This article by Lessing is one of the classic statements of the Enlightenment, high-minded, critical and above all contemptuous of the prejudice and deceit that was a feature of the orthodox period. Still a number of reservations must be expressed about his own analysis of the case. Granted that the reformed party did little justice to the dissident group in attempting to stage manage the whole affair, it must not be overlooked that it placed the Elector in a difficult political situation, one which threatened to undermine the whole structure of his church polity. Nor should it be supposed that Neuser was innocent in this respect. It is clear from a letter by Zanchi, only part of which is here presented, that it was he who was regarded as the principal culprit in the affair. Moreover, in his
eagerness to rehabilitate Neuser's reputation, Lessing is led on more than one occasion to
dismiss any evidence advanced for the prosecution. The quite plausible suggestion that he
came to reject any belief in the after-life is not even considered, apparently on the
grounds that it was based on the claims of 'a not very reliable witness'. Since the purpose
was to establish the balance of probability, it must be said that the impression conveyed
by Lessing's work is in certain respects as much a distortion of the truth as that which it
was designed to counteract.

D.L. WUNDT, *Versuch einer Geschichte des pfälzischen Arianismus in den Jahren
1568-72*, in: *Magazin für die Kirchengeschichte des Kurfürstenthums Pfälz* I (Heidelberg,
1789) 88-154.

This article, which represents the first attempt to present a sustained account of the group
as a whole, was undertaken to vindicate the reputation of the Elector Friedrich from the
criticism engendered by Lessing's recent study. There is no doubt that by placing the
events leading up to the scandal in a wider context, the author avoids the tendency to
moralize characteristic of most previous commentators. While acknowledging the value
of the material published in the *Beyträge*, a number of Lessing's inferences were
considered and rejected. There was, for instance, no reason to suppose that the letter to
the Sultan had been forged or that it did not represent a genuine statement of Neuser's
views. The evidence for the identification of Matthias Vehe with the dissident later active
under the name of Glirius was likewise dismissed as inconclusive. Such points aside, the
enduring value of Wundt's work lies in the fact that he had at his disposition a range of
archive material, including the full minutes of the church council and a number of
unpublished histories of the period, all of which have now been lost. For all that Lessing
may have proved to be the better critic, this study remains as an invaluable source for the
historian.

Georg VEESENMEYER, *Noch etwas von Adam Neuser*, in: *Theologische Studien and
Kritiken* 2 (1829) 553-9.

The author comments on a quarto page of Neuser's hand-writing bound up in a volume of
letters in his private possession. From the content this may be identified as the concluding
part of the draft letter to the Sultan, a point in some measure confirmed by a marginal
annotation in the hand of Gerlach. From this it would seem that Lessing was correct in
assuming that the draft letter was originally written in Latin and subsequently translated
for inclusion in the acts. It would also seem reasonable to infer that the piece must have
come into the possession of Gerlach following Neuser's death and hence found its way
back to the west. Unfortunately it has not been possible to trace what became of these
notes, which are not to be found amongst Veesenmeyer's papers in the Stadtarchiv at
Ulm. Given the importance of this document, it is surprising that it has never been the
subject of critical evaluation.

Most of the sheet was taken up with a collection of somewhat cryptic notes relating to the
Heidelberg affair, several of which were reproduced in the text. In general these provide
confirmation of a number of the points made in the letter to Kaspar Baumann, such as the fact that he thought of writing back to Heidelberg following his escape from prison. Perhaps of greater interest was the awareness that had he gone ahead with the publication of his apology in Transylvania his precarious situation might further have been threatened by the disclosure of the letter to the Sultan. This is at least a plausible explanation of his apparent reluctance to follow Dávid's advice by going into print. The point was also made that he had not finally resolved many of the problems concerning the Trinity before moving to Istanbul and had thus not been well placed to undertake a defense of the group.

As might be expected, the tone of these notes lends substance to the view that Neuser was the one mainly responsible for calling in question the eternal divinity of Christ. Having drawn up a list of objections to the orthodox doctrine, points on which it was hoped that the radical leaders in Poland and Transylvania could provide some illumination, the matter had been raised in conversation at his home with figures such as Erastus and Olevian. Here the opening verses of the Epistle to the Hebrews were cited as evidence against the coeternity of the Son. While the orthodoxy of the chief minister was hardly in doubt, it is notable that the professor of medicine was intrigued and sought a copy of his letter for further consideration. Most striking, however, is the fact that Neuser had apparently no difficulty in persuading Sylvan to accept the radical implications of his work. If anything, this may be taken to confirm that by the spring of 1570 both ministers had come independently to reject the received teaching of the church.


Following in the line of Wundt, the author sought to defend the action taken by the church authorities against the dissident group. The fact that the theologians called for the death penalty in accordance with the Mosaic law did not mean that the only grounds for their condemnation was heresy. It was evident from Neuser's letter to the Sultan, which Thelemann supposed to have been written after his flight from Heidelberg, that the ring-leader was guilty of trying to encourage an Ottoman invasion. While there was no evidence to support the claim that Beza had exercised any direct influence on proceedings, the recent publication of the reply from Herzog August of Saxony confirmed that even the political councilors favored taking a firm line, which was fully in accord with the judicial practice of the day.


Although cited a number of times in the secondary literature, it has not been possible to trace a copy of this work in any of the libraries consulted.

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In this seminal treatment of the ideological development of radical unitarianism, the author provided due recognition for the first time of the major contribution of two members of the Heidelberg group, Adam Neuser and Matthias Vehe. Although neither was able to remain in Klausenburg (Cluj) for long enough to merit the reputation of one such as Johann Sommer, it was yet here that their most important work was carried out. Not only was Pirnát able to prove that Neuser had been called to the ministry, but this work provides the only serious analysis of his one surviving treatise, the short commentary on Romans 7, where the possible influence of Jacob Palæologus (→) was noted. It is also suggested that these contacts may have been continued even after his eventual deportation to Istanbul, where he was able to collect material for the work of bible translation then being undertaken by Palæologus and Vehe. Unfortunately the reconstruction of the latter's activity was somewhat less thorough and the whole has now been superseded by the more recent research of Robert Dán and Bálint Keserű.

G. KATHONA, Megjegyzések Neuser Adám életrajzához és ideológiájához [Comments on the biography and ideology of Adam Neuser], in: Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények 67 (1963) 328-34.

Most of the information contained in this brief biographical sketch was taken from the works of Lessing (1774) and the hitherto unregarded portrait by Wild (1850). Only with reference to Neuser's periods of residence in Komárom and Cluj were certain corrections of detail supplied.
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D: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Published works


Neuser began by summarizing the previous part of the epistle. In chapters 3-5 Paul had shown the incapacity of man to fulfill the Law and the consequent need for the revelation of divine mercy in Christ. The following three chapters were designed to provide the faithful with instruction in the process of regeneration. To achieve this end the apostle sought to compare the example of the death and resurrection of Christ with the teaching of the Pharisees, which was outlined in chapter 7. It was this juxtaposition that made it possible to present a compelling account of the new life in the remainder of the Epistle.

If Romans 7 was understood as referring to those who were already reborn then there would be no distinction between ‘hominem carnalem et spiritualem’. Yet it was clear from the teaching of John, as well as the position outlined in the following chapter, that the carnal man could have no part in the spiritual life. Granted that Paul himself lived by the Spirit, so he could not here have been speaking of his own example after regeneration. Moreover, to interpret this passage as referring to the regenerate was to make a nonsense of the argument presented in the earlier part of the work. Paul's purpose was rather to demonstrate that those who followed the law ‘saltem mente seu intellectu’ remained subservient to the law and thus liable to sin. Such was indeed the case with the Pharisees, who looked to obtain a form of righteousness through works. The man who was truly regenerate would conquer the external nature.

All men possessed both an external or sensual nature and one which was internal, referring to the activity of the mind, intellect and will. ‘Nam nullo alio modo homo potest delectari, quam suo intellectu, voluntate & scientia, out aliquid odio prosequi interne, quam voluntate & intellectu’ [84v]. It was thus possible that the unregenerate might love the law according to their internal nature, but without the presence of grace they could never conquer the temptations of the flesh.

There were a number of other reasons why the passage could not be taken to refer to the life of the regenerate. To begin with this would remove any temporal distinction between Paul's life before and after the reception of grace. It was clear, however, that the Apostle was well aware of the importance of this dimension. Nor could an argument be advanced against this interpretation on stylistic grounds, since the device of presenting a general condition as if recounting one's personal experience had commonly been used by the writers of the Old Testament. A parallel case might be found in I Timothy 1, where the Apostle portrayed his past life of iniquity in the present tense.

Given that the subject of the analysis presented in Romans 7 appeared resigned to the law of sin, it was hardly very convincing to suggest that Paul was here describing an ongoing struggle within the life of the regenerate. It followed from such a theology that there was
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no actual distinction between the sins of the impious and the regenerate, a point that would deny the basis for moral improvement. Yet such a real change was possible and was the substance of the Apostle's demand to be delivered from the law of iniquity. This was the only interpretation of the passage which could be reconciled with the description of the new life in Christ provided in Galatians 5: 24 and I Corinthians 3: 5.
TRACTATUS TERTIVS.

SCOPUS SEPTIMI
Capitis ad Rom. Anno 1572.

LONGUM esset totius capitis interpretationem ponere, & probare ex antecedentibus, quis sit omnium verborum sensus: tantum summariam agam de scopo. Postquam apostolus praeceden-
tibus capitis, scilicet 3. 4. & 5. copiosè differuit de vberirima gratia sui temporis hominib. oblata, & postquam pro-
bautur reip. deserteo a lege propter transgressionei factam esse, & homines non propter legis observationem, sed propter solius Dei misericordiâ in Chris-
ti morte habere propitiati & benigne Deum: incipit denovo cap. 6. & 7. 8. institutae Christianos, quomodo in poste-
rum vitam gerere debeant, capite autem 6. describit à Christi exemplo, ab ipsius morte & resurrectione vitam veram & Christianam. Deinde 7. cap. hic vitæ Christianæ, exemplum vitæ Pharisiæ, quam
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1. Statement on excommunication, 1568.

In common with a number of the other theologians, Neuser received a request from the Chancellery to provide a short statement of his views on the problem of church discipline. Following his earlier intervention at the time of the disputation on excommunication, it was well known that he opposed the introduction of such a system in the Palatinate. No mention has ever been made of this report, though it may be assumed that it was sent to the Elector by the late autumn.


The preparation of a treatise on the Trinity was the principal theological work undertaken by Neuser between the time of his first trip to Bratislava (Preßburg) in the autumn of 1569 and his dismissal as minister of St. Peter's shortly before the following Easter. From his subsequent comments in the draft letter to the Sultan and the various remarks made at meetings of the Church Council, it would appear that this fell into two parts. The first of these was designed as a refutation of the Trinitarian dogma and took the form of a commentary on the Johannine Prologue. It was this section of the work which he read to Erastus and discussed with his other friends including Sylvan. The evidence for the existence of the second book on the corruption of the church through the imposition of such false doctrine is less clear. At any rate none of the other members of the group had seen the work or even knew of its existence. Since no such evidence was produced either during his own interrogation or the subsequent trial of Sylvan, the manuscript must have been taken or destroyed at the time of his flight from Heidelberg.

3. Theses on Christology, 1570.

It has always been assumed that Neuser was primarily responsible for the promotion of Arian sentiment in the Upper Palatinate. During his seven-week detention in Amberg in the late summer of 1570 he would seem to have drawn up a series of theses on Christology, which were then circulated around a number of sympathizers at the court. It must be said that when the scandal was discovered some three years later following the dismissal of Johannes Matthæus from his post as Superintendent, the authorship of the theses was attributed to a certain Styrius, one of the secretaries working at the court in Amberg. Be that as it may, there is little doubt that the ideas had originated with Neuser, who possibly sought to maintain a degree of anonymity in having the work transcribed by another. Again it was in the context of considering the Johannine Prologue that the identification of Christ with the eternal ‘logos’ was explicitly denied. Jesus could be described as the son of God only in terms of his humanity, a point from which it was suggested Matthaeus later derived the conclusion that he had fulfilled a role similar to that of an Old Testament prophet who did miracles.
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Register of correspondence


The German translation first appeared in J. Beyrlin's *Antiquitates Palatinae*, which was published in Mieg (1701) 337-44. This was reproduced in Struve (1721) 229-34 and Arnold (1740) 1133-6, while a part edition can be found in Mayer (1708) 9-10. A French translation appeared in Veyssière de la Croze (1701) 105-21. Although the original draft in Latin was probably destroyed at the time of Sylvan's execution, the conclusion is contained in the notes edited by Veesenmeyer (1829) 554. This confirms that the letter was written at the time of his discussions with the other members of the group around Easter, which that year fell on 26 March. Since Lessing the authenticity of the document has been in dispute. While a draft of the letter was certainly found amongst Neuser's papers when they were searched following the arrest of his colleagues, it appears as more than likely that the version included within the acts had been edited with a view to justifying a charge of treason.

Neuser introduced himself as one who had been converted to the truth through a reading of the Koran. He had already attempted to defect the year before, when he had been unable to get any further than Bratislava (Preßburg) on account of his ignorance of the language. Now more than ever convinced that Christ never saw himself as divine, he had prepared a work showing up the errors of Trinitarian theology. In a sequel study he had sought to demonstrate how this false interpretation of the doctrine of God had led to a general corruption of religious observance. Once this was set aside it became clear that Moses, Christ and Mohammed had all proclaimed the same message. Although he had been able to win over a number of the other ministers to this point of view, his eventual dismissal from the church of St. Peter showed that he could expect little immediate support within the Empire. It was for this reason that he wrote asking for asylum both for himself and his family under Turkish jurisdiction.


Neuser was concerned that the rumors of his apostasy to Islam would gain credence amongst members of the Minor Church in Poland. He hoped soon to be able to publish a defense of his conduct. In the meantime, it was emphasized that he continued to believe in the Gad ‘qui mundum condidit, qui Mosem cum sua lege, qui Christum cum Evangelio, qui prophetas et apostolos in hunc mundum misit’. The same God would eventually sit in judgment over the living and the dead. Greetings were sent to the other members of the congregation, especially his former host. The letter was dated on the eve of Easter and signed ‘Adamus Neuser nunc Mustafa begh’.

In response to the request for information about his defection, Neuser provided a detailed account of his movements over the last few years. After his escape from prison, he had hoped to find a job with the Dutch refugee community in London, but was refused as having no testimonial. Moving back to Paris he met and befriended Theophilus Dasypodius, who was at the time working as private tutor to the Count of Solms. Unfortunately he was recognized by Dr. Bictu, the Pfalzgraf Christoph's former preceptor in Geneva, who had then threatened to denounce him to the authorities. Even in Cracow opinion was turned against him after the intervention of Christoph Thretius. It was only when he got as far as Cluj that he found a welcome with Johann Sommer, who recommended him to the council for preferment.

Any hopes of finding a permanent refuge in Transylvania were undermined by a series of disputes with the other ministers over the relation between the Old and New Testaments, the doctrine of justification and the interpretation of John 1. His presence in Cluj (Klausenburg) was made more difficult by rumors to the effect that he had been dismissed from the Palatine service for reasons of adultery. Mindful of an earlier plan for his kidnap and extradition, he consulted with Ferenc Dávid on the best course of action and was advised to prepare a full and public defense of his earlier ministry. Unfortunately, as a foreigner, he was forbidden to publish his work in Transylvania and so it was decided to go to Simánd in the territory of the Pasha of Timisoara, where the local minister was reputed to have established a small press. He had gone no further than Lugoj when news of the minister's expulsion led to a change of plan and the two then traveled on together to the capital. Here the fact that he spoke Latin led to his being identified as a potential spy and he was accordingly placed under house arrest. Only when he disclosed his long-standing interest in the Koran was it decided to have him sent to Istanbul, where he was now living with the family of the chief interpreter.

In the meantime Neuser had been informed by friends in Heidelberg that the draft of his letter to the Sultan had been used to justify the execution of Sylvan. Even if it was too late to counteract this injustice, it was important that the record should be set straight. The initial project had been to undertake a research trip to Istanbul in the hope of resolving some of his doubts concerning the doctrine of God. It was for reasons of personal security that he had considered applying for refugee status. He had written to the Elector on two separate occasions from Poland to explain the matter, though was obliged to conclude that the letters had never been delivered. In any case he had added the phrase 'hoc potent omitti' to the original draft to indicate that the scheme had been abandoned as impracticable. His subsequent conduct also gave the lie to any accusation of treason as he returned to the Palatine jurisdiction in Amberg of his own free will.

Concerning the lesser charge that he had misused the Elector's seal, Neuser admitted that he had intended sending a copy to the Sultan as evidence of the fact that he was a person of some standing. It had been clear that he required some form of testimonial and was unlikely to receive this from official quarters. The seal, however, was not a forgery, but had been taken from an earlier request from the chancellery for his advice on the problem of church discipline.
As it turned out, he had greatly benefited from the opportunity to consult early codices of Scripture and some of the works of Arius. Still, he was anxious about his family and looked forward to receiving some definite news. Hopefully Baumann would be able to get his son out of prison, though it was much too dangerous for him to try and come any further for fear of being taken into slavery. Finally greetings were sent for Johann Crato who was acting as an intermediary.

4. Piotr Witrousk (?) to Neuser, Poland, 2 July 1574.

This letter provided the evidence for the report in Gerlach (1580) 38-9, where part of it was published. This was then reproduced in Wigand (1585) 361-2 and Wolfius (1600) 903, before being included in the revised version of the acts prepared by Struve (1721) 236-7. A fuller account is contained in Gerlach's letter to Andree, 1 November 1574 [See Neuser: Primary Sources (C/I)], on the basis of which a full reconstruction can be found in Lessing (1774) 187-90.

Neuser was asked to check whether Bibliander's translation of the Koran was a true version of the original: ‘Nam isto libro non valde delectamur & divinum esse asserimus’. If he decided to come to Poland, where they would provide him with a reasonable salary, he should try and bring any new material concerning the doctrine of God. It would be particularly useful to have a copy of Porphyry's work on the authority of scripture since this provided the grounds for much of the critique advanced by Cyril of Alexandria. In his letter Neuser had drawn attention to a number of inconsistencies in the biblical account and it was hoped that his presence would help to resolve some of their problems.

The reason for the importance ascribed to this letter was the claim by Gerlach that Neuser had written in the margin: ‘Nullus nostro tempore (mihi notus) factus est Arianus, qui non antea fuerit Calvinista ... Igitur qui timet sibi, ne incidat in Arianismum, caveat Calvinismum.’
Although in later life Vehe continued to describe himself as a native of Ballenberg, the village within the territory of the Archbishop of Mainz where he was born sometime during the mid 1540s, the family eventually moved north to settle in Königshofen, where his father worked as a miller. Situated within the Franconian circle, this small town had been an important center of activity during the Peasants' Revolt and now lay firmly under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Würzburg. No significance need be attached to the fact that this was not far from the area where Sylvan was active as a preacher in the period following the abortive colloquy at Worms, since Vehe would already have left to attend the Pædagogium in Heidelberg, the grammar school set up in the premises of the old Franciscan convent with a view to providing a preparatory training in the classics. Given that entry into the arts faculty followed naturally after graduation from the first class, it must be assumed that he had yet, to complete his course of study when the internat was forced to close due to lack of funding in 1558. It is not clear where Vehe spent the following three years before returning to Heidelberg to matriculate in the summer of 1561. All the same, it is notable that his early experience in the town must broadly have coincided with the reign of the Elector Ottheinrich (1556-1559), the time when the Palatinate finally adopted an evangelical form of church order.

In these circumstances the decision to study at Heidelberg may be taken as some indication of confessional bias on the part of his family. There is, however, no evidence that he intended to enter the ministry or was even well disposed to the increasingly reformed emphasis of government policy. He was certainly not one of the students admitted to the reorganized Sapienz College, which was intended to provide a center for the training of ordinands under the initial direction of Caspar Olevian. Rather it is notable that at the very time when the Palatinate made public the accord with the Swiss churches through the promulgation of the new catechism, Vehe decided to move to the recently established academy at Rostock, where for some two years he remained as a pupil of David Chytraeus. His studies in theology, which were still at the elementary level supplied to all students within the arts faculty, were doubtless in the Philippist tradition of his mentor for all that this position was becoming untenable in the years following Melanchthon's death. While he may have intended proceeding to a higher degree when he moved down to Tübingen in the autumn of 1565, it is clear that he now found it impossible to reconcile the doctrine of ubiquity as developed by Brenz with his own religious convictions. At any event, it would appear that he had little hesitation in accepting the invitation to work as deacon alongside Johann Sylvan in the church at Kaiserslautern, a calling that was presumably mediated through the latter's remaining contacts at the university.
Much of Vehe's theological education, both his knowledge of reformed exegesis and a more limited interest in the scholastic heritage, must date from the following four years spend as assistant minister. For all that there is little direct evidence of his work at the time, a lot can be inferred from the unusually close relationship with Sylvan, who was as much a friend and confident as a spiritual director. It was through this connection that the young man came into contact with figures such as Conrad Hubert, the aging amanuensis of Bucer, and the leading pastor of Zweibrücken, Cunmann Flinsbach. It should be noted that this reflected a broad consensus within the Palatine church according to which the changes introduced since the accession of the Elector Friedrich were little more than a continuation of the tradition established at Strasbourg during the early days of the reform. Even if Sylvan was eventually to abandon this position in favor of a Zwinglian doctrine of the eucharist, in terms of order and practice the situation in Kaiserslautern was typical of the region. Now provided with a secure career and the prospects of soon taking over a church in his own right, Vehe was at last in a position to get married. Here can be found no existential basis for a radical breech with the orthodox tradition.

As was the case with the other members of the group, it was the row over the imposition of the presbyteral system of church discipline that proved a major turning point in Vehe's life. It is clear from the surviving letter to Sylvan that he was one of the most active figures in organizing opposition to the plans of the Church Council and stood in direct contact with both Erastus and his friends in Zurich. Quite apart from the fact that he regarded the Genevan order as a betrayal of evangelical freedom, the degree of intrigue to which the dispute necessarily gave rise further undermined his confidence in the reformed cause. Conscious that any prospects for advance within the church had been thwarted by the appointment of the jurist Josquin Cybelius to succeed Sylvan as superintendent at Kaiserslautern, he had already decided to seek a transfer when the death of his young wife removed any further need for discretion. No longer concerned to maintain good relations, he agreed to help the Erastian party at court by bringing charges against the Church Council for having forged the electoral seal in a mandate forbidding the town council to provide him with a testimony of good conduct. In thus making an eventual show-down with the ecclesiastical authorities inevitable, such action only served to place new scrutiny on Vehe's contacts and to call in question the underlying orthodoxy of his views.

There is little doubt that Vehe's arrest following his visit to the diet of Speyer in July 1570 was an example of political opportunism on the part of the Church Council. Regardless of what evidence of conspiracy to defame the elector might be brought against Sylvan and Neuser, there were no grounds whatsoever for supposing that the recently dismissed minister at Kaiserslautern was a party to this plot. It was only the fortuitous discovery of Sylvan's letter to Biandrata that lend a degree of credibility to his action and allowed for his continued detention. While it is true that the project must have been fully discussed within the circle at Ladenburg, this hardly amounted to any proof that Vehe already shared the latter's reservations about the doctrine of God. Given the circumstantial nature of the evidence, it was necessary to place pressure on the young man to admit to error by making a formal retraction. Understandably reluctant thus to compromise his own reputation, not to mention the damage that would have been done to his former minister's prospects for obtaining a pardon, it was only after an abortive
attempt at escape had destroyed any chance of a sympathetic hearing from the Elector that Vehe was prepared to consider any compromise with the church authorities. Even so a further year was to elapse before he and his cell-mate Jacob Suter agreed to sign such a confession as the condition of their release from the castle of Dilsberg at the end of August 1572. The experience of these two years of imprisonment, together with the shock of Sylvan's eventual execution, was to form a lasting impression on his mind.

Now thoroughly disillusioned with the reformed tradition, the former minister paid a brief visit to the university of Wittenberg, where it is possible that he came into contact with a number of the Hungarian community, before returning to the family home at Königshofen to consider his future plans. If the reports received in Heidelberg contained a measure of truth, it would seem to have been under the influence of Suter that he first came into direct contact with representatives of the Jewish community. It is also more than likely that there was some correspondence with Adam Neuser, at whose instigation the two undertook the journey as far as Transylvania later that year. While the evidence at this point is far from clear, it was probably then that Vehe had himself circumcised in accordance with the precepts of the Mosaic Law before returning to the west early in 1574. There is no doubt that the contacts established with figures such as Johann Sommer and Jacob Palæologus, the leaders of radical opinion in Cluj (Klausenburg), were to help mold the pattern of his future career. At the same time, the influence of Neuser may be taken as responsible for focusing his attention on the problem of New Testament authority. Once it was recognized that much of the apostolic tradition had been developed in response to the apparent failure of Christ's mission, so the way was open for a more critical assessment of that work in its relation to contemporary Judaism. The one crucial difference with the unitarian group was the conviction that the true identity of the church was to be found within Jewish tradition rather than in the writings of the New Testament.

After splitting up with Suter following their return home, Vehe moved to Cologne, where he began an intensive program of study in the Hebrew language under the direction of the convert Johannes Isaac. Thanks to the support of Hieronymus von Sechten, a somewhat, broad-minded member of the reformed community in whose household he acted as private tutor, he was able to devote much of his time to acquiring a knowledge of rabbinical scholarship. It was at this time that he started to work on the commentaries of R. David Kimchi, as well as preparing the first Latin translation of R. Joseph Albo's book of fundaments under the pseudonym of Matthias Elias. Shortly after the death of his teacher in 1577, he moved back up the Rhine as far as Königswinter near Bonn, where he took up residence with R. Hajjim ben Jochanan long enough to gain a first-hand experience of life within the ghetto community. Details concerning the composition of the Mattanjah, a discursive but well thought out presentation of his theological position, are difficult to reconstruct, though it may be assumed that part of the work at least was written in these circumstances. The postscript was dated in September 1575 from the village of Dansenburg near Kaiserslautern, which area had already witnessed the expulsion of many of the reformed preachers in favor of the Lutheran teaching espoused by the new Elector Ludwig VI. Even so, it is unlikely that Vehe would have spent too much time in an area where he was still liable to arrest for having broken the terms of his
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earlier parole and he may well have returned to Cologne to see the book through the press later that month.

One reason for a certain dispatch was the offer of employment at the Collegium Unitariorum in Cluj (Klausenburg), where Palæologus had recently returned to take over the direction of the movement after the demise of Johann Sommer. Already known to this group, Vehe now adopted Glirius as a latinized version of his name and set to work providing basic instruction in the arts curriculum. His inaugural address was a reworked version of an attack on the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, a critique probably already found in Sylvan's treatise on free will. The real task, however, one that he hoped to develop in collaboration with Palæologus, lay in the preparation of a new bible translation, as well as a series of commentaries on the Old Testament. Yet it was his involvement in the now bitter conflict within the unitarian church between the followers of Biandrata and David that was to show both the scope and limitation of Vehe's influence. The presence of the ‘Jewish Doctor’ was first noted at the synod of Turda at the end of 1578, where his denial that prayer might legitimately be offered to Christ was criticized on the grounds of innovation and led to his forthright dismissal by the council in Cluj. Although it would appear that he had already left the territory before the arrest of Dávid the following March, it is striking that the list of charges brought against the former bishop were little more than a summary of the Mattanjah. Scattered evidence concerning the subsequent development of the Sabbatarian sect in Transylvania tends to confirm that many of its characteristic tenets were derived from this work of Vehe.

After a brief visit to Moravia, Vehe journeyed on to Poland, where he was to spend much of the final decade of his life. Denied any form of regular employment, his constant dependence on aristocratic patronage was to prove both a major irritant and the source of many problems for the historian. Even within the Minor Church his views can have found little echo, though there were a number of individuals such as Hieronimus Piekarski (→) and Daniel Bieliński (→) with whom he may well have established contact. It is known that as early as February 1581 he was staying as the guest of Simon Budny (→) at Lubeč in Lithuania. It was after the synod that took place in the town the following year that he returned to Little Poland with a view to publishing the series of radical tracts already collected through contacts in Cluj. Acting under the assumed name of Theodosius Schimberg, he was able to produce a couple of false imprints through the Rodecki press in Cracow. Although he eventually found protection and employment in the entourage of Mikolaj Firlej, a leading nobleman from the district of Lublin, this could not obviate the constant danger of deportation as an illegal immigrant. Following the death of this patron in September 1588, he and his young secretary Jakob Heuser went to stay briefly with Stanisław Gostomski, the recently appointed Palatine of Rawa. Yet it is probable that he had already decided to risk a return to Germany and to this end he may have adopted the name of Dietrich Dorsch as part of an attempt to assume a new identity.

Traveling down the Vistula through Thorn (Toruń), where Heuser would seem to have prepared the copy of the book of fundaments later used by Conrad Graser, they reached Danzig (Gdańsk) in the spring of 1589. Here Erasmus Johannis (→), his eventual successor in the Collegium Unitariorum at Cluj, had recently been active and it was possibly at his suggestion that Vehe decided to look to the Plantin press in Antwerp to
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provide an outlet for a critical bi-lingual edition of R. Joseph Albo's work. Although it is not known whether any negotiations with the publisher took place, it would appear that finding little support for his views in the Low Countries he carried on up the Rhine through Cologne and into the territory of Graf Johann of Nassau. As early as November 1589 he was sighted in Marburg, where most of his papers were impounded in a raid that led to the detention of his secretary some two months later. Returning to Ostfriesland after this narrow escape, Vehe was picked up almost immediately by the authorities in Emden. For all that it was apparent that he had sought to propagate heretical views, this was in itself no proper ground for imprisonment and it is quite possible that the Lutheran Graf Edzard even contrived at his escape from custody as a means of resolving a potentially troublesome problem. Unfortunately for Vehe, in seeking to make good his flight, he strayed into the neighboring territory of the Calvinist branch of the family, where Graf Johann had him placed in the less sanitary confines of the dungeons at Greetsiel. As there was little hope of bringing about a recantation, the lengthy negotiations to secure his extradition to Heidelberg were already well under way when his death at the end of December 1590 brought the case to an end. It is recorded that he was buried ‘in loco inhonesto’ the following day, when all his remaining papers were consigned to the flames.
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B: LIST OF WORKS

Printed works (See Vehe: D/1 and 2)

N. ELIAS [M. Vehe], Mattaniah, das ist ... die ware Christliche Religion aus der Bibel ... grundtlich tractirt [[Cologne, 1578]].

D. KIMCHI, Commentarium in Amos prophetam, translated into German with an introduction by M. Vehe (Cologne, 1581).

F. DAVID, Defensio in negotio de non invocando Jesu Christi, ed. [M. Vehe] ([Cracow], 1581).

J. SOMMER, Refutatio scripti Petri Caroli, ed. [M. Vehe] ([Cracow], 1582).


Manuscript works (See Vehe: D/3).

J. ALBO, Liber primus Ikarim seu fundamentorum, translated from the Hebrew by Matthias Elias [M. Vehe], Stadtbibliothek Hamburg Ms. Theol. 1013 [destroyed].

List of correspondents (See Vehe: D/5).

Letters to and from Johann Sylvan and [Lukács Trausner].
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C: SOURCE MATERIAL

Primary Sources

UNIVERSITY MATRICULATION, Heidelberg, [Friday], 29 August 1561. Published in Die Matrikel (1886) 26.

UNIVERSITY MATRICULATION, Rostock, [Monday], 7 June 1563. Published in Die Matrikel (1890) 149a.

UNIVERSITY MATRICULATION, Tübingen, [Saturday], 27 October 1565. Published in Die Matrikel (1906) 460.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Friday, 28 [February] 1567. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/33 (KRP 53). Published in Rott (1911) 22.
Seeking to remain in the company of Sylvan, Vehe had written to the Elector asking to be transferred from his post in Kaiserslautern.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 26 March 1567. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/81 (KRP 53). Published in Rott (1911) 23.
It was decided that Vehe should remain at Kaiserslautern for the time being with an annual salary of 100 guilders, together with 2 fuders of wine [c.2,000 litres], 20 malters of corn [c.2,500 litres] and 10 malters of oats [c.1,250 litres].

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Kaiserslautern, [Wednesday], 13 October 1568. Published in Küchler (1905) 26; and Seeling (1965) 141-2.
The request for a testimonial was considered in the light of Vehe's recent summons to appear before the Church Council in Heidelberg. He had asked to be relieved of his duties fearing that he might be dismissed for opposing the introduction of the system of discipline.

Matthias VEHE, letter to Johann Sylvan, Kaiserslautern, [Saturday], 29 January 1569. S.A. Amberg: Oberpfälzisches Religionswesen 67/142. Published in Rott (1911) 55-7; and Dán (1982) 233-4.
See Vehe: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 239). Published in Rott (1911) 27.
Vehe was informed that the reason for the summons was the disturbing reports that had been received from official sources concerning his response to recent doctrinal statements. As there was no immediate prospect of his obtaining a teaching post, he would only have himself to blame if dismissed from the service.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 273). Published in Rott (1911) 27.
Since it was evident from Vehe's reply that he had no intention of accepting their conditions, the Elector should be asked to approve his dismissal.
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MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 5551116 (KRP 277). Published in Rott (1911) 28.
Discussion concerning the appointment of a successor to Vehe, who had been dismissed from his post in Kaiserslautern for preaching false doctrine.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Wednesday, 26 July 1570.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 317). Published in Rott (1911) 34. See Sylvan: Primary Sources (C/1).

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Friday, 4 August 1570.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 329). Published in Rott (1911) 40.
Interrogation of Ottheinrich Wonecker concerning his friendship with Vehe.

REPORT by the THEOLOGIANS, Heidelberg, [November 1570.
Published in Mieg (1701) 335-6; Struve (1721) 227; and Arnold (1741) 1127-33.
The evidence against Vehe was mainly taken from a statement by Sylvan, in which he admitted inviting his former assistant to Ladenburg in order to show him a copy of Biandrata's work on the Trinity. The young man's complicity in the affair was further revealed in the fact that he had tried to warn Neuser following their arrest.

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Kaiserslautern, [Monday, 22 January 1571.
Published in Seeling (1965) 143.
In response to an inquiry from the court, it was noted that Vehe's doctrine had never given cause for concern, though there had been a problem as a result of his conflict with the new superintendent Josquin Cybelius.

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Heidelberg, [Sunday], 27 May 1571.
S.A. Zurich: E II 361, 19.
Despite the fact that his views on the Trinity were quite orthodox, Vehe was still being detained in prison.

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Heidelberg, [Sunday], 5 August 1571.
S.A. Zurich: E II 361, 78.
See Sylvan: Primary Sources (C/1).

DEPOSITION by Matthias VEHE, [Dilsberg, Tuesday], 26 August 1572.
See Vehe: Occasional Pieces (D/4).

DEPOSITION by Jacob SUTER, [Dilsberg, Tuesday], 26 August 1572.
See Suter: Occasional Pieces (D/4).

UNIVERSITY MATRICULATION, Wittenberg, [Wednesday], 18 March 1573.
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Published in Album (1894) 226.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 19 August 1573.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/41. Published in Rott (1911) 43-4.
According to the minister of Schweigern, Vehe had been living at the family mill in Königshofen, where he had apparently corrupted his brother. It was already clear that he and Suter should never have been released.

Thomas HILARIUS, letter to Hieronymus Schaller, Kosice, [Thursday], 18 February 1574.
Published in Riederer (1764) 1/112.
In a lengthy report on the state of the church in Hungary, the pastor noted the presence of 'profuges duos ex Heidelbergensi academia, qui se Colossensibus coniunxerunt'. They were at one with Biandrata and Dávid in favoring the Islamic doctrine of God.

MINUTES of the UNDERGROUND PRESBYTERY, Cologne, [Sunday], 1 April 1576.
Published in Konsistorialbeschlüsse (1905) 113.
It was reported that Vehe was employed as tutor to the children of Hieronymus von Sechten, while at the same time slandering the theologians of Heidelberg. The matter was referred to the next meeting of the Synod at Bedbur.

MINUTES of the UNDERGROUND PRESBYTERY, Cologne, [Sunday], 13 May 1576.
Published in Konsistorialbeschlüsse (1905) 115.
Vehe's employer should be warned about his heterodox views.

EPISTLE to the READER, Dansenburg, September 1578.
Published in Mattaniah 108b-9a; and Dán (1982) 398.
See Vehe: Published Work (D/1).

[Lukács TRAUSNER, epistle to Matthias Vehe, Basel], 1579.
Published in Defensio Davidis (1580).
See Vehe: Editions and Translations (D/2).

Simon BUDNY, letter to Simon Ronemberg, Lubecz, (Tuesday), 21 February 1581.
Published in Budny (1583) 220-2.
In discussing his relations with Matthias Glirius, who was actually staying with him at the time, it was noted that he was otherwise known as 'Wegius'.

EPISTLE to the READER, [Cracow, Saturday], 1 December 1582.
Published in Refutatio Carolii (1582) [*-2- @ 4] and Dán (1982) 247-53.
See Vehe: Editions and Translations (D/2).

EPISTLE to the READER, [Cracow], 1583.
Published in Tractatus aliquot (1583) [2*-3*] and Dán (1982) 255.
See Vehe: Editions and Translations (D/2).
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Johann JUNGNITZ, letter to Crato von Crafftheim, [Heidelberg, Thursday], 30 January 1584.
Published in Gillet (1861) 363-4.
Vehe was here identified in cryptic form as ‘bella vulpecula’, a play on the fact that his name could be referred to a small mammal. Many of his views were derived from earlier contacts amongst the Jewish community in Cologne. In the meantime he had been trying to convert others to the Samosatenian position, even going as far as to suggest that Christ had been a trouble-maker and Samaritan.

Daniel TOSSANUS, letter to Girolamo Zanchi, Heidelberg, [Saturday], 20 March 1585.
Published in Zanchi (1609) II/378-9.
Beza had sent a copy of the Refutatio, which had been published pseudonymously by a certain Theodosius, with the request that it be passed on for the attention of Zanchi.

ANONYMOUS, letter to Graf Johann of Nassau, Holland, 1587.
Warning was given concerning Vehe, who had recently been active in Belgium.

György KORNIS, letter to his father Farkas, Warsaw, Summer 1587.
Published in Vass (1912) 209-11.
Vehe, who had earlier taught in the Collegium Unitariorum at Cluj (Klausenburg), now sent greetings to András Eóssi and András Erdődi, the radical leaders in Transylvania.

Graf JOHANN of NASSAU, letters to the Landgrafen Ludwig and Wilhelm of Hesse, [Dillenburg, Tuesday], 2 December 1589.
S.A. Wiesbaden: 171/V 293, 4-5.
Vehe had been seen a fortnight earlier in Marburg and should be arrested.

Graf JOHANN of NASSAU, letter to Johannes Piscator, Dillenburg, [Friday], 9 January 1590.
S.A. Wiesbaden: 171/V 293, 6. Published in Pagenstecher (1911) 112.
Sent a copy of a letter from Bernhard Textor explaining the decision to burn one of Vehe's manuscripts. Given that simply destroying the work might prove counter-productive, it was hoped that they would be able to trace another copy.

Graf JOHANN of NASSAU, letter to Bernhard Textor, Dillenburg, [Friday], 9 January 1590.
S.A. Wiesbaden: 171/V 293, 7-8.
Published in Pagenstecher (1911) 112-3.
The decision to burn the book was regretted, since it would have been better to have considered preparing a refutation. He should now try and find another copy and sent it to Piscator.

Johannes PISCATOR, letter to Graf Johann of Nassau, Herborn, [Saturday], 10 January 1590.
S.A. Wiesbaden: 171/V 293, 9-12. Published in Pagenstecher (1911) 113-5.
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Textor had certainly acted from good motives in burning Vehe's book. It was by no means necessary to undertake a refutation of such error, provided the true doctrine was maintained intact.

Bernhard TEXTOR, letter to Graf Johann of Nassau, Driedorf, [Thursday], 15 January 1590.
S.A. Wiesbaden: 171/V 293, 13-6. Published in Pagenstecher (1911) 115-6.
It had been felt better to burn Vehe's work rather than risk letting the matter grow out of all proportion. Since this had been a manuscript, it looked impossible to find another example for the purposes of refutation.

Andreas CHRISTIANI, letter to the Graf Johann of Nassau, Marburg, [Tuesday], 20 January 1590.
S.A. Wiesbaden: 171/V 293, 22.
Inquiries in Marburg had led to the detention of Jakob Heuser, a student who had accompanied Vehe on his travels in Poland. Although he now denied having been influenced by the latter, from the books found in his possession it was clear that they had intended the dissemination of heterodox views.

Landgraf LUDWIG of HESSE, letter to Graf Edzard of Ostfriesland, Marburg, [Wednesday], 4 February 1590.
Having recently avoided arrest in Marburg, it was possible that Vehe would now seek to make good his escape through Ostfriesland.

Graf EDZARD of OSTFRIESLAND, letter to Landgraf Ludwig of Hesse, Emden, [Saturday], 21 February 1590.
S.A. Wiesbaden: 171/V 293, 30.
Vehe had been arrested on arrival in Emden some five weeks earlier. He had confirmed the testimony of Heuser, who had merely acted as his secretary in preparing a copy of the translation of Albo's Liber fundamentorum for presentation at court. It had been hoped to have the work published in a parallel text by Plantin of Antwerp. Despite reports to the contrary, he was being held under close guard and was only allowed to consult with approved ministers.

Bernhard CONDERZ, letter to Graf Johann of Nassau, Heidelberg, [Sunday], 29 March 1590.
Conderz had received the letter about Vehe, as well as a copy of that from Landgraf Ludwig of Hesse to Graf Edzard in Ostfriesland and the latter's reply. Alting had also written several weeks before about the same subject. It seemed that Vehe was going around propagating his heretical views, while at the same time defending the reputation of Sylvan. He maintained that the execution had simply been at the behest of Olevian. A copy of his sworn statement had been sent to Ostfriesland with the approval of the High Council. Meanwhile Vehe had escaped from Emden and fled to Greetsiel where he was again apprehended. Alting was now trying to obtain his extradition. It might be a good
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idea to send a delegation to Greetsiel to remind the Graf of his duty and request the possible return of the prisoner to Heidelberg. The full documentation would be given to Otto von Grunrade, who was due to travel with the court to Kassel.

REPORT by Matthias VEHE, Greetsiel, May 1590.
See Vehe: Occasional Pieces (D/4).

MINUTES of the CONSISTORY, Greetsiel, [Wednesday], 24 June 1590.
S.A. Aurich: Konsistorialakten 1583-92, Rep. 135/28, 60r. Published in Rott (1910) 238.
After discussion it was agreed that Menso Alting, Johannes Nicasius and Daniel Bernhard should engage in private debate with Vehe.

MINUTES of the CONSISTORY, Greetsiel, [Wednesday], 1 July 1590.
S.A. Aurich: Konsistorialakten 1583-92, Rep. 135/28, 60r. Published in Rott (1910) 239-45, together with a supplement in Pagenstrecher (1911) 118-9.
A letter had been received from the ministers at Emden dissuading them from undertaking any form of debate with Vehe. The real question was whether he could be held in prison on the grounds of his authorship of a blasphemous work, the twenty principal errors of which were then listed. His movements since leaving the Palatinate revealed that he was quite incorrigible. Since his ideas had been fully refuted by the church, it could serve little purpose to enter into further debate.

MINUTES of the CONSISTORY, Greetsiel, [Wednesday], 15 July 1590.
After considering a reply from Graf Johann of Nassau, it was decided that Alting and Bernhard should draw up a refutation of Vehe's work in the hope of persuading him to retract his errors.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Monday, 24 August 1590.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/49 (KRP 197). Published in Rott (1911) 44.
The acts from Emden would have to be considered before offering advice.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 26 August 1590.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 199). Published in Rott (1911) 44-6.
Vehe's account of the Heidelberg scandal was clearly at variance with the acts in their possession. The reports drawn up by Zuleger and Zanchi should be taken as authoritative. Although it would be difficult to prove he had subsequently returned to the Palatinate, Vehe had clearly broken the terms of his parole in openly defending the reputation of Sylvan and Neuser. Moreover, according to Alting he made no secret of his blasphemous convictions. It should thus be possible to request action against him on the basis of the common interests of the church.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Monday], 21 September 1590.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 199). Published in Rott (1911) 46.
It was decided to prepare a reply to Vehe's statement on the basis of the surviving acts.
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MINUTES of the CONSISTORY, Greetsiel, [Thursday], 24 September 1590.
S.A. Aurich: Konsistorialakten 1583-92, Rep. 135/28, 70. Published in Rott (1910) 246.
Having been approved by the ministers at Emden, the refutation of Vehe's book drawn up by Alting and Bernhard was sent on to Graf Johann of Nassau.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Friday, 2 October 1590.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 234). Published in Rott (1911) 46.
Marcus zum Lamb was charged with preparing an account of the affair, while further discussion of the copy of Vehe's latest submission was deferred until the following week.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Friday], 9 October 1590.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 240). Published in Rott (1911) 46-8.
Vehe's reply to Johann Casimir's letter to Graf Edzard was discussed. Here he not only denied having taken an oath to observe the conditions of his parole, but openly rejected the view that Christ was of one substance with the Father. Although they did not intend to get involved in any form of debate, it was yet important both to demonstrate the basis of the orthodox position and to refute his supposed authorities. Clearly the best solution would be to have him brought back to Heidelberg.

The death and burial of Vehe ‘in loco inhonesto’ is reported under 21 December 1590. Amongst his many heresies he described the death of Christ as a form of martyrdom and no sacrifice. It was suggested that he had been circumcised and refused to eat pork. It was also noted that he claimed to have derived his views from the works of Calvin and Beza.
Secondary Sources

Kaspar WILKOWSKI, *Przyczyny nawrócenia do wiary powszechnej od sekty Nowokrzeczeńców Samosateńskich* [Reasons for withdrawing from the Samosatian sect of Anabaptists and returning to the Catholic faith] (Vilnius, 1583) 87-8. The author, who was a convert to Rome, mentioned having received a letter complaining of Vehe's scandalous opinions. It would seem that he had already left Poland, where there was some concern arising from his earlier influence on the development of Dávid's views.

Simon BUDNY, *O urzędzie miecza użytkowym* [Concerning the use of the sword by the civil authority] (1583), ed. S. Kot (Warsaw, 1932) 220-2.

Antonio POSSEVINO, *Transilvania* (1584), ed. A. Veress (Cluj, 1973) 104-5 and 136-45. Having mentioned the influence of Sommer on the development of the Unitarian movement, Possevino noted that he was replaced as Rector of the school in Cluj ‘per un certo Matthia, conditio di Polonia’. Later it was noted that he might have had an earlier association with the Palatine group. It appeared that he not only denied the virgin birth, but went on to argue that Christ was a sinner like all other men. In any case he was ‘tutto dato al Giudaismo’. It was also suggested that he had been involved in preparing a translation of the Bible.

Antonio POSSEVINO, *De sectorum nostri temporis atheismis liber* (Cologne, 1586) 54a. Reprinted in the author's *Bibliotheca selecta ... de ratione studiorum* (Rome, 1593) 1/366. Mentions the activity of Sommer and Matthias ‘quendam Polonum’ in Transylvania, where they sought to promote their ideas through a corrupt reading of scriptural texts.


[András EŐSSI], *Az sidó hiten valók közül kiszakadott ember ellen* [Against the apostate from the Jewish faith (between 1578-1592)], ed. B. Varjas, in: *Régi Magyar Költők Tára* V (Budapest, 1970) 6 and 485. Vehe's importance for the development of Sabbatarianism was noted in a pamphlet ascribed to the early leader András Eőssi. In practice he carried the teaching of Sommer even further by insisting that the Church remained subject to the Mosaic Law.

Fausto SOCINUS, *De Jesu Christi invocatione* (Raków, 1595) preface. In his belated reply to the *Defensio Francisci Davidis* (1581), Socinus suggested that Vehe had helped Palæologus and Trausner prepare the work for publication. He was the one primarily responsible for the Judaizing tendency of radical thought: ‘Sane memini, cum, ipso Francisco præsente, Glirium eius Symmystam & ex parte præceptorem inter colloquendum, urgerem, ut mihi diceret, an crederet, Iesum Nazarenium jam revera esse Christum, illum nihil respondere voluisse, & sermonem nostrum præftracte alio detorsisse’.
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Stanislaw RESZKA, *De Atheismis et Phalarismis Evangelicorum* (Naples, 1596) 353 and 396. This report on Vehe's influence on the group of semi-judaizers was evidently based on a now lost work by Martin Czechowic (→), *Trzech dni rozmowa o dzieciochrzeñstwie* [A three day discussion on the baptism of the reborn] (Lock, 1581). Here it was noted that a number of the sect, which enjoyed a measure of support amongst the Lithuanian and Russian nobility, practiced circumcision and abstained from eating pork.

Johann MOLTHER, *Theologia iudaica, das ist, grundtliche Juden Wegweiser* (Frankfurt, 1601) 37. It was through his reading of Albo's work that Vehe was converted to a form of Judaism and subsequently developed close contacts with the ghetto community.


Christian GERSON, *Chelec oder talmudischen Judenschatz* (Helmstedt, 1610) b1V. The author had before him a copy of Vehe's vernacular translation of Kimchi's commentary on Amos, which had been published in Cologne in 1581. Here it was promised to publish similar works covering the whole of the Rabbinic Bible.

Wolfgang FRANZ, *Augustanæ Confessionis articuli priores decem ... breviter explicati* (Wittenberg2, 1610) 1/65 and IX/62 and 149. In the first disputation Vehe was listed amongst the principal Photinians. Later it was suggested that both the *Refutatio* (1582) and the *Tractatus aliquot* (1583) may have been responsible for some of the developments in radical thought.

Valentin SMALCIUS, *Refutatio thesium Wolfgangi Frantzii de præcipuis Christianæ religionis capitibus* (Raców, 1614) IX/290. Since they had not even seen the works mentioned by Franz, it was hardly likely that Schimberg and his associates could have influenced the Socinian leaders.

Conrad GRASER, *Ultima verba ... Graseri quibus explicat Visionem Danielis capite Nono, contra recentes ... Sabbatharios & novos Judeos* (Toruń, 1614) II/102-3. The views of one Matthias Elias from Ballenberg, otherwise known to his friends as Glirius, were here outlined in the context of a discussion of Daniel 9: 24. While granting that Jesus was in some sense the Messiah, his mission had been frustrated by the sins of the populace and thus ended in failure. The prophecy would only be fulfilled when he returned and his true identity was recognized. This interpretation of the Messianic concept, which was supported with reference to Romans 11: 25-9 and Matthew 23: 39, had been rejected as perverse even by the Socinians.

Florimond de RÆMOND, *Historia de ortu, progressu et ruina hæræseon* (Cologne, 1614) 280-1. Following Possevino, it was suggested that Vehe had been commissioned by Biandrata to prepare a Hebrew version of the Scriptures, while Palaeologus was to work on the New Testament.
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Abraham CALOV, *Socinismus Profligatus, h.e. errorum Socinianorum luculenta confutatio* (Wittenberg, 1652) 23. Reprinted in *Scripta anti-sociniana in unum corpus redacta* (Ulm, 1684) II/10, a work which includes the same comments in the author's *Dissertationum de pseudo-theologiae Socinianae ortu, methodo et progressu* 1/33. The names Matthias Glirius, Theodosius Schönberg, Dietrich Dorsch and Nathaniel Ælianus all appear amongst a list of Socinian writers.


Johann GERHARD, *Disputationum theologicarum in Academia Jenensi partes tres* (Jena, 1655) 1111 and 1122. Mentions the work of Theodosius Schimberg in editing the radical tracts.

Jan HALLERVORD, *Bibliotheca curiosa, in qua plurimi rarissimi atque paucis cogniti scriptores* ... (Königsberg/Frankfurt, 1676). Cited in Bock (1774).

*Epistolarum Martini Ruari selectarum centuria* (Amsterdam, 1677) 217. In a letter to Abraham Calov dated 17 December 1637, which was reproduced in Zeltner (1729) II/176, Martin Ruarus (→) mentioned that Vehe had operated under several pseudonyms, including Dietrich Dorsch and Nathaniel Ælianus Matania. His vernacular study published in 1578 clearly revealed the scope of Jewish influence.

Christoph SANDIUS, *Nucleus historiæ ecclesiasticæ cum appendice* (Amsterdam, 1676-8) 430 and 11/92-3. Vehe's responsibility for the *Mattanjah* had been established by Ruarus.

Andreas WEGIERSKI, *Slavoniæ reformatae ... libri IV* (Amsterdam, 1679) 510. Reprinted by J. Tazbir (Warsaw, 1973). Like Budny, Palæologus and Sommer, Vehe was opposed to the practice of offering prayer to Christ.

*Praestantium et eruditorum virorum epistolæ ecclesiasticae et theologicae*, ed. Philipp à Limborch (Amsterdam, 1684) 320 and 322. In two letters to Conrad Vorst dated 30 October and 31 December 1612, Johannes Wytenbogært mentioned his efforts to trace a copy of the *Mattanjah*.

Johann Adam SCHERTZER, *Collegii Antisociniani ante XII annos absoluti* (Leipzig², 1684) 11. Glirius, who was here possibly confused with Suter, was named as one of those whose heresy stemmed from their studies in medicine.

Christoph SANDIUS, *Bibliotheca Anti-trinitariorum* (Amsterdam, 1684) 57, 60 and 86.
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Most of the information was taken from Ruarus' letter to Calov published in *Epistolarum* (1677), though mention was also made of an unidentified Latin manuscript. The author likewise assumed that Vehe had been a medical doctor.
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Johann à LENT, *De moderna theologia Judaica* (Herborn, 1694) 18 and 136. Mention was made of Vehe's translation of Albo's *Liber fundamentorum*, a copy of which was in the possession of Pastor Winckelmann. A translation of part of the *Mattanjah* by Daniel Breen could be found in the library at Rotterdam.

See Sylvan: Secondary Sources (C/2).

See Sylvan: Secondary Sources (C/2).

Mathurin VEYSSIÈRE de la CROZE, *Dissertations historiques* (Rotterdam, 1707) 1/. See Neuser: Secondary Sources (C/2).

Johann Christoph WOLFIUS, *Bibliotheca Hebraica* (Hamburg/Leipzig, 1715) 1/302 and 503. Mention was made of Vehe's commentary on Amos. It would appear that he had intended preparing similar vernacular commentaries derived from rabbinical authority on the whole of the Old Testament. He was also the first to undertake a Latin translation of Albo's *Liber fundamentorum*, a copy of which had been passed on by Conrad Graser to the library at Toruń.

Johann Christoph WOLFIUS, *Bibliotheca Hebraica* (Hamburg/Leipzig, 1721) II/1053. Notes the comments by Johann à Lent.

See Sylvan: Secondary Sources (C/2).

Johann Christoph WOLFIUS, *Bibliotheca Hebraica* (Hamburg/Leipzig, 1727) III/190 and 381. Further information was supplied on Vehe's Amos commentary, which followed closely the authority of Kimchi. The work had been published in octavo in 1581. Wolfius also noted having recently seen a copy of the translation of the *Liber fundamentorum*, which was both complete and accurate. [In a letter to the author dated 14 September 1732, S.B. Hamburg, Wolfische Briefwechsel CXX/146, G.S. Scholl mentioned having bought this manuscript from the heirs of Winckelmann.]

[Louis-Anastase GUICHARD], *Histoire du Socinianisme* (Paris, 1723) 332. See also the English abridgment, *The History of Socinianism*, tr. W. Webster (London, 1729) 62. Most of the information was taken from Sandius, though it was recognized that Vehe had earlier been associated with the Heidelberg group. In the English version mention was made of his work in Transylvania, where it was suggested that he was responsible for a corrupted version of the Hebrew Bible.
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Gustav Georg ZELTNER, *Historia crypto-socinianismi ... et Martin Ruari epistolarum centuriae duae*, ed. G. Gebauer (Leipzig, 1729), I/353-4 and 1234 and II/176. Here the identification of Vehe and Glirius was confirmed. Although Zeltner had not seen any of his work, it seemed that he had proclaimed the establishment of a temporal kingdom of Christ in Palestine, one that was due to last for a thousand years. Certain elements of Vehe's theory had been adopted by Palaeologus, Dávid, Sommer and even Christian Francken (→).

J.I. HARKENROTH, *Oostfriesche Oorsprongklykheden* (Groningen, 1731) 434-6. This text, which is reproduced in Rott (1911) 236-7, provides an account of Vehe's final imprisonment based on the consistory records in Greetsiel. Mention was also made of Johannes Wytenbogert's interest in the *Mattanjah*.

Johann Friedrich BERTRAM, *Parerga historico-litteria de rerum in ecclesia Frisiae orientalis gestarum* (Bremen, 1740) 199-201. According to this brief account of Vehe's life, which was largely based on the work of Alting (1701), he traveled extensively before returning to Cologne with a view to setting up a new sect. Aside from the new evidence published in Harkenroth (1731), reference was made to the diary of Bernhard Elsenius.


[Daniel Ludwig WUNDT], *Extractus Kirchenratsprotokolle Sylvanum et Neuserum betreffend* (1763) L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/1r-40r. Partly reproduced in Rott (1911) 21-48. See Sylvan: Secondary Sources (C/2).


Tözser KÉNOSI, *Historia Ecclesiastica Unitariorum in Transylvania*, late eighteenth century manuscript of which several variant copies survive, including one in the Houghton Library in America. For an account of its composition and provenance see A. St.Iványi, *The ‘History’ and its authors*, in: *The American Hungarian Library* 3 (1960). In a letter of Stephan Basilius, it was noted that Vehe had already left Transylvania before the arrest of Dávid early in 1579. The more recent comments of Ruarurus were also cited.

Carl BÜTTINGHAUSEN, *Beyträge zur pfälzischen Geschichte* (Mannheim, 1773) 164.

Friedrich Samuel BOCK, *Historia Antitrinitariorum maxime Socianismi et Socinianorum ... ex fontibus recensetur* (Königsberg/Leipzig, 1774) 402-3 and 762.
Apart from his vernacular work on the messianic kingdom, Vehe was jointly responsible with the radical leaders in Cluj for the *Tractatus aliquot* of 1583.


Having confirmed that Vehe and Glirius were one and the same, Lessing sought to demonstrate that he was primarily responsible for the radical shift in the theology of Dávid.

Carl BÜTTINGHAUSEN, *Pfälzische historische Nachrichten* (Mannheim, 1783) 11.


See Neuser: Previous Studies (C/3).

In discussing the *Mattanjah* mention was made of the translation by Breen.


Mentions Vehe's work at Kaiserslautern.


Account based on Sandius (1684), Zeltner (1729) and Bock (1774).


See Neuser: Previous Studies (C/3).


See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C/3).

A manuscript of Vehe's work on predestination had been destroyed after being found in the possession of a group of Sabbatarians in 1638.

W.T. GÜMBEL, *Geschichte der protestantischen Kirche der Pfalz* (Kaiserslautern, 1885) 308.

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Die Matrikel der Universität Rostock, ed. A. Hofmeister (Rostock, 1890) 149a.

Album Academiarum Vitebergensis (Halle, 1894) II/226.


M. STEINSCHNEIDER, Christliche Hebraisten, in: Zeitschrift für hebraische Bibliographie 5 (1901) 50.

Julius KÜCHLER, Chronik der Stadt Kaiserslautern aus den Jahren 1566-1798 (Kaiserslautern, 1905) 26.


W. NOTSCHEIDT, Monatshefte für rheinische Kirchengeschichte 1 (1907) 144.


See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C/3).


See Vehe: Previous Studies (C/3).

Theodor WOTSCHKE, Geschichte der Reformation in Polen (Leipzig, 1911) 55.

Here it is suggested that Vehe was corrupted by reading the work of Adam Pastor, which had been brought to Heidelberg by Lasitius in 1563.

Henryk MERCZYNG, Polscy deisci i wolnomysliciele za Jagiellonów [Polish deists under the Jagellons], in: Przeglad Historyczny 12 (1911) 257-84.


Cites a letter from the student Kornis, in which mention was made of Vehe's association with the radicals in Lublin.

Curt HORN, Johann Sylvan and die Anfänge des Heidelberger Antitrinitarismus, in: Neue Heidelberger Jahrbücher 17 (1913) 251 and 263-81.

See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C13).
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Mentioned Vehe in connection with Piekarski, Budny and Bieliński.

Discusses Alting's role in the process against Vehe.


Karol ESTREICHER, *Bibliografia Polska* 32 (Cracow, 1938) 315.


Considers the political dimensions to Vehe's dismissal from Kaiserslautern following the row over the new order of discipline.

Shows that Schimberg's work was really published in Cracow.

See Neuser: Previous Studies (C/3).

See Vehe: Previous Studies (C/3).


See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C/3).

Notes that Vehe was probably in Transylvania for a time at the end of 1581, when he may have acquired the manuscripts later published in Cracow.

Lech SZCZUCKI, ‘Nieznanej kroniki arianskiej’, Czesc pierwsza [The Anonymous Arian Chronicle: Part I], in: Wokół dziejów i tradycji arianizmu (Warsaw, 1971) 172. It is recorded that Vehe was capable of reading Hebrew without pointing.


Here an attempt was made to reconstruct Vehe's ideas largely on the basis on the summary contained in the minutes of the consistory at Greetsiel. The subsequent discovery of a copy of the Mattanjah in Holland served to render much of the work obsolete.


The author's conclusions about the influence of Vehe and the Mattanjah on the development of Dávid's views can be found in the subsequent biography.


Róbert DÁN, *Matthias Vehe-Glirius: life and work of a radical Antitrinitarian with his collected writings* (Leiden/Budapest, 1982).

See Vehe: Previous Studies (C/3).

Mihily BALÁSZ, *Dávid Ferenc válaszol Fausto Sozzinak* [Ferenc Dávid's reply to Fausto Sozzini], in: *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 87 (1983) 97-106. Parts of Dávid's defense were taken directly from the Mattanjah.


Provides a summary account of Dán's work on Vehe.

Previous studies


Here the development of radical ideas during the 1580s was examined with reference to the cases of Erasmus Johannis (→), and Matthias Vehe. Although neither had any direct connection with the county of Nassau, the gradual intrusion of the so-called ‘second reformation’ into many of the smaller territories that lay between the Palatinate and the Low Countries provided both opportunity and attraction for several of the dissident intellectuals. Anxious to prevent the spread of the movement, Graf Johann of Nassau, who was the founder of the recently established academy at Herborn, sought to keep his neighbors informed through the active gathering of intelligence. Quite a lot of information can thus be gleaned from the surviving correspondence in the Alten Dillenburger Archiv, Aktenband V 293, now on deposit in the Staatsarchiv Wiesbaden, several of which pieces were published in the appendix.

Nothing new is provided by way of comment on Vehe's period of service in the Palatine church. Indeed this even contains a serious misreading of some of the material then being published by Rott, where it is suggested that after his dismissal from Kaiserslautern he was considered for placement as school-master at Oppenheim or Dirmstein. Moreover, there is a tendency to accept at face value the account of the Heidelberg scandal as provided some twenty years later by Vehe himself. While the reasons that lay behind his protestations of innocence can well be imagined, it hardly seems credible to suppose that he knew nothing of the ideas being discussed by Sylvan and Neuser or that he remained ignorant of the real reasons behind the proposed flight to Transylvania. Whether or not any case could have been proven against him, it was certainly not true that he remained a ‘purus putus’ Calvinist, untouched by the Arian heresy. His subsequent attempt to disclaim the sworn statement made as the price of his release from prison may be taken as evidence of the fact that he had already been confirmed in his views even before the execution of Sylvan.

The real value of Pagenstecher's article is the light, which it throws on the last fifteen years of Vehe's life from the time he left Cologne until his final imprisonment and death in Greetsiel. The reasons for his departure from the relative safety of Poland are somewhat unclear, though it would appear that he and his companion made little effort to keep their presence a secret from the authorities in Marburg. Most striking of all was the ambitious project to publish his translation of Joseph Albo's *Sepher Hikkarim* with the Plantin press in Antwerp. The latter was certainly well-known for his radical sympathies, though the inference might also be drawn that some form of contact had already been established. Meanwhile the full protocol of the consistory at Greetsiel made it possible to reconstruct both the content of the *Mattanjah*, the book that provided the real grounds for his imprisonment, as well as the subsequent discussions as to how best to proceed in the case. Even if much of this has been superseded by the more recent work of Dán, it remains a valuable and lucid account of how Vehe's work was perceived by a number of his contemporaries.
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Despite the importance of this study in fostering a renewed interest in Vehe's contribution to the development of radical ideas in Poland, it has not been possible to trace a copy of the work in any of the libraries consulted.

Róbert DÁN, Matthias Vehe-Glirius: life and work of a radical Antitrinitarian with his collected writings (Leiden/Budapest, 1982).

This study by one of the leading authorities in the field of radical dissent, the late Róbert Dán from the university of Budapest, was the result of many years of research and represents the only full-length account of any of the Heidelberg group. It is regrettable, as well as a little surprising, that a work jointly published by E.J. Brill of Leiden should be so marred by a translation that has obviously not been corrected by a native speaker. As it stands any reader should be warned that a degree of patience and imagination is sometimes required in order to discern the original sense of the text. Even if this is no direct criticism of the author, it does tend to exaggerate the impression of rambling created by the fact that the same evidence has to be adduced time and time again to establish points at various stages of Vehe's career. This notwithstanding, it must be admitted that a substantial part of the present dossier has been based on this book, which from a scholarly point of view can scarcely be faulted. Indeed, if one general objection were to be raised, it is that the very detail with which Vehe's life and work have been reconstructed tends to suggest a stature and originality that may not be entirely justified.

Probably the weakest part of the book is the introductory section on the Antitrinitarian group in the Palatinate, where it is evident that the author did not have at his disposal the full range of source material. Given the declared intention to treat these events within the context of historical ideology, it is a pity there is no real attempt to describe the intellectual climate produced by the Elector Friedrich's personal commitment to promote the reformed settlement from the 1560s. For all that Vehe remained somewhat isolated in Kaiserslautern until drawn into the controversy over discipline, he had sufficiently close associations with Heidelberg not to remain unaffected by the topical debates on lay involvement within the church, the role of higher education or the extent to which military intervention could be seen as a legitimate means of defending the faith. This created an environment in which radical ideas were able to develop and the young deacon easily fell under the influence of senior figures such as Sylvan and Neuser. It is not sufficiently emphasized that many of his later plans for propagating the cause were simply an extension of points already discussed within the dissident group.

The painstaking research that lies behind this study is shown to best advantage in the attempt to reconstruct the events of Vehe's life on the basis of the few pieces of surviving evidence. Much attention is given to his several contacts with the Jewish thinkers in and around Cologne, where he would seem to have attended the lectures of the convert Johannes Isaac before moving to stay with the Rabbi Hajjim ben Jochanan Treves at Königswinter. This experience of living within the ghetto community was important both in confirming his remarkable facility in the Hebrew language and in giving precise
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formulation to his mature ideas on biblical hermeneutics. In marked contrast to the other members of the Heidelberg group, whose views were based on a reasoned critique from within the Christian tradition, Vehe was able to use his experience of contemporary Jewish custom and practice to provide an alternative standard. It was the seder rite associated with the Passover, rather than any metaphysical speculation on the relation between the two natures of Christ, that provided the model for his understanding of the eucharist. By the same score, the rejection of the reformed doctrine of predestination was justified by rabbinical exegesis and not the works of Aristotle.

The rediscovery of a copy of the Mattanjah during a research trip to Holland in 1975 provided the most important piece of new evidence yet to come to light. Not only did this confirm the scope of Vehe's debt to rabbinical scholarship, a point already evident in his decision to translate the works of Joseph Albo and David Kimchi, but it enabled a full reconstruction of his own views, which had previously been known only in the form of summaries prepared by critics within the orthodox establishment. Despite certain similarities with the work of Sebastian Franck (→), a point that is never explored in any great depth, the radicalism of the Mattanjah lay in its claim that the authentic voice of divine revelation was contained in the Pentateuch. While the prophetic books of the Old Testament were authoritative in so far as they represented an inspired commentary on the Law, the writings of the New Testament merely bore witness to the belief of the early church that Jesus was the long promised Messiah. Taking this as an appropriate definition of the Christian faith, Vehe's insistence that the concept had to be understood in the light of Jewish tradition yet undermined the whole structure of received theology. Rejecting any idea of the divinity of Christ as little more than an attempt to make sense of the evident failure of his mission to establish the kingdom in Jerusalem, it was emphasized that the final vindication of his followers would only be found in the Second Coming. Apart from this eschatological dimension, there was little to distinguish Vehe's views from those of the rabbinical apologists.

Many scholars will find the sections dealing with the situation in Transylvania and Poland illuminating, especially since most of the previous research has not been readily available. It is unfortunate that Dán was unaware of the first visit to Cluj at the beginning of 1574, since it was then rather than after the period spend amongst the rabbinical scholars in Cologne that relations were established with figures such as Johann Sommer (→) and Ferenc Dávid (→). For all that contemporaries were inclined to ascribe the latter's changing stance on whether Christ should be seen as the object of worship to the influence of the ‘Jewish doctor’, it should not be forgotten that such contact had been an important catalyst in the development of Vehe's own ideas. Although he had already left Transylvania by the time matters came to a head with the arrest of Dávid in March 1579, it is notable that the sixteen points raised against the radical group had all been taken from the Mattanjah. While it is unlikely that the unitarian leader ever really shared the author's convictions, their close association was in itself significant. Further evidence of the impact of Vehe's work can be gleaned from the scattered records of the Sabbatharian group that came into being following the effective expulsion of the radical element from the church. Until reconstituted by Simon Péchi (→) in the 1620s, this minority sect helped to popularize and preserve many of the characteristic features of Vehe's theology.
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It would seem that the dissident leader enjoyed no similar success in promoting the growth of sectarian groups during his rather more extended visits to Poland and Moravia. Here his influence was mainly confined at a personal level through contact with such figures as Simon Budny (→) and Jacob Palæologus (→). Denied the opportunity of taking an active part in the ideological struggle within the church, Vehe turned to the press as a means of defending his views. Writing under the pseudonym of Theodosius Schimberg, he started to publish some of the material already collected in Transylvania. Given the legal restrictions under which foreigners were forced to operate, he was always obliged to look for the protection of some member of the nobility, a fact that may account for the eventual decision to return to Holland in 1589. Some additional information about the final stages of his life was taken from an anonymous chronicle of the Arian movement in Poland first published by Szczucki in 1971, though here the author was mainly dependent on material already gathered by Rott and Pagenstecher. It must also be said that much of the concluding section of the book is based on conjecture, some of which is less than wholly convincing.

There is no question but that Dán's research has established the reputation of Vehe as one of the most interesting and colorful of the sixteenth-century dissident leaders. The very fact that his name does not even appear in many of the standard works on the radical reformation gives some indication of the enormous service that has been rendered. Bringing together the scattered references contained in the source material, the author has been able to show a degree of continuity and order that was previously lacking. Aside from the Sabbatharian group in Transylvania, it is doubtful whether Vehe ever exercised sufficient influence to provide the material for a proper Wirkungsgeschichte. Yet the network of personal connections to which this study bears witness was in itself an important element in the diffusion of radical thought.
Published Works

1. MATTANIAH, das ist, ein kurtzes unnd nutzliches schreiben sehr notwendig einem jeden Christen der durest and lieb zur warheit hat zulesen, dan in im viel and mancherlei stuck and puncten, die ware Christliche Religion aus der Bibel recht zu finden, sehr notwendig in dieser itziger zeit da mancherlei Lehr unnd secten sich erheben, aus Hailiger geschriift grundlich tractirt werden, geschrieben Von Nathanaele Eliano (Cologne, 1578). 217 unnumbered pages, octavo, A-J⁶ and A-E⁷.


Several years ago the author's life had been threatened by those who accused him of denying the importance of the New Testament. It was then that he had undertaken to defend his views in the form of a series of propositions taken from Joseph Albo's book of fundaments. These had been designed as a summary of the teaching on the Messiah as outlined in the Old Testament.

The thirty-three principles of the faith were then outlined [3a-8a]. As far as the children of Israel were concerned, there was no knowledge of God outwith the Law, where his nature was revealed as unitary both in person and essence. Although it had been recognized that a new covenant was to be established with the coming of the Messiah, the substance of the two dispensations would remain the same. In practice the only difference was that the latter would be inscribed in the hearts of men through the action of the Spirit. This was to imply that the mediator of the New Covenant would be greater than Moses, whose work would be subsumed in that of the coming Messiah.

The idea of personal predestination was then rejected. God's promise to the Jewish nation could not be applied to the individual, whose salvation was to be found in a life of repentance and obedience to the precepts of the Law. According to the best rabbinical scholars: ‘es sein alle ding in der hand gots ausserhalb die forcht Gottes’ [4b]. Faith consisted in accepting the content of revelation as true. This included the proposition that God alone could forgive sin, though this was announced to the community through the Aaronic priesthood.

The Messiah, who was to be the same as other men in all respects save sin, would be called to reunite the chosen people in a temporal kingdom. Under his rule all sacrifice would be abolished except for that of gratitude and praise. It was no part of God's plan that he should be put to death or that this should be regarded as a sacrificial atonement. While it was true that God saw all things in advance, this did not amount to a denial of human free will. Nor did the fall of Adam in itself exclude man from Paradise; it merely opened the way for sin, through which that exclusion was brought upon oneself.

In the light of this analysis, there were at least thirteen points of doctrine derived from a reading of the New Testament that had to be rejected as false:
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a) The teaching on the Trinity and the two natures of Christ.
b) The doctrine of double predestination.
c) The practice of offering prayer to the Messiah.
d) The claim that the faithful were justified through the alien righteousness of Christ.
e) The belief that the death of Christ was a necessary sacrifice for the redemption from sin.
f) The doctrine of original sin.
g) The view that the Patriarchs of the Old Testament had been saved through implicit faith in Christ.
h) The assumption that faith in Christ was more than a belief in the veracity of all that he said.
i) The claim that the kingdom of God was not of this earth.
j) The idea that Christ was already enthroned and in power.
k) The insistence that the books of the New Testament should be identified with the promised covenant, together with the belief that Christ had come to undertake a revision of the Law.
I) The hermeneutic principle that the Old Testament should be read in the light of the New.
m) The claim that Christ's own words should be interpreted through the writings of Paul and the Apostles.

Each of these points was then examined separately in order to show that it was by no means an evident or necessary conclusion from the teaching of the New Testament. Here Calvin's interpretation of a number of passages was cited to discredit the view that Christ was the object of worship or that he exercised the intercessory function of a priest. It was this that led to the absurdity of trying to project the benefits of a propitiatory sacrifice back into the Old Testament.

Prior to dealing fully with the issues raised by the priestly office of Christ, it was necessary to consider the problem of hermeneutics in some depth. There were essentially two methods of exegesis employed by the rabbinical scholars. Although the strict sense of a passage was alone to be used in the derivation of doctrine, this way of peshāt did not exclude a tropological understanding where clearly required, as in the case of the words of institution at the Last Supper. The alternative way of drash sought to expound the spiritual sense of the text, but this could only be cited to justify points of doctrine where the interpretation found explicit collaboration elsewhere in Scripture. Some mention was made of cabalistic exegesis as explained ‘im buch Sohar and Jetsirah’, yet this had little to do with the matter in hand. On this basis no less than thirty objections were advanced to the common understanding of the priesthood of Christ as presented in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It was clear that the work should never have been admitted to the canon.

Points nine and ten were treated together in a section entitled ‘von der Regirung Christi’ [44a-70a]. Here the role of the Messiah was explained in response to a series of five questions. There was no support for the idea that God had intended that the mission of Jesus should end in the crucifixion. Many of the parables contained in the Gospels should be seen as a reference to the Second Coming rather than the Last Judgment as had been maintained by the papists. When this came about, all the righteous would be raised up to participate in the kingdom and to receive their reward. According to the book of
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Revelation this kingdom would last for a thousand years and would predate the day of judgment. One reason for the failure to understand these truths was the false dichotomy between the temporal and spiritual, terms that were by no means mutually exclusive. Once the true nature of the messianic kingdom was appreciated, the suggestion that Christ was already enthroned beside the Father could be dismissed as without foundation.

At this point the work came to an abrupt end with the promise of a further ‘trachtetlein’ on those points not yet covered. This second part on the hermeneutic problems of the New Testament followed immediately under a separate title page [71a-109a].

There was no evidence in Scripture to suggest that the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists should be described as the New Testament. Since the promised covenant was by its very nature spiritual, it could not be equated with a particular book. Moreover Christ had never intended to establish a new law and thus based his own teaching on the work of Moses, whose authority continued as binding. Only the book of Revelation could be seen as divinely inspired.

In explaining the reasons for rejecting the final two points, Vehe outlined his ideas on the authority of Scripture. The books of Moses were complete and perfect, though the prophetic writings should be granted a certain authority in so far as they agreed with the literal sense of the Law. None of this was superseded by the coming of Christ, whose own work had to be interpreted in this light. It followed that the New Testament could not be described as divinely inspired, a point clearly evidenced by the confusion surrounding the canon.

Vehe now turned to discuss the sacramental practice of the church. It was important to realize that the eucharist was based on the Seder rite, which was designed to prefigure the coming redeemer. At the Last Supper Christ merely pointed out to the disciples that he was the one for whom they had been waiting. By the same score, the fact that baptism by water had been practiced by the Jews long before the coming of John showed that in no sense could it be regarded as a covenant sign. Indeed, the rainbow and the custom of circumcision were the only two such signs recognized in Scripture. Here Zwingli came closer than Calvin to understanding the true nature of the rite. The real problem was that without a thorough knowledge of the idiom and sense of the Hebrew language, something which none of the reformers had possessed, much of the apostolic tradition was simply unintelligible.

A further point was that the sacred text must be understood according to the same grammatical rules as any other literary work. It was thus necessary to study the rules of rhetorical analysis. Rabbinic scholars like Kimchi provided a good example of the way in which such exegetical rules were to be applied. In all Vehe was able to adduce a total of nineteen principles as a guide to the interpretation of Scripture.

The work was concluded with a short letter to the reader, which was dated at Dansenburg near Kaiserslautern in September 1578 [108b-109a]. Here it was pointed out that virtually everything had been corrupted either by the fathers or the doctors of the scholastic age. The failure of the reformed theologians to redress this situation was due partly to their
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ignorance of the sacred language and partly to their own self-seeking attitude. Although willing to change his mind if contradicted on the basis of Scripture, for the moment Vehe could only hope that the present study would do something to prevent even more from being led astray.
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Mattaniah (1578) 1a and 71a.
Editions and translations

1. David KIMCHI, *Commentarium in Amos prophetam* (Cologne, 1581).
   Although no extant copy of Vehe's vernacular translation has been found, the edition is
   mentioned in both Gerson (1610) and Wolfius (1715), where it is noted that it was
   published in thirteen octavo sheets. In the *Mattanjah*, Vehe noted having undertaken a
   similar translation of Kimchi's work on the Psalms, but no further reference to this text
   has ever been discovered.

2a. *Defensio Francisci Dávidis in negotio de non invocando Jesu Christi in precibus*
    ([Cracow, Rodecki]: 1581).
    Copy in the Bibliotheca Filialei Cluj.

According to Fausto Socinus († 1595) this defense of Dávid's stance against Biandrata
was first published shortly after his death in 1580, though no copy of such an imprint has
ever been discovered. The fact that this first known edition bore the false mark 'in aula
Basiliensi' has led many to assume that it was prepared for the press by the former
bishop's son-in-law Lukács Trausner, who had by then moved to study in the Rhineland
city. Typographical evidence has been used to demonstrate that it was actually produced
on the Rodecki press in Cracow. This fact, together with the inclusion of an account of
Dávid's trial probably sent on to Vehe after his expulsion from Cluj, makes it highly
likely that he was primarily responsible for the production of the work.

2b. *Defensio Francisci Dávidis in negotio de non invocando Jesu Christi in precibus*
    ([Cracow, Rodecki]: 1582). Pagination runs from 49-408 followed by 31 unnumbered
    leaves; octavo; a-z/aa-cc4/A-D7.
    Copies in Manchester College Library, Oxford and the Library of the Hungarian
    Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Rath. 546. This text is reproduced as volume one of the
    *Bibliotheca Unitariorum* (Utrecht, 1983), where a full account of the edition is provided
    by M. Balázs.

The contents are as follows:
   a) Epistle to the reader [a1v].
   b) Theses of Ferenc Dávid, 1579 [a2r].
   c) Response of Fausto Socinus [a2v-b4r].
   d) Dávid's reply to the response [b4r- h4v/120].
   e) *Iudicium ecclesiarum Polonicarum de causa Davidis* [121-200].
   f) [G. Biandrata], Loci aliquot ex scripturis pro invocatione Christi [200-19].
   g) J. Palæologus, *Confutatio ... iudicii ecclesiarum Polonicarum* (220-408).
   h) F. Dávid, De dualitate tractatus [A-D7].

   T. Schimberg ([Cracow, Rodecki]: 1582). 171 numbered leaves; octavo; */**/ ⊗4/📞/a-
y4.
The Heidelberg Antitrinitarians

The contents are as follows:


In response to a demand for the works of some of the leading dissident intellectuals, the editor had brought with him a series of manuscripts directed against the views of Calvin and the orthodox party on the doctrine of the Trinity. This included replies to works by Bullinger, Beza, Simler and Zanchi. The best and indeed the earliest of these writings was the refutation of Péter Carolinus prepared by Johann Sommer (→) while working at the school in Cluj.

The accusation that the radicals were guilty of heresy and apostasy was then examined. According to the Old Testament a heretic was one who rejected any of the articles of faith, while an apostate denied the binding authority of the Law given by Moses. It was also important to realize that faith as a ‘habitus mentis’ could not replace ‘scientia’, which was derived from the proper analysis of Scripture. It thus followed that the analogy of faith ‘nihil aliud est, quam vt consentiat expositio cum fundamentis legis, et articulis fidei’. These beliefs were summarized in the following six points: the creation out of nothing; the resurrection of the dead; the coming of the Messiah; Moses as the mediator of the Covenant; the unalterable character of the Law; and the doctrine of rewards and punishments.

The doctrine of the Trinity could not be an article of faith since it was self-contradictory and consequently unintelligible: ‘Vnde manifestum est: Trinitatem et divinitatem filii, non esse articulos fidei veros, quia sunt impossibilia mentis, ideo in rei veritate sunt blasphema dogmata et horrenda’ [***v]. Satan had succeeded in corrupting the doctrine of the Church at the time of the Arian controversy. His own former teacher in Cologne, the baptized Jew Johannes Isaac, had suggested that the triumph of Athanasius might well have been the result of natural magic. Even Johann Eck admitted that the doctrine lacked any scriptural authority.

Finally the Apostles’ Creed was submitted to examination. It had to be understood that this was a confession of faith by Gentiles seeking to be accepted into the community of Jewish Christians. In accepting the Hebrew God, they also acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah [ ○1r-2v]. Some of these points had been anticipated in Paul Ricci’s study Sal foederis, but he would defer a fuller discussion of the matter to another time.

b) Preface by Johann Sommer, Cluj, 24 June 1572 [○ - ○6a].

c) The Turda Confession of Ferenc Dávid, 17 April 1579 [○6b-8b].

d) The reply to P. Carolinus, Brevis explicatio orthodox fidei de uno vero Deo adversus blasphemos Blandrate & Davidis erroris (Wittenberg, 1571) [a-y4].

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The contents are as follows:


The editor had been encouraged by the reception of the work published against Carolinus the previous year. The most important piece included in the present volume was Sommer’s treatise on justification. It was necessary to emphasize that the fundamental tenets of true religion could be reduced to a belief in free will, the Law, the threat of divine punishment and the analogy of faith. Unfortunately these were being undermined by the current teaching on the bondage of the will, the imputed righteousness of Christ and predestination. It was thus hoped that the present collection of tracts would do something to counteract this influence.


At the end of his preface to the work of Sommer, the editor had promised to provide a fuller discussion of the relation between Jewish tradition and the New Testament. All the teaching of the Jews was based on a series of fundamental articles and the belief in the Messiah was no exception. In order to discover whether Jesus really was the promised redeemer, it was necessary to look at the evidence of the New Testament ‘sine glossis Neotericorum’.

There was no dispute about the fact that Moses was the mediator who had established the original covenant with God in the Old Testament and it was quite possible for the Jews to remain loyal to this pact even without recognizing Jesus as the Messiah. It was ridiculous to suppose that the children of Israel had been banished from the alliance, an idea which contained the implication that God could change his mind. Moreover, since there was no evidence in the New Testament to justify the claim that prayers should be offered through Christ, it was reasonable to conclude that the Jews continued to invoke the name of the true God in prayer.

A very useful introduction to these problems was contained in the third book of the ‘liber fundamentorum’. Christ’s purpose had been to warn against hypocrisy rather than to condemn the Law. This point had been obscured by Paul’s teaching in Romans, where he developed a doctrine of predestination that was clearly opposed to Moses’ teaching on free will. Even though it brought death into the world, the Fall had not altered the nature of human freedom. A number of concessions made to the people of Israel on such questions as divorce had to be explained as an accommodation to human weakness. The fact that Christ sought to highlight these points only served to confirm that his primary task had been to interpret the Law. Its proper sense could only be grasped as Christ himself had sought to do through a sound knowledge of Hebrew idiom.

c) J. Sommer, *De justificatione hominis coram Deo* [25a-81a].

d) A. Neuser, *Scopus septimi capitis ad Romanos* [81b-9b].
Conscious of his duty to present an oration before the school on taking office, the author turned to the theme of predestination in view of the new emphasis being placed on the doctrine from some quarters. The idea of double predestination without respect to human merit was clearly opposed to the teaching of Scripture. The true relation to God was well summed up in the rabbinical maxim: ‘Omnia sunt in potestate Dei, excepto timore ipsius’. The real problem with the way in which the doctrine of predestination was now being presented was that it was not based on a proper understanding of the Old Testament, something that remained a closed book to the majority of theologians. The attempt to impose the dogma of the Trinity on scripture was a further cause of corruption. It was in no sense to deny divine omnipotence to note that God chose to obey his own laws. Having accorded man a degree of moral liberty, He could no more withdraw that freedom than He could restore a girl’s lost virginity. Such points would appear more clearly once the background to much of the New Testament writing had been properly understood.

f) J. Sommer, *Declamatio contra Baptismum adultorum* [112b-129b].

g) J. Sommer, *Theses de Deo trino in personis, uno in essentia, ex eius fundamentis desumptae*, Cluj, 1571 [130b-134b].
Title pages: *Refutatio Carolii* (1582) and *Tractatus aliquot* (1583).
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Manuscripts no longer extant


This translation was almost certainly undertaken while Vehe was living amongst the Jewish community in Cologne. According to Grünwald (1896), the copy in the Stadtbibliothek Hamburg, Ms. Theol. 1013, which was destroyed during the last war, was complete up until the concluding citation.
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Occasional Pieces


Vehe accepted he had been justly deprived of his living on account of his opposition to the new church order. While well aware of their heterodox opinions, he had maintained contact with both Sylvan and Neuser and even considered joining the expedition to Transylvania. Moreover, he admitted having tried to warn Neuser of their arrest through Grynæus and Mader. Discussions with Zanchi had since convinced him of his errors on both the Trinity and the problem of discipline. Still the obdurate refusal to sign an earlier form of retraction, together with the attempt to break out of prison, only rendered him the more culpable. In now accepting the offer of a second chance, he agreed to leave the Palatine territory, where he would never again attempt to corrupt others through his teaching. He also promised to spread no scandal or disparaging rumors about the Elector and was quite prepared to accept the consequences of any breach of this undertaking.


Vehe’s report of his role in the Heidelberg affair began with an account of the row over discipline. Having failed to win over their opponents by argument, during the spring of 1570 the Church Council acted to dismiss those pastors who refused to accept the Genevan order. They had already secured the demission of Neuser the previous year and now tried to undermine the reputation of Sylvan at court, where he was described as ‘der weltche bastart’. Although it was not true to suggest that he had divided the church in Kaiserslautern by his preaching against the discipline, Vehe had already decided to leave the ministry following the death of his wife and only looked to receive a testimony of good conduct before his departure. When he returned from a visit to his friends in Zweibrücken, he had been shown a mandate from the Elector forbidding the council to take any action in the matter. However, further inquiries in Heidelberg revealed that no such order had ever been issued and he was led to conclude that the document had been forged by members of the Church Council at the instigation of Josquin Cybelius, the new superintendent with whom his relations had been strained for some time. Since misuse of the official seal was a serious offense, he had felt obliged to refer the matter to the appropriate authorities.

At this time there was considerable tension between the High Council and leading figures within the church, whose influence over the Elector had been greatly increased following their move from the Schönauer Hof to new offices in the Chancellery. It was for this reason that he was encouraged to make a formal complaint and was given help in drawing up a written accusation ‘propter crimen falsi’. Apart from raising the threat of imprisonment if he did not withdraw the charge, the Church Council had responded by
commissioning two students to keep an eye on his every move. Knowing full well that 
the matter would be reported back, he had gone swimming in the Neckar with the nephew 
of Olevian and mentioned that he was thinking of presenting the matter at the 
forthcoming meeting of the Diet in Speyer. More seriously, he had been encouraged to 
persevere with the case by Christoph Probo, who gave him a personal assurance that all his 
expenses would eventually be reimbursed once a decision had been reached after the 
Elector’s return.

Since there was little he could do in the meantime, Vehe had decided to visit Speyer 
himself in order to look at the elephant that was supposed to provide the principal 
curiosity. Since Sylvan intended going as well, they agreed to meet up early the next 
morning in the home of the latter’s brother-in-law, the book-binder Holderman. In the 
event they had to wait for Neuser to finish taking morning prayer, after which they were 
both invited to his place for refreshments. No sooner had they got to Speyer than the 
others left him for half an hour while they went off to settle some business. As it was 
already getting late by the time they had seen the attractions, they agreed to stay the night 
with Neuser’s brother in Oftersheim. After about two miles, however, Vehe had to stop 
in an inn on account of the blisters on his feet. He went straight to bed, where the others 
joined him after dinner. Unfortunately his shoes were stolen during the night and so 
Neuser had to go on alone, while he and Sylvan returned to Speyer. Since it was not 
possible to get back home that day, they decided to visit Dathen and spend the night in 
his rooms at the Elector’s hotel.

Having agreed to go back with Sylvan to Ladenburg, the next morning they took the boat 
some two miles down stream to Ketsch and then continued on foot. As soon as they got 
to the town, they were met by the local Schultheiß, who informed Sylvan that the 
Heidelberg Faut was waiting for an urgent meeting in the local hostelry. Thinking that 
Hartmanni might have some news of the decision in his case, Vehe grabbed a quick bite 
to eat and hurried back to join them, only to discover that his friend had been placed in 
detention. Even though the Faut’s authority did not extend to Ladenburg, Vehe too was 
asked to give an undertaking not to try and escape from the Elector’s jurisdiction. The 
only reason they were given for the arrest was the rumor that several ministers had 
presented an anonymous petition to the Emperor slandering the Palatine government. An 
assurance was given that they would be set free as soon as further inquiries had 
established their innocence.

On the journey to Heidelberg sitting on the back of a cart, they met Grynaeus and some of 
his student lodgers working in the vineyards. Although in no way bound or under 
constraint, they mentioned their arrest on unspecified charges and asked that Neuser 
should be informed. They were placed in the castle prison known as the Selenlehr, 
access to the lower part of which was gained by means of a rope. Interviewed the 
following day, they denied any involvement in a secret correspondence with the Emperor, 
the whereabouts of whose lodgings in Speyer they had not even known. Two days later 
they were placed under torture and then moved to different cells where they could no 
longer communicate with each other.
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There was no doubt that the Church Council lay behind this action. Even though it was an open secret that they were being followed, neither Sylvan nor Neuser had tried to disguise their visit to the Transylvanian embassy, where they sought to pass on a letter for Giorgio Biandrata (→). Hoping to find some evidence against the two men, the Church Council then persuaded the Elector to request that the letter be handed over and it was eventually submitted to the Emperor. Here mention was made of a number of others in the Palatine service who were felt to be sympathetic towards the Transylvanian confession, though the first Vehe knew of the affair was when the letter was read to him in prison.

It was then that a search was ordered of their libraries, where Neuser was found to possess a copy of the Zurich edition of the Koran. More serious was the fact that Sylvan had a number of books on the Trinity, including the Transylvanian confession that had been left by Lasitius several months before for the purposes of refutation. At the time Sylvan had sent the young Hasler’ to solicit the advice of Tremilli in drawing up this response. The open admission that the only evidence in support of the doctrine of the Trinity came from the New Testament, led Sylvan to the view that the supporters of Adam Pastor (→) were probably right after all and he had accordingly prepared a vernacular treatise showing up the contradictions between the Athanasian Creed and that of the Apostles. Following this search, which took place several weeks after their initial imprisonment, the Genevan party began to disclaim against their opponents from the pulpit, where they were described as crypto-Turks. Instead of offering to debate the issue with Sylvan, they tricked him into making a full retraction, which was then used to secure the death sentence. The place of execution was eventually set up before the Rathaus in order to prevent him from making any public statement. Although Vehe had still considered himself a ‘purus putus’ Calvinist, this method of dealing with the opposition was likely to alienate even the most ardent supporter of the Church.

After the Elector’s return from Speyer on St. Martin’s day, they were brought into his presence for a formal interrogation conducted by Wenzel Zuleger. It was then agreed that Vehe should be present as an observer at discussions to be held the following day with Jacob Suter, one of the ministers who had apparently been corrupted by Sylvan. Here Zanchi argued that the doctrine of the Trinity could best be established on inductive grounds, since whoever introduced a new sign of the covenant such as baptism must be the true God. Despite the evident fallacy of such an argument, Suter claimed to be convinced and they agreed to sink any further differences over dinner. It was during this meal that the Italian recounted his earlier efforts to convince both Martyr and Bullinger of the dangers of Lelio Socinus’ (→) views on the divinity of Christ. Quite apart from the fact that Zanchi’s motives could bear no close scrutiny, all his arguments in *De Tribus Elohim* had now been refuted by Palæologus. Even Dathen, who had given his full support to the orthodox case, had now been won over as a result of his recent contact with Erasmus Johannis (→) in Gdańsk.

At the end of this meeting Vehe and Suter were placed in the same cell and told that their release was now only a matter of time. After a direct petition to the Elector, they were visited by Stephan Cirler at the end of November, who asked that they both sign a form of retraction drawn up by the Church Council as the price of their full pardon. Since they
refused to be compromised in this way, they were obliged to remain in detention until the following August, when they were moved back to the Seltenlehr, the very cell from which Neuser had escaped two months before. Although they eventually tried to make good their own escape, they were apprehended in Aglasterhausen after only a day on the run. From here they were taken to the castle at Dilsberg, where Hartmanni appeared a few weeks later with the offer of improved conditions in return for an undertaking not to try and escape again. During the subsequent twelve months of detention; they were provided with a separate room and allowed to take their meals together with the jailer. Anxious to obtain his release Vehe had agreed to sign the new form of retraction with which he was presented at the end of that period.

Finally he insisted that he had never broken this undertaking, though it was true that he had since come to change his mind on the disputed questions of theology. Yet it was flagrant tyranny to deny anyone the right to defend their own views on the basis of the word of God.
Autograph letter to Johann Sylvan, 29 January 1569.
1. Vehe to Johann Sylvan, Kaiserslautern, 29 January 1569.

Vehe was grateful that Sylvan had thought to send him a copy of his work against the discipline party. He had recently transcribed Erastus’ theses. The writings of Wolf and Bullinger had also been received. He would be pleased to see Sylvan and his son, together with Engelbert Faber after Easter. Martin Kolb’s daughter was anxious about the wages she had not yet received. A questionnaire was being sent round about discipline. Barth had received a copy but was reluctant to reply. It was hoped that the results would give no support to the Genevan party. News was given of the dean’s maid, who was already heavy with child despite being married only fourteen weeks. He would very much like a copy of the book ‘Cornucopia’. Greetings were sent to Erastus, Xylander and Diller. Meanwhile Conrad [Hubert] sent greetings to Sylvan.

2. Lukács Trausner to Vehe, [Basel, 1579].

Published as ‘scriptum fratrum Transylvanorum ad NN’ in: Defensio Davidis in negotio de non invocando Jesu Christi in precibus ([Cracow, Rodecki]: 1582) 236-78, where the account of the trial of Ferenc Dávid forms part of Palæologus’ rebuttal of the opinion submitted by the Polish churches.
See Vehe: Editions and Translations (D/2).
JACOB SUTER (SAUTER)

A: LIFE AND WORK

The fourth member of the group to be arrested at the time of the Arian scandal in Heidelberg would otherwise hardly merit inclusion in an account of intellectual dissidence in early-modern Europe. Yet if he made little enduring contribution to the religious debate, the subsequent pattern of his career serves to identify Jacob Suter as one of those whose early radicalism came to be tempered by prudence and who was able to expiate his past through reconciliation with the traditional church. While it may be doubted whether in later life he ever paid more than lip-service to the outward forms of the faith, it is clear that his pursuit of a successful career both as an academic and medical practitioner presupposed an attitude of silence on matters of religion. Here there was a close parallel with another member of the Erastian party, the former professor of ethics Johann Brunner from Toggenburg, whose disillusion with the reformed tradition eventually led to conversion and a calling to teach at Ingolstadt. The very ease with which such a transition was effected is itself evidence that it did not involve any fundamental reappraisal of their basic beliefs. The fact that neither of these men came to publish anything of theological import is thus in its own way as significant as the efforts of their rather more colorful contemporary Matthias Vehe.

The town of Ravensburg, where his father settled and married following the successful campaign to oust Herzog Ulrich of Württemberg in 1534, lay within the ambit of the reform movement of southern Germany, a region characterized by the influence of figures such as Blaurer and Bucer. It was here that the young Suter, who would have been born sometime during the middle years of the next decade, was to develop an aptitude for study through his formation in the classics. While there is no evidence of any strong confessional orientation on the part of the family, it seems likely that they observed the established norms of religious behavior as a means of gaining a secure position within the town. Even though a certain stability was provided by the Peace of Augsburg, it is much less likely that they would have approved any decision to enter on a precarious career within the evangelical ministry. At any event, given the shift in emphasis towards a more Lutheran form of order and discipline in the years following the Schmalkaldic war, it should be remembered that the majority of ordinands from around the Bodensee were matriculated at either Tübingen or the Strasbourg academy. It would thus be wrong to read too much into the fact that Suter was sent to study at Heidelberg at the very time when the university was coming to be seen as the spawning-ground for the more radical wing of the evangelical tradition.

Here Suter would appear to have undertaken the conventional four-year course of study in the arts faculty, where he came into contact with some of the younger émigrés from Switzerland, figures such as Brunner, Grynaeus and Mader who were then active in recruiting support for the Zwinglian cause within the halls. It was thus that he gained an introduction to the circle round Erastus, whose influence did more than anything else to hold the party together. There is no doubt that Suter was deeply impressed both by the personality and learning of the medical doctor, whom he was ever after to describe as ‘mei Mecoenas’. Whether he attended the lectures on the catechism then being provided...
by Ursinus in the seminary or even possessed any formal theological education is not clear, but given the urgent need for suitably qualified candidates for the ministry, it is hardly surprising that he should have been persuaded to accept a calling on completion of his course. Early in 1567 he was ordained to serve in the parish of Klein-Umstadt, a village about twenty miles to the east of Darmstadt. It is not clear why he should have moved some six months later, but the new calling to Feudenheim on the Neckar was probably more congenial since it was less than an hour's journey downstream from Ladenburg. It is notable that in distinction to Vehe whose posting at Kaiserslautern was a good two days on foot from the university town, Suter had every opportunity both to further his studies and to develop his relations with other members of the group.

It was through the ministry that he first came into contact with Sylvan at the very time when the row over discipline was beginning to divide opinion within church and school. As one of the better educated and intellectually active members of the clergy, Suter was to be a frequent visitor at Ladenburg, where he acted as a foil for some of the more radical ideas then being discussed. Although there was doubtless an element of truth in the subsequent suggestion that he had already been led to heterodox views through a perusal of works by Erasmus and Franck, it was not until offered a copy of Biandrata's treatise *De Regno Christi* that his views were crystallized into a forthright rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity. For all that he did not take part in the trip to Speyer, there seems little doubt that he was closely involved in the plan to seek refuge in Transylvania, where he and Neuser were supposed to prepare the way for a more general exodus of ministers dissatisfied with the Calvinist settlement. Whether or not Sylvan actually implicated his young colleague in the conspiracy, the investigation of his library at Ladenburg must have produced sufficient evidence to justify Suter's detention pending further inquiries.

From the report subsequently compiled by Matthias Vehe, it would appear that from the outset Suter adopted the defense of gullibility and made no attempt to justify his heterodox views on the divinity of Christ. When confronted with the evidence against him at his interrogation in November, he declared his willingness both to make a formal retraction and to accept the definition of the truth supplied by Zanchi and other members of the theology faculty. It was rather the obstinacy of Vehe, who was little disposed to acquit the high-handed tactics employed by the Church Council through confessing his own complicity in the affair, that led to the continued detention of both men throughout the following year. After the abortive attempt at escape had led to their transfer to the castle at Dilsberg, the saner councils of Suter would seem to have prevailed and both were released at the end of August 1572. If Vehe’s views became significantly more radical during this period of imprisonment, it doubtless owed much to the quiet influence of his cell-mate.

Although there is no evidence of Suter’s having joined Vehe in Wittenberg, the fact that he was arrested as a result of unguarded remarks in a tavern at Königshofen the following year, serves to confirm that the two remained in close relations after their release. Moreover, it would appear to have been Suter who took the initiative in establishing contact with the Jewish community at Grünsfeld. True to his original intention, Suter then persuaded his friend to join him on the trip to Transylvania, where they can be identified with the two refugees from Heidelberg passing through Cluj early in 1574. There is,
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however, no direct evidence that Suter took the irremediable step of being circumcised, something otherwise little in keeping with his character. Whether or not he was disappointed by this first-hand experience of the unitarian tradition, it was certainly at this time that Suter came to a reappraisal of his own radical stance. Taking his leave of Vehe as they returned through Ingolstadt, he was formally reconciled with the Catholic church and appointed forthwith to take charge of the near-by grammar school at Petershausen.

The fact that the bishop of Constance now came forward to provide a reference may indicate that some family influence was brought to bear on his behalf. At any event, after a brief probationary period during which he would seem to have proved himself to the entire satisfaction of the authorities, in April 1575 he was called to the vacant chair of Mathematics and the Hebrew language at the university of Freiburg. Two years later he took over the more onerous task of providing the students with a foundation course in the Organon. While doubtless encouraged to the study of medicine through his renewed contacts with Hasler, who arrived at the university after his expulsion from Strasbourg at the end of 1575, Suter continued to work within the arts faculty and was even appointed to act as Dean the year after taking his own doctorate in medicine in 1579. Even if he was still obliged to play his cards carefully and to avoid any overt contact with heterodox ideas such as those associated with the Paracelsians, his rehabilitation would seem to have been complete. The absence of any reports of scandal or controversy may be taken to confirm that he had consciously withdrawn from the field of theological debate.

Information on the latter stages of Suter’s career has to be pieced together from the chance remarks contained in his published work. His undoubted success as a medical practitioner probably owed as much to the pragmatic approach to diagnosis advocated by Erastus, as it did to the alchemical dabblings in which he confessed to take an interest. His nomination as municipal doctor in the Swabian town of Horb in the summer of 1583, an appointment probably secured through the good offices of his patron, the Freiherr Basilius Hippen von Remmingsheim, provided an excellent opportunity to gain practical experience, as well as the leisure to prepare some of his work for the press. He cannot have been in this post for more than some eighteen months before a more attractive calling to act as personal physician to the court of the Prince Bishop of Passau, a diocese which extended down the Danube as far as Vienna, obliged him to move once again. Here he would appear to have prospered, acquiring a house in the town some three years later in 1587. It is likewise in this heart-land of the counter-reformation, where Suter seems to have developed a highly influential group of patients and friends within the upper echelons of the church, that his tracks eventually disappear following the publication of his final work, the translation of Conradinus’ study on the so-called Hungarian fever in 1594. Although it is not known when he died, it may be noted that a firm successor to the post of court physician was not named until 1614. Further research into the final part of his career might well reveal an interesting bridge-head into the intellectual culture of the early Baroque.
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B: LIST OF WORKS

Printed works (See Suter: D/1 and 2).

*De rebus naturalibus dialogus* (Freiburg, 1584).

*Kurtzer Bericht was diejenigen ... dem Artzet ... entbieten sollen* (Passau, 1585).

B. Conradinus, *De febris ungaricæ liber*, tr. J. Suter (Passau, 1594).

There are no known manuscript works and no extant correspondence has been found.
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C: SOURCE MATERIAL

Primary Sources

UNIVERSITY MATRICULATION, Heidelberg, [Friday], 4 September 1562. Published in Die Matrikel (1886) 29.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 29 October 1567. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/41. Published in Rott (1911) 441. Suter was transferred to Feudenheim from his previous posting at Kleinumstadt, where he had been working since the beginning of the year.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Wednesday, 19 July 1570. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 311). Published in Rott (1911) 33. According to the assistant minister at Ladenburg, Suter had mentioned Sylvan’s treatise on free will in conversation.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Wednesday, 26 July 1570. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 317). Published in Rott (1911) 34. See Sylvan: Primary Sources (C/1).

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [after 26 July 1570]. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/25. Published in Rott (1911) 39. After meeting with Sylvan some three weeks before to discuss their intended flight, Suter had put the contents of his house up for sale.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Monday, 31 July 1570. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 324). Published in Rott (1911) 39. Suter was mentioned as one of the regular visitors at Ladenburg.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Wednesday, 9 August 1570. L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP 332). Published in Rott (1911) 40-1. While knowing nothing about Suter’s attempts to sell his property, the minister of Käfertal noted rumors of his opposition to the presbyteral system.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg. L. B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/44. Published in Rott (1911) 41. It was reported that Suter was well read on the disputed questions and had openly cast doubt on the necessity for a belief in the eternal divinity of Christ, a point which he held to have little relevance to the work of redemption.

REPORT by the THEOLOGIANS, Heidelberg, [November 1570]. Published in Mieg (1701) 334-5; Struve (1721) 227; and Arnold (1741). Most of the evidence against Suter was taken from the letter to Biandrata, though mention was also made of a writing submitted to Johann Casimir, in which the Arian case had been presented without a proper refutation. Sylvan’s subsequent claim that Suter had already been corrupted through a reading of Erasmus and Franck was at variance with his
own account, where the emphasis was evidently placed on the impact of the heterodox literature from Transylvania.

DEPOSITION by Matthias VEHE, [Dilsberg, Tuesday], 26 August 1572.
See Vehe: Occasional Pieces (D/4).

DEPOSITION by Jacob SUTER, [Dilsberg, Tuesday], 26 August 1572.
G.L.A. Karlsruhe: Urphedt Iacobi Suteri, der Arianismi wegen verhafft worden, Kopialbücher 847, 365v-7r.
See Suter: Occasional Pieces (D/4).

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [Wednesday], 19 August 1573.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/41. Published in Rott (1911) 43-4.
According to the minister of Schweigern, Suter had been with Vehe in Königshofen. Overheard to defend the practice of adultery in the local hostelry, he had been placed in detention. After managing to escape, he had apparently gone to Grünsfeld, where he enjoyed close contact with the Jewish community.

Thomas HILARIUS, letter to Hieronymous Schaller, Kosice, [Thursday], 18 February 1574.
Published in Riederer (1764) 112.
See Vehe: Primary Sources (C/1).

MINUTES of the UNIVERSITY SENATE, Freiburg, [Thursday], 28 April 1575.
The Senate discussed a recommendation from the Bishop of Constance to appoint Suter as professor of Mathematics and Hebrew. Although he had established a good reputation while teaching at the school in Petershausen, concern was expressed ‘ob religionem, quam antehac professus est veneficam häreticamque’. Still it was decided to allow the nomination to proceed.

UNIVERSITY MATRICULATION, Freiburg, [Saturday], 30 April 1575.
Published in Die Matrikel (1907) 548.

MINUTES of the UNIVERSITY SENATE, Freiburg, 1577.
U.A. Freiburg. Mentioned in Die Matrikel (1907) 549.
Appointment of Suter as professor of Logic.

MINUTES of the UNIVERSITY SENATE, Freiburg, [Tuesday], 20 October 1579.
U.A. Freiburg. Mentioned in Die Matrikel (1907) 549.
Suter’s promotion as doctor of medicine.

MINUTES of the UNIVERSITY SENATE, Freiburg, 1580.
U.A. Freiburg. Mentioned in Die Matrikel (1907) 549.
The nomination of Suter as Dean of Arts for the following session.
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MINUTES of the UNIVERSITY SENATE, Freiburg, [Friday], 12 April 1583. U.A. Freiburg. Mentioned in Die Matrikel (1907) 549. Following his appointment as municipal doctor in Horb, it was agreed that Suter could leave on 23 April, St. George's day.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY to the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, Horb, [Monday), 13 January 1584. Published in De rebus naturalibus (1584). See Suter: Published Works (D/I).

EPISTLE DEDICATORY to the Freiherr Basilius Hippen von Remmingsheim, December 1584. Published in Kurzer Bericht (1585). See Suter: Published Works (D/I).


EPISTLE DEDICATORY to the Abbot Bernard of Niederalteich, Passau,1594. Published in Conradinus, De febris ungaricae (1594). See Suter: Published Works (D/I).
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Secondary Sources

Georg DRAUD, *Bibliotheca classica sine catalogus officinalis* (Frankfurt, 1625) 916, 957 and 1002.

Georg M. KÖNIG, *Bibliotheca vetus et nova ... ad annum 1678* (Altdorf, 1678) 787.

See Sylvan: Primary Sources (C/1).

See Sylvan: Primary Sources (C/1).


Here Suter was identified with Palæologus, whose close relationship with Vehe was one reason for the occasional confusion between the two men.

Gottfried ARNOLD, *Unpartyische Kirchen and Ketzer Historien* (Schaffhausen², 1741) li/1132.

See Sylvan: Secondary Sources (C/2).


See Neuser: Previous Studies (C/3).

Friedrich Samuel BOCK, *Historia Antitrinitariorum maxime Socinianismi et Socianorum* (Leipzig, 1774) 969.

See Neuser: Previous Studies (C/3).
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H. SCHREIBER, *Geschichte der Universität Freiburg* (Freiburg, 1868) II/ 214-5.


See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C/2).

*Die Matrikel der Universität Heidelberg*, ed. G. Toepke (Heidelberg, 1886) II/29.


See Vehe: Secondary Sources (C/2).

H. MAYER, *Die Matrikel der Universität Freiburg i. B. von 1460-1656* (Freiburg, 1907) I/II, 548.


See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C/3).


See Sylvan: Previous Studies (C/3).


[The author was likewise responsible for tracing a couple of references to Suter in the Stadtarchiv, including the fact that he acquired a property in Passau in 1587. It would also appear that he undertook to investigate the practice of the local apothecaries shortly after arriving in the town.]


Provides the most detailed account of Suter’s life and work.


*Die Doktorpromotionen der medizinischen Fakultät Freiburg im Breisgau*, ed. E.T. Nauck (Freiburg, 1958) 37.

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D: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Published works

Copies in the *S.B. Munich: 8° Phy.g.469; H.A.B. Wolfenbüttel: Alv: Bc 419 (4) and B.N. Paris: R 12357.

On the verso side of the title page can be found the coat of arms of the Archduke Ferdinand, to whom the work was dedicated from Horb in an epistle dated 13 January 1584. Here Suter began by explaining that during the eight years of his residence at Freiburg he had mostly been concerned with lecturing on the Organon. It was only at the behest of his colleagues that he now considered publishing some of his work to prevent its circulation in the form of student notes. In practice he had found the interrogative method to be a very good way of teaching basic texts. Here the subject matter was particularly important, since an understanding of physics provided an essential foundation for the study of medicine.

Although ill-fortune had caused him to spend much of his life outwith the Archduke's jurisdiction, his family had a distinguished record of military service going back at least to the time when his great-grandfather fell at the battle of Ravenna. A similar fate almost befell the next in line Georg Suter, who recovered after being left for dead following a skirmish in the Swiss wars and survived a further sixty years until he finally succumbed in 1559 at the age of eighty-three. His own father, who was now seventy-seven years old, had fought in the Florentine wars and seen action in the Turkish campaign of 1532 before settling in Württemberg after Herzog Ulrich had been ousted two years later. Loyalty to the Habsburg cause was the assumption on which the fortunes of his family had been based. His own work as a teacher was an extension of this same principle.

The work itself was divided into twenty chapters, starting with a prolegomena on the value of physics. While firmly within the Aristotelian tradition, this did not gainsay the fact that there were many problems, such as that of primary causality and the eternity of the world, where revealed truth provided a better guide. Nor was the discussion limited to the works of the Stagirite. There were important areas of natural philosophy and anthropology where modern authors provided a valuable complement to the work of the ancients. It could not be denied that the study of rocks and plants had been greatly advanced through the work of such as Paracelsus. Given that man was also subject to physical laws, it was just as necessary to have a precise knowledge of the human condition. In discussing the tripartite composition of the soul, mention was made of the work of Erastus, ‘mei quondam quasi Mecoenatis adeoque præceptoris’ [144]. Such work was important in preventing an exaggerated deference to Aristotle that might stand in conflict with the teaching of the Church.
Title page: De rebus naturalibus (1584)
2a. Kurtzer Bericht was diejenigen, die Leibs gebrechen an ihnen befinden, dem Arztet, von dem sie rath begeren, neben ubersendung des Harns, oder auch sonst zuerbieten sollen (Passau, M. Nenninger: 1585). 29 unnumbered pages; octavo; A-B. Copy in the *S.B. Munich: 8° Path. 2612.

The tract was dedicated at the end of December 1584 to Freiherr Basilius Hippen von Remmingsheim, the Obervogt in Horb, for whom Suter had previously acted as personal physician, as well as to the town council in recognition of his recent appointment.

The reason for writing was his concern that those without proper qualifications in medicine were bringing the profession into disrepute by suggesting that a urine sample alone was sufficient to enable proper diagnosis. Although this idea had been fully refuted by Sebastian Kohlreuter, there were still some who sent samples for examination without any description of their condition. Granted that many could not attend the doctor for a proper examination, it was yet essential that they should provide full details of their medical history together with the specimen, which should be no more than six hours old. There was no reason to fear providing such a report, since doctors were obliged to secrecy in the same way as a confessor. Real medicine, an understanding of which required many years of study, was based on an accurate description of the cause of the disease. It was on this account that it should be defended against the claims of herbalists and charlatans.

2b. Kurtzer Bericht ... (Ingolstadt, W. Eder: 1586), octavo.

Although this second edition of Suter's vernacular tract was mentioned in Draud (1625) under the title Instructio pro iis, qui consilii medica deferent, the only copy yet traced in the S.B. Munich: 8° Path. 1389/2 was apparently destroyed during the war.
Kurzer Bericht

Was diejenigen, die Leibsgeschichten an ihnen befinden, dem Arzt, von dem sie nach begehen, neben überflüssiger Burg des Harns oder auch sonstigen stenobiten sollen.

Der Stat Horb zu gutem in Truch versetzt.

Durch Jacobum Saurent, der Arzney und freier Kunst Doctor.

Gedruckt zu Passau durch Mattheum Renninger.

M. D. L XXXV.

Title page: Kurtzer Bericht (1585)
Editions and translations:

1. B. CONRADINUS, *De febris Ungaricæ, eiusque symptomatum curazione liber unus* (Passau, M. Nenninger: 1594). 82 numbered sheets; octavo; A-M.
Copies in the *S.B. Munich: 8° Path. 261; Arc. 195716 and 9.*

The original vernacular edition of this work had been published by Christian Müller in Strasbourg in 1574. The translation was dedicated to the Abbot of St. Mauntius at Niederalteich, about twenty-five miles upstream from Passau on the Danube, where Suter was employed as personal physician to the prince. Their association had begun some nine years before when Suter had been instrumental in Abbot Bernard's recovery from a severe bout of fever. Since he was now a frequent visitor to the monastery in connection with the revenues that made up his stipend, they had been able to develop a much closer relationship.

The idea of producing a translation of Conradinus’ work had first been put forward by Johann Schenk, one of his colleagues at Freiburg. He would have begun the work immediately were it not for the fact that the author’s evident sympathy for the Paracelsian tradition carried with it the suspicion of heresy. Although it was clear that much of Theophrastus’ work was nonsense, this did not mean that it should be completely rejected. In the event he had finished the translation in Horb and would have published it then and there had it not been for other unforeseen impediments.

Following Conradinus’ epistle to the reader outlining the need for a serious treatment of the Hungarian fever, which had been devastating parts of Europe for the best part of a decade, there was a commendation for the work by Johann Stridach, who pointed out that Suter’s translation would now prove the basis of the author’s reputation.

The study itself, which was divided into twenty-seven chapters, bore the subtitle: *Commonefactio brevis et candida de maligna epidemica febri, quam luem appellant Ungaricam.* It is interesting that Suter omitted most of the long digressions on the philosophy of Paracelsus, while at the same time adding a number of parenthetic references to works by Erastus and Leonard Botallus.

At the end was appended a translator’s postscript to the reader, in which Suter mentioned how he had come to be interested in the subject during his visit to Hungary some two years before the appearance of Conradinus’ study. That he had not been the first to diagnose the disease had been confirmed through his subsequent correspondence with Johann Lang and the Freiherr Basilius Hippen von Remmingsheim. An earlier medical report by Johann Crato von Crafftheim was then reproduced as further evidence of this point.

Finally an abridged version of the *Carmen* (1579) was reproduced.
De Febris Ungaricae
Eivsque Symptomatum Curatione
Liber Unus,
In quo etiam affinum morborum selecta remedia pro methodi non
ignaris exitant,
A
Balthasare Conradino Germanica quondam editus lingua,
Ab
Iacobo vero Sytero Medico
Ante aliquot annos
in Latinam conuerse,
Nunc primum in Tyronum
Medicina gratiam excesse,
Passaviae,
Typis Matthei Nenningeri,
cl. I. vic.

Title page: B. Conradinus, De febris Ungaricae (1594)
Occasional Pieces


Although Suter had long held heterodox views, it was only after being shown a copy of the Transylvanian confession by Sylvan that he came to be confirmed in his opinions. Since it was felt that there was little immediate prospect of gaining much support in Germany, they began to contemplate flight. Suter was himself a party to the discussions about finding a place of refuge with Biandrata. After being persuaded of the orthodox doctrine by Zanchi and Tremilli, he had drawn up a confession as a means of confirming his change of heart. Impatient for his release, he had then joined with Vehe in trying to escape. Now grateful for a second chance, he promised never to return or to repeat his previous errors.

2. Epigramma in D. Ioannem Haslerum, in: Poemata a variis autoribus conscripta (Freiburg, 1576) B1b-2a.
See Hasler: Occasional Pieces (D/2).

3. Carmen gratulatorium in honorem J. Suteri (Freiburg, 1579).

Since it has not been possible to trace a copy of the first edition of this work presented to Suter at the time of his doctoral promotion, the following description is based on the abridged version reproduced in Conradinus, De febris Ungaricæ (1594) M5-7.

Following a series of epigrams by a number of his friends on his decision to take up the study of medicine in 1576, there was a long Carmen gratulatorium by Johann Helcher of Tetnang. Coming from a good family, Suter had obtained a thorough grounding in the classics at the school in his home town. After a long period of wandering, he had eventually settled down to a successful teaching career. A consistent champion of the peripatetic school, he was yet opposed to any unnecessary factionalism and regarded the study of mathematics as a useful adjunct to a formation in logic. Although Galen and Hippocrates were his standard authorities in the field of medicine, he had also learnt much from the work of Aulus Celsus. Convinced of the value of pharmaceutical study, he had long sought to bring these insights to bear in the everyday practice of medicine. It was thus that his true vocation had been found.

In a final ‘apokrisis’ Suter noted his gratitude for the work.
INTERPRES CAN-
dido lectori S.

NOLIM, candide lector, te prætereat, tam-
ensi CONRADINVS (vt & Iordanus) 
novum hunc statuat morbum; tamen longe 
ante assignatam ab ipsis originem in Vngaria 
iisdé fere symptomatis us grássatú, cum alios 
multos teltari, tū in Epistolis Ioan: Langium 
(cuius ego exsequius biennio ante expeditioné 
Vngaricam, qua ortam hanc luem Conradi-
nus putat, interfui) & Basilium Hippium à 
Remmingshaim, Horbæ praefectum, &c. qui 
ambo antidoti contra hunc antiquitus à glo-
bulis equini stercoris petité mentioné fecerit. 
Et hic quidem à nobili Bohemo iam sené, ali-
quot ante expeditionem illam annís, ad hunc 
modum descriptam sé dixit accepisse: quæ folio-
rii salutis M. j. globulos equini stercoris num. 
iii. aquæ & aceti rosaceorum, ana q. c. deco-
que du tertia líquoris pars deperdatur, & bo-
nus haustus post colationem videatur reman-
surus: quo principio morbi ebidito, indulgate 
zger sudori. Hanc descriptionem, quod alibi 
non exsit, silentio præterire nolui. Côtulum 
quod sequitur, ob eius breuitate, ad illu-
frandum præsens argumentum 
adici curauimus.

V A L E.

M 3

CON-

Suter’s Postscript to the Reader
Despite the fact that Hasler came from long established and relatively prosperous farming stock in the Bernese Schöntal, where he was born during the month of December 1548, it does not appear that he was early designated for an academic career. It was only after an accident had left him impeded in the use of one hand that he first turned to study at the age of nine, when it is recorded that he was able to learn to read within the space of three days. Some two years later his abilities were brought to the attention of the local lord, Niklaus von Diesbach, a member of the board of scholarchs, who until his death in 1585 was to act as Hasler’s patron and protector. It was thanks to this support that he gained a place at the internat established by the municipality in the now disused Franciscan convent, together with a grant to pay for his schooling from the Tillmann bequest. After working his way through the curriculum in less than six years, in the summer of 1565 he was sent to study under the direction of Theodor Zwinger at the university of Basel. It seems likely that his return to Bern some months later at the time of the Gentili affair was due to the fact that his basic education was deemed as yet inadequate and he had to spend much of the next two years repeating some of the course work while himself providing instruction in the lower school. Yet it is clear that he was really being groomed for the ministry, a vocation to which he was given every encouragement by the theologian Benedikt Marti, at whose lectures on the fourth gospel he was in regular attendance. If he had earlier come in contact with heterodox ideas, there was certainly no evidence of the fact.

It was already established practice for the majority of the more gifted students from Bern to be sent to further their education in the arts faculty at Heidelberg. Given that the seminary was only open to students prepared to enter the Palatine service, those with a municipal scholarship were usually provided with a letter of recommendation to one such as Adam Neuser, who would take over responsibility for discipline as well as a measure of pastoral training. Arriving as he did in the summer of 1568, the very time of the row over the theses on excommunication, it was hardly surprising that Hasler came to be closely associated with the opposition group around the university. There is no doubt that he welcomed the opportunity of some contact with Erastus, the most distinguished member of the medical faculty and one whose views enjoyed wide support at home. It is less clear in what context he was introduced to Sylvan, though he would seem to have acted as a courier bringing news and information the some ten miles downstream to Ladenburg. It was, for instance, Hasler who was sent to ask the professor of Old Testament, Emanuele Tremelli, whether any evidence could be found in the scriptures to justify the claim that the doctrine of the Trinity was implicit in the Pentateuch. In such circumstances he came to be familiar with the ideas then tentatively being discussed and even volunteered to help the minister with the preparation of a fair copy of his work for publication. It was the discovery of the transcriptions of the two works on freewill and the Apostles’ Creed following the search of Sylvan’s study that led to the detention of Hasler on suspicion of complicity.
The severity of the reaction against the dissident group must have taken the young man by surprise and it required a direct intervention from the council in Bern to secure his release from the custody of the beadle some six weeks later. It is possible that his attempt to pass off some of the blame on Johann Fädmingen, one of the leading ministers in the town, only made matters worse by exaggerating the importance of the affair and Hasler was obliged to present a full statement of his views on the Trinity before being allowed to continue with his studies in Lausanne later that year. Although still enjoying the support of influential members of the establishment, it is notable that from this point on his every movement was to be dogged by the constant suspicion of the pastoral corps. Here it was a question of character rather than conviction, since it was felt that an attitude of critical detachment from the doctrinal norms of the church would only be encouraged by further study at university. Resigned to the fact that they could not prevent the prolongation of his stipendium, the Antistes Johann Haller and his colleagues had now serious doubts as to his suitability for the ministry and were determined not to overlook any further evidence of aberrant behavior.

Having gained permission to study in Leipzig, Hasler made little attempt to assuage these fears and even seemed to play into the hands of his critics when the following year he announced his intention to accompany a group of Polish students on a trip back across the Vistula. No sooner was this reported in Bern than the suggestion was raised that his real destination was to join the other radicals in Transylvania. Granted that he did actually visit Cracow at the time, this should not be taken to indicate that he looked to establish relations with any of the leaders of dissident opinion. Indeed, it would appear from a report by Christoph Thretius that he was rather more anxious about his own future prospects and sought to develop his contacts in Lithuania with this in mind. Meanwhile the possibility of changing from theology to medicine, a subject in which he had long professed an interest, offered an easy way out of any residual conflict with the church authorities. In practice this meant that he came within the orbit of Simon Simonius, the Averroïst philosopher from Lucca who had earlier been dismissed from teaching posts in both Geneva and Heidelberg for his skeptical attitude towards questions of revealed truth. Only on condition that he restrain from such company were the scholarchs in Bern prepared to provide Hasler with the necessary funding for his medical training.

Were it not for the fact that he was now employed as private tutor to two scions of the Polish nobility, it would be difficult to see why Hasler then elected to go to Strasbourg, whose academy was better known for teaching the art of rhetoric than for studies in the field of medicine. Some hope of being called as a lecturer on the Organon may have encouraged him to set about the preparation of his master’s thesis as soon as he arrived in the town in the late summer of 1574. Seeking to give the lie to any suspicions concerning the orthodoxy of his views, he turned to the Metaphysics of Aristotle in order to demonstrate the conformity between the natural knowledge of God as contained in the work of pagan philosophy and the revealed truths of scripture. Although the suggestion that the Stagirite might have worshipped the Divine Trinity was greeted with some skepticism, the thesis itself was approved as an ingenious way of presenting a wide-ranging knowledge of classical philosophy. It was only the fact that several months later Hasler ventured to defend the reformed teaching on predestination against the criticism of Nicholas Florus, a leading member of the clerical assembly and an outspoken
champion of the Lutheran cause, which led to the affair being placed in a new perspective. Anxious to avoid being seen as a harbor for any form of religious radicalism, a category that now included the latent rationalism of the reformed tradition, the academy could do little to protect the interests of their doctoral student. When the young man refused to provide the apology required by the pastors, there was little option but to refer the matter to the attention of the civil authority, who responded by ordering his imprisonment for having violated the censorship laws through the publication of his work. A few days on bread and water served to convince Hasler that philosophical argument could little avail against ‘thick walls and strong locks’, and so he signed the form of retraction drawn up by the Dean as the price of his release on 22 August 1575.

For all that this latest clash with authority led to the abrupt termination of his residence in Strasbourg, it is clear from the fact he was able to secure his doctoral promotion early the following year in Freiburg that much of the work had already been done. Here he had reestablished contact with Jacob Suter, the former associate of Sylvan who had likewise decided on a medical career after his return from Transylvania. It is notable, however, that Hasler had no intention of practicing medicine and, since there was no immediate prospect of academic preferment, he would seem to have decided to continue with his work as tutor to the Monvid family in Lithuania. It was during the following two years that he really developed his consuming interest in astrology as a means of reconciling the insights of classical medicine with the methods of Paracelsus. This was a clear departure from the strict adherence to the principles of Galen enjoined by his mentors and would seem to have brought him into closer contact with the Zürich doctor Anton Schneeberger, whom he had almost certainly met during his brief visit to Cracow. Much of this time was spent in Augsburg, where Hasler’s two major works, the catalogue of medicinal compounds and a treatise on the formation of syllogisms, were both published in 1578. It was probably not for a further three years that the party finally returned to Poland having completed what appears to have been a grand tour of many of the leading academies.

The next indication of Hasler’s activity was his eventual recall to Bern, where he was appointed to succeed Stephan Kunz as municipal doctor in 1582. Since he had neither experience nor aptitude for practical medicine, it is not surprising that he was transferred the following year to a chair in the arts faculty. It was at this time that he got married and had a succession of children, whose highly unusual names may suggest a developing interest in the Cabalistic tradition. Yet his most successful undertaking lay in the composition of works of practical astrology, cheap calendars predicting the course of weather and harvest for the benefit of the local population. For all that the attitude of the reformers had been ambivalent towards such work, since it rested on an implicit recognition of natural theology, it was gradually being accepted within protestant circles as a legitimate complement to divine revelation. Hasler himself was careful to hedge any form of prognosis with the caveat that the course of all future events was dependent on the will of God. Certainly there was no suggestion in any of this work that his views were out of step with the church authorities.

The precise circumstances of his demission at the end of August 1590 are difficult to reconstruct, though some information can be gleaned from the surviving correspondence. According to Hasler the conflict with Abraham Musculus stemmed from the fact that he
encouraged the students to think for themselves in trying to resolve some of the paradoxical claims that lay at the heart of the faith. The doctrine of the Trinity was certainly one of these issues, though it is interesting that Hasler was able to convince Johann Jacob Gryneus, the real architect of the reformed settlement in the territory of Basel, concerning the orthodoxy of his views on this point. Notwithstanding the publication of his earlier confession on the Trinity and the continued backing of members of the civil administration, it was clear that he could no longer be employed in opposition to the wishes of the ministers. Attempts to find an alternative calling either within the cantons or in Alsace likewise proved to no avail and it was thus that after a conflict of over two years duration Hasler was finally forced into exile in the spring of 1593. There was an aspect of self-fulfilling prophecy about the earlier comments of Johann Haller to the effect that the stain of heresy could never be erased.

Virtually nothing is known about the final years of Hasler’s life, which he would seem to have spend in the protection of a noble family in the area of Vilnius in Lithuania. Here he continued with his astrological work in the hope of discovering a sure basis for medical prognosis and even looked to the patronage of the imperial court to further such study. Although he still took an interest in the more conventional aspects of medicine, it seems likely that he was employed as a private tutor rather than as a doctor. His final recorded work was a treatise on the plague, where once again his firm conviction in the doctrine of divine providence was evident in the claim that flight from infection was to no avail. Despite his association with those of a radical disposition, there is no evidence that he ever came to abandon the characteristic features of the reformed faith. It has unfortunately never been established when and where he met his death.
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B: LIST OF WORKS

Published Works.

*Aphorismi Thetici Aristotelei* (Strasbourg, 1575).

*De Logistica Medica problematis novem* (Augsburg, 1578).

*Tabula aphoristica* (Augsburg, 1578).

*Fröhliche Practick cuff das 1588 Jar* (Cluj, 1588).

*Astrologische Practica auff das 1590 Jar* (Basel, 1590).

*Paradoxus annorum mundi a creatione usque ad Jesum Christum* (Vilnius, 1596).

*De fuga et praeclusione pestilentiae* (Vilnius, 1602).

Manuscript works


*Duae tabulae thesium astrologicarum*, S.B. Bern, MS Inc. V. 174.

*De sacrosancta trinitate confessio apologetica*, A.S.T. Strasbourg 354/48, 419r-422r.

List of Correspondents.

Letters to and from the Town Council of Bern; Christian Amport; Girolamo Zanchi; Arbogast Rechberger; the Senate of the Strasbourg Academy; and Johann Jacob Grynaeus.
C: SOURCE MATERIAL

Primary Sources

ROLL of SCHOLARS, Bern, [Monday], 11 November 1560.
S.A. Bern: Stiftsurbar 116.
Hasler was appointed to a bursary from the Tillmann foundation,

Benedikt MARTI, letter to Theodor Zwinger, Bern, [Tuesday], 3 July 1565.
U.B. Basel: G II 37, 13. Published in Graf (1888) 47-8.
Recommendation for Hasler and his fellow student Michael Kummer.

Published in Die Matrikel (1956) 159.

UNIVERSITY MATRICULATION, Heidelberg, July 1565.
Published in Die Matrikel (1886) 47.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [July 1570].
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP f.308). Published in Rott (1911) 31.
See Sylvan: Primary Sources (C/1).

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, [after Saturday, 22 July 1570].
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP f.316). Published in Rott (1911) 34.
The Bernese student now under detention had written home suggesting that he had been
arrested on account of the row over discipline.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Wednesday, 26 July 1570.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP f.317). Published in Rott (1911) 37.
It was not clear to what extent Hasler shared the views of the dissident group, since his
only involvement had been to prepare a transcription of Sylvan’s work. He had recently
been sent instructions to have a fair copy of the treatise on free will ready for publication.
There should certainly be no question of his release, though it was doubtful whether the
Rector could be persuaded to have him placed in close confinement without a direct
mandate from the court.

MINUTES of the CHURCH COUNCIL, Heidelberg, Friday, 4 August 1570.
L.B. Karlsruhe: Ms. 555/(KRP f.329). Published in Rott (1911) 40.
According to Ottheinrich Wonecker, Hasler had been responsible for fetching a collection
of theses on the Trinity from a certain doctor in Speyer, which had been discussed during
his visit to Ladenburg some three months before.
The TOWN COUNCIL of BERN, letter to the Elector Friedrich, Bern; [Saturday], 26 August 1570.
In reply to the request for further information about their student Hasler, a copy of the relevant part of his recent letter to Fädminger was being sent. The pastor himself denied having requested a copy of Sylvan’s work. Since it seemed that Hasler had acted out of ignorance, he should be sent back to Bern, where he would receive a suitable caution.

Johann HALLER, letter to Rudolph Gualter, Bern, (Thursday), 31 August 1570.
S.A. Zurich: E II 370a, 430. Published in Horn (1913) 306-7.
During his interrogation Sylvan had implicated their student Hasler in the Arian conspiracy. He now admitted to preparing a transcription of the heretical work, as well as of another treatise on free will, but claimed that this had been undertaken at the behest of Johann Fädminger. The Elector had sent a full report to Bern, while placing Hasler in the charge of the beadle. The Council was greatly concerned and proceeded to interrogate the minister, who denied all knowledge of the affair. Unfortunately the only reference to the work in Hasler’s letter was deliberately obscure. In any case the transcript had not been sent. Still it was distressing to think that such views might gain entry to Bern.

Heinrich BULLINGER, letter to Theodore Beza, Zurich, [Thursday], 14 September 1570.
News was given of Hasler’s recall to Bern.

HASLER’S CONFESSION of FAITH, Bern, [Saturday], 30 September 1570.
See Hasler: Occasional Pieces (D/4).

Johann HALLER, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Bern, [Sunday], 1 October 1570.
S.A. Zurich: E II 371b, 1233ɔv.
Although Hasler had excused himself on grounds of ignorance, he had been required to present a confession condemning the errors of the Arian group, a copy of which was sent to Heidelberg. They had expected to receive a further letter either from the Elector or the rector of the university, but were told by some merchants that Hasler would get no testimonial.

CHRONICLE of Johann HALLER, 1550-1573.
B.B. Bern: Ms. h.h. I/117.
It was recorded that the Hasler had been arrested along with the Arian faction in Heidelberg. Despite his close association with the group, he had been allowed to return home, where he presented a written confession. Only on this basis had it been decided to continue with his grant.

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Bern, [Monday], 23 April 1571.
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 380/114.
Notes the permission for Hasler to study in Leipzig.
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MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTS, Bern, [Monday], 23 April 1571.
S.A. Bern: Sekelmeister Rechnung.
Hasler was to receive a supplementary payment of 20 florins.

UNIVERSITY MATRICULATION, Leipzig, 1571.
Published in Die Matrikel (1909) I/166.

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Bern, [1573].
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 384/124.
Reports the decision to order Hasler’s return from Marburg, the costs of the journey being met with an additional grant of ‘40 Kronen für Zerung’.

The TOWN COUNCIL of BERN, letter to Johann Hasler, Bern, [Tuesday], 25 August 1573.
S.A. Bern: AA III/34, Deutsch Missiven-Buch GG:
See Hasler: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Bern, [Wednesday], 17 March 1574.
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 386/101.
The bursar was instructed to pay the next installment of Hasler’s grant of 20 crowns, though a decision as to whether he should be allowed to change to medicine must be referred to the Scholarchs.

Johann HALLER, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Bern, [Monday], 29 March 1574.
S.A. Zurich: E II 370a, 495.
The ministers had raised the problem of Hasler’s attitude with the Scholarchs on several occasions, but his protectors always managed to prevent any disciplinary action being taken. They had nothing personally against the young man, ‘aber er hat das gifft gesogen’. Unfortunately he was good at dissimulation.

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Heidelberg, [Monday], 10 May 1574.
S.A. Zurich: E II 361, 47v.
The letter contained a long report on Hasler. For all that he was a good student, his arrogance and ambition gave grounds for concern. Some such figures turned out quite well in the end, though others required to be watched. Since his departure from Heidelberg, it was rumored that he had been traveling in Poland. Keen to dispute on the doctrine of the Trinity, he was yet capable of defending whichever side of the argument pleased him. It was for this reason that Erastus had never replied to the several requests for a reference, including the most recent letter received from Leipzig.

Johann HALLER, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Bern, [Friday], 20 August 1574.
S.A. Zurich: E II 370a, 509r-10r.
In moving from Leipzig to Strasbourg, Hasler had sent his patrons a testimonial from a certain Dr. Thomingius, whose sons he had provided with private lessons. It was surprising that he should decide to go to Strasbourg to study medicine.

Johann HALLER, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Bern, [Tuesday], 31 August 1574.
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S.A. Zurich: E II 370a, 508rv.

Thretius had provided a good report on Hasler’s conduct in Cracow, where he seemed to have attracted several pupils from influential quarters. After hearing of his complaints about being persecuted, Haller had written quite openly to explain the reasons for their disquiet. His views on the eucharist were quite orthodox, but if he did not pay attention to their advice the problem of Gentili might start all over again. Otherwise he had fine references and was regarded as exceptionally strong on Aristotle.

REPORT by Johann HALLER, Bern, [August 1574].
S.A. Zurich: E II 370a, 550rv.

As a native of Diesbach, Hasler had always been able to command the support of influential figures in the locality. Fädminger had been his most consistent patron and was inclined to overlook his natural arrogance. The problem really began when he came into close contact with both Neuser and Sylvan in Heidelberg. Not only had he helped to transcribe their work, but in general he had been a party to their secrets: ‘was sie selber nitt dörffen, habend sie durch inn ußgericht’. When subsequently interviewed in Bern, he sought to make light of the affair and presented a confession. Since he had obtained no testimonial from the university, it had been decided that he should remain in Switzerland for the completion of his studies. However, his patrons had managed to obtain permission for him to move to Leipzig, where he immediately joined a group of students on a trip to Poland. Since it was assumed that his intention had been to join Biandrata in Transylvania, his stipendium had been offered to someone else. After the receipt of a letter from Leipzig requesting permission to change from theology to medicine, he had been supplied with a new grant on condition that he break off all contact with Simonius and move to Wittenberg pending a settlement of the political situation in France. This notwithstanding, he had continued to study with the Italian philosopher, ‘der nitt nur ein Tritheist sonder ein Atheist ist’. Moreover, it would appear that the rector had received several complaints about Hasler’s own attitude, including mention of a letter in which he had described those responsible for the execution of Gentili as ‘pfaffos carnifices’. They had been given a full report on his conduct by Gabriel Blauner on his return from Leipzig and had also been in touch with Erastus, who noted that ‘er wölt der tüfel hette inn and den Simonium’. Only Fädminger had been opposed to taking any form of disciplinary action, though in the end it was decided to do little more than send a strongly worded letter of caution.

B.B. Bern: Cod. A 30, 68.
See Hasler: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

EPISTLE DEDICATORY to Nicholas von Diesbach, Strasbourg, [Monday], 7 March 1575.
Published in Aphorismi (1575).
See Hasler: Published Works (D/1).

Johann HALLER, letter to Heinrich Bullinger, Bern, [Thursday], 21 April 1575.
S.A. Zurich: E II 370a, 516rv.
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In a postscript it was noted that he was sending a copy of Hasler’s *Aphorisms*, ‘quibus ex Aristotele conatur probare illum recte sensisse de unitate et trinitate Dei: vult ita seipsum purgare, ut credamus ilium quoque recte sentiret’. The argument was stupid, but he sent the copy so that Bullinger might better appreciate the problems posed by the case. Some members of the Council thought of Hasler as being extremely learned and were inclined to dismiss the objections of the ministers as the result of jealousy.

MINUTES of the UNIVERSITY SENATE, Heidelberg, [Saturday], 30 April 1575.
Hasler’s work in preparing a transcription of Sylvan’s treatise on free will was discussed as evidence of the connection between the Arian group and Erastus’ supporters within the university.

MEMORANDUM of Andreas PLANER, Strasbourg, [Wednesday], 11 May 1575.
Not only were Hasler’s efforts to circulate his theses a breech of the undertaking made at the time of his promotion, but the recent row with Nicholas Florus after a sermon in the Munster also showed that his real intention was to provoke controversy. While he was at full liberty to disagree with the pastors, he could not be allowed to attack the official norms of the church.

Giralamo ZANCHI, letter to Johann Hasler, Heidelberg, [Tuesday], 28 June 1575.
See Hasler: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Strasbourg, [Saturday], 13 August 1575.
A.M. Strasbourg: Ratsprotokoll 1575, 479r/v.
Instead of retracting his *Aphorismi*, Hasler had presented a long defense of the work. In was accordingly agreed to have him placed in custody pending a decision on the affair by the Scholarchs.

REPORT by Johann MARBACH, Strasbourg, [Wednesday], 17 August 1575.
A.S.T. Strasbourg: Bericht von Johannis Hasleri Disputation und langer Apologia, auff begeren der herrn Schulpfleger gestellt, als er in gefangnuß gelegt, 354/37, 216r-244r. An autograph copy can be found in A.S.T. Strasbourg: 65/8, 110r-151v, where it forms part of the documentation concerning the controversy between the pastors and the professors in the academy. A further copy is contained in the *Varia Ecclesiastica* IV, A.S.T. Strasbourg: 169/54, 479r-88v.

The clergy had two grounds for complaint against Hasler. Following a sermon in the Munster, he had taken his pupils to visit the preacher with the intention of challenging his attack on the theology of Calvin. Although Nicholas Florus responded the very next day with a list of places to prove that the reformed held God to be the author of sin, the young man remained unconvinced and even suggested that the pastor was ignorant of elementary grammar. This was an obvious slight on the reputation of the town.
The second problem concerned his recent disputation arguing that Aristotle had recognized the Christian doctrine of God: ‘Welches ... nicht allein ein öffentliche unwarheit seye, sondern auch ein rechte blasphemia oder Gotteslesterung’ [217r]. It had been hoped that the Dean would take action, though in the event little was done other than to impound the remaining copies of the Aphorismi, which had been published in breech of the censorship laws. Only after further complaint was he given a formal reprimand by the Scholarchs and told to present the authorities with a revised statement of his views. Instead of preparing a short retraction, the resulting apology only made matters worse by suggesting that the Dean had originally approved his claims about the natural knowledge of God. His unrepentant attitude was revealed in the fact that he had sent copies of his work to Heidelberg and Tübingen.

The pastors then turned to consider the theological implications of the affair. The basic problem was his refusal to recognize the Law/Gospel distinction, ‘doruff sich das gantze h. Christenthum gründet and alles was dorinnen gelert and predigt wird’ [230r]. This was particularly clear in his discussion of the Trinity, which was a secret revealed only through grace, but it also led to other errors on Christ’s role as mediator and the doctrine of original sin. It was implicit in Hasler’s work that Aristotle had been saved through the exercise of natural virtue. Not only was this position false, but it also threatened to lead to a revival of philosophical speculation that would do great damage to the Church.

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Strasbourg, [Wednesday], 17 August 1575.
A.M. Strasbourg: Ratsprotokoll 1575, 483v-4r.
Following the submission of Marbach’s report, it was decided that Hasler should be interrogated to discover the names of any ‘Consorten’ and then asked to prepare a retraction. Only if he refused to cooperate was he to be placed in chains.

INTERROGATION of Johann HASLER, Strasbourg, [Wednesday], 17 August 1575.
A.S.T. Strasbourg: Interrogatoria oder fragstuck M. Joanni Haslero furgehalten, 354/40, 398r-400v. An incomplete copy can be found at A.S.T. Strasbourg: 354/41. Thirteen questions were listed on which Hasler was required to provide clarification. It was not true to suggest that he was being accused of Arianism, though he should learn to distinguish more clearly between revealed truth and the conclusions of philosophy.

REPORT by Andreas PLANER, Strasbourg, [Wednesday], 17 August 1575.
A.S.T. Strasbourg: M. Johannem Haslerum Bernatem belangend, 72/10, 62r-63v. This report, which was drawn up by the former Dean in consultation with the Scholarchs following their interrogation of Hasler and includes several marginal annotations in the hand of Marbach, was read at the Council meeting on Saturday, 20 August 1575. It would appear that Hasler had sent copies of his Aphorismi to Girolamo Zanchi, as well as to his patrons in Bern. Still it did not seem that there was much substance to the accusation of Arianism, which had first been raised by a certain [Otto] Gyphanius. His attitude towards the eucharistic controversy was quite reasonable. Clearly the best solution would be to require a formal retraction.

Johann HASLER, letter to the Scholarch Arbogast Rechberger, Strasbourg, [Saturday], 20 August 1575.
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A.S.T. Strasbourg: 354/44.  
See Hasler: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Johann HASLER, letter to the Academic Senate, Strasbourg, [Saturday], 20 August 1575.  
See Hasler: Register of Correspondence. (D/5).

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Strasbourg, [Saturday], 20 August 1575.  
A.M. Strasbourg: Ratsprotokoll 1575, 490⁻¹⁻¹⁻¹.  
Having read the report on the interrogation of Hasler, it was decided that he could be released from prison after presenting a formal retraction.

RETRACTION of HASLER, Strasbourg, [Monday], 22 August 1575.  
See Hasler: Manuscript Works. (D/3).

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Bern, [Wednesday], 31 August 1575.  
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 390/58.  
It was decided to require the immediate return of Hasler to Bern.

Johann HASLER, letter to the Town Council of Bern, Strasbourg, [Tuesday], 20 September 1575.  
S.A. Bern: Unnützpapiere 56/69, 1121-35.  
See Hasler: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

UNIVERSITY MATRICULATION, Freiburg, [Friday], 16 December 1575.  
Published in *Die Matrikel* (1907) 554.  
It appears from the entry beside Hasler’s name, ‘artium magister ut asserit’, that he lacked a formal attestation of his qualifications from Strasbourg.

MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTS, Bern. S.A. Bern: Seckelmeister Rechnung 1577 (I).  
Reports the continuation of Hasler’s grant for a further two years.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY to Nicholas Monvid of Dorohostajski, [Monday], 28 April 1578.  
Published in *De Logistica Medica* (1578).  
See Hasler: Published Works (D/1).

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Bern, [Thursday], 18 May 1581.  
Discussions concerning the recall of Hasler from Lithuania. Martin Zobel, an entrepreneur with whom he had had some contact in Augsburg, was asked to try and persuade him to return to Bern.

The TOWN COUNCIL of BERN, letter to Johann Hasler, Bern, [Thursday], 18 May 1581.  
S.A. Bern: A III/37, Deutsch Missiven-Buch K K 64.
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See Hasler: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

The TOWN COUNCIL of BERN, letter to Johann Hasler and Nicholas Monvid, Bern, [Monday], 20 August 1582.
S.A. Bern: AA III/37, Deutsch Missiven-Buch K K 584.
See Hasler: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Bern, [Monday], 24 September 1582.
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 404/201.
Appointment of Hasler as Stadtarzt in succession to Stephan Kunz.

The TOWN COUNCIL of BERN, letter to Johann Hasler, Bern, Monday, 24 September 1582.
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 404/201.
See Hasler: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Thomas ERASTUS, letter to Peter Hybner, Basel, 1582.
S.A. Bern: A 27/5. Published in Hagen (1886) 104.
There was a cryptic reference to his former pupil in Bern: ‘Haslerus istacne est? Et quae miracula edit homo?’

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Bern, [Thursday], 24 October 1583.
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 406/276.
In the light of complaints about Hasler’s aptitude for general practice, the question was raised as to whether he might not be transferred to another post.

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Bern, [Friday], 8 November 1583.
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 406/311.
Appoints Hasler to a chair in arts in succession to Solomon Blepp. Although obliged to resign as Stadtarzt, he was allowed to continue in private practice.

BAPTISMAL REGISTER, Bern, [Tuesday], 19 November 1583.
S.A. Bern: Taufrodel V/52.
Baptism of Gabriel Hasler.

BAPTISMAL REGISTER, Bern, [Sunday], 9 January 1586.
S.A. Bern: Taufrodel V/111.
Baptism of Asaria Hasler.

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Bern, [Monday], 20 November 1587.
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 414/224.
Payment to Hasler for his work in compiling a calendar.

COURT ROLL, Bern, 1588.
S.A. Bern: Chorgerichts bücher 59/94.
Records Hasler’s drunken behavior on Easter Monday [8 April].
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BAPTISMAL REGISTER, Bern, [Sunday], 28 April 1588.
S.A. Bern: Taufrodel V/168.
Baptism of Gedor Hasler.

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Bern, [Thursday], 13 June 1588.
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 415/388.
Hasler was to be punished for his drunken behavior by spending five days on bread and water in prison.

BAPTISMAL REGISTER, Bern, [Sunday], 8 March 1590.
S.A. Bern: Taufrodel V/213.
Baptism of Jammin Hasler.

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Bern, [Friday], 14 August 1590.
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 420/35.
The protection accorded Hasler following his recent row with Musculus and his colleagues was now lifted.

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Bern, [Friday], 11 September 1590.
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 420/84.
The nomination of the minister Ulrich Trog as a replacement for Hasler, who had been deprived of his chair on 28 August.

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Bern, [Friday], 11 September 1590.
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 420/196.
Orders Hasler’s wife to make arrangements to vacate their home.

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Bern, [Friday], 25 September 1590.
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 420/208.
Suggests that Hasler be called to the ministry.

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Bern, [Saturday], 27 March 1591.
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 421/172.
A letter of recommendation should be sent to the authorities in Mulhouse in support of Hasler’s attempt to gain a post as municipal doctor.

The TOWN COUNCIL of BERN, letter to the Town Council in Mulhouse, Bern, [Saturday], 27 March 1591.
S.A. Bern: A III/41, Deutsch Missiven-Buch 00 209.
Hasler had worked for several years in the school, as well as fulfilling the functions of municipal doctor, and they were quite satisfied with his services. The only reason for his seeking to leave was a conflict of personality, which had led to tension with several members of the pastoral corps. It was very much hoped that he would be able to find suitable employment for himself and his family in Mulhouse.

Johann HASLER, letter to Johann Jacob Grynæus, Mulhouse, [Thursday], 6 May 1591.
See Hasler: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Johann HASLER, letter to Johann Jacob Grynæus, Mulhouse, [Wednesday], 12 May 1591.
U.B. Basel: G.II.6/348. See also G². II.3/47.
See Hasler: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Johann HASLER, letter to Johann Jacob Grynæus, Mulhouse, [Wednesday], 26 May 1591.
See Hasler: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Johann HASLER, letter to Johann Jacob Grynæus, Mulhouse, [Monday], 31 May 1591.
See Hasler: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

Johann HASLER, letter to Johann Jacob Grynæus, [Basel, June 1591].
See Hasler: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Bern, [Monday], 14 June 1591.
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 421/347.
It was not necessary to reply to Hasler’s letter, though everything should be done to try and help if he decided to return to Bern.

HASLER’S CONFESSION of FAITH, Mulhouse, [Thursday], 17 June 1591.
See Hasler: Occasional Pieces (D/4).

Johann HASLER, letter to Johann Jacob Grynæus, Mulhouse, [Sunday], 27 June 1591.
See Hasler: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

HASLER’S CONFESSION of FAITH, Strasbourg, [Thursday], 8 July 1591.
See Hasler: Manuscript Works (D/3).

Johann HASLER, letter to Johann Jacob Grynæus, Basel, [Thursday], 15 July 1591.
See Hasler: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

UNIDENTIFIED MEMORANDUM, Bern, [Saturday], 7 August 1591.
S.A. Bern: Unnützpapiere 16/134.
Mentions financial support for Hasler.

Johann HASLER, letter to Johann Jacob Grynæus, Bern, [Thursday], 11 November 1591.
U.B. Basel: G.II.6/343. See also G². II.3/54.
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See Hasler: Register of Correspondence (D/5).

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL, Bern, [Saturday], 20 November 1591.
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 422/194.
Payment to Hasler for his work in compiling calendars.

TESTIMONIAL for HASLER, Bern, [Sunday], 20 February 1592.
S.A. Bern: Deutsch Spruch-Buch F F F 261.
Obliged to leave on account of his disagreement with the ministers, Hasler was yet welcome to return to their jurisdiction at some stage in the future.

MINUTES of the COUNCIL, Bern, [Monday], 26 March 1593.
S.A. Bern: Ratsmanuale 425/237.
Records the departure of Hasler.

S. LEEMANN, Narratio historica de ordine et successione professorum.
Here the grounds for the dismissal of Hasler from his chair in Bern were discussed. It was suggested that ‘sine fructu legerit et in lectionibus suis S.S. dictis turpiter et profane mode fuerit abusus’. This had given rise to conflict with Abraham Musculus.

AUTOGRAPH BOOK of Samuel WYSS, Leipzig, [Thursday], 10 May 1593.
S.B. Bern: Ms 677/238.
Hasler supplied the Bernese student with a citation from Hippocrates and noted that he was en route for Vilnius in Lithuania.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY to the Emperor Rudolf II, Vilnius, [Thursday], 8 July 1596.
Published in Paradoxos (1596).
See Hasler: Published Works (D/1).

DEDICATION to Constantine Ostrog, Palatine of Kiev, Vilnius, [Friday], 9 July 1591.
Published in Paradoxos (1596).
See Hasler: Published Works (D/1).

EPISTLE DEDICATORY to Christoph Monvid, Marshal to the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Vilnius, [Friday], 13 August 1602.
Published in De fuga pestilentiae (1602).
See Hasler: Published Works (D/1).
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See Hasler: Previous Studies (C/3).


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Previous Studies


As the title would suggest, the purpose of this article was less to present a full-scale biography of the hitherto almost forgotten figure of Hasler than to establish his position within the line of dissident thinkers active in Bern since the early days of the reform. Aside from the wealth of material derived from the council minutes and other sources in the Staatsarchiv, Bähler took most of his evidence from the surviving correspondence between Johann Haller and Heinrich Bullinger in Zurich. Following his association with the Arian group in Heidelberg, Hasler had to live under a constant cloud of suspicion, much of which was organized by the clergy in order to thwart the advance of one whose critical attitude was seen as a threat to the reformed order. The survival of a liberal element in both church and school was only due to the protection of several powerful figures within the magistracy. The final suppression of religious dissent came after the appointment of a long-standing antagonist in the person of Abraham Musculus to the post of Antistes. Denied any chance of preferment in his home town, Hasler and his family were eventually obliged to emigrate to the more tolerant atmosphere of Lithuania. In common with the other figures here discussed, this troubled career can be seen to typify the problems of an inquiring mind in the nascent age of orthodoxy.

While this is to construct a plausible framework within which to trace Hasler’s movements, it contains a number of serious drawbacks as far as the analysis of ideas is concerned. Quite apart from the fact that the significance of his work as a medical astrologer is almost wholly overlooked, the tendency to accept at face value the accusation of heterodoxy only serves to obscure the rather more complex nature of religious belief. This much is clear from the account of the row with the pastors in Strasbourg, where it is simply assumed that the concept of the Trinity outlined in the *Aphorismi* was liable to condemnation. It is unfortunate that Hasler’s subsequent apology, which provides by far the most detailed statement of his whole approach to the problem, was evidently not available to the author. Even if this does confirm a certain intellectual affinity with some of the dissident leaders, it hardly follows that his views were derived from this source. Given the absence of any evidence of a direct debt to people like Gentili, it is surely better to examine Hasler’s work on its own merits. It is a little ironic that in defending the existence of a tradition of radical thought within a particular locality, Bähler goes a long way to justify the orthodox assumption that heresy was a kind of infectious disease rather than a personal response to the challenge of ideas.


Here can be found a much more balanced attempt to present the life and work of Hasler in historical perspective. Building on the earlier study by Bähler, which provided the source for the account of his relations with the dissident group in Heidelberg, the authors
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were yet able to assemble much new material concerning his intellectual background and the development of his views on natural philosophy. It was through contact with figures like Theodor Zwinger, his mentor for a time in Basel, that Hasler was first drawn to a sympathetic understanding of the Paracelsian tradition, something whose importance in the history of radical thought has been too easily ignored. Although Hasler’s own strength lay in the field of medical astrology, the significance of the new alchemy was clearly recognized in the first of his two really serious studies *De logistica medica* (1578). Granted that this work in no sense betrayed the mark of an original mind, it helped to establish the author’s standing in an exciting if now discredited branch of medical research. This concern for iatrophilosophy also provided entry into a much wider intellectual circle as was evidenced by the decision to dedicate one of his later works to the Emperor Rudolf. It was this rather than any association with the Arian tradition that provided the connecting thread in Hasler’s career.

There is no doubt that this article provides a valuable corrective to some of the implications of Bähler’s analysis. By treating as legitimate Hasler’s interest in problems of astrology and medical prognosis, it is possible to avoid a misleading concentration on his role as a religious thinker. Still it must be said that this contains the parallel danger of completely discounting the latter as an aberrant concern of his early career. The fact that Hasler only turned to the study of medicine after giving up any thought of entering the ministry would seem to indicate that the two were in some ways related and that the key to his mature ideas may also be found in the radical associations and growing skepticism of the student period. This continuity is well brought out in the manuscript material in Strasbourg, which tends to suggest that the interest in Aristotle and Galen was in measure motivated by a desire to recover the dogmatic certainties earlier gleaned from Scripture. While this may have nothing to do with the evaluation of his achievement as a medical philosopher, it needs to be recognized as an important stage of Hasler’s intellectual development.


The most recent study on Hasler is limited in scope to an analysis of his brief period in Strasbourg and the controversy to which the publication of his master’s thesis on the natural knowledge of God gave rise. Taking up a number of insights contained in the work of Schindling, it is emphasized that the affair can only be understood in the light of the ongoing tension between church and school. Determined to regain their influence over the selection and training of ordinands, the members of the clerical assembly sought to discredit their opponents by raising the specter of heterodoxy. The case of Hasler was well suited to this end. Although a connection with the Arian group was never explicitly drawn, it was enough to point out that his views reflected the rationalizing tendency inherent within the reformed tradition. Reluctant to defend a young man whose character and conduct had already alienated feelings within the town, the school authorities had little option but to concur in his condemnation. It is notable that the content of the disputed thesis was never actually discussed.
In seeking to remedy this situation the author has provided a detailed analysis of the long
apology drawn up by Hasler as a response to his critics. The importance of this work was
its attempt to introduce a metaphysical element into protestant dogmatics, a matter
already broached in the debates between the Tübingen philosopher Jacob Schegk and
Hasler’s mentor in Leipzig, Simon Simonius. It was through this latter contact that he had
become acquainted with the Averroëist tradition at Padua and its off-shoot in the work of
the Parisian medical school. Although the resulting debt to skepticism may have played a
role in his subsequent intellectual development, this was not immediately apparent in the
Aphorismi. For all that his presentation of the doctrine of God in terms of an analogy with
the threefold structure of mind might be accused of a tendency towards modalism, there
is no doubt that it was intended to appear as fully orthodox. Even if Hasler’s sincerity in
thus undertaking a rational defense of the Trinity must be open to doubt, the very
question is itself indicative of the complex nature of the problem.

The final section of the article strives to place this debate in the context of the differences
then coming to divide the two wings of the evangelical movement. It is apparent that
Johann Marbach and his colleagues saw any attempt to supply a rational grounding for
the doctrine of the Trinity as tantamount to a denial of the sole sufficiency of revelation.
Despite the fact that Hasler’s work was also criticized by Girolamo Zanchi, here there
was no such clear disjuncture between reason and faith. As far as the reformed theologian
was concerned, the fact that the young man was incorrect in his interpretation of Aristotle
cast no shadow on the orthodoxy of his views. This point may well help to explain much
of the Lutheran response to the recent scandal in Heidelberg, though it is less clear how it
should account for the suspicion in which Hasler was held by the reformed ministers of
Bern and Zurich. It must be said that the author is inclined to overstate the confessional
basis for this difference of attitude towards the metaphysical revival and that neither party
was able to prevent the changes brought about by the growing impact of philosophical
inquiry on matters of faith.
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D: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Printed Works

1. *Aphorismi Thetici/ Aristotele,/ Precipuas libri, primæ Philosophiæ (seu ma/- lis Metaphysicorum) demonstrationes, cum/ de naturalibus essentis, tum etiam de Deo,/ beatisque mentibus plerasque omnes:/ adiectis nonnullis parepacoluthe-/ matis, brevissime complexi* (Strasbourg: Nicholas Wyriot, 1575). 26 unnumbered pages; quarto; A-Di.

Copy in the *Stadtbibliothek Bern, Phil. 366, with an inscription to Stephen Kunz, whom Hasler was to succeed in office as municipal doctor.

In the dedication to Nicholas von Diesbach, which was dated 7 March 1575, it was pointed out that all Aristotle’s writings were ‘ad moderandam Religionem utilissimum’ [Aii]. Yet the most important in this respect was the twelfth book of the Metaphysics, the content of which was summarized in the form of eighty-six theses. Some of the more difficult points were expanded through the addition of one or more supplementary theses.

The whole of the created order bore witness to an essential unity. Although it was not possible to draw from this any conclusions about the Creator, it did establish the basis for our knowledge of the divine. In discussing the definition of essence, the opportunity was taken to attack the Platonic theory of forms. It was necessary to consider things in themselves, as well as their matter and form. Turning to the question of human consciousness, it was noted: ‘Cuiusmodi est mens hominis ea, quæ non ex traduce oritur: sed corpori divinitus imissa coniungitur’ [XXVII]. Such matters had to be understood in terms of mathematical analogy. The problem of time and eternity had also to be broached before trying to explain the nature of the Prime Mover. ‘Quapropter eiusdem essentiæ huius naturam totam, purum putum actum omnisque potentiae expertem necessario colligitur’ [XLVIII]. It was then noted in a supplementary comment that this did not rule out the possibility that God could do evil. It was also important to realize that Aristotle’s comments on the eternity of the world were really a deduction from the idea of the Prime Mover as eternal causality. On this basis it was possible to outline the attributes of God, all of which could be derived from the simple and undivided nature of the divine essence [LXXVII].

At this point a series of five subsidiary theses were added showing how this provided the form for a trinitarian conception of God. ‘Aristotelem nostrum, ita de simplicissima una numero (primo modo I Top. 6) essentia Divina docuisse, palam est: ut eadem tribus numero (I Top. 6 secundo modo) distinctis ὑφισμένοις atque ita Divinæ maiestatis Trinitatem in Vnitate, & Vnitatem in Trinitate crediderit, & coluerit.’ Moreover, this was perceived in terms of the threefold structure of mind, the distinction between intellect, intelligence and understanding.

A number of further points were clarified with reference to astrology.
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2. De Logistica Medica. (Hoc est morborum & compositorum medica/minum qualitatum gradus, purgantiumque doses atque proprietates investigandi ratione apodictica) prolematis novem (Augsburg: Valentin Schönigt, 1578). 71 paginated leaves; quarto; A/*/a/B-Tiii.


The dedication to Nicholas Monvid of Dorohostajski in Lithuania, the father of Hasler’s pupil appeared immediately after a series of commendatory verses by Hieronymous Wolf, Simon Fabricius and Christoph Monvid.

Here it was pointed out that while medicine was clearly of great practical value, even Galen could not be understood without the application of logic. There was too much neglect of the arts by medical students. ‘Has ob res paulatim vulgo suspectis atque exosis, quicunque Hippocritatem aut Galenum aut Philosophum vel nominavisset: præclara Theophrasto Paracelso, universam medendi artem, perinde ac Petro Ramo, philosophiam Peripateticam funditus evertendi, occasio facile data est’ [*3a]. This new approach to the subject refused to take the trouble to make the proper distinctions between the different medicaments, of which there were at least six hundred. It was true that good food and exercise was better than relying on medicinal compounds, a point which Hasler had been enjoined to bear in mind in directing the studies of the young Monvid and his companion Stanislaus Bialozor. Still it was important that they should have a knowledge of these matters and the treatise had been developed out of a series of exercises designed for their benefit.

The work itself fell into two parts. In the theoretical introduction Hasler discussed nine basic problems that arose out of the classification of different medicaments [1a-15a]. The purpose was really to show that the theories of Galen could be reconciled to the new methods of the Paracelsian school. There was a clear analogy between the four elements of earth, fire, air and water and the temperamental qualities of the human body. Since the degree of dryness and warmth formed the basis of diagnostic medicine, so it was possible to correlate the various properties of both chemical and herbal compounds with the patient’s condition. The proper calculation of the latter presupposed an accurate knowledge of astrology, the principles of which were then outlined. It was also important that the medicine be taken or applied at the right point in time for the full benefit to be achieved.

This was followed by a catalogue of some six hundred different substances, each of which was carefully classified according to its properties of temperature and humidity [156-70a]. This formed part of a complicated chart designed to provide a reliable basis for medical prognosis.
Title Pages: *De logistica medica* and *Tabula aphoristica* (1578).

The copy in the *S.B. Munich: 4° Ph. sp. 21422 has an autograph dedication to Johann Hebart, a member of the Bernese council.

This brief summary of the first twenty-two chapters of the *Prior Analytics* was written for the benefit of Johann Rudolph, the son of Hasler’s patron Nicholas von Diesbach. The young man was exhorted to follow the example of Christoph Monvid in acquiring a solid basis in logic, which was the key to all other branches of learning. After outlining the structure of the syllogism, the whole work was summarized in tabular form. At the end Hasler promised to provide a series of examples to clarify some of the points made in a subsequent work to be entitled *Aphorismis universæ logicæ.*
There are a number of reasons to suppose that Hasler may be identified with Rhelasus, whose name appears in no other account of sixteenth century astrology or medicine. Despite its place of publication, the author was certainly living in Switzerland and at one point speaks of the ‘löblicher Eydgnosschaft’. Since it is known that Hasler was rewarded by the Council in Bern for his work in compiling a calendar for the year 1588, there is at least some circumstantial evidence in support of this claim. Moreover the style and presentation of the work is strikingly similar to his subsequent Astrologische Practica (1590).

According to the old astrologers, Albolian, Haly and Leopold, the fulfillment of the Book of Revelation should not be expected for at least 2260 years. It was thus quite wrong to read the work of Johannis Regiomontanus as if he had predicted the Last Judgment for 1588. Despite the many rumors of war, the constellation of the planets was such as to indicate a peaceful and prosperous year ahead. The generally temperate climatic conditions should ensure a balanced flow of blood, which normally indicated a favorable medical prognosis. However, there were going to be many problems as a result of the unbalanced diet adopted during the previous year of dearth. Although the rich, who had often sought to profit from the rapid inflation in the price of foodstuffs, had not been directly affected, they too could suffer the consequences of unbridled gluttony. Those who thus brought sickness on themselves should blame neither God nor the planets for their misfortune, a condition from which the normal medicaments could bring little relief.

In the third chapter it was noted that there was also no reason for a wide-spread disruption of the peace. Provided all parties were content to benefit from the favorable conditions, even the religious conflict need not degenerate into war. However, given the choleric, phlegmatic and melancholic temper of a small minority, it seemed unlikely that this opportunity for a general peace could be grasped.

There followed a brief outline of the weather forecast for each particular month, together with a discussion of its likely impact on health and welfare. At a number of points the author prescribed certain foods as the best protection against any imbalance in the constitution. Fasting was a well-established practice and should not be regarded as a form of superstition. Issue was also taken with Bartholomew Anglicus over the dating of the dog-days under the new calendar.
Title Pages: *Fröhliche Practick* (1588) and *Astrologische Practica* (1590).
In a concluding address to the reader, the author complained about the attitude of contempt with which some publishers and men of learning were inclined to regard such astrological study. This had almost persuaded him to give up the thankless task of compiling annual ‘Practica’ and must also excuse some of the more critical asides contained in his work. The fact that the resulting predictions were not always accurate, no more invalidated astrology than disagreement over the interpretation of the book of Revelation diminished the need for an exact study of Scripture.

5. *Astrologische Practica, auff das 1590 Jar* (Basel: Samuel Apiarius, 1590). 12 pages; quarto; A-B.

In the preface to the reader Hasler sought to defend astrology against common criticism. It was not intended to suggest that God had created the world ‘gleich einen Uhrmacher’ and then left it to run its course. Nor was it to imply any denial of the moral responsibility that derived from the freedom of the will. Still it should not be supposed that God acted like ‘ein Künzenjager’ to deceive his audience behind a screen. The sun, the moon and the stars all bore witness to God’s activity, which remained comprehensible to human reason even after the Fall. Predictability should be seen as a sign of divine favor and in no way contradicted the sovereignty of God over creation. Given its evident utility in planning for the future, it was quite possible the principles of astrology had been outlined in the many books of Solomon and the other writers of the Old Testament that had now been lost. It was false to suppose that the stars had been called after the pagan deities, since several could be found in the Scriptures, where they were clearly named according to their perceived impact on the affairs and destiny of men. Astrology was thus no less legitimate than any other form of human practice or art.

The work was divided into two chapters, beginning with a treatment of the ruling principles of the year, which stood under the joint influence of Mars and Mercury. The actions of the sun and moon had also to be considered, especially as the forthcoming eclipses were a sure indication of catastrophe. Yet there were some potentially hopeful signs in the activity of Jupiter. The second section then outlined the expected course of events during each individual month. In general things in Bern looked fairly good during the first half of the year and the consumer could expect to find relatively low prices in the town. However the time of harvest was going to be difficult and there would probably be a number of dangerous fires. In view of the likely course of the weather, the prospects for the wine harvest were good. Still the fulfillment of all these predictions was ultimately dependent on the will of God.
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6. Paradoxus annorum mundi a creatione usque ad Jesum Christum ... a solis literis sacrís deprompta computatio accurata, cum aurei numeri terminique paschalis integritati suæ restitutione certissima (Vilnius: Salomon Sulzer, 1596). 29 unnumbered pages; quarto, A-D.
Copies in the *BJ. Cracow: Cim 4814; B.N. Paris: G 3785; and D.S.B. Berlin: Oh. 2758/4.

The work was prefaced by a brief dedication to the Emperor Rudolf II, where the importance of astrology for both medical and political science was emphasized. Hasler saw his task as being to reestablish an accurate calendar, which could be achieved by calculating the movements of the planets back to the time of creation. This led to the conclusion that the world was actually 135 years older than had usually been supposed. This should prove of benefit to medical science, since there were certain ailments that could only be treated on the basis of an accurate knowledge of the constellations.

There was disagreement over the age of the world even amongst contemporary authorities such as Peucer and Munster, not to mention the marked difference between the eastern and western churches. Scripture provided a sure record of creation, but great care had to be taken when calculating on this basis -- a case in point was the book of Revelation, which Hasler had discussed elsewhere. The distinction between the Hebrew and Greek calendars was evident from the appended chronology of sacred history. According to the former the world was 4097 years old at the time of the Incarnation, while computations based on the latter gave the date of creation as 5423 B.C. There followed an account of the relations between the solar and lunar cycles and their importance for establishing the date of Easter, which had been incorrectly calculated according to the old calendar.

It was on this basis that Hasler tried to draw up a revised chronology of the world in an appendix dedicated to the Palatine of Kiev, Constantine Ostrorog. Accuracy in these matters was necessary in order to understand the biblical prophecies and to work out the time of the coming Antichrist. According to Hasler, in 1596 A.D. the world was really either 7104 or 5741 years old, depending on which version of the calendar was used.
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Title Pages: *Paradoxus annorum mundi* (1596) and *De fuga pestilentiae* (1602).
Hasler’s final treatise was dedicated to his former pupil, Christoph Monvid, who was now Marshal to the Grand Duke of Lithuania. Even the classical authors were agreed that both famine and plague were the judgment of God and there was no reason to suppose that the latter could be passed from one person to another. Although it was possible that the contagion could be spread through the breath of victims, it had to be remembered that this was immediately dissipated in the immensity of the atmosphere. It was more sensible to examine the cause of the disease, which was to be found in the conjunction of the fixed stars. Once this had been calculated, together with the eclipses of the sun and the moon, then it was possible to predict the likely incidence of plague over the following decade. On this basis the medical practitioner could prescribe a series of preventative measures for the benefit of his patients.

The work itself began with a series of letters from Hippocrates concerning the outbreak of plague in the army of Artaxerxes. A number of other classical sources were then cited to prove that the isolation of plague victims was unknown to antiquity. In general there were eight causes for the spread of infectious disease, starting with the anger of God against human sin. Although this served to demonstrate the importance of prayer and repentance, it was the second level of causality, namely the regular eclipses of the sun, the moon and the planets, which allowed for a degree of predictability. The other factors that contributed to the spread of plague amongst the urban population included insanitary housing conditions, an unbalanced diet and the lack of proper exercise. It was advisable to pay greater attention to these matters when the conjunction of the planets indicated that an epidemic was imminent.

The main point of the treatise was to emphasize that the recently developed practice of quarantine was not only contrary to the teaching of the Gospel, which clearly enjoined the visitation of the sick, but lacked any serious medical justification. The rapidity with which the disease spread seemed to belie the idea that it was the result of direct contact with the victims. The most satisfactory explanation was that the disposition of the planets was in some way responsible. It was for this reason that Hasler presented a detailed horoscope, based on the forthcoming eclipses of the sun and moon and covering the ten-year period up until 1613. It was hoped that this would prove of some benefit to the people within the duchy of Lithuania.
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Manuscript works


This long defense of Hasler’s earlier dissertation on the Metaphysics of Aristotle was submitted to the school authorities at the end of June 1575. It began with a brief account of the controversy that had developed since his arrival in the town the previous year. The idea of presenting a master’s thesis on the natural knowledge of God had been commended by the then Dean, Andreas Planer, who even helped with the revision of the work. In seeking to show that the doctrine of the Trinity was implicit in the teaching of Aristotle, Hasler hoped to give the lie to the suspicions that had stained his reputation since the time of the Heidelberg affair. Even so, it was never intended as more than a hypothetical statement and it was in this sense that the thesis had been approved following the oral examination at the beginning of November. The real problem arose because he had not been allowed to defend his work in the form of a public disputation, even though another young man ‘in statu pupillari’ had recently been invited to provide a full course on Aristotle. Concerned at this injustice, Hasler decided to have a hundred copies of the work printed at his own expense in the hope of being able to attract further patronage from the nobility. At a subsequent meeting with the school authorities, he was then informed that this breach of the censorship laws had destroyed any chance of his being asked to undertake any teaching within the academy.

During the intervening months Hasler had been busy preparing his doctorate and thought the matter settled. Not only had the *Aphorismi* been approved after full discussion with the examiners, but it was also clear that the blame for any infringement of the laws of censorship must lie with the printer rather than himself. It was only the week before that he had been told the academy still expected a written apology and a response to the following five queries derived from his work:

a) what was meant by the claim that a proper understanding of Metaphysics XII was useful in moderating the claims of revealed religion?

b) was not the assumption that God could do evil in open contradiction to his nature as pure act?

c) in what sense could Aristotle have recognized the idea of salvation by grace alone?

d) could a knowledge of Christ’s role as Mediator rightly be attributed to Aristotle?

e) was it intended to suggest that Aristotle’s understanding of the Trinity was as valid as that of any member of the Church?

It was proposed to reply to each of these points in turn.

It was generally agreed that a basic grasp of grammar and dialectic was essential to comprehend the sense of any text. Yet it could also be argued that natural philosophy provided a valuable complement in that it enabled the student better to understand the events or process under discussion. This was what Georg Liebler had meant by suggesting in his commentary on the Physics that ‘Nostra philosophia sit inchoatio veræ religionis’. This was not to say that philosophy could take the place of theology, since the
latter was based on the fundamentally different principle of revelation. Still, as Zanchi himself had pointed out in a course of lectures delivered in the Strasbourg school, it was particularly useful to the theologian in helping to avoid contradiction and providing a clearer demonstration of the truth. While this point could be applied to the whole corpus of Aristotle’s work, it had a special relevance to the Metaphysics, which explained the basic categories of human understanding.

The second question concerned the second supplement to thesis forty-eight of the *Aphorismi*, where it noted that the proposition that God could do evil did not contradict His nature as ‘absolute simplicity’. It was clear that there was no way in which God could be accused of doing evil in the same sense as human beings. Yet it had never been intended to imply that God actually behaved like this, since the point had simply been to emphasize that nothing could resist the divine will. On the whole Hasler was inclined to favor the solution put forward by Aquinas that God lacked the volition but not the capacity to act in a wanton manner. Indeed to deny this proposition would suggest an even greater degree of impiety.

The next two questions were a reference to the additions to the sixty-seventh thesis. The argument could best be put in the form of a syllogism: given the nature of God as pure act, a point clearly taught by Aristotle, so it followed that salvation must be sought independent of human merit. Yet it had never been suggested that the Stagirite had recognized the role of Christ as Mediator between God and man. All he had sought to do was demonstrate how such a mediating principle was a necessary consequence of Aristotelian logic, the field in which he had chosen to specialize over much of the last eight years. This allowed for the presentation of a further syllogism designed to prove the divinity of the one to whom it fell to fulfill this allotted role. While such points remained at the level of hypothesis, it should yet be noted that in Romans 1, 19-20, the Apostle had himself recognised the broad scope of man’s natural knowledge of God.

Hasler then went on to discuss the question of the Trinity. Once again the problem was that the intention of his theses was being misunderstood. In seeking to define the state of Aristotle’s knowledge it had never been suggested that this was in any sense comparable to that which could be derived from the Scriptures. The crucial point had been to show the logical necessity for a triune conception and here he had turned to the Organon for support: ‘Si quis ita de simplicissima una numero (1 Top. 6 primo modo) essentia Divina docet, ut eadem tribus numero (secundo modo 1 Top. 6) distinctis ὑφισαμένοις tradat: is Divinæ Maiestatis Trinitatem in Unitate credit atque colit’ [306 r]. In a further syllogism this recognition of separate properties in the divine essence was equated with a real distinction in substance. It might thus be argued that Aristotle had perceived the logical structure of the Trinity.

This led to a discussion of the distinction between intellect, intelligence and understanding, an analogue for the doctrine of God most recently employed by Jacob Schegk in his *Antisimonius Apologeticus* (1573). While the three aspects of mind were integrally related in all forms of rational being, it was only in the case of the Prime Mover that this could properly be described in terms of the first mode; where the predicate pertained to the definition of the subject. Since only the divine mens possessed absolute
simplicity, so it was here alone that its three-fold structure formed an essential unity. It was thus possible to argue that ‘Hæc tria distincta ὑφισάμενα Intellectum ... , intelligencia et Intelligens ab Aristotele vocata, Deo Patri, Filio, et Sancto Spiritui, Divinis scripturis traditis, respondeant’ [320r]. One way of describing this relationship was as the principle, the end and the means of mental activity and this provided a perfectly adequate account of the working of the Trinity ‘ad intra’.

Having briefly summarized the contents of the *Metaphysics* 12, 6-10 [342r-363r], Hasler then returned to consider the more general problem of the relation between philosophy and theology. The recognition of the possibility of a natural knowledge of God was itself to raise the question of the salvation of the heathen. Here again one was faced with a hypothetical problem, where it was probably best to maintain a judgment of charity. It had to be granted that God had revealed Himself to different generations and peoples in a variety of ways. The preaching of the Gospel offered salvation to those who were in a position to hear, but it could not be supposed that God intended to exclude the majority of mankind to whom it had never been announced.

In a concluding address to the Senate, Hasler again requested that he should be allowed to defend his work by means of debate within the school. Here his accusers could also state and defend their case, but they should not be allowed to condemn his views unheard. In the meantime he was confident of obtaining considerable support for his position from other quarters.


A.S.T. Strasbourg: 354/47, 417r-8v. The official copy in German, which bears the seal of Hasler, is preserved at A.S.T. Strasbourg: 354/46, 415r-6v. The draft version by Paul Hochfelder, to which Marbach supplied a number of annotations before it was considered by the Council at their meeting on 20 August, can be found in A.S.T. Strasbourg: 72/9, 58r-61v.

Hasler accepted that he should not have published or sought to circulate his work without the permission of the Dean. He withdrew without reservation his comments on the need for philosophy to moderate religion, as well as his hypothetical remarks on Aristotle’s knowledge of the Trinity. Yet the accusation of Arianism was quite without foundation and it was this that lay behind his aggressive attitude towards the preachers.
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Retraction and Seal of Hasler: A.S.T. Strasbourg 354/46

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The two tables here presented were designed to allow the reader to calculate the movements of the planets and the times of future eclipses in the region of Bern. The work was based on studies by the fifteenth-century astronomer Regiomontanus. It is not clear whether the manuscript was prepared with a view to eventual publication, though it may be noted that the final section is incomplete.


One of the principal reasons for his recent dismissal from the chair of logic in was the malicious rumor to the effect that he was sympathetic to the Arian position. It was through attending Benedikt Marti’s lectures on John and the parallel series of disputations against Gentili, that his attention had first been drawn to the problem of the Trinity. Having moved to Heidelberg with a recommendation to Adam Neuser, he had fallen under suspicion on account of his close association with the dissident group. Yet he had given a full account of his faith to the authorities in Bern shortly before his departure to continue his studies in Lausanne later that year. This confession, the original of which was still to be found in the municipal archives, was dated 30 September 1590.

The confession began with a description of God as ‘essentia spiritualis’. Although the Godhead was necessarily one, there were three distinct persons: ‘Personam voco subsistentiam incommunicabilem, intelligentem, volentem, agentem, per se in divina et simplicissima essentia subsistentem’. [420r]. I John 5 was cited as proof of the orthodox doctrine on the eternal generation of Christ. A number of other scriptural places were cited before Hasler affirmed his belief in the Athanasian Creed. He strongly opposed any criticism of the Trinity, though it was not always the case that those who went to Lithuania were tainted by heresy. His own position on the relation between the trinity and unity of God was derived from Porphyry and Aristotle. He was also able to cite Nazianus and Damascenus in defense of this position. He had written at some length on these matters to Grynæus.

The real reason for his having been deprived of his post in Bern was the malevolence of some of his former colleagues. This notwithstanding, he continued to affirm his adherence to the teaching of both the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions.
De Sacrosancta Trinitate;
Confessio Ioannis Hasleri Bernensis.

Occasional pieces

Copy in the *B.N.U. Strasbourg, R 141 000.

The thirty-two line dedication to the Polish noble Jan Sarius Zamojski was clearly composed by Hasler himself. In the long poem that followed, the study of medicine was defended with reference to the argument from design: ‘Nascitur in nobis sic pulchra scientia Divum, sic patris immensi facto deinde loquor’. The stars presented the book of God’s work in creation, which could be comprehended through the exercise of human reason. In this context Christ had to be understood as the ‘æterni patris sapientia’. The study of the physics was thus an important aspect of medical training.

Copy in the *S.B. Bern, Phil 3662.

There was a short dedicatory verse to Nicholas of Diesbach from Christoph Monvid of Dorohostajski dated 17 July, the day of Hasler’s promotion to a doctorate in medicine. This was followed by an 84 line tribute to Monvid by his fellow pupil Johann Jacob Beurer, as well as several epigrams and a carmen in praise of Hasler by Theodoric Petramandus of Vesontinus, where his relations with Jan Leszczinski were mentioned. Several verses were supplied by Jacob Suter, then professor of the Organon, who noted that much of Hasler’s studies in medicine had been undertaken in Strasbourg. The longest piece by Martin Holzapfel gave a detailed account of the various stages of his previous career. At Leipzig he had established contact with a number of the Polish nobility, including the distinguished family Radziwill. A description was then given of the promotion ceremony, at which the laudatory address had been given by the dean Georg Meyer. Finally there were three ‘carmina’ supplied by Panthaleon Theuenin, as well as a series of occasional verses by Leonhard Petri of Freiburg; Charles de Thesières; Ægidius Theuenin; and Christoph Monvid.
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Title Pages: *Iatrotheologonomicomachia* (1575) and *Poemata* (1576).
3. GEORG AM WALD, *Bericht and Erklerung, wie and was gestalt das new von im erfunden Terra Sigillata and universal Artzeney, wider die Pestilentz .... zu gebrauchen sey* (St. Gallen: Leonhard Straub, 1582). Quarto, A²v.
Copy in the N.L.S. Edinburgh: DC.1.10 (29).

Here were produced sixteen lines of Latin verse by Hasler commending the new product being marketed by Georg am Wald, one of the Paracelsian school. The subsequent report, which was written in the vernacular, was simply a form of advertisement for the Terra Sigillata Amwaldina, a compound that could be used as a remedy for most ailments.


For the circumstances surrounding the publication of Hasler’s confession on the Trinity, which was dated 17 June 1591 at Mulhouse, see the several letters written at the time to Johann Jacob Grynaeus in the Register of Correspondence (D/5). Since the single folio was actually printed in Basel and was not available for distribution until the middle of July, Hasler was obliged to prepare a further manuscript copy for the attention of the Town Council in Strasbourg during his visit at the beginning of the month - see Manuscript Works (D/3).
Register of correspondence


A report had been received from the Schulherm concerning Hasler’s wish to change to the study of medicine, a proposal that he had justified after his return from Poland on the grounds that his earlier involvement in the Arian scandal undermined any prospects for future advancement within the church. At the time he had asked for permission to return to Heidelberg or some other university with a distinguished faculty. Although under no further obligation in this matter, it had been decided to accede to the request and provide him with a continuation of the previous stipend on condition that he take the new course of study seriously.


It was hoped that they had by now received their stipend through the merchant Johann Rich. They had been sent the equivalent of 28 crowns and 40 batten in French currency, which could be converted without difficulty. It was hoped that Forer would follow assiduously the courses offered by Sturm. In a postscript it was suggested that if Forer had already moved to Marburg, then he should stay put and look for a good place of study with someone like Pincier.

A.S.T. Strasbourg: 354/42, 404r-405r. A second copy can be found at A.S.T. 354/43. Published in Zanchi (1609) 1/188-91.

Although he had wished to consult with Ursinus before responding to the request for an opinion on the Aphorismi, in view of the latter’s many commitments it had been decided that Zanchi should reply in a private capacity. To begin with the phrase ‘ad moderandam religionem’ was inappropriate to describe the role of human reason in comprehending Scripture. The work of Aristotle could be used to confirm true doctrine, but it did not supply the form of the faith as Hasler seemed to suggest. Moreover, it followed from the fact that God was ‘purissimus actus’ that he could not be described as the author of evil, which in any case had to be understood as a form of deficiency. For all that Hasler had shown great ingenuity in the rest of the thesis, it seemed rather facile to suppose that Aristotle might have recognized the doctrine of the Trinity and one would be better advised not to waste time on such speculation. The method of presentation also implied a view of the Trinity that was not entirely orthodox. Such reservations aside, the young man was encouraged to persevere with his studies in Philosophy, which were potentially of great benefit to the church.

Having taken the opportunity to reflect on the situation, Hasler now regretted his earlier conduct and the unnecessary row with Nicholas Florus. Yet he felt it important to emphasize that he had never been guilty of Arianism and much of his behavior was simply a response to this slur on his reputation. In the event he hoped soon to be released.


It had always been intended that the *Aphorismi* be understood in full conformity with the doctrinal tradition of the Strasbourg church. In seeking to use philosophical arguments to confirm that tradition, he had never been in any doubt that the only real source of authority was to be found in Scripture. That philosophy was in no way essential to salvation was evident from the fact that the Church had been founded well before the birth of Aristotle. In so far as he now recognized that his work could be seen as a threat to piety, he was more than willing to retract any such false impressions provided this was not seen as an admission of heresy. Aware that the orthodoxy of his views had been called in question, he could only hope to be given a fair chance to defend his reputation.


Hasler had received a letter of recall to Bern on 7 September. Although unable to travel due to the fact that his two pupils were both ill with fever, he hoped to be able to supply the authorities with a satisfactory account of his conduct. If further explanation were to be required, he would endeavor to return home as soon as possible.

His theses on Aristotle had been designed to show the extent to which natural philosophy stood in conformity with revealed truth. As he had not been asked to undertake a disputation, he decided to have a hundred copies produced for distribution at his own costs. It was only when the printer started to offer the *Aphorismi* for sale that the pastors intervened to have the work banned. At this point he had been able to satisfy the school authorities, who agreed that he should be allowed to provide a series of disputations for the benefit of the students at some stage in the future.

About seven weeks later he had been disturbed to hear a sermon by Nicholas Florus, where it was claimed that the Calvinists saw God as the author of evil. He and his two pupils then visited the pastor at home to ask for an explanation and evidence from the reformer's writing to justify the point. This led to a bitter exchange of letters the following day, as a result of which he was then required to prepare a written reply to a number of criticisms raised against his earlier work. No sooner had Johann Pappus taken
over as dean than he was placed under increasing pressure to produce this apology, which in the end had to be composed within a matter of four or five days.

In his defense he sought to make clear that a proper understanding of grammar and dialectic would invalidate the charge of impiety, while stressing that his interpretation of Aristotle had ample precedent in the classical tradition. Although convinced of the rectitude of this stance, when imprisoned without warning some five weeks later he quickly agreed to copy out the form of retraction drawn up by his accusers. They had also insisted on keeping the original of the *Declaratio* in an effort to prevent the matter from going any further. There was, however, another copy available and this, together with some of the other documentation concerning the affair, was being sent to Bern for safe-keeping.

The underlying reason for his constant clashes with authority was a devotion to truth modeled on the life of the ancients. Yet in this case it had to be remembered that many other foreigners had been driven from the town through the intolerance of the pastoral corps, who were even now seeking to get rid of Johann Sturm and his associates. For himself he intended to complete his studies with a trip to Italy in a few months time, a project for which he hoped to receive a further subvention from the town. In a postscript dated three days later Hasler promised to send on the above-mentioned documentation as soon as he could find a reliable carrier.


They were still waiting for a reply to the letter sent the previous year care of Matthias Zobel in Augsburg. While conscious of the fact that Hasler might have found other employment with Monvid, it was hoped he would remember his obligations to the town. If he did not return without delay, a letter would be sent explaining the situation to his patron and asking for his immediate demission.


The appointment of a successor to Stephen Kunz as Stadtarzt had been delayed for several months in the expectation of Hasler’s imminent return. A letter was now enclosed for his patron formally requesting that he be released from any further obligations. If for some reason this was not possible then they looked to receive a full explanation. In any case it was imperative that a final decision should now be made.


Letter of appointment to the vacant post as municipal doctor.

Although this was the second time he had been through Basel, there had not been time to arrange a meeting. Pending another opportunity, when he would have the chance to explain his situation, it was asked that Grynæus make inquiries about any suitable vacancy in either medicine or the arts.


Both his care for the sick and lack of funds had prevented his attendance at the meeting in Basel. He was now really desperate to find work and looked to Grynæus for help and advice. As far as his religious convictions were concerned, he stood fully in accord with the tradition of the church and was being unjustly accused before the authorities. His only fault had been to challenge some of the theology students to contradict examples of false reasoning from Scripture without recourse to the principles of the Organon. It was scarcely credible how his teaching had been distorted by his enemies.


The situation was still in flux; though it looked as if all might not work out as Musculus had intended. In the course of his work he sometimes presented the students with examples of the false reasoning of the adversaries, which they were expected to resolve for themselves. Yet he had always been willing to explain the orthodox position after the lecture if asked to do so. The intention was simply to encourage the ordinands to develop a proper respect for the principles of logic outlined in the Organon. As a result he was accused of trying to undermine their faith by spreading false doctrine, though there was no evidence to suggest that he had ever departed from the teaching of the reformed confession. Once again he sought advice on how best to proceed.


The letter from Basel had just been received and he would try to reply before going to listen to the sermon. The invitation to Basel was very welcome, but he could not leave his host who was for the moment affected by dropsy. Yet he was certainly grateful for all the help and would make the journey as soon as possible. It was true that he had always liked Samuel Huber as an individual, but this did not mean that he shared his views. In truth he felt that such matters were best avoided lest they become a cause of offense to the weak. Since Musculus appeared to think that the young theologians fell into this category, there seemed little chance of a reconciliation. Now all he could do was to rely on those like...
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Grynæus. In a long postscript he mentioned having presented the students with a copy of his earlier confession, a statement he undertook to defend against any serious criticism they could advance. The objection was that he concentrated on demonstrative argument rather than proclaiming the Sanctus. Yet it had to be realized that there was a difference between learned debate and popular rhetoric.


As he was about to return to his patient in Mulhouse, there was little time to write. Although he was very anxious that Grynæus should help with the confession, he fully understood his concern not to appear as a patron of Arian sentiment. He would accordingly make the suggested corrections as soon as possible. The hospitality of the previous evening had been gratefully received.


A copy of his confession was enclosed with the request that Grynæus try and find a publisher. It would be useful if he could supply the work with a short preface, while at the same time making any changes to the style he felt appropriate. Meanwhile he was due to be leaving for Strasbourg the next day.

In a postscript it was noted that he had been forced to resign due to the inadequacy of his stipend. This was simply a comment on the tactics employed by his opponents.


Having tried to find Grynaeus at home on several occasions, he now wrote to say that he was returning to Bern with sixty-six copies of the confession for presentation to members of the council. Grynæus would be able to pick up several copies from the book-seller Claude Maius. The rest were to be sold to try and recuperate the costs of publication. Still he would be pleased if a copy could be given to Heinrich Justus and any of the professors who were interested. In the meantime he was grateful to Grynæus for not having opposed the work despite his insistence on the paradoxical quality of tripartite being. The irony was that when he referred to Arianism in order to demonstrate the need for a proper attention to logic, he was accused of using logic to defend the Arian case. Finally he asked if it might not be a good idea to add the printer's name or at least the place of publication to improve the sales prospects of the work.


It would have been nice to send Grynaeus a present for all his help, but he had not even sufficient money left to buy a jug of wine, ‘ita me Christus bene amat’. At the behest of
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certain members of the council, a German translation of his confession had been sent to
the printers, though it would appear to have got lost in the post. He would try and send
another copy with the added request that Grynaeus undertake to supply a short preface.
There were some who sought to discourage him from leaving, but the gravity of the
accusations against him was such that he seemed to have little option. He was being
forced by his adversaries into adopting the errors he had always striven to avoid.
Hopefully Grynaeus would be able to suggest a suitable post in the not too distant future.