

Early Unitarians and Islam: revisiting a 'primary document'

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Introduction

This paper is primarily concerned with a meeting that never happened and a letter that was never delivered. On the face of it, hardly a promising subject but one that is of far greater significance than it might, at first, appear.

Sometime in the summer of 1682, just as a Moroccan ambassador was about to leave for home after a lengthy and successful visit to England,¹ some Unitarians in London attempted to deliver a bundle of papers to him. On hearing that they were concerned with religious matters, he declined to accept them, and so, unread, they passed into the hands of the Master of the Ceremonies, Sir Charles Cotterell, and from him to a Church of England priest, Thomas Tenison. When, over a decade later, Tenison became Archbishop of Canterbury, they found their way into the holdings of the library of Lambeth Palace, where they can still be consulted today.² They rarely are. Indeed, the bulk of the material remains in the Latin in which it was originally composed. Although a few scholars have discussed this 'curious case',³ mostly in passing, and the occasional work of contemporary Unitarian literature does refer to it,⁴ though not always accurately,⁵ the incident is largely forgotten.

But there are good grounds for believing that it is far from inconsequential. For example, Alexander Gordon, the great Unitarian historiographer, could claim that the *Epistle Dedicatory*, the covering letter that accompanied three longer treatises,⁶ as part of the Unitarians' submission, should be called the 'primary document of Unitarianism'⁷ because it was 'the first time, so far as is known, the term Unitarian was employed in an English document'.⁸ More specifically, it used 'the Unitarian name in its broadest scope, as denoting all who believe in an "onely Sovereign God (who hath no distinction or plurality in persons)".'⁹ For Gordon it marked the beginning of a stage when Unitarianism became 'a comprehensive school of thought' and it transitioned from the 'sporadic Antitrinitarianism' of preceding centuries,¹⁰ laying the foundations for the eventual emergence of the Unitarian denomination in the British Isles.

Although Gordon was, in one sense, wrong – the term ‘Unitarian’ had been used almost a decade earlier and in a comparable manner in a publication by Henry Hedworth¹¹ – the mere fact that he valued that text so highly justifies re-examining it today, but, as I hope will become apparent, there are other grounds for thinking again about this unusual document.

There are many ways that the *Epistle Dedicatory* could be scrutinised but for now I would like to restrict myself to what can be gleaned by reading it within what we know of the wider context of early Unitarian interpretations of Islam. But before doing this, it is important to give a brief summary of the letter’s contents.

The *Epistle Dedicatory*: Contents

After some initial flattering remarks about the ambassador, the letter begins by the authors identifying themselves as belonging to ‘the Sect of Christians called Unitarians’ and congratulating the ambassador and his retinue for being ‘fellow Worshipers of that sole Supreme Deity of the Almighty Father and Creator’, and, unlike Christians in the ‘Western part of the world’, preserving ‘the excellent Knowledge of that Truth touching a belief on an only Sovereign¹² God (who hath no Distinction or Plurality in Persons).’¹³ The ambassador is then informed of the letter of Ahmet Ben Abdalla, which dates from earlier in the century, a work that both expounds Islamic beliefs and attacks both Catholicism and Protestantism, and the Latin text of which they have included as the second document in their collection.¹⁴ However, the authors complain, ‘such errors, we Unitarians, do abhor as well as the Mahometans, in which we must agree in such even against our fellow Christians’,¹⁵ and so they have also submitted two further treatises in which they claim to:

First...to set forth ... in what points all Christians do generally agree with the Mahometans in matters of religion. 2ndly In what things Christians Universally disagree from you with the reasons for the same. 3rdly. In what cases you do justly dissent from the *Roman Catholicks*. 4Thly.The Protestant Christians do joyn with you in your condemning of the Romish errors, and theirs and our reasons for the same. 5thly. [...] in what Articles, we the *Unitarian Christians* do solely concur with you Mahometans [...] [I]n the 6th place [...] undertake to discover unto you [...] those weak places that are found in the platform of your Religion; and [...] offer to your Consideration some Materials to repair them.¹⁶

The rest of this initial letter consists of the anonymous authors, who describe themselves as ‘two single Philosophers’ and ‘Orators of the Unitarians’¹⁷ claiming that they speak on behalf of ‘a great and considerable People’,¹⁸ making a case for the antiquity of their form of Christianity¹⁹ and its distinction from ‘those backsliding Christians named Trinitarians’,²⁰ and explaining that, although plentiful elsewhere, ‘in the West and North we are not so numerous, by reason of the inhumanity of the clergy.’²¹ They conclude the letter with an offer to visit Morocco to discuss its contents with ‘the Learned of your Country’.²²

As is perhaps already apparent, this epistle includes a strikingly positive estimation of Islam in relation to Christianity. The authors evidently have a high regard for the faith of Muslims, indeed they include them at the end of a list of Christian churches that ‘maintain with us the faith of One Sovereign God’, saying ‘And why should I forget to add you Mahumetans’?²³ They also have a high estimation of Muhammad, as someone who was raised up by God as a ‘Scourge of the idolizing Christians’ (the Trinitarians),²⁴ and whom they seem to accept as a ‘Preacher’ of the ‘Gospel of Christ’²⁵. Indeed, so exalted is their estimation of him that they cannot believe that he is responsible for the ‘many and frequent repugnancies, as are to be seen in those Writings and Laws that are nowadays giv’n out under his name.’²⁶

It should be noted that despite what is said in the *Epistle Dedicatory*, the Unitarian treatises submitted with the *Epistle* do not systematically address the topics enumerated; indeed, some are barely touched upon. For example, there is only one occasion where an interpolation in the Qur’an is identified and the grounds for judging it to be so are explained (the text discussed is Sura 4.157 which concerns the Qur’anic claim that Jesus only seemed to have been crucified).²⁷ The two Latin Unitarian treatises are far from polished and were clearly written in a rush; as the authors say, they have ‘ten times more to urge on the Same subject that we present’ and that the papers were the work of a ‘few days’.²⁸

The *Epistle Dedicatory*: Context

To make sense of the letter, it is helpful to understand something of the relationship between early Unitarians and Islam that this letter both reflects and also seeks to develop.

On the one hand early Unitarians regularly found themselves described as being virtually synonymous with Muslims, as ‘more Mahometan than Christian’,²⁹ with the Racovian Catechism dismissed as the ‘Racovian Alcoran’.³⁰ An important antitrinitarian writing, Arthur

Bury's *Naked Gospel* (1690), could be accused of being so like the Qur'an that it amounted to no more than 'a Commentary on that Text'.³¹

There was a clear attempt to associate this form of dissent with a religion that was largely viewed as a work of 'imposture', something dangerously alluring but blasphemous, diabolical, and – given the dominance of the Ottoman empire and anxiety about the depredations of Barbary slavers – physically threatening.³² To get some sense of the nature of the dominant, hostile discourse concerning Islam and Muslims in this period in England one need only read the 'Needful Caveat' that accompanied the first English translation of the Qur'an which appeared in 1649. In it the reader is told that the Qur'an is made up of '1. Of Contradictions. 2. Of Blasphemies, 3. Of ridiculous Fables. 4. Of Lyes'.³³ Or note the title of one of the first books in Arabic translated into English, William Bedwell's *Mohammedis Imposturae: That Is, A Discovery of the Manifold Forgeries, Falshoods, and Horrible Impieties of the Blasphemous Seducer Mohammed with a Demonstration of the Insufficiencie of His Law, Contained in the Cursed Alkoran* (1615). Or take a cursory look at one of the captivity narratives that were so popular in the period and recounted the horrors of falling into the hands of North African pirates.³⁴ Given the widespread hostility towards Islam, it was a damning association to make. Some evidence of this is seen in Leslie's polemical accusation that the only reason Socinians did not openly acknowledge Muhammad as one of their fathers was because 'the people would stone you for they all have a great aversion to Mahomet.'³⁵

In some ways this was a continuation of long tradition of orthodox polemic against antitrinitarians that went back as far as Servetus, as well as the early years of the Transylvanian movement, as opponents sought to deny their Christian status and claimed that they preached a 'Turkish Christ'.³⁶ It was not something exclusive to Unitarians – such accusations could be made of other dissenters too – Quakers for example³⁷ – and Unitarians could find themselves being accused of being Jews, pagans, atheists and papists as well as Muslims,³⁸ but the accusation that they were really Muslims, or 'much more Mahometans than Christians',³⁹ was extremely common in relation to Unitarians, and more than any other group.

Such language reflected the common assumption, found even on occasions where they were not targets of polemic, that antitrinitarian Christianity had a strong affinity with Islam.⁴⁰ Indeed, somewhat later, we can find Gibbon using the term 'Unitarian', in his famous *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, to refer to Muhammad,⁴¹ picking up on language that can be found at the beginning of the eighteenth century, if not before.⁴²

Indeed, as the authors of the *Epistle Dedicatory* had noted, Socinianism had thrived under Islamic rule,⁴³ and rather than this being evidence of the intolerance of trinitarians, as the letter and other Unitarian literature claimed,⁴⁴ their critics saw this as conclusive proof that the Unitarians were Muslims in all but name.⁴⁵ For its opponents, Socinianism was virtually indistinguishable from Islam, the differences largely ‘imperceptible’.⁴⁶

However, even more concerning, it was claimed that Unitarianism ‘makes way for Mahometanism’,⁴⁷ that Unitarianism inevitably led from Christianity to Islam. As Thomas Calvert remarked, ‘If any Christians turne Mahometans they begin with Arianisme, and Socinianisme, and then Turcisme is not so strange a thing.’⁴⁸ And, as conclusive proof of this, famous converts from antitrinitarianism to Islam were paraded as proof, notably Adam Neuser and Paul Alciat⁴⁹ – although actually it was only true of the former,⁵⁰ a prominent Reformed Protestant theologian from Heidelberg.⁵¹ Such a perception does not seem to have been one held solely by trinitarian Christians, as Ottoman Muslims expressed much the same view. Leibniz, for example, recounted reading about how a Turk, on hearing a Polish Socinian talk about his faith, wondered why he did not get circumcised and become a Muslim.⁵²

Indeed, Socinianism was often described as even worse than Islam from the perspective of orthodox Christians. Although both made use of similar arguments against the trinity⁵³ theologically, Unitarianism could be judged as even more inadequate in its understanding of such things as Christology or predestination;⁵⁴ as Whitaker put it, in his *The Origin of Arianism*, written towards the end of the eighteenth century, ‘The truth is, that even Mahomet himself, weak and wicked as he was, never ventured out into the high blasphemies of Socinianism.’⁵⁵ It was also thought worse because it was potentially more dangerous than Islam, causing Christianity to be destroyed from within.⁵⁶

But it is also important to note that although the claims about the affinities between Unitarianism and Islam were intended to be damning, they were not always understood that way by Unitarians themselves. Although some could be ‘enraged’ by the association with Islam,⁵⁷ William Freke, for example, was happy to praise Muhammad and the Qur’an for defending the unity of God against the errors of trinitarian Christians,⁵⁸ and Stephen Nye could talk favourably about Muhammad as someone who set out ‘to restore the Belief of the Unity of GOD, which at that time was extirpated among the Eastern Christians, by the Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation [...] Mahomet meant not his Religion should be esteemed a new Religion, but only the Restitution of the true Intent of the Christian Religion’.⁵⁹ Bury could say that

‘Mahomet professed all the articles of the Christian faith’.⁶⁰

Indeed, as some of their critics accurately observed, founding figures within Socinianism more generally had been happy to both acknowledge that the Qur’an contained the same message of the unity of God that they proclaimed,⁶¹ and to make use of the Qur’an to support their case. Francis David, for example, used it to support his non-adorationist understanding of Jesus,⁶² and both Servetus and Socinus⁶³ made some use of it too. As the Unitarian historiographer of the Polish radical reformation, Stanislas Lubieniecki, could say of Servetus, he ‘sucked honey even out of the very thistles of the Koran’⁶⁴ in arriving at his doctrine, and in his famous trial in Geneva in 1553 he had to defend his use of the Qur’an to support his theological thought.⁶⁵ La Croze, the French critic of Socinianism, could claim, with some justification, that Unitarians, in the infancy of their sect, ‘cited the Alcoran as one of the Classick Books of their Religion’,⁶⁶ even if later followers were rather more reticent in acknowledging this debt.⁶⁷

The *Epistle Dedicatory* clearly reflects the major tropes that characterised the relationship between Unitarianism and Islam as understood by early Unitarians. It is, in most respects, not innovative but rather representative of early Unitarian views, notably in the way it identifies fundamental commonalities between the two religions, embracing rather than rejecting something central to anti-Unitarian polemic. It was, however, clearly different in some significant respects.

I) Much antitrinitarian writing, whilst praising elements of Islamic belief and practice nonetheless repeated age-old calumnies against Muhammad. Bury, for example, despite his positive appraisal of Muhammad as a reformer who restored the true Christian gospel, could call him ‘a lewd brainsick Scoundrel and his Doctrines (as far as they are His) no better than extravagant whimsies, or lewd panders to lust’ – repeating a number of common pejorative epithets.⁶⁸ The *Epistle Dedicatory* contains no such slanders, and Muhammad is praised as a man of ‘judgement’ and, as we have noted, a ‘Preacher’ of the ‘Gospel of Christ’.⁶⁹

II) The treatment of Muhammad and Islam found in the *Epistle Dedicatory* was unusual in being so sustained. Most antitrinitarian writings, especially English ones, only touched on the subject of Islam briefly, with the notable exception of Henry Stubbe’s *The Originall & Progress of Mahometanism*,⁷⁰ in which ‘Trinitarian Christianity is dismissed as hopelessly corrupt and false in favour of Islam, which is represented as the religion of Christ and the Apostles’⁷¹ or John Toland’s *Nazarenus: Or, Jewish, Gentile, and Mahometan Christianity* (1718).

III) The *Epistle Dedicatory* was also distinctive in the audience that it addressed. Antitrinitarian texts that mention Islam were almost invariably written to other Christians. The only exception to this is Adam Neuser's famous letter to Sultan Selim II in 1570 (and possibly some writings by Jacob Palaeologus).⁷²

IV) The positive valuation of Islam combined with the critical approach towards Islamic texts within the letter is exceptional. The fact that the Unitarians were acting in the same way in respect to both the Bible and the Qur'an was something that even their opponents thought worthy of note,⁷³ and clearly set them apart from the likes of Henry Stubbe.⁷⁴ It is especially interesting that de Versé, the 'agent' of the Unitarians named by Tenison as the figure who delivered the papers, was very much at the forefront of these developments, as both the translator into Latin of Richard Simon's important historical-critical work on the Old Testament, *Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament*,⁷⁵ and someone with a reputation as a radical biblical critic.⁷⁶

Conclusion

There is much more than can be said. Clearly the *Epistle Dedicatory* does merit careful scrutiny. However, I would like to leave you with some observations about the consequences of examining this text.

As we have noted, Gordon was technically wrong to call the *Epistle Dedicatory* the 'primary' document of Unitarianism as Hedworth had used the term 'Unitarian' a decade earlier. Indeed, Unitarians, for most of their history, have been reticent about being associated with it. It was their opponents, beginning with Charles Leslie in 1708, who published it, not Unitarians, and they did this to stigmatise the movement and its leaders.⁷⁷ Priestley found it quoted against him,⁷⁸ and it was used as part of a campaign to smear the Unitarian version of the New Testament published by Thomas Belsham in 1808 and as grounds for excluding Unitarians from membership of Bible Societies.⁷⁹ It was even quoted in the House of Lords as part of a successful attempt to have Unitarians debarred from being trustees of a major charity as late as 1839.⁸⁰

Nonetheless, however reluctant Unitarians have been to acknowledge the *Epistle Dedicatory*, it would be hard to say that it did not deserve a place in any reasonable narrative of Unitarian origins. Surely, at the very least, McLachlan was right to say that it represents 'the growth of a new self-consciousness' within Unitarians.⁸¹ If that is the case, in the light of the above, we need to recognise how exceptional the letter really is, and so, by implication, how exceptional is the story of the birth of English Unitarianism. There is no other example of the

genesis of a major Christian movement in which Islam, or indeed any other non-Christian religion, was a central, defining interlocutor, other than the birth of the early Christian church itself – although even there the parallel breaks down, as Christianity was initially a messianic sect *within* Judaism.⁸² At the very least the story of the origins of early English Unitarianism is not solely one of intra-Christian struggles, of arguments about reason and the scripture – or rather not solely *Christian* scripture.

The *Epistle Dedicatory* is a far from easy text for modern Unitarian readers. Its presuppositions about God and Christianity are not central to the lived religion of many its contemporary adherents. The notion that other religions, let alone their sacred texts, have weaknesses that Unitarians can repair, might seem a little insensitive at best. And despite the positive language about Muhammad and the emphasis upon the commonality of belief between Muslims and Unitarians, ultimately the authors of the *Epistle Dedicatory* intended to convert the ambassador and his compatriots to Unitarian Christianity, again probably not something that sits comfortably amongst many contemporary Unitarians and their liberal religious sensibilities. Other models of Unitarian engagement with Islam in the past, such as the ‘cultural enmeshment’ identified by Ritchie in Hungary and Transylvania in the sixteenth century, and the importance of recognising a ‘paradigm of shared understanding’,⁸³ may well have more contemporary utility.

Nonetheless, however awkward this piece of Unitarian history is, the *Epistle Dedicatory* does show how innovative, bold and disturbing radical dissent can be, how it can envisage relationships and commonalities that go beyond the limits of the prevailing thinking and practice of the time. And that, surely, makes it a text of considerable value today.

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- 1 For the ambassador ibn Haddu’s visit see Wilfrid Blunt, *Black Sunrise; the Life and Times of Mulai Ismail, Emperor of Morocco, 1646-1727* (London: Methuen, 1951), pp. 190–96; Caroline Stone, ‘An “Extremely Civile” Diplomacy’, *Saudi Aramco World*, 63.1 (2012), 16–23; Tazi ‘Abd al-Hadi al-, ‘Muhammad ibn Haddu’, *Academia*, 2 (1985), 55–80. For an example of the positive estimation of Haddu see John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. by Austin Dobson, 3 vols (London: MacMillan, 1906), iii, pp. 77–78.
 - 2 Lambeth Palace Library MS Tenisoniani 673. The volume is entitled *Systema Theologiae Sociniana*.
 - 3 Martin Mulsow, ‘The “New Socinians”: Intertextuality and Cultural Exchange in Late Socinianism’, in *Socinianism And Arminianism: Antitrinitarians, Calvinists, and Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, ed. by Martin Mulsow and Jan Rohls (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 49–78 (p. 60).

- 4 For example, George Chrystides, *The Elements of Unitarianism* (Shaftesbury: Element, 1998), p. 68; Susan Ritchie, 'The Pasha of Buda and the Edict of Torda: Transylvanian Unitarian/Islamic Ottoman Cultural Enmeshment and the Development of Religious Tolerance', *Journal of Unitarian Universalist History*, 30 (2005), 36–54 (p. 43); Susan Ritchie, *Children of the Same God: The Historical Relationship Between Unitarianism, Judaism, and Islam* (Boston MA: Skinner House Books, 2014), p. 28; Leonard Smith, *The Unitarians: A Short History*, 2nd edn (Arnside: Lensden Publishing, 2008), pp. 58–59.
- 5 Ritchie is incorrect to say that the 'only trace of its existence' was preserved by Leslie (Ritchie, 'The Pasha of Buda', p. 43).
- 6 The treatises were: (a) the *Epistola Ameth Benandala Mahumetani*, an excerpt from an earlier work of Muslim apologetics by Muhammad Alguazir, entitled *Apologia contra la ley Cristiana*, which is, itself, dependent upon the apologetic works of Muhammad al-Sanūsī. See Gerard Wiegers, 'Al-Andalusi Heritage in the Maghreb: The Polemical Work of Muhammad Alguazir (fl. 1610)', in *Poetry, Politics, and Polemics: Cultural Transfer Between the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa*, ed. by Zwartjes Otto, Geert Jan van Gelder, and Ed de Moor (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), pp. 107–132; (b) *Animadversiones in praecedentem epistolam*, which consists of a series of observations on the preceding treatise, from an antitrinitarian perspective; (c) *Theognis Irenaeus Christiani lectori salutem*, which takes the form of a sustained antitrinitarian polemic, written under the name of an Arian bishop of Nicaea from the fourth century. The author claims that it was commissioned to be a preface to a commentary on the *Epistola Ameth Benandala Mahumetani*.
- 7 Alexander Gordon, 'The Primary Document of English Unitarianism', *Christian Life*, 18 September 24th (1892), 464–65; October 1 (1892), 476–77; October 29 (1892), 523–24; Alexander Gordon, *Heads of English Unitarian History* (London: Philip Green, 1895), pp. 22–23.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- 11 Henry Hedworth, *Controversy Ended* (London: Francis Smith, 1673), p. 53.
- 12 I have retained the spelling of the original document which is not always consistent.
- 13 Charles Leslie, *The Socinian Controversy Discuss'd* (London: G. Strahan, 1708), p. v.
- 14 A Lutheran theologian, Zacharias Grape, subsequently published a version of it with a refutation. See Zacharias Grapius, *Ahmet Ben-Abdala Mohammedani Epistola Theologica de Articulis Quibusdam Fidei* (Rostock: Nicolai Schwiegerovii, 1705).
- 15 Leslie, *Socinian Controversy*, pp. vi, xii.
- 16 *Ibid.*, pp. vi–vii.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. ix.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. ix.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. ix.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. ix.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. xi.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. xiii.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. ix.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. vii.

- 25 Ibid., p. viii.
- 26 Ibid., p. viii.
- 27 Lambeth Palace Library MS Tenisoniani 673: 36r-v. For a discussion of this see Martin Mulsow, 'Socinianism, Islam and the Radical Uses of Arabic Scholarship', *Al-Qanṭara*, 31 (2010), 549–86 (pp. 572–76).
- 28 Leslie, *Socinian Controversy*, p. viii.
- 29 Ibid., p. xxv.
- 30 Francis Cheynell, *The Divine Trinitunity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* (London: T.R. and E.M., 1650), p. 422.
- 31 Thomas Long, *An Answer to a Socinian Treatise, Call'd The Naked Gospel* (London: Randal Taylor, 1691), p. 12.
- 32 Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World, 1558-1713* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 232.
- 33 Alexander Ross, 'A Needful Caveat or Admonition', in *The Alcoran of Mahomet*, ed. by Anon. (London: s.n., 1649), pp. Eer–Ff3v (p. Ff2r).
- 34 For a helpful collection, see *Piracy, Slavery and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England*, ed. by Daniel J. Vitkus (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2001).
- 35 Leslie, *Socinian Controversy*, p. 28.
- 36 Mulsow, 'Socinianism', p. 559. Mihály Balázs, *Early Transylvanian Antitrinitarianism (1566-1571): From Servet to Palaeologus* (Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 1996), p. 151.
- 37 See, for example, Justin J. Meggitt, 'Islam and Christianity in the Works of George Fox', in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History. Volume 8. Northern and Eastern Europe (1600-1700)*, ed. by David Thomas and John Chesworth (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 527–34 (p. 532).
- 38 John Edwards, *The Socinian Creed* (London: J. Robinson, 1697), p. 221.
- 39 Charles Leslie, *The Truth of Christianity* (London: G. Poole, 1711), p. 157.
- 40 Richard Baxter, *The Cure of Church-Divisions* (London: Nevil Symmons, 1670), p. 49.
- 41 See Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 6 vols (London: William Hallhead, 1788), v., pp. 204, 221, 679.
- 42 Maturin Veyssière La Croze, 'Historical and Critical Reflections on Mahometanism and Socinianism', in *Four Treatises Concerning the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of the Mahometans*, by H. Reland, A. Bobovius, and Anon. (London: B. Lintott, 1712), pp. 153–244 (p. 182).
- 43 Leslie, *Socinian Controversy*, p. ix.
- 44 Anon., *A Brief History of the Unitarians* (s.l.: s.n., 1687), p. 30; Paul Best, *Mysteries Discovered* (London: s.n., 1647), p. 15.
- 45 Leslie, *Socinian Controversy*, p. 43.
- 46 La Croze, p. 230.
- 47 J. Gailhard, *The Blasphemous Socinian Heresie Disproved and Confuted* (London: R. Wellington, 1697), p. 4.
- 48 Thomas Calvert, *The Blessed Jew of Marocco* (York: Nathaniel Brookes, 1648), p. 221.
- 49 Calvert, p. 221; Francis Cheynell, *The Rise, Growth, and Danger of Socinianisme* (London: Samuel Gellibrand, 1643), p. 31; Edward Stillingfleet, *A Discourse in*

- Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: Henry Mortlock, 1697), p. lix; La Croze, pp. 213–18. Interestingly this accusation continued to dog later generations of Unitarians. See Samuel Horsley, *Tracts in Controversy with Dr. Priestley* (Gloucester: J. Robson, 1789), p. 266.
- 50 Paul Alciat remained some kind of Socinian. See Pierre Bayle, *A General Dictionary, Historical and Critical*, 10 vols (London: J. Bettenham, 1735), i, pp. 448–50.
- 51 See Christopher J. Burchill, *The Heidelberg Antitrinitarians* (Baden-Baden: Editions Valentin Koerner, 1989). Bayle, i, pp. 448–50. There were others too, such as the influential Hungarian Unitarian convert İbrahim Müteferriqa. See Tijana Krstić, ‘Illuminated by the Light of Islam and the Glory of the Ottoman Sultanate: Self-Narratives of Conversion to Islam in the Age of Confessionalization’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 51.1 (2009), 35–63 (pp. 61–62). For another, unnamed but clearly influential Socinian convert to Islam see Gottfried W. Leibniz, ‘A Letter from Mr Leibnitz to the Author of the Reflections upon the Origin of Mahometanism’, in *Four Treatises Concerning the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of the Mahometans*, by H. Reland, A. Bobovius, and Anon. (London: B. Lintott, 1712), pp. 245–54 (p. 230).
- 52 Leibniz, p. 248.
- 53 Leibniz, p. 188.
- 54 La Croze, ‘Historical and Critical Reflections’, pp. 188–89.
- 55 John Whitaker, *The Origin of Arianism Disclosed* (London: John Stockdale, 1791), p. 400.
- 56 Leslie, *The Socinian Controversy*, p. xxv.
- 57 La Croze, ‘Historical and Critical Reflections’, p. 195:
- 58 William Freke, *A Vindication of the Unitarians* (London: s.n., 1687), p. 27.
- 59 Anon., *A Letter of Resolution Concerning the Doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation* (London: s.n., 1691), p. 18. (This text is usually assumed to be written by Nye.)
- 60 Bury, p. B2v.
- 61 Leibniz, p. 235.
- 62 Faustus Socinus, *Fausti Socini senensis operum tomus alter continens ejusdem scripta polemica*, 2 vols (Irenopoli [Amsterdam]: s.n., 1656), II, p. 751, col. 2 (in the context of a dialogue between David and Socinus). See Peter Hughes, ‘In the Footsteps of Servetus: Biandrata, David and the Quran’, *Journal of Unitarian Universalist History*, 31 (2006), 57–63.
- 63 Socinus, II, pp. 535–36.
- 64 Stanislaw Lubieniecki, *History of the Polish Reformation: And Nine Related Documents*, ed. by George Huntston Williams (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), p. 159.
- 65 See Jean Calvin, *Joannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia*, 58 vols, ed. by E. Cunitz, J. Baum, E. Reuss (Brunsvigae: C. A. Schwetschke, 1863), viii, p. 765. For Servetus and the Qur’an see Peter Hughes, ‘Servetus and the Quran’, *Journal of Unitarian Universalist History*, 30 (2005), 55–70; Peter Hughes, ‘Servetus and Islam: In His Life’, in *Servetus: Our 16th Century Contemporary*, ed. by Richard Boeke and Patrick Wynne-Jones (London: International Association for Religious Freedom, 2011), pp. 11–16; Jaime de Marcos Andreu, ‘Servetus and Islam: In His

- Writings', in *Servetus: Our 16th Century Contemporary*, ed. by Richard Boeke and Patrick Wynne-Jones (London: International Association for Religious Freedom, 2011), pp. 17–28.
- 66 La Croze, p. 212.
- 67 La Croze, p. 195.
- 68 Bury, B2r. See, for example, Humphrey Prideaux, *The True Nature of Imposture Fully Display'd in the Life of Mahomet* (London: William Roger, 1697), pp. 20, 137. For early modern accusations against Muhammad, see Matthew Dimmock, *Mythologies of the Prophet Muhammad in Early Modern English Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) and John V. Tolan, 'European Accounts of Muḥammad's Life', in *The Cambridge Companion to Muhammad*, ed. by J. E. Brockopp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 226–50.
- 69 Leslie, *Socinian Controversy*, p. viii.
- 70 See Nabil Matar, ed., *Henry Stubbe and the Beginnings of Islam: The Originall & Progress of Mahometanism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2014). Stubbe's work, written around 1671–74 (ibid., p. 7) only circulated in manuscript until was published in 1911: Hafiz Shairani, ed., *An Account of the Rise and Progress of Mahometanism with the Life of Mahomet [...] by Dr Henry Stubbe* (London: Luzac & Co., 1911).
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- 72 For Neuser's letter see La Croze, p. 215. For Palaeologus see Martin Rothkegel, 'Jacobus Palaeologus in Constantinople, 1554-5 and 1573', in *Osmanli Istanbulu*, ed. by F. M. Emecen, A Akyıldız, and E. S. Gürkan (Istanbul: 29 Mayıs Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2016), iv, 977–1004.
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- 82 For a classic study of this see James D. G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity*, 2nd edn (London: SCM Press, 2006).
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