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The Burning of books and their authors in the Medieval and Renaissance Europe: Casus of Michael Servetus and his Anti-Trinitarian Thesis

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Abstract: The burning of dissident authors and their works by both the Catholic “Holy” Inquisition and the Protestant censors had been one of the darkest pages of the Western civilization. Author, a Muslim Silesian/Polish historian of Eurasian Islamic-Christian Frontiers, investigates the causes, raison d’être and rationale of the destruction of numerous precious works and the public spectacles of executions in Michael Foucault’s perspective but from the Islamic viewpoint. The author of this paper, selected the Spanish humanist Michael Servetus (Miguel Serveto, 1511-1553 CE) and his books De trinitatis erroribus [On Errors of Trinity] and Dialogorum de trinitate [Dialogue on trinity] as a example of western method of annihilation of prohibited books and dissenters or the “Others” works”. Author also reviews the burning of precious copies of Qur’an and Islamic literature in the re-Catholicized Al-Andalus after the surrender of the Emirate of Granada.

Keywords: biblicide, Inquisition, Michael Servetus, auto-da-fe, Islamofobia

“Do you ever read any of the books you burn? He laughed. ‘That’s is against the law…””

(Ray Bradbury, Fahrenheit 451)

“Hassan: Where men burn books, they will burn people in the end…” (Heinrich Heine, Almansor, 1882)

Deliberate destruction of banned written works of authors declared by the ruling regimes as “heretics”, “deviants”, “people’s enemies”, etc., as well as executions of these condemned men of pen are neither confined to the Christian and secularist West nor only to its past. Historians are able to find such events in the antiquity and in all non-European civilizations. Infamous trial of Socrates and his execution recorded by Plato is one of the oldest example of condennatio memoriae but, for sure, not the first. Written records of other similar cases in the cradle of the classic foundations of the western civilization did not survive to our times. Burning of banned “undesirable” literature was (and still is) a public spectacle of erasing of the nonconformist works from the collective memory of people or peoples, taken by the ruling regime/ regimes under cover of the law preventing “illegal” dissemination or propagation of beliefs, thoughts and views. In the fifth century BCE, Protagoras’ books were commended by the judges of Areopagus to be burnt, and author himself was publically burnt in the agora of Athens. It was probably the first recorded act of ‘bonfire’. In the Middle Ages of Euro-Christianity, John Wycliffe’s books against corruption of popes were burned twice in 1403 and seven years later. Peter Abelard was ordered by the Church to throw his own book (‘On the Unity of God of Trinity’) into flames. In 1425 CE, his corpse (J. Wicliff died in 1384 CE) had been dig out of the grave and burnt by order of the Catholic Churchmen. Rebecca Drogin in her
Librocide (2003) examined all cases of destruction of books in the modern Germany, Bosnia-Herzegovina, USA, China and Tibet. But burning of authors of the “illegal” banned books is almost exclusively Western tradition and legacy of the Latin Christendom. In the Islamic civilization, the Mutazilites’ Mihnah (Arabic equivalent of “inquisition”) destroyed most of the Hanbalites’ counter-Mutazilite polemical books (presented by orientalists and their westernized Muslim disciples as so-called “anti-rationalist” works). The Mihnah of these pseudo-rationalists humiliated, denigrated, and in same cases murdered, defenders of the Islamic Aqidah but the victims of Mutazilite Grand Terror had never been burnt alive for obvious reason; the Islamic penal law does not allow to kill by fire, reserved only for Allah swt. The Islamic authorities also burned books declared as the offensive or degenerated. The charismatic Andalusian hajib and amir al-Muslimin Abu Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Abu Amr al-Mansoor, (938- Aug. 8, 1002 CE, 327-393, AH, known as Almanzor in the Spanish Christian annals) ordered to burn only pornographic collection of obscene books from Hakam II’s library. The homosexual Umayad ruler ‘patron of arts, poetry and science’ amassed 400 000 books, the largest collection of books in whole Europe.1 Franciscan friars burned all Mayan annals of the massacred Indians in the “New World”. In 1328, “heretic” Caco Ceko d’Ascoli was condemned by the nefarious “Holy” Inquisition in Rome and burned together with his book De Sphaera. On May 18, 1554, Wiliam Thomas’s A Historie of Italia was burned publically and he was hanged, quartered, and his severed head was impaled on the London Bridge on order of the fanatically Catholic Queen Mary.2 The pope John XXII ordered to burn Petrus Johannes Oliva’ bones. In 1639, Francisco M. De Silva was burned alive at staker in Lima, Peru, together with books tied around his neck at age of forty-nine. In July 1656, Ann Austin and mary Fischer, two Quaker women were arrested in Boston and deported to Barbados one month later. Their private collection of “corrupt” books and sectarian pamphlets had been burned by the hangman of Boston city.3 In 1683, Famous Leviathan of Thomas Hobbes was burnt in the backyard of the University of Oxford.4 Daniel Defoe’s ‘seditious’ Shortest Way with the Dissenters was burned in London and he was himself pilloried and humiliated by mob. In 1934, the nationalist dictator Chiang-kai-shek ordered to burn books of Maxim Gorki, Upton Sinclair and Bernard Russell. Five years later, Spanish Fascist caudillo F. Franco made similar decision. John Steinbeck’s Grapes of Wrath had been publically burnt in California, Oklahoma and Illinois. On May 1, 1989, Israeli troops raided Dar-al Khadra publishing house and threw thousands of books out of windows and burnt them in the street.

Our brief reassessment does not include cases of burning of libraries by accident or undeliberate conflagration of records during military operations and revolutions (for example like Caesar’s burning of Cleopatra’s Library in Alexandria, 48 BCE). Also premeditated and suspected intentional burning of libraries and archives during invasions and riots are not discussed in our historical review.5 Last year, a Judeo-Christian extremist cleric Terry Jones ignited a world-wide protest by

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3 Ibid, 23.

4 Ibid, 14

5 For example; the burning of the Alexandrian Library by the Christian fanatics (391 CE), Hulagu Khan’s Sack of Baghdad (1258 CE) and throwing of tons of precious Islamic documents by his Mongol hordes to the River of Euphrates, the Pillage of Iassy and burning one of the richest collection of Muslim and Moldavian records in the Eastern Europe by the Polish troops led by the king Jan Sobieski III (1684 CE), the barbaric bombardment of Library Vjecenica at Sarajevo together with the unique Islamic documents of the Oriental Institute by the Serbian Chetniks in 1994, the burning of one of the earliest copies of Qur’an and collections of rare documents for modern history of Iraq by the American occupiers in April, 2003, as well as obliteration of
his intention to burn publically a copy of the English translation of the Holy Qur’an in Florida, USA. His revitalization of the Christian medieval tradition reminds us that the western crusaders’ crimes against Islamic civilization are not barbarian rituals of the past. Ironically, the burning of copies of Qur’an is a proper way to protect the Revealed Book of Allah against disrespect. The burning of books and scholars was initiated in the antiquity by the Chinese Qin Dynasty. In 367 CE, Athanasius, the fanatical bishop of Alexandria issued an Easter letter in which he demanded that Egyptian monks destroy all such unacceptable writings. Sir Richard F. Burton’s Catholic wife burned almost all his letters, manuscripts, and travelogues after his death. Franz Kafka wrote to his friend and literary executor Max Brod: “Dearest Max, my last request: Everything I leave behind me ... in the way of diaries, manuscripts, letters (my own and others’), sketches, and so on, [is] to be burned unread.”[3] Had Brod carried out Kafka’s instructions, virtually the whole of Kafka’s work would have been lost forever. Ray Bradbury’s dystopic novel *Fahrenheit 451* is about a future society that has institutionalized book burning. In Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the “Memory Hole” is used to burn any book or written text which is banned by the regime of the Big Brother which declared “the total destruction of all books published before 1960”. In his 1821 play *Almansor*, Heinrich Heine referring to the burning of the Qur’an during the Spanish Inquisition’s crusade, wrote that “when they burn books, so too will they in the end burn human beings.” (Dort, wo man Bücher verbrennt, verbrennt man auch am Ende Menschen.) Logo of Anthony Comstock’s “New York Society for the Suppression of Vice”, founded in 1873, advocates book-burning and inscribed book burning on its seal, as a noble goal to be achieved. Comstock’s NYSSV burned 15 tons of books, 284,000 pounds of plates for printing such ‘objectionable’ books, and nearly “lewd” 4,000,000 pictures. In the 1950s several books by William Reich were ordered to be burned in the U.S. under judicial orders. Adolf Hitler’s NSDAP organized public bonfires of “decadent and degenerated literature”. Our concise study of bibliocide is focused on two, almost interconnected cases of burning books and their authors in the age declared by the western historian as the century of western humanism and “Renaissance”. The paper draws attention to the fate of the Spanish-origin Miguel Servetus and the Islamophobic policy of the Spanish Grand Inquisitor de Cisneros.

Miguel Serveto (or Servet, in Latinized version; Servetus) Conesa "Revés" was a Spanish-origin neo-Arian humanist, cartographer and practitioner of medical arts. He was born at Spanish town of Villanueva de Sijena, Huesca, in Aragon, probably on 29 September in 1511, the year of conquest of Melaka by the Portuguese corsairs of Afonso Albuquerque. But some of Serveto’s biographers quote his own claim of having been born in 1509.[1-2] His father Antonio Serveto alias Revés, ("Reverse"), a notary, was descendant of highlanders from Serveto, a small village in the Pyrenees. His mother was a daughter of the Sefardic-origin Catholic converts from Monzón area, who probably secretly taught him the banned Tawhid (the Ibrahimic monotheist credo of Oneness of God). Miguel Serveto had two brothers: the older was a notary like their father, and the younger was a Catholic cleric. [1] At the age of fifteen, Miguel Serveto became a disciple of the Franciscan monk Juan de Quintana, a personal confessor of the Habsburg emperor and the Spanish king Charles V.[4] who was follower of Erasmus of Rotterdam. The Dominican monks taught him Latin and Greek.[3] He also read the Hebrew Bible. In 1526, a year after the total ban of all practices of Islam and massive destruction of copies of Qur’an and collections of hadiths in the Spain, he was a student of law at University of Toulouse. The inquisitors suspected him to be a member of the secret pro-Protestant circle of students. In 1528, Servetus traveled through Germany and Italy with Quintana. [3] Two years later, in October, he was in Basel and visited Johannes Oecolampadius. In May 1531 he met Martin Bucer and Wolfgang Fabricius Capito in Strasbourg. After ten months of working as a proof-reader for a local printing house, the young Serveto published his famous *De trinitatis erroribus* ("On the Errors of the Trinity") in July 1531. One year later he published under the pseudonym “Michel de Villeneuve” his two other counter-trinitarian

Islamic *maktabes* in Maghreb by the French and Italian colonialist invaders – and other similar cases - are not subjects of our investigation.
books; *Dialogorum de Trinitate* ("Dialogues on the Trinity") and *De Iustitia Regni Christi" ("On the Justice of Christ’s Reign"). In 1533, he enrolled himself at the Collège de Calvi in Paris, where he studied medicine in 1536. Sylvius, Fernel, and Johannes Guinter praised him as their most talented assistant.

Miguel Serveto totally rejected the Nicean dogma of the trinity, arguing in his books that it was not based on the biblical scripture. He stated that the concept of trinity originated from teachings of Greek pagan philosophers, and propagated a return to the original Gospels (i.e., *Injil* of the Prophet Isa, aws) preached by the earliest “fathers of ecclesia” before the Synod of Nicea (325 CE) which imposed the doctrine of trinitarianism. Serveto hoped that the rejection of the trinitarianism would make the “New Testament” more convincing “words of God” to the Jewish followers of the “Old Testament” and to the Muslims who follow “The Last Testament” of the Qur’an. According to Serveto, Islam and Mosaic religion preserved the Ibrahimic authentic religion and the trinitarian Christians produced "tritheism", or belief in three deities. He was appointed as a personal physician of Pierre Palmier, Archbishop of Vienne, and of Guy de Maugiron, the lieutenant governor of Dauphiné. Under the pseudonym "Michel de Villeneuve" he wrote his letters to John Calvin.

In 1553 Servetus published *Christianismi Restitutio*, a work that refuted Calvin’s concept of predestination. God, argued Servetus, condemns no one who does not condemn himself through thought, word or deed. Calvin sent his own book as a reply and wrote to Servetus, "I neither hate you nor despise you; nor do I wish to persecute you; but I would be as hard as iron when I behold you insulting sound doctrine with so great audacity." [13] Calvin revealed his anger and intentions in a letter to his friend William Farel on 13 February 1546:

“Servetus has just sent me a long volume of his ravings. If I consent he will come here...I will never permit him to depart alive” (*Si venerit, modo valeat mea autoritas, vivum exire nunquam patiar*)[15]

On 16 February 1553, Guillaume Trie, a close friend of Calvin and a wealthy merchant who had found asylum Geneva, denounced Servetus as a “heretic” in a letter sent to his cousin, Antoine Arneys in Lyon. On behalf of the French inquisitor Matthieu Ory, Servetus as well as Arnollet, the printer of *Christianismi Restitutio*, were questioned, but they denied all charges and were released for lack of evidence. [16] But two months later, Servetus was arrested by the Roman Catholic religious police in Vienne. He escaped from prison three days later. On 17 June, he was condemned by the French Inquisition as the “heretic” on base of 17 letters sent by John Calvin [17] and sentenced to be burned alive with his books. An effigy and copies of his books were burned in his absence. Escaping to Italy, Servetus stopped in at Geneva, where Calvin and his Reformers had denounced him. On 13 August, he was immediately recognized and arrested after Calvin’s sermon [18]. All his property was confiscated. French Inquisitors asked Calvin for extradition of Servetus for execution. At his trial in Geneva, Servetus was condemned for spreading and preaching anti-trinitarianism, anti-paedobaptism (opposition to baptism of infants) and for sexual misconduct. The chief persecutor asked "whether he did not know that his doctrine was pernicious, considering that he favours Turks, by making excuses for them, and if he has not studied the Koran in order to disprove and controvert the doctrine and religion that the Christian churches hold, together with other profane books, from which people ought to abstain in matters of religion, according to the doctrine of St. Paul.”

Immediately after Servetus’ arrest, John Calvin wrote in his letter to Farel:

“... He impudently reviled me, just as if he regarded me as obnoxious to him. I answered him as he deserved ... I hope that sentence of death will at least be passed on him; but I desired that the severity of the punishment be mitigated... whoever shall maintain that wrong is done to heretics and blasphemers in punishing them makes himself an accomplice in their crime and guilty as they are. There is no question here of man’s authority; it is God who speaks, and clear it is what law he will impose by the Frenc...”

The Swiss Reformed cantons of Zürich, Bern, Basel and Schaffhausen supported condemnation and suppression of Servetus’ doctrine. [24] Both Martin Luther Philip Melanchthon also condemned his
writing. Even the Protestant faction of "Libertines", who were opposed to anything and everything John Calvin supported, in this case, were strongly in favor of the execution of Servetus at the stake. The council which condemned Servetus to death in flames was presided over by Perrin (a Libertine). On 24 October, he sentenced Servetus to death by burning for denying the Trinity and infant baptism.[25]. When Calvin requested that Servetus be executed by decapitation rather than fire, the Geneva Comune refused his request. On 27 October, 1553, the forty-two year-old Serveto was burned slowly at the stake just outside Geneva with his printed book chained to his leg.

Calvin wrote his friend, Farel, on February 13, 1546 (seven years prior to Servetus' arrest) and went on record as saying: "If he [Servetus] comes to Geneva, I shall never let him go out alive if my authority has weight." Geneva was the Vatican of the radical Protestantism. During Servetus' trial, Calvin wrote: "I hope that the verdict will call for the death penalty."(5) After arrest on August 14th until his condemnation, Servetus spent his remaining days "in an atrocious dungeon with no light or heat, little food, and no sanitary facilities as an 'obstinate heretic' "(10) He was lifted onto the pyre and chained to the stake. A wreath strewn with sulfur was placed on his head. When the faggots were ignited, 'Mercy, mercy!' he begged. For more than half an hour his agony continued on the pyre made of half-green wood, which burned slowly. Farel yelled and announced to the watching crowd: 'Here you see what power Satan possesses when he has a man in his power. This man is a scholar of distinction, and he perhaps believed he was acting rightly. But now Satan possesses him completely, as he might possess you, should you fall into his traps.' Servetus whispered 'Oh God, Oh God!' , Farel yelled at him: 'Have you nothing else to say?' This time Servetus replied to him: 'What else might I do, but speak of God!' Farel informed Servetus that he might have been saved by shifting the position of the adjective and confessing Jesus as "the eternal son" rather than as the son of the Eternal God."(12)

Jacques Gruet and Jerome Bolsec whom Calvin considered as Libertines wrote letters critical of his Consistory and petitioned the Catholic king of France for intervention in the political and religious affairs of Geneva. Gruet was beheaded for treason, Bolsec who publicly challenged Calvin's teaching on predestination was banished from the city in 1551. (Augustine of Hippo was an earlier proponent of predestination from whom John Calvin drew ideas). Jerome Bolsec published a biography of Calvin entitled as Histoire de la vie, moeurs, actes, doctrine, constance et mort de Jean Calvin ... printed at Lyon in 1577 (ed. M. Louis-Francois Chastel, Lyon, 1875) in which he charged the fanatical "Protestant pope of Geneva" with greed, financial misconduct, and sexual perversion."(18) In support of the persecution of "the false preachers", Calvin quoted Saul aka Paul, the Jewish-origin author of many letters which became a significant part of the Christian scripture (the New Testament): "Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some" (2 Tim. 2:17,18).

Executions of the religious dissidents by burning or boiling alive were carried out in whole Christian Europe as late as 1612 when the churchmen in England burned two thinkers who followed Servetus at the behest of the bishops of London and Lichfield. Thirty-nine "heretics" and "false preachers" were burned at the stake between May of 1547 and March of 1550. The so-called Renaissance was not a century of religious tolerance in Europe divided by the War of Religion. In the late Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas in his Summa Theologiae supported the burning of "heretics" saying, "If the heretic still remains pertinacious the church, despairing of his conversion, provides for the salvation of others by separating him from the church by the sentence of excommunication and then leaves him to the secular judge to be exterminated from the world by death." (ST, Ila, Iae q. 11 a. 3)

After the cruel execution of Servetus, the other anti-trinitarian thinkers like Martin Cellarius or Lelio Sozzini wrote only secretly. The ideas of Servetus strongly influenced the Unitarian movement in Poland ("Bracia Arianie") and Transylvania.[29] Piotr z Goniądza's support of Servetus' views led to the separation of the Polish Brethren from the Calvinist Reformed Church in Poland, and laid the foundations for the separatist Socinian movement.

Servetus was the first European to describe the function of pulmonary circulation, although his achievement was not widely recognized at the time, for a few reasons. Western historians of science discovered in the beginning of 16th century CE that the pulmonary circulation was known to the
Muslims in the 13th century CE. Ibn al-Nafis, born in 1213 CE, (in Damascus) discovered it. His discovery was not transmitted to Europe.

Francisco Jiménez (or Ximenes) Gonzalo de Cisneros, (1436 – November 8, 1517), was a Spanish cardinal-confessor of the queen Isabel of Castile and Grand Inquisitor of the Spain. He was born to a poor family in Torrelaguna in Castile in 1436 and studied at Alcalá de Henares and Salamanca. In 1459, he traveled to Rome to work as a consistiorial advocate where he worked for the Pope Pius II Piccolomini. He returned to Spain in 1465. In 1484 at the late age of forty-eight he became a Franciscan friar. As Francisco, he entered the Franciscan friary of San Juan de los Reyes, founded by Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile at Toledo. He had masochistic pleasure to mortify his own body by flogging and he wearing a horsehair shirt. He ordered the Franciscan friars to abandon their concubines so that four hundred monks together with their "wives" fled to the Islamic North Africa and embraced Islam. In 1499, Cisneros forcibly Catholicized Muslim Granadines. Cisneros proceeded with the "mass baptism" by sprinkling streets and ordered the burning of all copies of Qur’an, all Arabic manuscripts except those dealing with medicine. Cisneros’ fanaticism and anti-Islamic terror led to the First Muslim Uprising of the Alpujarras. He was almost captured by the Mujahedin. The uprising was cruelly suppressed and the survivors of massacres were given a choice of baptism or exile. The majority emigrated to Maghreb and by 1500 CE, Cisneros reported that "there is now no one in the city who is not a Christian, and all the mosques are churches". In 1506, the king Ferdinand I of Aragon made Cisneros Grand Inquisitor for Castile and Leon. His crusade against the Muslims of Oran in Maghreb was ended with fiasco. On January 28, 1516 Ferdinand died, leaving Cisneros as regent of Castile for Charles V, the Habsburg "Holy Roman Emperor". He fell ill (probably poisoned) and died at Roa, on 8 November 1517.

An auto-da-fé or auto de fe (in Spanish and Portuguese; "act of faith") was a ritual of the public penance of condemned "heretics" and "lapsed apostates" in public squares (esplanades) which lasted several hours. This public humiliation was followed by the burning alive in quemadero or "burning place". The first recorded auto-da-fé was held in Paris in 1242 CE. The first Spanish auto-da-fé took place in Seville, Spain in 1481; when six of the men and women who participated in this first Catholic ritual were later burned alive. Juan Antonio Llorente, the ex-secretary of the "holy Office" of the Inquisition, estimated that 31,912 were burnt, 17,696 burned in effigy, and 291,450 "reconciled de vehementi" (excluding the American colonies, Sicily and Sardinia) [6]. José Amador de los Ríos stated that only between 1484 and 1525, 28,540 were burned at stake, 16,520 burned in effigy and 303,847 penanced.[6] Majority of Iberologists and historians of Spain indicate less than 10,000 executed during the whole operation of the Spanish Inquisition[7]. The Portuguese Inquisition was established in 1536 and lasted officially until 1821. Autos-da-fé of Muslims were also held in the Portuguese colony of Goa, India, following the establishment of the Inquisition there in 1562-1563. Relaxado en persona, in a Spanish "relaxed in person" was a euphemism for "burnt at the stake" in the records of the Spanish Inquisition. Death by burning alive at the stake was a capital punishment in the ancient and Christian Europe and among the Jews and Canaanites. According to the Talmud, the “burning” in the Bible was an execution by pouring melted lead into the convicted person’s throat, causing immediate death.[1] The Greek tyrant Phalaris of Akragas in Sicily, roasted his enemies alive in a brazen bull; it was devised for him by Perillus or Perilaos, who made it acoustic so that the screams of the victims sounded like the roaring of a bull; when Perillus asked for his reward, he became the first victim.[3] Phalaris was later executed in his brazen bull. Burning was used as a means of execution in many ancient societies. According to ancient reports, Roman authorities executed arsonists in tunica molesta, a flammable shirt. Julius G. Caesar reported the ancient Celts executed prisoners of war by burning them inside giant "wicker men".[5][6] North American Indians often used burning as a form of execution. Roasting over a slow fire was a customary

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method.[7] In the Byzantine Empire, Zoroastrians were burned, because they worshiped fire. The Byzantine Emperor Justinian (527–565 CE) ordered death by fire for “heresy” against the Nicaean Christian trinitarism in his Codex Justiniani (CJ 1.5). In 1184, the Roman Catholic Synod of Verona declared that burning was the punishment for “heresy”. This decree was reaffirmed by the Fourth Council of the Lateran in 1215 CE, the Synod of Toulouse in 1229. The victims of the Christian law of fire died at stake from heatstroke, shock, the loss of blood and the thermal decomposition of vital body parts. The body burnt gradually, first calves, thighs and hands, torso and forearms, breasts, upper chest, face; and finally the head. Some records inform that victims took over 2 hours to die. In later years in England some burnings only took place after the convict had already hanged for half an hour. In England the condemned woman (men were hanged, drawn, and quartered) was seated on the “saddle” which was fixed on the iron stake. Having been taken to the place of execution with her hands tied in a cart. The executioner’s carried up a ladder against the stake to be sat astride the saddle. The chains were fastened and sometimes she was painted with pitch which was supposed to help the fire burn her more quickly. Bundles of wood were placed at the base of the stake and set alight. The fire would burn slowly causing the victim great pain and more wood would be added as necessary until she was totally consumed. Hernando del Pulgar, court historian of Ferdinand and Isabella, estimated that the Inquisition had burned at the stake 2,000 “heretics” and “relapsed Moors” in 1490 alone.[8] The Spanish Inquisition described the burning as relaxado en persona. Burning was also used by both the Roman Catholics and Protestants during the witch-hunts of Europe. The penal code known as the Constitutio Criminalis Carolina (1532) decreed that the witch was to be burnt at the stake. In 1572, Augustus, Elector of Saxony imposed the penalty of burning for witchcraft and fortunetelling.[9] Among the best-known individuals to be executed by burning were Jacques de Molay (1314), Jan Hus (1415), St. Joan of Arc (30 May 1431), Savonarola (1498) Patrick Hamilton (1528), John Frith (1533), William Tyndale (1536), Michael Servetus (1553), Giordano Bruno (1600), Avvakum (1682), Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley (both in 1555) and Thomas Cranmer (1556). In Denmark the burning of witches intensified during the Reformation of 1536. The king Christian IV of Denmark encouraged such executions. In 1590, in the North Berwick, the witch trials accused over seventy women to be witches in Scotland because bad weather when James I of England, who shared the Danish king’s interest in witch trials sailed to Denmark to meet his betrothed Anne of Denmark. Edward Wightman, a radical Baptist from Burton on Trent, was the last person to be burnt at the stake for heresy in England in the market square of Lichfield, Staffordshire on 11 April 1612. The last victim of the Catholic Church in Latin America was Mariana de Castro, burnt in Lima, 1732.[13] The burning of prohibited books, was an old Western “custom respectable by its antiquity”. Emperor Constantine, demanded the surrender of all Arian works under penalty of death. In 435 CE, Barbarian king Theodosius II. and Roman emperor Valentinian III ordered “all Nestorian books to be burned, and another law threatens punishment on all who will not deliver up Manichæan writings for the same fate”[7] “suspected heretics” were treated similarly; and the prisoner who “confessed” guilt under torture was tortured once again to obtain information about other “suspected enemies” of the church and state. The crime of “mistrust” was introduced by the Inquisition to the secular trials, and “the accused who could not be convicted of the crime laid to his door could be punished for being suspected of it, not with the penalty legally provided for the offence, but with some other, at the fancy and discretion of the judge. It would be impossible to compute the amount of misery and wrong, inflicted on the defenseless up to the present century, which may be directly traced to the arbitrary and unrestricted methods introduced by the Inquisition and adopted by the jurists who fashioned the criminal jurisprudence of the Continent. It was a system which might well seem the invention of demons, and was fitly characterized by Sir John Fortescue as the Road to Hell.”

Conclusion

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8 Ibid., 551.
The ‘bibliocaust’ was a European favoured public spectacle and “fearful reminader to the citizenry of what happens to those who express heretical and sedicitious views”. 9 This ritualistic theatre was/is an primitive intimidation, or punishment “less likely to be achieved if the books were simply collected and destroyed out of sight of the populace”. 10 Burning to ashes both book and his author is almost magic act of Western collective subconsciencessnes, an act of Indo-European cult of purifing fire, which turned to ashes bodies of fallen warlord of the Barbarian West and their female slaves, the same burning power which “cleansed” the forcibly Christianized tribes of Europe from their “witches” or the crypto-priest of the ancient Celtic, Germanic, Slavic heathenism, which until today almost daily kill in India hundreds of widows, wives, daughters in banned but observed secretly ceremonies of ‘Aryan’ sati. Power of incendiary bombs dropped on cities and villages of the “bad guys”, burning terror of missiles with napalm and white phosphor of air-forces of the perpetually belligerent and insecure West.

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9 Battles, 7

10 Loc.cit.
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A complete translation of *Christianismi Restitutio* into English (the first ever) by Christopher Hoffman and Marian Hillar was published on April 30, 2007.[1] [2]


Thomas Jefferson: letter to William Short, April 13, 1820 of Calvin and Servetus.

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