



Out of the Flames: The Remarkable Story of a Fearless Scholar, a Fatal Heresy, and One of the Rarest Books in the World

By Lawrence Goldstone, Nancy Goldstone

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Out of the Flames is an extraordinary story - providing testament to the power of ideas, the enduring legacy of books, and the triumph of individual courage.

Out of the Flames tracks the history of *The Christianismi Restituto*, examining Michael Servetus's life and times and the politics of the first information during the sixteenth century. *The Christianismi Restituto*, a heretical work of biblical scholarship, written in 1553, aimed to refute the orthodox Christianity that Michael Servetus' old colleague, John Calvin, supported. After the book spread through the ranks of Protestant hierarchy, Servetus was tried and agonizingly burned at the stake, the last known copy of the *Restitutio* chained to his leg.

Servetus's execution marked a turning point in the quest for freedom of expression, due largely to the development of the printing press and the proliferation of books in Renaissance Europe. Three copies of the *Restitutio* managed to survive the burning, despite every effort on the part of his enemies to destroy them. As a result, the book became almost a surrogate for its author, going into hiding and relying on covert distribution until it could be read freely, centuries later.

Lawrence and Nancy Goldstone follow the clandestine journey of the three copies through the subsequent centuries and explore its author's legacy and influence over the thinkers that shared his spirit and genius, such as Leibniz, Voltaire, Rousseau, Jefferson, Clarence Darrow, and William Osler.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

When Michael Servetus was burned at the stake for heresy in 1553, he had spent much of his life running from the Church. Born into a noble Spanish family, he studied medicine and the humanities extensively. By age 20, he had written a treatise on the Trinity that incensed Church authorities and led him into self-imposed exile. But the book that doomed Servetus was *Christianismi Restitutio* (Christianity Restored), which challenged, among other ideas, John Calvin's doctrine of predestination and argued that God exists in all people and all things. The reaction to Servetus's text was so vehement that all copies discovered were destroyed. As the Goldstones (book collectors and authors of *Used and Rare*, etc.) reveal, three copies of the book still exist. In this lively account, the authors vividly recreate a Renaissance world of revolution and reform in which the dissemination of ideas flourished thanks to the printing press. They also trace the paths of the surviving copies of *Christianismi Restitutio* as they make their way through the hands of Voltaire, Rousseau, Jefferson and physician William Osler. More than a theological treatise, the *Christianismi Restitutio* contains a paragraph that explains pulmonary circulation, decades before William Harvey generally credited with this discovery announced his find. The Goldstones offer both a portrait of an important but neglected Renaissance humanist and a testimony to the power of books to shape minds and hearts. Illus.

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From Library Journal

The Goldstones, who have written previous volumes about book collecting, here offer a look at the turbulent 1500s and Michael Servetus, a Spanish lay theologian and physician of convictions and brilliance who was executed for his polemical writings. His early desire for a rebirth of Christianity resulted in condemnation, secret flight, and the assumption of a new identity as a medical student in Paris. His studies there resulted in a major medical discovery: understanding the function of our pulmonary circulation system. He became a celebrated physician and a sought-after editor, and moved from being a Catholic to being a reformer, with views of the Trinity that antagonized John Calvin. In the anonymously published *Christianismi Restitutio*, Servetus reworked additional contentious themes, but the ugly politics of the times caught up with him. He was condemned and burned at the stake, and all but three copies of his book were destroyed. Saved from the flames, these volumes speak triumphantly of the courage of Servetus and the power of the printed word; today, the early roots of the Unitarian Church are seen in his ideas. This fascinating account is recommended for historical and religious collections.

George Westerlund, formerly with Providence P.L.

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From [Booklist](#)

Even as its author writhed in the flames as a heretic, a singular book--*Christianismi Restitutio* --was likewise burning in dozens of Geneva bonfires at the orders of an enraged John Calvin. Rescuing author and book from modern obscurity, the Goldstones recount the engrossing tale of how Michael Servetus came to write his unparalleled compendium of Unitarian heterodoxy and revolutionary human anatomy and how its ruthlessly suppressed ideas, sacred and scientific, survived--along with three improbably preserved copies of the book itself--to inspire religionists and medical scholars centuries later. The Goldstones' taut narrative builds to the high drama of Servetus' final days in Geneva, when both the writer and his final brilliant book incurred Calvin's malign wrath; but the story doesn't end there, as the authors chronicle the belated discovery of the three surviving copies of Servetus' magnum opus and detail his eventual recognition as the true

discoverer--75 years before Harvey--of pulmonary circulation. Though once an influence on Voltaire, Jefferson, and Emerson, Servetus has received little attention in recent decades. This fascinating study should help remedy that neglect. *Bryce Christensen*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Raymond Llamas:

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Julia Gilmore:

Reading can called head hangout, why? Because when you are reading a book particularly book entitled Out of the Flames: The Remarkable Story of a Fearless Scholar, a Fatal Heresy, and One of the Rarest Books in the World your brain will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in every single aspect that maybe unknown for but surely can be your mind friends. Imaging each and every word written in a publication then become one application form conclusion and explanation which maybe you never get before. The Out of the Flames: The Remarkable Story of a Fearless Scholar, a Fatal Heresy, and One of the Rarest Books in the World giving you an additional experience more than blown away your brain but also giving you useful details for your better life in this era. So now let us teach you the relaxing pattern here is your body and mind is going to be pleased when you are finished looking at it, like winning a casino game. Do you want to try this extraordinary shelling out spare time activity?

Martha Holt:

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