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Out of the Flames

Lawrence Nancy Goldstone : Out of the Flames before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Out of the Flames:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A Biography of a BookBy CuriousThe book is well written and does spend a good time talking about the martyr to the cause of quixotic academic idealism in a world redolent with intolerance. The book also goes into early printing history, Luther and his response to Catholic abuses or at least the church's questionable practices, as well as concerning Calvin, Versalius, Liebnitz, Osler, Voltaire and more. It details various aspects of France, Germany and England and the various book dealings present through later times. And there

are dealings with monuments planned and made that perhaps could have been dispensed with. Yes, the book does manage to deal with Servetus, when it gets a chance. Although the book explains quite a bit, it really deals more with the works and their history, as versus with the author himself. The book is definitely entertaining, only a bit misleading in its description. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Thoroughly enjoyed it. By John E. Mosley I don't like to write reviews but do want to give this 5 stars. It's history at its best -- it treats the subject while providing lots of interesting background. I ended up reading pursuing some of the ideas in it on the 'net to learn more -- a sign of a good, engaging book. Very easy writing style made it a joy to read, and I'll keep it to re-read one day. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A biography of Michael Servetus, his Unitarian ideas, and his book. By Colin A. Brodd An extremely enjoyable and readable history - one that I would recommend not only to anyone interested in the history of Unitarianism or medicine or any specific focus in the book, but to anyone interested in the history of knowledge, the history of ideas, and the great media revolution represented by the printing press.

Michael Servetus is one of those hidden figureheads of history who is remembered not for his name, but for the revolutionary deeds that stand in his place. Both a scientist and a freethinking theologian, Servetus is credited with the discovery of pulmonary circulation in the human body as well as the authorship of a polemical masterpiece that cost him his life. The *Christianismi Restitutio*, a heretical work of biblical scholarship, written in 1553, aimed to refute the orthodox Christianity that 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 is significant because it 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. *Out of the Flames* tracks the history of this special work, examining Servetus's life and times and the politics of the first information during the sixteenth century. 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 Dorrow, and William Osler. *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.

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. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. 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. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. 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 Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved