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Sozzini, Fausto and Francesco Pucci. De statu primi hominis ante lapsum disputatio

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[See table of contents](#)

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Ce sont également les emblèmes qui retiennent T. Montone (en particulier les *Emblemata Horatiana* (1607) d’Otto Van Veen) et Anna Maranini à propos du thème de la liberté créative dans les *Symbolicae Quaestiones* (1555) d’Achille Bocchi.

Après l’article d’Hermann Walter, qui s’intéresse à la manière dont le pape Urbain VIII et Le Bernin se sont efforcés d’occulter une partie d’une peinture de Pierre de Cortone dans une chapelle (celle du Saint-Sacrement) de Saint-Pierre de Rome, la dernière communication (d’A. Colombo) étudie, dans ses rapports à la question de la liberté, l’influence de la pensée de la Renaissance sur la poésie patriotique du XIX^e siècle.

Il faut souligner à nouveau, après ce trop rapide catalogue, que les communications sont d’excellente tenue et qu’elles fourmillent de notes grâce auxquelles le lecteur peut prolonger largement les analyses et — ce qui n’est pas de peu d’importance — développer, entre divers domaines, des relations qu’une telle publication contribue largement à encourager.

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Sozzini, Fausto and Francesco Pucci. *De statu primi hominis ante lapsum disputatio*. Ed. Mario Biagioni. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2010. Pp. lxxiii, 343. ISBN 978-8-8637-2176-8. € 58.

In 1574 Francesco Pucci and Fausto Sozzini met in Basel among the circles of mostly Italian and French exiles who had embraced a variety of Protestant persuasions that were not always compatible. Both hailed from wealthy merchant families that had also produced prominent academics, Florentine in Pucci’s case, Sienese in Sozzini’s. Soon they began to debate a theological topic that may seem exclusive, even minutiose, but proved to have wide implications. Pucci maintained that Adam, fashioned after God’s own image, had been created immortal and that death had not existed prior to the fall; Sozzini argued that Adam had been mortal *ab initio*. Their discussion in the presence of some friends continued until 1575, when both left Basel to resume their protracted wanderings. Meanwhile both were setting down their views in writing, and the result is a fine example of the sophistication of theological discourse in the age

of Reformation. Pucci formulated ten points that Sozzini answered one by one. Pucci's rebuttal followed. These texts were relatively short, but then Sozzini ended the debate with an extensive and very detailed treatise. Pucci would later attempt to reconcile himself to the Papal Church, but was tried for heresy and executed in 1597. In the dungeons of the Roman Inquisition he had met two kindred spirits, Giordano Bruno and Tommaso Campanella. Sozzini moved to Poland and became the spiritual leader of the radical Antitrinitarian church that bears his name. At the time of his death in 1604 only one manuscript copy of the four texts existed. They were published in Krakow in 1610 and later included in the edition of his works that forms part of the large *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum*, published in Amsterdam between 1665 and 1668. As no manuscript survives, Mario Biagioni's critical edition is based on these printed texts.

Although Pucci and Sozzini both draw often on arguments known from the unending controversies around Pelagius and Celestius, their debate is really unprecedented. Pucci claimed that not only Adam but all things created were originally immortal. While earth and heaven, like the angels, remained exempt from corruption, all other creatures had through Adam's fall been dragged into mortality. In the garden of Eden death had had no place. Even fierce brutes had lived there on a vegetarian diet. Death had come into existence with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. Egged on by Sozzini, Pucci insisted that all creatures, even animals, would at the end of time partake of Christ's final *restitutio*, which he described in chiliastic tones. In terms reminiscent of Neoplatonism he claimed that man had a natural knowledge of God; so the way to salvation was open to all and at all times. To Sozzini these assumptions lacked every scriptural base. Man was mortal by nature, and nature had not changed on account of the fall. Adam would have died, even if he had not sinned; only grace could save him. God was prepared to grant him immortality as a special privilege, but that had been forfeited with the fall. Adam, however, did not transmit sin and death to posterity; after him, all chose to sin, like he had done. Both opponents rejected the notion of original sin. For Sozzini there was no sin without consent, even the newly-born babes could not escape their sinful nature, and the Deluge showed that the animals too had become subject to sin and corruption. The grant of grace also depended on cooperation. Only the just will partake of Christ's final *restitutio* and life everlasting; the others simply will not be resurrected.

While Pucci's insistence on the amplitude of grace, and also his emotional, moralistic style, link him to the latitudinarian tradition of his Basel friends that reaches back to Erasmus, the significance of this debate lies primarily with the much fuller rejoinders of Sozzini. His precise and highly rational argumentation, sometimes reminiscent of scholastic models, shows him testing many key elements of the theological system he was to develop more coherently in his later writings. In other ways too the debate had an impact on the whole Socinian movement. Johannes Crell secured the relevance of Socinianism for another century in that, in his *De Deo et eius attributis*, he based its central Antitrinitarian position on a concept of natural religion, in a way thus reconciling Pucci with Sozzini. He published his treatise in 1630 together with *De vera religione* by the late Johannes Völkel, which was to be widely used as a standard exposition of Socinianism. Völkel was very much aware of the Pucci-Sozzini *Disputatio*. While deviating from Fausto, his mentor, in certain points, he fully supported the tenet of Adam's original mortality. John Locke, whose library was well stocked with Socinian literature, left a set of manuscript notes on Völkel's *De vera religione*. Adam's status kept him preoccupied. In a manuscript of 1693 he claimed unequivocally: "Man was made mortal," but then he changed his mind and in the *Christianae religionis synopsis* of 1702 he postulated: "Man created after the Image of God, i.e. Immortal."

Biagioni's apparatus is succinct; the early editions leave little scope for critical intervention and there are no direct sources other than the biblical ones. All the more welcome is his careful and extensive introduction. It provides historical background on the protagonists as well as on the impact of their debate. It also provides an analytical preview of the following texts. In a very helpful appendix Biagioni summarizes by page and line the principal points in Sozzini's last piece, which is both long and diffuse. Interest in Socinianism was reinvigorated with the four hundredth anniversary of Fausto's death in 2004. His *Opera omnia* were reprographically reprinted from the *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum*. But apart from Antonio Rotondò's pioneering volume with the works of Fausto's uncle Lelio Sozzini, published in 1986, there are no critical editions of major Socinian texts. Thus Biagioni has made a significant beginning and he has set an impressive standard. One is left to hope for sequels.

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