

REFORM 500. WYCLIFFE – A KEY TO A PUZZLE BETWEEN CALVIN AND ARMINIUS¹

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Abstract: The doctrinal system of Protestantism has its roots in the religious movements which stirred controversies during the Papal schism (14th-15th centuries). A fundamental change of perspective viewed in relation to the traditional Catholic system has begun in the British Isles and was initiated by the rector of Lutterworth, John Wycliffe. The present paper outlines similarities / differences between Wycliffe's theology and the conceptual frame of Calvinism (the so called TULIP). Wycliffe's doctrine has echoes in Calvin's and Arminius' doctrine and, through their mediation, Wycliffe, known as the "Morning Star of the Reformation" exerted a wider influence on the Protestant movement.

Keywords: Christian Reformation, Wycliffe, Lollardism, Calvin, Calvinism, Arminius, Five Theses of Calvinism, TULIP, Remonstrance, Counter-Remonstrance

Introduction: about *Reformationstag*, "Reform" and Wycliffe, Calvin and Arminius

In 2017th year we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Christian Reformation. Along with other peoples, the Romanian people's inaugural timer anticipated the German augural gong of the 31st of October 1517, on the eve of "All Saints' Day" [*Allerheiligen*], which became later on, for a part of Christendom, "The Reformation Day" [*Reformationstag*]. In this context, we can talk about pre-reformers like Wycliffe. After Wycliffe's summon on 19th of February 1377 before Archbishop Sudbury and William Courtenay, Bishop of London "at St. Paul's to account for his heretical ideas" (Lahey 2009, 17), Pope Gregory XI sent five copies of a bull against Wycliffe on 22th of May 1377. He demanded "that Sudbury and Courtenay

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address the problem by extracting a confession from Wyclif and imprisoning him to await judgment from Rome.” (18). So, we can talk about a pre-reformer in 1377 year: Wycliffe. And in this case my article can be characterized by the generic: *Reform 500 or 640?* The answer is: 500. And yet we will discuss Wycliffe’s report with another reformers, John Calvin and Jacob Arminius.

The term „reform” appears in Wycliffe’s pages as an impulse to bring back an original apostolic „form”³, to the detriment of the „deformation” of the biblical doctrine. His actions have converted, in a manner typical for the Reform, a phrase of the ecclesiastic traditionalism – *nunquam reformata quia nunquam deformata*⁴ – giving it a formal meaning: *deformed reformation*⁵. Thus, he speaks of several „reformed” elements:

- Eucharist (*deformata hostia*) (Wycliffe 1889, 136);
- reason (*mens sua peccato mortali deformata*⁶);
- letter (*litteris deformata*⁷) and
- Scripture (*scriptura deformata*) (Buddensieg 1905, 193).

Through his teachings of sacraments, authority and church discipline, tradition and scriptures, Wycliffe opened a doctrinal horizon to the puritanism that

³ The Latin *forma* (-ae) refers to: outline, figure, physiognomy (*homines inter se forma similes*); appearance (*forma nostra reliquaue figura*); face (*formae deorum*), beauty (*formarum spectator*), category (*genus et formam definire*), hence the Romanian regionalism *formoș* (from *fōrmō[n]sus*: *Vis formosa videri*) (Charlton 1918, 334).

⁴ The phrase was uttered in 1257 by Pope Alexander the IV (c. 1199-1261) referring to Carthusians. The meaning is the following: „The Carthusians were never reformed, as they have never been deformed”. (Johnston 2000, 246).

⁵ *Deformed reformation* was a reformative idiom used for the clergy, at the end of the XI century, and it aimed at bringing back to the church the correct form of devotion (Cardini and Montesano 2007, 126).

⁶ Wycliffe refers to Augustine’s phrase, also used by Anselm and Thomas: *Omne peccatum est mendacium* – „all evil is false” (Augustine, *Contra mendacium*, I; *Enchiridon*, 18. Or, in another version: *Omne peccatum est iniustitia*). This phrase seems to be rooted in Aristotle’s phrase: „as the truth is the good of intellect, the false is its evil” (Aristotle, *Etica Nicomahica*, VI, 2, 1139a 28) (See: Poole 1885, 343; Buddensieg 1906, 10; Southern 2000, 80; Hagenbach 1847, 18; O’Brien 2006, 156; Thomas of Aquinas 2009, 799).

⁷ John Wycliffe, „Sermo XLVI” (See: Loserth 1889, 399).

flourished in the England of the XVII century, offering it the base for five reforming topics: *Sola gratia, Sola fide, Sola Scriptura, Solus Christus, Soli Deo Gloria*⁸.

We are going to make a brief presentation of the historical and conceptual background where „the five theses of Calvinism” were functioning – improperly called as such⁹ – and we are going to end by seeking their correspondences in the spectrum of Wycliffe’s ideology. *Cor ad cor loquitur* – „the heart speaks to the heart”, said Newman¹⁰; we are to see how Wycliffe spoke to Calvin or to Arminius.

Our analysis will be rather theological than philosophical, approaching one segment of the systematics: neither Christology nor pneumatology, neither ecclesiology nor eschatology, but soteriology, the doctrine on salvation. Our endeavor belongs to the circuit of the „three relative suppositions” assimilated with the „statute of history of philosophy and of the events that it presents” (Baumgarten 2006, 11), having (1) scientific¹¹, (2) factual¹² and (3) pragmatic character¹³. We will initiate a theological reading of the texts, punctuated by corresponding predications and finalized by verification of the sources providing the „theses”. Thus, we will go through a triad formed of the historic, ideatic and intramatricial segments (original).

⁸ For better understanding, please see: Cummings 2007, 15-16, 41-47, 222, 230; Mathison 2001; Flebbe 2008, 380, 391, 396, 400, 403; Piper and Mathis 2010.

⁹ The contemporary theologian J.I. Packer claims that the Calvinist system cannot be reduced to „five points”, as it is much wider (Steele and Thomas 1999, 26).

¹⁰ The cardinal’s aphorism seems to have been inspired by *Prov 27:19*: „as in water, the face [answers] the face, the same the human heart answers the man”. C. Bădiliță and D.-M. D’Hamonville suggest the variant: „as the water [reflects] the face, the human heart [reflects] the man.” (See: Stone 2005, 146; Bădiliță 2006, 494).

¹¹ „... the central issue of the philosophy historian is to establish an interpretation horizon that may acceptably explain the multiplicity of the medieval interpretations of only one original text, an interpretation that would not simplify this multiplicity by reducing it.” (Baumgarten 2006, 12).

¹² „Following A.O. Lovejoy’s suggestion, we will call an *event* of the history of philosophy any moment that may be expressed by predication, considering those simple terms that denote the divine being, the world, the logic, etc., as lacking any significance, and the historic discourse concerning them will be considered as infinitely open to equivocal.” (12).

¹³ „... the meaning of the historical events of philosophy may be thought according to their effect.” (12).

1. Historical background: Arminianism and Calvinism: a post-mortem dispute in the Netherlands (1610-1619)

1.1. Who was John Wycliffe?

There are correspondences between the ideas of the Reform spread in the Dutch space and John Wycliffe's theology (1320-'84). Contemporary with Ockham, Marsilius of Padova, Petrarca, Boccaccio and the medieval mystics (Tauler, Suso and Ruysbroeck), spiritual father of Jan Hus¹⁴, who proved to be the precursor of the monk Augustine (or Martin Luther), Wycliffe was called „the Morning Star of the Reform” (Fedele 2004, 119; Popovici 2002, 17). He disputed with the traditional church and with the sovereign from Rome, whom he never saw as the Holy Father (*patres sanctissimos*), but as the server of the servants (*servos servorum*) (Boreczky 2008, 225)¹⁵. The latter, on his turn, considered that the English reformer sowed cockle among the enemies of the Church (*oriretur zizania ex inimici*), identified with the pure wheat in the barn of the clergy (*purum triticum in Dominicum horreum inferendum*)¹⁶.

¹⁴ „As regards these studies of Jan, his colleagues made reproaches: «By a decree of the Council of Constance, Wycliffe was sent to hell.» Huss answered them seriously: «I wish only that my soul reaches the place where that great Britton is dwelling now»” (Fedele 2004, 123-124).

¹⁵ See Wycliffe's quote: *Et hinc sumpsit beatus Gregorius et alii sancti pape evidenciam vocandi se non patres sanctissimos sed servos servorum Dei, non fingendo mendacia sed verba ministerio compensando* (Poole & Wycliffe 1885, 76).

¹⁶ Gregorii Papae XI, „Ejusdem epistola. Ad archiep. Cantuariesem, & episc. Londinensem. Un procedant contra Joannem Wycleffum, deque illius erroribus inquirant”, in: Mansi 1784, 562. The Pontiff Sovereign most likely refers to the followers of Ignatius of Antiochia, who uttered, at the beginning of II century the memorable phrase: *Triticum Dei sum : dentibus bestiarum molar, vt possim panis Dei mundus inueniri* (Witzel 1565, 393).



Image no. 1. Manuscript of Wycliffe's Bible and the text in In 1:1-3a¹⁷

In his work *De veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, Wycliffe identified the enemies of the Church amongst it: *perverted theologists* (I, 116), *novelli (modern) doctores* (I, 20, 276), *truncates* (I, 49), *lacerantes* (I, 277), *falsarii* (I, 238), *accusatores scripture* (I, 273), *pseudologi lolium*¹⁸ *in universitatibus seminantes* (III, 93; II, 43), *sophiste* (II, 112), *dialectici* (I, 182), *scripturam pervertentes* (II, 106, 152), *depravantes* (II, 176), *impugnantes* and *discipuli antichristi* (II, 116).

Wycliffe's long lasting influence in the European space consists in the fact that he translated the Bible into English (Le Goff 2005, 213)¹⁹. In image no. 1, we may see a copy of his Bible, as well as an excerpted page, reading the following verses from John, chapter 1 (1-3a), in Saxon, with characters reminding of the gothic writing *textualis* (Jakó & Manolescu 1971, 127): [1.] *In the bigynnyng was the word, and the word was at God, and God was the word.* [2.] *This was in the bigynnyng at God.* [3.] *Alle thingis weren maad bi hym.* The date of the manuscript is uncertain.

Wycliffe worded a series of concepts favoring the future Reform, in writings such as:

- *De dominio divino* [„On Spiritual Government”] (1373-’74);
- *De civili dominio* [„On Public Government”] (1375-’76);
- *De veritate Sacrae Scripturae* [„On the Truth of the Holy Scriptures”] (1378);
- *De ecclesia* [„On Church”] (1378-’79);

¹⁷ Images taken from *Fowler Bible Collection, Wycliffite Manuscript Bibles. First Bibles in the English language. A.D. 1382 and 1388*, from the address: <http://www.fowlerbiblecollection.com/wycliffite-bibles.html>.

¹⁸ The Pontiff Father called *lolium* the *lollards*, while Wycliffe called as such only certain professors of theology.

¹⁹ Actually, Wycliffe translated the New Testament from *Vulgata*, and his friend, Nicholas Hereford, joined by others, translated the Old Testament (Fedele 2004, 121).

- *De officio regis* [„On the King’s Obligation”] (1379);
- *De potestate papae* [„On the Pope’s Power”] (1379);
- *De apostasia* [„On Apostasy”] (1379);
- *De symonia* [„On Simony”] (1380);
- *De blasphemia* [„On blasphemy”] (1381);
- *De dissensione paparum* [„On Popes’ Conflicts”] (1382);
- *De cruciata* [„On Crusade”] (1383);
- *De Benedicta Incarnacione* [„On the Blessed Incarnation”];
- *An Apology for Lollard Doctrines*;
- *On Christ and His Adversary, Antichrist*;
- *Summa Theologiae*²⁰;
- *Treatise Against the Begging Friars*;
- *Dialogues*;
- *Dialogues*, etc. (Fedele 2004, 122; Canning 2011, 169)²¹.

Wycliffe’s followers, the *lollards*²² – priests recruited from among common people – have spread the Bible in England, together with other works of their mentor (Popovici 2002, 20). In image no. 2, we are reproducing a fragment of

²⁰ *Summa Theologica* has twelve chapters (following the structure of the apostles): I. *De mandatis*; II. *De statu Inocentiae*; III., IV., V. *De dominio*; VI. *De veritate Scripturae*; VII. *De ecclesia*; VIII. *De officio regis*; IX. *De potestate papae*; X. *De simonia*; XI. *De apostasia*; XII. *De blasphemia*.

²¹ There are other works attributed to Wycliffe: *Augustinus arguam te quando nescis*, *De actibus animae* or *De ente primo*, *De potentia productiva Dei* etc. (For a list of manuscripts and contents, see: Vaughan 1845, *passim*).

²² The term *lollard* generated several notional suppositions. **a.** Some say that it comes from the German *lullen* (*lollen* or *lallen*), meaning „to sing with a low voice”, hence *babbler*. **b.** The historian Diarmaid McCulloch gives the term the meaning of „bumblers that talk non-sense”. **c.** Jacques Le Goff associates it with another term, *beghard* – „beggar”. **d.** Pope Gregory XI, in 1378, relates it to the parable of cockle (*Mt* 13:24-30), and reprimands Oxford professors for accepting *lolium* (cockle) to grow amongst the wheat (allusion to Wycliffe and the lollards). Chaucer makes the same connection (*lolium*- *lollard*) in *Shipman’s Prologue* in *Canterbury Tales*: *Now, good men, quod our hoste, herkeneth to me: / I smell a loller in the wind, quod he.* (see G. Punchar). **e.** A. Hudson names the lollards “*laici literati*” (see J.-C. Schmitt). Cf. **1.** *Exley* 1812, 324; **2.** Brinton 1955, 277; **3.** McCulloch 2011, 516; **4.** Le Goff 2005, 213; **5.** Le Goff & Schmitt 2002, 151; **6.** Punchar 1865, 315.

De Benedicta Incarnacione, kept at Oxford (Harris 1836, title page). The textual character seems to be a *mixtum compositum* between Carolingian and Gothic.

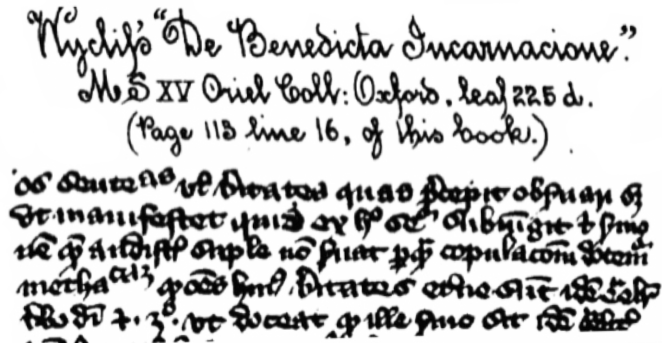


Image no. 2. *De Benedicta Incarnacione*, MSS XV, p. 113, Oxford

The courage to confront the power of Rome made Wycliffe a hero in the eyes of the people, and later, a martyr. The martyrologist John Foxe (1516-1587) summarizes Wycliffe's doctrine in the following ideas:

- (1) „The holy Eucharist, after the prayer of consecration, is not the real body of Christ”;
- (2) „The church of Rome is not more important than any other Church, and Christ has not given to Peter more power than to the other apostles”;
- (3) „The Pope does not have more power than any other priest”;
- (4) „The Gospel is sufficient to any man, without man-made rules, added to the Gospel”;
- (5) „Neither the Pope, nor any other cleric has the power or the right to punish the sinners” (Foxe 2001, 25-26).

We are offering in image no. 3 a fragment published in *anno Dom. MCCCXCVI* (1396), following the Council of London, by which, under the incidence of XVIII heads of counts, taken over from *Trialogus* – a work written towards the end of his life, written following the model of the *Sentences* of Petrus Lombardus, called as such because there are three characters that are speaking: *Alithia* (Truth), *Pseustis* (Lie) and *Phronesis* (Wisdom) – he was considered to be a notable heretic (*haereticum contemnendum*) (Mansi 1784, 809-812).

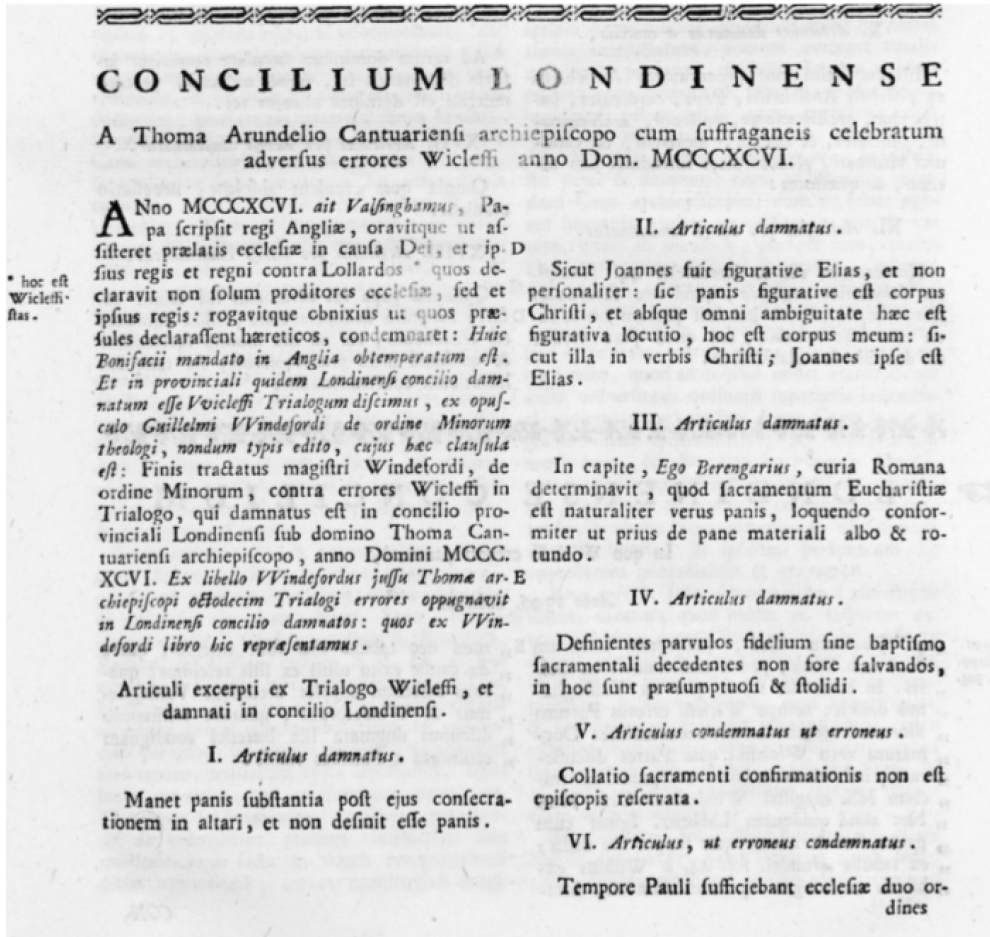


Image no. 3. *Condemning of the work Trialogus, Council of London (1396)*

After his death in 1384, the Council of Constance (1414-’18) ordered his disinterment and the burning of his body, buried in Leicestershire. In 1425, his ashes were spread in the river Swift in New Hampshire; the waves of the water carried it into Saco river, that spread it in the Atlantic Ocean. The same happened with Wycliffe’s ideas: they spread into the public conscience like waters into the oceans; they descended like the ashes carried by the wind over Europe, together with the dawn of the Reform.

1.2. *About Remonstrance and Counter-Remonstrance*

The conceptions of the theologian Jakob Hermanszoon (1560-1609), who, by his Latinized name – Jacobus Arminius – was the eponym of a Pelagian movement, were spread in the European space in the XVII century. „Reformer of the reformed” (Olson 2006, 54), Arminius was educated in Marburg (1575), Leiden (1576-’81), Basel (1582-’83) and Geneva (1582; ’84-’86), and studied theology with Calvin’s disciple, Theodorus Beza (1519-1605) (Kacic & Lugt 2013, 16).

One year after Arminius’s death, his successors – the Arminians – constituted a *Remonstrance*²³, against which the Calvinist Francis Gomar (1563-1641) fought by *Counter-Remonstrance*²⁴. The protest contained five articles of faith, and the protesters insisted that said theses were inserted in the confessions of the Reform²⁵. The topics referred to (1) free will, (2) conditional choice, (3) universal redemption, (4) resistible grace and (5) fall from grace (Steele & Thomas 1999, 18-21). Some conceptions – like, for instance, the one concerning the free will – were not new for the traditional church²⁶.

In order to clarify these issues, on November 13, 1618, the „Synod of Dort” was called (Dordrecht), during which, for seven months, in 154 sessions, the representatives of NHK – *Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk* („The Reformed Church of

²³ Name which may mean „protest” or „reprimand”, „admonition”, „exclamation” and „objection”.

²⁴ In 1611 (Benedetto & McKim 2010, 193).

²⁵ Two documents were particularly targeted: *Confessio Belgica* and „The Heidelberg Catechism”. Following *the Diet of Speyer* (I: 1526; II: 1529), the reformed received the name of „protestants”, because of the „Protest” read on April 19, 1529 and signed five days later. Following this reunion, the Protestantism outlined its doctrine by several confessions of faith: „Confession of Augsburg” (1530), *Confessio Helvetica I* (Basel, 1536), *Confessio Belgica* (The Netherlands, 1559; var. 2: 1562), *Confessio Gallicana* (Paris, 1559; var. 2: 1561), „The Heidelberg Catechism” (1563) and *Confessio Helvetica II* (1566). Cf. 1. Steele & Thomas 1999, 15; 2. Tappert & Pelikan 1959, 23; 3. Estep 1986, 149; 4. Gieseler 1862, 423; 5. Nevin 1847, 15-18.

²⁶ The „Council of Trident” (the XIX) of 1545-1563 proposed the following thesis: „the merit of man contributes to its salvation.” (Malherbe 2012, 140).

the Netherlands”, founded in 1570)²⁷, established the „five theses of Calvinism”²⁸, in reply to the ideas of Arminianism²⁹. Why do we use the term of „Calvinism” and not of „Lutheranism” or „Zwinglianism”, when we talk about the „five theses”? because Calvin „had an internationalist vision” (Hancock-Ştefan 2003, 24) of the Reform, while Luther and Zwingli were profoundly nationalists³⁰.

The controversies related to some of the five topics cover a wide historical spectrum. We are reminding here only the disputes between Augustine (354-430) and Pelagius (354-420) or Coelestius, related to grace, free will or predestination (*De spiritu et littera; De natura et gratia*) (Laporte [I] 2009, 342 & Laporte [II] 2009, 254-259) and those between Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536) and Martin Luther (1483-1546), discussing about the free will (*De Libero Arbitrio versus De Servo Arbitrio*) (Huizinga 1974, 241-253)³¹.

J.I. Packer claims that the theology of *Remonstrance* (1610) is related to two philosophical principles: „the first asserts that the divine sovereignty is not compatible with human freedom, therefore it is not compatible with human responsibility”; „the second, that ability limits obligations...”³².

²⁷ „84 members and 18 lay delegates, including 27 delegates from Germany, the Rhine Palatinate, Awitzerland and England”. (Malherbe 2012, 17).

²⁸ „Although there were supposed to be five Calvinist articles, only four chapters were conceived. This was due to the fact that articles three and four were combined in only one chapter. Therefore, chapter three is always considered to be Chapter III-IV” (Warburton: Steele & Thomas 1999, 17).

²⁹ Herman Selderhuis, contemporary professor at *Theologische Universiteit*, Apeldoorn, and Peter Nissen, professor at *Radboud Universiteit*, Nijmegen, The Netherlands, signals however that the term of „Calvinism” was not the proper one for the Netherlands in the period after the reform, „reformed” was better. For the Lutherans, the term of „Calvinist” equaled the dogmatism, intolerance and severity, and was rooted into the public conscience by associating it with the images of the European refugees living in the Netherlands (Selderhuis 2014, 199).

³⁰ Martin Luther excluded the Swiss from the German reformed movement (Cromarty 2002, 262-272); while Ulrich Zwingli believed himself to be „a Swiss that was confessing Christ to the Swiss.” (George 1998, 110 *apud* Hancock-Ştefan 2003, 67).

³¹ „Let God be good!”, proposed Erasmus. „Let God be God!”, claimed Luther (Andreiescu 2007, 16).

³² „From these principles, the Arminians drew two conclusions: the first is that, since the Bible regards faith as a free and responsible act, it cannot be produced by God, but it manifests independently from Him; the second is that, since the Bible regards faith as

2. The ideatic context of *TULIP* acronym (1610-1619). Arminius and Calvin: two opposing ideologies?

The Synod of Dort (1618-1619) rejected the five theses of *Remonstrance*; and drafted and restated „the five theses of Calvinism.” How did *TULIP* come to life? By an intelligent wording of the five Calvinist theses (Beveridge: Calvin 2009, xv):

1. Total Depravity,
2. Unconditional Election,
3. Limited Atonement,
4. Irresistible Grace,
5. Perseverance of the Saints.

The five Arminian theses (1610) and the Calvinist ones (1619) proposed at Dort were reunited by Daniel N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas in a table (Steele & Thomas 1999, 18-22), that we are centralizing here.

<i>The five theses of 1610 (Arminianism)</i>	<i>The five theses of 1619 (Calvinism)</i>
Human Ability;	(1') T - Total Depravity;
Conditional Election;	(2') U - Unconditional Election;
General Atonement;	(3') L - Limited Atonement;
Resistible Grace;	(4') I - Irresistible Grace;
Falling from Grace;	(5') P - Perseverance of the Saints.

We are briefly going to trace the coordinates of Arminianism, comparing them with those of Calvinism; and with Wycliffe's doctrine. We are offering fragments from the texts of the three theologians, without explanations. We will deduce the messages in the subtexts on our own.

obligatory for those that hear the Gospel, the capacity to believe must be universal.” (Steele & Thomas 1999, 16).

3. Intramatrix background: elements of *TULIP* doctrine with John Wycliffe

3.1. Human Ability or Total Depravity?

Table no. 1: First of the five theses	
The thesis of Arminius (1)	Calvin's thesis (1')
"faith is the gift that man makes to God";	"faith is the gift that God makes to man";
„Faith is not God's pure gift, it depends partially on the divine grace and partially on the power of the Free will, so that, if the man wills, he may or may not believe.” (<i>Art. VII</i>) (Arminius: Nichols 1853, 365) ³³ ;	„Nothing belongs to us, except the sin” (he quotes Augustine) ³⁴ . „Because of the slavery of sin, which rules over the will, it cannot be oriented towards the good...” ³⁵ ;
Wycliffe's quote & doctrine (1): "God giveth to each man free will to choose god or evil".	

Many reformers, among which Phillip Melanchton – "the golden voice" of the German Reform – regarded faith following the aristotelic model of intelligibility, analyzing it in reference of three components: *notitia*, *assensus* and *fiducia*³⁶. *The first thesis*: the Arminians claimed that both the perceptive element (*notitia historica*), and the permissive one (*assensus*) and the volitional one (*fiducia*), was

³³ Arminius quotes Bernard (*De Libero Arbitrio et Gratia*): „Remove your free will and you will never be saved. Remove grace and you will never hold the source of salvation. [...] God is the author of salvation. The unique free will [*tantum capere*] is capable of man's salvation. No one, except God, may give salvation; and no thing, except free will, is capable to receive it." in: "Twenty Five Public Disputations. D. XI: on the free will of man and its power", (Nichols 1853, 531).

³⁴ Augustine, *Preaches*, CLXXVI, 5-6, in: Art. 27: „Our will cannot wish for the good without the Holy Ghost", chap. II: „Man is currently deprived from the freedom to choose and is led into lamentable slavery", book II: „Knowledge of God the Redeemer" (Calvin [I] 2003, 397).

³⁵ Art. 5: „The man sins out of need, but without being coerced", in: chap. III: „The corrupt nature of man generates only damnable things", book II: „Knowledge of God the Redeemer" (Calvin [I] 2003, 403).

³⁶ Later reformers, like Joachim Lange (1670-1744), established three components engaged in the process of persuasion (of which two coincide with those proposed by their predecessors): mental power (*vis intelligendi: notitia*), aspirational power (*vis desiderandi: desiderium*) and trust (*vis acquiescedi: fiducia*) (Cf. Grenz 2000, 408; Shantz 2015, 38).

potentiated, but the Calvinists believed it was not potentiated. Here Wycliffe precedes doctrine of Arminius.

3.2. *Conditional or Unconditional Election?*

Table no. 2: Second of the five theses	
The thesis of Arminius (2)	Calvin's thesis (2')
"the human choice constitutes the ultimate cause of salvation";	"the divine choice constitutes the ultimate cause of salvation" (Shantz 2015, 38);
„The grace sufficient for salvation is granted by Choice and Non-choice, so that, if they [humans, n.n.] will, they may believe or not, they may be saved or not.” (Art. VIII) (Nichols 1853, 367);	„Therefore [...] we say that God has removed once, through His eternal and unchangeable plan, those he had chosen them long time ago once and for all for salvation, and those who, on the other hand, will be destined for destruction.” ³⁷ ;
Wycliffe's quote & doctrine (2): „We are predestined [and] we may acquire divine acceptance to become saints; we receive this grace through Christ's humanity, and at the end we please God.” (Coxe 1840, 254-255).	

The second thesis: Arminianism believed that God was choosing based on pre-cognition, which distinguishes between faith or lack of faith before eternity; the others, that God chooses based on predestination³⁸. G.V. Lechler, after examining Wycliffe's doctrine about choice and predestination, said about the rector of Lutterworth that he „had no equal... in solving all the difficulties contradicting his point of view on God's choice and predestination” (Penny 1990, 16.). The English reformer is here on Calvin's side.

³⁷ Art. 7: „Choice of individuals as proper choice”, in: chap. XXI: „Eternal choice by which God has predestined some for salvation, others for destruction”, book III: „The way by which we receive Christ's grace” (Calvin [II] 2003, 98). Calvin wrote: „If I wanted to write a complete volume of Augustine's teachings, I could very easily show my readers that I do not need other phrases except his.” (Calvin [II] 2003, 109).

³⁸ One of the Calvinists of the XX century proposes a debate topic – the topic of sovereignty: „who manages business on Earth nowadays: God or the Devil?” concluding in support of the first variant, of which he deduces the thesis of unconditional choice (Pink 2010, 17 and the next).

3.3. General or Limited Atonement?

Table no. 3: Third of the five theses	
The thesis of Arminius (3)	Calvin's thesis (3')
"The effects of the Atonement are freely available to all those whom He has chosen, which includes all humanity, «whosoever will.»" ³⁹ ;	"The effects of the Atonement, by which God forgave sinful humanity, are limited only to those whom He has chosen." (Calvin [II] 2003, 109);
"Christ offers the possibility to be saved, but He does not guarantee salvation to anyone" (Steele & Thomas 1999, 16);	„[Christ achieved]... the salvation of the chosen ones, granting it to them" (Steele & Thomas 1999, 16);
Wycliffe's quote & doctrine (3): "... we receive this grace through Christ's humanity, and at the end we please God." (Coxe 1840, 254-255).	

The third thesis: Arminians claimed that salvation was offered to any man by the possibility to choose, and Calvinists claimed that it was assured and guaranteed only to certain people.

3.4. "Resistible" or Irresistible Grace?

Table no. 4: Fourth of the five theses	
The thesis of Arminius (4)	Calvin's thesis (4)
"the divine grace is not invincible; it may be rejected by man.";	"the divine grace is invincible; it cannot be rejected by man" ⁴⁰ ;
The inner call may be refused ⁴¹ ;	The inner call cannot be refused ⁴² ;
Man contributes to the inner regeneration ⁴³ ;	The Holy Ghost regenerates the inner dimension ⁴⁴ ;

³⁹ See: <http://www.crivoice.org/tulip.html>.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Arminius: „The Ghost makes an inner call to those who are called from the exterior as well, by invitation of the Gospel [...]. The Ghost cannot regenerate the sinner if he does not believe." *Ibid.*

⁴² Calvin: „Beside the general call [...], the Holy Ghost brings a special inner call to the chosen ones, inevitably leading them to salvation" *Ibid.*

⁴³ Arminius: „... faith (representing man's contribution) precedes and makes rebirth possible. [...] If the man does not accept, the Ghost cannot give life" *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Calvin: „The outer call [...], may be, and often is, rejected. The inner call however (which is addressed only to the chosen ones) cannot be refused, but it always leads to conversion." *Ibid.*

Table no. 4: Fourth of the five theses	
The thesis of Arminius (4)	Calvin's thesis (4)
„With all due respect, I believe, according to the Scripture, that many people resist the Holy Ghost and reject the grace given to them.” (A <i>Declaration of Sentiments of Arminius</i>) (Olson 2006, 162);	„Jeremiah would not have said: «Convert me, oh, God, and I will be converted... Because, if You convert me, I will repent.» (Jer. 31:18-19, cf. Vg.)” ⁴⁵ ;
Wycliffe's quote & doctrine (4): „... none of the moral virtues may dwell in a man without the assistance of the divine grace. I wonder: how can man be worthy of the bliss to dwell and act by God's pleasure, without God accepting it through His abundant grace?” (<i>The Trialogus</i> , III) (Vaughan 1845, 117).	

The fourth thesis: Arminians asserted that the Holy Ghost may be refused, but He is assisted by the human faith in inner regeneration; Calvinists believed that the Holy Ghost cannot be refused, and the inner regeneration does not depend on human cooperation. Here, Wycliffe demonstrates affinities with Calvin's ideology.

3.5. Falling from Grace or Perseverance of the Saints?

Table no. 5: Fifth of the five theses	
The thesis of Arminius (5)	Calvin's thesis (5)
”one may fall from the divine grace, and salvation will be compromised.”;	”one may not fall from the divine grace, and salvation is guaranteed and final” ⁴⁶ ;
Salvation may be lost ⁴⁷ ;	Salvation may not be lost ⁴⁸ ;
„... he who believes he may fall [...] is not deprived from the necessary comfort,	„... Christ prays for the chosen ones [...]. Hence, we deduce that they are not in danger of falling,

⁴⁵ Art. 16. „(b) 1 Timothy 2:3-4 and other similar passages”, chap. XXIV: „Choice is confirmed by God's call [...]”, book III: Way by which we receive Christ's grace” (Calvin [II] 2003, 154).

⁴⁶ See: <http://www.crivoice.org/tulip.html>.

⁴⁷ Arminius: „Those who believe and are truly saved may lose their salvation if they do not succeed in keeping their faith.” *Ibid*.

⁴⁸ Calvin: „All those chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and who received faith through the Holy Ghost are forever saved”. *Ibid*.

Table no. 5: Fifth of the five theses	
The thesis of Arminius (5)	Calvin's thesis (5)
nor tormented by anxiety..." (Nichols 1824, 156);	because the Son of God, praying that their piousness is preserved constant, has not been refused. What else would Christ want us to learn from this, if not that we will forever be safe, because we have been made His forever?" ⁴⁹
Wycliffe's quote & doctrine (5): „I understand that grace, which is called «grace of predestination», or «of final preservation», cannot be dimmed in anyone; because, if it were so, it would no longer be grace.” (Calvin [II] 2003, 121)	

The fifth thesis: Wycliffe traces the same ideatic road that Calvin took later.

Conclusions

The paradigmatic assembly of the Reform, post-posed and incorporated in a doctrine system that has materialized and subsisted until present times under the general term of Protestantism has its ideatic radicals not only in the patristic theology, but also in the incipient movements generating wide controversies, during the papal schism (XIV-XV centuries) (Le Goff 2005, 209-212). A fundamental change of the religious optics in the British area was the one initiated by the rector of Lutterworth, John Wycliffe, beginning with the XIV century.

It is explainable that, although it tacitly agrees with and proposes their theses, in *Institutio christianae religionis* (1536-'59), Jean Calvin does not make reference to Wycliffe or Hus. He was interested in making the Reform known at European level, a deed certified by the „Introductive letter to king Francois I of France”, sent from Basel, on August 1, 1536, by which the king receives eight arguments in favor of the movement⁵⁰. Following the commotions generated by Wycliffe's or Hus' teachings, condemned by the councils of London (1396), Oxford (1408), Rome (1413) and Constance (1414), in an Europe where the chants of the Tabo-

⁴⁹ Art. 6: „To those belonging to Him, Christ gives them the certainty that their choice is irrevocable and long lasting”, chap. XXIV: „Choice is confirmed by God's call [...]”, book III: Way by which we receive Christ's grace” (Calvin [II] 2003, 141).

⁵⁰ 1. Argument of intentionality of the practiced doctrine; 2. Of the persecution of the righteous; 3. Of the used supernatural; 4. Of the patristic support; 5. Of the veracity of own doctrine; 6. Of clerical corruption; 7. Of diabolic hostility; 8. Of the innocence avenged by the divinity. (Calvin [I] 2003, 107-130).

rites may still be heard, the Reform, still fragile, continued to hide some of its roots.

The professor of *University of Oxford*, Anne Hudson, refers to the Wycliffean reform as being „premature” (Hudson 1988, title). Catalogued as „premature”, it however reached its maturity by reformers from Germany, France and Switzerland, that were a little more lucky due to political circumstances and to frictions within the Catholic Church.

Even though more than one century separated them from Luther, Calvin and Zwingli, Wycliffe’s reforming actions had an impact in the European area. The revolt of the English peasants of 1381, the revolts of the Czech hussites between 1419-1436, the separation of England’s Church, Tyndale and Coverdale’s Bible translations (1526; 1539) have known a precedent in Wycliffe’s life and teachings. Wycliffe’s influences have been felt up to the Romanian territories of XVI century, through the hussites refugees established on our territory⁵¹.

We see that for the Arminian, salvation was achieved through divine initiative and human cooperation, in this case the man, and not God, has a determinant part; for the Calvinist, salvation is achieved through the trinity of God (Father chooses, Son redeems, Holy Ghost regenerates), in this case God and not the man has a determinant part.

I would like to conclude with one observation: this field requires and needs to be studied in further details. I would like to add Augustine’s phrase to my own: „I believe of myself to be one of those who wrote what they learnt and who learnt from what they wrote” (Calvin [I] 2003, 103).

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⁵¹ The city of Huși seems to have been constituted by Hussites, in honor of Jan Hus. Some sources speak of about 2000 Hussites converted to Catholicism in the area of Moldova (Huși, Roman). (Nouzille 2004, 51-54).

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