

1. Information about the procedure

Habilitation procedure according to the Bulgarian legislation for an **interdisciplinary** academic position **Professor** at the American University in Bulgaria in the **2.Humanities** area of higher education, professional fields **2.2 History and Archaeology** and **2.3 Philosophy**. The procedure has been announced in the Bulgarian State Gazette, Issue 80, 24 September 2021.

The evaluation below is based on the *Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act*, the Rules for its implementation, the internal AUBG rules, regulations, and policies, including the *Habilitation Procedure*, and the additional requirements for the procedure advertised on the AUBG website.

Candidate: **Dr. Diego Lucci**, American University in Bulgaria

Reviewer:

Professor Jonathan Israel,
Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton,
17 January 2022.

2. Eligibility for admission to the procedure

The candidate Dr. Diego Lucci **is in compliance** the *Requirements for Full Professor Academic Position* as outlined in Enclosure 1 to this document as evidenced by the statement of the AUBG Habilitation Screening Committee and Dr. Lucci's habilitation dossier.

The candidate Dr. Diego Lucci **is in compliance** the *Additional Requirements for Full Professor Interdisciplinary Academic Position* as outlined in Enclosure 2 to this document as evidenced by the statement of the AUBG Habilitation Screening Committee and Dr. Lucci's habilitation dossier.

Dr. Diego Lucci's research results **are in compliance with** the aggregate number of points for both Associate Professor and Full Professor academic positions required by the MNIs set forth in the Bulgarian Law, as evidenced by the AUBG Verification Committee's statement and Dr. Lucci's habilitation dossier.

3. Evaluation of the Candidate

Evaluation of Diego Lucci's research and scholarly achievements

Professor Jonathan Israel, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, 17 January 2022.

Diego Lucci during the course of his career thus far has concentrated on the complex transition between seventeenth-century British intellectual and cultural history and the advent of the Early Enlightenment era with special reference to the early eighteenth-century Deists together with the philosophy and religious thought of John Locke. Following on from his successful 2004 doctoral dissertation focusing on the role of new approaches to Bible criticism in shaping the “origins and development of deism in Enlightenment Britain”, the central issue that has continued to characterize the main body of Lucci's research, thinking and publications has, as he expresses it himself, in his self-evaluation statement, been the classic question of “the relationship between Enlightenment and religion.” Although he has also done a certain amount of research on several figures in the Italian Enlightenment, among them Casanova, as he mentions, the early English Enlightenment has remained throughout the prime focus of his work and writing thus far throughout.

As regards history of philosophy and ideas, Lucci's *John Locke's Christianity* (Cambridge University Press, 2021) stands out, I believe, as his most substantial achievement so far and a work of particular importance not just in Locke studies but for Enlightenment studies generally. It has been widely praised by scholars both in the United Kingdom and in the USA as well as elsewhere. Although a great many authors have emphasized Locke's foundational importance in the epistemology, toleration theory, Natural Law debates, and in the political thought of the Western Enlightenment, and in broad terms Locke's contribution has for a long time been exhaustively covered, it is entirely true, as Lucci points out, that Locke's theological work, Bible criticism and intervention in religious debates, has been relatively little analyzed by scholars and has not really been assessed as a whole or in its pervasive significance for understanding Locke's thought in all its aspects as an organic whole in the way that Lucci examines it, in this 236-page study. Although concise and also very precise, Lucci's book is systematic and comprehensive in covering all aspects of Locke's religious and tolerationist thought, except perhaps for the divergences between Shaftesbury and Locke which certainly extended to the field of religion, theology and morality as well as other areas. Although I would have liked to find more about the protracted and tense encounter between Locke and Shaftesbury in this context, Lucci demonstrates with all rigour and explains from every angle the exact relationship of Locke's Christology and theories of sin, evil and miracles, to the Socinian

tradition (he was not precisely a Socinian), Arianism, Arminianism (he was not precisely an Arminian) , Presbyterianism, Anglican Latitudinarianism (he was not precisely a Latitudinarian), and the English Calvinist Independents of the mid and later seventeenth century. Cogent and persuasive, this is the first time such an analysis has been presented

Although Locke, as others have pointed out, was unquestionably an Anti-Trinitarian, Lucci fills in gaps not least by demonstrating why, throughout his career, Locke was mostly very reluctant to discuss this highly sensitive topic at all and how and why, despite the factual certainty of his rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity and his emphatic acceptance of Christ's (human) messiahship, he nevertheless diverged from typical traditional Polish and other earlier Socinian theological positions. Equally, Lucci convincingly shows that Locke while not precisely a Socinian in all respects, was nevertheless not fully in accord with his Dutch Arminian theological allies, Philippus van Limborch and Jean Le Clerc, either. Whereas some scholars have positioned Locke midway between Socinianism and the Arminians, Lucci convincingly portrays Locke's Christianity as a carefully devised, highly individual Protestant outlook that cannot be easily be fitted into any particular tradition or framework. Locke in effect deliberately avoided joining or identifying with any particular theological stream, instead developing a kind of personal, individual unchurched Protestantism that was nevertheless more than just a personal outlook but to him a purified distillation yielding a harmonizing basis bringing all the Protestant churches and sects potentially together on the basis of what he conceived as the true Christian message.

Besides skillfully profiling Locke's religious convictions in a comprehensive and detailed manner, Lucci effectively demonstrates the relevance of these to understanding the framework of Locke's philosophy as a whole. Notable examples of this shaping effect is the importance of Locke's religious beliefs for determining his "above reason" doctrine which became crucial to Jean le Clerc and the so-called *rationaux* Huguenot theologians on the Continent and for Locke's and their theory of toleration. This was limited in several respects. Locke expressly denies toleration to Roman Catholics but also to atheists and did so principally for what he conceived as being "moral reasons". Locke frequently expressed his objections to the principle of papal infallibility and this aspect of Locke's views has indeed long been well known. But thus far no other scholar has so clearly explained how and why it is the overall character of Locke's religious commitments, including his unrelenting insistence that there can be no other interpreter of basic Christian truth than Scripture itself, that fenced his toleration firmly within a narrower frame and lent it a more tentative character in relation to the Jews, and also in relation to freedom of expression, than the theories of Spinoza and Bayle and thereby perhaps condemned it in the long run to an ultimately less

important status in the history of the rise of Western toleration. It was not the beliefs of Catholics as such, or “speculative opinions,” even though Locke considered transubstantiation and other Catholic dogmas to be absurd, nor their religious beliefs per se, but rather purely political and moral considerations that led to his consistent exclusion of the Catholics from his toleration. The consequences of Locke’s toleration theory for separation of church and state, and for keeping theological disputes out of the public sphere and legislation affecting civil society, his principle that “there is absolutely no such thing under the Gospel, as a Christian commonwealth,” with the great importance of this principle for American history, receives added emphasis in Lucci’s excellent article: “Separating Politics from Institutional Religion” in the journal *Dialogue and Universalism* (Warsaw) 31 (2021), pp. 67-87.

Equally, the denial of toleration to atheists in Locke’s thought relates to the larger corpus of his philosophy in intricate ways. Since Locke rejected the possibility of innate ideas, man’s knowledge of God must be acquired knowledge and for Locke such knowledge is indeed acquired by the mind being inexorably led via processes of our experience-based reason, guided by the argument from design and the fact of creation. Not to believe in the “being of God” Locke acknowledges as possible among humans in theory but absolutely irrational. Nevertheless, in Locke, the reason for denying toleration to atheists, once again, is not, Lucci demonstrates, the nature of their conviction, irrational and absurd though Locke considers it to be, but the practical consequences of their erroneous belief, his inference that their not believing in eternal salvation and not belonging to any religious society or church inevitably renders them intrinsically devoid of morality. For morality in Locke’s thought is inseparable from religious commitment to such an entity, a crucial point of difference from Spinoza and Bayle.

Another important point issue Lucci’s analysis of Locke’s religious thought converges with and extends his major studies on late seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century deism is his account of Locke’s emphatic opposition to Deism and the precise reasons for his divergence from the positions of Charles Blount, John Toland, Anthony Collins and also to William Wollaston (1659-1724) to whose thought Lucci devoted an important article in the *British Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies* vol. 30 (2007). Lucci is one of the scholars who has most clearly demonstrated how Locke’s doctrine of “above reason” served from the late 1690s onwards to create a wedge creating a permanent rift between him and the Deists and Spinozists, arguable one of the most important developments in the early Enlightenment and yet again, one relatively understudied. After carefully examining Lucci’s *Scripture and Deism. The Biblical Criticism of Eighteenth-Century British Deists* (2008), I can certainly confirm that, with this book, he goes well beyond the focus on hermeneutics characteristic of his earlier Ph.d. thesis by providing a broad, well-

contextualized, and rather original survey of deistic attitudes towards revealed religion. Before Lucci, relatively little has been written, for example, on the religious views of the somewhat neglected figure of Matthew Tindal. Although I disagree with Lucci's view that in Tindal's *Rights of the Christian Church* (1706), he is basically radicalizing Locke's views on the distinction between political and religious authority (in my view Tindal is here borrowing from Dutch sources rather than Locke), I admire the way Lucci has provided a broader account of Tindal's contribution than can be found anywhere else in the existing literature, and how it relates to that of the other deists.

Equally, Lucci has provided us with greater perspective than practically any other modern scholar researching the early Enlightenment on William Wollaston (1659-1724), a deist who, as he rightly says in his article on him, "has mostly been disregarded by historians of eighteenth-century philosophy." Indeed, if anything, that is something of an understatement. Thus, for example, Wayne Hudson in his widely-known survey study, *The English Deists* (2009), makes no mention of Wollaston at all, not even listing him in his index. Lucci brings out clearly Wollaston's peculiarity when compared to the other English deists, especially in his preoccupation with Hebrew texts and involvement with Jewish writings and thought, and tendency to place Jewish tradition which he tends to rationalize (ignoring the traditions of Jewish mysticism) at the center of his discussion about religion and ethics, two entities which in fact Wollaston tends to equate: true religion for him, as for the other English deists, is basic morality as defined by reason (which *can* be seen as a radicalization of Locke's position). Lucci convincingly shows that despite its epistemological rationale being distinctly obsolete in Lockean terms, Wollaston's original textual approach to religion and ethics, is both fascinating in itself and in several ways historically more significant than has been supposed especially in developing a deism that rejects atheism and Spinozist pantheism no less than revealed religion.

Lucci makes clear how Wollaston uses medieval Jewish philosophy, for deistic ends, as for example in his discussion of the incorporeality, unity and unchangeableness of God where Wollaston implicitly rules out the Holy Trinity and Incarnation. Although Wollaston too rejects and rules out Locke's "above reason" doctrine, much as did Bayle and other early Enlightenment thinkers on the Continent, Lucci demonstrates that, unlike Blount and Toland who were more specifically Spinozist, and hence pantheist and immanentist, Wollaston does endorse the principle of general providence and hence divine purposefulness in regulating the order and laws of nature, rendering this notable figure more concretely an exponent of natural religion than they.

More generally, Lucci has explored the theme of the Christian-Jewish relations, and specifically the relationship of eighteenth-century European society to the segregation and isolation of the Jews, in several of his articles as well as in the notable book he published jointly with Paolo Bernardini, *The Jews, Instructions for Use: four eighteenth-century Projects for the Emancipation of European Jews* (Boston, 2012), focusing on schemes to naturalize and eventually grant full civil equality to the Jews in European society, starting with John Toland's arguments in his 1714 pamphlet "Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews in Great Britain." Not only has Lucci shown a considerable gulf existing between Locke and the deists on the subject of Christianity's relationship to ancient Judaism and the Mosaic Law, in articles such as his "The Law of Nature, Mosaic Judaism, and Primitive Christianity in John Locke and the English Deists," in *Entangled Religions* 8 (2019), he has also convincingly brought out the significant contrast between Toland's portrayal of Mosaic Judaism as being "on a par with primitive Christianity," his seeing both as being anchored in the Law of Nature, on the one hand, and the broader tendency, starting with Tindal, and then going further in Morgan and Peter Annet, in disparaging and discarding the Mosaic Law as more properly a primitive divergence from and corruption of the true natural religion revealed to us by reason.

I fully agree with Lucci's further claim that Charles Blount's publications were one of the main strands of the incipient deist "threat" that Locke was reacting to in his most important theological text, the *Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695) and that this work is indeed in part a critique of incipient deism, even though Toland's *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696) did not appear until the following year. This is one of Lucci's most important contributions. Once again, the key issue here is that Charles Blount has in the past received considerably less attention from historians than he deserves and in this respect Lucci (2008) definitely preceded Wayne Hudson (2009), the other main scholar to point to Blount's seminal importance in the more recent literature, doing so by a year. If the subsequent Oxford University Press volume *Philosophy and Religion in Enlightenment Britain* (2012) features only five lines on Blount, Lucci has made it difficult for this kind of neglect to continue in the future. In his eight pages on Blount in his *Scripture and Deism*, he sets out his argument that Blount's *Great is Diana of the Ephesians* (1680) is the first significant attempt "in the context of British deism" to elaborate "a naturalistic and thoroughly secularized interpretation of the history of religion." Blount's rejection of the supernatural in all its forms is indeed both systematic and stunningly early (coming just two years after Spinoza's *Opera Posthuma*) and, with his pages devoted to Blount in his *Scripture and Deism* and a key passage also in *John Locke's Christianity*, Lucci along with Hudson had played a leading part in repositioning Blount on the Enlightenment map as he deserves.

A large part of *Scripture and Deism* (2008) is devoted to discussion of the deism of John Toland whose conception of reason was much more closely related to Locke's "way of ideas" than Wollaston's more idiosyncratic notion, and was in this respect philosophically more up-to-date. Unlike Wollaston or Blount, Toland has been the focus of a great deal of attention over several decades. But Lucci is more successful than Champion, Hudson and other recent writers on Toland in relocating him in relation to Locke and continental philosophers such as Spinoza and Bayle. Toland signally put Locke's curtailed conception of reason, and strict empiricism, to very different uses from Locke and by rejecting Locke's doctrine of "above reason" and the tight relationship of reason and revelation that Locke stipulated, forged a conception of an "non-mysterious" Christianity from which miracles, divine revelation, and the supernatural elements of Locke's theology as well as every variety of supernatural Christology are systematically eliminated. If a great many recent scholars writing on the early Enlightenment have taken a close interest in Toland, uniquely among the British deists, Toland has also attracted a lot of attention from prominent Continental scholars such as Dagon, Gawlick, Jaffro, Lurbe and Carabelli. Toland has become a key figure of the Western Enlightenment as a whole with his impact on d'Holbach widely recognized. Yet, despite all the competition, examining the recent debates on this topic makes it quite clear that Lucci has successfully established himself as one of the two or three principal and most original commentators on this crucial Anglo-Irish deist no less than on Tindal, Wollaston and Blount, no mean achievement.

A key feature of Lucci's approach to interpreting Toland, that has been followed recently by Ian Leask, but is rare to encounter in most of the recent literature on Toland earlier than Lucci, is his stress on the fundamental role of Spinoza rather than Locke in forming Toland's outlook and approach to Bible criticism. In *Letters to Serena* (1704) Toland's "observations on Jewish culture reveal a sort of lay, rationalistic anti-Judaism, greatly influenced by Spinoza's thought." In his *Hodegus and Origines Judaicae*, Lucci shows, Toland again projects the history of ancient Judaism among the ancient Near Eastern civilizations in a manner calculated to secularize and deprive it of special status and centrality, to negate all notions of the Jews being a people elected by God, and by doing so neutralizing the claim to a sacred history revealing the main line of human development, counteracting the belief that Scripture provides the guiding central thread to the history of the ancient world, a prominent claim particularly striking at the time in the work of Pierre-Daniel Huet and Bishop Bossuet.

At the close of his book on Locke's religious thought, Lucci expresses the hope that his analysis and exposition of Locke's Christianity, and account of its impact on other areas of his thought which is indeed one of the most significant features of the book will contribute "to further reassessing the complexity of the

Enlightenment origins of modern Western culture.” I think that there can be little question that he has much such a valuable contribution.

Furthermore, aside from his evident skills in research and written argument, it is also noteworthy that Lucci’s written English, already markedly competent and fluent in *Scripture and Deism* has risen to a still higher level in *John Locke’s Christianity* and has now attained a level which for precision, elegance and articulate quality is truly remarkable in a scholar for whom English was not his first language. Equally, I am able to conclude without reservation, having met Lucci and discussed his work with him in London as well as participated together with him in a large-scale international conference held at the AUB that he largely organized, that he is very able and effective in lecturing, in group discussion and in chairing meetings and also when explaining complex issues to younger scholars, so I have no doubt that he makes a highly effective teacher. Considering all these aspects, I have no reservation whatever, in fully supporting confirmation of Diego Lucci’s status as a full professor at the AUB.

Most sincerely,



Jonathan Israel, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

Requirements for Full Professor Academic Position

Delete as appropriate:

YES	The Candidate has a Ph.D.;
YES	The Candidate has held the position of Associate Professor for at least six years, or has at least six years of teaching experience, at recognized and accredited higher education institution(s)
YES	If internal to AUBG, the Candidate has received a positive final decision for promotion to Professor after evaluation according to the internal AUBG rules based on the US legislation as outlined in the Faculty Handbook
YES	The Candidate has published a monograph;
YES	If the Candidate has not held the position of Associate Professor acquired or recognized according to the Bulgarian legislation, they have published one more monograph.
YES	The Candidate has other original research, academic, or applied works and publications;
YES	None of the publications presented for the current procedure repeat publications used for acquisition of the doctoral degree of the Candidate, or in a previous procedure for an academic position according to the Bulgarian legislation;
YES	The Candidate has not been found responsible for plagiarism in their works under a statutory procedure;
YES	The Candidate has teaching experience from recognized and accredited higher education liberal arts institution(s);
YES	The Candidate has experience in student-centered teaching approach;
YES	The Candidate has at least two years of experience in teaching in English at a higher education institution with instruction in English language.
YES	The Candidate has passed at least one successful evaluation in teaching, research, and service at a recognized and accredited higher education liberal arts institution, including positive student evaluations of teaching.

Signature and date:

Jonathan Israel

17 January 2022

Additional RequirementsFor Professor Interdisciplinary Academic Position
in Professional Fields 2.2 History and Archaeology and 2.3 Philosophy

Additional specifications: Early modern philosophy and intellectual history, with a focus on England and/or the Anglophone world.

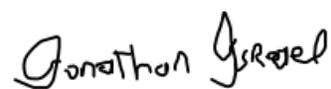
Delete as appropriate:Research focus on:

- | | |
|-----|--|
| YES | Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophy, with a focus on England and/or the Anglophone world. |
| YES | The intellectual history of the early modern period and the Age of Enlightenment, with a focus on England and/or the Anglophone world. |
| YES | English philosophical, political, and religious thought and its international impact. |
| YES | Major Anglophone philosophers and intellectuals. |

Teaching experience in:

- | | |
|-----|---|
| YES | The history of philosophy, with a focus on the period since the early modern era. |
| YES | The history of moral and political theories, with a focus on the period since the early modern era. |
| YES | The philosophy and intellectual history of the early modern period and the Age of Enlightenment. |
| YES | Introductory as well as advanced level courses in European history, philosophy, ethics, and political theory. |

Signature and date:



17 January 2022

Minimal National Indicators

Area of Higher Education 2. Humanities

Professional Fields 2.1 Philology, 2.2 History and Archaeology, 2.3 Philosophy, 2.4 Religion and Theology

Indicator Group	Indicator	Number of Points	Minimal Number of Points Required				
			Ph.D.	Dr. of Science	Senior Assistant	Associate Professor	Full Professor
A	1. Doctoral (Ph.D.) dissertation	50	50	50	50	50	50
B	2. Doctor of Science dissertation	100	-	100	-	-	-
C	3. Habilitation work – monograph	100	-	-	-	100	100
D	4. Published monograph that has not been presented as primary habilitation work	100	30	100	-	200	200
	5. Published book based on defended Ph.D. or Doctor of Science dissertation	75					
	6. Articles and reports published in academic editions that are indexed in world-renowned academic databases	30/n					
	7. Articles and reports published in non-indexed peer-reviewed editions or edited collective volumes	10/n					
	8. Studies published in academic editions that are indexed in world-renowned academic databases	45/n					
	9. Studies published in non-indexed peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes	15/n					
	10. Published chapter in a monograph with multiple authors	20/n					
	11. Compiling of dictionaries (for 2.1 [Philology] only)	40/n					

Indicator Group	Indicator	Number of Points	Minimal Number of Points Required				
			Ph.D.	Dr. of Science	Senior Assistant	Associate Professor	Full Professor
E	12. Citations or reviews in academic editions, monographs or collective volumes indexed in world-renowned academic databases	15					
	13. Citations or reviews in [non-indexed] peer reviewed monographs or collective volumes	10	-	100	-	50	100
	14. Citations or reviews in non-indexed peer-reviewed journals	5					
F	15. Acquired Doctor of Science degree	40					
	16. Supervision of successfully defended doctoral students (n is the number of the co-supervisors of the respective doctoral student)	40/n					
	17. Participation in a national research or educational project	15					
	18. Participation in an international research or educational project	20					
	19. Leadership of a national research or educational project	30	-	-	-	-	100
	20. Leadership of an international research or educational project	40					
	21. Published university textbook or textbook that is used in the high school network	40/n					
22. Published university learning guide or learning guide used in the high school network	20/n						