

Preface

The events of Münster have long fascinated me. In the early 1980s, as I prepared for my *Kirchliches Examen* in Germany, I was drawn to the Radical Reformation and the Anabaptist kingdom in particular. What made me curious was the outraged descriptions of the Münsterites in history books. Eager to know what had really happened, I headed for Münster's archives. Almost two decades and several detours later, I am surprised to find that I have come full circle. It is not the events my book explores, but that which intrigued me in the first place: the fierce reaction to the Anabaptist establishment in Münster. The focus has changed; this study looks largely at contemporary, not nineteenth and twentieth century reactions.

The shift from events to the perception of events has been precipitated by a number of occurrences. Heiko A. Oberman, who in Tübingen patiently listened and expertly answered my questions on Luther and the Radical Reformation, in Tucson eventually steered me toward looking at "Münster" in a larger context. I am grateful for his vision and insights. Furthermore, the events in Westphalia have now largely been retold. Building on Karl-Heinz Kirchhoff's rich work, Ralf Klötzer has presented a solid portrait of this episode.

After months and months of sitting ensconced behind my desk, it is with great pleasure that I think back over the evolution of my book and remember how much it owes to the support and inspiration of colleagues, family, and friends. In the beginning, when limits had to be set, Tom Brady gave me invaluable advice. So did Martin Brecht in Münster. Over the years, my work greatly benefited from stimulating—and often eye-opening—conversations with Johannes Helmrath and Götz-Rüdiger Tewes in Cologne, Gerd Schwerhoff in Bielefeld, Ralf Klötzer in Münster, and Gérard Chaix, then in Göttingen. Hans-Christoph Rublack was not only instrumental in readying me for the paleographic challenge that awaited me in Cologne's archive. He was also a perceptive and insightful sounding board for the many questions I brought to him. Hans-Joachim Köhler provided a seemingly bottomless source and resource for *Flugschriften*. Manfred Groten's and Joachim Deeters' wonderful cooperation at the *Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln* and Jean Rott's precious insights at the *Archives Municipales de Strasbourg* did much to keep my momentum going—and in the right direction.

Through the years I always returned to Tübingen with its impressive library and its *Institut für Spätmittelalter und Reformation*. The *Institut* generously offered me a place to work. Suse Rau eased my path in more ways than I can express. Manfred Schulze and Gerhard Hammer were unique partners in debate. During these often rushed visits, Sibylle Ruf-Mayer at the *Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen*

managed to provide me in record time with the library's treasures. The staff of the *Volksliederarchiv* in Freiburg assisted me in the friendliest and most helpful manner. And Christian Hogrefe quietly facilitated my work at the *Herzog August Bibliothek* in Wolfenbüttel.

The extensive research would not have been possible without generous help, particularly of my home institutions both in Tucson and in Cincinnati. The Division for Late Medieval and Reformation Studies at the University of Arizona enabled me to spend one year and two summers in Germany and France to gather material at the archives of Cologne, Düsseldorf, Mülheim, and Strasbourg as well as in Tübingen. The *Forschungsförderungsspendenstiftung Spätmittelalter und Reformation* in Tübingen granted me a fellowship for one summer of research, and the University Research Council at the University of Cincinnati provided funds for two more research trips. Most of all, I am indebted to the Taft Fund at the University of Cincinnati for its generous and consistent support over the years. Their many travel and research grants made it possible for me to complete my book. Lastly, I greatly appreciate the consideration of my department which freed me from teaching for one quarter term.

Out of the first years of research grew my dissertation, "The Rule of Fear: The Impact of Anabaptist 'Terror' 1534–1535." Heiko A. Oberman guided me with his characteristic ingenuity through its stages. He made me think that my work was the most important item on his agenda and readily cleared his schedule every time I brought him a new chapter. The next day we would go over the pages line by line. Luise Betterton, Oberman's right hand, would make space with a casual: "Will it be your usual three-hour appointment?" Donald Weinstein read the dissertation and made sure that the language would pass for English. I am grateful for his warm support and constructive criticism. Alan Bernstein gave much appreciated advice and was a refreshing presence on the Social Sciences' ground floor. I thank Andrew Gow for introducing me to theories of reception in German literary studies.

My dissertation of 1993 became the basis of the present study. Tom Brady read my dissertation and expressed interest in publishing it. We had a long discussion, during which he dared me to realize the potential of my dissertation and take my work a few steps further. That my book addresses new dimensions beyond my earlier study owes much to Tom Brady's vision and encouragement. In the following years, I shortened, restructured, and revised my dissertation, then added two chapters to broaden the perspective to include reactions among the general public and the empire. A good part of my newer work has been presented and tested at Sixteenth Century Studies Conferences. Several of my colleagues at the University of Cincinnati read drafts of my manuscript and gave me valuable advice, in particular John Brackett and Hilda Smith. Before sending it to Tom Brady, my manuscript had the benefit of June Alexander's critical reading. Her shrewd grasp of the text's shortcomings improved my work in more than "just" style. I am much indebted to her for her frank and friendly

suggestions. Constantin Fasolt kindly read the second chapter in view of its treatment of legal issues.

It is a great privilege to have as an editor someone who is a specialist in one's field. Tom Brady ferreted out embarrassing mistakes and was in an expert position to question some of my conclusions. If I did not always agree with him, his critical remarks challenged me to strengthen my argumentation. My thanks go to Katharina Gerstenberger, Kathy and Tom Brady, as well as to Barbara Ramusack for helping me proofread the manuscript, and to Manfred Ebbers and Sally Moffitt for aiding me in finding suitable maps. Rose Glickman copy-edited my manuscript. Lastly, I thank Humanities Press/Brill for publishing it in their series and production editor Katy Stenhouse for her patience and cooperation.

A few remarks about logistics seem appropriate. I use "Münster" (in quotation marks) as a shorthand for *the events of Münster*. Without these marks, Münster refers to the city alone. *Heretics* or equivalent terms, on the other hand, will typically appear without quotation marks—a decision intended to keep the page less busy and to retain the perspective of the Münsterites' opponents, who perceived them as true heretics. I have tried to render citations in their original style. Frequently used German names, such as Johann, have been anglicized.

The network of support described above comprises only most of those who were involved in the project first hand. In Tucson I had a unique group of colleagues who helped me through good and bad times. Over the years, I received encouragement and words of wisdom from Silvana Seidel Menchi, Elisabeth Gleason, Susan Karant-Nunn, and, lastly, Miriam Usher Chrisman. I do not think they will ever know how much their example and their attention to my life and work has meant to me. Many friends as well as my family sustained me throughout this enterprise. Those are indeed faithful companions who, after years of hearing "I am still working on the manuscript," still listen and cheer. I owe most to my parents, who laid the ground work, who never lost faith, whose sanity and straightforward advice kept me focused, and who did everything in their power to bring this venture to a successful conclusion. My book is dedicated to them.