

PREFACE

Three features about this study should be identified at the outset. Two are interpretive and one is methodological. The primary thesis of this work is that theologians, when they addressed social and political questions, were doing so as theologians, and that their answers to these questions accordingly were theological ones, unable to be understood without attention to their religious context. The second thesis is that within this theological literature there is an eclecticism in which traditions which had been peripheral to theology are employed now theologically. Rhetoric and normativity are thus focal concepts alongside doctrine. The central methodological feature that characterizes this book is its comparative approach, adopted for the sake of identifying common themes in the literature being studied. The typology adopted, the mass of the material brought under consideration, and the framework in which the comparisons are made, have the unfortunate weakness of preventing subtler differences from being accurately presented; but they allow hitherto unrecognized patterns to emerge.

It is a delight to be able to thank all who made this work possible. I gratefully acknowledge the help of the National Endowment for the Humanities for two grants, a Travel to Collections Grant in 1992 and a Summer Stipend in 1993, which enabled me to complete preliminary research in Wolfenbüttel (1992) and at Columbia University (1993). The Herzog August Bibliothek, which has been hospitable and helpful to me since 1985, generously granted me a fellowship for 1994; and the University of Iowa allowed me to accept it by granting a leave for one semester. Through its Old Gold Summer Fellowship program the University of Iowa also made it possible to extend my research trip by several crucial months; and a leave of absence in fall 1996 allowed final revisions.

Parts of this study were presented as papers at various conferences, and I am grateful for responses offered by participants. The sixth and seventh chapters in particular emerged from a series of papers given between 1991 and 1993. The research on Melanchthon and Cochlaeus from which these papers originated also resulted in a few articles and an edition of Cochlaeus's *Philippics*. Although no part of the articles is reprinted here (some of the Introduction to the edition, however, is), they contain extensive documentation and contextualization. The reader is directed to them for citations and discussions of secondary literature, which have been omitted here for the sake of brevity. For the same reason, the documentation that is present takes a highly abbreviated form, but the bibliography should provide necessary guidance.

The critiques of several colleagues have helped me achieve whatever clarity and accuracy are present here. In particular, T. Dwight Bozeman, Peter Iver Kaufman, and Robert Kolb read the entire manuscript and offered salutary corrections and suggestions. The faults that remain are my own.

Two persons deserve special mention, not only for having read this work in manuscript but for much else besides. For the past decade, Jerald Brauer and James Gustafson have provided guidance and encouragement in ways too numerous to recount. Much of the present work has its origins in work done under their supervision at Chicago; and their influence is present throughout the book. I thank them heartily.

R.K.

Iowa City, Iowa
21 December 1996