Four Methodological Questions
Pertaining to Recent Arminius Scholarship:
A Response to Keith Stanglin

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Scholarship lives by thorough debates and strong differences of opinion between specialists, and is in fact greatly aided by them. For that reason I was pleased with the extensive and especially critical review of my dissertation by Keith D. Stanglin recently published in this journal. All the same, his criticism on my study of Arminius’s theology reaches so foundational a level that I was pleased to accept the opportunity the editors offered me at my request for a brief response. Stanglin raises important questions which pertain directly to the methodology and structure for which I opted. In this article I will primarily address Stanglin’s criticism, but also contest several conclusions and misrepresentations.

1. The Search for a Leading Motive: God’s Iustitia as “Central Dogma?”

Is it methodologically justified to search for a “leading motive” in such theologians as Arminius? Stanglin objects to my search for “what is basically the

1) William den Boer, Duplex amor Dei. Contextuele karakteristiek van de theologie van Jacobus Arminius (1559–1609) (Apeldoorn, 2008); the English translation appeared under the title God’s Twofold Love. The Theology of Jacob Arminius (1559–1609) (Göttingen, 2010). References are provided to both editions using the abbreviations DAD and GTL.
central dogma in Arminius.” His use of the term “central dogma,” however, makes a nineteenth-century caricature of my work. More Arminius scholars, including Stanglin himself, have looked for “leading motives” in his theology. Proceeding from the recognition that the motives others had already distinguished were indeed important for Arminius, the purpose of my study was to consider whether they were all determined by one central motive. My research led me to conclude 1. that God’s justice/righteousness has an important place in his theology in terms of both structure and contents, as well as frequency; 2. that Arminius himself connected his view of God’s justice to his criticism on aspects of the mainstream of Reformed theology; 3. that his understanding of God’s justice can also explain his option for dissenting views on predestination, free will, Christology, and assurance of faith; and 4. that, consequently, all of these elements form a coherent whole. A direct connection can be drawn from all disputed issues relating to predestination and free will to his view on God’s justice. This holds true not only in the doctrine of God, but also in the doctrine of creation, Christology, and soteriology.

Remarkably, Stanglin states that it is incomplete “to isolate iustitia in particular as the fundamental motive of Arminius’s theology, as Den Boer does throughout.” He continues: “In Arminius’s exposition, God’s love for justice is primary, but is meaningless and unchecked without God’s love for the sinner. Thus [...] Den Boer would have done better to stay with the twofold love of God as the larger concept.” This is indeed a remarkable statement given that this is precisely what I did, while it was Stanglin who in his own dissertation never developed what God’s primary love for justice means within the broader concept of God’s twofold love, which position it occupies in the background to Arminius’s thought, and how justice relates to the assurance of faith which forms the core of Stanglin’s work. According to Stanglin, I described the leading motive of Arminius’s theology as “the justice/righteousness of God (iustitia Dei) within the broader concept of the twofold love of God (duplex amor Dei).” It should be pointed out that it is not without reason that I chose to entitle my dissertation Duplex amor Dei, or in the English translation which recently appeared, God’s Twofold Love. Iustitia cannot be isolated from other issues, and certainly not from the concept of duplex amor Dei which is indeed

3) Ibid., 422.
4) Ibid.
5) DAD, p. 168 (GTL, p. 173).
6) Stanglin, ‘Review’ (see above, n. 2), 420.
the central concept which binds Arminius’s theology together. Crucial for Arminius is the primacy of God’s love for justice within the concept of the *duplex amor Dei*. Also God’s second love for creation in general and humankind in particular is fundamentally a result of his justice which demands that God’s goodness be satisfied. Furthermore, God’s love for justice is not only visible in a demanding justice, but also in his dependability and especially in the gift of Christ as Mediator to satisfy God’s justice. For this reason, it is entirely justified to identify God’s justice as the central motive of Arminius’s theology. In addition, this approach proves to be most helpful in analysing Arminius’s theology in its whole and in its parts.

2. Interaction with Secondary Sources

The second issue which Stanglin broaches is significant for all studies dealing with topics on which a wide body of secondary literature exists. Is it necessary with each successive topic of study to refer to all previous scholarship? Stanglin hardly minces his words when he criticizes the “interaction with secondary sources [of my study, wdb] and its derivative nature.” He states that I was “highly dependent on the topics and sources of previous scholars, and often without giving due credit.” The question he thus raises is whether I was too minimalistic in the use of my references to secondary literature. Here I do not have the opportunity to respond to all of the “examples” Stanglin furnishes. Instead, I will consider the chief example and explain what method I applied.

Stanglin attacks the claim that my dissertation is an “entirely new contribution,” and feels “compelled” to point out that I was dependent on the topics which he first touched upon in his own dissertation and monograph on Arminius. As evidence, Stanglin gives the following examples: “I previously argued extensively that God’s twofold love enjoyed a (not “the”) central place in Arminius’s theology.” He found it “disconcerting to read Den Boer’s treatments of such subjects as the theme of *securitas/desperatio* (pp. 167, 171, 193), the heuristic use of Arminius’s “foundation” language (p. 155, pp. 162–163), the distinction between ontological and epistemological soteriology (p. 167), and the authorship of disputations, among other topics. The sections on these and other topics, sometimes without due acknowledgement, can hardly be considered original insights.” This leads him to label my work as “derivative.”

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8) Stanglin, ‘Review’ (see above, n. 2), 423.
9) Ibid., 423–424.
For the writing of my own dissertation, I made profitable use of Stanglin’s work, often referring to it in the text and praising it for its qualities. However, the conclusions of certain parts I was forced to examine carefully and to test their underlying argumentation. All the examples Stanglin provided to suggest that I borrowed from his work in fact occur in the context of my lengthy reaction to, and discussion of, his dissertation. One should thus not even expect that I here claim to present “original insights” and that “without due acknowledgement.” Given Stanglin’s argument in his dissertation, namely, that the assurance of faith was of decisive importance for the formation of Arminius’s theology and constituted the driving force behind his polemics against certain aspects of the Reformed theology current in his times, I was because of my entirely different interpretation forced to respond to Stanglin at length. I refer to Stanglin’s book over 100 times in text and footnotes, and aside from the criticism I offered I also did not hide my appreciation for parts of his work. Moreover, a number of concepts which Stanglin considers me to have taken over from him can literally be found in Arminius’s own work. In short, I give full credit to Stanglin as an Arminius-scholar, as a dialogue partner, and attempted to push the debate on Arminius’s theology further ahead by reflecting critically on past scholarship and by arguing for my own position.

A clear example of the way I responded to the arguments Stanglin furnished for his main thesis can be found on pages 170–174 (pp. 165–169 in the original Dutch version). In this section I provide arguments against a number of Stanglin’s claims in his dissertation, but in his review he simply passes over them. Instead he writes: “I will resist the temptation to correct its misunderstandings and misrepresentations of my work on Arminius.” This is unfortunate because in my opinion misperception should be corrected with argumentation. I had no use for presenting Stanglin’s conclusions (or, in fact, those of anyone else) as my own, but rather concentrated by way of argumentation to counter scholarship which I considered to give an incorrect interpretation of Arminius. What makes my work original is not the use of the terms and topics Stanglin mentioned, but rather the argued claim that Arminius’s most important motive for departing from the mainstream of Reformed theology in his time lay in the defence of God’s justice (further developed in the broader concept of God’s twofold love). Stanglin admits that my research “demonstrates how iustitia Dei […] plays a vital role in Arminius’s theology. In fact,

11) Stanglin, ‘Review’ (see above, n. 2), 424.
Arminius’s theology cannot be fully appreciated without an understanding of God’s twofold love.” Of course I agree with this statement. However, why did not Stanglin discuss more extensively that twofold love of God in his own dissertation? And why did not he react in his review to my claim that he left unanswered an equal number of questions regarding the assurance of faith in his treatment of Arminius’s concept of the *duplex amor Dei*?

To sum up, the question Stanglin raises concerning interaction with secondary sources in a scholarly work is important and deserves consideration. In my own dissertation I opted to lay out Arminius’s view on important points from primary sources and his own work, to describe it, and to refer only to previous scholarship for quotations or when there was sufficient difference of opinion for discussion in either the main body or in the footnotes. I did not refer to all existing secondary literature in connection with all of the themes I treated. This methodological procedure may as such be disputed. However, the examples Stanglin gives to argue that I do not interact properly with secondary literature are invalid.

3. Contextualization

A third problem to which Stanglin draws the reader’s attention is the lack of contextualization in my study: “Den Boer dispenses with the need to compare Arminius’s thought with that of his influential predecessors, contemporaries, and opponents.” The issue of contextualization is interesting and in fact raises important questions for each and every study in the field of history and theology. For, how can we do justice to the innumerable aspects and relationships that exist, and to the tremendous complexity of historical reality? To a certain extent all research is reductionist, making historical realities fit for “human” proportions in order to be able to understand and explain them. Consequently, we should realize that every choice made in this respect can by definition be challenged.

Stanglin may well be correct when he states that my method “precludes common notions of historical contextualization.” He does not address the reasons I gave for my method, however. Instead, he continues by unfairly caricaturing several of my analyses, as well as the goals I explicitly noted in my dissertation concerning contextualization. With regard to this, I would like to make the following remarks:

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12) Ibid., 421.
13) Ibid.
1. Because of the political, ecclesiastical, and theological developments after the death of Arminius (1609), his theology has too often and too easily been considered (and condemned) from the perspective of the debates between Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants and of the Synod of Dort and its Canons (1618–1619). In order to avoid this pitfall I chose to depict Arminius as much as possible independently and within the context of his own development as a theologian; in this way, I attempted to exclude later developments from my description.

2. I was inspired by the method Peter Opitz applied in his monograph on Bullinger’s *Decades.* Like Opitz did for Bullinger, I sought to sketch Arminius’s theological “profile” and it was my intention to analyse and describe the historical and theological context as much as possible through Arminius’s own glasses.

3. Constant comparison with contemporaries, as Stanglin did in his dissertation, has the advantage of bringing to light what was unique to Arminius. The disadvantage, however, is that it creates the impression that someone’s view is significant or special only when it departs from that of another, while I consider that it is worthwhile independently to describe and evaluate the whole of a viewpoint in its coherence. Furthermore, it is most difficult to determine the actual value of comparison with another theologian. Who or what is the norm by means of which can be determined whether a position should be considered as divergent or special? There is no such thing as the Reformed theology, and this complicates research. Providing some comparisons seems too simple a procedure for casting Arminius aside as deviating from the Reformed theology. It is in fact just as much possible, and more realistic, to place him within the context of the sixteenth-century Reformed movement.

4. The impression created by Stanglin that my work treats Arminius largely in isolation (“as an island,” to use his words) is incorrect. I am of the opinion that new scholarship may make use of earlier, quality scholarship without having to redo everything. Rather, existing conclusions can be used as the point of departure for new research, or else negatively rejected by that new research. I myself was glad to use the results of earlier scholarship on Arminius. I mentioned Richard Muller, for example, who depicted Arminius as a Protes-

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15) See also William den Boer, “*Cum delectu.* Jacob Arminius’s Praise For and Critique of Calvin and his Theology,” *CHRC* 91 (2011), 73–86, esp. 82–86.
16) Stanglin, ‘Review’ (see above, n. 2), 424.
tant scholastic theologian; or Eef Dekker, who carefully examined Arminius’s views on freedom, grace, and predestination. I also mentioned William Witt, who depicted Arminius as a primarily Thomistic theologian, as well as Keith Stanglin, whose excellent study placing Arminius in his own academic context of the Leiden university and his colleagues there gives a clear view on both the differences and the large extent of agreement on various doctrinal loci. In fact, I refer to the studies of Muller and Stanglin as “two valuable corrections to the caricature that had long prevailed” and posit that “[p]articularly Muller and Stanglin have made important contributions to a contextual understanding of Arminius’s theology,” while at the same time my own study “aims at another, complementary approach.”

Finally, I note also the work of F. Stuart Clarke who gave an insightful Christological interpretation of Arminius, and Mark A. Ellis who compared Episcopius with Arminius on the doctrine of original sin. In my dissertation I conclude my survey of the history of scholarship by remarking that “[t]he studies on Arminius’s theology from the past twenty years have provided much information on, as well as deeper insight into, his thought. For the time being, they will continue to direct further research. […] Particularly the different characterizations of Arminius’s theology, as well as the quest for its structures and motives, have not yet produced convincing results. In my opinion, all preceding scholarship has passed over Arminius’s leading motive that lies at the very root of his departure from the majority of his Reformed colleagues. This motive also represents the link between the various motives and characterizations that have been proposed in the aforementioned studies.”

In short, in my own work I took these previous contextualizations as the point of departure without considering it necessary to repeat this excellent work, but turned myself instead to the remaining gaps and questions also in connection with contextualization.

5. In chapter 5 I treated Arminius’s relationship to Reformed theology. On the basis of a brief analysis it appeared that the controversial elements of Arminius’s theology are consistently in an inseparable relationship with his (non-controversial) view on God’s justice.

6. I attempted to place the motive of God’s justice within the context of two important sixteenth-century debates: in the first place, the debate on voluntarism, intellectualism, and the knowability of God’s justice (which,
it should be added, deserves further study), and in the second place the related issue of the cause of sin: does God become the author of sin?  

In light of these facts I find it difficult to surmise on which basis Stanglin remarks that “he offers only one brief reference to a contemporary (namely, Calvin), as if one citation from Calvin is sufficient [italics mine, wdb] to represent the contemporary thought from which Arminius departed. It is an important question, with, unfortunately, no support for the answers.”  

I never claimed that one reference to Calvin would suffice to sketch this debate; that would indeed be absurd. I devoted more than 30 pages to the issue, and treated not only Calvin but also Augustine, Thomas Bradwardine, Gregory of Rimini, John Duns Scotus, Hugo of St. Victor, Thomas Aquinas, Gabriël Biel, Luther and Erasmus, Zwingli, Martin Bucer, Albertus Pighius, Bolsec, Bullinger, Beza, Vermigli, Musculus, Theodorus Bibliander, Peter Baro, Zanchi and Marbach, Sebastian Castellio, Martin Borrhaus, Faustus Socinus, Zacharias Ursinus, Samuel Huber, Abraham Musculus, Aegidius Hunnius, and Nicolas Hemmingius.  

In connection with the chapter devoted to the theologico-historical context of Arminius’s theology, Stanglin warns the reader that he or she “will search in vain for one primary source citation.” However, in my dissertation I first note that the research here is not in any way intended to be exhaustive, that it rather has an exploratory character and is largely based on secondary literature, and that its purpose is to invite further research.

I then go on to cite extensively especially Calvin and Luther from the primary sources. Further, I make profitable use of many citations from primary sources which can be found in a number of the excellent secondary sources which I consulted.

The method of contextualization for which I opted complements previous scholarship and draws maximum profit from it. In my opinion, the arguments which plead for God’s justice in the concept of the twofold love of God as the leading motive are very strong. The connection of this concept with Arminius’s theology as a whole (at least, insofar as it pertains to controversial or divergent aspects) is essential. What is more, it is seamlessly joined to earlier

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23) Stanglin, ‘Review’ (see above, n. 2), 424.
25) Stanglin, ‘Review’ (see above, n. 2), 424.
26) DAD, p. 274 (GTL, p. 281).
and contemporaneous debates on the cause of sin as to whether or not God becomes its author. Precisely this concept of God’s justice forms the missing link between the earlier attempts to characterize Arminius’s theology.

This method of contextualization in my opinion contributed to a better understanding of Arminius’s theology and provides a plausible explanation for this phenomenon in its historical context. Since this method represents at one and the same time a complement as well as a correction to earlier scholarship, the challenge for future Arminius scholarship is to complement and correct my findings on the basis of closer analyses and other or deeper contextualizations.

4. The Use of Sources: Authorship and Representativeness of Disputations

In my dissertation I called the exhaustive attention which Stanglin in his dissertation devoted to the authorship of disputations held under the presidency of Arminius “a significant contribution.” Remarkably, Stanglin finds it “perplexing” that I in turn devote so much space to “arguing that the public and private disputations of Arminius cannot serve as ‘primary source material’ for this study.” After all, it was he who began the discussion and who forced me to consider his arguments carefully and to argue why I did not agree with him.

Stanglin calls my “rejection of Arminius’s disputations as source material” (which is an oversimplified and thus misleading characterization of my actual position) “fraught with many difficulties.” However, he does not enter into my arguments. The same is true of my observation that Stanglin on the one hand remarks that he depends heavily on the disputations and that they are a “necessary component for knowing the full story of the Arminian controversy,” but then in his exposition of Arminius’s divergent view on the assurance of faith (which forms the central thesis of his dissertation) hardly makes use of these disputations at all.

Given the constraints in space, I will consider only the most important arguments. Furthermore, it is not possible to discuss the issue without including Stanglin’s carefully prepared edition of The Missing Public Disputations of

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27) DAD, p. 13 (GTL, p. 23).
28) Stanglin, ‘Review’ (see above, n. 2), 420.
29) Ibid., 424.
Jacobus Arminius.31 The further arguments which Stanglin produces here for his position that “the evidence indicates that Arminius is the sole, or at least primary, author”32 of the disputations held under his presidency have in the meantime convinced me.

However, our newfound agreement on the authorship does not take away from the fact that I continue to have questions concerning the disputations’ representativeness of their author’s views. My questions largely pertain to two elements (i.e. their genre and polemical context) which both have methodological consequences for the value attached to Arminius’s disputations for a study on his theology.

1. The disputation genre. Stanglin himself in this context points to a “certain degree of ambiguity” “in comparison to other documents,” refers to an “interpretative caution,” and concludes that “any potential ambiguity, which is due to the genre of disputations, is not necessarily antithetical to a certain amount of precision in the disputations […] Outlines […] are nevertheless accurate portrayals of the author’s thought.”33 Indeed, not necessarily, but “accurate portrayals” applies only if the author intended to sum up his views in the theses. It is under normal circumstances, when there is no reason to be (more) careful and no additional attention is given to the contents of the theses, that the disputation will indeed result in an accurate summary of the author’s views.

Another aspect of the disputation genre to which Stanglin points is on the one hand the formation of “communal boundaries” which “determined the shape of the Leiden theology” and “helps explain Arminius’s comments that he composed the disputation on predestination in accord with the Catechism, and that he did not give all his opinions on the topic of free choice,”34 while he on the other hand refers to “the clearly individual expressions that both fell safely within the boundaries and also occasionally pushed them.”35 However, also this is a characteristic of genre which requires great interpretive care.

All aspects connected to the disputation genre do not lead necessarily to less accurate or representative portrayals of the author’s thought; the genre as such is thus not the most important argument to the contrary. However, the genre does offer great opportunities for authors to disguise their deepest motives and

32 Ibid., p. 73.
33 Ibid., p. 25.
34 Ibid., pp. 90–91.
35 Ibid., p. 91.
views. Both the situation, as well as statements of Arminius himself and of his opponents, give cause to doubt representativeness at least in the specific case of Arminius’s disputations. Only on the basis of knowledge and insight into Arminius’s views as it can be discerned from other writings can his disputations be interpreted, complemented, and supplemented, and in this way the reader is spared from misinterpretation. For this reason I viewed the disputations as secondary source material, that is, usable only on the basis of knowledge derived from the primary source material.

In the end my own conclusion is entirely in line with what Stanglin writes: “With Arminius, one must be satisfied with saying that his public disputations cohere very well with, and do not contradict, his other writings.” The most important difference is that I state this at the end, rather than as an a priori. At the same time, it is not easy to come to a clear view of Arminius’s theology purely on the basis of the disputations. It is just as Arminius himself stated in connection with his disputation De libero arbitrio: the theses contain nothing that is beside the truth, but some truths which he could have spoken were passed over in silence for the sake of peace.

2. The polemical context. Stanglin, too, noticed that Arminius under circumstances proceeded with care and tried to avoid unnecessary provocation. This created a climate in which no one was sure what Arminius exactly thought and taught, so that his opponents continually tried—usually without success—to draw him out. It thus seems that they were not satisfied with his references to his public disputations, which will have been composed in such a way that Arminius expected them to free him from accusations rather than adding to them. This takes nothing away from authorship, but it does have an effect on the transparency with which Arminius discussed controversial issues in his disputations. Because of their “skeletal” character disputations probably lend themselves precisely to this. The absence of exact details, nuances, etc., gave Arminius sufficient room to include his controversial views in a more-or-less non-controversial framework.

36) Ibid., p. 62.
37) Letter to Borrius, July 25, 1605, in Philippus van Limborch and Christiaan Hartsoecker, eds., Praestantium ac eruditorum virorum epistolae ecclesiasticae et theologicae (Amsterdam, 1704), p. 78. Arminius here refers to his Public Disputation XI.
38) Cf. e.g. Stanglin, Missing Public Disputations (see above, n. 31), pp. 50–51.
Stanglin points out that Gomarus knew that Arminius did not openly say everything, and that “his decision not to declare everything was no secret, but acknowledged openly.”\textsuperscript{40} This is a significant finding, because this may well explain all the more the misgivings of Arminius’s opponents, their claim that Arminius hid all kinds of heresies, and their attempts to draw or force him to be completely open.

The knowledge that especially in the public disputations Arminius picked his way carefully and did not always say what he thought must make scholars cautious about the use of these disputations as primary source material. I do not, as Stanglin suggests, “dismiss”\textsuperscript{41} the disputations, but conscious of their polemical context and academic genre I wish to take them as secondary source material. Every source must be weighed on the basis of its own merits in order to determine its nature, function, meaning, dependability, and representativeness.\textsuperscript{42} The care with which the sources must be treated does not make them less interesting. My plea not to consider Arminius’s disputations as primary but as secondary source material is founded on pertinent, methodological considerations. One who is in search of Arminius’s deepest theological motives and views must, when confronted with different kinds of source material, first decide which formal grounds should be applied to evaluate whether sources are or are not suited (or, perhaps, less suited) to this purpose. Only afterwards can it be determined primarily on the basis of the contents whether this distinction between primary and secondary source material had any results, or whether that distinction can be dropped. In the case of Arminius, statements of Arminius himself, the polemical nature of the disputations, and the nature of the disputation genre are reasons not to use his disputations directly and without discretion as primary source material. In my dissertation I drew conclusions at the end concerning my methodological decisions.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{40} Stanglin, Missing Public Disputations (see above, n. 31), p. 92.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., p. 93.
\textsuperscript{42} For this reason it is incorrect to conclude as Stanglin does: “If so, then the lectures on Galatians may as well remain in hiding in the Archives Tronchin, Geneva.” Stanglin, Missing Public Disputations (see above, n. 31), p. 93, n. 172. Given the circumstances, it would be most interesting to know how Arminius exposted Paul’s letter to the Galatians.
\textsuperscript{43} DAD, pp. 320–321 (GTL, pp. 326–327).
Stanglin warns against the consequences implied in my method: “any attempt to marginalize the significance of the disputations would (perhaps inadvertently, nevertheless indisputably) also cast suspicion on most other works of Arminius.” However, our methodological considerations should not be motivated by fear of the consequences. After all, is it all that bad if certain source material is determined to be less suitable or to be of less primary relevance?

I entirely agree with Stanglin when he states concerning the disputations that “the socio-political contexts must be considered. Moreover, the disputations should not be made to say something they do not contain; their genre should be respected.” However, for the reasons given above I do not entirely agree with him when he writes: “There can be no doubt that Arminius was politically savvy, a cautious individual caught in a volatile situation. He also made it clear that he was not afraid to express his opinions when he was in disagreement with his colleagues concerning their interpretation of the confessional standards, and even in his desire to subject the standards to revision. Hence, although the disputations must be read and interpreted in a way appropriate to their genre, they are no less representative of Arminius’s thought than his other works.” The logic of the final conclusion escapes me. One should rather conclude: “Hence, because the disputations must be read and interpreted in a way appropriate to their genre, and we have to reckon with the volatile situation and Arminius’s cautiousness, they may be less representative of Arminius’s thought than his other works.”

In spite of all of Stanglin’s objections, it is justified to remain sceptical about the representativeness of Arminius’s disputations. On more than one occasion Arminius explicitly refused openly to give his views. Would he then have been so careless as to be entirely transparent in public and during a disputation? As I see it, the burden of proof lies with those who insist on using the disputations for studies on Arminius’s theology.

Finally, my conclusions regarding the disputations’ authorship and their representativeness of the personal convictions of their author can be summarized in three points:

44) Stanglin, Missing Public Dissertations (see above, n. 31), p. 94.
45) Ibid., pp. 95–96.
46) Ibid., p. 28.
1. The factors which influence the final answer to this question are numerous and pertain to country, university, faculty\(^{47}\) and personal customs,\(^{48}\) place, time\(^{49}\) (developments over time), social and political circumstances, polemics and conflicts (tense collegial relations), academic genre, prevailing views regarding authorship, the intention to publish (e.g. the *Synopsis purioris theologiae* of 1625), etc.

2. The great number of factors make it impossible to come with general verdicts in this matter. In each case, all factors must be weighed.

3. The final word concerning the authorship of disputations and their representativeness of personal views has not yet been spoken. New research still needs to be done on specific cases.

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\(^{47}\) Cf. Ahsmann’s conclusions concerning the law faculty in Leiden. Ahsmann argues that in the period examined by her (1575–1630) as a rule it was the students who themselves formulated the theses. Margreet J.A.M. Ahsmann, *Collegia en colleges. Juridisch onderwijs aan de Leidse universiteit 1575–1630* (Groningen, 1990), pp. 311–323.

\(^{48}\) Also Stanglin, *Missing Public Dissertations* (see above, n. 31), p. 28, points out that the authorship of a certain disputation Arminius defended in Geneva is “less clear […], for Geneva students may have had more freedom in writing public disputations than in German and Dutch universities.”

\(^{49}\) For instance, Stanglin (ibid., p. 62) brings forward the argument that “separate public disputations under the same presiding professor on the same topic often demonstrate much verbal similarity, and are at times verbatim.” Recent scholarship on Leiden disputations held between 1620 and 1630 shows, however, that numerous examples can be given of significant differences between “separate public disputations under the same presiding professor on the same topic.”