PART I

JACOBUS ARMINIUS
“His historical significance neither a sympathizer nor an opponent can misunderstand.” This was the claim of Remonstrant professor H.Y. Groenewegen, who, exactly one century ago, said this about Jacobus Arminius on the occasion of the third centennial of the death. Reflecting now, with another century behind us, we can repeat this sentiment only with great qualification, for historians, theologians, and ministers too often continue to misunderstand and underestimate Arminius’s significance. In view of the enormous international impact of the school of thought that bears his name, and compared with the scholarly research devoted to other reformers of less prominence, study of the “historical Arminius” still has some catching up to do. In addition, among those who acknowledge his historical and theological significance, there is no consensus on the precise nature of his contribution or its significance. Is Arminius the harbinger of the future course of Remonstrantism, or a proponent of old Dutch Protestantism? Is he an irenic Reformed theologian or a dogmatic Protestant scholastic? Perhaps he is a combination of all of these things, and more.

The task of this essay is to provide an overview of current research on Arminius that will function as a bibliographical resource. Given that reassessments of Arminius and Arminianism tend to be carried out at approximately fifty-year intervals, in remembrance of the years of his birth and death (1559/1560 and 1609, respectively), this study will