Seventeenth-century German theater primarily consisted of two types of plays: Protestant vernacular and Catholic Latin drama. Despite their coexistence, literary historians have traditionally focused on each group's linguistic and confessional aspects without explicating the differences between them. Thematic similarities have occasionally been noted, but most discussions of Protestant and Catholic theater have usually been undertaken to demonstrate the superiority of one religious style over the other. Whereas some Baroque scholars have dismissed Catholic drama as didactic and militant, others have either disregarded Protestant theater or deemed it artistically deficient. Such prejudices have been especially apparent in most examinations of Gryphius' relationship to Jesuit theater. Indeed, Willi Harring's 1907 assessment of Gryphius' tragedy *Leo Armenius* (1650) as "echt poetisch" in contrast to its Jesuit model ("trocken und langweilig") has become an implicit assumption in all *Leo Armenius* interpretations, if not several investigations of Jesuit and Prote-


2. Willi Harring, *Andreas Gryphius und das Drama der Jesuiten*, Hermaea, 5 (Halle, 1907), p. 73. Harring's aesthetic assessment con-
stant drama. The following study is intended to rectify such judgments by reassessing the differences between Gryphius’ play and his Jesuit source and thereby to establish an interpretive basis for future comparisons between Catholic and Protestant theater.

The Protestant Gryphius was well acquainted with the writings of several Jesuit scholars, poets and playwrights, some of whose works he adapted and translated. One such writer whose plays Gryphius undoubtedly knew was the English Jesuit Joseph Simons (1593?-1671) whose tragedy on the ninth-century Byzantine emperor, Leo the Armenian, has long been regarded as the inspiration for Gryphius’ drama on the same subject. Indeed, Gryphius’ work has traditionally been held to be an artistic improvement over the inferior Jesuit play, if not a Protestant replique to the subversive Catholic idea of revolution presented there. Such an assessment cannot, however, be supported through a close comparison of the two texts. A careful study of the relationship between Gryphius’ Leo Armenius and its Jesuit model will demonstrate that the complexity of Gryphius’ work was already inherent in the Jesuit play. Moreover, the two tragedies do not present contrastive approaches to the validity of tyrannicide, but rather, contrastive interpretations of the Christian conception of history.

Contributed to the view that all Counter-Reformation dramas were merely polemical works with black-and-white characters. Traces of this judgment reappeared in Gerhard Kaiser’s essay on Leo Armenius (in Gerhard Kaiser, ed. Die Dramen des Andreas Gryphius: Eine Sammlung von Einzelinterpretationen (Stuttgart, 1968), pp. 5-8; in the “Nachwort” in P. Rusterholz, ed. Andreas Gryphius “Leo Armenius” (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1971), pp. 130-131, and, most recently, in Harald Steinhagen, Wirkllichkeit und Handeln im barocken Drama (Tübingen, 1977), pp. 129-130.

3. In addition to Kaiser (pp. 7-8) and Szarota (pp. 63-4), other critics equated the Jesuits with tyrannicide without realizing the complexities of Jesuit political thought, and consequently regarded Leo Armenus as an endorsement of political revolution: see H. Plard, “De heiligheid van de koninklijke macht in de tragedie van Andreas Gryphius,” Tijdschrift van de Vrije Universiteit van Brussel, 2 (1961), pp. 217-218. In contrast, the subtle distinctions which Jesuit political theorists, such as Robert Bellarmine, often made between regicide and tyrannicide, as well as between legitimate and illegitimate tyrants, by no means suggest that orthodox Jesuit thinkers endorsed revolution. See F.X. Arnold, Die Staatslehre des Kardinals Bellarmin (Munich, 1934), pp. 229-54.