



The Chancery of God: Protestant Print, Polemic and Propaganda against the Empire, Magdeburg 1546-1551 (St Andrews Studies in Reformation History)

Nathan Rein

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The disastrous protestant defeat in the Schmalkaldic War (1546-47) and the promulgation of the Ausburg Interim (1548) left the fate of German Protestantism in doubt. In the wake of these events, a single protestant town, Magdeburg, offered organized, sustained resistance to Emperor Charles V's drive to consolidate Habsburg hegemony and reinstitute uniform Roman Catholic worship throughout Germany. In a flood of printed pamphlets, Magdeburg's leaders justified their refusal to surrender with forceful appeals to religious belief and German tradition. Magdeburg's resistance, interdiction and eventual siege attracted admiring attention from across Europe. The teachings developed and disseminated by Protestant thinkers in defence of the city's stance would ultimately influence political theorists in Switzerland, France, Scotland and even North America. Magdeburg's ordeal formed a signal crisis in the emergence of German Lutheran confessional identity. The Chancery of God is the first English language monograph on Magdeburg's anti-Imperial resistance and pamphlet campaign. The book offers an analysis of Magdeburg's printed output (over 200 publications) during the crucial years of 1546-51, texts which present a broad spectrum of arguments for resistance and suggest a coherent identity and worldview that is characteristically and self-consciously Protestant.

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