

Title: Sibrandus Lubbertus (1555-1625): And Reformed Polemics on Authority in the Church

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### **ABSTRACT**

Sibrandus Lubbertus (1555-1625) was a German born Reformed theologian who spent most of his life teaching at the University of Franeker in Friesland, a northern region of the Netherlands. Among his publications, the most significant in size and importance were his disputational works, which used a polemical form to address controversial issues of the post-Reformation period in which he gave a robust defense of the Reformed position over and against the most influential voices of his day, whether they themselves were a more heterodox expression of Protestant theology or simply Roman Catholic.

This dissertation examines the major treatises of Lubbertus, which were written to refute Robert Bellarmine, the great Jesuit apologist of the Roman Catholic Church during the Counter Reformation. Specifically, this dissertation argues that Lubbertus—who, in the past, has been largely ignored in both English and Dutch scholarship for being a mere polemicist—is important for the development of the Reformed tradition precisely because of his use of the polemical form to write about the doctrine of Scripture (prolegomena) and the doctrine of the church (ecclesiology). He wrote with particular influence on the topic of church councils, which brought together prolegomena and ecclesiology to address one of the long standing issues between Protestants and Catholics even into the seventeenth century—*Who has the authority to settle controversies in the church once and for all?* This research seeks to offer greater insight into the theology of Sibrandus Lubbertus, the theological genre of polemics in the post-Reformation period, and the ways Bellarmine's challenge provided the occasion for the advancement of Reformed theology throughout the seventeenth century.