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The Dynamics of the Classical Reformed Liturgy in the Netherlands: Its Texts and their History. Presentation of a Project

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The Dynamics of the Classical Reformed Liturgy in the Netherlands: Its Texts and their History

Presentation of a Project

Klaas-Willem de Jong

Abstract

In this article, I present a project that recently emerged at the Protestant Theological University (PThU: NL Amsterdam-Groningen). It focuses on the classical reformed liturgy in the Netherlands, its texts, rituals and their history, especially in the 16th and early 17th centuries. The collection of these texts, passed on through generations, is known as, among others, The Liturgy. I demonstrate it has been observed since the middle of the 17th century that The Liturgy is not a collection of prayers and forms of which the extent and the texts can be clearly defined. Still, a critical edition of The Liturgy has not yet been produced. I argue that a critical edition with attention to its origins, its various releases, its reception in the Netherlands Reformed Church and its effects on other liturgies is needed for an in-depth study of the history of both the reformation period and the reformed liturgy. Subsequently, I outline the method to produce such an edition. Because of the complexity of the matter, each part – for example a form or a collection of prayers – needs to be studied separately. Nevertheless, for each part similar steps have to be taken in which the involved scholars can work together. The critical edition of a part can be published in its own right. The final result is a merging of the releases into a critical edition of The Liturgy as a whole.

Keywords

Project, reformed liturgy, (para)liturgical forms and prayers, 16th and 17th century, the Netherlands

1 Introduction to the project

The texts of the classical Dutch reformed liturgy are to be found in the back of a number of old and new Psalm books, usually together with reformed confessions, such as the Heidelberg Catechism. They are referred to as ‘Ceremonies and Prayers’ or more often ‘The Liturgy.’¹ In this contribution, I use the latter designation when I want to point out the collection of liturgical forms and prayers in question.

1) See the attachment to this article for an overview of The Liturgy’s contents.

The Liturgy originated in the 16th and 17th centuries – somewhere between 1566 (edition of Petrus Dathenus) and 1618–19 (Synod of Dordrecht).² It provides insight into the theological development of the increasingly influential Calvinism in the Netherlands during that period. Presumably, The Liturgy has been printed millions of times over the centuries until now and, therefore, has been distributed widely. It has not only influenced theology, but because of its frequent use in ordinary church life, it has had an effect on piety and spirituality as well, probably more than any edifying treatise. Nowadays it is used in traditional reformed circles in the Netherlands and in congregations of Dutch emigrants and their descendants overseas. Both in its genesis and in its reception, extraordinary dynamics characterize The Liturgy. This fits a pattern. Susan Karant-Nunn concludes in a *The Oxford Handbook of the Protestant Reformations*: “Reformation-era liturgies differed among themselves, and they were in a state of continued alteration as divines, secular rulers, magistrates, and ordinary people were exposed to new religious strains or even new styles of living. Liturgy was endlessly dynamic, perpetually in motion.”³ Still, until now an extensive critical edition of the 16th and 17th-century texts of The Liturgy has not yet been published. A more or less accepted *textus receptus* exists but, in spite of earlier research, substantial knowledge of its origins and subsequent changes is still lacking.⁴ In this article, I present a project in which we aim to realize such a critical edition of The Liturgy.

2 Origins of the project

The project originates in the work of my late father, Freerk de Jong (1930–1981). He made a thorough study of the form for the baptism of infants in the 1970s. Unfortunately, he was not able to finish his research and publish his findings regarding the history of the texts. I did so posthumously in 1998.⁵ Looking back, his approach had its limitations. First, he did not study all relevant texts; not all were known at that time, let alone were all of them easily accessible. Moreover, he restricted himself to only one form.

The subject came up again in a conversation with my PThU colleague Marcel Barnard, professor of Practical Theology and Liturgical Studies, and we decided to address it. Producing a critical edition

2) Cf. Petrus Dathenus, *De Psalmen Davids (...). Metgaeders den Christelicken Catechismo, Ceremonien ende Ghebeden* (Heydelbergh, 1566).

3) Susan C. Karant-Nunn, “The Reformation of Liturgy,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Protestant Reformations*, ed. Ulink Rublack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 409–430, esp. 424.

4) The base for this *textus receptus* can be found in *Nieuwe Druck van den Catechismus (...). Mitsgaders De Blydenisse des Geloofs (...). Als oock de Lyturgie der selve Kercken (...)* (Dordrecht: Fredrik Outman, 1737); cf. J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, “De tekst van de belijdenisgeschriften en van de liturgische formulieren der Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk,” in *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* XL (1954): 207–250, esp. 236–241.

5) Klaas-Willem de Jong, “Van Forme naar Formulier. Het ontstaan en de ontwikkeling van het klassieke gereformeerde doopformulier in de Nederlandse Reformatie,” *Jaarboek voor Liturgie-onderzoek* 14 (1998): 7–59.

of The Liturgy was considered a viable and relevant project, first by a small project group at the PThU and then later by a group of experts and scholars from several institutions.⁶ The PThU project group and professor Erik de Boer (TU-Kampen) helped me to elaborate the project into the form presented in this article.

3 The history and current situation of the research

3.1 The history of the research of reformed liturgy in the Netherlands

It has long been observed that The Liturgy is not a collection of prayers and forms of which the extent and the texts can be clearly defined. One of the first scholars to reflect upon this theme was Leiden professor Jacobus Trigland (1583–1654). In his *Ecclesiastical histories* (1650) he blames the printers. “They print and sell all that pleases them. When they obtain a copy of a hymnbook, catechism or something like that, they all just print it without investigating its quality. These books are sold in the shops for several purposes.”⁷ Paradoxically, in his argument, Trigland actually shows that not only the printers are guilty of the differences. He reconstructs the history of the form for the baptism of infants and evaluates the choices made by Synods and theologians. It shows a lot of alterations that were made deliberately, but sometimes because of sloppiness or knowing neglect they were forgotten in later times. Trigland situates the history of this form in the context of the battle between Arminians (Remonstrants) and Gomarists (Counter-Remonstrants), which led to the condemnation of the latter group at the Synod of Dordrecht (1618–19).

After Trigland, there were several others who studied the history of the liturgical forms and prayers. I limit myself to a few authoritative efforts, one from each of the next centuries. A study by professor Joh. Ens (1682–1732) from Utrecht concerns the three reformed confessions and The Liturgy. It was published posthumously in 1733.⁸ Ens provides an overview of the contents of The Liturgy and the way it came about. The *Treatise of the liturgical writings of the Netherlands Reformed Church*,

6) Members of the project group at PThU: Wim Moehn, extraordinary professor of Reformed Protestantism; Maarten Wisse, professor of Dogmatics with a particular interest in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper; and Gert van Klinken, assistant professor of Church History. Others: Mirjam van Veen, professor of Church History and August den Hollander, professor of Religious Heritage (both from VU-Amsterdam); Erik de Boer, professor of Church History (TU-Kampen); Arjen Mensink, chairman of the Reformed Association within the Protestant Church in the Netherlands; Bert Boter and Jaco van der Knijff, both doctoral candidates (the latter defended his thesis on July 5, 2018); and Bernhard van der Knijff, master student at the PThU.

7) J. Trigland, *Kerkelycke Geschiedenissen (...)* (Leiden: Wijngaerden, 1650), 664.

8) Joh. Ens, *Kort historisch berigt van de Publieke Schriften, Rakende de Leer en Dienst der Nederduytze Kerken van de Vereenigde Nederlanden: Zynde de formulieren van eenigheyt en de liturgie, doorgaans gevoegt agter de Psalmboeken die in de zelve Kerken gebruykt werden* (Utrecht: J. Wagens en J. Paddenburg, 1733) (reprints: Amsterdam: Salomon Schouten en Jan Roman de Jonge, 1746; Kampen: S. van Velzen jr., 1857 and 1861).

written by the Dutch minister J.A.M. Mensinga (1809–1898) and published in 1851, was the result of a competition initiated by the Society to Defend Christian Religion in The Hague.⁹ Mensinga describes the texts of The Liturgy, their history and their use and practical value in his own lifetime.¹⁰ Well over a century later, between 1952 and 1956, A.F.N. Lekkerkerker (1913–1972) – at that time still a minister, later he became professor in Groningen – issued four modest volumes under the title *Observations with regard to the reformed Service book*.¹¹ Lekkerkerker not only discusses the texts and rituals that have been adopted into the Service book¹², but also describes some of their historical backgrounds.

From the 1960s onwards, the relevance of The Liturgy for the praxis in the largest reformed denominations in the Netherlands slowly diminished, as I will describe in more detail below. As a result of this diminishing relevance, scientific publications on the subject of The Liturgy have since become increasingly scarce.

From a historical point of view, the research until now needs to be updated and supplemented on three points in particular, which I will describe next.

The first point concerns the relationship between The Liturgy and older liturgical materials. The previously mentioned authors and other authors have discussed the sources of The Liturgy, such as the publications of Joh. Calvin¹³, Martin Bucer¹⁴, Valerandus Pollanus¹⁵, Martinus Micronius¹⁶, Joh. A. Lasco¹⁷, Petrus Dathenus¹⁸ as well as the church order of the Pfalz (1563).¹⁹ However, hardly any of them offered a total view, partly because they wanted to emphasize certain aspects of The Liturgy, for

9) J.A.M. Mensinga, *Verhandeling over de liturgische schriften der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk* ('s-Gravenhage: Erven Thierry en Mensing, 1851).

10) Mensing inspired by his writings several other authors, such as J.W.F. Gobius du Sart in his dissertation *De geschiedenis van de Liturgische geschriften der Nederlandsch Hervormde Kerk op nieuw onderzocht* (Utrecht: A.J. van Huffel, 1886), H.H. Barger in his for a broader public released *Ons Kerkboek* (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1900) and P. Biesterveld in his similar *Het Gereformeerde Kerkboek* (Breukelen: 'Filippus', 1903).

11) A.F.N. Lekkerkerker, *Kanttekeningen bij het Hervormde Dienstboek I-IV* ('s-Gravenhage: Boekencentrum, 1952–1956).

12) *Dienstboek voor de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk in ontwerp* ('s-Gravenhage: Boekencentrum B.V., 1955).

13) Cf. P. Barth, G. Niesel (eds.), *Joannis Calvini Opera Selecta II* (München: Kaiser, 1952), 1-58. A fully revised edition is on its way at Droz in Geneva, but it is not released yet.

14) Cf. G.J. van de Poll, *Martin Bucer's Liturgical Ideas* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1954).

15) Cf. Valerandus Pollanus, *Liturgia Sacra (1551–1555). Opnieuw uitgegeven en van een inleiding voorzien door A.C. Honders* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970).

16) Cf. M. Micron, *De Christlike Ordinancien der Nederlantscher Ghemeinten te Londen (1554). Opnieuw uitgegeven en van een inleiding voorzien door Dr. W.F. Dankbaar* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956). See also: A. Sprengler-Ruppenthal, *Mysterium und Riten nach der Londoner Kirchenordnung der Niederländer (ca. 1550 bis 1566)* (= Forschungen zur kirchlichen Rechtsgeschichte und zum Kirchenrecht 7) (Köln: Böhlau, 1967).

17) Cf. A. Kuyper, *Joannis a Lasco opera tam edita quam inedita II* (Amsterdam: Fred. Muller, 1866), 1-283.

18) Cf. Dathenus, *De Psalmen Davids*.

19) Cf. "Kirchenordnung (...)," in *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts 14. Kurpfalz*, ed. E. Sehling (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1969), 333-408. Cf. also other volumes of this series.

example its Calvinistic origins, and partly because sources were unavailable or not entirely available. Thus, a recent and coherent approach is lacking.

Second, in spite of the efforts made in the past, no one has produced a comprehensive annotated edition of the various texts of The Liturgy. Only some fragmentary text editions of The Liturgy are available at this moment. For example, the reference work *Coena Domini I. The liturgy for the administration of the Lord's Supper in 16th/17th century reformed churches* contains the form for the Lord's Supper of Petrus Dathenus and compares it with the German original from the Kurpfalz (1563).²⁰ An article to which I contributed, "Towards a complete atonement of all our sins? A few observations with regard to the words of administering in the form for celebrating Lord's Supper", only deals with the aspect mentioned in the title.²¹ Another example is the dissertation of Dutch scholar and minister H.J. Oldenhuis, *The practice of baptism in the reformed churches in the Netherlands 1568–1816*, in the beginning of the 20th century. He offers a comparative overview of several forms for baptism.²² In the article in which I edited the findings of my father, I provide a more critical annotated text as well as a history of the form for the baptism of infants only.²³

Of the remaining examples that could be given, I want to highlight one in particular because it covers The Liturgy as a whole and it is partially annotated. A major drawback, however, is its repetitiveness. In 1897 the reformed professor in Church History and Church Law F.L. Rutgers (1836–1917) edited *The versed psalms and some hymns in use in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. Together with (...) their Liturgy (...) according to the texts established by these churches*.²⁴ The last words of the title reveal the pretension of this book: it suggests that the Synod of Dordrecht (1618–19) has established the texts of the Liturgy in an *editio typica* of some form.²⁵ The book was primarily meant for practical use, but had a sound substantiation. Its pretense led to a fierce debate at the turn of the previous century. Rutgers and his supporters belonged to the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, a denomination in which two groups that dissented from the Netherlands Reformed Church had gathered in 1892. Others, members of the Netherlands Reformed Church, disputed the theorem that the Synod of Dordrecht had made such a decision.²⁶ They were of the opinion that the origin of the official texts could

20) Irmgard Pahl (ed.), *Coena Domini I. Die Abendmahlsliturgie der Reformationskirchen im 16./17. Jahrhundert* (= Spicilegium Friburgense 29) (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1983), 525-535.

21) N.J. van den Herik & K.W. de Jong, "Tot een volkomen verzoening van al onze zonden? Enkele kanttekeningen bij de uitdelingswoorden in het avondmaalsformulier," *GTT* 90 (1990): 146-158.

22) H.J. Olthuis, *De doopspraktijk der Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland. 1568–1816* (Utrecht: G.J.A. Ruys, 1908), esp. attachments I-V: 239-267.

23) De Jong, "Van Forme naar Formulier," 47-54.

24) F.L. Rutgers (ed.), *De berijmde Psalmen met eenige Gezangen in gebruik bij de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland. Alsmede (...) hare Liturgie (...) naar den door die Kerken vastgestelden tekst* (Middelharnis: Flakkeesche Boekdrukkerij, 1897).

25) Rutgers (ed.), *De berijmde Psalmen*, 66.

26) See K.W. de Jong, *Ordering van dienst. Achtergronden van en ontwikkelingen in de eredienst van de*

be traced back to the Synod of The Hague (1586). Although there was some rapprochement between the parties involved, they could not agree on a generally accepted reference point.

The outcome of this disagreement – which was in fact a dispute about the question of who should be considered the true heir of the Dutch reformed tradition – did not stimulate scholars to investigate the texts again. Each party held firmly to its conviction. This partly explains why a comprehensive annotated text edition has not yet been produced. However, there is more. When the two denominations became closer in the 1960s, alternative liturgical texts were created and the old disagreement became irrelevant. In addition, probably the most important explanation is the fact that already before this development there was no urgency. In their services, both churches predominantly used the texts of The Liturgy, which had become common practice since 1737, the *textus receptus* I referred to before. In practice there were hardly any substantial differences.

A third point, which has scarcely been investigated, is the reception of The Liturgy in the Netherlands (in particular, of course, in the Reformed Church, but also in related denominations, for example among Arminians and in English speaking congregations), as well as overseas (for example, in former colonies).²⁷ As far as the latter is concerned, however, we do know which Dutch and English texts have been used for the first broadly accepted English edition of the Liturgy in North America (1767).²⁸ We know little, however, about the century and a half before this release. More detailed knowledge of these fields would provide a welcome addition to the existing data. This would likely offer a fresh perspective on especially the time shortly after the Synod of Dordrecht (1618–19).

The developments outlined above are reflected in the limited number of theological studies on (parts of) The Liturgy. Most are from an edifying nature, though, some offer deep theological insights too.²⁹

3.2 The current situation of the research on the reformation period in the Netherlands

From a broader perspective of the research on the reformation period in the Netherlands, the need for a critical edition of The Liturgy can be underlined. The Liturgy, though of a nature of its own, is

Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Baarn: Ten Have, 1996), 68f and the literature given there.

27) At the time of writing, I am preparing a contribution on the preparation and publication of the first liturgical texts among Remonstrants in the Netherlands.

28) Daniel J. Meeter, “*Bless the Lord, o my Soul*”. *The New-York Liturgy of the Dutch Reformed Church 1767* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 1998). This edition in turn came into use later on, amongst others in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (89f), the Christian Reformed Church (90), and the Canadian Reformed Church (91). Furthermore, it was translated into Tamil, Telugu, Japanese and German (89).

29) Cf. e.g. the books of B. Wielenga (*Ons huwelijksformulier* (Kampen: Kok, 1909); *Ons avondmaalsformulier* (Kampen: Kok, 1913); *Ons doopsformulier* (Kampen: Kok [1920])), as well as the study of J.G. Woelderink, *Het doopsformulier. Een verhandeling over zijn leer van den H. Doop* (’s-Gravenhage: Guido de Bres, 1938).

closely related to reformed confessions and church orders. The latter, in which the liturgical forms are mentioned several times, have been published together already in 1889, and were reprinted in 1980.³⁰ In the last decades, new transcriptions were produced, but they were released separately. The basic reformed confessions in the Netherlands were collected in a critical edition in 1940. This edition, which has been highly valued over the years, was reprinted once and was used as a source for simpler, popular releases.³¹ Still, as stated above, no initiative has been taken for a similar edition of *The Liturgy*. This is even more surprising considering the research in the Netherlands and abroad. For example, other liturgical subjects, such as psalms and hymns in the Netherlands in the 16th and 17th centuries, have been studied intensively by several Dutch scholars.³² Abroad, amongst others in Switzerland, an extensive study has been made of the liturgical practices in the German-speaking areas of the country in the 15th and 16th centuries.³³

Which present and future research concerning the reformation period, in particular, might a critical edition of *The Liturgy* tangibly support? Without being exhaustive, I want to mention two ongoing projects. Firstly, there is the project of Mirjam van Veen (VU-Amsterdam) and Jesse Spohnholz (Washington State University), ‘Rhineland Exiles and the Religious Landscape of the Dutch Republic, c.1550–1618’.³⁴ Secondly, there is the research of Erik de Boer (TU-Kampen) and August den Hollander (VU-Amsterdam), investigating the grassroots development of reformed ecclesiastical praxis and liturgy in the southern part of the Netherlands in the same period. In both cases, a critical edition would be helpful and deepen the insights. It should also be noted that the findings of these projects could shed a new light on the development of the liturgical texts in the Netherlands and therefore possibly provide relevant data for the critical edition.

Furthermore, I want to point at a hiatus in the current research, namely the development of the piety in the late Middle Ages and the Reformation period in the Netherlands, parallel to the famous research of Eamon Duffy on England.³⁵ The envisioned critical edition may serve as a basis for a project

30) F.R. Rutgers (ed.), *Acta van de Nederlandsche synoden der zestiende eeuw* (= *Werken der Marnix-Vereeniging I-4*) (‘s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1889) (reprint: Dordrecht: J.P. van den Tol, 1980).

31) J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink (ed.), *De Nederlandsche belijdenisgeschriften. Vergelijkende teksten* (Amsterdam: Holland, 1940) (reprint: Amsterdam: Ton Bolland, 1976).

32) Cf. e.g. J.R. Luth, “*Daer wert om ’t seerste uytgekreten ...*”. *Bijdragen tot een geschiedenis van de gemeentezang in het Nederlandse Gereformeerde protestantisme ± 1550–± 1852* (Kampen: Van den Berg, 1986) and Jaco van der Knijff, *Heilige gezangen. Herkomst, ontwikkeling en receptie van de lofzangen in het psalmboek van Dathenus en de ‘Eenige Gezangen’ in de Staatsberijming van 1773* (Apeldoorn: Labarum Academic, 2018), as well as the references given in these publications.

33) Cf. the most recent volume in the series *Geschichte des Gottesdienstes in den evangelisch-reformierten Kirchen der Deutschschweiz*; Alfred Ehrensperger, *Geschichte des Gottesdienstes in Zürich Stadt und Land im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Reformation bis 1531* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2018).

34) Cf. <https://labs.wsu.edu/religiousexiles/> (accessed October 6, 2018).

35) Cf. Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* (New Haven CT,

about this theme.

In conclusion, a critical edition of *The Liturgy* as a whole – with attention to its origins, its various releases, its reception in the Netherlands Reformed Church and its effects on other liturgies – is lacking, as is a description of its genesis in relation to 16th and early 17th-century (church) history. The project fills this gap and provides a completely and exhaustively annotated edition of *The Liturgy*.

4 Goal and relevance

The goal of the project is to bring order to the confusing variety of text editions of *The Liturgy* and to describe them in relation to each other and to their contexts.

In addition to what is noted in the previous paragraph, the relevance of the project can be described as follows. On the one hand, *The Liturgy* and its direct predecessors reflect on (the theology in) older liturgies, as well as on contemporary events such as Synods. Furthermore, they demonstrate theological developments in the reformed church in the Netherlands during the first half-century of its existence. On the other hand, *The Liturgy* influenced and shaped millions of Dutch people then and in the centuries thereafter. This was especially the case when children were baptized and the corresponding form was read. The forms for the Lord's Supper and matrimony were also used and therefore heard regularly. In addition, the liturgical forms were explicitly (and implicitly) reflected upon in a comprehensive manner, especially those forms for administering the sacraments. In short, the project deepens our insight into reformed praxis and theology in the Netherlands, especially in the 16th and early 17th century.

5 Questions and checkpoints

The project deals with a set of closely related questions. The first one is basic: which editions of *The Liturgy* currently exist and how do they relate to each other? The second one is meant to discern the roots of the *Liturgy*: how do these editions depend on related foreign-language liturgical editions? The third investigates the relationship between *The Liturgy* and its context: how does the development of *The Liturgy* fit into the development of both the reformed church and reformed theology? The fourth takes a closer look at the praxis of the *Liturgy*: how did local congregations and the reformed church at a regional/nationwide level receive the consecutive editions? Finally, the fifth elaborates the influence of the *Liturgy*: how did these editions influence reformed traditions elsewhere and similar traditions in the Netherlands particularly, especially in the first half of the 17th century?

For the time being, three checkpoints have been chosen to answer these questions: 1566 ('*The Psalms of David*' of Dathenus), 1618–19 (Synod of Dordrecht), and 1737 (edition of the provincial Synod of Zuid-Holland). As they were in the project *Dutch Culture in a European Context*, these checkpoints

Yale University Press, 1992).

are approached as historical and cultural cross sections, used to prevent a partial and one-sided perspective.³⁶

6 Elaboration

The Liturgy that currently exists forms a coherent whole and shares similarities in genesis and subject matter. Nevertheless, there are more differences than any single researcher could cover. Therefore, to meet the aims of the project, it has been broken down into partial projects, each of which covers all the research on one item of The Liturgy, such as the form for the baptism of infants, certain liturgical prayers, etcetera. Each partial project should result in a study about the relevant liturgical texts and their history (A), as well as a critical annotated publication of these texts (B). Within this framework, each researcher is free to determine the method and focal points. This can be of a different nature, such as cultural-historical, theological or liturgiological.

Priority will be given to the liturgical forms. The realization of this part of the project will probably take the next six years, 2018–2024. At a later stage, the prayers will be dealt with. The study of the so-called “Comfort of the Sick”, “The Short Compendium of the Christian Religion” and other para-liturgical texts, which are usually attached to The Liturgy, have a lower priority. However, if new participants show interest and join the project, a speedier achievement of the project’s objectives will be possible.

According to the project plan, the following steps are foreseen. Though they have been put in a reasoned order, they partly overlap each other. Some can be executed simultaneously, as most researchers will concentrate on one theme or on one liturgical form. One may assume the researchers will work together and/or will make use of each other’s work. Surely, the large majority of editions of The Liturgy are released in one volume.

6.1 Step 1: Assessment of editions and their global content

The first step of the project consists of an assessment of the editions of The Liturgy and their contents. The recent assessment of psalm books made by Jaco van der Knijff and the older collections of titles of W. Heijting will be taken as the starting point.³⁷ They will be supplemented with other findings of

36) Cf. Douwe Fokkema & Frans Grijzenhout, *Rekenschap. 1650–2000* (Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers, 2001), 10f.

37) Van der Knijff, *Heilige gezangen*; W. Heijting, *De catechismi en confessies in de Nederlandse Reformatie tot 1585* (2 volumes) (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1989); W. Heijting, “De psalmberijming van van Marnix en Datheen en het ‘particulier interest’ van de boekverkopers,” in W. Heijting, *Profijtelijke boekskens. Boekcultuur, geloof en gewin. Historische studies* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2007), 124–142, esp. 134–142. Cf. C.A. Höweler & F.H. Matter, *Fontes hymnodiae Neerlandicae impressi 1539–1700. De melodieën van het nederlandsstalig geestelijk lied 1539–1700. Een bibliografie van de gedrukte bronnen* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1985). Van der Knijff’s list of titles is more detailed than Heijting’s, but still requires a critical approach.

printed editions and with texts that fall outside the direct scope of these collections, such as archival materials.

6.2 Step 2: Relevant foreign–language liturgical text editions

A second assessment concerns foreign-language liturgical text editions on which The Liturgy is somehow dependent.

6.3 Step 3: Reception of The Liturgy

Next is an examination of the liturgical traditions The Liturgy affected in the first half of the 17th century. Thought should be given to at least four categories: translations for English and Scottish refugees who migrated to the Netherlands in the first half of the 17th century, the reception of The Liturgy in the first Dutch colonies (such as the Netherlands Indies, New Amsterdam/New York, Formosa, South-Africa), the (para-)liturgical prayers and liturgical forms of the Arminians in the Netherlands, and the influence on Puritan and independentist circles especially in Great Britain.³⁸

6.4 Step 4: Assessment and first reading of secondary literature

Whereas the previous steps focus on primary sources, this step concentrates on the secondary literature about these sources. In particular, the secondary literature about the editions and their global content (Step 1) must be as complete as possible. Moreover, its scientific level must be taken into account. Though a lot of popular contributions have been written over the years, only a part of these will serve the purposes of the project. The selection of the literature with regard to Steps 2 and 3 will also be influenced by the choices made in the next steps of the project.

6.5 Step 5: A thorough description of the relationship between The (Dutch) Liturgy and other/older sources

During this stage of the project, an in-depth study will be made about the relationship between the oldest Dutch texts, which were widely well received in the Netherlands, and older, mostly foreign-language sources. As previously mentioned, it seems obvious to use the 1566 Dathenus edition as a reference point when it comes to the relationship between The (Dutch) Liturgy and other/older liturgical sources, as far as the forms are concerned those for the baptism of infants, the administration of the Lord's Supper and for the solemnization of marriage. Other forms, such as for the ordination of

38) With regard to the first and latter mentioned groups, see e.g.: Daniel J. Meeter and B.D. Spinks, *From the Lord and "The Best Reformed Churches": A Study of the Eucharistic Liturgy in the English Puritan and Separatist Traditions, 1550–1633* (Eugene, OR: Wipf, 2004); cf. B.D. Spinks, *Freedom Or Order?: The Eucharistic Liturgy in English Congregationalism, 1645–1980* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1984); B.D. Spinks, *Reformation and Modern Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: from Luther to Contemporary Practices* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

office bearers and several prayers, are lacking in Dathenus' psalm book. It must be decided to what extent other forms and prayers of a later period have to be added to be able to describe the origins of all parts of The Liturgy. An alteration of the initial plan at a later stage should be taken into account.

6.6 Step 6: The (formal) relationship between the Dutch editions themselves

Subsequently, the relationships between the Dutch editions themselves have to be identified without losing sight of the aforementioned mostly foreign-language sources. In this follow-up analysis, attention must also be paid to aspects such as the rituals at stake, the order of forms and prayers within The Liturgy and references to biblical texts in the margin.

6.7 Step 7: The various Dutch text editions in view of church life and theology

As previously stated, the history of the consecutive texts is complicated. Some parts of The Liturgy have been established in part or in whole by an ecclesiastical assembly. Certain texts have not been published directly and were not followed up in everyday church life. Others, however, are of a private origin and were nevertheless taken into use, etcetera. These developments can be best illustrated by the history of the form for the baptism of infants.³⁹ The national Synods of, respectively, 1574–75, 1580 and 1586 made substantial changes, but it seems they did not order anyone to prepare the revised texts for publication. Moreover, it seems the alterations of 1586 in the second question to the parents in this form did not come into general use. In practice, the wordings of 1580, which appear to have been written down by a minister on his own behalf, were maintained. This confusing situation led to fierce debate in Amsterdam in the 1610s, a prelude to the condemnation of the Arminians at the Synod of Dordrecht (1618–19). Afterwards, the formulation changed again, but in both cases it is not yet exactly clear, why and when. This step is meant to position and evaluate the genesis of the texts in their contexts, both historically and theologically. Moreover, it enables us to value the actual influence of the Synods on the process. Finally, it deepens the insight in the developments of the texts. Therefore, it is, of course, closely related to the previous step as well as the next one.

6.8 Step 8: Practice

Currently there is no coherent view of the use of The Liturgy in the 16th and 17th century. Based on a limited number of resources, G.D.J. Schotel made a description in 1870.⁴⁰ Presumably, more printed sources than the ones Schotel worked through are available. In addition, there are indications that

39) Cf. De Jong, "Van Forme naar Formulier."

40) G.D.J. Schotel, *De Openbare Eeredienst der Nederl. Hervormde Kerk in de zestiende, zeventiende en achttiende eeuw* (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff, [1906]). The first print dates from 1870.

more data can be found in local archives.⁴¹ The main question to be answered in this step is how the texts functioned in practice and how they influenced practice. The emphasis is on the period until the Synod of Dordrecht (1618–19).

6.9 Step 9: The last shape of The Liturgy and its reception

As is mentioned above in the fifth section, some are of the opinion that thanks to the Synod of Dordrecht, the genesis of The Liturgy came to an end, while others believe this happened in spite of this iconic Synod. Nevertheless, how the provinces received and handled The Liturgy is still a question. How did a certain unity come into being? How were the texts implemented in the end?

6.10 Step 10: Publications

As is indicated – besides other publications – a critical, annotated text edition is foreseen for every part of The Liturgy. One may assume these editions will be collected into one volume in the end. Texts may also be made available on the Internet.

7 Conclusion

A critical edition of The Liturgy is needed for in-depth research of the history of both the reformation period and the reformed liturgy. It is clear how such an edition can be produced, paying attention to the origins of The Liturgy, its various releases, its reception in the Netherlands, and its influence on other liturgies. With each researcher focusing on one part of The Liturgy, they can work together in the execution of the steps to be taken for each part.

The project presented is work in progress. At the moment I am finishing this article it seems very likely that shortly four PhD-students will start researching the forms of baptism, the Lord's Supper, the offices, and marriage. Hopefully others will join the project later and take care of the parts yet undressed.

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41) J. ter Steege, "Ds. Johannes Bogerman sr. (± 1540–1604). Een man van meer dan lokale betekenis," *IJsselakademie* 12 (1989): 56–64, esp. 61.

8 Attachment – the contents of The Liturgy⁴²

8.1 The Christian prayers

- Prayer at the beginning of a service
- A common confession of sins and Sunday prayer (before the sermon)
- A prayer for the needs of Christians, to be used on Sundays after the first sermon
- An open confession of sins and a shorter form of a prayer before the sermon
- A short form of a prayer after the first sermon
- A prayer before the teachings of the catechism
- A prayer after the teachings of the catechism
- Prayer before a meal
- Prayer after a meal
- Prayer for ill and challenged people
- The morning prayer
- The evening prayer
- Prayer before ecclesiastical meetings
- Prayer after ecclesiastical meetings
- A prayer before a meeting of the deacons

8.2 The forms

- Form for the holy baptism of infants
- Form for the holy baptism of adults
- Form for the administration of Lord's Supper
- Form for excommunication
- Form for readmission
- Form for the ordination of ministers of God's Word
- Form for the ordination of elders and deacons
- Form for the solemnization of marriage

42) According to Rutgers (ed.), *De berijmde Psalmen*, 66-121 (cf. 127f). With regard to the chosen parts and their order, Rutgers points inter alia to the decision of the Synod of Dordrecht concerning The Liturgy, and a 1611 and the aforementioned [see note 4] 1737 edition of The Liturgy (80, cf. 67).