

The Influence of Petrus Dathenus on the Reformation in the Netherlands

Author: C. VanSteenselen

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Introduction

Petrus Dathenus was born between 1531 and 1532 in Cassel in modern day Belgium. He becomes a monk in Yperen and later a preacher in Kortrijk.¹ Persecution leads him to London, England, in 1553 and makes him a book publisher.² After Bloody Mary comes to the throne, he flees for his life and seeks safety in Frankfort am Main, where he becomes the minister of a Flemish congregation. Due to religious opposition by the local Lutheran government, this congregation is shut down. Dathenus and other families move to Frankenthal, in the region of the Reformed elector Frederik III.³ After traveling, he comes back to Frankenthal and is made the court preacher of Frederik III in Heidelberg.⁴ Though it is followed by a time of turbulence and sorrows, he lives quietly in his last years and dies in Elbing, East Prussia, on March 17, 1588.⁵

Due to his contacts with Frederik III, the university in Heidelberg, and many in the Netherlands, Petrus Dathenus is well known in the Netherlands. Also, his personality plays a role in his appreciation among the church members. This means that his actions, writings and decisions have had much influence on the Dutch Reformed Churches. Particularly, Petrus Dathenus had a strong influence on the liturgy, and style and content of preaching in the conservative Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

¹. Lambregt Abraham Van Langeraad, Jan Pieter De Bie, and Jakob Loosjes, *Biographisch woordenboek van protestantsche godgeleerden in Nederland*, vol. 2 (Utrecht: Kemink & Zoon, 1908), 383.

². *Tercentenary Monument in Commemoration of the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism* (Chambersburg: M. Kieffer & Co, 1863), 157.

³. Van Langeraad, De Bie, and Loosjes, *Biographisch woordenboek van protestantsche godgeleerden in Nederland*, 2:384.

⁴. Van Langeraad, De Bie, and Loosjes, *Biographisch woordenboek van protestantsche godgeleerden in Nederland*, 2:387.

⁵. Van Langeraad, De Bie, and Loosjes, *Biographisch woordenboek van protestantsche godgeleerden in Nederland*, 2:395.

His Influence by means of the Liturgy

Petrus Dathenus had great influence in the Dutch Reformed Churches by means of the liturgy. He translated the Psalter, and the forms for infant baptism and the Lords Supper into Dutch and published them. Further, Dathenus developed the order of worship for the Dutch Churches. That was not meant for his own glory but the unity of the churches.⁶ In summary, Dathenus's Psalter book has had great influence in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

The Need for and Translation of a Psalter Book

In Dathenus's time, there was no complete and reliable Dutch Metrical Psalter. Though Utenhove had published a Psalter, it contained only a number of psalms. His first publication of 1551 contained 25 psalms, while his second edition of 1561 had only 100 psalms.⁷ The first reason for Dathenus to translate the Metrical Psalter is the need of a complete Psalter book. Moreover, he believed the psalms which had been translated were not accurate nor edifying for singing in churches. He says in the preface to the Psalter, "All the psalms, with my knowledge, are not accurately translated to sing in an edifying way in the Congregations."⁸ A second reason, Dathenus has to work on the Psalter is to keep unity in the Reformed churches. He says, "I have versified the Psalter in this manner...in order that we should have unity in doctrine and ceremonies with the Evangelical churches in France."⁹ In French, the Psalter book by Marot and Beza was available. Dathenus used this French text as basis for his almost literal—some would say "slavish"—Dutch translation.¹⁰ Besides the accurate translation of the words, Dathenus kept also the same number of stanzas per psalm.¹¹ Although Dathenus largely relied upon the French, he verified his work with the *Deus Aes Bible*.¹² It appears that he used other writings as well for his Psalter.¹³ Dathenus finally completed the Psalter book and published it on March 25, 1566.¹⁴

⁶. Van Langeraad, De Bie, and Loosjes, *Biographisch woordenboek van protestantsche godgeleerden in Nederland*, 2:385.

⁷. Pieter Datheen, *De Psalmen Davids, ende ander Lofsanghen*, dbnl. (Heidelberg, 1566), 7.

⁸. Datheen, *De Psalmen Davids, ende ander Lofsanghen*, 39 - "Ten anderen daerom, dat die Psalmen alle (mynes wetens) noyt bequaemelick sijn ouerghesettet geweest, om stichtelick in der Ghemeynten te singhen."

⁹. Datheen, *De Psalmen Davids, ende ander Lofsanghen*, 39 "Dat ick desen Psalter op deser wyse in dichte ghestelt hebbe...dewyle dat wy met den Euangelischen kercken in Vranckryck, in der leere, ende ceremonien eendrachtigh sijn."

¹⁰. Van Langeraad, De Bie, and Loosjes, *Biographisch woordenboek van protestantsche godgeleerden in Nederland*, 2:385.

¹¹. S.J. Lenselink, *De Nederlandse Psalmberijmingen in de 16de Eeuw* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1959), 526.

¹². Lenselink, *De Nederlandse Psalmberijmingen in de 16de Eeuw*, 561.

¹³. Lenselink, *De Nederlandse Psalmberijmingen in de 16de Eeuw*, 529.

¹⁴. Datheen, *De Psalmen Davids, ende ander Lofsanghen*, 33,40.

Dathenus's Psalter Introduced into and Used in the Dutch Churches

Petrus Dathenus was strongly participated to introduce his Psalter in the Netherlands. In 1568, he was the president of the Convent in Wesel. This Convent strongly recommended the use of Dathenus's Psalter to the Provincial and National Synods in Dordrecht. The National Synod followed in 1578 and Dathenus acted as president again. This Synod decreed that the Psalter of Dathenus would be used as official Psalter book in the Reformed Churches. The consequence was that it became widely used in the churches in the Netherlands,¹⁵ but also in schools and homes.¹⁶ It gained much popularity and resonated with the hearts of God's people¹⁷ because of five reasons. First, its origin was the French Psalter, which had the cooperation of Beza but also a preface written by Calvin to the psalms of Marot. A second reason is its completeness, containing all the psalms and not only a number as was the case with Utenhove. Third, the melodies used for the Psalter were known by the people. Fourth, Dathenus's Psalter was simple in its word order, syntax, and rarely used foreign words. For example, there are no subordinate clauses.¹⁸ A fifth possible reason is that Dathenus was loved among the Reformed people.¹⁹ Moreover, Dathenus's influence lasted for a long time because his Psalter remained official until 1773. In this year, a new Psalter book was published and replaced Dathenus's Psalter as official Psalter. The 1773 Psalter book is still used in the conservative Dutch Reformed churches.²⁰

Comparison of Dathenus's Psalter and the 1773 Psalter

In 1773, Dathenus's Psalter was replaced by the 1773 Psalter. These two Psalters are different with respect to how they use words and poetry. These differences will be explored below by comparing the two Psalter's rendition of Psalm 42 and 105. The Psalters are literally translated from Dutch for the sake of comparison, with the result that the sentence structure and wording in English is inelegant.

Psalm 42 – Verse 1

Psalm 42 in Scripture reads, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" (Ps. 42:1-2). The metrical versions of Dathenus and 1773 are as follows:

¹⁵. Datheen, *De Psalmen Davids, ende ander Lofsanghen*, 7.

¹⁶. Lenselink, *De Nederlandse Psalmberijmingen in de 16de Eeuw*, 493.

¹⁷. Van Langeraad, De Bie, and Loosjes, *Biographisch woordenboek van protestantsche godgeleerden in Nederland*, 2:385.

¹⁸. Lenselink, *De Nederlandse Psalmberijmingen in de 16de Eeuw*, 561–563.

¹⁹. Van Langeraad, De Bie, and Loosjes, *Biographisch woordenboek van protestantsche godgeleerden in Nederland*, 2:385.

²⁰. Datheen, *De Psalmen Davids, ende ander Lofsanghen*, 10.

Psalter Dathenus – Psalm 42	Psalter 1773 – Psalm 42
As a dear hunted , O Lord, That freshwater desires: Even so thirsts my soul also very To thee my God highly honored , And speaks by her with lament: O Lord when comes that day , That I shall be but with Thee And see thy appearance praised ? ²¹	The panting deer, escaped of the hunt , Cries not stronger to the delight , Of the fresh waterflows, Than my soul desires unto God. Yea, my soul thirsts after the LORD ; God of life, o , when Shall I approach before Thy eyes In Thy house Thy name exalt ? ²²

Both versions, compared with Scripture, add their own interpretation to the psalm. In the first line, both poets add to the Scripture text, though Dathenus believes that the deer is still hunted, and the 1773 poet thinks that the act of hunting is completed. Another element that Dathenus adds compared with Scripture is, “And speaks by her with lament: O Lord when comes that day.” Dathenus did not translate this directly from the French Psalter, where it says, “Always go crying out, following...alas, therefore, when will it be.”²³ Furthermore, where Scripture speaks about the “living God,” Dathenus translates it with “highly honored” but the 1773 poets keep it closer to Scriptural by using “God of life.” However, the changes which Dathenus makes regarding lament and a hunted deer point to that which happened in his own life. His life had times of sorrow and persecution.

Psalm 103 – Verse 2

The second comparison is Psalm 103, “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; Who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies” (Ps. 103:3-4). The metrical versions render:

Psalter Dathenus – Psalm 103	Psalter 1773 – Psalm 103
Praise him who through his goodness high exalted , All those sins you wholly has forgiven, And heals you from your great defects . Praise him , who has you bought free [for] your life, From death, which made you tremble much , Who you now surrounds with sole grace . ²⁴	Praise Him , who you, all that you have done wrong , How much it is, graciously will forgive; Your illnesses knows and lovingly heals; Who from destruction your life wants to spare , With goodness and mercy you crowns; Who in need has been your deliverer. ²⁵

²¹. Dathenus, *De Psalmen Davids, ende ander Lofsanghen*, 639–640 - See Appendix for the Dutch version.

²². “Psalmen,” Psalms, *Psalmboek.nl*, n.d., sec. Psalm 42, <https://psalmboek.nl/psalmen.php> (accessed February 28, 2020) - See appendix for the Dutch version.

²³. “Psaume 42: Ainsi qu’on oit le cerf bruire (Marot-Bèze),” *Psautier de Geneve*, n.d., <https://psautierdegeneve.blogspot.com/2019/05/psaume-42-ainsi-quon-oit-le-cerf-bruire.html> (accessed February 29, 2020).

²⁴. Dathenus, *De Psalmen Davids, ende ander Lofsanghen*, 1504.

²⁵. “Psalmen,” Psalm 103 - See the appendix for the Dutch version.

Comparing this verse, few things stand out in Dathenus's version. First, Dathenus adds the first line because it is found in the French text, though it is not part of Scripture.²⁶ Also, he translates one line with "surrounds with sole grace," which is closer to the French version than to Scripture's "crowning with lovingkindness and tender mercies," which is more closely followed by the 1773.²⁷ Furthermore, Dathenus interprets "death" as something "which made you tremble much," rather than "had enslaved you" as in the French text.²⁸ It seems that death terrified Dathenus rather than that it enslaved him. Furthermore, Dathenus speaks in relation to healing concerning "great defects" instead of "diseases" in Scripture or "infirmities" in the French version.²⁹ The 1773 version is in this case a better interpretation of Scripture. Nonetheless, Dathenus's translation is sometimes better than the interpretation of the 1773 version. In the second line, he uses "sins forgiven" versus "forgive what you have done wrong" in 1773. Also, there is difference between how the two translations view the time of forgiveness of sins. For Dathenus, it was in the past with the effect for today, while for the 1773 poet it is in the future.

Current Use of Dathenus's Psalters in the Netherlands

Since 1773, most churches have replaced Dathenus's Psalter with the 1773 Psalter. However, the Psalter of Dathenus is still used in the Netherlands in about 29 congregations, mainly in the province of Zeeland, consisting of: Four Netherlands Reformed Congregations, Nine Reformed Congregations in North America, and 16 Old Reformed Congregations. Some of those congregations vote at regular intervals to keep Dathenus or change it to the 1773 Psalter. Nonetheless, the majority wants to keep Dathenus. An example is Sint Annaland who vote at a regular interval of four years but still uses Dathenus.³⁰ Furthermore, the Reformed Bible Society (GBS) still prints and sells the Dathenus Psalter.³¹

In conclusion, Dathenus translated his Psalter generally from the French text but tries to remain Scriptural. However, at instances Dathenus adds or changes certain words, in which the

²⁶. "Psaume 103 : Sus louez Dieu, mon âme, en toute chose (Marot-Bèze)," *Psautier de Geneve*, n.d., <https://psautierdegeneve.blogspot.com/2019/05/psaume-103-sus-louez-dieu-mon-ame-en.html> (accessed February 29, 2020).

²⁷. "Psaume 103 : Sus louez Dieu, mon âme, en toute chose (Marot-Bèze)."

²⁸. "Psaume 103 : Sus louez Dieu, mon âme, en toute chose (Marot-Bèze)."

²⁹. "Psaume 103 : Sus louez Dieu, mon âme, en toute chose (Marot-Bèze)."

³⁰. Redactie Muziek, "Datheen in 29 kerken gezongen," *Reformatorisch Dagblad* (Apeldoorn, March 5, 2016), <https://www.digibron.nl/viewer/collectie/Digibron/id/175030247c8e49da270221c86fd3cd4a> (accessed February 28, 2020); Jaco Van der Knijff, "Zingen uit de 'oude rijm,'" *Reformatorisch Dagblad* (Apeldoorn, March 5, 2016), <https://www.digibron.nl/viewer/collectie/Digibron/id/3ee6cf285f56ee830bcacf163d552661f> (accessed February 28, 2020).

³¹. "Petrus Datheen," *Gereformeerde Bijbelstichting*, n.d., <https://gbs.nl/webshop/psalmboeken/petrus-datheen> (accessed February 28, 2020).

1773 Psalter is closer to the text of Scripture. Moreover, the Psalters of Dathenus and 1773 bear the characteristic of the period in which they were translated or composed. Dathenus reveals in his Psalter that he was persecuted and had a life of sorrow, features that are more rarely found in the 1773 version. Also, Dathenus Psalter still has some influence in the Netherlands because it is currently used in about 29 congregations.

His Influence on the Style and Content of Preaching

Petrus Dathenus's influence on today's preaching has been greater than by means of liturgy because he translated the Heidelberg Catechism accurately from German to Dutch. A form similar to this translation is still used in the evening services of conservative Reformed churches in the Netherlands. It is possible that Dathenus was involved the composition of the Catechism.³²

Translation of the Heidelberg Catechism

In 1563, the Heidelberg Catechism was published in Germany. The same year, the Catechism was also translated into Dutch³³ though it was not done accurately.³⁴ Also, it is uncertain whether Dathenus was the translator. Known is that Dathenus's translation, which seems to be more reliable, was published and bound with his Psalters in 1566.³⁵

Introduction and Adoption of the Heidelberg Catechism

The Heidelberg Catechism was published in the Netherlands as one publication of Bible, Dathenus's Psalter, and the Heidelberg Catechism.³⁶ Also, Dathenus wrote a preface and placed the Catechism after the Psalter and New Testament.³⁷ At this time, it was not required to preach from the Heidelberg Catechism though many congregations used it as a preaching tool.³⁸ The first steps towards required Heidelberg Catechism preaching came when the Convent of Wesel (1568) and Synod of Emden (1570) strongly recommended to use this form of unity.³⁹

³². C. Strohm, "On the Historical Origins of the Heidelberg Catechism," *Acta Theologica Supplementum* 20 (2014): 23,26.

³³. Lenselink, *De Nederlandse Psalmberijmingen in de 16de Eeuw*, 495.

³⁴. Van Langeraad, De Bie, and Loosjes, *Biographisch woordenboek van protestantsche godgeleerden in Nederland*, 2:386.

³⁵. *Tercentenary Monument in Commemoration of the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism*, 158.

³⁶. *Tercentenary Monument in Commemoration of the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism*, 158–159.

³⁷. H. De Cock, *Historisch Overzicht van de Formulieren van Eenheid en de Liturgische Geschriften van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk in Nederland* (Groningen: G.J. Beits, 1879), 17.

³⁸. De Cock, *Historisch Overzicht van de Formulieren van Eenheid en de Liturgische Geschriften van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk in Nederland*, 17.

Nonetheless, congregations still had freedom to use it or not.⁴⁰ Also, the Provincial Synod (1574) and National Synod (1578) of Dordrecht strongly recommended the use of the Heidelberg Catechism in preaching. It is important to notice that Petrus Dathenus was the president for both the Convent of Wesel, and the National Synod of Dordrecht.⁴¹ The second step in requiring the use of the Heidelberg Catechism was made at the National Synod of the Hague (1586),⁴² which decreed that all churches were to use it in the afternoon services. The decree determined, “The Pastors shall explain, in a brief manner, on successive Lord's day afternoons, in regular order, the summary of the Christian religion, contained in the Catechism, which is now adopted in the Netherlands, so that the same may be concluded and gone through with every year, according to the divisions laid down therein.”⁴³

The Old German Catechism Compared with Dathenus’s translation

Dathenus translated the Heidelberg Catechism from the German. Two questions of the original German version and the translation of Dathenus will be compared in to see the reliability of Dathenus’s translation. In order that the reader understands the differences, both versions are translated literally into English. The original languages can be found in the Appendix.

Question 1

The first question for comparison is Heidelberg Catechism Question 1.

Old German – Question 1	Dathenus – Question 1
<p>Q. What is your only comfort in life and in dying?</p> <p>A. That I with Body and Soul, both in life and in dying, not my, but my faithful Savior Jesus Christ am owned, who with his precious blood, for all my sins fully paid [...]</p>	<p>Q. Which is your only comfort, both in the life and dying?</p> <p>A. That I with body and soul, both in the life and in dying, not my, but my faithful Savior JESUS Christ am owned, who with his precious blood, for all my sins fully paid [...]</p>

As shown above, the first question of the Heidelberg Catechism is accurately translated. Dathenus changed only the first word of the question from “was” (what) to “welck” (which). This is, however, no fundamental change and conveys the same meaning. Moreover, Dathenus

³⁹. *Tercentenary Monument in Commemoration of the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism*, 159.

⁴⁰. De Cock, *Historisch Overzicht van de Formulieren van Eenheid en de Liturgische Geschriften van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk in Nederland*, 17.

⁴¹. Dathenus, *De Psalmen Davids, ende ander Lofsanghen*, 7.

⁴². *Tercentenary Monument in Commemoration of the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism*, 159.

⁴³. J.F. Berg, trans by., *The History and Literature of the Heidelberg and of Its Introduction into the Netherlands* (Philadelphia: William S. & Alfred Martien, 1863), 145.

added the word “beide” (both) to Question 1 which is not found in German. A possible reason for this addition is because its place in the answer. Overall, the first question and answer of the Heidelberg Catechism is translated very accurately.

Question 21

The second question to compare is Question 21.

Old German - Question 21	Dathenus – Question 21
<p>Q. What is true faith?</p> <p>A. It is not only a sure recognition, whereby I all for true keep, what us God in his word has revealed: but also a hearty trust, which the holy Ghost through Gospel works in me, that not only to others, but also to me forgiveness of the Sins, eternal righteousness and salvation from God is granted, solely out of solely, only for the sake of the merit Christ’s.</p>	<p>Q. What is an upright faith?</p> <p>A. An upright faith is not only a certain knowing or knowledge whereby I keep all for true, that us God in his word has revealed. But also a heartily trust, which the holy Ghost, through that Gospel works in me, that not only to others, but also to me forgiveness of the sins, eternal righteousness and salvation is granted from God, solely out of grace, only for the sake of the merit Christ’s.</p>

In this question, more changes have taken place than in Question 1. The first change is found in in the question, where Dathenus changed the original German “warer” (true) into “oprecht” (upright). The reason for this change is unsure though the basic meaning is similar. Second, Dathenus adds a part of the question, “An upright faith is not only” to the answer, which is not found in German. Furthermore, he translates “gewisse erkantnuss” (sure recognition) into a more descriptive phrase “zeker weten of kennesse” (certain knowing or knowledge). It is possible to understand it in the Dutch version as mere head knowledge, while in German it points to the act of accepting knowledge, an acknowledgement or recognition of what God says in His Word.

In conclusion, Dathenus translated the Heidelberg Catechism accurately though he adds at times parts of the question to the answer or vice versa and changes words to words with a similar meaning without reason. Also, at times, Dathenus translates certain words as a paraphrase rather than one word in Dutch. This demonstrates that he used at times his own interpretation to translate the Heidelberg Catechism.

Dathenus’ Translation Compared with the Current Catechism

After the publication and the Synod’s decree to preach it, the Heidelberg Catechism was used in the Dutch Reformed Churches. The translation of Dathenus, however, is similar to the one of 1566: “It is this translation produced by him in 1566, that, except for occasional changes of a word or two, is up to now completely the same, which is still presently used in the Dutch

Reformed Church.”⁴⁴ Again, a comparison will be made between Dathenus’s translation of 1566 and the current edition of the Reformed Bible Society (GBS). The original questions are found in the Appendix.

Question 15

Dathenus – Question 15	GBS Edition – Question 15
<p>Q. What must we then seek for a mediator and savior?</p> <p>A. A such, who is a true and righteous man, and yet also stronger than all Creatures, that is, who is also true God.</p>	<p>Q. What must we then seek for a Mediator and Savior?</p> <p>A. Such one, Who is a true and righteous man, and yet also stronger than all creatures, that is, Who is also at the same time true God.</p>

In this question, most changes are only related to spelling or capitalization. For example, a spelling change is “seek”, translated by Dathenus as “soecken” and changed by the GBS to “zoeken”. Capitalization is used for the names related to God. For example, “mediator” in Dathenus is capitalized as “Mediator” in the GBS Edition. Furthermore, the word “Creatures”, translated by Dathenus as “Creaturen” is updated to “schepselen.” These the same words but is a change from old to modern Dutch. Moreover, the GBS Edition adds “at the same time” to the answer, a phrase that is not found in Dathenus’s translation but is found in the Old German.

Question 21

Translation Dathenus – Question 21	GBS Edition – Question 21
<p>Q. What is an upright faith?</p> <p>A. An upright faith is not only a certain knowing or knowledge whereby I hold all for true, which us God in his word has revealed. But also a hearty trust, which the holy Ghost, through that Gospel works in me, that not only to others, but also me forgiveness of sins, eternal righteousness and salvation are granted from God, solely out of grace, only for the sake of the merit Christ’s</p>	<p>Q. What is a true faith?</p> <p>A. A true faith is not only a sure knowing or knowledge, whereby I all hold for true, what us God in his Word has revealed, but also a secure trust, that which the Holy Ghost works through the Gospel in my heart, that not only to others, but also me forgiveness of sins, eternal righteousness and salvation are granted from God, solely out of grace, only for the sake of the merit of Christ.</p>

Also in this question, the main changes took place in spelling. Nonetheless, the question has more changes than in the previous comparison. One example is “oprecht geloove” (upright faith) in Dathenus for “waar geloof” (true faith) in the GBS Edition. In this case the GBS used the word of the German version rather than that of Dathenus. Another instance is a change from

⁴⁴. *Geschiedenis van den Oorspen en Invoer van de Heidelberg Catechismus*, n.d., 150–150 - “Hoe het zij, het is deze in 1566 door hem vervaardigde overzetting, die, kleine veranderingen van een enkel woord hier of daar uitgezonderd, tot heden toe volkomen dezelfde is, welke nog thans in de nederlandsche hervormde kerk gebruikt wordt.”

“hertelick vertrouwen” (hearty trust) in Dathenus to “vast vertrouwen” (sure trust) in the GBS Edition. However, the changes made from the Dathenus’s version to the one currently used in the conservative Dutch Reformed Churches are small and the difference of meaning is slight.

Current Use of the Heidelberg Catechism

The sentiment already expressed in 1863, “Great is the number of Sermons on the Catechism which have appeared, both in the Latin and Netherland language, many of which have been a great many times republished,”⁴⁵ is still true for today. After 450 years, the Heidelberg Catechism is still printed, for example by the Reformed Bible Society (GBS),⁴⁶ and almost every Sunday preached in many conservative Reformed churches in the Netherlands. Moreover, it is still recommended for use as teaching tool for young people. At the National Synod in 2019 of the Gereformeerde Gemeente (GG)⁴⁷ in the Netherlands, Rev. G. Clements said, “For the unity in our congregations, it would be valuable if in all congregations the instruction of Hellenbroek and *the Heidelberg Catechism* for our young people is presented.”⁴⁸ Also, the Church Order of the Gereformeerde Gemeenten (2008) has an article concerning the preaching of the Catechism: “The ministers shall everywhere on Sundays, ordinarily in the afternoon preaching, the sum of the Christian doctrine in the Catechism, which nowadays is accepted in the Dutch churches, contained, briefly explain, even so that it may ended yearly, according to the sections in the Catechism.”⁴⁹ Moreover, the Church order of the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken (CGK)⁵⁰ declares: “The consistories will see to it that as a rule in one of the Sunday services the Heidelberg Catechism will be explained.”⁵¹ The recommendation on the GG Synod, and church orders of both the GG and CGK demonstrate that the preaching of the Heidelberg Catechism is still useful and mandatory in many conservative churches.

⁴⁵. *Tercentenary Monument in Commemoration of the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism*, 163.

⁴⁶. GBS, “Formulierenboekje GBS,” Webshop, *Gereformeerde Bijbelstichting*, n.d., <https://gbs.nl/webshop/bijbels/formulierenboekje> (accessed February 29, 2020).

⁴⁷. The “Gereformeerde Gemeenten” are sister churches of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations.

⁴⁸. “Verslagen GS Dag 4,” *Gereformeerde Gemeenten*, October 10, 2019, <https://www.gergeminfo.nl/algemeen/generale-synode/verslagen-gs-dag-4> (accessed February 29, 2020) - [emphasis added] - “Voor de eenheid in onze gemeenten zou het waardevol zijn als in alle gemeenten het onderwijs van Hellenbroek en de Heidelbergse Catechismus aan onze jonge mensen wordt voorgehouden.”

⁴⁹. “Kerkorde GG (2008) - Artikel 68 - Catechismusprediking,” *Kerkrecht.nl*, n.d., <http://www.kerkrecht.nl/node/2837> (accessed February 29, 2020) - “De dienaars zullen alom des zondags, ordinaarlijk in de namiddagse predikatie, de somma der christelijke leer in de Catechismus, die tegenwoordig in de Nederlandse kerken aangenomen is, vervat, kortelijk uitleggen, alzo, dat dezelve jaarlijks mag geëindigd worden, volgens de afdeeling des Catechismus zelve daarop gemaakt.”

⁵⁰. The “Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken” are sister churches with the Free Reformed Churches in North America

⁵¹. “Kerkorde CGK (2010) - Artikel 68 - Catechismusprediking,” *Kerkrecht.nl*, n.d., <http://www.kerkrecht.nl/node/332> (accessed February 29, 2020).

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are two main areas where Dathenus has had a strong influence on the Dutch Reformed churches. The first area is by means of the liturgy, and the second area is the content and style of preaching through the Heidelberg Catechism. Regarding the liturgy, Dathenus translated the Psalter into Dutch because there was no complete and edifying Psalter available to sing in the churches. Although Dathenus largely relied upon the French, he used the Deus Aes bible to remain Scriptural. After completion, Dathenus influenced its introduction in the Dutch Reformed Churches because he presided at certain historically important synods in relation to the Psalter. Dathenus's Psalter remained official until 1773. In this year, a new Psalter book was published and replaced Dathenus's Psalter as official Psalter. Nonetheless, his Psalter still has some influence in the Netherlands because it is currently used in about 29 congregations.

The second area of Dathenus's influence in Dutch reformation is on the style and content of preaching by the use of the Heidelberg Catechism for its organicity principle. The German version was published in 1563 and translated by Dathenus in the same year in Dutch. He published it together with the Psalter book. He influenced the introduction of the Heidelberg Catechism in the churches in the Netherlands because he was president at the synods that recommended and decreed preaching from the Heidelberg Catechism. Furthermore, Dathenus translated the Heidelberg Catechism accurately though he adds at times parts of the question to the answer or vice versa and changes words to words with a similar meaning without reason. Also, at times, Dathenus translates certain words as a paraphrase rather than one word in Dutch. Moreover, his influence can still be seen today because the preaching of the Heidelberg Catechism is strongly recommended or mandatory in many conservative Dutch Reformed churches.

In summary, the translations of the Psalter and Heidelberg Catechism and their introduction, demonstrate Petrus Dathenus's influence on the Reformation in the Netherlands which is still visible in the Reformed churches.

Appendixes

Dathenus's Psalter and 1773 Psalter in Dutch

Psalm 42

Psalter Dathenus – Psalm 42 verse 1	Psalter 1773 – Psalm 42 verse 1
<p>1. ALS een hert ghejaeght, O Heere, Dat verssche water begheert: Also dorst myn siel oock seere, Nae v myn Godt hoogh' gheert. End spreeckt by haer, met geklagh: O Heer wanneer komt dien dag, Dat ick doch by v sal wesen, End sien v aenschijn ghepresen?</p>	<p>1. 't Hijgend hert, der jacht ontkomen, Schreeuwt niet sterker naar 't genot Van de frisse waterstromen, Dan mijn ziel verlangt naar God. Ja, mijn ziel dorst naar den HEER; God des levens, ach, wanneer Zal ik naad'ren voor Uw ogen, In Uw huis Uw naam verhogen?</p>

Psalm 103

Psalter Dathenus – Psalm 103 verse 2	Psalter 1773 – Psalm 103 verse 2
<p>Loeft hem die doer sijn goetheit hoogh' verheuen, Die sonden all' v gantschlich heeft vergheuen, End v gheneest van v' ghebreken groot. Pryst hem, die v heeft vry ghekocht v' leuen, Van der doot, de welck' v seer heeft doen beuen, Die v nu omringht met ghenaede bloot.</p>	<p>Loof Hem, die u, al wat gij hebt misdreven, Hoeveel het zij, genadig wil vergeven; Uw krankheên kent en liefderijk geneest; Die van 't verderf uw leven wil verschonen, Met goedheid en barmhartigheên u kronen; Die in den nood uw redder is geweest.</p>

The Heidelberg Catechism in Dutch and Old German

Question 1

Old German – Question 1	Dathenus – Question 1	GBS Edition – Question 1
<p>Was ist dein einiger trost in leben vnd in sterben?</p> <p>Dass ich mit Leib vnd Seel, beyde in leben vnd in sterben, nicht mein, sonder meines getrewen Heilands Jesu Christi eigen bin, der mit seinem thewren blut, für alle meine sünden volkomlich bezalet, vñ mich auss allem gwalt des Teufels erlöset hat, vnd also bewaret, dass ohne den willen meines Vaters im Himmels, kein haar von meinem haupt kan fallen, ja auch mir alles zu meiner seligkeit dienen muss. Darumb er mich auch durch seinen heiligē Geist des ewigen lebens versichert, vnd jm forthin zu leben von hertzen willig vnd bereit macht.</p>	<p>Welck is uvven eenighen troost, beyde in't leuen ende steruen?</p> <p>Dat ick met lyf ende siele, beyde in't leuen ende steruen, niet myn, maer myns getrauvven Salichmaekers IESV Christi eygen ben, die met synen dieren bloede, voor alle myne sonden volkomelick betaelt, ende my vvt allen gevalt des Duyuels verlost heeft, ende also bevvaert, dat sonder den vville myns hemelschen Vaders geen haar van mynen hoofde vallen kan, ja oock dat my alle dinck tot myner salicheit dienen moet, daerom hy my oock doer synen heyligen Geest, des eevvigen leuens versekert, ende hem voortaan te leuen van herten vvilligh ende bereydt maect.</p>	<p>Wat is uw enige troost, beide in het leven en sterven?</p> <p>Dat ik met lichaam en ziel, beide in het leven en sterven, niet mijn, maar mijns getrouwen Zaligmakers Jezus Christus eigen ben, Die met Zijn dierbaar bloed voor al mijn zonden volkomenlijk betaald en mij uit alle heerschappij des duivels verlost heeft, en also bewaart, dat zonder den wil mijns hemelsen Vaders geen haar van mijn hoofd vallen kan, ja ook, dat mij alle ding tot mijn zaligheid dienen moet; waarom Hij mij ook door Zijn Heiligen Geest van het eeuwige leven verzekert, en Hem voortaan te leven van harte willig en bereid maakt</p>

Question 15

Old German - Question 15	Datheen – Question 15	GBS Edition – Question 15
<p>Was müssen wir deñ für ein Mittler vnd Erlöser suchen?</p> <p>Einen solchen, der ein warer, vnd gerechter mensch, vñ doch sterker deñ alle Creaturen, das ist, zugleich warer Gott sen.</p>	<p>Vvat moeten vvy dan voor eenen middelaer ende verlosser soecken?</p> <p>Eenen sulcken, die een vvaerachtich ende rechtueerdich mensch sy, ende nochtans oock stercker dan alle Creaturen, dat is, die oock vvaerachtich Godt sy.</p>	<p>Wat moeten wij dan voor een Middelaer en Verlosser zoeken?</p> <p>Zulk een, Die een waarachtig en rechtvaardig mens is, en nochtans oock sterker dan alle schepselen, dat is, Die oock tegelijk waarachtig God is.</p>

Question 21

Old German - Question 21	Datheen – Question 21	GBS Edition – Question 12
<p>Was ist warer glaub?</p> <p>Es ist nicht allein ein gewisse erkañtuss, dardurch ich alles für war halte, was vns Gott in seinem wort hat offenbaret:</p> <p>sonder auch ein hertzliches vertrauen, welches der heilige Geist durchs Euangelium in mir mürcket, dass nicht allein andern, sonder auch mir vergebung der Sünden, ewige gerechtigkeit vnd seligkeit von Gott geschenckt sei, auss lauter gnaden, allein vmb des verdiensts Christi willen.</p>	<p>VWat is een oprecht gelooue?</p> <p>Een oprecht gelooue en is niet alleen een seker vveten oft kennesse dear doer ick all voor vvaerachtich houde, dat ons Godt in syn vvoort gheopenbaert heeft.</p> <p>Maer oock een hertelick vertrauven, vvelck de heylige Geest, doer dat Euangelium in my vverckt, dat niet alleen anderen, maer ooc my vergeuinge der sonden, eevvige gerechticheit ende salicheit van Godt geschoncken sij, vvt louter genaeden, alleen om de verdienst Christi vville.</p>	<p>Wat is een waar geloof?</p> <p>Een waar geloof is niet alleen een stellig weten of kennis, waardoor ik alles voor waarachtig houd, wat ons God in Zijn Woord geopenbaard heeft,</p> <p>maar oock een vast vertrouwen, hetwelk de Heilige Geest door het Evangelie in mijn hart werkt, dat niet alleen anderen, maar oock mij vergeving der zonden, eeuwige gerechtigheid en zaligheid van God geschonken is, uit louter genade, alleen om der verdienste van Christus wil.</p>

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