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The Synod of Dordrecht Project

*Critical Edition of the Documents
of the Synod of Dordrecht 1618/19*

The Synod of Dordt

Alongside the Westminster Assembly (1643-1649), the Synod of Dordrecht is one of the most important church councils in the history of the reformed tradition.

Its international significance continues to be felt today.

Reformed believers throughout the world know Dordrecht as the place where the Synod met and where the Canons of Dordrecht were accepted as a confessional standard which continues to be followed by many reformed churches of Dutch heritage throughout the world.

International delegates from all over Europe (Great Britain, the Palatinate, Hesse, Switzerland, Nassau-Wetteravia, Bremen, and Emden) served as important participants and played a significant role in the evaluation of Remonstrant doctrine and in the formation of the Canons.

The Synod also made important pronouncements on a variety of church issues (e.g. Sunday observance, catechism instruction, and theological education) and commissioned the official Dutch translation of the bible (the *Statenbijbel*), which would be published in 1637.

The Canons of Dordt

The Canons of Dordrecht to this very day function as a confessional document of the reformed churches. They have played an important role in numerous ecclesiastical and theological conflicts in the Netherlands over the course of the last four centuries.



The Church Order of Dordrecht, which was a consolidation of earlier church orders, regulated the structure of the Dutch reformed churches and was also very influential for later church orders.

Additionally, the decrees on Bible translation and on preaching and teaching the Heidelberg Catechism have shaped the spirituality and doctrine of the reformed tradition up to the present day.

The edition project

Given the continuing worldwide historical significance of the Synod's Canons and Church Order, the absence of a critical scholarly edition of the majority of documents composed at the time of the Synod is remarkable.

The Johannes a Lasco Library Emden, as leading research centre for the history and theology of Reformed Protestantism, has taken the initiative to edit this corpus of texts in cooperation with institutions in the Netherlands and Switzerland. The edition is organised as a Refo500 project.

The goal of the edition project is to produce a critical edition of all the documents of the Synod of Dordrecht in their original languages (predominantly Latin, but some in Dutch, English, German and French) by an international team of institutions and scholars, mostly partners of Refo500. This critical edition will be published by publishing house Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht as a multi-volume series, and will be made available in digital format as well.

If you would like to contribute to the success of this important project, then please donate to our donations account (see reverse) citing 'Acta Dordrecht'.

For further information, please contact the project director and curator of the Johannes a Lasco Library, Prof. Dr. Herman J. Selderhuis (hjselderhuis@refo500.nl).
