

Compilation of the Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism



Authors:

Rudolph M. Britz¹ 
Marius D. Meijer² 

Affiliations:

¹Department of Philosophy and Classics, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

²Reformed Church Bloemburg, Bloemfontein, South Africa

Corresponding author:

Rudolph Britz,
britz.dolf@gmail.com

Dates:

Received: 02 Oct. 2023
Accepted: 16 Nov. 2023
Published: 15 Mar. 2024

How to cite this article:

Britz, R.M. & Meijer, M.D., 2024, 'Compilation of the Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism', *In die Skriflig* 58(1), a3024.
<https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v58i1.3024>

Copyright:

© 2024. The Authors.
Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

The renowned *Schatboek* [Commentary] on the Heidelberg Catechism is one of the most influential early expositions of the Heidelberg Catechism. It has been commonly and wrongfully attributed to the exclusive legacy of Zacharias Ursinus (1534–1583). However, the content of the Commentary has been shaped by the influences of theologians from different places, times, and contexts. Editors like Simon Goulart (1543–1628), Johann Jungnitz (1540–1588), and David Pareus (1548–1622) played a significant role in the compilation of the different imprints, by utilising student's class notes, originally written during Ursinus' lectures on the Heidelberg Catechism in Heidelberg or Neustadt. These notes were not the most reliable and the editors, being students of Ursinus themselves, critically used the transcripts, containing lecture material from different time periods. Their content fluctuated between differentiated theological arguments and perspectives. The three editors had experience of the process that produced the manuscripts. They acknowledged and addressed the inadequacies and limitations in terms of the reliability of these primary sources – unfortunately, the editors' own preferences were not prevented. The Latin editions of Goulart, Jungnitz, and Pareus served as the foundation for subsequent translations, including their own editorial craftsmanship. To responsibly account for the content of the Commentary, it is crucial to consider the source's *Sitz im Leben* and editorial history. The current research is limited to the Latin editions of Goulart, Jungnitz, and Pareus. A bibliographic-historical approach is followed, presenting the development of the Commentary from primary sources themselves. The selected editions' title pages and prefaces reveal a clear narrative of how the source came into being. In the final analysis, the titles and prefaces give unequivocal evidence that editors compared, corrected, revised, and even rewrote the notes to align them with Ursinus' theology in general. This article concludes that, based on the editors' use and engagement with identified sources, as well as personal editorial work, the Commentary can be characterised as the thorough work of a second generation of reformed theologians, disseminating the theological significance of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Contribution: In analysing the title pages and prefaces of the first Latin editions of the Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism, this article identifies differentiated sources and how these were used by the editors. This constitutes a significant contribution to the still unknown bibliographic history of the Commentary. Based on the literature analysis outcomes, this article paves the way towards further historical-theological examination of the Commentary's content as expression of second generation reformed theology.

Keywords: Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism; David Pareus; Heidelberg; Heidelberg Catechism; Johann Jungnitz; Neustadt; reformed theology; *Schatboek*; Simon Goulart; Zacharias Ursinus.

Introduction

The first imprint of the renowned Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism,¹ commonly associated with Zacharias Ursinus (1534–1583), appeared in Geneva in 1584. It was entitled, *Doctrinae Christianae Compendium*, and was compiled by Simon Goulart (1543–1628). During the year following the publication of the *Compendium*, an impression of the Commentary materialised in Neustadt, edited by Johann Jungnitz (1540–1588). The Heidelberg professor of Theology, David Pareus (1548–1622), compiled a third Latin edition, which was printed in Neustadt in 1591. These three form the cradle for subsequent Latin editions and translations. Editors (and translators) added, and occasionally abridged theological material embedded in an array of differentiated sources to serve the purposes of publication. Neither the content nor the authorship of the

1. Since the first edition of Simon Goulart in 1584, the term *Commentarii* was introduced in the title *Doctrinae christianae compendium, seu, commentarii catechetici*. In modern scholarly discourse, the publications in general are commonly referred to simply as the 'Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism'.

Read online:



Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

Commentary should be unilaterally attributed to Ursinus. It has a rich and complex editorial history (Boender, Roukens & Schipper 2013:9–24; De Wildt 2013:85–94; Smid 1940:228–243; Voorwinden-Hofman & Van den Belt 2013:136–153; Wagner-Peterson 2013:87–109).

This article investigates the titles and prefaces of each of the three mentioned Latin editions of the Commentary. It aims to uncover information concerning the identity and use of theological sources selected and incorporated by the editors in compiling the editions. Who were the compilers and why did they publish the work? To what extent were they aware of the *Sitz im Leben*, the original context in which the Commentary came into existence? What do the introductory observations and titles unveil about the origins and nature of the sources the editors used? What is indicated about the collation of the theological content of this famous Commentary, and the self-directed contribution and consideration of each of the editors? A close reading of the demarcated passages intends to identify the constitutive deposits of sources that underpin the editions of the Commentary.

In the three editions that we have examined, reference to the role of class notes of students in the compilation of the respective publications are made. Therefore, our investigation commences with an overview of the historical setting in which Ursinus taught and students took notes. This provides valuable information to guide the interpretation of the texts we focused on. Subsequently, the attention shifts to the *Compendium* edited by Goulart (1584a), followed by the *Explicationum* (ed. Jungnitz 1585) and the David Pareus edition, *Explicationum Catechetarum* (1591). Our findings are summarised in the conclusion.

Zacharias Ursinus' teaching in Heidelberg and Neustadt

It is well-known that Ursinus lectured in Heidelberg and Neustadt. Born in 1534, he grew up in the Lutheran city of Breslau where he distinguished himself as a brilliant and gifted student (Visser 1983:34). At the age of 15, he enrolled at the University of Wittenberg to study theology. He remained in the city until 1557. The Wittenberg years shaped in many respects his person and theology. He was exposed to the theological controversies and diversified opinions among protestants. He became dedicated to the teachings of Philip Melancthon, the compatriot and close friend of Martin Luther. Melancthon was recurrently accused by the Lutherans of a Calvinist orientation. Ursinus defended his mentor in several letters addressed to a circle of friends and acquaintances (Visser 1983:46ff.).² In his last year of study, Ursinus embarked on a tour and visited various, significant centres of the Reformation (Visser 1983:65–70). He met with influential reformed theologians such as Peter Martyr (1499–1562), who became a long-time friend, Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575), John Calvin (1509–1564), and Theodore

2. Approximately 130 of Ursinus' letters have been published in the *Neue Heidelberger Jahrbücher* during the past century (Benrath 1964; Ursinus & Rott 1906; Sturm 1970).

Beza (1519–1605). His education familiarised him with the main trajectories of thinking in the theology of the Reformation.

In 1560, Ursinus returned to Breslau where he accepted a position as a teacher. He stayed in his native city for two years, after which he relocated to Zürich to continue his studies under Peter Martyr. During that time, he was called to Heidelberg to inaugurate as lecturer at the *Collegium Sapientiae*. Due to political fluctuations in Germany, the Palatinate turned Lutheran after the death of Friedrich III (Visser 1983:170ff.). Ludwig VI, son of Friedrich III, transformed the *Collegium* towards Lutheranism. Ursinus, like many others, lost his position in Heidelberg. Numerous students and lecturers, including Ursinus, transferred to Neustadt where a new reformed academy, the *Casimirianum*, was established.³

In Heidelberg and Neustadt, Ursinus used the Heidelberg Catechism (of which he was the main author) as textbook for instructing his students.⁴ His lectures encompassed much more than an explication of the Catechism. He engaged and adjudicated Lutheran criticism of reformed positions, reflected on the theology of Martyr, and incorporated consideration of the profound teachings of Melancthon, while aspects of the theological convictions of reformed theologians like Beza, Bullinger, and Calvin also found their way into his lectures. The scope of knowledge contained in his lectures, introduced his students to a wide range of theological thought (Visser 1983:65–70).

Ursinus dictated his lectures. Students were expected to transcribe what they heard or received. One of them, Johann Jungnitz, observed that:

[I]ndeed, it happens that the things dictated in lectures, and even more those things which are pronounced quickly, are received, and written down confusedly and corruptly, due to the tiredness, ignorance and slowness of the listeners and copyists. (EC I:[fol. 2])⁵

He also indicated that students had to make notes partly from memory, possibly based on shorthand transcripts of the lectures (EC I:[fol. 2]).

Some of these class notes were circulated and widely read. A manuscript is extant in the Bibliotheca Palatina in Heidelberg. This document contains the notes of Joannes Borgensis⁶ and bears the title *Dictata, seu explicata, in catechis: Heidelb: A*

3. The *Casimirianum* was named after Johann Casimir, Ludwig VI's brother, who committed to preserve reformed teaching in the Palatinate. Neustadt was part of the territory over which he reigned.

4. On Ursinus' role in the composition of the Heidelberg Catechism, see Neuser (1979), Bierma et al. (2005), and Gunnoe (2010).

5. EC I:[fol. 2]: '*Cum vero plerunq, accidat, ut quae in scholis etiam dictantur, nedum quae celeriter pronunciantur, tamen propter auditorum et librariorum aut oscitantiam, aut incitiam, aut tarditatem excipiatur et transcribantur mutila, confusa et depravata*'. Unless otherwise stated, Dirk Meijer is responsible for all translations and versions of original texts in the manuscript. If prefaces do not have page numbers, the abbreviation [fol.] following with a number, will indicate the specific page namely, *folium 1* (fol. 1) is consequently the title page of that particular edition.

6. Information on his life and death is unknown.

Zacharia Ursino. In *Aedibus Sapientiae incocepta Mense Julio. Anno 1572*.⁷ It contains a *prolegomena* as introduction to theology and continues with the *explicata* of the Heidelberg Catechism (Borgensis 1572). In the *Dictata* and similar student transcripts, we encounter, notwithstanding the challenges, the teaching of Ursinus in the lecture halls of Heidelberg and Neustadt, as captured by his audience when listening to him.

Although the student transcripts are the closest sources to the original Ursinus, they are not necessarily the most reliable. Obviously, the content of the notes also differed, as Wagner-Peterson (2013:89) remarked. As indicated, the editors deliberately made use of students' manuscripts and class notes. What status did these significant sources of information receive? In the exposition and analysis of the texts, this consideration played a significant role.

The Compendium of 1584

The first Latin edition of the Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism was published in 1584 in Geneva as a *Doctrinae Christianae Compendium seu Commentarii Catechetici, ex ore D. Zachariae Ursini, vere Theologi, (qui Heydelbergae Catecheseos explicationem continuare solebat & iterare) diuerso tempore ab ipsius discipulis excepti* [Compilation of the Christian Doctrine or Catechetical Commentary, from the mouth of Zacharias Ursinus,⁸ a true Theologian, (who continued to expound and repeat the explication of the Heidelberg Catechism) and was received by his students at different times].⁹ The printer of the *Doctrinae Christianae Compendium* (henceforth DCC), was Eustache Vignon. The initials S.G.S. at the end of the preface, identifies the editor as Simon Goulart Senlisiensis. Goulart (1543–1628) was born in Senlis, France. In 1566, he had to leave France because of Roman Catholic persecution against the protestants. He found refuge in Geneva where he became a pastor in the neighbourhood of the city. Since 1571, he served in the city. Goulart was part of the 'company of pastors' (eds. Fatio & Labarthe 1969:12), and became closely associated with Calvin's successor, Theodore Beza (1519–1605).

Not much is known about Goulart's theological education. He was acquainted with Ursinus, and one of his students. As a well-educated theologian, with international recognition, he was author, publisher, editor, and translator of dozens of works not only of the early church fathers, but also of contemporary reformed theologians (Jones 1916:537–560).

It is probable that Beza encouraged Goulart to compile and publish the Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism, as Voorwinden-Hofman and Van den Belt suggest (2013:142). This assumption is based on the inclusion in Goulart's edition of a short eulogy in which Ursinus' tireless labour is

7.Borgensis (1572:1): 'Dictate or explanation of the Heidelberg Catechism by Zacharias Ursinus. In the House of Wisdom which commenced in the month of July 1572.' The reference to the House of Wisdom is an allusion to the Collegium Sapientiae in Heidelberg where Ursinus lectured.

8.This means orally delivered, lectured, or dictated to students.

9.DCC:[fol. 1].

commended. It was written by Beza. He noted that the publication of the Commentary confirms that Ursinus 'is still living for us after his funeral' (DCC:[fol. 9]).¹⁰ Ursinus is held in high esteem. The Commentary is an accolade in celebration of his academic reputation and remarkable work. The title and the foreword of the edition is therefore prudently formulated to endorse the legacy of Ursinus. Hence, the prominence of his name in the title. Doctor Ursinus, it states, was a true theologian (*vere Theologi*), indicating that he adhered to the (reformed) teachings of the Reformation. According to the title, he unremittingly devoted his instruction to the explanation of the Catechism of Heidelberg.

The title page

The title presents the work as a *Compendium*, which is an anthology of the Christian doctrine. Simultaneously, the publication is characterised as a catechetical *Commentarii*. This *Compendium* and Commentary is *ex ore* [from the mouth] of Ursinus, *who continued to expound and repeat the explication of the Heidelberg Catechism*, readers are informed. The Catechism was at the core of his teaching activities, and year after year Ursinus continued to explicate and advance (*solebat et iterare*) the content of his lectures. Although the tri-part structure of the Catechism was obviously followed in its treatment of the 129 *quaestiones*, lectures varied in content from year to year. The title acknowledges that Ursinus annually incorporated new material in his lectures. The publication is, however, not directly the outcome of Ursinus' labour in this regard. It is the result of what *was received by his students* in the lecture rooms *at different times (diuerso tempore)*. What students 'received' has been written down. These notes, the title indicates, are from different periods of study, and therefore also vary among themselves. The *Compendium* thus unfolds from these notes.

Goulart identifies an original and diverse corpus of sources comprising manuscripts. The title page states that the edition is meticulously collated 'from seven specimen ... now published for the first time' (DCC:[fol. 1]).¹¹ These notes were augmented by the editor with 'diverse questions, theses, and arguments' (DCC:[fol. 1]).¹² Goulart therefore did not confine the *Compendium* to an edited compilation of available student notes. The title hints that he made additions and considered other sources as well. Evidently, theological data from inside and outside the Ursinus classrooms found their way into the Goulart *Compendium*.

Does Goulart's preface contain more information in this regard?

The preface

In the preface, the tribute to Ursinus, 'whose life of extraordinary piety and singular modesty was accompanied

10.DCC:[fol. 9]: '*nempe etiam nobis vere post funera visis*'.

11.DCC:[fol. 1]: '*Ad septem exemplaria ... nunc primum in luce editi*'.

12.DCC:[fol. 1]: '*uariis quaestionibus, thesibus & argumentis auctiores facti ...*'

with high literacy' (DCC:[fol. 5]),¹³ is pursued by Goulart's explanation of how the *Compendium* came into being. While Ursinus was still alive, he and other students, Goulart observes, often solicited Ursinus to publish his explication of the Catechism. However, Ursinus always refused, arguing that 'it is not worthy to see the light' (DCC:[fol. 6]).¹⁴ Thus, after his death, Goulart took the work upon himself. He had to rely on a collection of class notes from various times. As indicated, this content of notes differed from each other. Ursinus adapted and expanded his lectures over time.

Except for Adam Tobolski, the students whose transcripts Goulart incorporated are not identified. Tobolski's notes were of pivotal importance to Goulart and is specifically mentioned (DCC:[fol. 7]). Tobolski studied under Ursinus in Neustadt. They were tendered to Goulart in person (DCC:[fol. 7]). In addition, Goulart remarks that he also had to his disposal a set of notes of his own (DCC:[fol. 7]). These originated in Heidelberg. Should we assume that notes of Goulart and Tobolski played a key role in the compilation of the *Compendium*?

Goulart gives the impression that he has considered all the notes thoroughly. After comparing and compiling them, he wrote, he presented the result in a 'clear and somewhat elegant, but in perspicuous theological style' (DCC:[fol. 7]).¹⁵ It is clear that he not only edited and critiqued material, but also supplemented it with additional information, and considered the way in which it was offered. As a creative contributor he had a noteworthy influence on the final text of the *Compendium*. The gap between the original classroom of Ursinus and the Goulart *Compendium*, is occupied by a cluster of sources, reviewed, and augmented by a devoted editor. This is evident from the motive for the publication, which is also touched upon in the preface.

Goulart laments the state of theology in the churches in Europe at the end of the 16th century. He sketches a landscape of theological turmoil with the reformed churches not only encountering opposition from the Roman Catholic Church, but also from the Lutherans and Anabaptists. Yet, as he was writing, he believes that the 'one person who was, grounded in God, able to provide a remedy against these tendencies of heresy, is Doctor Zacharias Ursinus' (DCC:[fol. 4]).¹⁶ The book will also serve to rectify and provide theological direction. An apologetic purpose was embedded in the compilation of the *Compendium*. In conjunction with this, an educational function is intended. Goulart identifies the *Compendium* 'as an introduction into the more difficult subjects of theology' (DCC:[fol. 7]).¹⁷

13.DCC:[fol. 5]: 'Ursinus, quem, et eximia pietas, singularis modestia, et summa doctrina comitata sunt uiuum ...'

14.DCC:[fol. 6]: 'haec non sunt luce digna' ...'

15.DCC:[fol. 7]: 'sane & parum eleganti, sed perspicuo Theologicoque stylo conscriptam offero' ...'

16.DCC:[fol. 4]: 'Qui potuit secundum Deum, huic malo, errorisque conatibus remedium offerre et adferre, is est ... D. Zacharias Ursinus'.

17.DCC:[fol. 7]: 'hanc isagogen ad difficiliores Theologiae locos ... offero' ...'

Subsequent editions of Goulart's *Compendium* appeared in Cambridge (Goulart 1585) and London (Goulart 1586). Shortly after the first publication, translations were offered. Platt (1982:50) mentions a German imprint, dated 1584, which is, however, no longer extant. In 1587, an English translation of the 1584 (Latin) edition was printed in Cambridge. Translator Henry Parry (1587) entitled his work *The Summe of Christian Religion: Delivered by Zacharias Ursinus in his lectures upon the Catechisme, authorised by the noble prince Fredericke throughout his Dominions*. The influence of the English translation upon subsequent publications and English theology presents a field of inquiry that awaits exploration.

The Explicationum of 1585

The year after the publication of Goulart's *Compendium* in Geneva, an impression of the Commentary appeared in Neustadt, where Ursinus lectured during the last years of his life. This edition owes its existence to the editorial labour of Ursinus' former student, colleague, and life-long friend, Johann Jungnitz (1540–1588).

Like Ursinus, Jungnitz was born in Breslau. When he went to Heidelberg to commence his studies in 1563, he attended Ursinus' lectures (Sinnema 2006:129). Jungnitz specialised in logic and became Ursinus' colleague in the *Collegium Sapientiae*. He also had to leave Heidelberg and joined the *Casimirianum* in Neustadt. Jungnitz was at Ursinus' bedside when he died in 1583, and he became the family's testament-executor (Voorwinden-Hofman & Van den Belt 2013:143). He was guardian of Ursinus' only son, Johannes, and custodian of Ursinus' literary heritage. This enabled him to include a 'catalogue of books written by Zacharias Ursinus' (EC I:[fol. 1]),¹⁸ in his edition. He was therefore in an informed position to also take care of an edition of the Commentary.

The title page

The work is limited to a 'first part'¹⁹ that contained the explanation of questions 1–36 of the Catechism. Apparently the Goulart edition was not consulted. The title of the book suggests independent work. Jungnitz calls it *Pars prima Explicationum Catechetarum, quae tractationum locorum Theologicorum κατ' επιτομιαν complectuntur, sicuti illae ex repetitionibus D. Zachariae Ursini Uratislauiensis* [First part. Catechetical explanations, which include the dealing with Theological subjects as epitomes, were subsequently for several years collected by his pupils in the Collegium Sapientiae in Heidelberg, exactly in accordance with the discourses of (Doctor) Zacharias Ursinus of Poland]. Matthaus Harnisch in Neustadt printed the *Explicationum Catechetarum* (henceforth EC I). Obviously, the edition is an exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism. The title also indicates that careful editorial work went into compiling

18.EC I:[fol. 1]: 'Additus est catalogus librorum à Zacharia Ursino conscriptorum'.

19.EC I:[fol. 1]: 'Pars prima'.

the *Explicationum Catechetarum*. Editor Jungnitz compared (as did Goulart) student's notes:

[N]ot only among one another, but also with other personal work of the same author, and in as far as it was available, it was rewritten in a more accurate order and method, which is considerably more correct and thorough than previous editions (EC I:[fol. 1]).²⁰

Jungnitz was indeed well acquainted with the books written by Ursinus.

The preface

In the preface, Jungnitz elaborates on the 'previous editions' of Ursinus' explications mentioned on the title page. He writes that:

[T]he numerous works of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus (among which his *Explicationes Catechetica*) were, while he lived, widely distributed, not only in Germany, but also in France, England, Poland, and other places. (EC I:[fol. 2]).²¹

Which editions of the *Explicationes Catechetica* he had in mind is, however, uncertain. Jungnitz might have been aware of Goulart's compilation, but whether he in fact adjudicated the edition, remains unclear. Jungnitz makes no mention of Goulart's edition. Meticulous comparison between the editions would clarify the issue and establish whether there is a connection at all.

What is certain though, is that Jungnitz was concerned about the validity and integrity of these versions, as he observes that 'sometimes, under the name of great men, many falsehoods and impurities sneak in and are mixed into the writings of themselves' (EC I:[fol. 2]).²² Apparently, it also occurred that these 'editors' presented Ursinus' lectures as their own work, and therefore Jungnitz admonishes them to 'remember that it is very unfair to do someone else's work as your own' (EC I:[fol. 3]).²³ Therefore, he resumes, 'necessity demanded' (*necessitas postulauit*) that he should offer a version which is true to the content of his life-long compatriot's lectures, against all those editions which are imbued with fallacies. He presents the work not as his own, but as Ursinus' (EC I:[fol. 1]).

In providing an unadulterated rendition of Ursinus' explications, Jungnitz was, however, enforced to critically engage sources available to him. Like Goulart, he should be considered as a significant contributor who augmented the final edition with content from other constituent works.

Jungnitz did not publish the ensuing parts of the *Explicationum* he envisioned. In 1587, a combined version of Goulart and

20.EC I:[fol. 1]: 'non tantum inter se, sed etiam cum aliis eiusdem autoris lucubrationibus diligenter et fideliter collatis, ordine ac methodo accuratiori retextae, multoq, quam antea, emendatius ac plenius editae'.

21.EC I:[fol. 2]: 'Doct. Zachariae Ursini plurima, non per Germaniam solum, sed per Galliam quoque, Angliam, Poloniam et alia loca, ipso etiamnum uiuente, late sparsa sunt'.

22.EC I:[fol. 2]: 'nonnunquam etiam sub magnorum Virorum nomine multa falsa et adulterina, in ipsorum scriptis obrepant et admisceantur'.

23.EC I:[fol. 3]: 'Meminerint alii, valde iniquum esse, alienos labores vel suos facere'.

Jungnitz appeared in Cambridge (Anon. 1587), mainly following the content of Goulart's *Compendium*, but bearing the title that Jungnitz assigned to his imprint (Wagner-Peterson 2013:374). The one-part volume of Jungnitz remained rare (Sinnema 2006:128), but had an important influence on the subsequent editions of David Pareus (1548–1622).

The David Pareus edition of 1591

In 1591, David Pareus, another former student of Ursinus, published the *Explicationum Catechetarum* (henceforth EC II) in four volumes. Pareus was of Polish descent and commenced his theological studies in Heidelberg in 1566 where Ursinus lectured. After completion of his studies in 1570, he served as minister in various churches until he was appointed as professor at the *Collegium Sapientiae* in 1584 (Himmighöfer 2001:65; Pareus 1633:65). After the death of the Lutheran elector Ludwig VI in 1583, Heidelberg once again reverted to reformed persuasion. Pareus followed the pedagogy of Ursinus and was also used to expound the Heidelberg Catechism during his lectures (Boender et al. 2013:72).

Pareus was familiar with Ursinus, his thought and his theological method. This enabled him to review and improve previous editions of the Commentary (Smid 1940:228). He saw this as a life-long task. Writing to his son, Philipp, Pareus underlined that 'I never took this catechetical treasure to hand without hearing afresh, as it were, my teacher's voice, and learn what had before eluded me' (*Corpus*, 1651:[fol. 11]).²⁴

Compared to the Goulart and Jungnitz editions, Pareus' received significantly more imprints and revisions over a prolonged period.²⁵ In 1598, the initial four volumes were revised and abridged to one book (Pareus 1598). Subsequent revisions and reprints appeared throughout Pareus' life. His son, Philipp, took care of the publication of two posthumous editions in 1651 (Pareus & Pareus 1651) and 1653 (Pareus & Pareus 1653), with further emendations prearranged by his father.

Our investigation is confined to the edition of 1591. What does the title and preface indicate in relation to the composition, the sources, and the effort and input of the editor? With this question in mind, we focus on the last section of the article in the *Explicationum Catechetarum Doctoris Zachariae Ursini Silesii*.

The title page and introductory letter

The edition is entitled as an *Explicationum Catechetarum of Doctor Zacharias Ursinus*. In this regard it follows the title of the Jungnitz imprint. Matthaus Harnisch printed both in Neustadt. The 1591 title page indicates that it is 'revised, and

24.*Corpus*, 1651:[fol. 11]: 'ita hic thesaurus catecheticus nunquam mihi in manus sumitur, quin quasi rediviva Praeceptoris voce audiam, et discam, quod prius me fugerat'.

25.For an overview of Pareus' editions, see Wagner-Peterson (2013a:374–379) and Boender et al. (2013:14).

now for the first time edited by the learned David Pareus' (EC II:[fol. 1]).²⁶ It confirms that Pareus reviewed existing editions and incorporated them in his version, which resulted in an extensive work of four volumes.

Pareus introduces his book with a short letter addressing the Christian reader, who 'finally has the complete work of that outstanding theologian Zacharias Ursinus' catechetical explications' beforehand (EC II:[fol. 2]).²⁷ He emphasises that his efforts resulted in a final, comprehensive, and standard edition of the Commentary. The author desires that new theological recruits may use the work in such a way that they will be enabled to step into 'the vast and broad sea of theology'²⁸ and 'that they will not need to study empty rhetoric and to be dragged into the whirlpool of dangerous opinions' (EC II:[fol. 2]).²⁹ On the contrary, readers ought 'to use it with gratitude and enjoy it' (EC II:[fol. 2]).³⁰

The preface

In the preface, Pareus discloses why he undertook this task. His friends, 'who did not stop to exhaust him with letters and in person to attend to Zacharias Ursinus' catechetical explanations' (EC II:2),³¹ inflicted him to accomplish the assignment. He refers to two sets of sources he used: extant editions, and his personal class notes.

He observes that publications of the Commentary appeared in Switzerland, England, and the Netherlands (EC II:2). Was he referring to the *Compendium* of Goulart? With Pareus' publication in 1591, editions of the *Compendium* have been published in Geneva, Leiden, Oxford, and Cambridge (Wagner-Peterson 2013:372–374). Voorwinden-Hofman and Van den Belt (2013:145) note that he made use of the work of Jungnitz. However, there were other editions in circulation as well. Reflecting on these, he uses strong language. Previous versions, Pareus remarks:

[H]ave not only been ruined by dubious research but have also been variegated and illogically patched together and are so rough in style, that some sentences and words are missing, and some are redundant or corrupt, so that hardly a trace of Ursinus appears in this horror, and it seems as if this work is rather worthy of a newcomer than of such a great Theologian. (EC II:2)³²

These comments confirm that Pareus was familiar with published editions. Identifying these impressions, and to

26.EC II:[fol. 1]: 'retexta, et nunc primum edita, studio Davidis Parei'.

27.EC II:[fol. 2]: 'Habes tandem, Christiane Lector, D. Zachariae Ursini, Theologi clarissimi, Explicationum Catechetiarum absolutum opus'.

28.EC II:[fol. 2]: 'tyronibus ... qui Theologiae aequor satis latum ingrediuntur'.

29.EC II:[fol. 2]: 'nec spumam inanum rhetoricationum provado consecrari necesse habeant, nec vorticibus noxiarum opinionum temere abripiantur'.

30.EC II:[fol. 2]: 'gratus utere, frueri'.

31.EC II:2: 'qui me obtundere per literas et coram non destiterunt, ut Explicationes Catecheticas D. Zachariae Ursini ... colendi' ...'

32.EC II:2: 'studio quidem non malo adornatas, sed ita tamen esse magna ex parte adiacrictos και αμεθοδος consarcinatas, ita dictione incultas, passim sententiis et verbis vel hiantes, vel redundantes, vel deprauatas, ut vix summa vestigia Ursiniana illius δεινοτητα in iis apparerent, opusque, ipsum Tyrone magis, quam tanto dignum Theologo videretur'.

what extent they were incorporated into his edition, await on research.

The fact that so many questionable imprints were in circulation inspired Pareus as he wrote to concede to his friends' insistence to provide an accountable edition. This was a labour-intensive task, since a great variation existed between the lecture notes of students who studied under Ursinus at various times.

Ensuing, he touches upon the second set of sources which he used. He did not depend only on publications, he stated, but deliberately considered primary informants, the students' transcripts. In this regard, Pareus observes that although Ursinus kept to the broad structure of the Heidelberg Catechism, the form and content of his lectures differed every year. 'In different years a different Ursinus was put forth' to his students (EC II:2).³³ Additionally, Ursinus often spoke in a subdued manner, or became fiery in arguments, or talked so hastily that 'everyone almost in their own words took out the essence of what was said with a hasty pen' (EC II:3).³⁴ The variation of student notes presented challenges to the editor. He consequently 'did not only turn to and collect other specimen, but primarily to the notes I once took myself' (EC II:2).³⁵ His own notes were decisive. Employing what was at his disposal, he presented the *Explicationum* in a simple, appropriate, and faithful way, in which he endeavoured to remain as close to the original style as possible (EC II:3).

A two-fold motive for the publication of the *Explicationum* surfaces. On the one hand, Pareus undertook the publication to present Ursinus' explications as true to Ursinus as possible, both in content and style. His edition thus should have and deserves the status of authenticity. On the other hand, he wanted the *Explicationum* to serve an educational purpose in the instruction of students in theology, as his introductory letter informs us (EC II:[fol. 2]).

The edition was reprinted in 1593 and 1595. Since 1598 it appeared as a single abridged volume. It was this volume that was foundational for the Dutch translations of Festus Hommius (1576–1642), first printed in 1602, and then published as *Het Schat-Boeck*. *Het Schat-Boeck* saw many editions, which were reviewed, and incorporated theological material that was added by Hommius. The book played a significant role in the post-reformation ecclesial life, education, and preaching. It was widely used in the world of the Dutch East Indian Company since it was issued to sick comforters in the service of the Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC).

Conclusion

The titles and prefaces of the first Latin editions of the Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism confirm that

33.EC II:2: 'aliis annis alium Ursinum proposuisse' ...'

34.EC II:3: 'Sed cum vel submissius vel in disputationum feruore concitatus diceret, inter festinandum quisque, suis fere verbis, dictorum summas celeri calamo exceptit, vel certe, ut potuit, Praeceptoris orationem interpolauit'.

35.EC II:2: 'Adhibui et cantuli exemplaria non pauca, sed eas cum primis notas, quas ipsemet olim ... exceperam'.

editors used a range of differentiated sources in compiling the respective publications. Our analysis of the demarcated passages provided noteworthy knowledge pertaining to the identity of sources incorporated in the books, as well as the nature and scope of the editors in this regard.

The passages that were consulted clearly indicate that class notes of students of Ursinus played a fundamental role in the compilation of the editions. The editors were students of Ursinus, went to class with him, and knew the context or *Sitz im Leben* of these manuscripts. The titles and prefaces give unequivocal evidence that editors had to compare, correct, revise, and even rewrite the notes to align them with Ursinus' theology in general. Evidently, these manuscripts also contain lecture material from different periods of time. Their content fluctuated or accommodated differentiated theological arguments and perspectives. The three editors had first-hand experience of the process that produced the manuscripts. They acknowledged the inadequacies and limitations in terms of the reliability of these primary sources and addressed them. In doing so, the preferences of the editors were not necessarily prevented. In using these sources, the editions primarily represent an account or portrayal of Ursinus' theology. A careful analysis and comparison of the editions should identify trajectories which can be traced to an original source.

Editors also used obtainable and contemporary publications linked to Ursinus. Primarily in this regard are the works of Ursinus. These were consulted and informed the editorial work. Secondly, editors were aware of and critically engaged with a variety of editions of the Commentary, which were at the time in circulation. A prevailing motive for the editions was to protect and guarantee the integrity and validity of the version published. Would it be possible to trace and identify the influence of this second set of sources in the composition of the Commentary? This is an exciting challenge that should be investigated.

In the final analysis, based on the use and engagement with identified sources and personal editorial work, the Commentary, in our opinion, should be characterised as the thorough work of a second generation of reformed theologians in disseminating the theological significance of the Heidelberg Catechism. Ursinus' students, their editorial work and their class notes played a pivotal role in informing the compilation of the Commentary. A theological and historical critical mapping out of the sources that informed the Commentary, should confirm our conclusion.

Acknowledgements

Competing interests

The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

Authors' contributions

R.M.B. contributed towards the conceptualisation, methodology and writing of the research article. M.D.M. contributed towards the investigation and writing of the original draft.

Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human participants.

Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors, or the publisher.

References

- Anon., 1587, *Explicationum Catecheticarum quae tractationum locorum Theologicorum κατ' επιτομῶν complectuntur*, Thomasius, Cambridge.
- Benrath, G.A., 1964, 'Briefe des Heidelberger Theologen Zacharias Ursinus (1534–1583)', in F. Ernst (ed.), *Heidelberger Jahrbücher*, vol. 8, pp. 93–141, Springer, Heidelberg.
- Bierma, L.D., Gunnoe, C.D.J., Maag, K. & Fields, P.W., 2005, *An introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism (texts and studies in Reformation and post-Reformation thought): Sources, history, and theology*, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Boender, C., Roukens, A.A. & Schipper, I., 2013, *Schatbewaarders: Geschiedenis van het Schatboek en het leven en werk van Zacharius Ursinus, David Pareus, Festus Hommius*, Koster, Barneveld.
- Borgensis, J., 1572, *Dictata, seu explicata, in catechis: Heidelb: A Zacharia Ursino. [Handwritten]*
- De Wildt, K., 2013, 'Commentaren op de Heidelbergse Catechismus, 1567–1620', in A. Huijgen, J. Fesko & A. Siller (eds.), *Handboek Heidelbergse Catechismus*, pp. 85–98, Kok, Utrecht.
- Fatio, O. & Labarthe, O. (eds.), 1969, *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs*, vol. III, Droz, Geneva.
- Goulart, S. (ed.), 1584, *Doctrinae Christianae Compendium seu Commentarii Catechetici, ex ore D. Zachariae Ursini, vere Theologi, (qui Heydelbergae Catecheseos explicationem continuare solebat & iterare) diuerso tempore ab ipsius discipulis excepti*, Eustache Vignon, Geneva.
- Goulart, S. (ed.), 1585, *Doctrinae Christianae Compendium seu Commentarii Catechetici, ex ore D. Zachariae Ursini, vere Theologi, (qui Heydelbergae Catecheseos explicationem continuare solebat & iterare) diuerso tempore ab ipsius discipulis excepti.*, Thomas Thomasius, Cambridge.
- Goulart, S. (ed.), 1586, *Doctrinae Christianae Compendium seu Commentarii Catechetici, ex ore D. Zachariae Ursini, vere Theologi, (qui Heydelbergae Catecheseos explicationem continuare solebat & iterare) diuerso tempore ab ipsius discipulis excepti*, Henricus Middletonus/Thomas Chardius, London.
- Gunnoe, C., 2010, *Thomas Erastus and the Palatinate: A renaissance physician in the Second Reformation*, Brill, Leiden.
- Himmighöfer, T., 2001, 'Pareus, David', in Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 20, pp. 65–66, Duncker & Humblot, Berlin.
- Jones, L.C., 1916, *Simon Goulart: Sa vie et son oeuvre, 1543–1628*, Imprimerie Albert Kundig, Geneva.
- Jungnitz, J. (ed.), 1585, *Pars prima explicationum catecheticarum, quae tractationum locorum Theologicorum κατ' επιτομῶν complectuntur, sicuti illae ex repetitionibus D. Zachariae Ursini Uratislauensis*, Matthaus Harnisch, Neustadt.
- Pareus, D. (ed.), 1591, *Explicationum catecheticarum Doctoris Zachariae Ursini Silesii pars prima*, Matthaus Harnisch, Neustadt.
- Pareus, D. (ed.), 1598, *Explicationum catecheticarum D. Zachariae Ursini Silesii absolutum opus*, Witwe Wilhelm Harnischs, Neustadt.
- Pareus, D. & Pareus, P., 1651, *Corpus doctrinae christianae ecclesiarum a papatu romano reformatarum ex ore quondam Zachariae Ursini in explicationibus Catecheticis rudi Minervae exceptum*, Jakob Lasche, Hanau.
- Pareus, D. & Pareus, P. (eds.), 1653, *Explicationum catecheticarum D. Zachariae Ursini Silesii absolutum opus*, Samuel de Tournes, Geneva.
- Pareus, P., 1633, *Narratio historica de Curriculo Vitae et Obitu Reverendissimi Patris D. Davidis Parei; Sacrarum Literarum olim in Antiquissima Academia Archi-Palatina Doctoris & Professoris Primarii: Memoriae & pietatis ergo conscripta*, Wolfgang Hofmann, Frankfurt.

- Parry, H. (transl.), 1587, *The Summe of Christian Religion: Delivered by Zacharias Ursinus in his lectures upon the Catechisme, authorised by the noble prince Fredericke throughout his Dominions*, Joseph Barnes, Oxford.
- Platt, J., 1982, *Reformed thought and scholasticism: The arguments for the existence of God in Dutch theology, 1575–1650*, Brill, Leiden.
- Sinnema, D., 2006, 'Johann Jungnitz on the use of Aristotelian Logic in Theology', in C. Strohm, J.S. Freedman & H.J. Selderhuis (eds.), *Späthumanismus und reformierte Konfession*, vol. 31, pp. 127–152, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen.
- Smid, T.D., 1940, 'Bibliographische Opmerkingen over de Explicationes Catecheticae van Zacharias Ursinus', *Gereformeerde Theologisch Tijdschrift* 40(6), 228–243.
- Sturm, E., 1970, 'Briefe des Heidelberger Theologen Zacharias Ursinus Aus Wittenberg und Zürich (1560/61)', in H. Schipperges (ed.), *Heidelberger Jahrbücher*, vol. 14, pp. 85–119, Springer, Heidelberg.
- Ursinus, Z. & Rott, H., 1906, 'Briefe des Heidelberger Theologen Zacharias Ursinus aus Heidelberg und Neustadt a.H.', *Neue Heidelberger Jahrbücher*, n.p. Koester, Heidelberg.
- Visser, D., 1983, *Zacharius Ursinus: The Reluctant Reformer: His Life and Times*, United Church Press, New York, NY.
- Voorwinden-Hofman, T. & Van den Belt, H., 2013, 'De complexe ontstaansgeschiedenis van het Schatboek van Zacharias Ursinus (1534–1583)', *Theologia Reformata* 56(2), 136–153.
- Wagner-Peterson, B., 2013, 'Zacharias Ursinus und "seine" Auslegung des Heidelberger Katechismus', in M. Freudenberg & J. Lange van Ravenswaay (eds.), *Geschichte und Wirkung des Heidelberger Katechismus. Vorträge der 9. Internationalen Emdener Tagung zur Geschichte des reformierten Protestantismus*, pp. 87–109, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen.