In the Netherlands Abraham Kuyper is particularly well known for his pioneering work in the field of the Protestant press (De Heraut, 1871; De Standaard, 1872), political party founding (the Anti-revolutionaire Partij, 1879), university founding (Vrije Universiteit, 1880) and church constitution (Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Kerken, 1886). To a degree he also became known abroad, in particular owing to the fact that he was able to proclaim his neo-Calvinist worldview in Princeton in 1898 through the Stone Lectures. His crowning glory was, in a sense, the role he played as Prime Minister in the period 1901-05. That the young Kuyper also did pioneering work in publishing church-historical primary sources is usually overshadowed by his later work. This in spite of the fact that this and other church historical work was a school of learning for him, of which he would reap the rewards throughout his life. After all, through this work, he not only built up a national but also an extensive international network of contacts, and learned to think about the position of religion and church in a modern state and society at an early age. Kuyper’s most important feats regarding church history were the answer he wrote for a prize essay, awarded gold in 1860, about the ecclesiology of Calvin and A Lasco,¹ which in 1862 served in part as a dissertation, the edition of the Joannis a Lasco Opera in 1866² and the foundation of the Marnix-Vereeniging [Marnix society]. The study before you concerns this Society, which was founded in 1868 as Kuyper’s first national enterprise regarding the search for and

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publication of primary sources dating back to the time of the Dutch Reformation. Its history has been insufficiently documented so far.\(^3\) I will show that the enterprise: 1. was a new version of former activities by Kuypcr in the field mentioned above, and that it had the trouble as well as the fun of that fact; 2. suffered from the outset from the rivalry between its successive directors, Kuypcr and J.J. van Toorenenbergen, with all the consequences that brought with it (also positive ones such as the *Acta van de Nederlandsche synoden der zestiende eeuw*, edited by F.L. Rutgers in 1889); and (this by way of excursus) 3. not only indirectly influenced the Royal decree of 1902, for the institution of the Commissie van advies voor ’s Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën (RGP) [Advisory committee for national historical publications], but also directly, through a manuscript as yet unidentified, the RGP publication in 1993 of the *Acta van de Nederlandsche gemeente te Londen*, published only in part by Kuypcr at an earlier date.

1. **Dutch editions of primary sources**

A short review of primary sources published in the Netherlands before 1868 shows that also Kuypcr’s first national enterprise can easily be called pioneering, at least when seen within the Dutch perspective.\(^4\) For the Netherlands did not lead the field as far as the separate publication of primary sources was concerned, let alone that this was done in the form of a series. In 1826 and the years shortly after, it had looked as if the national government would play a leading role in this matter. In the year mentioned above, King William I had launched a competition in which the historians and men of letters...

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\(^3\) J.C. Rullmann, ‘De Maninx-Vereeniging en hare werken’, *Antirevolutionaire Staatkunde* 1932, 73-110 is superficial and hagiographical [henceforth I will use a separately numbered copy]; L. Praamsma, *Abraham Kuypcr als kerchistoricus* (Kampen, 1945), does not add anything relevant; A.W. Meeder, *Johann Justus van Toorenenbergen ( . . . )* (Kampen, 1988), brought new information to light, but failed in the interpretation of it.