

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT The scant attention which has long / 13
been paid in the Netherlands to the person and work of Comenius reaches
back to Pierre Bayle's hostile criticism.

On Comenius's *Opera Didactica Omnia*, he commented as follows: 'C'est
ouvrage in folio, qui coûta beaucoup de veilles à son auteur, et beaucoup
d'argent à d'autres, et dont la République des Lettres n'a pas tiré aucun
profit; et je ne pense pas même, qu'il ait rien de praticable utilement dans
les idées de cet Auteur.'

And about his plans for the reform of the educational system: 'La réformation
des écoles ne fut pas son principal entêtement: il se coiffa encore plus de
prophéties, de révolutions, de ruïnes, de l'Antichrist, du règne de mille ans,
et de semblables morceaux d'un dangereux Fanatisme; je dis dangereux,
non seulement par rapport à l'Orthodoxie, mais aussi par rapport aux
Princes et aux Etats.'

Bayle was referring to the verdict published six years earlier by Samuel de
Sorbière in his *Sorberiana*,² (who in turn based himself on the *Antirrhe-*
ticus by Samuel Maresius, professor of theology at Groningen. In this
polemical writing, the latter attacked Comenius because of his Chiliastic
ideas and his belief in prophecies.)³ (

In 1853, someone in the Netherlands wrote about Comenius: 'This scholar,
who fled from Bohemia, lived in our country for a number of years. Here
he made a great name for himself by the publication of various works. He
died in Amsterdam on November 15th, 1670, according to others in 1671,
or on October 15th, 1672, and was buried at Naarden. We should like to
know whether there is any mention of this scholar in the municipal or
ecclesiastical archives. Whether anything definite can be discovered regarding
the day of his death and about a monument that is said to be erected on
his grave. Whether at the time of his death, or later, any obituary notices
were published in our language.'

A report that a statue was to be unveiled in honour of Comenius on September
5th, 1865 at Brandýs on Orlice (Moravia) at the spot where fifty years before
the little house still stood in which he had written his *Labyrint Světa a Lusthauz
Srdce*,)⁵ (elicited the question: 'Where can I find accurate facts on the life

¹ P. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*. I. Rotterdam 1697, pp. 882—887.

² S. de Sorbière, *Sorberiana ou bons mots, rencontres agréables . . . et observations curieuses
de M. Sorbière*. Paris 1961. De Sorbière met Comenius in 1642 in Holland. See Adam-
Tannery XIII (supplément), p. 2.

³ S. Maresius, *Antirrheticus*. Groningen 1669.

⁴ *De Navorscher* III (1853), p. 128.

⁵ Comenius, *Labyrint Světa a Lusthauz Srdce*. See LPW no. 14.

14 / of this man, and are his merits really so great that they entitle him to a statue?)¹ (This time answers came from four readers who indicated literature which does not, however, appear to be impressive.)² (The notary public J. Ph. de Roeper found a note of the grave of Jan Amos Comenius in the graveyard records of the Walloon Church at Naarden. The *Algemeen Handelsblad* mentioned this found in 1871.)³ (But the notary remained as one crying in the wilderness and was unable to stimulate any Dutchman to make a study of Comenius in the Netherlands. In 1892, W. L. Leendertz wrote in *Geloof en Vrijheid*: ‘The secretary will be much obliged to anyone who is able to give hitherto unknown details about Comenius’s stay in this country’)⁴ (A few Dutch translations of Comenius’s works appeared around and during the commemoration years 1857,)⁵ (1892)⁶ (and 1920)⁷ (and on the occasion of the opening of the mausoleum at Naarden in 1937, there were also publications about Comenius the man, his works and his grave. The Amsterdam doctor R. A. B. Oosterhuis, is particularly deserving of praise for his many publications. Since the end of the last century, Czech Comeniologists have been coming to the Netherlands to search for traces of their great fellow-countryman in Dutch libraries and archives. Their scattered publications, the newly-found works by Comenius and the studies on this scholar made in other countries during the past forty years, supplemented by the results of the author’s own research in libraries and archives in the Netherlands, form the material for the present study. Other countries where Comenius lived and worked as an exile have long been ahead of us in this respect. J. Kvačala wrote a study about the pedagogical reformation by Comenius in Germany.)⁸ (R. F. Young described Comenius’s stay in England;)⁹ (the years in Poland were dealt with by

¹ *De Navorscher* XV (1865), p. 274.

² *op. cit.* p. 328.

³ *Algemeen Handelsblad*, Nov. 3rd, 1871.

⁴ W. I. Leendertz, ‘Feestelijke herdenking van den 300sten geboortedag van Johan Amos Comenius op 28 Maart 1892’ in *Geloof en Vrijheid*, XXV (1892), pp. 527—528.

⁵ LPW no. 86.

⁶ Johannes Amos Komenský (Comenius) was born at Nivnice in Moravia on March 28th, 1592.

⁷ Comenius died in Amsterdam on November 15th, 1670.

⁸ J. Kvačala, *Die pädagogische Reform des Comenius in Deutschland bis zum Ausgange des XVII. Jahrhunderts*. Berlin 1903—1904, Vol. I: Text; Vol. II: Historischer Ueberblick, Bibliographie, Namen- und Sachregister.

⁹ R. F. Young, *Comenius in England*. London 1932.

L. Kurdybacha;) ¹ (S. Göransson wrote on Comenius in Sweden) ² (and E. Kovács is the author of a monograph on the Hungarian period of Comenius.) ³ (

Although he may have been more active as a philosopher in London and Elbing (Prussia), and better known as a pedagogue in Přerov (Moravia), Lissa (Poland) and Saros Patak (Hungary), it was in Amsterdam that he was able to work for fourteen years, longer than anywhere else before. These were the last years of his life, during which his still unfinished works were made ready for printing, the didactical works were published collectively and in which he laboured to complete his life-work, *De rerum humanarum emendatione Consultatio Catholica*. Moreover, from 1665, he collected numerous notes for the *Clamores Eliae*.

In the Netherlands, Comenius succeeded in giving clearer shape to his vision for the improvement of the spiritual and material conditions of mankind. It is wrong to describe Comenius as a pedagogue only. He performed his universal vocation in being a theologian and church-leader, a pedagogue and reformer of education and teaching, and these two qualities he saw in the perspective of the world peace to be expected very soon, and of which he was a prophet, a third Elija.

The interest in Comenius's pansophical work was bound to lead to one-sidedness. I have moreover refrained from evaluating the data, I only entered sometimes into discussion with other Comeniologists.

Finally there are several other fields which still lie fallow and which lend themselves to other studies. Among the aspects which I left unconsidered are Comenius's relations with Dutch printers, his dependence on other authors, the influence of his works and ideas, the distribution areas and the numbers of copies of his publications, his relations with the Rosicrucians and other secret societies, the genesis of the *Consultatio Catholica* and the *Clamores Eliae*, Comenius's political engagement and the Peace of Breda, his contacts with diplomats in the Netherlands, his worries for the Unity of Brethren (appointment policy, care of students, collections), the choice and frequency of texts quoted from the Bible, the development of Comenius's concept of evangelical missions, the semantic values in Old-Czech, Old-German and Latin texts which did not always find ex-

¹ L. Kurdybacha, *Działalność Jana Amosa Komeńskiego w Polsce*. Warsaw 1957.

² S. Göransson: *Den europeiska konfessionspolitikens upplösning, 1654—1660*. Uppsala 1956; Comenius och Sverige 1642—1648. *Lychnos* 1957—1958, pp. 102—137. Uppsala 1958.

³ E. Kovács, *Comenius Magyarorzágon*. Budapest 1962.

16 / pression in the translations into the modern languages, the Leitmotives of his thought, the psychology and character of his person, as they come to us through his writings, in particular his correspondence, the survival of his memory in the Netherlands.

'Greetings, learned reader and critic. If you expect this work to enlighten you, or if at least the intention of the work is of good purport, please show your approval by agreeing with it. If you do not see it yet, try to obtain a better view of it. If you should see shortcomings, complete them; if you should see errors, eliminate them. If you should see better roads towards the light, clear them, so that what the Father of Light shows to any of us, will be common property of all those who covet the light, the more so as we mean the light that is beyond the range of the human eye.'

COMENIUS in C. C. [Lexicon reale pans.], p. 447