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## **In search of Comenius' pansophism in the research endeavours of Polish scholars**

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**Abstract:** The article deals with the problems of Comenius' pansophism in his interpretation and in the research of selected contemporary Polish scholars. One of the significant differences between the author of the above dissertation and other contemporary researchers is the treatment of pansophism as a primary concept in relation to didactic solutions. The arguments cited in the dissertation justify the importance of pansophism as the basis of Comenius' work. The characteristics of pansophism present in synthesis the richness of its meanings that are not commonly perceived in the source literature. Authors who pondered over this issue have noticed its historical evolution. However, pansophism is not a historical artifact, but carries numerous consequences that, at least in part, are close to contemporary trends in scientific research.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, history of pedagogical thought, Comenius, pansophism

The aim of this article is to find an answer to the question in what form the interest in Comenius' pansophism appeared in Polish literature, understood as his own original concept of the transformation of man, and not as a symbol of his entire work. In my earlier works, I took up the subject of the reception of Comenius' pedagogy understood *en bloc* (Sztobryn, 2016: 25-33; Sztobryn, 2017: 57-72). Now I would like to narrow this analysis down to a more detailed view of the idea of pansophism, which I consider to be the core of Comenius' whole concept. In the third and fourth volumes of *Siedleckie Zeszyty Komeniologiczne*, when analyzing the reception of the Moravian's work, I pointed out that the concept of pansophism was the core of all of Comenius' work (Sztobryn, 2006: 59); at the same time, it makes a whole in the above approach and a part of the whole when it belongs to

the works consisting of *Panegersia*, *Panuagia*, *Panglottia*, *Panorthosia*, *Panutesia*, *Pampedia* and, finally, *Pansofia*. Especially, the latter two reveal a strong educational dimension. In *The Way of Light*, Comenius specified what he meant by the concept of pansophism. He enigmatically defines it as *a set of unshakable laws about things* (Suchodolski, 1979: 140). The interpretation itself contains some important indications as to what Comenius understood by this concept<sup>1</sup>. First, it was supposed to be axiomatic knowledge, unquestionable, true of itself and allowing for true inference. The scope of these few laws was to be universal, i.e. they were to apply to all, both observable and unobservable, things and to all people. Secondly, pansophism was to be a system of internally integrated knowledge, which differed from the concept of encyclopedias merely summing up stratified knowledge. The prefix *pan-*, coined from Greek (παντες, παντα, παντως), meant universality, and as M. Wichowa (1999: 46) claims, it assumed *organic unity of all knowledge*. Maliszewski (2010: 350-353), situating Comenius in the historical development of science in the pre-critical period – which is obvious – saw the hidden drive of his thoughts in the *thirst for transparency* hidden – I believe – in the very basis of his concept – pansophism, since the planned harmony of the world was to be established by laws common to all. Maliszewski (*ibid.*) wrongly looks at Comenius and his legacy as a kind of relic of a long-gone history, while disregarding the pansophic thread; adequately, however, does he demand a critical reconstruction of the problems initiated by the Moravian's research<sup>2</sup>. However, little can be said about the

<sup>1</sup> A similar interpretation of the assumptions of pansophism is contained in *Pansophiae prelude* published in: J. A. Komeński, *Selected writings*, Wrocław Warsaw Krakow 1964. B. Suchodolski belongs to the group of outstanding Polish comeniologists, as evidenced by his comenians. Compare M. Kycler, *Comenians in the book collection of Professor Bogdan Suchodolski*, In: [https://rebus.us.edu.pl/bitstream/20.500.12128/11089/1/Kycler\\_Komeniana\\_w\\_ksi%20C4%99gozbiór\\_prof\\_B\\_Suchodolskiego.pdf](https://rebus.us.edu.pl/bitstream/20.500.12128/11089/1/Kycler_Komeniana_w_ksi%20C4%99gozbiór_prof_B_Suchodolskiego.pdf); Access on 1 October 2020.

<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that contemporary research done by K. Schaller comes closer to my position rather than the one held by K. Maliszewski. Cf. the following quote after D. Benner, D. Stępkowski, *Theoretical and social constitution of one's own logic of modern education. Considerations in reference to Jan Amos Comenius and Jan Jakub Rousseau*, p. 11, In: <https://repozytorium.ukw.edu.pl/bitstream/handle/item/669/Dietrich%20Benner%20c%20Dariusz%20Stepkowski%20Teoretyczne%20i%20społeczne%20ukonstytuowanie%20własnej%20logiki%20nowcze%20snego%20wychowania.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>: *Moreover, Schaller is of the opinion that <the starting point of Comenius' pedagogy> should not be found in his treatises on school and didactics, but only and exclusively <in his philosophy, or rather in his pansophism>*. The aforementioned authors, that is, Benner and Stępkowski, shift the focus from pansophism - in their understanding grounded in theology - to the notion of educability, which they expressed in the following quote: *Comenius's pedagogy center is not in the pansophistic motives of education or*

present day by stopping at abstract but original questions if we cut ourselves off from understanding the message of history (which is rarely seen on the level of simple facts). What must be done first of all is to understand people and their times, penetrate their mentality, the circle of experiences, beliefs, taboos, subjectively read knowledge accumulated to their times, from which new, sometimes timeless ideas sprouted. Searching for the antecedents of the present, we cannot impose our own image matrices, definitions and our own context on the past. Marxist writers repeatedly made such a mistake, and I have the impression that contemporary writers are not free from it either. History has many tracks. What we register on the surface does not have to be identical to what is hidden deeper, which needs to be introspectively realized.

Let us return to the definition thread, because pansophism in Comenius and his commentators had many similar, but not the same interpretations. In the aforementioned *Path of Light*, Comenius built a formal structure for his system<sup>3</sup>. It consisted of a number of postulates and statements, the principle of which was to *recreate in the right arrangement the books of God, nature, the Holy Bible and ideas innate to the mind* (Suchodolski, 1979: 140). The knowledge that man was to learn from this concerned self-knowledge (i.e. subjective world), realization of the nature of reality (i.e. objective world) and a possibility of insight into transcendence. These three circles exhausted the area of knowledge designed by Comenius. Thus, the first feature of his pansophism concerned the assumed holism and maximalism. His next thesis was that the knowledge he learned – leading to wisdom, and not to narrow practical efficiency, which the Moravian also dealt with – would be universal, i.e. it would concern all things necessary for man and would be available to everyone. This postulate had a lot in common with the encyclopedism of Piotr Ramus or Johan H. Alsted; but it also had a second weakness consisting in the fact that it was impossible to enumerate all the things that are necessary for man in this world, and Comenius' faith that it is possible to point out those things that are necessary for man in the afterlife was completely irrational. Here comes a very strong theological accent in all his

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*in the sectarian narrowing of education, but in the still ongoing process of crystallizing one's own logic of modern and contemporary education* [ibid: 11].

<sup>3</sup> It is worth adding here that the research by Łukasz Kurdybacha shows that Comenius started working on pansophism in 1630 while working on *Janua* and initially it was to be an encyclopedia of omniscience. He highlighted the characteristics of the historical and partly pedagogical context of the emergence of pansophism in the chapter with a characteristic title: *The Mirage of Pansophism*. Cf. Ł. Kurdybacha, *Selected writings*, vol. II, Warsaw 1976, 68-81.

works. It is from faith, from the *Holy Scripture* that the premises creating human wisdom necessary to obtain salvation would emerge. And this is clearly selective and elitist, contrary to the previous assumption. This motive is even more clearly revealed in the project of a universal college, which would eventually undertake *the hardships [...] of converting Jews, Mohammedans, idolaters and others* (Suchodolski, 1979: 160). This systematic exchange of pansophism towards theology had a disastrous effect on its fate, because – despite its double publication in England (1637 and 1639) – *de facto* support for it was finally withdrawn (Kurdybacha, 1976: 81). The universalism of this concept was also included in the not fully accomplished assumption that truth is one and common to all, and – as it was mentioned above – in the genetic and axiomatic character of this concept<sup>4</sup>.

It is also worth stopping for a moment at the thesis often formulated by Comenius that pansophism would indicate those **things** that are **necessary for man**. What is exactly to be searched for behind this phrase? An interpretation of this should be found in *Unum Necessarium*, the late dissertation of Comenius published in Amsterdam in 1668, which already by its title announced the clarification of this issue. Using the scholastic method of lecture, he gave the following direct answer to the question of what this only necessary one is: *To be wise, i.e. to be able to deal with things, people, and God, with the first one called philosophy, the second one – social life, and the third one – religion*; and in the next paragraph: *there are three ways of transmitting wisdom: a healthy mind full of innate messages, which should be enlightened by the reason, a world full of creatures, which should be subordinate to the senses, and the Bible full of revealed secrets, which should be examined with faith* (Comenius, 1999: 80, 81). Comenius realized that the multilingual science accumulated in libraries was full of mutually questioning theses, that what we call science is an endless labyrinth (this is one of his favorite metaphors) in which all humanity errs. His conviction that the multiplicity and variety of positions must lead to endless discussions based on partial, though constantly increasing, knowledge, which, however, is only an opinion, sounds quite contemporary. Comenius believed that the only wisdom that is universal is divine wisdom, while human wisdom is only its fragmentary reflection. A peculiar *memento* for today's scholars is the bitter, but very true thesis of the Moravian that *people, because of their speculative*

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<sup>4</sup> Kurdybacha points to the supporters of Comenius's pansophism in the persons of Samuel Hartlib and Joachim Hübner, who, however, ultimately refused to come to Hamburg to hold a conference on pansophism.

*opinions, [are] {add. S. Sztobryn}, too much in love with themselves, they worship their little sparkles like the sun and expect the same from others, hence contradictions and skirmishes arise, which they call discussions* (Comenius, 1999: 83). The author, who has all his writings published in Amsterdam, in *Unum Necessarium* considers books to be a kind of evil because, according to him, they cause a form of muddle and confusion of minds. As he writes, *unlearnedly learned or learnedly mad* people arise from this dangerous pluralism. The regression of his position is clearly visible here, for what can it mean to appreciate the few good books, what is the criterion of their selection? Here is the answer. There is no error in the perfect books, which according to Comenius are only the books of God. Comenius himself considered such a thesis, so clearly formulated and actually depreciating the entire intellectual output of mankind, to be exaggerated. What he was looking for was a kind of keystone between the perfect wisdom of God and the imperfect wisdom of man. He found it in the paradoxical thesis of innate ideas expressed in the knowledge of numbers, measures and weights (Comenius, 1999: 95), which either denied the perfection of divine wisdom, or led to a contradiction in the description of human wisdom, which was to arise from perfect ideas given from God. Thus his own speculations drove him into a dead end<sup>5</sup>.

However, before Comenius questions his entire pansophic output – and this is how I read his involution from multiplicity, pluralism to unity and monism, contained in only one of many books, the holy book of humanity, one can risk a statement that the instrument of his original, philosophical pansophism was pampedia; the whole concept could be understood in the following way: pansophism was meant to define the horizon and goals, whereas pampedia and other books set the means by which these goals could be achieved. Thus, the concept of formability in the structure of the Comenius's system – to which Benner & Stepkowski refer – can be considered as a derivative of pansophic premises, but not the other way around,

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<sup>5</sup> He believed that certain inborn concepts, instincts and abilities, and even tools are given to man. At the end of his life, Comenius turns to the work that completes his output, which he called *Pansofia Christiana*, and becomes an inexorable censor who already directly depreciates the achievements of the *blind crowd of pagans*. He wanted it to be recognized that *there is only one divine library, and the different human ones are either omitted or selected with the utmost care and brought to harmony with divine wisdom*. Cf. J. A. Comenius, *Unum necessarium, or the only necessary one*, Wrocław 1999, p. 95. Holding this perspective, it is obvious that he could not come to an agreement with Descartes.

nor as its equivalent. Otherwise, the characterization of pansophism itself would have to lose its superior generality to all the notions that flow from it.

After this introduction to the characteristics of pansophism – on the basis of the available but limited literature – we can analyze its comments in selected studies that refer to it. One of the authors who devoted a lot of space in his works was B. Suchodolski. It was he who, referring to the nineteenth-century dissertation of the Czech scholar named A. Patera, considered pansophism as *the fundamental basis of all didactics* (Suchodolski, 1973: VII). In his comments on *Pampedia*, Suchodolski makes an important thesis that pansophism, reflecting the structure of being – and thus perceived in an ontological dimension – has found its analogy in the structure of school. Since the levels of school reflect the spheres of being, a person educated in the spirit of pansophism will be a full, almost perfect man, and thus the world will also become better. Comenius is no stranger to this Renaissance theme of linking education and good on earth. Suchodolski treats pansophism as a chronologically older part of Comenius' legacy, emphasizing the primordially of his school didactics: as it is didactics that, according to him, is justified by the years of publication of individual volumes; it is also Suchodolski (1979: 26) in another study who points to a very early intention to develop common knowledge, dating it to 1626. It seems, however, that it is more justified to prescind from the order of publishing Comenius' books and concentrate on revealing the structure of his philosophical thinking; in this sense, my thesis that concerns the concept of pansophism which is initially dormant in his consciousness and then, with the passage of time, more and more verbalized seems worth considering. The fundamental aspect of Suchodolski's interpretation of pansophism was the justification of its humanistic dimension. It seems that this is a linear depiction of Comenius' pansophic aspirations, assuming that the peak point would be to obtain a synthesis of knowledge through permanent, pansophic education. From my point of view, this development should be viewed on a circular basis. The three great circles of pansophism include the nature, art, perceived as human activity, and God, who is both the starting point and the point of arrival, as evidenced by his latest work, *Unum necessarium*. Ultimately, therefore, contrary to Comenius himself, his pansophism turned out to be "chrestosophy"<sup>6</sup>. In this aspect, in which pansophism concerned art, and thus human

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<sup>6</sup> I made an attempt to substantiate this thesis in my article *Introduction to the pansophic foundations of pedagogy by Jan Amos Comenius*, (Sztobryn, 2016: 27). A similar point of view was presented by Ł. Kurdybacha, who stated that Comenius *subordinated philosophy and all science to*

creativity, Suchodolski's conviction that it was a program for the reorganization of the world, so it had a transgressive dimension – both in an individual (the famous *gnothiseauton*) and collective perspective is undoubtedly correct. This is perhaps – from the perspective of contemporary pedagogy – Comenius' greatest achievement. Suchodolski's interpretation reveals the humanism of pansophism particularly strongly – it can be seen when he talks about rising to humanity thanks to your own human effort, or where he discusses the famous *omnes, omnia, omnino* as a path to the cultural fullness of potentially all people, while excluding the reduction of pansophism to a simple encyclopedism. Placing the emphasis on such knowledge, which is not a set of disconnected information, but has a comprehensive, synthetic and basic character, is certainly another value of Comenius' pansophism. However, in these comments there is no reflection on a fairly fundamental aspect of pansophism, namely where Comenius' belief that all people are given the same *rules of knowledge called common concepts* comes from. Comenius added common instincts and universal abilities to these. While pansophic education would rather indicate the underlying assumption of *tabula rasa*, the rules given to all come from the opposite area – innate ideas. Is this a contradiction in Comenius' views, or is it just an attempt to compile different philosophies? Or is it a consequence of the aforementioned chrestosophy? Suchodolski does not resolve this, and it seems to be an extremely important problem for understanding this innermost core of pansophism. In the Introduction to *Pampaedia*, there are many references to pansophism, which Suchodolski interprets in the context of the analogy between the structure of being and the stages of human life. Elsewhere, he claims that the educational tasks flowing from this philosophy are rooted in the metaphysics of human fate and are aimed at shaping people's humanity. In these descriptions there is a key statement for the current analyzes of Suchodolski's interpretation that *pansophism was to lead to a thorough educational reform* (Suchodolski, 1973: XXVI). From this original trunk, other, more detailed Comenius' solutions (e.g. didactics) could only spring up, but not the other way around<sup>7</sup>. Suchodolski wanted to see Comenius as a realist, especially

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*theology in accordance with the requirements of the Middle Ages* (Kurdybacha, 1976: 71). Among the earlier authors, this thought was clearly expressed by J. Marjański, who wrote: *religion determines his goal and the general concept of education* (Marjański, 1928: 89). B. Suchodolski had a different opinion, as he claimed that in pansophism *it is clearly visible how far he* [Comenius, add. S.S.] *has gone from traditional religious assumptions and solutions* (Suchodolski, 1967: 215).

<sup>7</sup> W. Osterloff presented quite the opposite and very critical presentation that concerned the value of education designed by Comenius. One of the basic elements of pansophic education,

when he presented pansophism as an objective synthesis of knowledge about things, about the world in general, and found justification for this thesis in Comenius' references to Aristotle. In one of his early works, Suchodolski, analyzing the process of pedagogy becoming a branch of science, pointed to Comenius' works as one of the most important links in the emancipation of this discipline *from the ties of the religious and ecclesiastical conception of man* (Suchodolski, 1957: 628). If we realize that this thesis is fully true only in relation to one great circle of pansophism, i.e. the nature, only partially in relation to art, and completely unrelated to its third circle – God, then we must necessarily undermine the validity of Suchodolski's beliefs. (Suchodolski, 1967: 217). His position is also weakened by the *tabula rasa* dilemma, or innate ideas presented earlier, because from it two separate theses can be derived: about following Aristotle (*tabula rasa*), but also about Plato (inborn ideas)<sup>8</sup>. In his search for the intellectual contexts of Comenius' pansophism, Suchodolski pointed to the 16th-century Italian philosopher Franciszek Patrizzi, who also used the concept of pansophism. The philosopher leaned towards the philosophy of Plato, which might suggest Comenius' pro-Platonic inclinations. Suchodolski was convinced, however, that *pansophic ideas were not Platonic, they were representations of things* (Suchodolski, 1973: XLIV–XLV). Suchodolski included his syncretic method, which Comenius considered to be a method of holistic, pansophic cognition, among the Moravian's independent discoveries. Its essence was the assumption of unity in multiplicity, finding analogies and similarities in differences. This valuable – also for contemporary researchers – aspect of Comenius' intellectual work requires a broader study elsewhere.

Although in his pansophism, Comenius clearly stood on the basis of the Christian faith, placing the nature and human knowledge in the background – which is perfectly visible in his basic triad taken after F. Bacon<sup>9</sup>.

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namely visibility, in the opinion of this philosopher and historian of pedagogy, [...] *has undermined the true science of perception for hundreds of years in its foundations* (Osterloff 1918: 71).

<sup>8</sup> Suchodolski is ambiguous in his interpretations of Comenius' philosophy, because he also claimed that [t]his can be considered a reference to the Plotinian metaphysical concept, according to which the world flows from God as a great unity and returns to God by developing and differentiating, but he made Comenius' speculations realism.

<sup>9</sup> It would also be interesting to analyze Comenius' legacy in the context of Bacon's theory of illusions. If we look at the composition of the pansophic seven-book, it reflects Bacon's idols – tribal, cave, market and theater. There is also a fundamental difference between them, and it concerns the relationship between theology and philosophy. Comenius – evolving in his research, finally took the position of *philosophia ancilla theologiae*, while Bacon tried to liberate philosophy from the bonds of theology. (Comenius, 1999: 80–96); K. Leśniak, On the theoretical and historical foundations of Franciszek Bacon's induction, <http://old.archidei.ifispan.pl/>



God, nature, art – such people like Hieronim Broniewski, or representatives of the Anglican Church with all their religious fanaticism truly opposed the pansophic conception of the Moravian (Kurdybacha, 1976: 76-79). What's more, he was even accused of being close to the doctrine of the Polish Brethren, (i.e. Arians), which I think must have sounded absurd already at that time<sup>10</sup>. According to Suchodolski, Comenius had an opposition both among the theologians of that time (Kurdybacha adds that also among his own community of the Czech Brethren) and scientists, naturalists and rationalists. This desire to combine the mutually exclusive elements: a strong profession of faith with the scientific method created a situation in which today we have difficulties interpreting not only the course of the Moravian's fate, but also his pansophic doctrine.

Łukasz Kurdybacha, writing about Comenius from a sociological and historical perspective, emphasized the specific goal of pansophism. The humanism that Suchodolski emphasized so clearly appears here rather as a result of the implementation of further goals. According to Kurdybacha (1976: 80), *Comenius was looking for a cure for wounds inflicted on schools, the church and all mankind in pansophism*. He perceived it as the surest way to rebuild peace among Christians and to spread again *one common Christian religion among them [...] so that all Christians could live in harmony with one another in the universal one church and profess one faith – maior gloria Dei*. Thus, Comenius, presented by Kurdybacha as a representative of the plebeian masses, in fact made school and pansophic education a tool for church renewal, or rather a return to the golden times of medieval unity. Therefore – as K. Schaller admits – the honest statement of the Moravian himself that *he wrote everything he wrote for young people not as a teacher but as a theologian*<sup>11</sup> is not surprising. While summing up the historical evo-

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pdf/7ahf02\_00 1lesniak.pdf, p. 80. Access on 29/09/2020. The source text of A. Fijałkowski (Fijałkowski, 2019: 156) indicates the links between Comenius' pansophism and Ramism, and Piotr Ramus.

<sup>10</sup> It seems that Comenius' tolerance in the didactic field, assuming understanding of differences and willingness to communicate in a wider field, was losing its power especially in relation to the Arians. Jiří Pavlů wrote about tolerance in a hagiographic tone (Pavlů, 2013: 292).

<sup>11</sup> This citation has been borrowed from: Benner & Stepkowski, *Theoretical and social constitution of one's own logic of modern education. Considerations in reference to Jan Amos Comenius and Jan Jakub Rousseau*, p. 11, In: <https://repozytorium.ukw.edu.pl/bitstream/handle/item/669/Dietrich%20Benner%2c%20Dariusz%20Stepkowski%20Teoretyczne%20i%20spoleczne%20ukonstytuowanie%20wlasnej%20logiki%20nowoczesnego%20wychowania.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>, p. 10; Access on 1 October 2020. It is worth recalling at this point his view of the importance Comenius assigned to his philosophical research. He wrote: *I already thought that I would abandon the thorny field of teaching and devote myself to the pleasant work on seeking the*

lution of pansophism, Kurdybacha (1978: 80) offers the following conclusion: *Over time, religious issues take up more and more space in pansophism, until the 'Centum Pansophiae' dialogues overshadow all other matters with their number and importance.* However, following this historian's opinion, the greatest achievement of pansophism is *absolute democratism*. This thesis, probably stimulated by the Marxist ideology, in such an unequivocal form is not entirely true. The concretizations introduced by Comenius, however, limit its social scope. He added scientific and didactic elements to Kurdybacha's democratism: pansophism was to be created by a global network of scholars<sup>12</sup>, it was to become the most important subject of teaching, schools were to become a common phenomenon even in small towns and were to use the visual method. The assessment of Comenius' pansophism in the writings of this historian is positive, although it does not seem to be critical. The eschatological dimension of pansophism was less emphasized than its social, or educational dimension.

Among the dissertations referring to pansophism as a whole and to its individual components, it is worth noting the small but important information formulated by Nawoja Mikołajczak-Matyja, a psycholinguist and a philologist. In her dissertation, she took up the issue of the *alphabet of human thought*, the aim of which is to create a hierarchical, logical system of concepts. While referring to C. Marelli, she pointed to *Pansofia* and *Janua linguarum* as prototypes of building a universal language of thought. In her opinion, *Comenius, by combining humanism with universalism, suggests creating a new, artificial language, naming all elements of reality and constituting a means of universal education for all people* (Mikołajczak-Matyja, 2005: 20). There is a deeper philosophical content in this idea, the conviction that our world is created by language, and that the differences between people originate from the differences in the concepts they use. Comenius' idea to bring people closer to each other by creating a common base of concepts has not disappeared and nowadays, as reported by N. Mikołajczak-Matyja, can be

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*truth in philosophy, when I found myself again among these thorns.* Quoted from R.H. Quick (Quick, 1896: 101).

<sup>12</sup> Numerous commentators of Comenius' writings drew attention to the participation of scientists from all fields of science. An excellent idea - ahead of modern scientific networks - was of particular importance, because at that time, i.e. at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, various journals began to appear, both periodicals and magazines. The weekly *Wöchentliche Zeitung* was published in Gdańsk, the town geographically closest to Comenius, in 1618. In Europe, in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, magazines from Italy, Germany, England and France were published. One of them, i.e. *Merkuriusz Polski...*, appeared in 1661. The progress of scientific research generated solutions aimed at more and more efficient communication of its results.

evidenced by the activities done by John Wilkins and his followers. In order to be able to assess the value of this aspect of Comenius' pansophic reflection (*Panglottia*), appropriate research by philological specialists is necessary.

Maria Wichowa (1999: 46), when looking at the problem from the position of a historian of the baroque literature, also referred to the idea of pansophism in general and the pansophism proposed by Comenius in particular. She believed that pansophism was an integral part of that culture (this claim is also indirectly confirmed by the opinion of Antoni Bądzkiewicz<sup>13</sup>). In her opinion, not only Comenius assumed that an outstanding human mind was able to encompass all the accumulated knowledge. Among these polymasters, while searching for suitable representatives among those only who could be found in the national (i.e. Polish) borders, M. Wichowa (*ibid.*) mentioned, among others, Grzegorz Knapski, Sebastian Petryce, Bartłomiej Keckermann, Jan Adam Kochański, Jan Jonston. This group also included Father Benedykt Chmielowski. In her opinion, what can be used as the expression of the baroque encyclopedism was precisely pansophism<sup>14</sup>. It is true that in her text Comenius and his concept of pansophism were presented through her contemporary works on encyclopedism of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (cf. J. Olkiewicz, C. Vasoli), hence one should not expect a more detailed interpretation of the Moravian's position. What she did was to place the author of *Pansofia* in a broader cultural context, which gives rise to certain common aspirations of people of that time to organize and comprehend the entire intellectual output of mankind. The second observation that emerges from this dissertation is the approximation, if not an equal sign, between the Greek *enkyklios paideia*, translated as a complete circle of education, and Comenius' project. It seems, on the basis of the above-exposed features of Comenius' pansophic thinking, that it is impossible to reduce his position to the classically understood encyclopedism; such an approach meant rather retrospection, intellectual mastery of the existing knowledge, whereas the goals discovered in Comenius' pansophism are transgressive, go far beyond what exists, beyond the existing state of affairs, which must be transformed

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<sup>13</sup> The author stated that the Swedish chancellor Axel Oxenstierna, not being satisfied with Ratke's projects, decided to base the reform of Swedish education on Comenius' pansophism. See: Antoni Bądzkiewicz, *Jan Amos Komeński and the importance of his educational system*, Lviv 1874, <https://kpbk.ukw.edu.pl/dlibra/plain-content?id=732>, 19-20; Access on 1 October 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *In the 17th century, the so-called common, universal encyclopedias, covering a systematically arranged set of information from all fields of knowledge, but also smaller specialized encyclopedias*. (M. Wichowa, *ibid.*, p. 48).

pansophically into a perfect reality that has to embrace all living people<sup>15</sup>. This perfect reality was not meant to be a collection of people and states fighting each other, but a community of harmonious coexistence of all people. W. Voisé (1972) adds to these differences one more important observation, stating that pansophism had two dimensions: intellectual and practical, which indicated the goal and the means of its implementation.

On the basis of the research and observations of the authors who analyze Comenius's pansophism from the perspective of various scientific disciplines, an original and, despite various influences, independent philosophical, social and pedagogical concept emerges, with quite many simultaneously accompanying limitations and/or other forms of burden<sup>16</sup>. Such research is necessary due to the richness of the Moravian's interests and the rich, multilateral legacy. Pansophism, not noticed in many dissertations in its complexity and the consequences arising from this state of affairs, was usually presented as a kind of synonym for encyclopedism; however, at a more detailed examination of this concept, it turns out not only to be complicated due to the multitude of features attributed to it by Comenius, but also close to the contemporary thinking about science and its qualities. In the studies analyzing Comenius' pedagogical concepts and ideas, one should urgently abandon the simplified view referring to the concept of encyclopedism in favor of exposing the concept of pansophism in all the complexity.

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<sup>15</sup> Pansophically, the aspiration to model the future in connection with religious motivation was emphasized by W. Voisé (Voisé, 1972: 234).

<sup>16</sup> An example of such a limitation is the arbitrary selection of books proposed by Comenius in accordance with his chrestosophy, but suggesting the destruction of the historical heritage of mankind, and so contrary to the meaning of his own panhistory. In it he wrote: [*t*]here will be descriptions of human affairs, especially in the field of secular or civic, state and church life, so that we will not miss any memorable event that may be of value to us or our descendants as either an example to follow or a warning. J.A. Comenius, *The Way of Light*, (Suchodolski, 1979: 143). This issue was also dealt with in more detail by M. Jarczykova, Useful and harmful readings according to Jan Amos Komeński, [https://rebus.us.edu.pl/bitstream/20.500.12128/2150/1/Jarczykova\\_Pozyteczne\\_i\\_bezpieczwien\\_lektury\\_wedlug\\_Jana\\_Amosa\\_Komenskiego.pdf](https://rebus.us.edu.pl/bitstream/20.500.12128/2150/1/Jarczykova_Pozyteczne_i_bezpieczwien_lektury_wedlug_Jana_Amosa_Komenskiego.pdf), 18-32; Access on 1 October 2020.

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