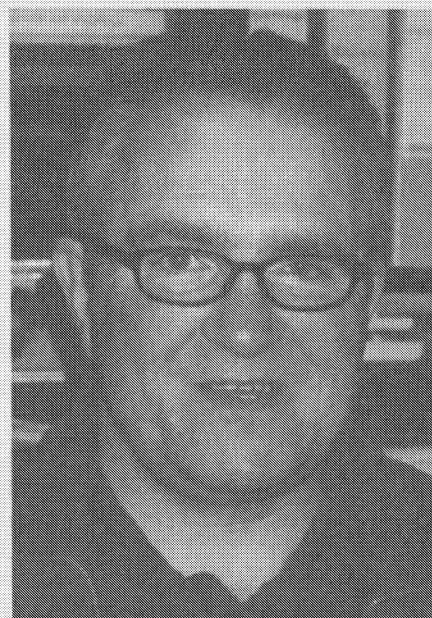


THE LONG WAY TOWARDS THE WAY OF LIGHT: VIA LUCIS IN GERMANY

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In 1997, the entire text of Comenius' *Via lucis* ("The Way of Light") was published for the first time in German by the distinguished publishers Felix Meiner in their "Philosophical Library" series. Its publication in German was anything but inevitable. This paper aims to show why the path to publication was so laborious and how, in the end, it was pursued with success. It will also show that a great deal of work remains to be done.



1. Why the 'Way of Light' Remained in Darkness for so long

There seems to be something elusive about Comenius' treatise *Via lucis*. Although written as early as 1641/42, it circulated only in manuscript as the secret reform programme of a small group of friends until it was finally printed in 1668.¹ Even after its publication, it would remain in the dark for a long time. Although Comenius dedicated – and sent – *Via lucis* to England's Royal Society, the society sold the book shortly after receiving it.² Throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries, if it was noticed at all, it was despised as an obscure work which mingled philosophy with theology.³

Only at the end of the 19th century did *Via lucis* slowly gain the attention of scholars,⁴ until finally it was recognised that *Via lucis* was the key to

¹ Cf. Milada B l e k a s t a d. *Comenius. Versuch eines Umrisses von Leben, Werk und Schicksal des Jan Amos Komenský*. Oslo-Prague: Universitetsforlaget, 1969, pp. 318 f.

² Cf. Milada B l e k a s t a d. *Comenius*, op. cit., p. 659.

³ Cf. J. A. *Komenského Cesta světa* vyšetřena a vyšetřenu býti mající, to jest, rozumné vyhledávání, kterými způsoby lze zdárně rozdělovati již naposledy pod večer světa rozumově duchů světlo, moudrost, po všech myslích všech lidí a po národech. Z latinského jazyka vyložil Josef Š m a h a. Praha: Alois Svoboda, 1920, pp. 7 f.

⁴ Cf. the editorial note by Julie N o v á k o v á in: *Dilo Jana Amose Komenského (DJAK)*, Vol. 14. Academia: Prague 1974, pp. 371-373.

understanding Comenius' view of human history and progress.⁵ Nevertheless, older accounts of *Via lucis* merely sketch its content and briefly describe its origins and publication.⁶ In Germany, moreover, work on Comenius was done primarily by members of the first Comenius Society (founded 1891 in Berlin), who saw Comenius as belonging to a certain esoteric tradition and more often than not had no first-hand knowledge of his writings. This line of interpretation can be found as late as 1991, when it was claimed that *Via lucis* had been the "Bible" of the early Masonic lodges.⁷ By 1899, however, such ideas had already been persuasively challenged by Ján Kvačala (1862–1932).⁸

At that time, there were no serious attempts to make the text of *Via lucis* accessible to the public. Although there were copies of the work at Hamburg city library, the Royal Library Berlin and the university libraries of Rostock and Heidelberg, the Comenius Society did not bring out a reprint, even though this had been recommended by one of its members in the *Monatshefte der Comenius-Gesellschaft*. Karl Dissel (1857–1923), a schoolmaster living in Hamburg, had studied the copy of *Via lucis* there and been greatly impressed by it. "It would be welcome", he wrote in German, "if friends could be found to provide the C.G. [Comenius-Gesellschaft] with funds in order to get along with it soon."⁹

The first known translation of *Via lucis* into a modern vernacular was into Czech.¹⁰ Josef Šmaha (1843–1922), a schoolmaster and diligent translator

⁵ Cf. Johann K v a c s a l a. *Johann Amos Comenius. Sein Leben und seine Schriften*. Berlin-Leipzig-Wien: Julius Klinkhardt, 1892. Repr. Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1989. p. 259 f.

⁶ Cf. Johann K v a c s a l a. *Johann Amos Comenius*, op. cit., pp. 253–260, 466; Karl D i s s e l. *Der Weg des Lichtes. Die Via Lucis des Comenius*. Monatshefte der Comenius-Gesellschaft 4 (1895) 295–305; Jan V. N o v á k and Josef H e n d r i c h. *Jan Amos Komenský. Jeho život a spisy*. Prague: Nákl. "Dědictví Komenského", 1932, pp. 326–331, 645–647. The same holds true also about some later publications, e.g.: Herrmann P i x b e r g. *Die Via Lucis von Johann Amos Comenius*. In: Eckart 29 (1960) 154–161; Milada B l e k a s t a d. *Comenius*, op. cit., pp. 317–325, 658 f.; Jaroslav L u d v í k o v s k ý. *Via lucis. Několik poznámek ke Komenského Cestě světla*. Slavia 39 (1970) 471–488.

⁷ Cf. Karel R ý d l. *Komenského ideje a přechod rosenkruciánství do zednářství*. Studia Comeniana et Historica 44 (1991), pp. 93–99, here: p. 95. No evidence is given for this claim, and there most certainly is no such evidence, as *Via lucis* was too rare a book to enjoy such a wide-spread reception; cf. Karl D i s s e l. *Der Weg des Lichtes*, op. cit., p. 296, fn. 1.

⁸ Cf. Ján K v a č a l a. *J. V. Andreä's Antheil an geheimen Gesellschaften*. Jurjew: Mattiesen, 1899, pp. 4–20 (without direct reference to *Via lucis*). On Kvačala see Werner K o r t h a s e. Ján Kvačala und die Comeniologie in Deutschland. In: *J. A. Komenský a slovenská kultúra*. Zborník materiálov z medzinárodnej komeniologickej konferencie konanej v Bratislave v dňoch 30. a 31. marca 1992. Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského, 1993, 148–54; S. Katalin N é m e t h. *Die ersten ungarischen Comenius-Studien von Ján Kvačala*. Comenius-Jahrbuch 11–12 (2003–2004) 132–136.

⁹ Karl D i s s e l. *Der Weg des Lichtes*, op. cit., p. 296, fn. 1.

¹⁰ Cf. the bibliographical study: *Soupis děl J. A. Komenského v Československých knihovnách, archivech a museích*. Vědecká redaktorka Emma Urbánková. Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1959, p. 434.

of Comenius' writings, presented it as a source of inspiration for the renewal of the Czech educational system,¹¹ thus narrowing its universal validity in the area of reform. Astonishingly, this view has been re-expressed in the recent Czech edition of *Via lucis*.¹² It is no less regrettable that the first, and so far only, English translation of *Via lucis*, portrays Comenius as a good but simple-minded fellow who, failing properly to grasp the challenges of his time, sought to resolve them with antiquated, medieval antidotes.¹³ This distorted picture led in turn to the denunciation of Comenius as one of the "three foreigners" (together with Samuel Hartlib and John Dury) who provided the ideology for Cromwell's violent regime.¹⁴

After the fragmentary but lengthy *De rerum humanarum emendatione consultatio catholica* was rediscovered in 1934 and, in 1966, finally published for the first time, it began to overshadow *Via lucis*. Attitudes to *Via lucis* were not free of contradiction, as is evident, for example, from the views of Jan Patočka. Patočka both acknowledged that *Via lucis* was the foundation of the rich architecture of the *Consultatio catholica*,¹⁵ and, at the same time, dismissed it as an "incomplete duplicate" of the same work.¹⁶ Hence, in the following decades, Comenius studies focused on *Consultatio catholica* and paid little attention to *Via lucis*, which was regarded as a mere stage in Comenius's intellectual development.¹⁷ We do,

¹¹ Cf. J. A. Komenského *Cesta světla*, op. cit., pp. 7-9.

¹² Cf. Jaromír K o p e c k ý (ed.). *Jan Amos Komenský. Cesta světla*. Praha: Mladá fronta, 1992, pp. 223-226.

¹³ Cf. E. T. C a m p a g n a c (ed.). *The Way of Light. By John Amos Comenius*. Liverpool: The University Press; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938, p. III.

¹⁴ Cf. H. R. T r e v o r - R o p e r. *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change and Other Essays*. London-Melbourne-Toronto: Macmillan, 1967, pp. 237-293 ("Three Foreigners: The Philosophers of the Puritan Revolution"); in German translation: *Religion, Reformation und sozialer Umbruch*. Frankfurt am Main etc.: Propyläen, 1970, pp. 221-270.

¹⁵ Cf. Jan P a t o č k a. *Komenského názory a pansofické literární plány od spisů útěšných ke 'Všeobecné poradě'*. In: id. *Jan Amos Komenský (II). Gesammelte Schriften zur Comeniusforschung*. Bochum: Universität Bochum, 1981, pp. 354-375, p. 373: *Via lucis* as *Consultatio catholica* "in nuce".

¹⁶ Cf. id. *Entstehung und Aufbau der Opera didactica omnia von J. A. Komenský*. In: id. *Jan Amos Komenský...*, op. cit., pp. 163-171, p. 167.

¹⁷ Cf. Dagmar Č a p k o v á. *The Comenian Group in England and Comenius' Idea of Universal Reform*. *Acta Comeniana* 1 (1969) 25-34; Charles W e b s t e r. *The Great Instauration. Science, Medicine and Reform 1626 - 1660*. London: Duckworth, 1975, pp. 25, 110 f. (one of the rare examples of an account of the history of ideas which is not directly Comeniological and nevertheless makes senseful use of *Via lucis*); Jan P a t o č k a. *Die Philosophie der Erziehung des J. A. Comenius*. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1971, p. 19; Gerhard M i c h e l. *Die Welt als Schule. Ratke, Comenius und die didaktische Bewegung*. Hannover etc.: Schroedel, 1978, p. 123f.; Klaus S c h a l l e r. *Comenius 1992. Gesammelte Beiträge zum Comeniusjahr*. Sankt Augustin: Academia, 1992, pp. 27-29, 51 ff.; Jaromír L o u ž i l. *Via lucis*. In: Peter B e c h e - r e t a l. *Ve světle tmy / Im Licht der Dunkelheit*. Prague: Prago Media, 1995, pp. 173-178.

however, find one comparatively good introduction to *Via lucis* in a recent edition of the Latin text with a new Czech translation, albeit written from a Marxist viewpoint.¹⁸

The major breakthrough for *Via lucis* as a object of research came in 1974 with the publication of Jarmila Borská's and Julie Nováková's (1919–1991) critical and well-annotated edition.¹⁹ This work played a part in accelerating the reception of *Via lucis* in Germany, as parts of it, albeit in Latin, were included in a German publication some years later, accompanied by a short introduction.²⁰ In West Germany, only part of *De rerum humanarum emendatione consultatio catholica*, the *Pampaedia*, had been translated from Latin, and published for the first time in 1960 under Dmitrij Tschizewskij (1894–1977).²¹ Outside the field of educational studies there had been little interest in translating Comenius. At all events, in 1981 Comenius was mentioned for the first time in a German handbook of the history of philosophy,²² and here *Via lucis* was included in the list of his works.²³ The co-editor of the handbook, Erwin Schadel (* 1946), has since endeavoured in numerous lectures and publications to give Comenius a place in contemporary philosophical and theological discourse.²⁴ He also presides over a research institute which promotes Comenius studies and which has greatly facilitated

¹⁸ Cf. Jaromír Kopecký – Jiří Kyráček – Jan Patočka – Jiřina Popelová – Otáhalová (ed.). *Johann Amos Comenius. Via lucis / Cesta světla*. Prague: Stát. Pedagog. nakl., 1961. The introduction given here (pp. 287–302) depends heavily on Jiřina Popelová. *Jana Amose Komenského cesta k všenápravě*. Prague: Stát. Pedagog. nakl., 1958.

¹⁹ *DJAK*, Vol. 14, pp. 279ff.

²⁰ Cf. Klaus Schaller (ed.). *Johann Amos Comenius. Ausgewählte Werke*. Vol. III, Hildesheim: Olms, pp. VIII–IX (introduction by the editor), 3–11 (dedicatory epistle), 12–16 (chap. 18), 134–136 (chap. 17).

²¹ Cf. Dmitrij Tschizewskij (together with Heinrich Geissler and Klaus Schaller, ed.). *Johann Amos Comenius. Pampaedia. Lateinischer Text und deutsche Übersetzung*. Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1960; ²1965. On Tschizewskij, see also the following works by Werner Korthaase: *Der Philosophiehistoriker, Literaturwissenschaftler und Comeniologe Dmytro Čyževs'kyj in der Tschechoslowakischen Republik und in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. In: Rolf Göbner – Alexander Kratochvíl (Hg.). *Ukrajins'ka kul'tura v evropejs'komu konteksti*. Ukrainische Kultur im Europäischen Kontext. Internationale Ukrainistikkonferenz vom 26. bis 28. Juni in Greifswald 2000. Greifswald: Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität Greifswald, 2002, pp. 22–42; *Aus dem Schriftwechsel Milada Blekastads mit dem Verlag Quelle und Meyer und Dmitrij Tschizewskij*. Comenius-Jahrbuch 11–12 (2003–2004) 176–180; *Vid Melanchtona do Komens'koho ta Čyževs'koho*. Drohobyč, Kyjiv: Kolo, 2005, pp. 201–296.

²² Cf. Erwin Schadel. *Johann Amos Comenius*. In: Wilhelm Totok (ed.). *Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*. Vol. IV: *Frühe Neuzeit*. 17. Jahrhundert. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1981, pp. 384–419.

²³ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 418.

²⁴ Cf. e.g. Erwin Schadel (ed.). *Johann Amos Comenius. Antisozinianische Schriften*. Hildesheim etc.: Georg Olms, 1983; *id. Die Sozinianismuskritik des J. A. Comenius und die Genese des neuzeitlichen Selbst- und Wissenschaftsverständnisses. Versuch einer kritischen*

my research on *Via lucis* (“Forschungsstelle für interkulturelle Philosophie und Comeniusforschung” at the “Educational Studies – Philosophy – Psychology” Faculty of the Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg).

The fourth centenary of Comenius’ birth in 1992 was marked by the publication of new translations of *Via lucis* – one each into Dutch²⁵ and Korean,²⁶ and two into Italian.²⁷ Previous attempts to produce a German translation did not augur

Würdigung der pansophischen Triadik. In: Klaus S c h a l l e r (ed.). *Comenius. Erkennen – Glauben – Handeln. Internationales Comenius-Colloquium, Herborn 1984.* Sankt Augustin: Richarz, 1985, pp. 164-188; J. A. Comenius’ „*Sapientiae trigonus*“ – ein Modell universaler Selbstverwirklichung? *Studia Comeniana et historica* 16 (1986) 29-40; *Komenský’s Emendationstriadik im reformatorischen und speziell sozinianischen Umfeld.* *Studia Comeniana et historica* 18 (1988) 91-111; *Tun, Denken und Sprechen als binnendifferenzierte Verbindlichkeitsstruktur. Erläuterungen zu J.A. Comenius’ „Sapientiae Trigonus“.* In: Norbert K o t o w s k i and Jan B. L á š e k (ed.). *Internationales Comenius-Kolloquium (Bayreuth, 26.-29. Sept. 1991).* Fürth: Flacius-Verlag, 1992, pp. 107-115; *Obrar, pensar y hablar como estructura inradiferencial. El ‘sapientiae trigonus’ de Juan Amós Comenio como modelo pansófico de la autorealización in-sistencial.* *Estudios trinitarios* 30 (1997) 309-322; id. (ed.). *Johann Amos Comenius. Wiederholte Ansprache an Baron Wolzogen / Iteratus ad Baronem Wolzogenium sermo. Übersetzt von Otto Schönberger. Mit einem Kommentar und einer Einführung in die antisozinianische Kontroverse hg. v. Erwin Schadel.* Frankfurt am Main etc.: Peter Lang, 2002; id. *Sehendes Herz (cor oculatum) – zu einem Emblem des späten Comenius. Prämodernes Seinsverständnis als Impuls für integral konzipierte Postmoderne.* Frankfurt am Main etc.: Peter Lang, 2003; *Comenius’ Pansophie als Konzept eines kreativen Friedens.* In: Norbert Brieskorn [S.J.] and Markus R i e d e n a u e r (ed.). *Suche nach Frieden: Politische Ethik in der Frühen Neuzeit.* Vol. III. Stuttgart etc.: Kohlhammer 2003, pp. 175-213; *Die ternare Pansophie des Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1670) als Korrektiv für neuzeitlichen Indifferentismus.* In: *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie* 48 (2003) 69-98; *Verus Catholicismus. Grundzüge der Comenianischen Reform- und Friedensbemühungen.* In: *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie* 49 (2004) 41-62; *Syntagma pansophicum triumum. Grundriss der Comenianischen Reform- und Friedensbemühungen.* In: Werner K o r t h a s e et al. (ed.). *Comenius und der Weltfriede / Comenius and World Peace.* Berlin: Deutsche Comenius-Gesellschaft, 2005, pp. 180-203; *Comenius’ Pansophie – ein Initialmoment des Leibnizschen Philosophierens?* In: Herbert B r e g e r et al. (ed.). *VIII. Internationaler Leibniz-Kongress „Einheit in der Vielheit“.* Vorträge, 2. Teil. Univ. Hannover 2006, 24.-29. Juli 2006. Hannover: Universität Hannover, 2006, pp. 898-908. Schadel is currently publishing Comenius’ complete anti-Socinian writings in an annotated German translation (*Johann Amos Comenius. Antisozinianische Schriften.* Vol. I-III. Frankfurt am Main etc.: 2003-2007); the first volume of this series was *Wiederholte Ansprache an Baron Wolzogen*, op. cit. For further important publications by Schadel on Comenius, see fn. 34, 39, 45 and 53 below.

²⁵ Cf. J. M. S c h a a d (ed.). *Johann Amos Comenius, De Weg van het Licht.* Amsterdam: Pelikaan, 1992.

²⁶ Sook Jong L e e (ed.). *The Way of Light by John Amos Comenius. Translated [into Korean] by Sook Jong Lee.* Seoul: Jeshurun, 1999. This translation is not based directly on the Latin text, but on the English translation by Campagnac.

²⁷ Cf. Giordano F o r m i z z i (ed.). *Jan Amos Komensky, La via della luce.* Verona: Libreria Editrice Universitaria Verona, 1992; Cosimo S c a r c e l l a (ed.). *Amos Comenio, La via della luce.* Tirrenia (Pisa): Edizioni del Cerro, 1992. Scarcella’s edition is curious as it is based on the

well for the centenary year. In 1896, Joseph Reber (1838–1924), a headmaster in Aschaffenburg and one of Germany's first Comenius scholars, mentioned in his Latin and German edition of *Physicae synopsis* that he had a German translation of *Via lucis* ready for print.²⁸ Reber wanted to edit it as the second volume of a German-language Comenius series. The cool reception of his bilingual edition of *Physicae synopsis*, particularly by the Comenius Society (founded in 1891), led him to abandon this plan.²⁹ His translation of *Via lucis* seems to have been lost. Heinrich Bartholomé (1907–1981), professor at the college of education in Dortmund, also worked on a translation of *Via lucis*. Yet although his “first sketch”, as he called it, was found after his death, it was never printed.³⁰ In my own edition of *Via lucis*, I stated that there was also an unpublished German translation of *Via lucis* by Dmitrij Tschizewski.³¹ This is plainly not the case, as I am now aware thanks to Tschizewski scholar Werner Korthaase.

The year 1992 did at least see the publication of two translated excerpts from *Via lucis* (the dedicatory epistle and chapter 16). They appeared in an omnibus edition of Comenius texts which had been planned by Franz Hofmann (1922–2002) in the old East Germany.³² Earlier, in 1983, Erwin Schadel had published a section of *De rerum humanarum emendatione consultatio catholica*,³³ which though it depended heavily on a passage of *Via lucis*,³⁴ was not actually part of it; nor was it particularly long. One work entirely translated into German was *Panaugia*. However, the translator, Franz Hofmann, did not take account of recent work on *Via lucis* and hence did not explore the relation between the two works.³⁵

Latin text of the Latin and Czech edition issued in 1961 (cf. above, fn. 19), obviously without taking into account either the critical edition of 1974 or most of the relevant literature.

²⁸ Cf. Joseph Reber. *Johann Amos Comenius, Entwurf der nach dem göttlichen Lichte umgestalteten Naturkunde*. Gießen: Roth, 1896, p. LXXXIV.

²⁹ Cf. Werner Korthaase. *Die Berliner internationale Comenius-Gesellschaft zur Pflege der Wissenschaft und Volkserziehung (1891–1934)*. Berlin: Comenius-Zentrum, 1993, p. 58.

³⁰ Thanks to Bartholomé's widow and to Gerhard Michel, I had a chance to read it after finishing work on my own translation.

³¹ Cf. Uwe Vogt. *Johann Amos Comenius. Der Weg des Lichtes / Via lucis*. Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1996, p. XXV.

³² Cf. Franz Hofmann (ed.). *Jan Amos Comenius. Schriften zur Reform der Wissenschaften, der Bildung und des gesellschaftlichen Lebens*. Neuwied-Kriftel-Berlin: Luchterhand, 1992, pp. 77–97. The translation is fluent but not always reliable. On Hofmann, see Werner Korthaase. *Comenius – praeceptor humanitatis. Franz Hofmann zum 75. Geburtstag*. Comenius-Jahrbuch 5 (1997) 57–67.

³³ Cf. Erwin Schadel. [Translation and edition of:] *Johann Amos Comenius: Lichttheoreme (Consultatio catholica, Panaugia, cap. XI)*. Grenzgebiete der Wissenschaften 32 (1983) 89–122. *Panaugia* had been reprinted and introduced already by Dmitrij Tschizewskij (München: Fink, 1970).

³⁴ Viz. chapter 10.

³⁵ *Johann Amos Comenius. Allerleuchtung*. Frankfurt am Main etc.: Peter Lang, 2002.

To sum up: by the mid-1990s, *Via lucis* was accessible to a wider audience in some countries, at least in principle. In addition to some Czech translations, there were vernacular editions in Dutch, Italian, Korean and English (although the last of these was seriously flawed by its commentary). In Germany, however, there was no complete translation, while most of the important secondary literature was either obsolete and out of print, or written in foreign languages only.

2. *How I Stumbled on the 'Way of Light'*

Before I began to study philosophy, psychology and Catholic theology at the University of Bamberg in 1985, I had heard little of Comenius – or *Via lucis*. That would change once I became an assistant at the Department of Philosophy I for a research project directed by Heinrich Beck (* 1929): “Creative Peace through Encounter of World Cultures”.³⁶ One of my initial tasks was to translate papers and lectures from English into German. After one of these jobs early in 1988, I was approached by Dr Erwin Schadel, who also worked in the department and had already told me a little about Comenius. Schadel asked whether I felt able to translate a treatise by Comenius from Latin into German. By agreeing to do so, I had in fact chosen the focus of my interest for a long time to come, although without realising it at the time. I was flattered by the fact that the translation was to be published by Felix Meiner. Dr Schadel told me that Paul Otto Kristeller (1905–1999), famous for his studies of neo-Platonism in the Italian renaissance,³⁷ had recently pointed out to that publisher that Comenius was not included in their series of classical philosophical works. His own suggestion for a little Comenius trilogy had therefore fallen on fertile ground. His translation of *Janua rerum* was already on its way – it was published in 1989³⁸ – and *Via lucis* was to be the next issue, followed by *Triertium catholicum*.

Having made a copy of the critical edition of *Via lucis*, I started working on a translation. From the very beginning I was fascinated by the profound humaneness of the text and by its rich ideas woven into powerful images and metaphors. At

³⁶ Cf. e.g. Heinrich Beck – Gisela Schmirber (ed.). *Kreativer Friede durch Begegnung der Weltkulturen*. Frankfurt am Main etc.: Peter Lang, 1994. This volume is available in numerous translations, among them also an English one: *Creative Peace Through Encounter of World Cultures*. Delhi: Indian Books Centre, 1996.

³⁷ Cf. Paul Otto Kristeller. *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1943; *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters*, Roma 1956; *Renaissance Thought*, New York 1961; *Medieval Aspects of Renaissance Learning*, Durham 1974; Thomas Gihard. *Bibliographia Kristelleriana. A Bibliography of the Publications of Paul Otto Kristeller*. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2006.

³⁸ Cf. Erwin Schadel (ed.). *Johann Amos Comenius. Pforte der Dinge / Janua rerum*. Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1989. This publication contains numerous excurses by Schadel on the philosophical impact of Komenský's thinking.

the same time my theological studies were being supervised by the late Ignacio Escribano-Alberca (1928–2003), a philosopher of religion who specialised in medieval and early modern chiliastic movements.³⁹ In Heinrich Beck's research project, mentioned above, I had encountered the concept of history as a process of increasing mutual completion by different human civilizations.⁴⁰ For this reason I approached *Via lucis* with a special interest in its understanding of history and in its philosophical and theological background. What I found was a creative synthesis of different traditions with an original interpretation of the development of civilisation.

I soon decided, at the prompting of Klaus Boekels, head of Bamberg University's computer department, to write my Ph. D. thesis on *Via lucis*.⁴¹ To this end, it was essential to learn Czech, which I did. In order to consult 16th and 17th century literature related to *Via lucis*, I travelled to the libraries at Coburg, Eichstätt, Wolfenbüttel and, finally, to the Comenius Museum at Uherský Brod. There I benefited greatly both from discussions with Czech Comenius scholars and from access to the works contained in the library.⁴² I also met Werner Korthaase, the Comenius scholar and founder (and later president) of the new German Comenius Society, for whose infectious enthusiasm and inspiration I remain grateful.

3. Sparse sponsorship of Comenius studies in Germany

I carried out my work on *Via lucis* at my own expense, although I was fortunate to receive some financial support for the publication of the translation.⁴³ And even today, ten years later, sponsorship of Comenius studies remains meagre.⁴⁴ One

³⁹ Cf. Ignacio E s c r i b a n o - A l b e r c a. *Das vorläufige Heil. Zum christlichen Zeitbegriff*. Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1970; *Eschatologie. Von der Aufklärung bis zur Gegenwart*. Freiburg etc.: Herder, 1987 (Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte, Vol. 4,7d); *Anmerkungen zur Theologie der Antitrinitarier in der englischen Frühaufklärung*. In: Erwin S c h a d e l – Uwe V o i g t (ed.). *Sein – Erkennen – Handeln. Interkulturelle, ontologische und ethische Perspektiven. Festschrift für Heinrich Beck zum 60. Geburtstag*. Frankfurt am Main etc.: Peter Lang, 1994, pp. 515–546. His handbook on eschatology (*Eschatologie*, op. cit., pp. 39–44) contains a short passage on Comenius in England which is derived mainly from H. R. T r e v o r - R o p e r. *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change and Other Essays*, op. cit.

⁴⁰ Cf. fn. 37.

⁴¹ Uwe V o i g t. *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Johann Amos Comenius als kreative Syntheseleistung. Vom Konflikt der Extreme zur Kooperation der Kulturen*. Frankfurt am Main etc.: Peter Lang, 1996.

⁴² I am especially indebted to librarian Dana Večeřová and museum director Dr Pavel Popelka for their assistance.

⁴³ The publication of *Via lucis* (see footnote 31) was facilitated by a grant from the University of Bamberg and by an award for my dissertation from the Universitätsbund Bamberg.

⁴⁴ Cf. Hans-Georg H e r r l i t z. *Comenius in Deutschland*. *Comenius-Jahrbuch* 7 (1999) 100; and the critical remarks by Werner K o r t h a a s e on the situation in Germany in his review of Klaus S c h a l l e r. *Johann Amos Comenius. Ein pädagogisches Porträt*. *Studia Comeniana et Historica* 75–76 (2006) 252 f.

has little chance of giving a philosophical paper on Comenius at a conference in Germany unless one organises the conference oneself.⁴⁵ Nor has the situation been greatly improved by the encouraging response to the German translation of *Via lucis* and to my study of the text.⁴⁶ And although I have tried in various papers to focus attention on the relevance of Comenius,⁴⁷ and, undoubtedly, scholars are now beginning to take greater note of him,⁴⁸ as can be seen in an important new

⁴⁵ For a rare exception, see: Erwin S c h a d e l (ed.). *Johann Amos Comenius – Vordenker eines kreativen Friedens. Deutsch-tschechisches Kolloquium anlässlich des 75. Geburtstages von Heinrich Beck*. Frankfurt am Main etc.: Peter Lang, 2005.

⁴⁶ For comments on the translation see Jürgen B e e r. In: *Comenius-Jahrbuch* 6 (1998) 105-107; Johannes H e i n r i c h s. In: *Philosophischer Literaturanzeiger* 51 (1998) 220f.; Felix K r ä m e r. In: *Bochumer Philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter* 3 (1998) 250-256; Martina B r e t z. *Am Abend, als es kühle war. Der Gläubige vertraut dem Morgen: Johann Amos Comenius suchte in finsterner Zeit unbeirrt das Licht der Vernunft*. In: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland*. 24. 12. 1997, p. 11.

For comments on my study of *Via lucis*, see : Heinrich B e c k. In: *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie* 42 (1997) 159-163; Johannes H e i n r i c h s. In: *Philosophischer Literaturanzeiger* 50 (1997) 289f.; Helmut M ü l l e r. In: *prima philosophia* 12 (1999) 99 f.; Erwin S c h a d e l. In: *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 104 (1997) 458-462; Klaus S c h a l l e r. In: *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 47 (1998) 617 f.; Siegfried W o l l g a s t. In: *prima philosophia* 10 (1997) 231-233; id. in: *Comenius-Jahrbuch* 6 (1998) 105-107; Zdeněk B e n e š. In: *Studia Comeniana et historica*, XXIX, 61, (1999), p. 124, Milan S o b o t k a. In: *Acta Comeniana* 12 (1997), p. 231.

⁴⁷ Cf. Uwe V o i g t, *Verschüttete Fundamente einer anderen Neuzeit. Die 'Via lucis' des J.A. Comenius und ihre Bedeutung für seine Geschichtskonzeption*. In: Erwin S c h a d e l and Uwe V o i g t (ed.). *Sein – Erkennen – Handeln*, op. cit., pp. 461-498; *Illegitime Säkularisierung oder berechnete Selbstverweltlichung? Die Bedeutung der 'Via lucis' für die Geschichtsauffassung des Comenius*. *Studia Comeniana et historica* 29 (1994) 45-65; *The Way of Light as Way Towards Peace. The Connection Between Theory of Knowledge and Understanding of History in Via Lucis*. *Studia Comeniana et historica* 26 (1996) 116-122; *"Walking alone and in the dark" or going the "Way of Light". Komenský's Concept of History in Via Lucis as an Alternative to the Cartesian Position*. *Studia Comeniana et historica* 26 (1996) 276-288; *Vom 'Labyrinth der Welt' zum 'Weg des Lichtes': Die Verbindung von Ganzheitsdenken und Geschichtsverständnis im Werk Jan Amos Komenský's*. In: Erwin S c h a d e l (ed.). *Ganzheitliches Denken*. Frankfurt am Main etc.: Peter Lang, 1996, pp. 147-173; *Comenius und die Erfahrungen des 20. Jahrhunderts*. *Comenius-Jahrbuch* 8 (2000) 83-91 [repr. in: *Studia Comeniana et historica* 31 (2001) 5-16; Werner K o r t h a a s e – Sigurd H a u f f – Andreas F r i t s c h (ed.). *Comenius und der Weltfriede / Comenius and World Peace*. Berlin: Deutsche Comenius-Gesellschaft, 2005, pp. 930-939]; *Der Weg des Lichtes als Weg zum geistigen und politischen Frieden*. In: Werner K o r t h a a s e – Sigurd H a u f f – Andreas F r i t s c h (ed.). *Comenius und der Weltfriede / Comenius and World Peace*, op. cit., pp. 913-929; *Die Renaissance in der Sicht des J.A. Comenius*. In: Lutz H a g e d o r n – Hans-Rainer S e p p (ed.). *Andere Wege in die Moderne. Forschungsbeiträge zu Patočkas Genealogie der Neuzeit*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2006, pp. 120-126; *Die offene Seele auf den Wegen des Lichtes. Grundlagen des comenianischen Geschichtsverständnisses in Via Lucis*. In: Lutz H a g e d o r n – Hans-Rainer S e p p (ed.). *Andere Wege in die Moderne*, op. cit., pp. 170-177.

⁴⁸ See the paper by Andreas L i s c h e w s k i in this volume.

handbook,⁴⁹ and in a popular philosophers' lexicon,⁵⁰ neither Comenius nor the *Via lucis* is known much beyond a small circle of experts. Due to disappointing sales of the first two volumes in the Comenius series, the publication of the third volume, *Triertium catholicum*, has been postponed by the publisher. This lack of public interest can be compared with the situation in England in 1938, as reported by the scholar responsible for the English translation of *Via Lucis*: "It soon became clear that this book would not pay, and that if it were to be brought out it must be at the expense of people who were willing to lose their money. Happily there are such people". Hence he was able to "persuade the University Press of Liverpool to accept the book and to publish it".⁵¹

All of this underlines the importance of institutionalising Comenius research in Germany. In this regard we can hardly do better than to pursue the suggestions of Werner Korthaase, originally put forward at an international conference on Comenius at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland in 2005 and later published in the Czech Republic:

- "1. First we need good translations, ideally into as many languages as possible, but at least into English, today's lingua franca.
2. Further volumes of Comenius' Opera omnia must be published.
3. A complete translation of all of Comenius' works is unnecessary. Anthologies of well-selected extracts will suffice to acquaint the reader with the essence of his thought. It would be impracticable to read through the entire corpus, given its length and structure.
4. In addition to Comenius' educational writings, the anthologies should include poetic and satirical works such as *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart*, the reform programme *Via Lucis*, the social critique *Letters to Heaven* and, in excerpts, the *Panegersia*, *Panorthosia*, and *Panorthosia*, which contain Comenius' programme of political and social action.
5. We need to offer sabbaticals at the excellent Czech Comenius museums. Participants will have to cover their own expenses if governments and universities are unwilling to provide funding (although this is possible Japan!). It is important for Comenius students to read Czech secondary literature, and

⁴⁹ "Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie" in the recent new edition by Helmut Holzhey, esp. *Die Philosophie des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Vol. 4: *Das Heilige Römische Reich deutscher Nation. Nord- und Ostmitteleuropa*. Basel: Schwabe & Co, 2001. The first part of this volume contains sections on Comenius' physics by Pavel Floss (pp. 39-44) and on Comenius as an "utopian of a Christian society" by Gerhard Michel (pp. 166-181). There are also numerous entries on Comenius in the register (second part of the volume, p. 1410). On the merits and shortcomings of this work in respect of Comenius, see the review by Werner Korthaase. In: *Comenius-Jahrbuch* 11-12 (2003-2004) 186-195.

⁵⁰ Cf. Uwe Voigt. "Comenius, Johann Amos". Metzler Philosophen Lexikon. Stuttgart-Weimar: Metzler, 2003, pp. 143-146.

⁵¹ E. T. Campagna (ed.). *John Amos Comenius. The Way of Light*, op. cit., pp. xvii-xviii.

this should be facilitated by means of English translations.

6. Societies for the promotion of Comenius studies should be founded.
7. It is important to ensure that libraries throughout the world are supplied with the latest Comenius literature. Comenius studies should everywhere be part of university curricula.”⁵²

RESUMÉ

Je dlouhá cesta Cesty světla: Via lucis v Německu

V roce 1997 byla Komenského *Via lucis* poprvé vydána německy ve slavném nakladatelství „Verlag Felix Meiner“ v Hamburku, ve známé ediční řadě „Philosophische Bibliothek“. Autor přibližuje historii tohoto německého překladu a vysvětluje, proč se realizoval teprve v poslední čtvrtině 20. století.

Mělo být vlastně povinností „Comenius-Gesellschaft“, založené v roce 1891, toto důležité dílo Komenského vydat; ta pro to ale nic nepodnikla, ačkoliv exempláře latinských výtisků *Via lucis* byly k dispozici v mnoha německých knihovnách, např. v hamburské Městské knihovně, v Královské knihovně v Berlíně, v knihovnách univerzit v Rostocku a v Heidelbergu. Tehdejší vedení „Comenius-Gesellschaft“ o publikování prostě nejevilo zájem. Překlad, který kolem r. 1896 pořídil Joseph Reber (1839–1924), německý školní ředitel, nebyl nikdy zadán do tisku, protože jím přeložená a vydaná Komenského *Physicae synopsis* se nesetkala se čtenářským zájmem a neprodávala se. Joseph Reber proto nebyl s to pro svůj překlad *Via lucis* najít nakladatele a jeho překlad se během následujících let ztratil.

Ve staré Spolkové republice Německo, západní části německého státu, byly do němčiny přeloženy a publikovány *Didactica magna* a *Pampaedia*.

Autor zpravuje o „dlouhé cestě“ *Via lucis* v Německu, o tom, jak sám byl jako spolupracovník na katedře filozofie Univerzity v Bamberku upozorněn na Komenského a začal *Via lucis* překládat do němčiny. Byl nadšen humanistickým obsahem textu, myšlenkovým bohatstvím, účinností obrazů a metafor.

Ale ačkoliv *Via lucis* vyšla v roce 1997 v renomovaném nakladatelství filosofické literatury, a autor sám upozorňoval na *Via lucis* v četných článcích ve vědeckých časopisech, našel tento spis ve Spolkové republice Německo jen málo kupců. Nakladatelství se proto zdráhalo zařadit do edičního programu další titul, který autor chtěl rovněž přeložit do němčiny (*Triertium catholicum*), ačkoliv to bylo plánováno.

Komenského spis *Via lucis* je v Německu znám jen malému kruhu odborníků. Autor proto v závěru svého článku vyvozuje poučení z tohoto neúspěchu *Via lucis*: bylo by potřebné komeniologická studia v Německu zintenzívnit a institucionalizovat. Poukazuje na návrhy Wernera Korthaase a připojuje se k nim: musí být vydány další svazky *J. A. Comenii Opera omnia*. Musí být vydány kvalitní překlady Komenského děl do národních jazyků. Musí být připraveny výbory textů v němčině. Edice musí zohlednit filosofické, reformní, sociálně-kritické a politické texty. Je třeba vyslat studijní skupiny do českých muzeí J. A. Komenského a na komeniologická výzkumná pracoviště. Německé univerzity by měly tyto studijní programy finančně podporovat a zařazovat komeniologická studia do svých studijních plánů.

⁵² Werner K o r t h a a s e. *Becoming acquainted with the unknown Comenius*. Dějepis XXII (2006). Sborník katedry historie. K životnímu jubileu profesora Jana Kumpéry. Třicet let učitelem učitelů dějepisu. Plzeň: Západočeská univerzita v Plzni, pp. 336-349; quotation: pp. 348 f.

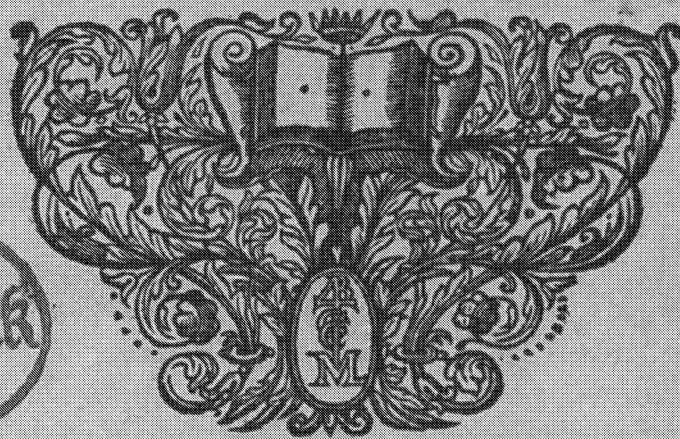
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VIA LUCIS, Vestigata & vestiganda, *h. e.*

Rationabilis disqvistio, qvibus
modis intellectualis Animorum LUX,
SAPIENTIA, per omnes Omnium Hominum mentes,
& gentes, jam tandem sub Mundi vesperam
feliciter spargi possit.

*Libellus ante annos viginti sex in Anglia scriptus,
nunc demum typis exscriptus & in Angliam remissus,
Anno salutis*

M. DC. LXVIII.



AMSTERODAMI,

Apud CHRISTOPHORUM CUNRADUM, Typographum.
Anno 1668.

Das Titelblatt der ersten Auflage von *Via Lucis* von 1668. Nach dem Exemplar in der Staatsbibliothek Berlin.