

## Introduction

Here is the first volume of *Siedlce Comeniological Research Bulletin* of the *EDUCATION STUDIES* series. Its history is quite long, and its creation required a lot of toil. While working on the texts and preparing the publication, the editor had to struggle with numerous difficulties, which made the task almost Sisyphean. Besides the *EDUCATION STUDIES* series, another one is being prepared, connected with literature and history. Its editor is Roman Mnich of the Department of Modern Languages and Interdisciplinary Studies. In order to understand our studies as a whole, one should first trace their history at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce.

Our interest in John Amos Comenius goes back to the turn of the century. The fact that we went deeper and deeper into the research and organization determined our choice of further path of study, which finally became a passion. As Barbara Sitarska is an educationist, and Roman Mnich is a linguist, the research of Comenius and the whole activity became interdisciplinary. The year 2007 turned out to be crucial for the activity.

Assistant Professor Barbara Sitarska, PhD, is an employee of the Faculty of Humanities, Department of Education Studies, Sub-Department of Teaching Methodology, the director of the Institute of General Teaching Methodology. She is an educationist, teaching methodologist, pedagogue. Assistant Professor Roman Mnich, PhD, is the deputy director of the Department of Modern Languages and Interdisciplinary Studies. He is a specialist of Slavic literature theory and history.

The research of John Amos Comenius began in 2007 and resulted in international cooperation, mainly with the German Comenius Association in Berlin. The cooperation started at the beginning of 2007 with a meeting with Werner Korthaase, PhD, the former chairman of the Association, who inspired us to take up Comeniological studies. After his death we got in touch with the new chairman, Prof. Andreas Fritsch. The cooperation resulted in the 1<sup>st</sup> INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC SEMINAR "JOHN AMOS COMENIUS AND THE CULTURE OF BAROQUE", organized in March

2007 at the Department of Education Studies and the Department of Polish Studies and Applied Linguistics. The seminar was attended by researchers of John Amos Comenius both from Poland and from abroad and resulted in the joint publication *JOHN AMOS COMENIUS AND THE CULTURE OF BAROQUE*, from the series *STUDIA COMENIANA SEDLCENSIA* (Vol. 1, 2007).

After Werner Korthaase's death, the members of the German Comenius Association requested the publication of a book about him. It was to be edited by the organizers of the seminar with the help of Manfred Richter, a member of the Association, and published at Siedlce University. It appeared in 2009, entitled *WERNER KORTHAASE – RESEARCHER OF JOHN AMOS COMENIUS*. In September 2009 the 2<sup>nd</sup> INTERNATIONAL COMENIUS SEMINAR was held, entitled *JOHN AMOS COMENIUS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE 17<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY EUROPE*. It was mainly attended by Comenius experts from the Czech Republic, Germany, as well as from the John Amos Comenius Higher Vocational School in Leszno, Poland and the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. The conference was also attended by local academics from the Department of Education Studies, the Department of Polish Studies and Applied Linguistics, the Department of Modern Languages, as well as interested academics from the Department of Natural Sciences. The conference was oriented around the following topics: Comenius' output in the context of philosophical and theological discussion; John Amos Comenius' educational universe; Comenius as a 17<sup>th</sup>-century writer; Leszno and the prodigy of John Amos Comenius. The seminar resulted in the publication *JOHN AMOS COMENIUS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE 17<sup>TH</sup>- CENTURY EUROPE* (2010). It appeared as the third volume of the series *STUDIA COMENIANA SEDLCENSIA*.

In 2011, the 3<sup>rd</sup> INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR was held, entitled *COMENIUS AND THE 17<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY EUROPE*. In the following year, the fourth volume of *STUDIA COMENIANA SEDLCENSIA* appeared under the same title. On 5-6 June 2014, the 4<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC SEMINAR on John Amos Comenius took place, entitled *JOHN AMOS COMENIUS' LABYRINTHS AND PATHS TOWARD THE LIGHT*, combined with an International Scientific Conference at the John Amos Comenius Educational Centre and Junior Secondary School "Peterschule" in Saint Peters-

burg. At the moment the 5<sup>th</sup> volume of *STUDIA COMENIANA SEDLCENSIA* is being prepared.

Three years ago, the idea of an *AENCYCLOPOEDIC LEXICON OF JOHN AMOS COMENIUS* emerged in our research team. Unfortunately, the idea has not been accomplished so far. The information about the lexicon was sent to the cooperating Comenius centres in Poland and abroad. As it turned out, similar initiatives had been undertaken before. Our team has not been successful in this field yet. Two years later, the idea of *Siedlce Comeniological Research Bulletin* appeared. As we assume, it is going to be the first stage of the work on the *Lexicon*. The first volume of the *Research Bulletin* was prepared for over a year. It was approved by the Sub-Department of Teaching Methodology of the Department of Education Studies. The entries were presented to the academic teachers according to their research interests (Comenius comprises all of them in his intellectual writings). The task was undertaken by the employees of the Institute of General Teaching, the Institute of Early School Education and the Institute of Pre-school Education.

The Bulletin contains the following papers: *A learner at John Amos Comenius' school and John Amos Comenius' teacher* by Barbara Grzegorzczuk; *John Amos Comenius – a forerunner of special needs education* by Halina Natora; *Pre-school education according to John Amos Comenius* by Anna Klim-Klimaszewska and Ewa Jagiełło; *Egalitarianism in John Amos Comenius' thought* by Urszula Tyluś; *Natural methods of teaching and John Amos Comenius' rules of teaching methodology* by Grażyna Dzida; *John Amos Comenius' teaching methodology* by Kazimierz Żegnałek. Barbara Sitarska has contributed a few papers: *Life-long education according to John Amos Comenius*; *John Amos Comenius' humanism*; *Education and self-education in John Amos Comenius' philosophical thought*; *John Amos Comenius' labyrinths and paths toward light*; *Freedom, responsibility and identity in John Amos Comenius' views*. The contributors outside the university are: Heliodor Muszyński (*Methodological foundations of John Amos Comenius' writings*); Mariola Jarczykowska (*John Amos Comenius as a guide to life for youth*); Kamila Szymańska (*Education in Leszno in the times of Comenius and Comenius in Leszno*).

Some other contributors are still working on their papers. They are: Aldona Grądzka, *Motivating children, youth, and adults to study by John Amos Comenius*, Barbara Grzegorzczuk, *Worthiness of the book in human life*, Sławomir Sobieraj, *John Amos Comenius' student's book*, Andrzej Borkowski,

*Symbolism in John Amos Comenius' works*, Barbara Sitarska, *John Amos Comenius' pansophia and axiology* – Danuta Szymonik, *Man's dignity according to John Amos Comenius* of Siedlce University, as well as from other universities: Heliodor Muszyński (*Comenius' idea of school*); Sławomir Sztobryn (*Presence of John Amos Comenius in electronic repositories, John Amos Comenius as a forerunner of philosophical education studies*); Adam Fijałkowski (*Demonstrative method in education*), Genowefa Koć-Seniuch, *Communication in education according to John Amos Comenius*.

Their entries are going to appear in the next volume. It is our dream to include foreign (mainly European) contributors' papers in the Bulletin. We hope they will be published in the future volumes.

The editors' assumption is to publish one volume of the Bulletin every year. We are aware of the imperfections of the first publication of the series, as far as both the contents and the form are concerned. However, we decided that it is better to make an attempt and aspire to perfection in the subsequent volumes than aspire to perfection without doing anything at all.

It was even problematic to choose the title of the first volume. I came up with different ideas. One of them was: "John Amos Comenius and the beginnings of Comeniology". Initiatory writings about the subject appeared. However, on second thought, I decided that it was inadequate to the contents: it was too general (the texts did not directly concern the development of Comeniology nor were they interdisciplinary; they concerned Education Studies) and too narrow at the same time (the contents concerned views of European education, its various kinds and aspects). Therefore, I suggested the title: "John Amos Comenius and his views of education" as I was convinced about its adequacy. Additionally, the contents concern Education Studies, which are a section of Comeniology. (Comeniology in itself is an interdisciplinary science). We should remember that Comenius is mostly recognized as an educationist, both in Europe and worldwide.

As an editor of the first volume of *Siedlce Comeniological Research Bulletin* of the *EDUCATION STUDIES* series I wish to thank all the contributors, as I am aware how difficult their task was. I would like to thank my colleague Assistant Prof. Roman Mnich, co-organizer of the seminars on John Amos Comenius and co-editor of the series *STUDIA COMENIANA SEDLCENSIA*,

and Andrzej Borkowski, PhD, for a good and productive cooperation in the field of Comeniology.

I also wish to thank the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Prof. Stanisław Jaczyński, PhD; the Deputy Dean for Science, Prof. Romuald Kalinowski, PhD; the Director of the Department of Education Studies, Assistant Prof. Sławomir Sobczak, PhD; the Deputy Director of the Department of Education Studies for Science, Assistant Prof. Mikołaj Bieluga, PhD, for a good and friendly atmosphere, conducive to creative activity, and for openness to any scientific initiatives.

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*Barbara Sitarska*