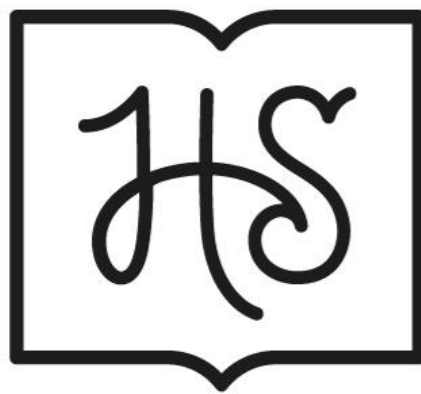


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# Reflection of the Work of J. A. Comenius in Croatia<sup>1</sup>

Štefka BATINIĆ<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Croatian School Museum, Zagreb, Croatia

## Introduction

A more noticeable interest in Comenius's work in Croatian pedagogic milieu was recorded at the end of 1850s, roughly ten years after the establishment of the first public teacher school in Zagreb in 1849. The first Croatian pedagogical journal *Napredak* appeared in 1859 and teacher associations were being established since mid-1860s with the purpose of organising, providing solidarity and educating their members. The last three decades of the nineteenth century were a period of emancipation, affirmation and systematic organisation of teacher education and position. Many pedagogical journals were launched and Croatian translations of European pedagogical texts published. That was the environment in which books by John Amos Comenius were also translated, having remained the only Croatian translations of his work so far. However, the first translation of one of his works has escaped the attention of Croatian historians of pedagogy and is not mentioned in any of the existing texts about Comenius in Croatia.

## Translations of the works of John Amos Comenius in Croatia

The name of John Amos Comenius begins to appear in Croatian publications in the 1840s and 1850s. *Danica ilirska* weekly paper, published by Ljudevit Gaj in Zagreb in 1840, published a Croatian translation, in several parts, of a text from the Czech journal *Květy* on the contributions of Slavs to European civilisation, in which Comenius was mentioned as a "highly commendable educator and renovator of schools in a large part of Europe", whose pedagogical and educational achievements are "indeed of historical importance for the whole world" (*Danica ilirska*, 1840, p. 207). Ivan Filipović, a teacher, refers to Comenius in the *Neven* journal (1855, p. 27), writing the "pages for our fair sex" and in the same volume one of the first biographies of Comenius, the "early Slavic teacher", was published in Croatian language. In his short depiction of Comenius's life and work, author Milan Dimitrev<sup>2</sup> (1855, pp. 104–105) does not mention a fact of interest to Croatian readers, which has remained almost unnoticed in the pedagogical community so far, that the first translation of a Comenius's work into Croatian language had been published as early as 1842.

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<sup>1</sup> This text is a result of research conducted within the project entitled "European Origins of Modern Croatia: Transfer of Ideas on Political and Cultural Field in 18th and 19th Centuries" (IP-2018-01-2539), financed by the Croatian Science Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> A pseudonym for Milan Bubanović.

A German-Croatian text of a shortened version of *World in Pictures (Orbis pictus)* by John Amos Comenius was published in the second edition of *Grammatik der illirischen Sprache*<sup>3</sup> by Ignjat Alojzije Brlić<sup>4</sup> printed in Zagreb in 1842, replacing a dictionary that was part of the first edition published in 1832. A note linked to the Croatian title, *Svjet u obrazih, od Ivana A. Komenskoga*, states the following:

The author of this small work, known by the name of Comenius, was a highly educated Slav who left a mark on an epoch, both in Czech literature and in mediaeval pedagogy. His “World in Pictures” was the first usable textbook in the Middle Ages, which is why it was soon translated into all European languages. The original, written in Czech, was illustrated, which explains the title.

The text includes 82 thematic units and its contents correspond to shorter versions of *Orbis pictus* published in the second half of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century for the instruction of young people in the countries of Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>5</sup> It was also published in the third edition of *Grammatik* in 1850. Its publication can be probably attributed to the merit of Bogoslav Šulek<sup>6</sup>, as indicated by a short note in *Kolo* literary journal (1842, p. 104) on the occasion of the publication of the second edition of *Grammatik der illirischen Sprache*:

This edition does not contain anything new, nothing that cannot be found in old Budimski, with the exception of a few small modifications by Mr Bogoslav Šulek, the proofreader of the work. The only significant novelty is that the said proofreader replaced the monotonous glossary with the notable “*svijet u obrazih*” by Comenius, translated into our language.

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<sup>3</sup> Full title: *Grammatik der illirischen Sprache, wie solche in Dalmatien, Kroatien, Slawonien, Bosnien, Serbien, und von der Illirien in Ungarn gesprochen wird.*

<sup>4</sup> Ignjat Alojzije Brlić (1795–1855), Croatian author and linguist.

<sup>5</sup> From the comparison with the German text, it is justified to assume that the trilingual edition (Latin-Hungarian-German) from 1793 could have been used as a template for the German-Croatian version of *Orbis pictus*, or, even more probably, the quadrilingual edition from 1798, in which “Slavic” text was added to the Latin-Hungarian-German one. A digitized edition from 1793 was used here, but that version of the book was published again later, and probably also earlier. There is a copy of the Latin-Hungarian-German edition in the Croatian School Museum, but we cannot date it with certainty since the front page and the first four pages are missing. The remaining part of the book corresponds to 1793 edition, with the full title (copied exactly from the title page) as: *ORBIS PICTUS, IN HUNGARICUM ET GERMANICUM TRANSLATUS, ET HIC IBIVE EMENDATUS. = A' VILAG LE-FESTVE. Magyarra fordítatott, és hellyel-hellyel meg-jobbítatott Sz. J. által S. Patakón 1790-dik efzt. = Die Welt in Bildern. In die Ungarische und Deutsche Sprache übersetzt und hin und wieder verbessert.*

<sup>6</sup> Bogoslav Šulek (Sobotišće, Slovačka, 1816 – Zagreb, 1895), Croatian polyhistor, linguist, journalist and natural scientist of Slovakian origin.

Šulek, then a young man of 26, who came to Croatia from his native Slovakia in 1838, could be probably also credited with the Croatian translation<sup>7</sup> of *Orbis pictus*. The *World in Pictures* without the pictures may have been better than the “monotonous glossary” from the first edition of the book, but it was still denied the attention it would have had in its integral form. Rather than a textbook for visual learning in its own right, it remained only an appendix at the end of a book.

The translation of *Orbis pictus* is hardly mentioned in Croatian pedagogical historiography. *Didactics* is the most often mentioned as the first translation of a work by John Amos Comenius into Croatian language, the publication which is connected with the development of professional and class dimensions of the teaching community, a process that had started in the mid-nineteenth century.

Organised forms of teacher training appeared in Croatia in the second half of the eighteenth century as part of the schooling system reforms in the Habsburg Monarchy. Pedagogical training of teacher candidates was based on Felbiger’s *Methodenbuch* – a canonical manual that included all the know-how needed for teaching and school management. Pedagogical courses were the only organised form of teacher training up until the middle of the nineteenth century. The instructors transferred the basics of pedagogy to teacher candidates with the help of shortened versions of *Methodenbuch*, such as *Kern des Methodenbuches...* or *Kurzer Leitfaden zur vorgeschriebenen Lehrart...* (Batinić and Gaćina Škalamera, 2009). As there were no printed Croatian translations of those manuals, we can assume that the instructors running the teacher courses knew German and that they dictated the contents of the German manuals directly to the candidates in Croatian language, as indeed some preserved handwritten Croatian translations suggest. We have no confirmed insights into the reception of the pedagogical ideas of John Amos Comenius, and subsequently other pedagogues of the Enlightenment (Rousseau, Locke, Pestalozzi), in Croatia before mid-nineteenth century. Even though the library of the Croatian School Museum in Zagreb holds, alongside the omnipresent manuals by Felbiger and similar methodology manuals dating from the first decades of the nineteenth century, the works of European pedagogical classics published in the eighteenth or the first half of the nineteenth century<sup>8</sup>, the lack of their translation, as well as the lack of pedagogical textbooks and literature in Croatian language, indicates their highly limited reception.

The first printed textbooks on pedagogy in Croatian language were published in Buda in 1849 for the newly-founded teacher school in Zagreb. These were uncredited, compiled textbooks probably put together in the likeness of the pedagogical manuals used in the Habsburg Monarchy during the first half of the nineteenth century. We have, for instance, discovered

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<sup>7</sup> Zabož Budečki (probably a pseudonym for Vjenceslav Zabož Mařik), writing about Comenius and *Orbis pictus*, states that this valuable work “our Brlić translated several years ago now and published it in his grammar” (Budečki, 1859, p. 86).

<sup>8</sup> For instance: six editions of *Orbis pictus* in the period between 1776 and 1838 (published in Vienna, Nuremberg and Prague), German edition of Rousseau’s *Emile* and the works of Pestalozzi and Herbart.

that one of them – *Posebna znanost podučavanja (Didactica specialis)* – was actually a translation of the “Specielle Methodik“ chapter from *Methodenbuch* by Joseph Peitl (Batinić, 2007). These practical textbooks in education and teaching do not reference specific pedagogues’ names, including Comenius, his name is not also explicitly mentioned in the first Croatian manual on pedagogy written primarily for catechism teachers by the priest Stjepan Ilijašević (*Obuka malenih ili Katechetika*, 1850).<sup>9</sup> The first Croatian textbook on pedagogy that mentions the name of Comenius was *Gojitba i obća učba* (1867) by Stjepan Novotny<sup>10</sup>, a priest and pedagogy teacher at the School for teachers in Zagreb. Comenius is mentioned as a “man with our roots”, referring to his Slavic origin. One page was dedicated to him, while *Orbis pictus* and *Janua linguarum reserata* were mentioned among his works. The reference to Comenius ended with a statement that his principles were being increasingly better understood and applied.

*Napredak*, the first Croatian pedagogical journal that has been continuously published until the present, was first published in 1859. Its founders and publishers were teachers Ferdo Mlinarić, Ferdo Vuksanović, Vjenceslav Zabož Mařík and Stjepan Novotny, who was also the journal’s editor. During the second half of the nineteenth century, *Napredak* was the most important medium of professional communication of Croatian teachers. Since 1873, it has been published by the Croatian Pedagogical-Literary Assembly, a professional association that would play an important role in the class emancipation and professional affirmation of Croatian teachers.

During the first year of issuing the *Napredak*, the publication of parts of Comenius *Didactics* was already planned. However, one piece of news in *Narodne novine* daily paper surprised the ambitious teachers gathered around *Napredak*. On 22 November 1859, *Narodne novine* published the following as an exclusive “literary news”:

As we have learned, one of our younger authors is translating Comenius’s *Didactics*, that pearl among the texts on Slavic schooling. As we further learn, this excellent book shall be published by Messrs publishers of *Napredak* pedagogical journal, who shall give it to their annual subscribers as a present. We have no doubt that by this act they would acquire enormous gratitude from their readership and would also in a magnificent way show the public that they truly care about the development of our national schooling system. (P. L., 1859, p. 738)

The staff of *Napredak* were surprised by the announcement and considered it unsubstantiated and untrue. It is true, they said, that parts of Comenius’s *Didactics* were being translated in order to be published in *Napredak*, but that in no way meant the whole work was going

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<sup>9</sup> Vukasović (1986, p. 165) says of Ilijašević that the “author references J. A. Comenius, strongly advocates his visual teaching and other pedagogical and didactical principles”.

<sup>10</sup> This was the first Croatian authored textbook on pedagogy, created for the teacher school in Zagreb. Comenius is mentioned on pp. 282–284.

to be printed on their expense and given to the subscribers. The published news was, they stated, pure *pium desiderium*, wishful thinking (*Napredak*, 1859, p. 80). Still, the news was probably not entirely unsubstantiated.

A biography of John Amos Comenius was published in *Narodna knjiga* calendar for 1860 edited by the teacher Ivan Filipović. It was authored by Zabož Bedečki (1859) and we can almost certainly assume that this was a pseudonym of Vjenceslav Zabož Mařik, a Croatian teacher of Czech origin who participated in all important activities of Croatian teachers in the second half of the nineteenth century – including the establishing of the first pedagogical journal, *Napredak*, the founding of teacher associations, the writing of expert articles and books. The author of the text supports the idea of translating *Didactics*<sup>11</sup>, so when he exclaims “Oh, if we could only translate this didactics into our beloved language!” (Budečki, 1859, p. 87), the editor [Filipović] replies in the footnote “Well, why would we not be able to? It would only take some good will. Why would not you make a good deed and translate for us that literary gem by the great Slavic mind. Indeed, you could not endow a greater gift to our nation but to undertake this work and produce a translation” (Ibid.). We do not know for certain whether Zabož Budečki [Vjenceslav Zabož Mařik] had actually taken on this task. But we do know that another teacher had been working on the translation.

A collaborator of *Napredak*, signed by the initial P (1860, pp. 101–104) supported the efforts to translate *Didactics*, repeated the exclamation of Comenius’s biographer and listed arguments in favour of such work:

Oh, if we could only translate this didactics into our beloved language!<sup>12</sup>  
If teachers could see it, they would realise the importance and value of their calling and, elated with the national spirit, of which Comenius was so proud and which he emanated, they would embrace their home, their language, welcome the youth entrusted to them and use all possible means to transform the innocent youths into virtuous, pious and learned people, making them into members of the humankind who are the pride and joy of the church and the homeland.

However, the enthusiasm is not unreserved. The author of the article goes on to ask how exactly the work should be translated – whether it should be completely in line with the Czech edition from 1849 or adapted to the circumstances in the country. The latter would, he considers, be necessary because to give the Croatian people a book that “in several places

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<sup>11</sup> We do not know to which edition of *Didactics* he referred – Czech or Latin. He probably referred to the Czech edition (*Jan Amos Komenského Didaktika*) from 1849, which was published in Croatian translation in 1871 indeed.

<sup>12</sup> At this point in the footnote, the editor of *Napredak* leaves a message for the author of the text: “There is no hurry, be patient. It is being translated right now and will be ready in a few months; we are only worried by this question: who can cover the printing costs?”

explicitly radiates the spirit of the ominous revolutionaries of the times, and to think and claim that such dangerous places would not harm the stability and unflinching faith of Croatian people, would be like throwing a bunch of arrows into a mass of people and hope no one gets hurt” (P, 1860, p. 102). Nevertheless, the author continues, it would be a great pity not to give Croatian teachers the opportunity to use *Didactics*, “that precious gem of Slavic spirit, which only has to be adjusted to our taste and to our liking prepared” (Ibid.), and that could be achieved by translating the entire book and leaving out those places that are not in line with the catholic principles, or by retaining only the main sections, or by translating the whole text and adding notes and explanations to those “particular dangerous places” (Ibid.).<sup>13</sup>

The author of the *Napredak* article, signed with the initial P (the yearly index lists A. P.) was probably the teacher Andrija Pakšec. He was the author of the translations of segments from *Didactics* that *Napredak* was publishing during 1860 and 1863. *Napredak* (1861) enthusiastically announced that its readers holding the annual subscription for the third volume of the journal will be offered a translation of *Didactics* in 12–14 sheets at half price, the amount of which was to be announced at a later date. It seems that this did not happen because almost two years later, on several occasions during 1863, *Narodne novine* daily paper published a fairly large text with a call to subscription, in which Pakšec quotes an entire paragraph from the biography of Comenius (published in *Narodna knjiga* calendar for 1860), adding that he had initially decided, motivated by the fact that Croatian teachers have few books for guidance and support, to translate several chapters of *Didactics* into Croatian, but then managed to translate the entire book, which he intends to print provided he gets a sufficient number of subscribers. He therefore called on all patriots and primary school teachers, for whom the book was primarily intended, to support him by taking out a subscription and promised to add Comenius’s biography with a photograph to the translation if he gets sufficient number of subscribers. Due date for subscriptions was 15 October 1863 (Pakšec, 1863). We do not know how many interested subscribers responded to the call, but probably not enough of them since the book was not published as announced, but eight years later.

Croatian Pedagogical-Literary Assembly, a professional association of progressive Croatian teachers, was established in Zagreb in 1871. In the same year, they convened the General assembly of teachers of Croatia and started the publishing industry. The first book published in the Pedagogical Library series was *Didactics* by John Amos Comenius.<sup>14</sup> It was expected

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<sup>13</sup> An article by France Ostanek “Jan Amos Komenski kod Slovenaca” (John Amos Comenius in Slovenia) also makes it clear that this attitude towards Comenius was not unusual. Ostanek mentions an article by Bishop Anton Mahnič commemorating the international tercentenary celebration of Comenius’s birth, which gives Comenius credit in the area of school reforms, but also expresses doubts from the Catholic point of view, since Comenius was a heretic and had shown animosity towards Austria (Ostanek, 1970, p. 169).

<sup>14</sup> This is a translation of the next Czech edition: *Jana Amosa Komenského Didaktika*. W Praze: W Kommissí u Říwnáče, 1849.



to be printed before the opening of the General assembly (21 and 22 August 1871) that had brought together around 1000 teachers, but according to a short note in *Napredak* (1871, p. 104), it did not happen. Instead, the book was published several days after the end of the assembly, so the teachers who attended the assembly, and had previously subscribed, could not collect it in person. It would have been expected that *Napredak*, as the leading pedagogical journal, published a longer review of this edition immediately after the book had been published. That happened only in the issue dated 1 March 1872.<sup>15</sup> An anonymous author (signed by the letter “ć”, often used by Croatian teacher Ivan Filipović) says at the beginning of his review that he had been waiting long for some of the Croatian literary men to appraise the work that is “the gem of the wise Comenius”, but he had not seen it yet, and besides, it seemed to him that the work that the entire intellectual Europe treasures was being ignored on purpose (ć, 1872, p. 1).

It is also interesting that the name of the translator was not stated, so we can only assume that this was the previously mentioned translation by Andrija Pakšec since the Croatian Pedagogical-Literary Assembly had had little time to prepare the book for printing. It is also possible that the translation done by Pakšec was finalized and supplemented by somebody else, so it was not thought necessary to reference his name. The third possibility is that *Didactics* was translated from Czech by Vjenceslav Zabož Mařík, as Ivan Filipović suggested back in 1859. The Assembly ensured that the review on Comenius’s activity, written by Jan Karel Škoda and already published in *Napredak* in 1870, was also translated and added to the book. By publishing the *Didactics*, this association of teachers established itself as a publisher of pedagogy-related literature, having by the end of the nineteenth century published translations of several other European classics of pedagogy (Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Locke, Rabelais and others).

Starting from April 1871, *Školski prijatelj* journal also published, in several parts, the segments of *Didactics* translated by Pakšec, but did not mention the book after its publication in early September.

In 1886, the Croatian Pedagogical-Literary Assembly published *Informatorium za školu materinsku (Informatorium školy materskéj)*. On this occasion, the translator’s name was displayed on the front page: “translated from the Czech original by Vjenceslav Zabož Mařík”. This was the 18<sup>th</sup> book in the publishers’ series entitled *A Library for Teachers* (initially *Pedagogical Library*). It was translated from a Czech edition dating from 1858. The publisher’s editorial states, among other things, that it will be clear to everyone reading the book “that Comenius had laid the foundation stone of all present-day nursery (preschool) training and that Fröbel only systematized and practically realised what the great mind of Comenius had thought of and outlined two hundred years earlier. The only basic difference between Comenius and Fröbel is in Comenius’s idea that every mother should take the role of a nursery teacher for her children, which is also more natural, while Fröbel transposed that

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<sup>15</sup> The journal was not issued in January and February.

role onto specially paid persons, so that mothers could have more carefree time or do other work” (Comenius, 1886, pp. VII–VIII). The book was printed in 2000 copies.

The third and so far the last translation and generally the last edition of a work of Comenius in Croatian language – *Velika didaktika (Magna Didactica)* – came out in 1900, also published by the Croatian Pedagogical-Literary Assembly. The book was translated from Latin by a secondary school teacher Julije Golik on the basis of an edition published in 1894 by Siegismund and Volkening in Leipzig<sup>16</sup>. In the foreword, Golik says that the French are proud of their Rousseau, Germans of their Pestalozzi, the English of their Locke, and Croats, although without such shiny stars in the sky of pedagogy, can still as Slavs be proud of Comenius. The Croatian Pedagogical-Literary Assembly therefore decided, after the first translation of Comenius *Didactics* had been distributed, that “Croatian primary school teachers have ‘their’ Comenius in a new attire” (*Napredak*, 1901, pp. 50–51).

There were no new translations of Comenius’s pedagogical works into Croatian in the twentieth century. It should be noted that Serbian translations of *Orbis pictus* (Belgrade, 1913, 1932), *Velika didaktika (Didaktika magna)* (Belgrade, 1954 and 1967) and *Materinska škola (Informatorium školy materske)* (Belgrade, 1946, 1980) were available to the professional community in Croatia. *Velika didaktika* was issued by the Union of Pedagogical Societies of Yugoslavia, while the supporting text about Comenius and was written by a Slovenian pedagogue Vlado Šmidt.

Croatian translation of John Amos Comenius’s poem *Život naš je samo putovanje (Život náš na světě jen pout)*, poetically rendered by Dubravka Dorotić Sesar, was published in the book *Zlatna knjiga češkoga pjesništva* (Zagreb, 2003).

### **Books and articles about Comenius in Croatia**

In their discussions published during the nineteenth century in pedagogy journals *Napredak* (1859–), *Školski prijatelj* (1868–1876), *Hrvatski učitelj* (1877–1895), Croatian teachers regularly refer to Comenius. Apart from notes and biographical texts already mentioned, Comenius was mostly written about on occasions of important anniversaries of birth or death. As a way of marking the bicentennial of Comenius’s death, the pedagogical journal *Napredak* (1870), the literary journal *Vienac* (1871) and the daily paper *Obzor* (1871) published articles on Comenius. In celebration of the tercentennial of his birth, the Croatian Pedagogical-Literary Assembly published the book entitled *Život i rad Ivana Amosa Komenskoga (Komenskeho život a práce)* (1892), written by Josef Klika and translated from Czech by Vjenceslav Zabožnjak Mařík, who later that year prepared and himself published a booklet for young people *Jan Amos Komenský, veliki učitelj naroda*, based on Klika’s book.

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<sup>16</sup> In the Foreword, the translator says: “I must note that I have translated according to the following edition: J. A. Comenii Magna Didactica. Ex editione Amstelodamensi anni 1657. omnes libros didacticos complectente nunc primum separatim edidit Fridericus Carolus Hultgren. Lipsiae Sumpt. Sigismund et Volkening 1894.” (Komenský, 1900, p. 6).

In 1892, Croatian teachers organised celebrations in tribute to Comenius in their teachers' associations across the country. The celebration organised by the teachers of Zagreb was attended by the Ban of Croatia Khuen-Héderváry and the principal of the Department of Worship and Teaching, Izidor Kršnjavi (Kobali, 1892), while the teachers of Osijek published a text entitled *Uspomeni Jana Amosa Komenskoga i tristogodišnjici njegova narodenja posvećuje Učiteljsko društvo „Zajednica“ u Osijeku* (“Dedicated to the memory of Jan Amos Comenius and the tercentennial of his birth by the Teachers' association *Zajednica* in Osijek”). Alongside the editors Marijan Vuković (1892) and Dragutin Hirc (1892), appropriate shorter texts about the life and work of Comenius were written by about a dozen other teachers. During the celebrations of 1892 anniversary, Comenius was again the subject of texts in refereed journals (*Napredak*, *Hrvatski učitelj*, *Škola* and *Pedagogijski glasnik*), as well as in weekly and daily newspapers (*Dom i svijet*, *Narodne novine*). The authors of discussions and contributions on Comenius in the second half of the nineteenth century included Vjekoslav Dominković (1892), Ljudevit Dvorniković (1892), Josip Horvat (1892) and others. Comenius also claimed notable space in the first Croatian *History of Pedagogy* written by Stjepan Basariček (1881).

The anniversaries of Comenius's birth and death were marked in Croatia in the twentieth century as well. On the occasion of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, during 1920, the pedagogical journals *Nastavni vjesnik* (Matičević, 1920) and *Napredak* (*Ivan Amos Komensky*, 1920) wrote about Comenius, with *Napredak* also reporting on the Assembly meeting of teachers of Zagreb dedicated to Comenius in 1938 (Skupština..., 1938). Five Croatian pedagogues (Dragutin Franković, Vladimir Mužić, Mihajlo Ogrizović, Pero Šimleša and Ante Vukasović) presented their papers at the “Comenius and Contemporaneity” symposium organised by the Union of Pedagogical Societies of Yugoslavia in 1970 and the papers were published in a themed issue of the Belgrade journal *Pedagogija* (1970).

In November 1968, the Croatian School Museum in Zagreb hosted an exhibition entitled *Život i djelo J. A. Komenskog* (*Life and Work of J. A. Comenius*), and in 1992 presented *Jan Amos Komenský – učitelj naroda* (*Comenius – Teacher of the People*), an exhibition that toured to Daruvar in the same year, where the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Comenius's birth was celebrated, alongside the bicentennial of Czech people settling in Croatia and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Czech Elementary School bearing the name of Jan Amos Comenius since 1926. Apart from the mentioned exhibition, organised through the cooperation with the Embassy of Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, the 400<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Comenius was also celebrated by commemorative programmes in several Croatian towns (Bjelovar, Rijeka, Split, Zadar), with the central celebration taking place in Zagreb, where an academic convention entitled “Jan Amos Komenský u ozračju suvremene znanosti i culture” (“Jan Amos Comenius in Milieu of Contemporary Science and Culture”) was organised by the Croatian Pedagogical-Literary Assembly in June 1992 (Vukasović, 2007). Several presenters (Ante Vukasović, Ivan Dumbović, Jasminka Ledić and Mate Zaninović) published their papers in *Napredak* journal

(1992, no. 3), while Ivan Dumbović, Vlatko Previšić and Vedrana Spajić-Vrkaš published their in *Umjetnost i dijete* (1992, nos. 2/3). Elizabeta Serdar and Ivan Vavra published their texts on Comenius in the annual book of the Croatian School Museum – *Anali za povijest odgoja* (*Annals for the History of Education*) (1992). Ante Vukasović has written several articles on Comenius and a book, *Jan Amos Komenský i Hrvati* (Split, 2007), in which a chapter with the same title deals with the reception of Comenius in Croatia, while the other two chapters give a short overview of his life and work, as well as a review of the international academic symposium on Comenius held in Bratislava in 2000 that focused on exploring the significance of Comenius for the third millennium.

From mid-nineteenth century until today, Croatian authors have published about 200 shorter or longer texts and scholarly discussions on Comenius, with Mirko Lukaš and Emerik Munjiza among the most recent contributors, writing in *Život i škola* (2014). The name of J. A. Comenius can be found in all Croatian textbooks on pedagogy and historical overviews of pedagogy.

### **Conclusion**

The interest of Croatian teachers and pedagogues in Comenius and the implementation of his ideas into the theory and practice of pedagogy can be discerned around the middle of the nineteenth century, when first teacher schools were founded and first journals on pedagogy started coming out, and it became more intensive after 1870s when the social class of teachers started establishing itself and achieving the status of a relevant professional community, learning about the heritage of European classics of pedagogy. Comenius was undoubtedly the first among those, as an unquestionable pedagogical authority, but also as somebody “with our roots”, as Croatian teachers enthusiastically claimed him due to his Slavic origin. The need for such identification is understandable if we consider the context of social and political circumstances in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the second half of the nineteenth century when the idea of pan-Slavic connectedness and solidarity was particularly strong in the field of culture and education. Croatian and Czech teachers were closely connected. The former would go to Prague to be educated (Skender Fabković, Bartol Fancelj, Ljudevit Modec) and return to Croatia enriched with valuable experience and new acquaintances, and the latter would come from the Czech lands to Croatia, achieving great success in their work, so there were, for instance, even four teachers of Czech origin (three male teachers and one female teacher) involved in the formation of the Croatian Pedagogical-Literary Assembly – Vjenceslav Zabož Mařík, Anton Truhelka, Sebald Cihlar and Marija Fabković (née Frechova). There is no doubt that such historical context influenced the reception of Comenius’s works in Croatia and that Comenius was the connecting thread both in the field of pedagogy and in the struggle for national identity.

**Works of J. A. Comenius published in Croatia:**

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- (1871) *Didaktika*. Zagreb: Hrvatski pedagoški-književni odbor.
- (1886) *Informatorijum za školu materinsku*. Zagreb: Hrvatski pedagoški-književni odbor.
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