COMENIUS and NAARDEN

(English pdf-version)
Preface

Dear Reader,


With this English pdf-version we hope to reach readers in third countries and to draw their attention to the last resting place of Jan Amos Comenius, the Comenius Mausoleum in Naarden, the Netherlands. We are much obliged to Wendy van Noppen for her useful comments.

Introduction

On the 8th of May 2017, it was eighty years ago that the former chapel of the *Eglise Wallonne* 1 in Naarden was solemnly consecrated as the burial chapel of Jan Amos Comenius, the Czech theologian, philosopher, educator and political thinker. In 1656, Comenius arrived in Amsterdam as a refugee and died there in 1670 at the age of 78. He was buried in Naarden.

With the publication *Comenius and Naarden* we wish to mark the 80th anniversary of the Comenius Mausoleum with an outline of its history. It all began with revived interest in Comenius in the nineteenth century and a further impetus after the proclamation of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. The history of the Mausoleum is linked to that of the Comenius Museum, to the erection of Comenius statues and to Comenius Commemorations. The interplay between private initiative and the town of Naarden is fascinating.

Much has been written about the life and work of Comenius. In Chapter 1 we concentrate on the man Comenius who came to the Netherlands, on the reason for his arrival in Amsterdam, and on his activities in the fourteen years he spent there. In Chapter 2 we describe the search for the tomb of Comenius in the 19th century, the identification of his remains, and the decoration of the Walloon chapel as the final resting place that would be worthy of a person of his stature. How the renewed interest in Comenius and his work developed in the Netherlands is dealt with in Chapter 3. In communist Czechoslovakia, Comenius was an icon since 1948 and Filip Bloem explores this in Chapter 4. Numerous Czechs and Slovaks travelled to Naarden in order to pay a personal tribute to 'their' Comenius and they still do.

In Chapter 5, we describe the development of activities, from the first Comenius exhibition in 1892 on the top floor of the Town Hall of Naarden to those organised in 2017 by the Comenius Museum Foundation. The current co-operation with the Muzeum Jana Amose Komenského in Uherský Brod is also extensively described. Interesting, and perhaps unique, is the commitment at governmental level over the years both in Czechoslovakia/the Czech and Slovak Republics and in the Netherlands. In Chapter 6, we conclude the historical outline with a description of this governmental co-operation.

In Chapter 7 conclusions are drawn from the responses from persons involved in the activities of the Comenius Museum and Mausoleum because of their function, position or personal interest to explain the undiminished importance of the life of Comenius and his rich ideas. The acknowledgements in Chapter 8 list all the co-operation we received in realising *Comenius and Naarden*. The references used for this publication are listed in chapter 9.

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1 the French-speaking protestant church in the Netherlands founded by refugees from France and Southern Belgium at the end of the 16th century
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1. Comenius in the Netherlands (1656–1670)

Who was the Comenius who came to the Netherlands?

Jan Amos Komenský, who in the Netherlands is known as Jan Amos Comenius, was born on March 28, 1592, probably in Nivnice, situated near the South Moravian town of Uherský Brod. He was a Czech theologian, philosopher, pedagogue and political thinker; at the time one of the leading European thinkers and perhaps the most important Czech asylum seeker of all time in the Netherlands. In response to a telegram from the Czechoslovak President Tomáš G. Masaryk, in which he expressed his appreciation for the commemoration in Amsterdam of the 250th anniversary of the day of Comenius’ death, the Mayor of Amsterdam, J.W. Tellegen, wrote to the President in a letter dated November 26, 1920 the phrase “… (Comenius) to whom our ancestors had the privilege to grant asylum…

The Comenius who came to the Netherlands was a man raised in the Protestant community of the Unitas Fratrum, 'the Brethren'. After studying theology, he served his church both as a pastor and as a teacher. The young minister endorsed the coup of the Protestant nobles, who in 1618 deposed the representatives of the Catholic Habsburg ruler in the 'second' defenestration of Prague (the first was in 1419) and who put the Protestant Friedrich V von der Pfalz on the Bohemian throne. However, this revolution was short-lived, as in the Battle of White Mountain in 1620 Friedrich V was overwhelmingly defeated by his Catholic adversaries. Friedrich V sought refuge with his Uncle, Prince Maurits van Oranje, in The Hague and Comenius had to go underground to escape persecution.

It soon became clear that under the renewed Catholic regime of the Habsburgs there was no longer a place for the Brethren. On behalf of his church leadership, Comenius visited Friedrich V in 1626 in The Hague, to ask him in vain to actively support the Protestant cause. In 1628, he was forced to change direction and join a group of fellow believers in the Polish Protestant enclave of Leszno.

During his time in exile in Sweden and later in the Hungarian city of Sárospatak, he committed himself to improving the local educational systems because he saw this as a key role for school, church and state reforms. On behalf of his Church, everywhere he went he sought support for his fellow believers. The choice of the tasks he undertook shows how he used his network also politically in the hope ever to return to a liberated homeland.

Comenius established his reputation with his language method Janua linguarum reserata (The open gate to the language) in which he combined concrete and practical information with learning one's mother tongue, Latin and other languages. The first edition was published in 1632. It became one of his most popular works: it was published in twelve European translations and was used as far away as the colonies in Asia and America. In addition, there were Turkish, Persian, Arabic and Indian translations. The book made Comenius a leading pedagogue in Europe. Comenius also became famous for his efforts to achieve universal knowledge and wisdom (pansophy). Learned friends invited him in 1641 to set up an institute for pansophy in London, but the outbreak of the Civil War there prevented the implementation of the plan.

In 1642, Comenius accepted an offer to reform the educational system in Protestant Sweden. The wealthy Amsterdam merchant Louis de Geer (1587-1652), who did much business in Sweden, would pay his salary. Comenius was in contact with the Swedish Chancellor Oxenstierna who was involved in the peace settlements which in 1648 were to bring to an end both the Thirty Years' War and the Eighty Years' War also known as the Dutch War of Independence. To Comenius these peace settlements were a disappointment: the political situation in his homeland would not change and he would not be able to return there.

On his way to Sweden he met René Descartes in the Dutch castle Endegeest. Both men had respect for each other's work and encouraged each other to proceed to publication. But there were differences. Descartes limited himself in his view that human knowledge is created only by sensory perception and rational argumentation. The theologian Comenius took this viewpoint as being too narrow, and Descartes commented to Comenius: I go not beyond the realm of philosophy; my work is only part of the comprehensive whole - which is the central issue in your work.
In 1650, Comenius saw a new opportunity when the Prince of Siebenburgen, Rakoezi, commissioned him to reform the educational system there. Comenius hoped for a new political alliance with the support of the Prince of Siebenburgen against the Catholic House of Habsburg. In 1651 as a preacher Comenius blessed the marriage between the Prince of Siebenburgen and his young bride, the daughter of the ousted King Friedrich V von der Pfalz. However, shortly after the marriage ceremony both the bride and groom died from disease and thus ended Comenius’ political plan to get support for the Protestant cause via this marriage.

In his attempt to reform the Latin school in the Hungarian city of Sárospatak, Comenius wrote his Orbis Sensualium Pictus (Visible World in Pictures) in which he recorded functional pictures of the world to show them to students and to explain them. Comenius was convinced that education should prepare not only for social life but also for the life in the non-physically perceptible world after death. And because no human being should be excluded from partaking in this preparation, boys and girls, rich and poor, smart and stupid, all had to be given the opportunity to attend school. Comenius was of the opinion that he received too little co-operation in Sárospatak to work out his ideas and so in 1654 he went back to Leszno.

Unfortunate circumstances awaited him there again with the outbreak of the Swedish-Polish war and in 1656 his residence was burned down by Polish troops. Comenius lost almost everything: his house and his library, along with most of his unpublished manuscripts. When Laurens de Geer, the son of his former patron in Sweden, heard about this situation, he invited him in 1656 to come to Amsterdam. Comenius accepted the offer with gratitude.

**Comenius in Amsterdam**

Comenius travelled via Groningen, where he was warmly welcomed by Professor Maresius, with whom he would later come into conflict. In late August 1656 he reached Amsterdam, where he stayed for some time at the home of the De Geers on Keizersgracht 123. The Amsterdam City Government welcomed him and allowed his wife and children to join him. Moreover, the City Government awarded him a grant of 200 guilders per quarter, for the printing of his didactic writings. Because his personal library had been destroyed, the key to the city library was put at his disposal, so that he could continue with his work. In just one year, his Opera Didactica Omnia (The Collected Didactic Works from 1627 to 1657) with more than 1200 pages was prepared for printing, and was published in 1657 at the expense of the City. Comenius dedicated it to the city authorities of Amsterdam and called Amsterdam Ocellus urbium, decus Belgii, exulatia Europae (The loved one amongst the cities, the jewel of the Netherlands, and the joy of Europe).

In addition to teaching, his political ideal remained in place. In the same year 1657 he published In Tenebris Lux (Light in Darkness). In this book he recorded various political prophecies and again attempted to move powerful political figures into action.

During talks on the Treaty of Breda in 1667, he handed the negotiators from the Netherlands, England, France, Denmark and Sweden his writings Angelus Pacis (Angel of Peace), with the phrase That they should stop making war and make a place for Christ, the Prince of Peace, Christ, who already now wishes to proclaim the peace to all peoples. In this book he succinctly countered different kinds of reasons to go to war: Disputes over the Constitution: Kingdom or Republic? These reasons are nonsense according to Comenius: None of these forms of government is bad in itself. God has shown this by examples in nature: he decreed the bees to live in a monarchy, the ants to live in a democracy; both being successful if no one is disruptive.

The calm which Comenius had hoped for in Amsterdam proved relative. Theologically, Comenius became involved in a variety of disputes. Several theologians in the Netherlands disagreed with the value he placed on the prophecies of the seers that he had presented in his In Tenebris Lux. He himself was opposed to the mechanical world view that was expressed by Descartes. He also opposed the Socinian belief in their denial of the Holy Trinity and saw Jesus first and foremost as a moral example. Against Comenius, who was convinced that the return of Christ on earth would not be a long time coming, were the theologian Samuel Maresius and his supporters who dismissed him as a dreamer and fanatic. Comenius forced himself to write a defence in his last years [1669/1670] in two consecutive parts, which appeared as Admonitio fraterna J. A Comenii (Brotherly admonitions of Comenius) and Continuatio admonitionis fraternalis(Continuation of fraternal admonitions). This second part (Continuatio)
provides much autobiographical information up to the first year of Comenius' stay in Amsterdam. In *Unum necessarium* (*The one necessary*) Comenius reflects on his life and he urges the others to distinguish between what is needed or unnecessary.

In Amsterdam, Comenius lived within walking distance of Rembrandt van Rijn who had his studio on the Rozengracht. Did the great thinker and the great painter have contact with each other? According to the Rembrandt expert Ernst van de Wetering this was the case. He is convinced that Rembrandt's painting Portrait of an Old Man in the Italian Uffizi Museum in Florence is indeed a portrait of Comenius. In early 2006 he revealed this news on the occasion of an exhibition at the Rembrandt House in Amsterdam. In 1914 this possibility was also raised by the Czech Art Historian Karel Chytil, but this was not generally accepted by the experts.

2. The Search for the Tomb of Comenius

*The Walloon chapel in Naarden*

Comenius died on November 15, 1670, in Amsterdam, and was buried on November 22 in the Chapel of the former St. Marien Convent in Naarden, which was built around 1440. Nuns had lived there until 1579, when they had to leave the building after the Reformation and the Government had given it a different destination. The building had subsequently been used for other purposes such as the Municipal Orphanage and the Latin School. In 1651, the Walloon Congregation in Naarden obtained the right to appoint a minister and since then the east wing of the chapel had been used for its services.

The Walloon chapel was the church of French Protestants who had sought refuge in the Northern Netherlands. The Church that Comenius belonged to, the Unitas Fratrum or Moravian Church, had also become a refugee church and had settled in the Polish Protestant enclave of Leszno. Comenius had corresponded with Colvius, a Walloon minister in Dordrecht who had married a sister of Louis de Geer. The first service in the Walloon chapel in Naarden was led by Gottfried de Hotton. He was also a Walloon minister in Amsterdam and served the De Geer family there as both tutor and spiritual counsellor. On behalf of De Geer, De Hotton maintained further correspondence with Comenius.

After merging with the Dutch Reformed Church in 1816, the Walloon Congregation in Naarden fell into oblivion, along with the chapel and the tomb of Comenius. The chapel was no longer used for services, but as a storage and carpentry workshop, and later as a tailor’s shop.

*In Search of the Tomb of Comenius*

In the mid nineteenth century, when Czechs and Slovaks rediscovered Comenius and his spiritual legacy, their interest also grew in the place where he was buried. The Czech writer and archaeologist John E. Vocel travelled to Naarden in 1836 in order to search for Comenius’ grave. His mission ended without a result because he was put on the wrong track by a reference to the Great Church in Naarden. However, this church proved not to be the final resting place of Comenius.

In 1870, steps followed that would have a practical impact. Because they wished to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the death of Comenius, the Teachers' Association Budeč in Prague approached the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for information about his grave. This request led to extensive research by the City Archivist Dr. P. Scheltema in Amsterdam and subsequently also in Naarden. When the trail went dead, he placed a call for more information in several newspapers. J.P. De Roeper, a notary in Naarden, responded. He appeared to be in possession of the tomb register of the Walloon Congregation, which mentioned - in French - a grave, no.8: of a certain Johannes Amos Comenius, interred on 22 Nov. 1670. More than fifty years later and in different handwriting the following words had been added: *C'est apparentemment le fameux auteur du Janua Linguarum (This is apparently the famous author of the Janua Linguarum).* In a separate ledger it was shown that the minister at Comenius’ funeral, Grouwels, had donated money for the funeral.
But the search for the tomb of Comenius did not end there, for ten years before the discovery of the tomb register, the Walloon chapel had been substantially rebuilt. In 1861, the former monastery church had been joined to the neighbouring barracks to house soldiers. To this end a new wooden floor had been built in the recess of the building. In all probability, while the builders replaced the floor, tombstones had been removed, because when the wooden floor was replaced again in 1896, no tombstones were discovered. For a long time it was assumed that by removing the tombstones, also the graves had been removed. On the newly cemented floor were established the Head Guards room, the arresting chamber and the military tailoring room.

When in 1918 the Czechoslovak Republic was proclaimed, the interest in Comenius was given a new impetus. Czechoslovaks in the Netherlands gathered on the 28th of March at the Comenius Memorial in the Ruysdaelplein in Naarden, which had been erected in 1892 to commemorate his 300th birthday. A new monument with the bust of Comenius by Czech sculptor Josef Strachovský was unveiled in the Captain G.A. Meijerweg in Naarden in 1920.

Among those who attended the commemorations was Dr R.A.B. Oosterhuis. He had married a Czech and was very interested in Comenius, about whom he wrote articles and of whom he translated various works. He wondered why the meetings were not held at the tomb of Comenius but at a monument. In his own research, Oosterhuis had found no evidence that Comenius’ grave had been cleared when the tombstones had been removed from the Walloon chapel in 1861. Oosterhuis had heard from J.A. of Eijken Nieukerk that as a child he had seen how the tombstones had been removed, but not the tombs themselves. Oosterhuis continued his research and made a reconstruction of the possible arrangement of the tombs in the Walloon chapel. He concluded that the remains of Comenius himself would still be located there.

**Criticism of the Condition of the Tomb**

In 1925, the German journalist H. Eulemberg visited the Walloon chapel in Naarden. What he found there gave him reason to write in the *Kölner Presse (Cologne Press)* of August 4, 1925 that the Czechoslovak Government had paid too little attention to the final resting place of Comenius. R.J. Vonka, who worked at the Embassy in The Hague and was a Comeniusologist, replied in the Czechoslovak press: the Czechoslovak Embassy and Government were committed to the memory of Comenius in Naarden by actively supporting the Comenius Museum. A year later, the German journalist Egon Erwin Kisch, nicknamed the ‘Furious Reporter’, also took a look at the Walloon chapel. The title of his travelogue *Komenius im Kasernearrest* (*Comenius in arrest in barracks*) spoke for itself and fitted in well with Eulemberg’s observations. On October 30, 1928 the *Haagse Courant* printed a photo of the interior of the Walloon chapel. According to this newspaper the Czechoslovak Ambassador rightly considered the tailor’s room not to be a dignified final resting place for Comenius. In 1931, it was Karel Čapek who wrote in turn about the Walloon chapel, that the chapel there looked so poor, that our government should do a good turn by quickly proceeding towards a substantial renovation.

**Investigation of the Remains**

In order to obtain confirmation that Comenius was indeed buried in the Walloon chapel, the graves should be opened. The Mayor of Naarden, M.P. van Wettum, however, refused in May 1927 to give the Czechoslovak Embassy the necessary authorisation; he did not want to disturb the eternal rest of the dead. The archives show that considerable pressure was put on the Mayor from the side of the government to reconsider his refusal. Three ministers showed their commitment: the Minister of Foreign Affairs because of bilateral relations with Czechoslovakia, the Minister of the War Office because the Walloon chapel was part of a military complex, and the Minister for the Interior and Agriculture since a Mayor was involved. At the beginning of January 1929, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs formally informed the Czechoslovak Embassy that research into the tomb had been agreed. It would have to be, however, a limited archaeological investigation and should in no way prejudge the question of what should be done with the remains of Comenius. The Mayor wanted to prevent that they would be transferred to Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak Ambassador wrote to the Mayor in June 1929 that these conditions were accepted. The Mayor was honoured by Czechoslovakia in October 1931 with the Order of the White Lion.

A joint research team was formed with Anthropology Professor J. Matieglka and Architect S. Sochor representing the Czechoslovak side. The Dutch team included Professors of Anatomy J.P. Kleiweg de Zwaan and A.J.P. van
den Broek, and J. Waterink, Professor of Pedagogy. The excavations indeed brought the human remains to light. First, the remains of a child were found, and then later also those of three men. The latter was consistent with the data found in the grave register. Based on this research, the team concluded that it had found the remains of Comenius. This news was announced to the press on July 22, 1929 and it was extensively reported on. The remains were reburied on the 25th July in the Walloon chapel during a ceremony which the Czechoslovak Ambassador and the Dutch Minister of Education attended.

However, there were also doubts about the conclusion of the investigation. Professors Van den Broek and Waterink were initially unconvinced, but they later accepted the findings. Apparently, Čapek also had doubts, which were removed, however, by Professor Kleiweg de Zwaan, who assured him, that by the scientific findings no doubt was raised. Capek concluded then: This issue is now resolved.

From Tomb to Dignified Final Resting Place

The remains of Comenius were reburied, but the Walloon chapel remained a space that was marked out for the use of the military guard and detainees. The format that was eventually selected for a resting place worthy of Comenius was that of a mausoleum. From 1930-1933 negotiations took place between the Netherlands and Czechoslovakia on the modalities for its construction and status. In this connection, also the ownership question was raised. The transfer of ownership of the Walloon chapel to Czechoslovakia gave rise to legal concerns, the press reported on June 1, 1931. It was decided then to lease and negotiations culminated in a lease agreement. Against a yearly fee of one Dutch guilder, Czechoslovakia leased the land under the chapel for an indefinite period. The internal and external maintenance of the chapel would be taken on by Czechoslovakia. Symbolically, on the birthday of Comenius the agreement was signed by Minister of Foreign Affairs F. Beelaerts van Blokland, Minister of War L.N. Deckers and Ambassador M. Plesinger-Božinov.

Karel Čapek wrote in his column: that small piece of Czechoslovak land surrounded by the swamps of Naarden, but that wasn't correct. The land did not become the property of Czechoslovakia. Moreover, the Mausoleum has never enjoyed extraterritorial status or any diplomatic immunity such as embassies do. Also, Naarden is not entirely situated between marshes, but on the spurs-end of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, a ridge of sand hills.

Restoration of the Walloon chapel

The chapel was restored in the years 1934-1935 under the supervision of the Dutch architect Professor D.F. Slothouwer. The changes which had been introduced for the purposes of the barracks in 1861 were undone and the medieval lancets were restored. The door to the courtyard of the barracks was bricked up again and there was a new entry from the Kloosterstraat with a bronze door and a sandstone surround. Above it, a plaque was affixed with both Dutch and Czech words: The Final Resting Place of Jan Amos Comenius.

The restored chapel was consecrated on March 28, 1935 by a ceremony in the Great Church. Ambassador Ivan Krno also represented President Tomáš G. Masaryk who had been invited to the ceremony by the City Council of Naarden, as well as to a tea party to be held on the occasion of the official inauguration of the restored Comenius Chapel. The Ambassador and the Minister of Education H. P. Marchant gave speeches.

Interior of the Mausoleum

Following the architectural restoration of the chapel, its interior design started. The Czechoslovak Government sent some visual artists to Naarden to view the site and to make proposals. They thought that the interior of the chapel was to radiate the Czechoslovak spirit and should be carried out by artists with materials from their country.

The transformation into a mausoleum took place in 1935-1937 under the leadership of architect Ladislav Machoň, who along with Jaroslav Benda, Jaroslav Horejc and Karel Štípl designed and styled the interior. The structure of the building remained intact, but the added elements gave the building a unique character.

In the stained glass windows Benda incorporated all kinds of symbols from Freemasonry which are also visible from the outside. By doing this, he referred to the influence of Comenius on the thinking within the Masonic
movement. On the inside he placed a continuous series of seven glass panels with scenes in which the life and work of Comenius are depicted. The choir screen placed in the Mausoleum was the work of the sculptor Jaroslav Horejc. The eight bronze sculpture groups on the choir screen show the major events in the life of Comenius. Also by his hand is a candelabrum as high as a man showing two hands carrying a bowl with a candle. Horejc wanted to show the yearning for the Divine Light coming from the work of Comenius. For the opening of the balcony a large wood sculpture was made to the design of sculptor Karel Štipl, a large lime tree trunk that splits in two, in its middle the coat of arms of the Czechoslovak State with the motto of Jan Hus: Pravda Víteží (Truth Prevails). The temporary cover of the tomb of Comenius during the restoration of the chapel was replaced by a large deep-black diorite stone with a gold-lettered inscription.

On either side of the choir screen, plaques were placed on behalf of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands and the first President of Czechoslovakia Tomáš G. Masaryk. On the plaque of Queen Wilhelmina is the motto: Tandem fit succulus arbor (At last the twig became a tree). On that of President Masaryk is written in Czech the famous prediction of Comenius: Also I trust in God that after the passage of the storms of His anger caused by our sins, the administration of your affairs will return to you, O Czech people.

These words were spoken by Masaryk during his first speech to the National Assembly in Prague after the independence of his country (1918), after centuries of oppression by Austria, and were cited by President Havel in his first Presidential New Year address (1990), when the country had freed itself from more than forty years of communism.

On one of the walls the epitaph is applied which Comenius' son Daniel wrote for his Father:

Concredidit Deo triuni spiritum, / bonis memoriam, propinquae buic tombae corpus / IOANNESS AMOS COMENIUS / cuius virtutem nulla exhaurit eloquium, / ECCLES-FF-Bohem-episcopus et senior vigilantissimus, / pietate, doctrina, ingenio / theologus, didactius philosophus / indique incomparabilis / ecclesiam, scholarum, orbem / perpetuo habiturus meritis rectigalem. […] (Jan Amos Comenius gave his soul to the Triune God, as reminders to all of good will and his body in this grave here. His excellence as a bishop of the Moravian Church and as her extremely vigilant senior cannot be sufficiently praised: By his piety, learning, and talent he will be always meritorious to the Church, School and the World […] )

On another wall are written in Czech, the names of ten financial supporters of the Mausoleum, including two Czechoslovak savings banks, individuals and the Czechoslovak and Dutch Freemasonry. Upon completion of the interior design, the Mausoleum was ceremoniously inaugurated on May 8, 1937.

**A Surprising Find during the Restoration**

After the City of Naarden had acquired the building next to the Mausoleum in 1988, it was decided to transfer the Comenius Museum from Turfpoortstraat to Kloosterstraat and to connect the building to the Mausoleum. The new building was inaugurated in 1992.

Fifteen years later, the Mausoleum was extensively renovated by the Dutch Government Buildings Agency. Inside, Benda’s glass plates and stained-glass windows were restored. Repair of Štipl’s carvings followed in 2009. During this restoration a wonderful discovery was made. In the woodwork behind the shield a copper tube was hidden. On the 2009 Comenius Commemoration Day in the Mausoleum the Czech Ambassador Petr Mareš opened the tube and read out the message which it contained.

"P.S.V.S.V.V.M. [To the glory of the Great Builder and Illuminated Grandmaster] - In the year 1937, when Brother EDVARD BENEŠ, son of the Regular and Perfect Lodge "Truth will prevail", was President of the Czechoslovak Republic, the beautification of this memorable chapel is completed. Its decoration is, with concrete support of the Dutch Brothers belonging to the Order of Freemasons under the Grand Orient of the Netherlands, carried out by the Czech visual artists JAROSLAV HOREJC, LADISLAV MACHON and KAREL ŠTIPL, sons of Prague Lodges, united in the NATIONAL GRAND CZECHOSLOVAK LODGE, who’s Grand Master was: KAREL WEIGNER, Rector of Charles University in Prague. Aforementioned Brothers have done their work with love and reverence for the Great Teacher of Nations: JAN AMOS COMENIUS, the Spiritual Founder of the Freemasons."

These words speak of the close involvement of the Czechoslovak and Dutch Freemasonry in the restoration of
the Mausoleum. According to this message, the four Czech artists were Freemasons. The Dutch Freemasonry donated a window for the Walloon chapel, the Czechoslovak donated money. The message was again put in the tube and hidden behind the shield.

Thanks to a generous anonymous donation, a lift could be installed in the building in 2012 for unhindered access to the Museum and Mausoleum.

3. Interest in Comenius from 1892

The Commemoration of 1892 and the Monument on Ruydsdaelplein, Naarden

In 1890, letters were exchanged between Ludwig Keller, founder of the Deutsche Comenius Gesellschaft in Berlin, and Nicholas de Roever, City Archivist of Amsterdam and successor of P. Scheltema. As a follow-up in 1891, the Comenius Zweig Gesellschaft in Amsterdam, the Dutch Comenius Association and a Committee for the celebration of the 300th birthday of Comenius in 1892 were created. On the eve of Comenius’ birthday on March 28, in Amsterdam a commemoration was held in the 'House with the Heads' on the Keizersgracht, which had belonged to the family De Geer, and another ceremony in Naarden on the day itself.

At the Commemoration in Naarden Archivist A.N.J. Fabius played an important role. He had designed the Comenius Memorial which was unveiled in Ruysdael Square, had written the text for the Comenius Cantata composed by C. Andriessen, and had organised an exhibition on Comenius on the top floor of the Town Hall. He had had great difficulty in getting original works by Comenius for the exhibition. Eventually he could show several works borrowed from several national libraries and from the library of the Brüder-Unitat in Herrnhut.

The national and regional press devoted a great deal of attention to the Commemoration in 1892, and even reports appeared in the Dutch East Indies at the time. Besides, the Leidsch Dagblad mentioned on March 26 that the Austro-Hungarian Empire, of which Bohemia and Moravia were part, had banned the Comenius Commemorations in public as an expression of Czech Nationalism.

From 1892, the municipality of Naarden was closely involved in the Commemorations of Comenius. In that year
the municipality undertook the upkeep of the Comenius Monument in Ruysdael Square. A year later, at the initiative of its Mayor, H. M. Wesseling, and Alderman, C.J. Eycken, the Association 'J.A. Komensky' was founded. It was chaired by the Mayor with the objective of maintaining and enlarging the Comenius Museum which was located on the top floor of the Town Hall.

The Commemorations of 1920 in Naarden and Amsterdam

Czechoslovak nationals living in the Netherlands wrote President Masaryk a letter in 1919 with a request for support to commemorate the emergence of their new state in 1918 with a Comenius Memorial. This came in the form of a bust of Comenius established on the Captain G.A. Meijerweg in Naarden. The bust was a creation of the Czechoslovak sculptor Strachovský and was made possible by funding from Czechoslovaks based in Amsterdam and by a personal gift from President Masaryk.

In his report to Prague on the Commemoration of Comenius’ birthday in Naarden on March 28, 1920, the Czechoslovak Ambassador included newspaper articles from the Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant, the Algemeen Handelsblad, the Gazette de Hollande and the Nieuwe Gooilander. The Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant wrote on March 30 that a deputation of Czechoslovaks paid tribute to their compatriot Jan Amos Komenský.

Apart from the birthday of Comenius, also the day of his death on November 15th was commemorated in Amsterdam and Naarden in 1920. On behalf of the Czechoslovak Government Professor František Drtina, Deputy Minister of Education came over from Prague for this occasion. On the Valeriusplein, opposite the Amsterdam Lyceum, the foundation stone for a Comenius monument was unveiled in his presence. The Ambassador laid a wreath on behalf of President Masaryk. On November 25 Masaryk sent a telegram (without accents) to the City Council of Amsterdam:…Accept my profound thanks for taking under your high protection the ceremonial placing of the first stone for the Monument of Comenius…)

Mayor J.W. Tellegen answered this telegram the next day with a letter in which he wrote, inter alia: … En posant la première pierre du monument du célèbre pedagogue il s’est accompli un acte de reconnaissance et piété envers votre grand compatriote…(…By the laying of the foundation stone for the Monument of the famous pedagogue has been done an act of piety and recognition for your great compatriot…).

The stone on the Valeriusplein was intended as the foundation for a Comenius Monument in Amsterdam and came from the area of Uherský Brod, close to where Comenius was born. The stone was transported by train to Amsterdam as diplomatic cargo. At the ceremonial departure of the train from the Masaryk railway station in Prague the Minister of Education and Community Development, J. Šusta, was present. In 1922 J.V. Klíma described the developments relating to the stone and the intended monument and mentioned that a bronze casket with official documents had been placed under the stone. However, a Comenius Monument was never established in Amsterdam.

The stone is still on the Valeriusplein next to the Amsterdam Lyceum, in a part of the square that is kept bicycle-free. Around the turn of the 21st century the stone was damaged, reportedly due to road works. Could the City of Amsterdam not consider restoring the stone in view of the 350th anniversary of the death of Comenius in 2020, when it will also be 100 years since the stone was solemnly unveiled? A model for the monument is kept in the Comenius Museum in Naarden.

The Commemoration of 1972

In 1972, according to the newspaper NRC Handelsblad on 29 March, an incident had occurred at the Commemoration of the birthday of Comenius between the Czechoslovak diplomatic mission and some Slovaks who had been based in the Netherlands since the Prague Spring in 1968. Before the official wreath-laying ceremony they had already laid a wreath at the Monument of Comenius. On the ribbon were names of some prominent political prisoners in Czechoslovakia, such as the famous dissident and chess master Luděk Pachman. The Czechoslovak Ambassador Václav Malý therefore refused to attend the ceremony. Museum Director H.H.J. Heule removed the wreath personally, under the motto: 'No politics around Comenius, who himself stood above all parties'.

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4. The Czech Communists and Comenius; at home Comenius was considered to have been more than a pedagogue and thinker

A national icon

Shortly before the end of communism, the Czechoslovak National Bank introduced a new twenty-crown note bearing the effigy of Jan Amos Comenius. At first sight, one would not expect a communist regime emphatically to pay homage to a deeply devout, headstrong man, an emigrant moreover. Czech Communists, however, tried to associate with national icons and Comenius was unmistakably one or them. Since the very beginning of their rule, they tried to place themselves invariably on the same line as major figures in Czech history. Komunisté, dědiči velkých tradic českého národa (Communists, heirs of the great traditions of the Czech people) heralded the revealing title of a publication in 1946 by party ideologue Zdeněk Nejedlý, in which he presented the Communists as the guardians of all progressive traditions in Czech history, back to the Hussites.

In the case of Comenius, it is possible to reconstruct this alleged relationship partly, using documents from the Presidential Archive in Prague, which in the communist period centre around two dates, 1957 and 1970. In both years, major events around Comenius took place and extensive attention was paid to his legacy with exhibitions, book publications, conferences and monuments. In 1957, the commemorations were motivated by the fact that Opera Didactica Omnia, a collection of educational works by Comenius had been published in Amsterdam exactly three hundred years before. The Chancellery of the President was always kept informed in detail of all the activities, and on several occasions, President Antonín Zápotocký also attended in person.

As part of these festivities, Comenius was deliberately used as a showcase abroad. A new official biography of Comenius appeared not only in Czech, but also in Russian, German, Dutch, French, Spanish and Portuguese. Furthermore, in Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Great Britain, West Germany and Sweden - the countries where Comenius had settled down for any length of time during his tumultuous life - a list was compiled of sites of significance in his life. The Czechoslovak diplomatic missions were then instructed to ensure that there were locations where mapped plaques would be installed, which would be a reminder of Comenius. Naarden even received a Comenius statue donated by the Czechoslovak State. The monument - created by Vincenc Makovský and Jaroslav Fragner - was erected in the Captain G.A. Meijerweg, and would become the site of the annual wreath-laying ceremony to mark the birthday of Comenius.

More than a Pedagogue and Thinker

In 1970, exactly three hundred years after his death, the warm relationship that the Czech communists felt for Comenius was renewed, inter alia with a major scientific conference in Prague on 8 to 11 September. Gustáv Husák, President and Leader of the Communist Party, was invited to welcome international guests. At first, he would personally meet the foreign scientists, but upon insistence of persons such as Jan Fojtík, the chief ideologue of the Communist Party, this was called off for uncertain reasons. Instead, a speech was read out which had been prepared with the help of the same Fojtík and in which Comenius was cited with high praise:

…Our socialist state and society have great respect for the work of Comenius. After all, it is precisely the ideas of socialism that ensured an end to the abuses of the unjust society - something Comenius dreamed of. [...].

Then, Comenius' efforts for international peace in particular were placed in the spotlight:

…Comenius is more than a pedagogue and thinker. His actions demonstrate a genuine effort to promote international understanding and the peaceful settlement of conflicts. Indefatigably he called on representatives of States to put an end to their wars. He concludes that it is necessary to eliminate the causes of war and his struggle for peace is linked to criticism of exploitation and to the desire for a better organization of society…

Comenius' thoughts about global peace fitted well within the self-image that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia had presented, so it is not surprising that these thoughts are stressed in the speech of Husak.

Peace was a key concept in communist propaganda, which attributed the Cold War tensions invariably to Western aggression. Aggression in the communist point of view necessarily resulted from the capitalist system and therefore could only be overcome by radical social changes as had happened in the communist countries. By claiming Comenius as spiritual ancestor of such changes, its own peace rhetoric could be placed in a long historical tradition, thus providing an extra distinction.
Representative of the Best Traditions

Showing off national heroes would not benefit the Czech communists in the long run. Especially after the crushing of the Prague Spring in 1968 they appeared domestically more and more like puppets of Moscow. And Comenius was used not only by those in power, but dissidents also found their way to use him. The playful opposition group Bohemian Children announced in its manifesto of 1988 that they wanted to bring back the remains of Comenius to the fatherland to pay this greatness the honour which he deserves. And Comenius also indirectly played a role when Václav Havel and Jan Patočka met each other, two key figures in the human rights initiative Charta 77 which would develop into the best-known Czech opposition movement against communism. It was at a lecture which Patočka held on Comenius where they first met. Many years later, in the middle of the Velvet Revolution of 1989 which would put an end to more than forty years of communist rule, Comenius appeared again when Havel presented his candidacy as President and, through national television, was allowed to speak to the population as a leader of the mass-protest movement Civic Forum. In his speech, he referred to Comenius as a representative of our best traditions to which finally could be adhered again. And a few weeks later, Havel concluded his first speech as President with the famous quote of Comenius with which his predecessor Masaryk had started his first presidential speech: People, your government has returned to you!

Tribute of Czechoslovaks to Comenius in Naarden

When it became easier, around the time of the Prague Spring, for Czechoslovak citizens to travel abroad, the number of visitors to the Museum and Mausoleum grew strongly: 5710 in 1968 and 11272 in 1969. Many came to Naarden by bus. Paul Vuyst, then a clerk at the Town Hall and key holder of the Mausoleum, accompanied them to the grave of Comenius. Often people were overcome with emotion, Vuyst said: All the tears would together have been able to fill a large aquarium. Vuyst also saw that somebody took pictures of pages in the guest book in the Mausoleum, which had been kept since 1937 and in which visitors often wrote comments or messages. He suspected that the man belonged to the Czechoslovak secret service and was keeping an eye on his fellow travelers. Therefore Vuyst decided in consultation with the Mayor that the guestbook should be stored safely in the Town Hall and between 1968 and 1990 a loose-leaf guestbook was used. When Alexander Dubček, the leader of the Prague Spring and after the Velvet Revolution President of the Czechoslovak federal parliament, visited the Mausoleum in 1990, the guest book was reinstated and he was the first signatory.

After the Velvet Revolution in November 1989, the number of visitors to the Mausoleum spectacularly increased from 7,000 in 1990 to 32,000 in the Comenius Jubilee Year of 1992. Aleid Hamelink was then the Town Hall clerk and key holder of the Mausoleum. Daily, and often even at the weekend she accompanied the many visitors from the Town Hall to the Mausoleum, a five-minute walk away. Paul Vuyst and Aleid Hamelink remember how in those days Czechoslovaks were often taken care of by residents of Naarden. When the Comenius Museum was transferred to the building next to the Mausoleum and was given the task of facilitating access to the Mausoleum, the role of key holder became redundant. The Town Hall Clerk could once again focus on core tasks.

5. From an occasional exhibition in 1892 to the Comenius Museum in 2017

The Exhibition of 1892 in the Town Hall

Thanks to the efforts of the archivist A.N.J. Fabius, an exhibition in the Town Hall of Naarden was opened during the commemoration of Comenius’ 300th birthday on March 28, 1892. Fabius had succeeded in convincing the local notary, J.J. Roeppe, that the burial register of the Walloon Congregation that Roeppe was in possession of, should not be omitted from the exhibition because it proved to be not easy to obtain original works by Comenius.

It was not to be an occasional exhibition. This became clear when in the following year, among others, Mayor H. M. Wesseling and Alderman C.J. Eycken established the Association J.A. Komenský for the management and the expansion of the collection. Over time, the collection grew through donations and acquisitions. The money
came from the Czechoslovak Embassy, from contributions from members of the Association, and from the proceeds of bazaars and sponsorship.

In the early 1920s, the Municipality of Naarden, the Association J.A. Komenský, and the Czechoslovak Embassy found that the space available for the collection in the Town Hall was too small. What began modestly in 1892 should develop into a museum and a study centre. They decided to join forces and transferred the Comenius Museum to the Spanish House on Turfpoortstraat in 1924.

From Town Hall to the Spanish House (1924-1992)

The Embassy donated 700 Dutch guilders for the furnishing of the property and the Amsterdam and Naarden Comenius Associations guaranteed its rental. After the opening in 1924, the number of visitors grew as a result of the excitement surrounding the investigation into the grave of Comenius and the realisation of the Comenius Mausoleum (1933-1935). But then it all became quiet. During World War II, the Museum remained open.

After the Communists came into power in Czechoslovakia in February 1948, and after the Cold War began, the Museum Board took the view that politics should be avoided and it showed restraint against the Czechoslovak administration. Between 1963 and 1967 the Museum was closed for restoration, the official re-opening took place on 6 November 1967. In 1968, the management of the Comenius Museum changed. The Association J.A. Komenský that was closely linked with the Municipality and had led the management of the Museum since 1893 was abolished. On December 23, 1968 the Mayor N.J.C. Cramer, created the Comenius Museum Foundation for the management of the renovated museum. The Mayor and Aldermen of Naarden would appoint the members of the Foundation Board and would also have to approve the annual report of the Foundation, but the bond between the Municipality and the Foundation was loosened.

Merging of the Mausoleum and Comenius Museum on Kloosterstraat

A new era dawned with the move of the Comenius Museum into the building at Kloosterstraat right next to the Mausoleum. The combined Museum & Mausoleum was opened on May 16, 1992 by the Czechoslovak Deputy Prime Minister Josef Mikloško and the Dutch Minister of Culture Hedy d’Ancona. With the combination of Museum and Mausoleum the formal articles of association of the Comenius Museum needed to be adjusted. In contrast to the situation up to 1992, the Comenius Museum Foundation would now independently provide the management of and access to both the Museum and the Mausoleum. The Municipality would provide the Foundation with financial resources in the form of grants for the rental of the Museum building, and for the costs of the joint operation of Museum and Mausoleum. The Government Building Service - now the Government Real Estate Company - remained responsible for maintenance of the Walloon chapel.

A decade later, the Municipality of Naarden had to cut back on structural subsidies. As a result, the subsidy to the Foundation was restricted to the rental fee for the Museum building. This had the effect of the Comenius Museum being threatened with closure and would also constitute a risk for the management of and access to the Mausoleum.

The prospect of closing the Museum and Mausoleum led to concern in the Czech Republic. In consultation with the Czech Ambassador Petr Kubernát, the Comenius Museum Foundation and, in particular, its chairman Hans van Oostveen and members Vladimir Hobrlant and Harry Rörik strove to find a sustainable solution to the problems. This came about via the Czech Republic. The Czech Government decided in 2004 to give financial support to the J.A. Komenský Memorial in Naarden (Museum and Mausoleum) through a partnership with the Czech Comenius Museum in Uherský Brod (Muzeum J.A. Komenského). For the implementation of this decision the Comenius Museum Foundation, the Muzeum J.A. Komenského in Uherský Brod and the Municipality Naarden signed a mutual co-operation agreement on December 1, 2004. The Czech Radio reported soon thereafter in an interview with Ambassador Kubernát that the Comenius Museum was saved from permanent closure. Kubernát indicated that it was a pretty big amount, costing up to € 80,000 - per year. This amount would actually cover the operating costs of both the Museum and Mausoleum, the Ambassador said.
Activities of the Comenius Museum Foundation

Having been appointed in 2009, part-time director Hans van der Linde went on to professionalise the Comenius Museum Foundation and to position it in the Dutch museum world. The Director is assisted by an also part-time administrative assistant and thirty volunteers. The members of the Board and the Advisory Council of the Foundation are also volunteers.

The activities of the Comenius Museum Foundation focus on managing the Museum collection, the Library and the Archives, and on making them accessible to the public. At the same time, the Comenius Museum Foundation provides management of and access to the Mausoleum. The third area of responsibility of the Foundation concerns deepening and disseminating knowledge about Comenius and his ideas through exhibitions, symposiums, conferences and publications. Extra attention is given to educational school visits to the Mausoleum.

A special activity is the Commemoration of the birthday of Comenius, on or about March 28th. In the morning of this Comenius Commemoration Day, the Mayor and Aldermen of the Municipality Gooise Meren (formerly Naarden) and the Ambassadors of the Czech and Slovak Republics lay wreaths on the grave of Comenius in the Mausoleum, and then do the same in the afternoon together with the Ambassadors of Hungary and Poland at his statue next to the Great Church. Since 2011, the Comenius Commemoration Day has been combined with the Comenius Lecture and the presentation of the Comenius Prize. In 2014, the Comenius Museum Foundation merged with the Foundation Comenius which since 1995 had organised the Comenius Lectures which are based on scientific research. The lectures address topics of current social importance in which the ideas of Comenius resonate. The Comenius Prize is awarded to an individual, to a project, or to an organisation with a distinct commitment to society in the spirit of Comenius, in the fields of faith, education and society. On the Comenius Museum website (www.comeniusmuseum.nl) reviews can be found of exhibitions, Comenius lectures and Laureates of the Comenius Prize.

In 2015, the accreditation of the Comenius Museum was renewed by the Dutch Museum Register. With all its activities, the specialised library and use of social media, the Comenius Museum Foundation has the ambition to fulfill the function of a knowledge centre for everyone. Does this not remind one of the visions for the development of the Comenius Museum nearly a century ago?

Cooperation with the Muzeum J.A. Komenského in Uherský Brod

The Comenius Museum in Naarden and the Muzeum J.A. Komenského in Uherský Brod have worked closely together since 2004. The latter is a State Museum dating back to 1898, but in 1945 it specialised as a Comenius Museum. Since then it follows developments relating to Comenius in areas such as collections, presentations, research and education, at both a national and an international level. The first time that an official delegation from the Muzeum J. A. Komenského in Uherský Brod visited the Comenius Museum in Naarden was in 1957. On that occasion, the Czechoslovak Government gave Naarden the Comenius statue created by Makovský and Fragner as referred to above. Identical statues stand in front of the Muzeum J.A. Komenského in Uherský Brod and the Moravian College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA. A small copy can be seen in the miniature city of Madurodam in The Hague, the Netherlands. Since 2000, the Comenius statue is situated next to the Great Church, opposite the Town Hall On a blank wall to the side is a fragment of a poem written by Jana Beranová Without Luggage (Bez bagáže).

The Mutual Cooperation Agreement of 2004

The basis for the current relationship between the two Comenius Museums is set by the Mutual Cooperation Agreement of 2004. The Czech Government chose the Muzeum J.A. Komenského in Uherský Brod as a partner for the Comenius Museum Foundation to administer its financial contribution to the Comenius Museum in Naarden and to undertake joint activities in order to deepen and disseminate the knowledge about the life and work of Comenius. Co-operation with regard to exhibitions developed over the years. In 2006, the Muzeum J.A. Komenského in Uherský Brod gave the exhibition Vivat Comenius on permanent loan. It is its intention to renew the exhibition before the 350th anniversary of the death of Comenius in 2020. In addition, also temporary exhibitions from the Czech Republic are installed. In return, the Comenius Museum can provide exhibitions in
the Czech Republic.

International co-operation regarding Comenius and his heritage is also promoted through conferences. For example, more than sixty Comenologists from seven countries took part in the Comenius International Conference in October 2013 in Naarden. The conference was the result of co-operation with the Deutsche Comenius Gesellschaft in Berlin, the National Pedagogical Museum and the Library J.A. Comenius in Prague, and the Muzeum J.A. Komenského in Uherský Brod. The Comenius Museum intends to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the death of Comenius in 2020 again with an international conference in Naarden.

6. Comenius and Mutual Co-operation at Government Level

**Personal attention of the Czechoslovak President**

For the young Czechoslovakia, Comenius was an important symbol, especially for the unity of the country. President Masaryk personally saw Comenius as a teacher and a source of inspiration and expressed his interest in Comenius on and in Naarden over the years. At the unveiling in 1920 of the first stone of a monument to Comenius on the Valeriusplein in Amsterdam, Ambassador P. Maxa laid a wreath on behalf of his President. On November 25, 1920 President Masaryk sent the Amsterdam City Council a telegram of thanks for the ceremony, in which he wrote about Comenius: "...Je pense à vous avec cett homme illustre le jour anniversaire de sa mort, l'homme qui a uni par des liens étroits nos deux nations et le monde civilisé tout entier... (With you I think at the anniversary of the death of this illustrious man, of a man that united our two nations and the whole civilised world with close ties).

Documents in the Presidential Archive in Prague show that the President was kept informed continuously about developments concerning Comenius Commemorations, the Comenius Museum, the search for Comenius' grave and the interior decoration of the Mausoleum. The Association J.A. Komenský, which was in charge of the Comenius Museum, wrote to President Masaryk on May 4, 1930 informing him that its Board had appointed him as an honorary member, and asked him to accept this appointment. It is not documented whether the President accepted the honorary membership. On April 26, 1931 President Masaryk received the Alderman of Naarden, also Chairman of the Association J.A. Komenský, J.J. Smits and his daughter Marianne at his country residence in Lány. After his return to Naarden, Smits sent President Masaryk a letter thanking him for the reception and for his contribution to the Association. When before his departure to the Netherlands in 1934 Ambassador Ivan Krno paid a courtesy call to President Masaryk, he recommended the ambassador to promote in particular a worthy restoration of the chapel in Naarden.

**Involvement of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

As first point of contact for foreign embassies, as guardian of relations with other countries and responsible for treaties, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs played an active role in the developments regarding Comenius and Naarden. The formal correspondence between the Foreign Ministry and the Czechoslovak Embassy in 1927 about the inspection of the grave is an example, but also that about the situation in 1959 with respect to the lease agreement of 1933. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was responsible for negotiating the lease agreement that opened the way for the renovation and furnishing of the Comenius Mausoleum, which became the subject of further discussions as described below.

**The German Occupation of Czechoslovakia and its Consequences for the Mausoleum**

On March 15, 1939 Nazi Germany invaded Czechoslovakia. Bohemia and Moravia became a Reichsprotektorat and Slovakia a clerofascist republic. This meant in fact the end of the Czechoslovak Republic. Because of this, Naarden postponed the annual commemoration on March 28 of Comenius' birth until April 17. The newspaper De Gooi en Eemlander gave an account of the ceremony. Ambassador Artur Pacák, who was no longer Ambassador after March 15, held an emotional speech. The Czechoslovak national anthem was sung on two occasions, at the laying of wreaths at the Mausoleum and, later, at the Comenius Monument. There were weeping women and men, the newspaper De Noord-Ooster added.
Worldwide, Czechoslovak Ambassadors on March 15, 1939 had been instructed to transfer properties such as embassies and consulates to the German Embassy. De Goot en Eemlander on 20 March, 1939 devoted an article to the Comenius Mausoleum containing an interview with Tourton Bruyns, inspector of State Property in Amsterdam. He did not doubt that Germany would promptly pay the lease fee for the Walloon chapel if this country would be considered to be the legal successor to Czechoslovakia. However, the Inspector wondered, could this be the case with a State that had deprived the Czechs of their freedom? In order to prevent Nazi Germany indeed becoming the successor to Czechoslovakia, the reference to Czechoslovakia as a leaseholder in the Land Registry was deleted. The Municipality of Naarden asked the Ministry of Education and Science in early January 1940 whether the Municipality could take over the lease. It is not known whether this letter was answered.

The Lease Agreement after World War II

After World War II, the deletion of Czechoslovakia as leaseholder was not undone. The Embassy of what had become communist Czechoslovakia in 1948 asked the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the 1950s to clarify the status of the lease agreement. In The Hague, official opinions on the lease differed. Questions arose as to whether or not the lease agreement had been legally established in 1933 because it had not been submitted for approval to the Dutch parliament, whether or not the agreement was annulled by World War II, and whether or not the agreement should be renewed? By 1959 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Czechoslovak Embassy that the agreement was not legally established. Out of courtesy, however, Czechoslovakia would not have to pay the lease fee any longer and the Dutch State would cover the costs of maintenance of the Mausoleum and also ensure access. This was followed by correspondence between the Embassy and the Ministry in which from the side of the Embassy international law objections were raised against the position of the Ministry. In 1994, the lease agreement was included in the list of treaties, which were originally concluded between the Netherlands and Czechoslovakia and remained in force between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Czech Republic after the breakup of Czechoslovakia on January 1, 1993.

The Mutual Co-operation Agreement

Signed in December 2004, the Mutual Co-operation Agreement between the Comenius Museum Foundation in Naarden, the Museum J.A. Komenského in Uherský Brod and the Municipality Naarden also served to effectuate the decision by the Czech Government to financially support the J.A.Komenský Memorial in Naarden. The Czech Ambassador Petr Kubernát briefed the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Atzo Nicolaï about this co-operation agreement in January 2005. In this context, the Ambassador said that he appreciated that the Dutch Government would keep taking care of the external maintenance of the Walloon chapel. In his reply to the Ambassador the Secretary of State wrote in February that he was pleased that the Mutual Co-operation Agreement was concluded and that the Museum remained open. Following the merger of the Municipality Naarden into the new Municipality Gooise Meren on January 1, 2016, the Mayor of Gooise Meren confirmed to the Czech Ministry of Culture that since then Gooise Meren is the legal successor of Naarden in the Mutual Co-operation Agreement of 2004.

Distinguished Visitors

Engagement of important politicians was shown by their visits to the grave, Mausoleum, Museum and various events organised by the Comenius Museum Foundation. In 1931, Eduard Beneš visited the tomb when he was in the Netherlands for the international Rehabilitation Conference; he was then Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia and after 1935 successor of President Masaryk. He also became a contributor to the Association J.A. Komenský. Ministers of both countries attended the inauguration of the Mausoleum in 1937.

As mentioned, the President of the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly, Alexander Dubček (Leader and symbol of the Prague Spring in 1968) visited the Comenius Museum and Mausoleum in 1990 and had signed the guestbook. According to the programme of his visit, Dubček went directly to the Mausoleum after landing at the national airport.

Václav Havel, President of Czechoslovakia, after the Velvet Revolution in 1989, visited Naarden as part of his first official visit to the Netherlands in March 1991. In the guestbook of the Town Hall he showed his appreciation for the many years of care by the town to protect the heritage of Comenius. During the last
meeting of the Municipal Council of Naarden on December 16, 2015 before the merger with Bussum and Muiden, Havel’s visit was called a milestone in the history of Naarden. Together with the then Queen Beatrix, President Havel accepted the invitation to become patrons of the Comenius International Scientific Conference in the Great Church during the Comenius Jubilee Year 1992. The Queen attended the conference in person.

And, as mentioned earlier, together with the Dutch Culture Minister Hedy d’Ancona, the Czechoslovak Deputy Prime Minister Josef Mikloško opened the new Museum on May 16, 1992. In 2016, the Czech Minister of Culture, Daniel Herman, and Deputy Minister Vratislav Ouroda participated in the celebration of Comenius Commemoration Day. The Comenius Award was then presented to the former President of the European Council, Herman Count Van Rompuy.

The Czechoslovak president Václav Havel at the Comenius statue in 1991 at the Kapitein G.A. Meijerweg at Naarden. Nowadays the statue is situated beside the Great Church in Naarden

The president of the Czechoslovak Parliament in 1990 at the Comenius Mausoleum
7. Responses to Questions about the Significance of the Heritage of Comenius

Daniel Herman, Minister of Culture of the Czech Republic

During the 2016 Comenius Day celebrations, you knelt on the grave of Jan Amos Comenius: an impressive tribute. Your gesture symbolised as it were the significance which the Czech Republic attaches to Comenius and his rich heritage. Eighty years ago, co-operation between the Netherlands and Czechoslovakia culminated in establishing a Mausoleum for Comenius. Today, the importance of this co-operation is shown, among other things, in the financial support from the Czech Republic to the Comenius Museum Foundation.

What do you consider today to be the importance of the Comenius Museum and Mausoleum in Naarden, nationally and internationally?

“We can say with certainty that taking care of Comenius’ ideas in itself is meaningful and a responsible approach and that it requires humility. The Museum and Mausoleum of Jan Amos Comenius in Naarden commemorate his important personality in our shared European history in such a way. The function of the Monument in Naarden is to spread the ideas of Comenius, which in an original way give expression to the Christian roots of European culture: improving society through systematic education, the value of human life, faithful to both one’s own conscience and to the overarching spirituality in everyday life. This attitude is still needed today. For me, this is the significance of the activities of the Museum and Mausoleum at both national and international levels.

Jet Bussemaker, Minister of Education, Culture and Science, of the Netherlands

On May 8, 1937 your predecessor, J.R. Slotemaker De Bruïne, attended the inauguration of the Comenius Mausoleum. In 2016, almost eighty years later, you associated the name of Comenius with scholarships for Innovation in Education.

What is your feeling with regards to the importance of Comenius for education today and tomorrow, and what role could the Comenius Museum Foundation in Naarden play in disseminating the educational ideas of Comenius?

"It was Comenius, who, in the seventeenth century advocated education for everyone, boy or girl, rich or poor. In early March 2017, I presented the first of ten Comenius Scholarships. These new grants of € 50,000 for teachers employed in higher education are meant to stimulate innovation and quality improvement of education. This year the scholarship programme corresponds entirely to the ideas of Comenius, all projects are dedicated to the achievement of equal opportunities, where students with similar abilities can also have equal opportunities. All winners of scholarships (and that number is rising rapidly in the coming years) will constitute the Comenius community where sharing and dissemination of knowledge about educational innovation are key. So the whole of higher education can benefit from the innovations that will come about thanks to the Comenius programme, and these teachers will be ambassadors of higher education and of the ideas of Comenius”.

Kateřina Valachová, Minister of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic

Soon after the independence of Czechoslovakia in 1918, the Ministry of Education and Public Education showed a keen interest in initiatives to honour the memory of Jan Amos Comenius in the Netherlands. In 1920, Deputy Minister Professor F. Drtina unveiled in Amsterdam the foundation stone for a Comenius Monument and he made a tour of all the cities in the Netherlands which Comenius had visited. On May 8, 1937 Minister E. Franke took part in the solemn inauguration of the Mausoleum.

Abroad, Comenius is primarily known as a famous pedagogue. Could you describe the significance of his thinking for the future of education?
"All his life, Comenius campaigned for an overall improvement of man through continuing education and upbringing. An idea of his that was revolutionary at the time was that education should be accessible to students of both sexes and all social classes, as well as his emphasis on individual freedom, tolerance, humanity and fairness for all. For Comenius, education was the tool to achieve a better future for the whole of society. Comenius of course not only developed "pure" theory about the good effects of education, he also sought radical change of didactic principles. It was in particular Comenius who formed ideas on the use of all the senses in the learning process to move away from the education which at that time in schools was only based on mindless cramming.

As the bloody history during the twentieth century shows, aggressive totalitarian ideologies put all ideas on cultivating free citizens through upbringing and education to the side and have - for racial or ideological reasons - denied some people the right to education. In today's globalised world Comenius' legacy shows it is of unquestionable value, even if it is not possible to apply this in some parts of the world. For ideologies that impose limits on the freedoms of citizens, an intellectually developed person is all the more dangerous. As long as the world is tied up in conflict with those who deprive others the right to education and freedom, we need the torch of Comenius' ideas on creating a better individual and society through education and upbringing to keep burning”.

**Bert Koenders, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands**

In the history of the Mausoleum the Ministry of Foreign Affairs played an active role as interlocutor for the Czechoslovak and later the Czech and Slovak Embassies. At the time your predecessor even personally attended the solemn inauguration of the Mausoleum. Comenius was a famous scholar, but also a refugee.

*What is the importance of free access to his Mausoleum and of the Comenius Commemoration Day which is organised by the Comenius Museum Foundation each year on the occasion of his birthday?*

"Jan Amos Comenius stood at the cradle of modern Europe as a free thinker, scholar and reformer. His unbridled enthusiasm and innovative contribution to pedagogy and philosophy made him a central figure in the humanist tradition that formed Europe and the Netherlands. His life, which is characterised by unprecedented set-backs, illustrates the importance of a free, fair and equal Europe with solidarity. The creative spirit of Comenius was ahead of its time in Europe where free and critical thinkers were persecuted. Now that these values, which are partly based on the ideas of Comenius, are again under pressure, we think back to the Europe of his time and the ideal he had in mind. The Comenius Commemoration Day reminds us of this connecting ideal, and also of his eventful life. Its importance should never be underestimated. The Dutch-Czech cooperation around the Mausoleum I therefore think is of great value”.

**Lubomír Zaorálek, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic**

When you kindly supported the memorial in Rotterdam for Tomáš G. Masaryk in 2015, you described that the monument will remind us of our shared history. By celebrating the eightieth anniversary of the Comenius Mausoleum our attention is focused not only on the life and death of Comenius in the Netherlands, but also on his multi-faceted heritage, including that in the field of international relations.

*During negotiations in 1667, culminating in the Treaty of Breda and in the end of the Second Anglo-Dutch War, Comenius shared his thoughts about peace with the participating delegations in his Angelus Pacis (Angel of Peace). How do you interpret the ideas of Comenius in the field of international relations, war and peace?*

"Comenius was a personality whose significance exceeds beyond the time and frontiers of the territories where he lived and worked. Not only his work *Angelus Pacis (Angel of Peace)*, but also other writings such as *De rerum humanarum emendatione consultatio catholica* (General discussions on improving human affairs), contain ideas that are still very relevant today. In his work he emphasised the importance of religious tolerance and co-operation among nations. How topical Comenius’ appeal sounds that we need to be not Austrians, Spaniards, Frenchmen, but equal citizens. The idea of humanism and universalism, the vision of supranational structures, the peaceful co-existence
of peoples and individuals without regard to race or religion - these ideas of Comenius are ideals that we are trying to reach at all times. Some of Comenius’ ideas in the area of international relations were at least partly realised by means of setting up international structures, both at an European level and at an international level. However, from the history of international relations it is more than obvious that the mere existence of formal structures and rules is not sufficient - essential are concrete steps towards fulfilling the real ideas of humanity and peaceful coexistence of nations. For this reason, I hope that the ideas formulated by Comenius will constitute an inspiration for future generations, and I also believe that it is possible through them to look for a way out of today’s global crises and conflicts that are interwoven in contemporary international relations”.

Jana Reinišova, Ambassador of the Czech Republic

The active involvement of your Embassy in establishing the final resting place of Comenius and the Comenius Museum in Naarden goes back to the early 1920s and was closely followed by President Tomáš G. Masaryk personally. Tens of thousands of Czechs and Slovaks came over to honour Comenius with their visit to the Mausoleum during the eighty years of its existence. President Václav Havel came to Naarden during his first official visit to the Netherlands in 1991.

At the unveiling of the Monument T. G. Masaryk and Rotterdam in 2015, you wrote: Finding a small piece of homeland abroad always gives a very nice feeling, What do you think is the deeper meaning of Czech interest in Comenius, his life, heritage and final resting place?

"Comenius undoubtedly was one of the greatest personalities in our history and is considered to be so by our citizens. In 2005, the election to find "the greatest Czech" was held, and Comenius came in fourth place (after Emperor Charles IV, whose seven hundredth birthday was celebrated, last year in 2016 and former Presidents T. G. Masaryk and Václav Havel). We remember him mainly as the teacher of nations, and we commemorate him every year on March 28 (his birthday), which in the Czech Republic is considered to be a special day: the Day of the Teachers. On the other hand, we do not neglect his philosophical, humanitarian and religious heritage. I am delighted that Comenius still means something even to current generations, and not just in the Czech Republic. Naarden and the Netherlands, who were home to him after he was forced to leave his own homeland, are the proof of that. Comenius connected our countries even further, especially in times of oppression, and connects them also today in our joint care for his Mausoleum and Museum, a place that few Czechs would miss during their visit to the Netherlands. I believe and wish that the ideas and teachings of Comenius will still be a source of inspiration for everyone and that they will contribute to peaceful co-existence between nations”.

Roman Bužek, Ambassador of the Slovak Republic

The Comenius Mausoleum dates from the time of the (First) Republic of Czechoslovakia. Jan Amos Comenius is also honoured in the current Slovak Republic. Your Embassy is involved in the annual Comenius Commemoration Day in Naarden.

What role does Slovakia have in maintaining the memory of Comenius and in disseminating his ideas?

“In Slovakia, we have a profound respect for Jan Amos Comenius. March 28 is celebrated annually as the International Teachers’ Day. The first and biggest Slovak University in Bratislava proudly bears his name. But the most important thing is that his legacy is implemented in practical life and in education. Many things have changed since the time of Comenius. But we must remain aware that none of the modern technology, tablets, computers, internet, etc. can replace the teacher. Education can only have good results if the basic principles of Jan Amos Comenius are put into practice: communicating with students, their active participation, and learning things by their own experience, etc. “
Han ter Heegde, Mayor of the municipality Gooise Meren

Since January 1, 2016, Naarden is part of the Municipality Gooise Meren. The Naarden name remains linked with that of Jan Amos Comenius and his final resting place, the former Walloon chapel in Kloosterstraat. In photographs of 8th May 1937, the Kloosterstraat looked festive. Residents of Naarden greeted the procession of dignitaries on their way to the solemn inauguration of the Mausoleum of Comenius. In Comenius and Naarden we do not limit ourselves to the creation of the Mausoleum, we also outline the interest in Comenius in Naarden from the mid-nineteenth century to the twenty-first.

Are the Town of Naarden and the Municipality Gooise Meren in the year 2017 aware of the fact that they offer the final resting place to Comenius, refugee, theologian, educator and political thinker?

"Here we certainly are aware of all of this. The inhabitants of the historic centre of Naarden are reminded almost daily of this because of a beautiful several metres high statue of him in the main street. The twinning relations between the Municipalities Gooise Meren and Uherský Brod, not far from where Comenius was born, contribute to such awareness. And many of our citizens attend the celebration of Comenius Commemoration Day every year in March. Also for the Municipal Council this is a highlight that we would not want to miss”.

Hans van Oostveen, Chairman of the Comenius Museum Foundation

In Comenius and Naarden we give an impression of the interest in Comenius in Naarden. The Comenius Museum Foundation plays a key role: besides disseminating the ideas of Comenius the Foundation is responsible for free access to and management of the Mausoleum on behalf of the Municipality. To this end, the Foundation also maintains close contacts with the Czech Ministry of Culture and the Muzeum J.A. Komenského in Uherský Brod.

In recent years, you have committed yourself successfully to the mission of the Comenius Museum Foundation. How do you see the position of the Comenius Museum and Mausoleum in the future?

"Since my appointment as Chairman of the Comenius Museum Foundation there has been a steady expansion of the Foundation’s activities, particularly through the efforts of experienced people on the Board and Advisory Council of the Foundation, and of course thanks to the appointment and tireless activities of a professional director as well as volunteers. By merging with the Comenius Foundation, forces and activities were combined. For the future I see further development of our knowledge centre and intensified dissemination of the ideas of Comenius through collaboration with other museums, especially with the Comenius Museums in Uherský Brod and Prague. By giving our volunteers their own responsibilities, the Foundation remains attractive to persons with initiative”.

Henk Woldring, Author of Several Works about Jan Amos Comenius

Apart from being Vice Chairman of the Comenius Museum Foundation, you are the author of several works on Comenius and his ideas. On November 16, 2016 you presented in the Comenius Museum your book The pansophy of Comenius, his quest for comprehensive wisdom. One year earlier this work was preceded by your book Jan Amos Comenius, his life, mission and legacy.

How will the scientific interest in the life, work and ideas of Comenius develop and what is its significance?

“On the basis of my research, in 2015 I contacted some scientists (philosophers, theologians, historians and pedagogues) to assess whether they saw opportunities to pay attention to Comenius in their ongoing investigations. Their responses were positive, and on January 18, 2016 they met at my invitation at the Vrije Universiteit (Free University) in Amsterdam. These scientists appointed a committee, under my supervision to organise a Scientific Comenius Symposium, which will be held at the Vrije Universiteit on 20 November 2017. I hope that this initiative will create more interest in the work of Comenius, both in Dutch higher education and beyond”.
Hans van der Linde, Director of the Comenius Museum in Naarden

Under your leadership, the Comenius Museum has been accredited by the Dutch Museum Register. Assisted by dedicated volunteers you focus on the dissemination of Comenius' ideas and on the development of the Comenius Museum with its collections in conjunction with the final resting place of Comenius. Naarden commemorated the 250th anniversary of his death in 1920. The Comenius Museum intends to commemorate the 350th anniversary of his death in 2020 with a special exhibition and an international conference, and to highlight as many facets of its heritage as possible in the meantime. The Muzeum J.A. Komenského in Uherský Brod and the Comenius Museum in Prague are your main partners.

What is the added value of the Comenius Museum to the knowledge of Comenius, his life, work and ideas in the Netherlands and third countries?

"The Comenius Museum in Naarden is the only place in the Netherlands from where we draw attention to the ideas of Comenius in various ways. This happens, for example, in exhibitions, publications, book presentations, lectures, events, symposia, and conferences. In this way, the Comenius Museum endeavors to become visible as a central point from which the dissemination take place of the ideas of Comenius. Consequently, the Comenius Museum is not only a repository for articles, books and archive materials, but also interlocutor for those who want to study the ideas of Comenius. The Comenius Museum maintains contacts with researchers and other museums and libraries at home and abroad, but also seeks cooperation with schools and training institutions for education. By doing so the Comenius Museum focuses not only on those who are interested in the Netherlands but also on the international audience that visits the Mausoleum and Museum. The cooperation with our international colleagues from the Comenius Museum in Uherský Brod, the National Pedagogical Museum and Library J.A. Comenius in Prague and the Deutsche Comenius Gesellschaft in Berlin is of paramount importance because of sharing information, knowledge and networks. We complement each other by joining forces from different countries to draw attention to and keep interest in Comenius' ideas.”

Miroslav Vaškových, director of the Muzeum J.A. Komenského in Uherský Brod

The Muzeum J.A. Komenského in Uherský Brod is the partner of the Comenius Museum in Naarden on behalf of the Czech Ministry of Culture. Together with your colleague in Naarden you inspired us to take the initiative for the book Comenius and Naarden on the occasion of 80 years of the Mausoleum.

What is for you the importance of this bilateral cooperation for the conservation and the further dissemination of the Comenius heritage bequeathed to us all?

"For the Comenius Museum in Uherský Brod and for me personally it is a pleasure and challenge to work to deepen the relations between our two countries through Comenius, who is part of the great history of the Netherlands and the Czech Republic. On the basis of the government decree of the Czech Republic, dated 21-4-2004, to finance and maintain the Comenius Museum and Mausoleum in Dutch Naarden, a co-operation agreement was subsequently signed on 1-12-2004 between the Museum J.A. Komenského in Uherský Brod, the then Municipality Naarden and the Comenius Museum Foundation in Naarden. The co-operation refers to the area of exhibitions and science, and also to friendly relations that develop, especially through the twinning between Uherský Brod and Naarden.

A major challenge for the coming years is a new permanent exhibition in the museum in Naarden, which should especially highlight the spiritual heritage of Comenius, as it may also be inspiring for today's world. We will aim to portray Comenius as a member of the network Republic of Scholars. Contacts with intellectuals - be it direct personal contact or through his correspondence - are characteristic of his whole life, including during his long stay in Amsterdam at the end of his life. Through his contacts with people from science, theology and politics, it is possible to show Comenius' ideas and efforts, as well as to outline his entire literary work, something which is lacking in the current set-up. Such a new exhibition should appeal to the visitor by presenting the very essence of Comenius' work, by positioning him right into the context of thinking and problems of the seventeenth century, as well as showing how his personality is perceived in the following centuries. At the same time we will
draw attention to the year 2020 when it will be 350 years since Comenius was buried in Naarden. The ties between Uherský Brod and Naarden will certainly continue in the future”.

Markéta Pánková, director of the Národní pedagogické muzeum a knihovna J.A. Komenského (National Pedagogical Museum and Library of J. A. Comenius) in Prague

The National Pedagogical Museum and Library J.A. Comenius in Prague has been working together with the Comenius Museum in Naarden for many years now. You focus on the educational and pedagogical aspects of the ideas of Comenius. In your Museum portraits of members of the family De Geer were exhibited in 2010, who had loaned them to the Comenius Museum. The family De Geer assisted Comenius in the last fourteen years of his life in Amsterdam.

How do you view the development of the co-operation with the Comenius Museum in the international dissemination of knowledge about Comenius and his ideas?

“The National Pedagogical museum and Library of J. A. Comenius has co-operated with its partner Comenius Museum in Naarden already for many years. The cooperation is realised not only in the form of exchange of information regarding comenioligical topics and research results in this sphere, but also by participation in conferences and other events organised by our counterpart and by exchanging exhibitions. For example, in 2016 our institution successfully cooperated with Dr Hans van der Linde. The Comenius Museum in Naarden helped me with the book J. A. Comenius in the Czech and global art (1542-2016). We also remember the year 2010, when the National Pedagogical Museum housed an excellent exhibition of portraits of the De Geer family including portraits from the 17th century until the present day, and the years 2013/2014 when the Comenius Museum in Naarden accommodated our exceptional exhibition of prominent Czech artist Miroslav Huptych containing collages inspired by Comenius’s work Labyrinth of the World. But I can add that already in 1970 the Prague Pedagogical Museum prepared an exhibition about Comenius for the Naarden Museum. The National Pedagogical Museum and Library of J. A. Comenius has expressed its appreciation of the fruitful collaboration by granting commemorative medals of J. A. Comenius to esteemed partners in the Comenius Museum in Naarden.”

Maud Arkesteijn, Chair of the Advisory Council of the Comenius Museum Foundation

As Chair of the Advisory Council of the Comenius Museum Foundation, as well as being a former Alderman of Naarden you have been involved for more than twenty-seven years with Comenius and Naarden. You were at the start of the physical merger of the Comenius Museum and Mausoleum in 1992.

How do you explain your personal involvement in the Comenius Museum and that of the many volunteers in the Museum, in its Board and Advisory Council?

"I came across the ideas of Comenius while studying Pedagogy at the University of Amsterdam, especially during the lectures on historical pedagogy. His ideas on upbringing and his commitment to the shaping of a child's own identity and that of men and women in general, have always greatly inspired me. By continuing to seek the good in men, Comenius, has greatly contributed to our world: in spite of his difficult circumstances he did not give up. His writings on upbringing, education and language, and also his efforts to solve problems by opponents talking to each other, make him an inspiration for many to this day. Comenius defended education for girls and boys, rich and poor, to give children the opportunity to develop by studying and thus to increase their chances in life. Comenius deserves that we should vigorously propagate his ideas to as many people as possible in order that they, in turn, share his ideas with others. The Comenius Museum is dedicated to achieving this, thanks to the many volunteers.”
Albert-Jan Postma, Director of the “Comenius Courses”

Your involvement in Comenius goes back further than your nomination in 2015 as Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic in Groningen. You are an entrepreneur and director of the Comenius Courses for Managers, affiliated with the University of Groningen. In the Netherlands, in the Czech Republic and many other countries, institutions in lower, secondary and higher education bear the name of Comenius.

Which significance has Comenius for current and future education?

"The importance of Comenius for education today is fully reflected in the way the Comenius Courses are designed. Delaying one's judgment is in itself already controversial, but at a time when we tend to search for solutions too quickly, we almost forget that we actually know very little. The Comenius Courses are based on the search for sources of wisdom and offer a choice of paradigm shifts, to tempt the participants to argue the reason of their own wisdom and subsequently to submit it again for discussion with the greatest of ease. Only then one will be able to draw oneself like a Baron Munchausen up from one's own swamp of prejudice and assumptions. Keeping a sharp eye and using a critical inward view shapes a personal leadership style”.

Kees Mercks, former Czech Literature teacher at the University of Amsterdam and a member of the Advisory Council of the Comenius Museum Foundation

In preparing our publication Comenius and Naarden, you have given us valuable advice. Thanks to you we were able to include the quotations of Karel Capek from a newspaper column he wrote during his visit to Naarden in 1931. You are not only a translator of a recent edition of The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart by Comenius, but you have also enabled your students at the University of Amsterdam to become knowledgeable about him.

What did you try to give to your students by doing so?

"As a teacher of Czech literature at the University of Amsterdam, I always liked the students to read the comic passages of The Labyrinth which describe the bad habits of students and professors. These passages prove the modernity of Comenius or stubbornness of our bad habits. In any case, they provide the necessary self-reflection, the basis for a philosophical approach to life. As much as possible, I also put the principles of Comenius' pedagogical theory into practice: the appearance and orderliness of the training materials and a good relationship with the students. In Comenius' time those principles were revolutionary, whereas today we (wrongly) take them for granted. After my recent translation of The Labyrinth I now dream about writing a book on the theme Comenius and Amsterdam.

8. Concluding Remarks and Acknowledgments

Comenius and Naarden might have become a simple story about a museum and memorial chapel for a famous man. However, when we collected information that was partly as yet unknown, we realised how many different facets the history of the Comenius Mausoleum has. In this outline we have highlighted only some of them. We hope that after reading Comenius and Naarden others will feel inspired to research certain subjects more thoroughly.

While reading the correspondence in 1920 between the Mayor of Amsterdam, J.W. Tellegen, and President T.G. Masaryk of Czechoslovakia, it touched us that Amsterdam was proud to have granted asylum to Comenius in 1656, and to hear from eyewitnesses - more than three centuries later - how inhabitants of Naarden assisted numerous Czechoslovaks when they visited his grave and sympathized with them.

The comments in chapter 7 confirm the significance of Comenius, also for us today. They are an invitation to continue co-operating across borders to transmit knowledge about his life and work to the new generations. Cooperation regarding the Museum and Mausoleum during the last century has known different forms, but it is
now anchored in the Mutual Cooperation Agreement between the Comenius Museum Foundation in Naarden, the Muzeum Jana Amose Komenského in Uherský Brod and the Municipality Gooise Meren. In the coming years preparations will start to organize the commemoration of the 350th anniversary in 2020 of the death of Comenius. We hope that many will find their way to Naarden to pay a personal tribute to Comenius in the Mausoleum.

Our thanks go to all who participated in the creation of this publication. We highly appreciate the responses we received to our questions. We also asked many people to comment on drafts and we made good use of their observations. The contributions of the Czech Embassy in The Hague, the Countess of Bylandt Foundation, the Municipality Gooise Meren, the Horizon Foundation (Naarden), Nolores, Albert-Jan Postma and Robert Fremr made it possible to finance the publication. Thanks to Jakub Doležal, Head of the Presidential Archive (AKPR) in Prague, we were given access to the entire Comenius file in this archive.

Without the admirable efforts of the translators Jana Pellarová, Radka Hartmanová and Magda van Duijkeren-Hrabová and our consultant, editor and translator Kees Mercks Comenius and Naarden would not have been ready in time for the 80th anniversary of the Mausoleum. The final touch was given by Susan Oostveen of Pegasus Publishing House. She managed to conceal from her father Hans van Oostveen that Comenius and Naarden would be dedicated to him as token of appreciation for his indomitable commitment during the recent history of the Museum and Mausoleum.

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