

# Religious Representation in Comenius's *Orbis sensualium pictus* (1658)\*

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## ABSTRACT

The *Orbis sensualium pictus*, first published in 1658, was an important element in the pedagogical programme of the Czech Reformer, Jan Amos Komensky [Comenius]. Through the use of illustrations with an associated key, it was intended to educate young children about the names and terms of items and activities that they saw in the world around them. Although the significance of the work has long been recognised and has been studied in the wider context of Comenius' philosophical ideas, comparatively little attention has been paid to the illustrations in this work. The intention of this article is to examine the portrayal of religious faiths in the *Orbis sensualium pictus* as well as to demonstrate that, in spite of Comenius' rejection of confessional differences, they depict Christian worship and religious practice from a largely Lutheran perspective.

Keywords: Jan Amos Comenius; *Orbis sensualium pictus*; Lutheranism; Nuremberg; worship; Islam; Judaism.

## Introduction

The *Orbis sensualium pictus* or the *Visible World in Pictures* was first published by the Endter printing house at Nuremberg in 1658 and has been lauded as a seminal work in changing approaches towards teaching.<sup>1</sup> The work of the Moravian educationalist and churchman, Jan Amos Komensky – better known by his Latinised name Comenius – *Orbis sensualium pictus* encouraged an experiential approach towards education rather than the more traditional forms of rote learning and recitation. For Comenius the established forms of teaching had failed because material was given to children in forms that could not be properly understood by them or ‘presented to the senses.’<sup>2</sup> He had outlined the pedagogical basis for this work some years earlier in his *Didactica Magna*, although the latter book was not published until 1657. Early education could be provided through ‘a picture book which should be put straight into the children’s hands,’ he suggested, for ‘at this age instruction should be mainly carried on through the medium of sense-perception, and as sight is the chiefest of the senses, our object will be attained if we give the children pictures of the most important objects.’<sup>3</sup> Each chapter of *Orbis sensualium pictus*, therefore, had a woodcut illustrating aspects of a particular theme; a key identified the different elements or activities that were being depicted. (Figure 1)

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<sup>1</sup> John Amos Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus. Hoc est fundamentalium in Munde Rerum & in Vita Actionum Pictura & Nomenclatura. Die Sichtbare Welt, das ist aller vornehme Welt-Dinge, und Lebens-Verrichtungen, Vorbildung und Benahmung* (Nuremberg: Michael Endter, 1658). Quotations are taken from the first English edition, *Orbis sensualium pictus. Hoc est fundamentalium in Munde Rerum & in Vita Actionum Pictura & Nomenclatura. Visible World or a Picture and Nomenclature of all the chief things that are in the world, and of Men’s Employments therein*, translated by Charles Hoole (London: J. Kirton, 1659). Although the prefatory material is unpaginated, both of these volumes have the same pagination for the main text so, unless otherwise stated, references to the *Orbis sensualium pictus* apply to both editions.

<sup>2</sup> ‘The authors preface to the reader,’ Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus*.

<sup>3</sup> *The Great Didactic of John Amos Comenius*, edited and translated by M.W. Keatinge (London: A. and C. Black, 1907), p. 264

**Place figure 1 here** The book was intended to be comprehensive, so that it provided ‘a picture and nomenclature of all the chief things in the world, and of men’s actions in their way of living’; it was ‘a brief of the whole world.’<sup>4</sup> From looking at the woodcuts, children were encouraged to learn the Latin and vernacular names of the illustrated objects or activities. In his opening quotation from Genesis 2: 19–20, Comenius drew a parallel between this visual education of children and Adam’s naming of the creatures of the earth that were brought before him. It was an aphorism which highlighted not only Adam’s thirst for knowledge but also his relationship with God, a concept that was developed further in the early-modern period.<sup>5</sup>

The *Orbis sensualium pictus* was intended to educate children about the world, but there was also an underlying Christian narrative. There are strong parallels between the text and an early Czech work, *Labyrint světa a ráj srdce* [*The Labyrinth of the World*] which Comenius had completed in 1623. In *The Labyrinth*, a curious pilgrim is led through seventeenth-century Europe and critically evaluates the world through what he sees and his other senses.<sup>6</sup> Although the term ‘pilgrim’ does not appear in the *Orbis sensualium pictus*, the young reader is invited at the opening of the book to ‘learn to be wise’ and told that with his guide, the master, ‘we will go into the world and we will view all things.’<sup>7</sup> It is a journey that begins with God – ‘As the creator, so the Governor and preserver of all things, which we call the world’ – and concludes in the final chapter with the Last Judgment. The last instruction to the student is ‘to fear God and call upon him

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<sup>4</sup> ‘The authors preface to the reader,’ Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus*.

<sup>5</sup> For its wider significance, see John Leonard, *Naming in Paradise: Milton and the language of Adam and Eve* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

<sup>6</sup> Howard Louthan and Andrea Sterk, ‘Introduction’ in John Comenius, *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart*, edited and translated by Howard Louthan and Andrea Sterk (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), pp. 9, 13, 22–25.

<sup>7</sup> Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus*, pp. 2–3. See also Louthan and Sterk, ‘Introduction,’ p. 24; Miklós Peternák, ‘Convention and Invention. Notes on the Illustrations of *Orbis Pictus*’ in Siegfried Zielinski, Silvia M. Wagnermaier and Gloria Custance (eds), *Variantology 2: On Deep Time Relations of Arts, Sciences, and Technologies* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther, 2006), p. 93. See also James Turner, ‘The Visual Realism of Comenius’, *History of Education* 1 (1972), pp. 121–23.

that he may bestow upon thee the Spirit of Wisdom.’<sup>8</sup> Further religious elements appear during the course of this exploration of the world. For example, chapter 36, ‘Man,’ recounts from Genesis the creation of Adam and Eve and the Fall, while chapter 43 discusses ‘The Soul of Man.’<sup>9</sup> The last section of the book examines the relationship between Christianity and other faiths, and this section has been discussed by historians in conjunction with Comenius’s other writings on Christian unity.

In spite of the educational importance of visual learning, less attention has been paid to the portrayal of religion in the *Orbis sensualium pictus*. This seems surprising given the confessional upheavals and turmoil of the first half of the seventeenth century, which directly affected Comenius himself. While the significance of the *Orbis sensualium pictus* in the wider context of Comenius’s educational and philosophical writings has been recognised, the presentation of religious subjects in the work would benefit from closer scrutiny. This article intends to analyse their portrayal in the context of Comenius’s own views on confessional difference and Christianity’s position vis-à-vis other faiths. After a brief consideration of the *Orbis sensualium pictus* in relation to early modern attitudes to education, it will examine the portrayal of Christianity and other religions. Secondly, it will argue that in spite of Comenius’s rejection of confessional differences, a particularly Lutheran perspective is evident in the depiction of worship and religious practice. It will also demonstrate that this was evident not only in the Nuremberg editions but also those published further afield.

### **Comenius, Education and the *Orbis sensualium pictus***

Comenius originated from Moravia but was educated at the Reformed academy at Herborn and later the university of Heidelberg. He subsequently returned to his homeland where, in 1616, he was ordained priest and began his ministry amongst the Unitas Fratrum or Unity of Brethren. The Unitas Fratrum was one of the churches that had

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<sup>8</sup> Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus*, p. 309; Louthan and Sterk, ‘Introduction,’ p. 24; Peternák, ‘Convention and Invention,’ p. 93.

<sup>9</sup> Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus*, pp. 74–75, 88–89.

emerged from the teachings of Jan Hus, but by the late sixteenth century, their ecclesiastical position was closer to the Reformed movement while the Utraquists adopted a more conservative stance.<sup>10</sup> The increasing persecution that followed the Catholic victory at the battle of White Mountain in 1620 culminated in Ferdinand II's decree of 1627 which sought to re-Catholicise Bohemia. Like many other Protestants, Comenius fled the country; he settled in southern Poland at Leszno. It was here during the 1630s that he developed his ideas on education and learning, while also gaining practical experience through teaching at the town's academy. His philosophical ideas on education led to a visit to England and an abortive attempt to establish a college in London in 1641–42. After a period reforming the education system at Elbląg, a Baltic port then in Swedish-held territory, he was invited in 1650 by Prince Sigismund Rákóczy of Transylvania to Sárospatak, where he composed the *Orbis sensualium pictus*. Comenius returned to Leszno in 1655, resuming his ministry; the following year, the town was razed to the ground as part of the Catholic king's reprisals following the defeat of the Swedish invasion of Poland. Comenius lost his library, manuscripts and all his possessions in the conflagration and was forced to flee. He eventually settled in Amsterdam and remained in the Netherlands until his death in 1670.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Craig D. Atwood, *The Theology of the Czech Brethren from Hus to Comenius* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), pp. 291–92, 315–17.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew Spinka, *John Amos Comenius. That Incomparable Moravian* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1943); Daniel Murphy, *Comenius. A Critical Reassessment of his Life and Work* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1995); Louthan and Sterk, 'Introduction,' pp. 7–17; Craig D. Atwood, *The Theology of the Czech Brethren from Hus to Comenius* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), pp. 327–65; Dagmar Čapková, 'Comenius and his Ideals: Escape from the Labyrinth,' in Mark Greengrass, Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor (eds), *Samuel Hartlib and Universal Reformation. Studies in Intellectual Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 75–91; Jan Hábl, *Lessons in humanity: from the life and work of Jan Amos Komenský* (Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft, 2011), pp. 111–16; David Parry, 'Exile, Education and Eschatology in the Works of Jan Amos Comenius and John Milton,' in Timothy G. Fehler, Greta Grace Kroeker, Charles H. Parker and Jonathan Ray (eds), *Religious Diaspora in Early Modern Europe. Strategies of Exile* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), pp. 47–60; *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*: <https://doi-org.oxfordbrookes.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/67104>.

Comenius espoused the late Renaissance concept of pansophism, which sought to combine all human knowledge in a single encyclopaedic system. This could be achieved through studying nature and the world, the application of reason, as well as the moral and spiritual principles that stemmed from divine revelation. As all three derived from God, they could not be contradictory but formed a single harmonious system. Pansophism presented an alternative to the traditional Aristotelian understanding of the world.<sup>12</sup> This philosophical position sought to challenge the fragmentation of early modern society through reforming education, religion and society.<sup>13</sup> Comenius's pansophic reforms aimed at establishing a universal system of education whereby 'the youth of both sexes' would 'become learned in the sciences, pure in morals, trained in piety, and in this manner instructed in all things necessary for the present and for the future life.'<sup>14</sup> Comenius had unsuccessfully attempted to establish a school based on his educational philosophy during his time at Sárospatak.<sup>15</sup>

The *Orbis sensualium pictus* was intended to educate the youngest children, from around five years old, during the first stage of this pansophic universal education.<sup>16</sup> It represented a further development of Comenius's earlier pedagogic texts, in particular his *Janua linguarum* which was first published in 1631 and went through a number of

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<sup>12</sup> Čapková, 'Comenius and his Ideals,' pp. 76–77, 79; Peter Harrison, *The Fall of Man and the Foundations of Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 92–93, 130; Matthew Spinka, 'Comenian Pansophic Principles,' *Church History* 22 (1953), 156; Louthan and Sterk, 'Introduction,' p. 14.

<sup>13</sup> Atwood, *The Theology of the Czech Brethren*, pp. 354–56, 366–68; Spinka, 'Comenian Pansophic Principles,' 162.

<sup>14</sup> Atwood, *The Theology of the Czech Brethren*, pp. 381–84; Spinka, 'Comenian Pansophic Principles,' 158–59; Frank le Van Baumer, 'The Conception of Christendom in Renaissance England,' *Journal of the History of Ideas* 6 (1945), 150–52. See also Čapková, 'Comenius and his Ideals,' pp. 79–80.

<sup>15</sup> Atwood, *The Theology of the Czech Brethren*, pp. 358–60; Louthan and Sterk, 'Introduction,' p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> G.H. Turnbull, 'An Incomplete Orbis Pictus of Comenius Printed in 1653,' *Acta Comeniana* 16 (1957), 36; Atwood, *The Theology of the Czech Brethren*, pp. 359–60, 385.

editions.<sup>17</sup> There was a long tradition of using illustrations, particularly in religious works, for educating the faithful, and Comenius acknowledged that he had taken the idea of using illustrations for teaching children from a suggestion made by Eilhardus Lubinus in his Latin-Greek-German edition of the New Testament.<sup>18</sup> Comenius also appears to have been influenced by the work of the Lutheran theologian and pedagogue Sigismund Evenius, who sought to instruct the young in Christian piety, particularly through his *Christliche Gottselige Bilder Schule* (Jena, 1636).<sup>19</sup> A Nuremberg edition of this children's book was published by the Endter family the following year.<sup>20</sup>

The *Christliche Gottselige Bilder Schule* was intended to provide a structured approach to educating children in Christian doctrine through the use of detailed engravings conveying a particular story. Groups of six pictures were linked by numbers to a full explanation of what was being depicted together with biblical citations. The book covered themes such as the necessity of prayer, the principal elements of the Lutheran catechism, the story of creation, three states of Christianity, the end of the world, resurrection of the dead and the Last Judgment and finally an encouragement to piety. The intention was that that parents would instil piety in their pre-school children through showing them the illustrations and reading the text to them. As they progressed, children were taken through several stages during which they learned the biblical stories, the citations, and ultimately their relationship to the catechism and religious praxis, until they

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<sup>17</sup> Werner Hüllen, *English Dictionaries, 800–1700. The Topical Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), pp. 383–92

<sup>18</sup> Bridget Heal, *A Magnificent Faith. Art and Identity on Lutheran Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 116–17; Dagmar Čapková, 'J.A. Comenius's «Orbis Pictus» in its Conception as a Textbook for the Universal Education of Children,' *Pedagogica historica* 10 (1970), 7–8; Hüllen, *English Dictionaries*, p. 393.

<sup>19</sup> Mary Noll Venables, 'Responding to God's Anger: Sigismund Evenius and the Siege of Magdeburg (1631),' in Emily Michelson, Scott K. Taylor and Mary Noll Venables (eds), *A Linking of Heaven and Earth: Studies in Religious and Cultural History in honor of Carlos M.N. Eire* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 114, 118–19.

<sup>20</sup> Sigismund Evenius, *Christliche, Gottselige Bilder Schule* (Nuremberg: Michael Endter, 1637); Kurt Pilz, *Johann Amos Comenius. Die Ausgaben des Orbis Sensualium Pictus. Eine bibliographie* (Nuremberg: Stadtbibliothek, 1967), p. 22; Adam Fijałkowski, *Orbis Pictus. Świat malowany Jana Amosa Komeńskiego. Orbis Pictus. Die Welt in Bildern des Johann Amos Comenius* (Warsaw: Uniwersytet Warszawski, 2008), p. 90.

were finally able to describe each stage without reference to the text and illustrations.<sup>21</sup> Like the *Christliche Gottselige Bilder Schule*, the *Orbis sensualium pictus* directly linked illustrations and text through the use of numbering and a key, which had not been the case with Comenius's experimental use of illustrations in the 1656 edition of the *Janua linguarum*.<sup>22</sup> Following Evenius' approach, Comenius similarly regarded the *Orbis sensualium pictus* as providing a staged learning process with the youngest children beginning by looking at the pictures while older students read the accompanying text.<sup>23</sup> The illustrations used in the book had therefore become an important component of the pedagogic process.

### **Publication and Illustration of the *Orbis sensualium pictus***

Comenius initially completed the *Orbis sensualium pictus* at Sárospatak and it has previously been assumed that the initial sheets were printed there in 1653.<sup>24</sup> In fact, the task was entrusted to the Nuremberg printer, Michael Endter, who produced the preliminary pages.<sup>25</sup> The illustrations were an important component in fulfilling the

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<sup>21</sup> Heal, *A Magnificent Faith*, pp. 117–19; Venables, 'Responding to God's Anger,' pp. 123–24; James Turner, 'The Visual Realism of Comenius', *History of Education* 1 (1972), 126; Čapková, 'J.A. Comenius's «Orbis Pictus»,', 7–8; Hüllen, *English Dictionaries*, p. 393; Marion Keuchen, *Bild-Konzeptionen in Bilder- und Kinderbibeln*, 2 vols (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlag, 2016), I, pp. 122–42.

<sup>22</sup> Turner, 'The Visual Realism of Comenius', 118–19.

<sup>23</sup> Hüllen, *English Dictionaries*, p. 392.

<sup>24</sup> Turnbull, 'An Incomplete Orbis Pictus,' 38; Pilz, *Johann Amos Comenius*, pp. 72–76.

<sup>25</sup> Stefan Ehrenpreis, 'Teaching Religion in Early Modern Europe: Catechisms, Emblems and Local Traditions,' in Heinz Schilling and István György Tóth (eds), *Religion and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 270; Stefan Ehrenpreis, 'Reading Materials and Visuality: Religion and Educational Models of Early Modern Europe,' in José Pedro Paiva (ed.), *Religious Ceremonials and Images: Power and Social Meaning (1400–1750)* (Coimbra: Palimage Editores, 2002), p. 308; Marta Bečková, 'Enarratio,' in *Dílo Jana Amose Komenského / Opera Omnia* (Prague: Academia, 1969–92), XVII, p. 276. See also Pilz, *Johann Amos Comenius*, pp. 38–39.



volume's purpose, but Comenius had initially found it difficult to find a carver with sufficient skill to produce the woodcuts.<sup>26</sup> Nuremberg had become an important centre for the printing of emblem books by the late sixteenth century, an industry that revived quickly after the devastation of the Thirty Years War.<sup>27</sup> Drawing on the educational practice of the Jesuits, emblems had come to be recognised as being invaluable for religious instruction. In Nuremberg, leading figures, such as Johann Michael Dilherr – a prominent Lutheran minister and former head of the gymnasium – and the poet, Georg Philipp Harsdörffer, recognised the visual impact of illustrations, which was then given added meaning by the accompanying text.<sup>28</sup> Comenius had established links with the literary circles during the 1630s and following the publication of the proof edition of the *Orbis sensualium pictus*, Dilherr and Harsdörffer were recruited to work on the illustrations.<sup>29</sup> Although Comenius was corresponding with Harsdörffer, the extent of his involvement with the selection of the woodcuts is unclear.<sup>30</sup> The German translation of the work has been attributed to another member of this literary circle, Sigismund von Birken.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Turnbull, 'An Incomplete Orbis Pictus,' 38; Peternák, 'Convention and Invention,' p. 97n.

<sup>27</sup> John Roger Paas, 'The Production of Emblems in Nuremberg, ca. 1650–1680,' in Thomas Kerth, George C Schoolfield, and Robert M Browning (eds), *Life's Golden Tree: Essays in German literature from the Renaissance to Rilke* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1996), pp. 115–32.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 120–23; Heal, *A Magnificent Faith*, p. 116; Willard James Wiefeldt, *The Emblem Literature of Johann Michael Dilherr (1604–1669). An Important Preacher, Educator and Poet in Nürnberg* (Nuremberg: Schriftenreihe des Stadtarchivs, 1975), pp. 12–17, 61–69.

<sup>29</sup> Ehrenpreis, 'Teaching Religion in Early Modern Europe,' pp. 268–70; Ehrenpreis, 'Reading Materials and Visuality,' p. 311; Bečková, 'Enarratio,' pp. 276–78.

<sup>30</sup> Pilz, *Johann Amos Comenius*, pp. 38–39. See also Paas, 'The Production of Emblems,' pp. 124–26.

<sup>31</sup> Ehrenpreis, 'Teaching Religion in Early Modern Europe,' pp. 269–70; Bečková, 'Enarratio,' pp. 277–78; Hullen, *English Dictionaries*, p. 392. See also Ralf Schuster, "'JST ES HIER NIT EITELKEIT!" Der Briefwechsel zwischen Sigmund von Birken und Johann Rist als Beispiel für literarisches Konkurrenzdenken im Barock,' *Daphnis: Zeitschrift für mittlere deutsche Literatur* 34 (2005), pp. 571–602.

Art historians have pointed to the derivative character of some of these woodcuts, for example the influence of medical treatises for the diagrams of the body. Analogies have also been drawn between particular woodcuts and the work of earlier artists, such as Jost Amman and Hans Baldung Grien. Furthermore, it has been suggested that some of the images may have been influenced by the Endter presses.<sup>32</sup> What has not been previously apparent is that some of the woodcuts relating to religion and worship illustrated scenes which would have been familiar in early seventeenth-century Nuremberg. This gave a Lutheran dimension to the volume.<sup>33</sup>

The *Orbis sensualium pictus* quickly established itself as an important educational text. Kurt Pilz has identified no fewer than 55 editions published before 1700, including the incomplete text produced in 1653.<sup>34</sup> Almost half of these volumes, 24 in total were published in Nuremberg, most, if not all, by the Endter printing house family.<sup>35</sup> The place of publication for two editions is unknown and an Amsterdam version is no longer extant.<sup>36</sup> An English translation of *Orbis sensualium pictus* was published in London by Charles Hoole in 1659. Described as a ‘teacher of a private grammar school in Lothbury, London,’ who had earlier published works for instructing children in Latin, his work was known in Nuremberg literary circles.<sup>37</sup> The English version was a largely faithful translation with only minor deviations from the Nuremberg edition, such as placing the vernacular before, rather than after, the Latin text.<sup>38</sup> The illustrations were engravings

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<sup>32</sup> Peternák, ‘Convention and Invention,’ pp. 92–93; Robert Alt, *Herkunft und Bedeutung des Orbis pictus: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Lehrbuchs* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1970), pp. 30–43; Turner, ‘The Visual Realism of Comenius’, 128–29; Ákos Dömötör, ‘Az Orbis Pictus Keletkezése,’ *Magyar Pedagógica* 96 (1996), 169–84.

<sup>33</sup> See below pp. 00–00.

<sup>34</sup> Pilz, *Johann Amos Comenius*, pp. 54–55.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 76–88, 91–107, 112–17, 123–24, 126–31, 134–35, 144–47, 149–51.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54–55, 122–23, 135.

<sup>37</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*: <https://doi.org.oxfordbrookes.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/13701>. See Ehrenpreis, ‘Teaching Religion in Early Modern Europe,’ p. 269; Ehrenpreis, ‘Reading Materials and Visuality,’ p. 311.

<sup>38</sup> Pilz, *Johann Amos Comenius*, pp. 88–90; Hüllen, *English Dictionaries*, pp. 419–21.

based on the original woodcuts in the first edition.<sup>39</sup> A further seven English editions of the *Orbis sensualium pictus* had been published by the end of the century. The remaining editions were published in predominantly Protestant towns, a number with significant Lutheran communities, across eastern Europe or Scandinavia: Braşov [Coronae] (1675); Cluj [Claudiopoli] (1698); Copenhagen [Hafniae] (1672, 1686); Levoča [Leutschoviae] (1685); Riga (1683); Sibiu [Cibinii] (1684); Turku [Aboae] (1680, 1683, 1684, 1689, 1698); Wrocław [Breslau] (1667).<sup>40</sup>

The multiple translations of the book are often cited as evidence of the success of the publication. Pilz recorded translations into French (1662), Italian (1662), Polish (1667), Hungarian (1669), Danish (1672), Dutch (1673), Transylvanian Saxon (1675), Swedish (1680), Lithuanian (1682), Zipser (1685) and Slovak (1685).<sup>41</sup> However, simply identifying these languages creates a slightly misleading impression. These were generally multi-lingual texts with further languages added to the original Latin and German. The first Latin-German-French-Italian text was published in Nuremberg in 1662 (with a further edition four years later) but Pilz has not identified a single edition printed in either France or the Italian peninsula before 1967.<sup>42</sup>

### **Portrayal of Religious Faiths in the *Orbis sensualium pictus*.**

Comenius intended to educate the young about religion through the *Orbis sensualium pictus*. This included the relationship between Christianity and other faiths together with certain aspects of religious practice. The final section of the text is devoted to Christianity and other world faiths, and, like the rest of the book, includes a woodcut for each chapter

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<sup>39</sup> Hoole commented the following year on ‘the dearness of the book (by reason of the brasse cuts in it),’ which had added four or five shillings to the cost of each volume, Charles Hoole, ‘The Ushers Duty’ in his *A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole* (London: J[ohn]. T[wyn] for Andrew Crook, 1660), pp. 6–7.

<sup>40</sup> Pilz, *Johann Amos Comenius*, pp. 54–55.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54–55.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54–62.

together with a key to the elements depicted. The opening chapter of this section bore the title 'Religio' and depicted a Christian place of worship. By equating 'Religio' with Christian worship, Comenius appears to be implying the primacy of Christianity over the principal religious faiths, although in the subsequent chapters, Christianity is considered alongside other religions in the order of their foundation. Comenius had made a similar assertion earlier in *The Labyrinth of the World*, where he argued that because Christianity was based on divine revelation, 'it brings to light the heavenly truth, while it also defeats opposing errors.'<sup>43</sup> The preceding chapter of *The Labyrinth* had commented on the religious profession of first the pagans, then the Jews and Muslims. It provided a superficial and critical appraisal of each faith, briefly touching on their religious practices but also on what Comenius viewed as their underlying flaws.<sup>44</sup> Although the *Orbis sensualium pictus* was primarily concerned with depicting and labelling aspects of the world, which can be seen in the chapters on 'Gentilism' and 'Mahometism,' a different approach was taken in the presentation of 'Judaism' and 'Christianity.'

'Gentilism,' the first of the chapters on religion, depicted several different pagan faiths (Figure 2). **Place figure 2 here** The majority of the chapter focused on the Roman gods, listing first the male and then the female deities and their areas of influence. Two thirds of the woodcut depicted alcoves with statues of each god and their attributes, resembling a gallery of classical statues. The chapter also referred to other religions: the Egyptians who 'worship all sorts of beasts and plants'; the Canaanite god Moloch to whom 'the Philistines' offered 'their children to be burnt alive'; and 'the Indians [who] even at this day worship the devil.'<sup>45</sup> Only these latter two religions are included in the illustration with the Roman gods.

These pagan faiths are followed by sections on Judaism and Christianity, each of which is accompanied by six vignettes relating to key aspects of the respective faith. For Judaism, these depicted Abraham and the 'sacrament of circumcision'; Moses receiving the Ten Commandments; 'the eating of the Paschal Lamb'; a priest offering sacrifices at

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<sup>43</sup> Comenius, *The Labyrinth of the World*, p. 125.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 122–25.

<sup>45</sup> Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus*, pp. 294–95.

the altar; the tabernacle and ark of covenant; and the brazen serpent (Figure 3). **Place Figure 3 and 4 here one above the other** Six scenes from the life of Christ were used to illustrate Christianity: the Nativity; Jesus's baptism by John the Baptist, which included a depiction of the Trinity; the Last Supper; Crucifixion and Resurrection; Ascension; Pentecost and the descent of the Holy Spirit. (Figure 4) The text accompanying the Christian scenes was much longer – an additional two pages – than that covering Judaism, at least in the first German and English editions.<sup>46</sup> The illustrations for the two chapters on Judaism and Christianity are rather different from the others in the book. There is a resemblance between these depictions and early seventeenth-century bibles used for teaching young children, as well as Evenius' *Christliche Gottselige Bilder Schule*.<sup>47</sup> However, the images are much cruder and less detailed than those in Evenius' book, although the underlying principle appears to be the same. Rather than illustrating aspects of Jewish and Christian life, Comenius intended to convey some of the fundamental principles of Christian doctrine to the young reader.

The vignettes depict scenes from the Old and New Testament, respectively, describing in sacramental and sacrificial terms the distinction between the two faiths. Comenius portrays Judaism as the precursor to Christian belief and religious practice, now superseded by them. Circumcision is described as a 'sacrament' and linked with 'the holy baptism' of Christ, 'the sacrament of the New Covenant.' The third image of the Jewish Passover, 'the eating of the Paschal Lamb,' can be matched to the third Christian scene of Jesus' institution of 'the mystical supper of his body and blood, for a seal of the New Covenant.' Furthermore, Moses receiving the Ten Commandments and the brazen serpent represent the Old Law whereas 'from this Christ we are called Christians, and are saved in him alone.'

Although the chapter on Christianity depicts scenes from the life of the Saviour, the language used also echoes the fundamentals of belief and doctrine expressed in the

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp. 296–301.

<sup>47</sup> Heal, *A Magnificent Faith*, pp. 117–19; James Turner, 'The Visual Realism of Comenius', *History of Education* 1 (1972), 126. Venables, 'Responding to God's Anger,' pp. 123–24. See also Peter van der Coelen, 'Pictures for the People. Bible Illustrations and their Audience,' in M. Lamberigts and A.A. den Hollander (eds), *Lay Bible in Europe, 1450–1800* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2006), pp. 185–205.

Nicene creed. The English text refers to the ‘the only-begotten son of God’; ‘conceived by the Holy Ghost in the most holy womb of the Virgin Mary’; ‘being fastened upon a cross he dyed’; ‘he rose again the third day out of the grave and forty days after being taken up from Mount Olivet into Heaven’; ‘henceforth to come again to the last Judgement sitting in the mean time at the right hand of the Father.’ The only scene that does not appear to fit in this creedal sequence is Christ’s baptism, but this allows Comenius to provide a biblical reference to the Trinity as well as inferring the Christian acknowledgement of baptism for the remission of sins.

Comenius returns in the following chapter on ‘Mahometism,’ like that on ‘Gentilism,’ to a single scene comprising of far fewer components (Figure 5). **Place Figure 5 here** Only seven items are identified in the key compared to the fourteen relating to Christianity. Islam is portrayed as a violent amalgam of earlier faiths: ‘Mahomet, a warlike man, invented to himself a new religion, mixed of Judaism, Christianity, and Gentilism.’<sup>48</sup> Comenius’s understanding of Islam appears to have been derived from Christian writings and therefore repeated certain polemical tropes, such as Mohammed’s reliance on a Arian monk named Sergius.<sup>49</sup> Unlike the previous chapters, the focus is not on doctrine and belief but on the religious practices and the lives of Muslims: ‘His followers refrain themselves from Wine; are circumcised and have many wives; build chapels from the steeples whereof they are called to holy Service not by bells but by a priest; they wash themselves often.’<sup>50</sup>

Although not uncritical, this portrayal of Islam reflected the more measured approach towards other faiths taken by Comenius from the mid-1650s.<sup>51</sup> In *Panorthosia*, he explained that ‘there should be no exercise of hatred on religious grounds’ regardless of the extent of their current differences. The Jews should be tolerated as they had preserved the message of the prophets; Muslims because they regarded Christ as a

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<sup>48</sup> Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus*, p. 302

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp. 302–3; Noel Malcolm, ‘Comenius, the Conversion of the Turks and the Muslim-Christian Debate on the Corruption of Scripture,’ *Church History and Religious Culture* 87 (2007), 487.

<sup>50</sup> Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus*, p. 303

<sup>51</sup> Malcolm, ‘Comenius, the Conversion of the Turks,’ 490.

prophet and opposed blasphemous attacks upon him. Furthermore, the Gentiles should be accepted because ‘they are blind, and deserve compassion rather than hatred.’<sup>52</sup> In his dedicatory epistle to the sultan for a Turkish translation of the Bible composed in 1666, Comenius is similarly respectful, pointing out the common ground shared by the monotheistic faiths.<sup>53</sup> This acceptance of other religions was, however, only until such time as these faiths could be converted to Christianity, starting with the Muslims, then the pagans and finally the Jews, ‘so that the circle of God’s loving kindness may end with those with whom it began.’<sup>54</sup> Although not explicitly articulated, it was no doubt this eschatological belief that accounted for the placing of these chapters at the end of the *Orbis sensualium pictus*, which then concluded with the Last Judgment.

### **Christian Worship and Religious Practice in the *Orbis sensualium pictus*.**

According to Comenius, the conversion of other faiths could only be achieved once Christians had overcome the issues that bitterly divided them and were ‘brought into agreement and harmony.’ Comenius recognised that the ‘preaching of the Gospel [had] brought the study of religion into the world and aroused vast discussions ... and these discussions issued in schisms and sects and heresies and new religions both within and without the Church.’<sup>55</sup> He argued that there needed to be a complete reform of the Christian Church as the previous efforts – including those of the magisterial reformers of the sixteenth century, such as Luther and Calvin – had been partial, only addressing

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<sup>52</sup> John Amos Comenius, *Panorthosia or Universal Reform. Chapters 1–18 and 27*, edited and translated by A.M.O. Dobbie (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), pp. 119–20.

<sup>53</sup> Malcolm, ‘Comenius, the Conversion of the Turks,’ 485–86.

<sup>54</sup> John Amos Comenius, *The Way of Light*, edited and translated by E.T. Campagnac (Liverpool: The University Press, 1938), p. 225; Malcolm, ‘Comenius, the Conversion of the Turks,’ 491–92. See also Nabil Matar

<sup>55</sup> Comenius, *The Way of Light*, pp. 34, 225.

certain aspects of belief and religious practice.<sup>56</sup> Earlier in his *Haggeus Redivivus*, Comenius had rejected the sectarian or eponymous titles of reform movements such as Hussite, Lutheran, Calvinist, arguing that ‘every Christian should not look at him who teaches but what he teaches and compare it with the Scriptures.’ The faithful should be therefore called Christians rather than adopting divisive names based on the reformers.<sup>57</sup>

Although Comenius praised the initial advances made by the Lutherans and the Reformed in his *Bequest of the Unity of Brethren* (1650), he lamented the doctrinal the wranglings and divisions within these movements. A point he illustrated with reference to Reformed adherents in mid-seventeenth century England, where after ‘the terror of wars has subsided, are making a sad and derogatory exhibition of themselves and have defamed thy name among their fellows by their practice of ever searching for novelties and never attaining to stable convictions’.<sup>58</sup> Comenius appealed ‘to all Christian churches together’ for ‘unanimity of opinion and for reconciliation among themselves, and for union in faith, and love of the unity of spirit’.<sup>59</sup>

One of the most significant differences between the confessions was their stance on communion. While the *Orbis sensualium pictus* included earlier chapters on Christian rites of passage such as marriage and burial, it did not examine directly the sacraments of baptism or communion. Comenius adopted a pragmatic stance on the divisive issue of communion and, in particular, the real presence. In the fifteenth century, the *Unitas Fratrum* did not have a uniform communion liturgy; the use of vestments and the type of bread, for example, varied and some of the first services took place in private houses. Nonetheless, they believed that in receiving the bread and the wine, they were sharing in

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<sup>56</sup> John Amos Comenius, *Panorthosia or Universal Reform. Chapters 19 to 26*, edited and translated by A.M.O. Dobbie (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), pp. 58–60. See also Simon J.G. Burton, “Jan Amos Comenius’s Trinitarian and Conciliar Vision of a United Europe: Christ as the Universal ‘Centre of Security’”, *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 19 (2017), 110–12.

<sup>57</sup> John Amos Comenius, *A Perfect Reformation. An Anthology*, edited by Amedeo Molnár (Prague: Ecumenical Institute of the Comenius Faculty of Protestant Theology, 1957), pp. 35–36.

<sup>58</sup> John Amos Comenius, *The Bequest of the Unity of the Brethren*, translated and edited by Matthew Spinka, Chicago: The National Union of Czechoslovak Protestants in America, 1940, 26–29. I am grateful to Howard Louthan for a copy of this work.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.



the body and blood of Christ.<sup>60</sup> In the wake of the Reformation, the *Unitas Fratrum* retained their own distinctive communal identity but adopted a position close to that of the Reformed Church. When it came to communion, they believed that Christ was only physically present in heaven but was sacramentally present at communion.<sup>61</sup> Comenius addressed the confessional divisions over communion in his *Panorthosia*, arguing that the fundamental issue was what Christ meant by ‘This is my body’ and the subsequent explanation of the transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. He concluded that ‘since Christ left this unspecified, why should we not also not do likewise? To investigate the method is the work of the faithless, or at least a reason for lack of faith.’<sup>62</sup>

The confessional divergence over communion had implications for the rites and material culture of worship. Comenius, however, dismissed concerns ‘for the difference of ceremonies’ as superstition, maintaining that ‘all these and similar things are adiaphora’ because neither ‘the substance of the divine service nor that of man’s salvation depends on them.’<sup>63</sup> He articulated this further in his *Panorthosia*, arguing that for the reform of the Christian Church, it was necessary ‘to stop the undue multiplication of ceremonies, high-sounding titles, and the observance of holy places and dates which is merely based on superstition if anything, the idolatrous naming of temples, and paintings and other similar features too numerous to mention. In a word, anything which is liable in any way to corrupt, defile, or at least spoil the beauty of the Church of God must be abolished.’<sup>64</sup> Comenius had earlier illustrated in *The Labyrinth of the World* how people were distracted from the ‘preaching the word’ by pictures and the veneration of images.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Atwood, *The Theology of the Czech Brethren*, pp. 179–81.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 262–63, 315–17.

<sup>62</sup> Comenius, *Panorthosia* (1995), p. 134.

<sup>63</sup> Comenius, *A Perfect Reformation*, p. 35.

<sup>64</sup> Comenius, *Panorthosia* (1993), p. 64.

<sup>65</sup> Comenius, *The Labyrinth of the World*, pp. 125–27.

Rites and material things were superficial matters that needed to be addressed in the more fundamental reform of the Christian Church.<sup>66</sup>

In spite of Comenius's rejection of confessional differences over ceremonies and the setting for worship, it is striking that some of the illustrations in the *Orbis sensualium pictus* present a Lutheran religious perspective. Several depictions are particularly reminiscent of the places of worship and religious practices in Nuremberg. The city's influence is particularly evident in the woodcut that accompanied the chapter on 'Religio,' translated as either 'Der Gottesdienst' (church service) or 'Religion.' This woodcut depicts a Lutheran church interior rather than portraying a confessionally-neutral place of worship. (Figure 6) **Place Figure 6 here** Although this is more a stylised image than an attempt to represent a specific building, it shows an aisled church constructed in the Gothic style, the vaulting supported by circular columns with simple capitals not unlike those of the Frauenkirche in Nuremberg. While there does not appear to be a clear distinction in the woodcut between the choir and the nave, there is an altar and retable (or altarpiece) at the east end of the church. In the foreground of the woodcut, representing the west end of the building, there is a substantial font. A pulpit appears half way along the south side of the nave and there are also pews located in close proximity. The 'Book of Scripture' is shown placed on a lectern and above it is a board listing the Ten Commandments affixed to a pillar. In his Latin text, Comenius identified the following places and liturgical furnishings within the 'templo' or church: 'penetrale,' 'altari,' 'sacrarium,' 'suggestus,' 'subsella,' 'ambones' and 'baptisterium.' In the English edition these terms have been translated, respectively, as the 'quire,' 'altar,' 'vestry,' 'pulpit,' 'seats,' 'galleries' and 'a font.'<sup>67</sup> The way these have been rendered in the woodcut/engraving was no doubt a matter of artistic interpretation, but the depictions appear to have been based on religious practice in Nuremberg. The presence of a pulpit and pews to accommodate the congregation during sermons indicate that this is a Protestant church interior, but the vested altar and in particular the substantial retable

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<sup>66</sup> Comenius, *Panorthosia* (1993), pp. 65–66.

<sup>67</sup> Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus*, pp. 292–93.

suggest that this is a Lutheran place of worship. Notably, in spite of its prominence, there is no reference to the retable in the key to the woodcut.

The association with Nuremberg is still more apparent in the depiction of church buildings in chapter 123 on ‘the inward parts of the city.’ (Figure 7) **Place Figure 7 and 8 here one above the other** This illustration appears to be based on the map of Nuremberg published by Matthäus Merian in 1648. There are parallels between the map and the woodcut, such as the location of the citadel or ‘tower’ and the fountain or ‘well’ in the market place. (Figure 8) There is a likeness between the two buildings identified by number 5 in the *Orbis sensualium pictus* as ‘Templum’ / ‘die Kirche’ and the appearance and relative location in Nuremberg of the parish church of St Sebald’s and the Frauenkirche. The two towers at the west end, aisled nave and the considerably higher roof line of the choir resemble St Sebald’s church. The most obvious distinction between St Sebald’s and the church depicted in the text book is the addition of the clock on the southern tower. The second, more compact, church located on the marketplace with a small choir, and steeple at the west end of the building is similar to the fourteenth-century Frauenkirche. Both these Catholic churches had been adapted for Lutheran worship following the city’s acceptance of the Reformation in 1525.<sup>68</sup>

A third dimension of the Nuremberg’s religious life represented in *Orbis sensualium pictus* is extra-mural burial. Burials had often taken place outside towns during plague epidemics, but there was a more general move towards extra-mural burial in the early sixteenth century. Concerned by the health risks posed by overcrowded urban graveyards, the Nuremberg authorities with the approval of the Emperor Maximilian I established two cemeteries outside the walls, which were consecrated in 1519. The city also used its authority in the region to compel other towns during the 1520s to relocate their graveyards.<sup>69</sup> Although the extra-mural burial grounds had been established at Nuremberg before the city adopted the Reformation, the separation of the living from the

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<sup>68</sup> Bridget Heal, ‘Sacred Images and Sacred Space in Lutheran Germany’ in Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (eds), *Sacred Space in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 48–56

<sup>69</sup> Craig M. Koslofsky, *The Reformation of the Dead. Death and Ritual in Early Modern Germany, 1450–1700* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 42.

dead became a divisive confessional issue, with the Lutherans favouring burial in these new cemeteries.<sup>70</sup> Comenius's actual chapter on burial (129) describes the corpse being brought to the graveside to the singing of hymns and the tolling of bells, but it does not mention this being an extra-mural burial. (Figure 9) **Place Figure 9 here** The woodcut, however, shows a substantial wall in the background, which could just be around the cemetery, but the illustration accompanying the earlier chapter on 'the city' (122) clearly shows the 'burying-places' to be 'in the suburbs' and outside the town walls.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, the funeral monument is depicted with a large crucifix rather than a simple cross; this is also more indicative of Lutheran than Reformed commemoration of the dead.<sup>72</sup>

It is perhaps not surprising that the illustrators of the *Orbis sensualium pictus* drew upon the religious practices and setting for worship that they saw around them in mid-seventeenth century Nuremberg. However, one of the consequences of relying on these local examples was that it portrayed a particularly Lutheran perspective rather than a confessionally neutral image of religion.

### **'Religio', Places of Worship and Foreign Editions of the *Orbis sensualium pictus***

The visual depictions in the *Orbis sensualium pictus* only represented the first stage in educating children about the world around them. Towards the end of his introduction, Comenius argued 'let the things be shewed, not only in the Picture, but *also* in themselves.' Through observing these particular objects in the world around them, children would learn about their size and scale.<sup>73</sup> There was an underlying assumption that these objects remained constant and did not vary from place to place.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp. 46–54.

<sup>71</sup> Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus*, pp. 248–49, 262–63.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp. 262–63; Koslofsky, *Reformation of the Dead*, pp. 93–100.

<sup>73</sup> 'The Authors Preface' in Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus*.

Although Comenius dismissed the confessional differences as *adiaphora*, they did have implications for the appearance of places of worship. The depiction of a Lutheran church interior continued to be used for the ‘Religio’ chapter in the multi-lingual editions of the *Orbis sensualium pictus* printed by the Endter family in Nuremberg. Publishers in other cities did not have access to these woodcuts and so commissioned their own engravings and woodcuts.<sup>74</sup> However, as there still needed to be a correlation between the illustrations and the text, these new depictions tended to replicate those from the original Nuremberg editions. Even so, it is worth considering the portrayal of ‘Religio’ in these other editions in the context of local religious practice, especially if these illustrations were intended as a visual aid to learning.

In Charles Hoole’s English edition published in 1659, engravings based on the original woodcuts were used to illustrate the chapters, including the image depicting ‘Religio.’ Hoole issued a warning to schoolmasters using his translation: ‘There is one thing to be given notice of, which I wish could have been remedied in this translation; that the book being written in high-Dutch does express many things in reference to that countrey and speech, which can not without some alteration of some pictures, as well as words, be expressed in ours.’<sup>75</sup> It is unclear whether Hoole considered the portrayal of ‘Religio’ was one of the things that it had not been possible to revise for his edition.

Although the illustration clearly had to work with the existing text, there was no attempt to adapt the depiction of ‘Religio’ to the reality of English church interiors of this period. In England, altars and retables had been removed at the Reformation to be replaced with communion tables, although the position of these remained a contentious issue into the early seventeenth century and beyond.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, the English edition of the *Orbis sensualium pictus* was published in 1659 during the Commonwealth. The book of Common Prayer had been abolished by Parliament in 1645 and replaced with *A Directory for the publique worship of God*. This required ‘the Table’ to be ‘decently

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<sup>74</sup> Peternák, ‘Convention and Invention,’ p. 104.

<sup>75</sup> Charles Hoole, ‘The Translator to all judicious, and industrious School-Masters,’ in Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus*.

<sup>76</sup> Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars restored: the changing face of English religious worship, 1547–c.1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 39–273

covered, and so conveniently placed' rather than vested and at the east end of the church. Baptism was to be conducted before the congregation 'not in the places where fonts in the time of Popery were unfitly and superstitiously placed.' In some churches, fonts were replaced with basins attached to the pulpit.<sup>77</sup> The adoption of the *Directory* varied, however, and the book of Common Prayer continued to be used by some congregations.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, following the Restoration in 1660, the prayer book service was reinstated, the communion table returned to the east end and fonts restored to churches where they had been removed.<sup>79</sup> As a result, whether during Commonwealth or after the Restoration, the English setting for communion differed from that illustrated in the *Orbis sensualium pictus*. English travellers to the continent commented, often disapprovingly, on the altars, altarpieces, images and organs that they saw in Lutheran churches, generally regarding them as vestiges of popery.<sup>80</sup> In such circumstances, it is questionable what educational message was conveyed to children about the appearance of a place of worship from studying the engraving included in Charles Hoole's edition.

Other foreign publishers similarly reproduced the Nuremberg illustrations, such as the Latin-German-Hungarian-Bohemian edition published at Levoča [Leutschoviae] in 1685 and the Swedish translation (1689) produced at Turku [Aboae].<sup>81</sup> However, some

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<sup>77</sup> *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God, throughout the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London: Company of Stationers, 1645), pp. 39–40, 50–51; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, pp. 180–81.

<sup>78</sup> Judith Maltby, 'Suffering and Surviving: The Civil Wars, the Commonwealth and the Formation of "Anglicanism", 1642–60,' in Christopher Durston and Judith Maltby (eds), *Religion in Revolutionary England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp. 160–67.

<sup>79</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, pp. 305–52.

<sup>80</sup> Andrew Spicer, 'Lutheran Churches and Confessional Identity,' in Andrew Spicer (ed.), *Lutheran Churches in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 3–4; Margaret Aston, *Broken Idols of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 994–95.

<sup>81</sup> John Amos Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus quadrilingus ... Latina, Germanica, Hungarica, & Bohemica* (Leutschoviae [Levoča]: Samuel Brewer, 1685), [unpaginated] chapter 145; John Amos Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus ... cum versione Sveca* (Aboae [Turku]: Johannes Winter, 1689), pp. 300–1. A mirror image of the illustration appears in the former edition.

contemporary versions of the *Orbis sensualium pictus* published outside Nuremberg modified the image that accompanied the chapter on ‘Religio.’ Strikingly, in the Latin-French-German-Polish edition published at Wrocław [Breslau] in 1667 and the Danish editions of 1672 and 1686, the depiction of the church interior was altered to further emphasize its Lutheran character.

The illustrations in the Wrocław edition are inserted into the text, usually two images per page, rather than appearing at the start of each chapter. These images drew their inspiration from the original woodcuts, but certain elements in this composition are much more elaborate. (Figure 10) **Place Figure 10 and 11 here one above the other** While the Nuremberg edition referred to the choir, there was no clear spatial division from the nave; this new image included a beam dividing the two spaces, akin to the original rood loft. There are two candles on the vested altar, a tall elaborate retable behind with statues on either side and possibly at its apex. A canopy and lifting mechanism have been added to the font in the foreground. The prominence of the altar and the font can be contrasted with the pulpit and sounding board, which appear along the north wall of the nave, and although the pews are indicated they can be barely seen. One noticeable omission from the depiction is the lectern holding the Bible.<sup>82</sup>

In the Danish texts, the portrayal of the church interior is slightly closer to the original but there are significant differences. (Figure 11) The vested altar and retable are shown, although in a less elaborate form than the Silesian example, with two lighted candles in candlesticks. There is a much more elaborate baptismal font in the foreground, which has been relocated from the centre to the left of the picture. It is surmounted with a crown and there is a mechanism for raising this cover. The font appears to be highly decorated, with animal figures supporting the base. This alteration allowed the artist to include another row of pews in the centre of the composition as well as more substantial pulpit, presumably to emphasise the importance of preaching. The lectern with the Bible

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<sup>82</sup> John Amos Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus ... Latino-Gallico-Germanico-Polonice* (Breslau [Wrocław]: Caspar Müller, 1667), after p. 384.

remains in this interpretation of the illustration.<sup>83</sup> While the schema of the original woodcut was replicated in these Danish translations, the illustration was improved to present a more recognisably Lutheran place of worship.

## Conclusion

Through his innovative use of images, Comenius sought to illustrate and educate young children in the visible world that they saw around them. This represented part of Comenius's drive towards a system of universal education that would ultimately see the triumph of the Christian message. The existence of other religions was accepted and, to a degree, were respected until such time as the adherents of these faiths would be converted to Christianity. This apocalyptic vision could only be achieved once Christians had set aside their confessional differences. Comenius dismissed doctrinal divisions and regarded their differing rites and material culture of worship as being *adiaphora*. Nonetheless, when it came to the depiction of Christian churches and places of worship, the *Orbis sensualium pictus* presented a Lutheran interpretation of Christianity.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the illustrators drew upon the landscape and religious practices of Nuremberg, where the first edition was published, when carving the woodcuts for the volume. This raises questions about the extent to which Comenius was actively involved in the design of the illustrations. This portrayal of some religious rites and the setting of worship was perpetuated in the subsequent multi-lingual editions published by the Endter family using the same woodcuts. It was a depiction that was enhanced in the new illustrations produced for editions printed elsewhere for in the late seventeenth century. Scandinavian children would probably recognise in their parish church what they had seen depicted as 'Religio' in the *Orbis sensualium pictus*. If English travellers to the continent were surprised by the appearance of Lutheran places of

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<sup>83</sup> John Amos Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus. Ia in Dania ed., optâ & curâ J.G. Rhodii* (Hasniæ: Daniel Paulli, 1672), pp. 446–; John Amos Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus ... Secunda in Dania editio* (Hasniæ: Widow Daniel Paulli, 1686), pp. 450–51.



worship, what did young English children make of the unrevised illustration in Hoole's translation? While the underlying Christian message of the *Orbis sensualium pictus* has long been recognised, the illustrated text actually purveyed a Lutheran portrayal of the setting for worship. Apart from the London editions, this was a position which was generally in accord with the confessional stance of the cities where the book was published during the late-seventeenth century.

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