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On Comenius's Approaches to the Biblical Texts in his *Manual or Core of the Whole Saint Bible*

Michaela Hashemi

ABSTRAKT

Ke Komenského přístupům k biblickému textu v jeho *Manuálníku aneb Jádro celé Biblí svaté*

Ve své studii se autorka soustřeďuje na šest základních témat: Charakteristika textu Komenského *Manualníku* (1623) jako nejrozsáhlejšího Komenského autografu; stav dosavadního bádání o tématu vzhledem k meritornímu tématu, tj. první vydání edice *Manualníku*, a její rámcové části – Jindřich Hrozný (1926), odborné stati, především – Milan Kopecký (1978 – časopisecky; 1982 – knižně); vazba *Manualníku* na Komenského literární terminologii užitou v jeho spisu *Zpráva a naučení o kazatelství* autorkou ilustrovaná jako převážně vzájemně si odpovídající; amplifikace a abreviace v textu *Manualníku*, např.: MAN Gn 35: 15–16 ve srovnání s K3 (vydání tzv. kralické jednodílky z r. 1613), Gn 35:18 – amplifikace (využívá se zpravidla poznámkový aparát k tzv. *Kralické šestidíle*); MAN Jr 5: 10 ve srovnání s K3 Jr. 5: 10 abreviace (úroveň motivů; poloveršů, veršů, částí kapitol, úplných kapitol – další příklady); analýza biblických citací v úvodu k *Manualníku* – různé typy biblických parafrází, např. vzhledem ke K3 Jb, 30:20 – abreviace; motivované biblické centony: Ž 66: 11–12; shrnutí nových poznatků, zejména o úvodu k *Manualníku* vzhledem k typu užitých biblismů: intepretace motivovaného biblického centonu (Mt 4,16).

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Komenský, *Manuálník aneb Jádro celé Biblí svaté* (1623), *Zpráva a naučení o kazatelství*.

KEYWORDS

Comenius, *The Manual or Core of the Whole Saint Bible* (1623), *Report and Study on Preaching*.

I had originally suggested investigating types of **paraphrase** in connection with Comenius's literary theory as contained in his work *Zpráva a naučení o kazatelství*¹ (1651) as a possible way to research his approaches to the original biblical texts contained in his *Manual*. Further research has proved this way to be insufficiently effective Comenius used the terms **paraphrase** and **periphrase** interchangeably; his presented theory in *Zpráva a naučení o kazatelství* was different from his own literary practice; and, most importantly, *Zpráva a naučení o kazatelství* was devised in relation to the art of preaching (and not as an excerpt from the Bible, which the *Manual*, simply put, in fact is). The illustration of **paraphrase** that I will present today based on the *Manual* is, in effect, only a partial and very narrow angle from which Comenius's methods of approach to biblical texts can be observed. I would like to try to present these methods at least a bit more accurately.

Here is the outline of my presentation; I will concentrate on six areas:

1. An introduction of *Manual*;
2. A brief overview of the current state of research on the topic;
3. Relevant connections to Comenius's literary theoretical terminology in the *Manual*;
4. Examples of amplifications and abbreviations in the substantive text of the *Manual*;
5. Examples of amplifications and abbreviations based on a comparison of the non-substantive text of the Preface to the *Manual*, the actual text of the *Manual*, and the third edition of the Kralice Bible (1613);
6. Summary of the new findings.

ad 1. Introducing of *Manual*. Leaving aside its more detailed description, I will simply mention that **The Manual or Core of the Whole Saint Bible** is the largest autograph by Comenius². The manuscript of the *Manual* dates back to 1623, closely related in time to other works by Comenius written in the early 1620s, namely Comenius's "comforting" works. The *Manual* was published in Amsterdam in 1658; even though the *Manual* (affectionately called the "little Bible" by Comenius) is, simply put, a kind of excerpt from original biblical texts (specified later), it is a rather voluminous print, consisting of (in the old print)

1) Most recently in Opera omnia 4, Academia Praha 1983, p. 13–120.

2) I am leaving aside the question of whether this is Comenius's own manuscript, as suggested by Julie Nováková; I admit that, considering the small number of corrections in the text, I would deem the text to be the last clean copy. However, I do not feel competent enough in this respect to oppose such a distinguished scholar as Julie Nováková was.

912 pages of substantive text and altogether thirty-five framing pages (twenty-four pages of introductory passages and eleven pages of concluding passages).

ad 2. I will not go into detail about the current state of research on the topic. I would only like to state that previous treatises on the *Manual*, above all those by Jindřich Hrozný (1926), Milan Kopecký (published in 1978 in a journal and as a book in 1992), and Julie Nováková (1984) are, considering their focus, almost complete (the most comprehensive description of the *Manual* can be found in the Preface to its publication by Jindřich Hrozný, presenting the point of view of the relation between the substantive text and the original biblical texts), but still allowing space for further specifications of some findings. This is, without a doubt, possible by means of further specification of quantitative lists of examples of deviations from the texts of various original biblical text (including percentages³). With the Kralice translation from 1613, Hrozný does not include the deviations in full, not even in his comments to the individual pages of the *Manual*.

ad 3. Connection to Comenius's literary theoretical terminology in the *Manual*

I would like to add to the statement from the beginning of this talk that **paraphrase** in Comenius's *Zpráva a naučení o kazatelství* is characterised as a means of amplification (i.e. expansion) of the text through words (apart from synonyms and epithets). Such amplification approaches can also be found in the *Manual*, albeit only rarely; the *Manual* is primarily a shortened biblical text.

Comenius's theory, however, deserves our attention in connection with the *Manual*, at least regarding the specification of his term **zveličování** [*overstatement*] as one of the two objectives of amplification (in contrast to **ztenčení** [*understatement*])⁴, namely in the following statement by Comenius: *Zveličování čím kratšími a mrštnějšími slovy se dělá, tím lepší* [*The shorter and more agile the words of overstatement the better.*]⁵ In this context, it is worth noting that as a *more agile* adjective, in connection with the description of a harlot, Comenius used the word *vagrant* / „těkavá“ / (Pr = Proverbs 7:11) while in K3 (Kralice Bible, third edition, 1613) the same text uses the adjective *presumptuous* / „opováhli-vá“/and the adjective *obstinate* / „zarputilá“/is used in K1 notes (the six-volume Kralice Bible annotations). I have been unable to determine the original biblical

3) In this connection, I would like to mention the abridgement of most of the chapters of the Book of Proverbs, by as much as 50 percent.

4) *Zpráva*, p. 61, 2. 2.

5) *Zpráva*, p. 64, 7.

text under the influence of which Comenius proceeded (if at all); it is, however, essential to note that the word was changed from that of the Kralice originals.

ad 4: Examples of amplifications and abbreviations of the substantive text of the *Manual*

I. Amplification: In the *Manual*, amplification is demonstrated primarily in texts taken over from the annotations to the Kralice Bible. These amplifications are mostly words (this is true more for the manuscript than for the print). **Amplification occurs as:** an explanation of the word (theme) or a place in the text reference to another biblical text – a formal signal for spotting the reference are brackets, within which are also frequently an imperative included by Comenius, see

ad 4 I **Example 1:**

K3 (Gn = Genesis 35:18): the text about the birth of Rachel's son Benjamin:

MAN 35:15-16 /hemistich/: ...and she called his name Benoni⁶ (**Son of Pain**): but his father called him Benjamin (**Son of the Right**) /... a nazvala jméno syna toho Ben Ony (**Syn bolesti**); ale otec jeho nazval ho Benjaminem (**synem pravice**)/: the expressions in bold are taken from the annotations in K1

– It is necessary to add that in this respect Comenius was not accurate when stating the verse of omission, the numbers are not 15 and 16, but 19 in the original biblical verse.

(plus, I also correct the finding by Hrozný, who found the difference between the *Manual* and K3, but stated only the second expression as appropriate, not both).

Example 2:

MAN (Ex = Exodus 25:17): *And thou shalt make a mercy seat (i.e. coffin lid) / / Uděláš i slitovnici (**totiž přikryvadlo truhly**) /*

In both examples (1 and 2), the added explanations by Comenius in the annotations of the six-volume Kralice Bible aim to explain a word:

ad 4 I a) Example 1: Hebraism in a *proper name*;

ad 4 I a) Example 2: a less known old-Czech word and further:

ad 4 b): Amplification in the *Manual* is created by a reference to another place in the Bible:

6) The English translations are taken from the King James Bible (<http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org>). Alternative translations were retrieved from: <http://mymemory.translated.net>.

Example:

MAN (Nu= Numerals 5:6): *If a soul sin against his neighbour [When a man or woman commits any sin that men commit in unfaithfulness against the Lord, **Levit. 6:2-3**]. /Kdoby zhřešil proti bližnímu svému. / It is necessary to add that this chapter (Lv = Leviticus 6:2-3), functioning as an amplification, presents a more relaxed relation to the original biblical text. Hrozný did not sufficiently highlight this in his annotations, although he provided a partial reference, not only to the annotations of the six-volume Bible, but also to one lexeme that Comenius took from the Melantrich Bible.)*

I would like to repeat that

II. Abbreviation (a procedure opposite to amplification) is much more frequent in the *Manual*. Omissions can be found on the following levels:

- a) words
- b) hemistichs
- c) verse
- d) verses
- e) parts of chapters
- f) whole chapters

Examples of ad 4 II a) and b):

K3: (Jeremiah, Lamentations 5:10): ... *Our skin was black **like an oven** because of the terrible famine. / Kůže naše **jako pec** zčernaly od náramného hladu./*

MAN: *Our skin was black because of the terrible famine. /... kůže naše zčernaly od náramného hladu./*

I would like to state that among the frequently omitted words are pronouns or epithets, hemistichs, verses frequently repeated in the originals that Comenius used, and similarly also parts of chapters.

Comenius, though he himself demonstrated an extraordinary literary talent in relation to the original biblical text (e.g. in his translation of Psalms), omits metaphors from his *Manual*, especially if they are repetitive.

Concerning the contents, he omitted mainly “superstitious” passages, which were, in his opinion, superfluous or unsuitable in terms of the purpose of the *Manual* (as an introduction to biblical reading); he also omitted passages that included erotic themes. This does not concern e. g. the Song of Songs, which is quite well known for this feature, but other books of the Bible with distinctive fleshiness, like the already mentioned replacement of the adjective closely related to the harlot in the Book of Proverbs. To be specific, full four verses (7:14-17) describing the seduction of the harlot were left out.

Up to now, papers on the topic of Comenius's omissions of longer passages from the original biblical texts have all included longer lists, e.g. lists of the names of Israeli families, proper names, and names of countries, such as in the Third Book of Moses.⁷

A more accurate idea of Comenius's work with the original biblical texts can be acquired by completing the category of omission (i.e. the types of omissions) with the individual types within the category of replacing textual parts: The scheme can be simplified as follows:

III Substitution of words or collocations or compounds of the omitted text of one chapter almost the whole chapter

Example of ad 4 III a) *he touched the hollow of his thigh* – Gn 32:25= K3, / přirbří vrchní stehna jeho/ whereas *hip joint* / kyčel/ is used in the *Manual* (in the same place in the text);

Example of ad 4 III b) in the Book of Psalms, Comenius proceeds most frequently like this: in Psalm 57, he includes five out of the twelve verses in the Kralice Bible; starting with verse eight, he refers to the analogical text in Psalm 108 (108:2-8); this is still an abbreviation, as the resulting text by Comenius is much shorter;

Example of ad 4 III c) almost whole chapters are omitted by Comenius through summarizing or paraphrasing or through referencing another biblical book. In terms of contents, this is **paraphrase** in the true sense of the word: the connection to the original is fairly loose; only the *sumička* [*summary*] is not formally marked by a bracket and it mostly also includes the numbering of biblical verses (as well as a reference to another biblical book).

Example: A reference to another biblical bookings

MAN: Is =Isaiah, Chapter 36 and 37, is only mentioned by Comenius like this: *Historia o přitažení Senecheribovu do Júdstva a k Jeruzalému. (The (hi)story of Senecherib's arrival in Judah and Jerusalem. /Historia o přitažení Senecheribovu do Júdstva a k Jeruzalému. (And he adds: See it Kings 4 18. and 19.)*

Having assessed this category of substitution on the basis of the examples, the overall conclusion can be supported by this sample: namely, that in such instances a primary abbreviation of the whole can be observed (with the excep-

7) As a clue to the abridgements in the *Manual*, Jindřich Hrozný has chosen Comenius's own division of the Scripture in the Preface to the *Manual*, namely into (hi)stories on one hand, and the sermons of Prophets and Apostles on the other, which (according to Hrozný) were shortened the least by Comenius. In this conclusion, Hrozný differs from Milan Kopecký, who asserts that Comenius reduced less in historical epic non-repetitive passages. The fundamental conclusion, to which both researchers agree, is the fact that Comenius shortened in conformity with the function of his *Manual*, namely with its primarily didactic and pastoral purpose.

tion of another possible case, ad 4 III a), where the one-word expression from the Bible is substituted by a collocation in the *Manual*).

Ad 5: Comenius's approaches to the biblical text in the *Manual*, based on the analysis of its dedication Preface (*Rozptýleným z Lešna*). It is in the Preface where the fundamental approach to original biblical text, consistent throughout the *Manual*, is shown, although not all types of grammatical changes, i.e., changes of grammatical persons and verb forms, were covered.⁸

There are more than 32 Biblisms in the Preface by Comenius.

In relation to the *Manual* these quotations and their *paraphrases* are:

I. completely **identical**, i.e. in the Preface, in the *Manual*, and in K3, e.g. Jb 19:10

II. an example of **amplification**: a word or words are added, e.g.

MAN: *I stand up, and thou regardest me not* (Jb, 30:20); in the Preface to the *Manual*, the phrase **in front of you**, (i.e. *I stand up in front of you*) was added; in the K3 text (Jb 30:20) the exact wording is: *I stand up, but thou regardest me not*: In this case, the amplification is in the Preface as compared with the *Manual* and K3.

III. In the relation between the *Manual* Preface and K3 it is an **abbreviation**:

a) a Biblism text (a word or words) from the Preface is omitted in the text of the *Manual*:

Example: the biblical verse Os. 5:15 is omitted in the *Manual* but used in the Preface.

Example: In Job 16:11, cited in the Preface, only the key word (verb form) with a pronoun was left in the *Manual*, namely: *turned me over*, from the whole: *God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked* (Jb 16:11) /Vydal mne Bůh nešlechetníku, v ruce bezbožných uvedl mne/ as included in the Preface to the *Manual* and also in K3.

Example: Further from Psalm 42:6 in K3 and in the *Manual* in the verse: *Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance*. /Posečkej na Boha, neboť ještě vyznávati jej budu, **i hojné spasení tváři jeho**/ The part in bold is missing in the Preface.

The reasons for the textual omissions are mostly contextual.

IV. In the relation between the *Manual* Preface and K3 it is a **substitution**:

8) Such changes, in relation to Hebrew and Greek texts with which Comenius also worked, were mostly demonstrated by Jindřich Hrozný (in his Preface to the *Manual* 1926 edition); and were also mentioned by Julie Nováková in relation to the *Manual* manuscript.

With regard to the biblical verse /hemistich/, the word /motif/ is replaced by its synonym:

Example: in the Preface: ... *and what **benefit** is it that we have kept his ordinance* (Mal. 3:14) /jaký **užitek**, budeme-li ostříhati nařízení jeho/; in the text of the *Manual*: ...*and what **profit** is it that we have kept his ordinance* /jaký **zisk**, budeme-li ostříhati nařízení jeho/

The reason for the change is contextual, in the given context of the Preface the word *benefit* – *užitek* is more appropriate and accurate.

Example: further in this subcategory: the connective *jistěže* – *truly* in the *Manual* is replaced by *vždyť* – *surely* in the Preface, namely:

In the Preface: **Surely** *God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.* (Psalm 73:1) /Vždyť jest Bůh dobrý Izraelovi, těm, kteříž jsou čistého srdce./

In the *Manual* and K3: **Truly** *God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.* /Jistě žeť jest Bůh dobrý Izraelovi, těm, kteříž jsou čistého srdce./

As the most suitable example of substitution, not only for contextual reasons, but also for reasons of topicality in the Preface, as compared to the biblical text, the example of reference to Psalm 66:11-12 can be given:

Preface: *And where the Lord gave us right to our Mud hunters, cruelly tormented loins ours, **bet on our head man, who drove us through fire and water:*** /Kdež nás právě Pán uvedl do leče **lovců našich**, krutě soužil bedra naše, vsadil **člověka na hlavu naši, kterýž nás hnál skrze oheň i vodu.**/

K3: *Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; **we went through fire and through water:*** /Uvedl jsi nás byl do leči, krutě jsi bedra naše ssoužil, vsadils člověka na hlavu naši, **vešli jsme byli do ohně i do vody.**/

In the *Manual* we can find almost the same as in K3, split into two sentences: *Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; **we went through fire and through water:*** /Uvedls nás byl do leči, krutě soužil bedra naše. Vsadils člověka na hlavu naši, **vešli sme byli do ohně i do vody.**/

In the given example it is thanks to the change in grammatical person and number that we can see the obvious topicality, an allusion to the historical situ-

ation of the expatriates after the Battle of the White Mountain, whose adversary is expressed by the metonymic expression “man”.

Conclusion ad 5: The Preface is framed with the help of Biblisms (partly centons), whose relation to the biblical pretext has various degrees of dependence, i.e. **paraphrases** in relation to the biblical text are more or less loose, for both contextual and topical reasons.

Ad 6: In the concluding passage, I would like to present the interpretation of **paraphrase** in which I have found the loosest link in relation to the biblical text. Such examples can be mostly found in the framing parts: I have chosen those that are a part of the content title of the *Manual* as Comenius's expression of the purpose of his “Little Bible” / *Biblička* and as its characteristics, namely the verse in the context of the name of the *Manual or Core of the Whole Saint Bible*, i.e. *Manual ...* (in the conclusion of the content title) *instead of a new candle for those still sitting in darkness.*

The key words of the above verse, namely the motifs of a *candle* and *those sitting in darkness* lead us to biblical allusions. As the closest biblical motif I found the following in K3 Matthew 4:16: *The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.* / Lid, kterýž bydlil v temnostech, viděl světlo veliké, a sedícím v krajině a stínu smrti, světlo vzešlo jim./ This verse should be understood in the context of the following verse (Mt 4:17): *From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* /Od toho času počal Ježíš kázati a praviti: Pokání čiňte; neboť se přiblížilo království nebeské./

Comenius mostly worked with the K 3 version.

When looking for an analogical biblical verse in the *Manual*, the text will not be found because it was completely omitted by Comenius. The reason is the same as with the other omissions. The text (i.e. Matthew Chapter 4) made sense even without the motif and the logic of the text was maintained; moreover, the metaphor based on the same motifs can be found in the *Manual* several times, first of all in Isaiah (Is 9:2⁹; further in 50:10¹⁰; and also in Micah, Mi 7:8)¹¹.

As far as the New Testament concluded, I would summarize, in agreement with the findings of Jindřich Hrozný, that Comenius shortened the New

9) *People that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.*

10) *(that) ... walketh in darkness, and hath no light ...*

11) *Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me.*

Testament in the *Manual* less than he did the Old Testament. However, he proceeded analogically in both parts of the Bible, i.e. concerning the repetitive passages of the New Testament, he often shortened the texts of the Gospels, drawing on Matthew (not really on Mark, from which the least was left); in the Epistles, Comenius shortened e.g. the letter formulas at the beginning and at the end of the Epistles.

In each case primarily in the analyse of the Preface of the *Manual* (apart from organizing the existing knowledge and also partly in presenting different examples from the current research), I allow me to see my own contribution.

Translated into English by Jarmila Fictumová

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