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## The Helsingfors Lyceum 1831–1891

### A Reforming Secondary School in Finland

**T***he Helsingfors Lyceum was the first Lyceum in Finland. The new Lyceum was founded in Helsinki, which was the new capital following Turku. This school was a product of the cultural atmosphere of The Imperial Alexander University. The Finnish nationalism had begun at the Åbo Academy in the 1810's and it was again revived in Helsinki, when the university was moved there in 1828.*

### The new situation

**T***he situation in Finland changed after the year 1809. Finland had become a state of political completeness, not a direct part of the Russian government in the Russian Empire, imperija. Finland was separate and in the special position. It was directly attached to the Emperor as Grand Duchy of Finland. Geoffrey Hosking writes:*

*“Finland was an unusual success story for Russian imperial policy in the nineteenth century, at least until the final decade. The relative success was due partly to the singular circumstances in which Finland was received into the Empire. In an attempt to win over the Finns, Alexander I promised to uphold all the liberties they had enjoyed under the Swedish crown. Finland kept its own laws and institutions, and had its own ruling council, or Senate, quite separate from the Russian government. This kind of concession went further than the normal Russian imperial practice of respecting local traditions and conciliating local elites: it left Finland with unmistakable home rule.”*

*One of the remaining institutions was the Finnish school system. The economic detachment from Sweden happened gradually, a great turn was in the 1830's. Most of the cultural bonds remained good to the old mother country, Sweden since the connections to St.Petersburg were few. Helsinki became the capital of Finland in 1812. It was originally founded by Gustav Wasa, the King of Sweden in 1550, and for many years it was a sleepy small town, far from Stockholm and Turku. A new life began in Helsinki, it became an administrative centrum, tactically nearer St.Petersburg. The new Administration needed new governing bodies and they needed new officials and public buildings. However, the inner new orientation needed more time.*

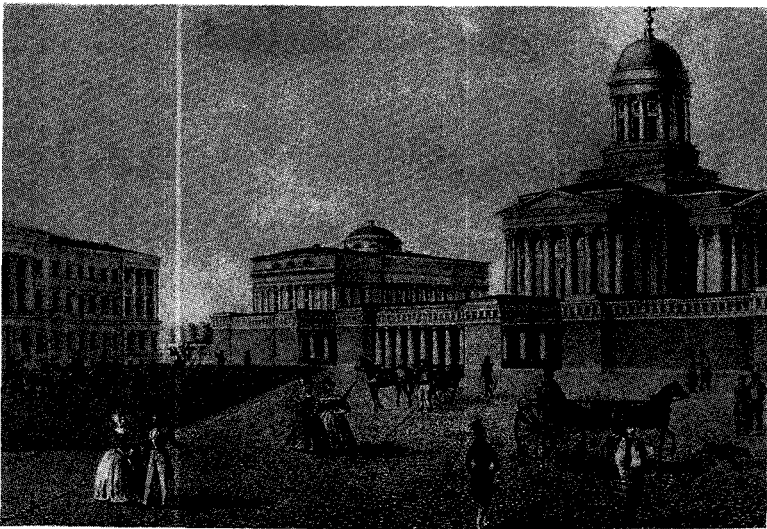
*The relocation of the university from Turku to Helsinki meant growth and development to Helsinki. There had been a great fire in Turku in the autumn of 1827. The new Imperial Alexander University started lessons on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, 1828, in Helsinki. It was originally founded as the Academy of Turku in 1640, the new name was a part of Alexander I's policy. The oldest university in Russia was the University of Tartu, founded in 1632 and later reopened in 1802. At the end of Alexander I's reign, there were five other , new universities in Russia: Kazan, Kharkov, Vilna, St.Petersburg and Moscow.*

*The Emperor gave the University of Helsinki both financial grants and appointments. It also received prestigious surroundings. The move from Turku was difficult for the personnel of the university. Torsten Steinby, a Finnish historian writes:*

*"Mental adaptation was needed and new scientific activity in that situation. It was a material, moral and psychological blow, when the old academic milieu, the institutes and the professors' homes were destroyed by the fire. The new capital seemed to be poor in traditions and was only a half ready small town."*

*In these circumstances, the new secondary school was very needed in Finland and especially in Helsinki. The public school system in Finland was old fashion. There were pedagogios, seven trivial schools and only two higher educational establishments, the Gymnasiums in Porvoo and Vyborg, and a Cathedral School in Turku. There was one trivial school in Helsinki, but there was no secondary school leading on to the university.*

*There were school committees founded for the reform of the public school system and for the new school order. Neo humanism was dominating in the public school policy and it meant conservatism. In this situation, a group of young university teachers joined together, one of their goals was to get a new private secondary school in Helsinki.*



KUVA 1.

Helsinki in 1838, The University of Helsinki, The University Library and Nicholas Church. (F. Tengström: Vuer af Helsingfors år 1838) The source: Hirn, Marta & Hirn, Yrjö. 1937. Runeberg ja hänen maailmansa. Kuvat koontanut Marta Hirn, tekstin kirjoittanut Yrjö Hirn ja suomennanut Vilho Suomi. Kustannusosakeyhtiö Otavan kirja- ja syväpaino. Helsinki. 67.

## The Russian Secondary School System

**F**irst we should review briefly the Russian secondary school system before 1831. There were two poles in Russia, By Hopking:

*"First, the Imperial Court, Army and bureaucracy, with its attendant nobility and increasingly Europeanized culture. The other was the peasant community. The result was that the two weakened each other."*

The Russian school system had been influenced from Europe. Catherine the Great had used Prussian and Austrian models to her school reforms. Alexander I had continued with his grandmother's reforms. We can see several French influences from his activities. It was a question of the entire school system, how to organize it and how to make it regionally hierarchical.

Nicolas Hans tells about the connections, that Alexander I's friends and the members of the private Committee, had to the French Revolution and its public men. The Russian reformers in 1804 were influenced by Condorset. There was also much discussion about German and Polish education styles. There should be three Lyceums in the country according to the plan of the year 1804. The Imperial Alexander Lycée was founded by Speranski in Tsarskoe Selo near St.Petersburg in 1811. It was meant only for the boys of the nobility, its costs were higher than in the universities and institutes and the number of male students was limited to approximately 50 boys.

The Imperial Lyceum became a famous and celebrated institution, which also tempted the most talented teachers. There were Lycées also in other cities, for example The Richelieu Lyceum in Odessa. The era of Nicholas I is often seen as a period of conservative education policy. It was aimed to concentrate and uniform the education system. The social classes should all have a school form of their own. The education in gymna-

*siums and universities was primarily meant for the boys of the nobility. The creator of this kind of policy is said to have been Uvarov, Minister of Education 1833–1849. Uvarov wanted to combine Europeanism – including a good grounding in the classics – with religious-moral instruction and Russian patriotism.*

*The founding of the new secondary school in Helsinki in 1831 was just before Uvarov's time. The former Minister of Education was Prince K. A. Lieven 1828–1833. The Imperial school policy and its limitations were facts behind the situation in Helsinki, in spite of all the privileges Finland had received for its traditional education system and for its own new administration, the Senate.*

### Founding the Lyceum

**A***lready in Turku, the young students had gathered together and helped each other for the best of the fatherland. It was continued in Helsinki and a so called Saturday Society began spontaneously in 1830. All of its members were connected to the academic world. The meetings were always held by a society member. There were no records or lists of the participants. The atmosphere was hopeful, but prudent about the authorities, because the university worked so close to the public administration and the heir to the throne officiated as the Chancellor of the university. It was under the protection of the university, where the Censorship Board with three members was founded in 1829. All of the board members came from the Saturday Society. The young had pioneering spirit and they criticized the old. The Saturday Society offered a place for creative thinking.*

*The members of the Saturday Society lived in the present, but we know that most of them went on to become great and famous men, Finnish heroes, for example Johan Ludvig Runeberg, the national poet, Johan Wilhelm Snellman, the great*

*philosopher and statesman or Elias Lönnrot, the collector of the national epos, Kalevala. There were also Carl Backman, Fredrik Cygnaeus, B. O. Lille and J. J. Nervoander, who joined the group already during the Turku period. Most of them were poor and earned money for their studies by working as tutors for private families. The Finnish gentlefolk and the poor young students met often in the Finnish speaking provinces, in the countryside away from the Swedish language cities on the coast. They were paid for this kind of activity and it gave them valuable experience for future teaching. The tutor had a methodological freedom and he used it.*

*The Saturday Society often purchased new literature and then had furious discussions about it. At the same time, the members were seeking solutions to the difficult problems and the reform of the education system was one of these. The society members understood what penalism was, they had experienced it in the old school, it was bullying.*

*The growing group of officials in Helsinki did not want to put their boys into the only trivial school. The first who wanted to change the situation was J. H. Avellan, professor at the University of Helsinki. He founded a private school, Avellanska Skolan, with modern curriculum and teaching methods in 1829. Unfortunately, the attempt was unsuccessful. Avellan died in 1832 and the school was closed.*

*There was discussion about Avellan's school and about the instruction contra organisation of a school in the Saturday Society. The idea of a new school was raised during the summer of 1830. Mårten Lindfors, Licentiate in Medicine was the first to discuss it.. He had studied in Denmark to become a veterinarian. He had become familiar with Niels Bygom Krarup, who was an agricultural theorist and a reform pedagogue. Krarup's school was Borgerdyds Skole på Kristianshavn. The school was founded by the Bourgeoisie Society, Selskabet for Borgerdyd in 1787. Already the next year, the school was divided*

*into two, the western school became Vestre Borgerdydskole på Christianshavn and the eastern school Østre Borgerdydskole I København. Supposedly, there were too many pupils for one school. Borgerdydskole på Christianshavn was between an old secondary school and a Realschule. It was a private institution. The modern curriculum was linked with the social class basis of the founders and Latin was needed for the aims of the education. N. B. Krarup, the head master or the Rector, as he was called, was a very good Latinist. It is written in the hundred years jubilee publication for the Borgerdydskole, that almost all the boys wanted to the career as a civil servant during the beginning period of the school and Krarup's school was not an exception.*

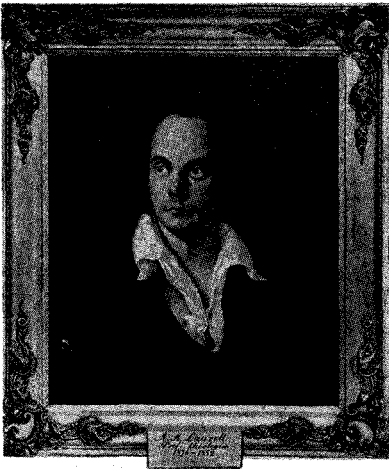
KUVA 2.

Mårten Johan Lindfors (1800–1869), Licentiate of Medicine, the first proposer of the new Lyceum. The painting by J. E. Lindh, 1840. The source: Hirn, Marta & Hirn, Yrjö. 1937. Runeberg ja hänen maailmansa. Kuvat koonnut Marta Hirn, tekstin kirjoittanut Yrjö Hirn ja suomentanut Vilho Suomi. Kustannusosakeyhtiö Otavan kirja- ja sylväpaino. Helsinki. 71.



*The special features in Krarup's pedagogy were in the teaching methods. He had an idea, that plays should be performed in language teaching as a main learning method. He also wanted democracy and parliamentary system should be used in the administration of the school. It meant a School meeting, Skoleforsamlingen, with two chambers formed by the mothers and their sons. The meeting especially handled the discipline questions. The rector still had the final word in decisions.*

*We are still unsure why especially the Danish school fascinated the members of The Saturday Society. Maybe it was the democracy, or only the power of own observations and impressions and a need to use them in Helsinki. J.J.Nervander made an initiative and six members of the society be-came the guarantees. They were A. A. Laurell, Docent in Theoretic Philosophy, J. J. Nervander, Do-cent in Physics, J. L. Runeberg, Docent in Rhetoric, N. A. Gylden, Docent in Greek Literature, B. O. Lille, fil.mag. and K. H. Ståhlberg, fil.kand. There was an announcement of the new school and its program in the Finnish official newspaper, Finlands Allmänna Tidning, in November 1830. The new school meant responsibility and more work, and an continuous livelihood for the guarantees.*



KUVA 3.

Axel Adolf laurell (1801–1852), The Professor of Theology, the first Rector of The Helsingfors Lyceum. The painting by C. P. Mazer. The source: Hirn, Marta & Hirn, Yrjö. 1937. Runeberg ja hänen maailmansa. Kuvat koonnut Marta Hirn, tekstin kirjoittanut Yrjö Hirn ja suomentanut Vilho Suomi. Kustannusosakeyhtiö Otavan kirja- ja syväpaino. Helsinki. 72.

*The new school was meant to be an elitistic one :*

*“A school for those, who belong to the civilized class and take care of the national Administration, Church and the Sciences.”*

*It was a message for those, who controlled the education policy in the Russian Empire. It was clear that the limits*



*between the social classes were closed. One of the goals was: "...the thorough and complete distribution of knowledge with a simple method and the saving of the pupils time. Only the generally human or so called humanistic civilization can offer the basis, which can be reached especially by the languages and mathematics."*

*The greatest shortcomings were "the old fashion school order and the ancient tradition: bad methods, no practicality, the use of physical punishments and bullying of younger pupils". The program of the starting school contained a new philanthropic line also in the attitudes towards the pupils. The guarantees announced that they would desert corporal punishment, which had been the norm in education for hundreds of years. During their own school years they had seen the teacher hit pupil's hands with a cane. The model had been taken from the army. Another new order was to divide the pupils into classes and give the teachers the status of a subject teacher.*

### The new Lyceum and the Authorities

**T***he members of The Saturday Society certainly knew that the proposed plan was weight against the Russian education policy. It is said that The Saturday Society did not want to interfere in the Finnish official affairs. But at the same time, the society members as private citizens followed very eagerly and carefully what happened in the Russian Empire, for example the events in Poland in the autumn of 1831. There were rebellions in Russia which the Finns did not take part in. When there was peace in Finland, also the possibilities were open for new attempts.*

*The substance of the school refers by the sources to the west, to the Danish model. Another inter-esting detail is the name of the school, The Helsingfors Lyceum, also The Helsingfors Privaatlyceum was used. The sources used for this paper do*

*not tell, who was or who were the inventors and why it became a Lyceum. The thought followed here are my own conclusions, how it could have been.*

*First, the Danish Borgerdydskole did not offer a model for the name. The school was private and the names of the official state school system did not fit, especially when the Lyceum included a trivial school and a gymnasium together.*

*Next our thoughts are flying to Sweden. The name Lyceum was used there for reformed private secondary schools in 1830's. The teachers in these secondary schools wanted changes but they did not want to go too far with the reforms. There was much discussion about the old secondary education and the new one in Sweden in those years and it is often referred to as the Ramström's school. K. O. Ramström, Docent in the University of Uppsala, had founded The Lyceum i Uppsala in 1827. He worked as a rector for the school until the year 1839. In that year, he started a new secondary school in the capital, the school was named The Lyceum i Stockholm. The Lyceum i Uppsala released its students from the instruction of Greek and Hebrew and emphasized instead the modern curriculum and the new languages. Ramström's school was not alone and all the private secondary schools together reformed the Swedish education system.*

*The members of The Saturday Society had many ties to Sweden. We can assume that they knew The Lyceum i Uppsala. But why did they consider the Danish model without any referring to Sweden? Was it a part of political tactics? Denmark is located far away but Finland was separated from Sweden only recently. Possibly it was because of the Imperial school policy. J. J. Nervander visited Borgerdydskole på Kristianshavn during his long journey to Europe in 1833. Nervander wrote to A. A. Laurell, the rector of The Helsingfors Lyceum. He told, that he did not want to praise a private school before a public one. He also wrote: "There are no revolutionary ideas in the Danish youth."*

*We can also seek the model for the school in the new mother country Russia. We can assume with good reasons that the young academic people in Helsinki had heard about the famous Imperial Alexander Lyceum. Perhaps the classic name and the worthy example came from the east. The name Lyceum was suitable because it meant a completeness from elementary education to the gymnasium and university. It also informed about the education for the intelligentsia.*

*We can see the international connections between the educational systems by historical and linguistic means. The concept of Lyceum had come a long way from the classical period in Greece to the North, to the edge of Europe.*

*Aristotle had a famous educational establishment in Athens. It was founded in 336 B.C. with the name Lykeion. It was not unusual that a school was named by the geographic position. In this case, however, the origin of the name and its later use are separate. There is a history: "The Academy, where Aristotle taught was situated near the cave of Apollo Lykeios, Apollo 'The Wolf Killer', and that is why the educational establishment was called Lykeion".*

*The concept of Lyceum spread over the world in the Latin form. It became a part of the public education system in Napoleon's proposed bill in 1802, in the form of Lycée. And finally, it came to Russia, Sweden and Finland as Lyceum.*

*The concept of Lyceum was partly adapted to the new spiritual soil and it meant reforms in 1830's. Lyceum was introduced in the Finnish language form Lyseo in the school order of 1872 and in Elias Lönnrot's Finnish-Swedish Dictionary in 1874.*

*Finland has always situated between the cultural influences of west and east. We can see it also in the founding of The Helsingfors Lyceum in 1831. That point of time was so early in the Finnish autonomic history, that the Imperial supervision over the private educational establishments was not yet*

*started. Authorization was not needed for a private school. There are no founding documents or records at the archives of The Helsingfors Lyceum. The school was only publicly announced and after that only started. The Helsingfors Lyceum was also left outside the ecclesiastic supervision. The beginnings of the next private secondary schools in Finland were much more complicated.*

### The Helsingfors Lyceum and Eeveryday School Work

**T***he schoolwork in The Helsingfors Lyceum began on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 1831. There were some difficulties just in the beginning, because cholera raged in Helsinki and also in the countryside. A. A. Laurell (1801–1852) became the headmaster, the Rector, as he was called. He was the oldest of the six guarantees. He was a philosopher and a Lutheran priest. He had worked as a Docent in the University of Helsinki from the year 1826. He had also given instruction in the Cadet College of Hamina. The first decade in the life span of The Helsingfors Lyceum was Laurell's era.*

*There were young enthusiastic teachers in The Helsingfors Lyceum, those we already know from The Saturday Society. The combination of the teachers varied from year to year. Many of the members in The Saturday Society moved to the university to better posts or even moved away from Helsinki like J. L. Runeberg moved to Porvoo and J. V. Snellman to Kuopio. The Saturday Society ceased to function after 1838. It had been a very important decade in the Finnish cultural history.*

*The annual fee for the pupils in The Helsingfors Lyceum was high, 200 rubels. New pupils were taken 13 boys in 1831, 41 in 1832, 48 in 1833 and 55 boys in 1835. They were boys of high officials, professors, military officers, wealthy merchants and relatively many boys of the estate owners.*

The Lyceum had good reputation from the beginning. It recruited its pupils from all over Finland and there were more boys wanting to come to school than it was possible to take in. A. A. Laurell, the Rector announced the higher entry requirements to the first class in 1835. The mechanic ability to read was not enough, also knowledge in six school subjects were required. It was a task for home to give the pupil these elementary skills. Laurell advised the parents:

*“Take an Informator, a home tutor, because a private tutor in the countryside is less expensive than the school fees in my school and the maintenance costs in a foreign locality. What does it come to the inhabitants of Helsinki, they have a possibility to choose the private instruction or the school education, first in the reading school held by the womenfolk or in the educational establishment by Lieutenant Odert Gripenberg, and learn there the elementary concepts of Languages, Mathematics, Geography etc.”*

The Helsingfors Lyceum was open for sixty years. K. G. Leinberg (1830-1907), the Rector for the Lyceum wrote a 35 years jubilee book in 1866. This work is the best, detailed description of the everyday school life in the Lyceum. Leinberg writes:

*“There were a significant difference between The Helsingfors Lyceum and the other secondary schools in Finland. It was the fact, that The Helsingfors Lyceum was private and could develop free from regulations. The teaching methods were emphasized. The oral annual examination every spring was controlling the learning and there was a written test in all the subjects at the end of the term.”*

Especially during A. A. Laurell's period as the Rector, the discipline in The Helsingfors Lyceum differed greatly from the regulations in the other Finnish secondary schools. The pupils worked as sensors and ediles. The most rigorous punishment was arrest by the Rector or by some of the teachers on Sunday. The punishments were scaled, the lowest was an oral warning.

*Laurell reigned his school with his strong word and his charming personality. The discipline declined after him. There was a period which almost ruined the school.*

*The next Rector, K. H. Ståhlberg worked only a short time 1840–1841. He became a teacher in the Gymnasium of Vyborg. G. F. Aminoff, Docent at the university, went on as the Rector. He had given instruction in the Lyceum before and he wanted to make reforms there now. He had, together with J. J. Nervander and N. A. Gylden, founded a private educational establishment in Helsinki. It prepared boys for the university. J. V. Snellman called the school a "Student Factory". Aminoff wanted to reform the teaching of the new languages by a practical language class. He should have wanted to begin having Biology and Psychology as new subjects.*

*During the inter period, the discipline led by the pupils turned against itself when the strong minded Rector had gone. Corporal punishment was begun again. Aminoff got help from Carl Backman, Magister, who was a chief sensor in the irritating situation. The same C. Backman (1805–1856) became a diligent and eager Rector in 1845. He belonged to the heart of the teachers. He had given instruction in The Lyceum 1833–1835 and returned in 1840. He had planned to become a Doctor in Medicine but it was too expensive. He went to Russia and worked as a home tutor. He acquired a very good knowledge of the German, Russian and French languages. Later he studied English. Backman also took a closer view of the new Russian schools. He became inspired by the pedagogy and his dreams to become a doctor flew away.*

*Backman made reforms in the instruction of new languages. He had also a "Backman's Realia Department" as an experiment. One Latin line was although a better practice and the experiment died out. Backman was also reforming the elementary education. A preparing class was founded in 1854. The modern methods in this class became famous and they be-*

*came a model to the general pedagogical innovation. Botany became a new subject in 1846 and Zoology the next year. The Swedish language composition also became a new subject in 1847.*

*Carl Backman, the Rector died 1856. The Religion teacher, K. G. Leinberg (1830–1907) became the next Rector. He was interested in the History of Education and he published many collections of documents about Finnish history. Leinberg worked until the year 1869, when he became the Rector for the Seminar of Jyväskylä, Teacher Training College, after Uno Cygnæus.*

*The last Rector in The Helsingfors Lyceum was Emil Böök (1835–1914). He had worked first in one of the girls' schools in Helsinki lead by the Blomqvist sisters. He came to The Helsingfors Lyceum in 1861. Böök tried to maintain the good reputation of the Lyceum although the competition between the secondary schools was hard. In particular, the economy of the Lyceum was troublesome.*

*Emil Böök was a Docent of Pedagogy and Didactics in the University of Helsinki 1868–1892. When The Helsingfors Lyceum ceased to exist in 1891, Böök became a head teacher of History in the Swedish language Normal Lyceum in Helsinki.*

## The Helsingfors Lyceum and the Finnish School System

**T***he Helsingfors Lyceum had its unique life-span. It was a solitary and leading secondary school until 1864. The number of pupils was greatest in 1860's, with over 200 boys in five years. The competing combination was set, when other secondary schools were founded in Helsinki. The Swedish Normal School, later The Normal Lyceum was founded in 1864 and the Swedish Real Lyceum in 1872.*

*During the life time of The Helsingfors Lyceum, the language relation in the Finnish school system changed greatly. The*

*Lyceum was a Swedish language secondary school, it was very natural in 1831. The language of the higher social classes in Finland was Swedish, the common people only spoke Finnish. All the members of The Saturday Society were of Swedish speaking origin, except Elias Lönnrot. Runeberg and Snellman, for example, wrote in Swedish, but they were all Finnish national minded and they wanted to raise the position of the Finnish language. A day after The Helsingfors Lyceum was founded, The Saturday Society presided over the birth of The Society for the Finnish Literature.*

*The first Finnish language secondary school, later The Lyceum of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylän Lyseo, was founded in 1858. The aim of the Finnish national movement was to get a Finnish language secondary school system, the classic curriculum and the Lyceum form were its tools. Towards the end of the century, half of the secondary schools in Finland were in the Finnish language.*

*The Rectors of the Helsingfors Lyceum represented the latest practical knowledge about secondary education. All six of them had worked as a teacher in the school. They were asked to help, when the new school orders were prepared for Finland. A. A. Laurell took part as a member in the work of the School Committee preparing the School Order of the year 1843. C. Backman likewise took part pre-paring the School Order of 1856. K. G. Leinberg belonged to the School Committees in 1860's.*

*The Russian government authorities paid special attention to increase the efficiency in inspection of the secondary schools. According to the School Order of the year 1843, the new private secondary school should have an authorization. A new order was given in 1849. The private secondary school leading to the university should have an authorization to give a certificate from the year 1852. At last, the School Order of the year 1856 adjusted the relationship between the private secon-*



*dary schools and the Government. According to the last mentioned School Order, the private secondary schools were under the Diocesan Chapter, The Helsingfors Lyceum was the only exception in Finland. But also it was obliged to apply for a concession, which was granted on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 1857. The Helsingfors Lyceum had the professor of Pedagogy and Didactics in the University of Helsinki as the supervisor. That was because the Lyceum was situated in the capital and, perhaps, because it had been near the university from the very beginning. The end of reforming the relations between the private secondary schools and the Government was the School Order of the year 1872, which defined the Lyceums as a part of the Finnish school system.*

*The Helsingfors Lyceum filled well its place in history of the Finnish secondary school system. It had its roots in long European tradition. We can even say, it was a part of the European development. The international influences rolled from one country to another. The nations were like islands, everyone equally important for the wholeness of the others in the pedagogic chain. The Helsingfors Lyceum was important for Finland and it was a part of the European completeness, on the temporal way from the antiquity to our days.*

*Kyseinen artikkeli on esitetty kansainvälisessä kasvatuksen historian tutkijoiden konferenssissa, ISCHE XXIV, Pariisissa 12.7.2002.*

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*Arkistoluettelo*

*Ba1 Opettajaluettelot 1839–1856*

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