

Martti T. Kuikka

J.A. COMENIUS AND THE SCHOOL ORDER OF 1649 IN SWEDEN-FINLAND

1. Introduction

The Reformation had a great effect on the development of the School System in 16th century Sweden of which Finland was a part. The Lutheran Church was interested both in elementary education and in secondary school. According to the principles of the Reformation, public education attempted to increase the ability to read among the people. One of the aims of secondary schools was to educate priests for the Lutheran Church. There was great tension between the Church and the State (the Crown). The question was, who should decide about and control the School System.¹

The tension continued in the 17th century as well, when King Gustav II Adolf wanted to reform the School System and develop it in a more practical way, bringing it closer to the needs of the economic life. It was a time of mercantilism. The Church stressed religious aims, such as religious instruction and the professional education of priests. This conflict became so great that it was necessary to reform the School System. In this process they also wanted to use pedagogic experts from foreign countries. One of them was Jan Amos

from Czechoslovakia.²

In this paper I will describe the reform of the School System in the 1640's and Comenius' part in it.

2. Comenius' connections with Sweden

Sweden Finland followed the development of the German School System and the Lutheran Church. Pedagogical influences came in many ways. Special interest was paid to the school order and the new didactic methods. The didactics of Wolfgang Ratichius were well known. Comenius' thinking began to spread to Sweden through his textbooks. Janua linguarum and Vestibulum were printed in Stockholm in 1636. The book Janua became very popular with six editions printed in 1636-1647. In 1642 the Swedish pedagogue Eric Schroderus translated Comenius' Informatorium maternum into Swedish.³

In 1637 Comenius received his first invitation to Sweden, but rejected it. A new invitation was sent in 1641, and Comenius came to Sweden one year later (1642) on the initiative of his patron Louis de Geer. Comenius also met the Chancellor of the realm, Axel Oxenstierna. He was very interested in school policy and knew Comenius' books. Comenius had discussions with the Chancellor of the University of Upsala, Johan Skytte. These discussions dealt with more pedagogical questions than for instance ethics and religion. Oxenstierna proposed that Comenius should take part in the reform process of the School System in Sweden. Comenius hesitated at first, but finally agreed, provided that he could live in Elbing. His patron de Geer presented three conditions for grants: 1) Comenius should only concentrate on writing textbooks for Sweden's schools and set

aside pansophistic argumentation. 2) Comenius should work in Elbing 3) Comenius should choose young men as assistants rather than old married men, since it would be easier to dismiss young men if they did not follow the pedagogic guidelines. Obvious Comenius agreed to these principles and travelled to Elbing where he immediately began to work. He was there for six years.⁴

The cooperation with Sweden continued in a different way. In 1645 Comenius visited Thorn in Poland. One year later he finished the textbooks and travelled to Sweden. It was a great surprise for Comenius when he was indicted for Calvinism. De Geer and Axel Oxenstierna realized that Comenius' visit indicated a very close connection with this religion, and that Comenius had not complied with the agreement. Comenius had a discussion with the Swedish Queen Christine, who proposed that Comenius come back to Sweden. But Comenius saw that he could not continue his work and left Sweden in October 1646. Tension between the Lutherans and the Calvinists was great at that time. Sweden emphasized orthodoxy.⁵

But the cooperation did not end. Comenius sent his textbooks to be controlled by a committee. They were accepted and later printed. The following books were later published either for the first time or as new editions: Methodus linguarum novissima, Vestibulum latinae linguae, Janua linguarum, Lexicon januale latino-germanicum, Grammatica latino vernacula and Atrium linguae latinae, rerum et linguarum ornamenta exhibens.⁶

3. The School Order of 1649

King Gustav II Adolf had wanted to reform the School

System of Sweden, but the war in Middle Europe interrupted his plans; the King died in 1632. Later the Government and the Diet continued to plan and prepared new proposals in the 1630's. This reform advanced very slowly. Sweden paid attention mainly to military and foreign policy. A final phase began in 1640 when Professor Lars Stigzelius was able to make a new proposal taking into consideration earlier plans. Regarding school policy, tension between the State and the Lutheran Church increased in the planning of a new central administration for the School System. This meant that pedagogical principles became more important in this reform. One starting point was pupil-centered education, teachers didn't pay attention to the abilities and talents of pupils. How could these principles be taken into consideration in the structure? A new school order must provide norms for the teacher.⁷

Professor Stigzelius formulated a proposal, but it took eight years before the Diet accepted the new School Order in 1649. It was called *Ratio informandi in Scholis Trivialibus et Gymnaasis*. Another name given was the School Order of Queen Christine. These Acts were broader than earlier Orders: One part concerned School law and the another part included pedagogical principles and norms for teachers, which were called the school didactics.⁸

4. A structure and a curriculum

According to the School Order of 1611 there were two kinds of schools: cathedral schools with six classes and provincial schools with four classes. With pupils attending each class for two years, the length of school could be almost 12 years.⁹

In Table 1/5 I have described two models of the School System: The School Order of 1649 and Comenius'

Table 1/5: The structure of the School System

Age	The School Order of 1649	Comenius' model
19-24	academy	academy
13-18	gymnasium	gymnasium
6-12	upper trivial school lower trivial school	public school
0-5	home education	home education

In comparing Comenius' model with the School Order of 1649, one can see some similarities. In both models the first education was the responsibility of parents. This was one of the principle of the Reformation. The basic structure of both are similar, namely a parallel school system. In other words, pupils may continue to study up to the academy level. Latin was a very important subject, especially in gymnasium, which prepared pupils for the academy. Differences appeared in the elementary education. In the School Order of 1649 the Lutheran Church would have the responsibility to organize public education. Comenius stressed a greater communal participation. ¹⁰

What were the subjects in the schools?

On the next page, Table 1/6 Shows the subjects and number of lessons per week. These figures were noted generally, and did not distinguish the number of lessons in separate subjects. The list of subjects indicates that the basic of the curriculum provided classic humanistic ideal for the school education. The most important subject was Latin according to the School Order of 1649. It was stressed that Latin was the most useful subject both for studying other subjects and

Table 1/6. Number of lessons per week and subjects in the School Order of 1649

Subjects	Trivial school				Gymnasium					T
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV		
Religion, Greek (trivial school) Hebrew (Gymnasium)	13	10	10	10	43	8	8	8	8	32
Latin (in Gymnasium too)	20	23	23	20	86	13	13	11	11	48
Greek						4	4	6	6	20
Logic, rhetoric				3	3					
Mathematics						6				6
Astronomy, chronology of the Christian era and geography							6			6
Physics								6		6
Social Sciences, Law of Sweden									6	6
Disputations						2	2	2	2	8
Singing	6	6	6	6	24	6	6	6	6	24
Writing exercises	5	5	5	5	20	5	5	5	5	20
Total (=T)	44	44	44	44	176	44	44	44	44	176

for later life as well. In the trivial schools the number of Latin lessons was 59 per cent of the total and in the gymnasium it was more than 27 per cent. Pupils had to learn to speak and write Latin, both formally correct and classically clear too. One principle was to teach all the sciences using Latin, so all teaching was at the same time the teaching of Latin and practising it. The position of Latin was reinforced through the textbooks. The School Order of 1649 provides a list of recommended textbooks, which included 31 Latin, 5 Greek and only 5 Swedish textbooks. ¹¹

The mother-tongue was not an essential subject in the School Order of 1649. It was taught through oral translation and writing exercises. From the Reformation the position of

the mother-tongue was reinforced, with the elementary instruction of religion always in the mother tongue. This meant, at the same time, the publishing of new religious literature and the increase of the national language.¹²

According to the School Order of 1649 the aims were to develop a pious and virtuous disposition, a good knowledge of languages and to provide a general education (*peritia linguarum et cognitio rerum*)

5. Teaching methods

One important aim of the School Order of 1649 was to develop new teaching methods. In a large part of the didactics of this School Order, one can see the influence of such wellknown pedagogues as Quintilianus, Plinius, Ludovicus Vives, Professor Justus Lipsius (from Leiden University), the Frenchman Francois du Jon and Antonius Scherius. On the other hand it is very difficult to extract a very detailed pedagogical basis. However one can make some observations. An attempt was made to go from the old traditions to new didactics. I have chosen some examples. The teaching of Latin should begin by explaining literature and texts, not starting with grammar. The teacher should go from an easy example to a more difficult example. One aim was that pupils must understand the content of the text before they try to learn it by heart. Only aphorisms, beautiful parts of the text and wonderful stories should be learned by heart, not all the rules of grammar. Many principles of the old tradition remained in this School Order. It was stressed that

pupils should only know what they can keep in their minds, what they can remember. In practice it meant many, many repetitions, according to the old saying "repetitio mater studiorum est". 13

What was the part of Comenius' didactics?

It seems to me that Comenius' influence appeared in his textbooks used in the schools of Sweden. His textbook Janua linguarum was very popular in the elementary teaching of Latin. Pupils should be taught Latin through sentences which contained images well known to the pupils and whose structure at the same way revealed the main norms of grammar. Another textbook, Orbis sensualism pictus, was very popular. It was published in Åbo in Finland in 1680. On the initiative of Bishop Johan Gezelius the elder. The purpose of this textbook was to increase the factual information of pupils. The book was very graphical. Both the text and pictures inspired interaction between the teacher and pupils. One reason for this was the many-sidedness of this book. For instance it had information about the earth and its form etc. 14

6. Summary

In this paper I have described the School Order of 1649 in Sweden and Finland and J.A. Comenius' effect on it. Comenius worked in Elbing from 1642-48 on the initiative of the Chancellor of the realm Axel Oxenstierna and took part in the reform process of a new School Order in the 1640's. Comenius' textbooks were known in Sweden, and at that time it was proposed that new textbooks be written especially

for schools in Sweden.

What was Comenius' effect on the new School Order of 1649? The structure of the School System remained similar to the earlier School Order of 1611. The changes were very small because the tension between the State and the Lutheran Church was great. On the other hand, cooperation between Comenius and his patrons in Sweden was broken in 1646. Sweden wanted to be an orthodox country and could not tolerate any different religious thinking. In spite of this, Comenius' textbooks were very popular in the schools in Sweden and Finland. In the 17th century, Latin textbooks were especially used both in the elementary teaching of Latin and in the gymnasium. One can say that Comenius' didactics were extended through his textbooks more than through the School Order itself.

Notes

1. J.T. Hanho (1947), Suomen oppikoululaitoksen historia I, p. 9-35.
2. Hanho 1947, p. 35-49. Hall (1932) Reformpedagogik i Gustav Adolfs anda p.67-73.
3. Hall 1932, p. 75-110, 11-187. Hanho , p. 41
4. Johan Skyttes Studieplan. Published by P.E. Thyselius (1849) Handlingar rörande svenska kyrkans och läroverkets historia p. 69-72. J. Stormbom (1989) Jan Comenius, skolfäderna och det svensk-finsk skolsystemet.p.12-13.
5. Stormbom 1989 p. 15.
6. Hanho 1947 p. 42.
7. ibid. p. 36-37.
8. Drottning Christines Scholordning af d. August 1649. published by P.E. Thyselius 1849.
9. Scholae Ordning,giord och stadfäst af Prästerskapet, Anno 1611.
10. The trivial school had got his name according to trivium-subjects: grammar with orthography and literature, rhetoric and dialectic. The upper trivial has four classes and one separate class so-called classis scribarum. Its aim was to educate boys for service of business. The length was only one year. The lowe trivial school has 1 or 2 classes.
11. Drottning Christines Scholordning af.d.7. August 1649.

12. Drottning Christines Scholordning af.d.7. August 1649.
see Hanho 1955, p.168-169.
13. Drottning Christines Scholordning af.d.7. August 1649.
14. Hanho 1947, p. 268.

Bibliography

- Drottning Christines Scholordning af.d.7. August 1649.
- Hall B. Rud. (1932) Reformpedagogik i Gustav Adolfs anda.
Årsböcker i svensk undervisningshistoria 33. Lund.
- Hanho J.T. (1947) Suomen oppikoululaitoksen historia I.
Porvoo.
- Johan Skyttes Studiplan, published by Thyselius 1849.
- Scholae Ordning, giord och stadfäst af Prästerskapet
Anno 1611, published by Thyselius 1849.
- Stormbom J.(1989) Jan Comenius, skolfäderna och det svensk-
finsk skolsystemet. In Skolhistoriskt Arkiv XX. Svenska
Skolhistoriska Föreningen in Finland. Vasa. p. 5-47.
- Thyselius Pehr Erik (1849) Handlingar rörande svenska kyrkans
och läroverkens historia. Första häftet I Örebro.