

Classical Languages for Comprehensive Intellectual Education in the 16th -18th Century Riga

Multilingual approach to the acquisition of languages in the early educational history of Riga goes back to the Riga Protestant Dome School (16th cent.), on the basis of which the Riga Academic Gymnasium was later built, and to the Riga Lyceum (called also Carl Lyceum) established in the 17th century. As seen from the extant written evidences, e.g., *Orationes tres* written and pronounced by prominent people from Riga educational circles on the occasion of the reorganization of the Protestant Riga Dome School in 1594, as well as from the extant school curricula, the acquisition of both classical languages (along with other subjects), has been considered as significant within the framework of *Studia humanitatis*. A stable place in the education of Riga residents was allocated to Latin and ancient Greek which have dominant similarities in the structure of these strongly inflected languages, as well as to the study of the texts of classical Roman and ancient Greek authors. The languages were acquired as academic disciplines following the principle of sequence and gradualism, while at the same time putting the usefulness for the students (*discentium utilitas*) in the foreground.

The acquisition of both languages were first and foremost useful as mental disciplines, they served for the development of language competences in general; at the same time, text readings and analysis provided the acquisition of strong, effective and sophisticated expression, the cultivation of oratorical skills, and the acquisition of ethical ideals and values. All these qualities can be observed in the numerous examples of the extant occasional poetic texts and prose texts that can serve as evidence of intellectual communication and multilingualism in Riga in the respective period.