Sturm, Johann

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Title*

Sturm, Johann

Alternate names (if there are any)

Johannes Sturm
Jean Sturm
Ioannes Sturmius

Dates and places of birth and death*

Born: 1 October 1507, Schleiden

Died: 3 March 1589, Strasbourg

Abstract*

Johann Sturm was a Reformed pedagogic innovator, who established a teaching curriculum for gymnasia in order to provide an education based on the humanist ideals and on evangelical piety. This model described the contents and the method of learning for boys from seven to sixteen years, and consisted mainly of the study of grammar, rhetoric and dialectic (based on Cicero and on classic literature). His method of learning was based on memorization and imitation rather than on the understanding of formal rules of reasoning. This model, rather than to introduce students to religion, was intended to prepare them to the autonomous understanding of Scripture. Sturm was important also as he contributed to the innovation of biography as a genre, which he intended as more realistic than the typified pre-modern biographies.

Biography*

Johann Sturm was born in 1507 in Schleiden, in the region of Eifel. After having received his first education in the house of the count Dietrich of Manderscheid, in 1521 he moved to the Gymnasium of Saint Jerome of Liège, where he studied Latin, Greek, the logic of Aristotle, mathematics and some elements of theology, in accordance with a division of subjects he will assume as a model for his Gymnasium (Tinsley 1989, 24). In 1524 he moved to Leuven, where he attended the lectures of Latin of Conrad Goclenius and of Greek of Rutger Rescius (with whom Sturm associated as bookseller) and obtained his M.A. In 1528 he moved to Strasbourg and followed the lectures of Martin Bucer, while in 1529 he moved to Paris, starting to study medicine and lecturing at the

Collége Royal from 1534, under the protection of Guillaume Baudé. His lectures were on Cicero's *Partitiones oratoriae* and on the dialectic of Rudolf Agricola, and were attended by Petrus Ramus. Probably under the influence of the Swiss physician Ludwig Carinus, he embraced the Reform. After the failure of the reconciliation between the French King Francis I and the Protestants, Sturm left Paris in December 1536 to Strasbourg, governed by the *stettmeister* Jakob Sturm (not related with Johann). Jakob Sturm had supported the Reformation in Strasbourg since 1524, and in 1530 the town became part of the Tetrapolitan Confession, as well as of the Lutheran *Confessio Augustana* (1531) (Brady 1995). Accordingly, an educational reform consistent with Reform had to be initiated: from 1524 the Lutheran theologian and botanist Otto Brunfels assumed the direction the Strasbourg Latin school, while at the cathedral Bucer gave lectures on the New Testament. For the end of providing an education to the younger, Johann Sturm was granted to found and direct the *Gymnasium Illustre* (1538), whose pedagogic manifesto was his *De literarum ludis aperiendis* (1638). Eventually, the Emperor Maximilian transformed the *Gymnasium* into an Academy in 1566-1567. In 1564 Sturm set the program for a gymnasium in Lauingen, for which he wrote the *Scholae Lauinganae* (1565). However, since the 1560s he suffered attacks from the Lutheran pastor Johannes Pappus, who addressed his supposed Calvinist theology (Kittelson 1977; Schindling 1977, 132-140) and led him to lose his position in 1581. He then retired in Northeim, and died in Strasbourg in 1589. (Schmidt 1855; Tinsley 1989, 23-26; Schröder 2009, 12-22).

Innovative and original aspects

Sturm was a humanist – i.e. a scholar devoting himself to the *studia humanitatis* (i.e. mainly to grammar and rhetoric) (Tinsley 1989, 24; Kristeller 1955, 9-11) – and a pedagogical innovator. His main aim was to provide a reform of high education based on the humanist ideal and on Christian faith (Schröder 2009, 9-14), i.e. to pursue a "wise and eloquent piety". In his *De literarum ludis* he outlines an educational program based on the study of the classics and covering the disciplines of the *trivium*: grammar, rhetoric and dialectic (including logic). It is divided into nine grades, for boys from seven to sixteen years. In the first year students study Cicero's letters, while in the next ones Virgil, Horace, Terence, Plautus, Caesar and Sallust, and the works of Cicero, whose civic orientation makes him the foremost author to be studied. In the fifth they begin with Greek, and in the sixth they learn Aristotle's logic and poetics, together with other Greek authors as Homer and Demosthenes. In the eight they study Hebrew, while in the ninth year they start with mathematics and astrology. To this cycle, a five-years long series of lectures on law, medicine and theology, as well as on philosophy, literature and oratory follow, in order to complete the education of boys until the age of twenty-one. (Tinsley 1989; Sturm 2009a; Mehl 2009). As to Sturm's teaching method, it is based on memorization and on the imitation of models, disputations, declamations, which replaced the teaching of the deductive apparatus for logic. This approach is borrowed from the dialectic of Agricola (Sturm 1539) and from Melanchthon's use of rhetorical *loci communes* (Mesnard 1966; Tinsley 1989, 30-31). As to the relation of education and religion, Sturm restricts religious education to the reading of the history of Christ and Moses, as the humanist education he was proposing had only to enable students to read Scripture, thus acquiring "literary piety" (Mesnard 1965). This model was refined in his further writings, as in his *Scholae Luiningae* the program is accelerated into five classes, although maintaining the contents of the Strasbourg Gymnasium grades (Sturm 2009b; Schindling 2009), while in the *Classicae Epistolae* (1565) a tenth grade is added to the program and the focus is given mostly to the learning of Latin and classic literature (Sturm 1938; Tinsley 1989, 35-36; Schröder 2009, 371-375). The influence of the pedagogy of Sturm spread, beside to Germany and Alsace – where it co-existed with the Jesuit colleges (Negruzzo 2005) –, to England, where Sturm's pedagogy was praised in the *Schoolmaster* of Roger Ascham (Armytage 2012, 2-4), and to Poland-Lithuania, Bohemia and Riga (Pietrzyk 2009; Holy 2009; Klöker 2009). Finally, Sturm is important as a founder of modern genre of biography, more realistic and less morally oriented and typified than pre-modern biographies, signalled for the first time by Jakob Burckhardt (Burckhardt 1990) and exemplified by Sturm's

Beati Rhenani Vita (1551). The life of Beatus Rhenanus (1484-1547) is described in contrast with Sturm's humanist ideal of man, devoted both to letters and to civic life, which was neglected by Beatus (Weiss 1981; Backus 2009).

Cross-References (if there are any; please include a list of other entries in this encyclopedia that may be of further interest to your readers.)

Ascham, Roger
Burckhardt, Jacob
Education - Renaissance Philosophy
Humanism - Renaissance Philosophy
Virgil (in the Renaissance)
Melanchthon, Philipp
Horace (in the Renaissance)
Latin
Poetics
Budé, Guillaume
Humanism, civic
Academies
Printing and Publishing
Trivium
Calvinism - Renaissance Philosophy
Confessio Augustana
Plato (in the Renaissance)
Reformation - Renaissance Philosophy
Ciceronianism
Dialectic - Renaissance Philosophy
Eloquence
Logic - Renaissance Philosophy
Rhetoric (in the Renaissance)

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