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### *Wolfgang Ratke (Ratichius) and his educational writings*

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## A B S T R A C T

John Brian Walmsley

### Wolfgang Ratke (Ratichius) and his educational writings

Wolfgang Ratke (Ratichius, 1571–1635) presents something of a paradox in educational history. Born in Holstein, he first came into prominence through the *Memorandum* he presented at the election of the Holy Roman Emperor in Frankfurt in 1612. The *Memorandum* contained a brief proposal for reforming schools and bringing about unity of government, language and religion throughout the empire.

Apart from these few facts, there is almost nothing concerning Ratke on which historians agree. For some, Ratke was a reformer of central importance – the first in history to dedicate himself exclusively to the cause of education (hence his self-given title '*Didacticus*'). For others, he was a man who developed fruitful ideas, but failed to demonstrate that they could be implemented in practice, – a man sincere but incapable. For still others, he was not only incapable but not even sincere – a cheapjack, a charlatan.

This thesis takes up the paradox of Ratke's treatment in educational history, and tries to discover how it arose. Starting with a sketch of Ratke's life, it examines Ratke's attempts to implement his reforms in Augsburg, Köthen and Magdeburg, and the reasons for his failure. It also examines Ratke's contribution to the areas in which he invested his reforming energy for over twenty years – the curriculum, educational policy and administration, learning-theory and teaching-method. Finally, an attempt is made to find an answer to the question of whether Ratke's ideas did indeed prove fruitful for the educational reforms which spread through seventeenth-century Germany, or whether they disappeared without trace.

**WOLFGANG RATKE (RATICHIUS) AND HIS  
EDUCATIONAL WRITINGS**

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A thesis submitted by John Brian Walmsley to the  
University of Durham for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

April 1990



24 JUL 1990

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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For his skill and efficiency in producing maps, tables and illustrations I am indebted to Raymond Kitching.

Finally, I am grateful to all those individuals who cannot be named here but who helped in typing, reading and commenting on the manuscript, and with technical and linguistic advice, — not least among them the members of my family, who now know more about Ratke than can possibly be good for them.

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- II. The opening pages of the *Little Reader* (*Lesebüchlein*), Köthen, 1619.  
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**LIST OF BRIEF REFERENCES**

## List of Brief References

Full details are given in the Bibliography. Works not assigned to a named author are to be understood as Ratichian, i.e. as having been written by Ratke with or without other members of his team not explicitly named in the document in question.

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| Adamson  | J.W. Adamson, <i>Pioneers of Modern Education 1600–1700</i> , Cambridge, 1905.   |
| Aphor 17 | Aphorisms (Aphorismi), in, Rhenius, ed., 1617, pp. 175–178.  |
| Aphor 29 | Aphorisms (Aphorismi), in, Vogt 1881, pp. 30–31.   |
| Archont  | <i>Archontica (Regentenamtslehr – Of the Office of Sovereign)</i> .  |
| Art      | Articles (Artikel auf welchen), in, Rhenius, ed., 1617, pp. 179–206.   |
| AU 1     | <i>Wolfgang Ratke: Allunterweisung. Part I</i> , edd., G. Hohendorf and F. Hofmann, Berlin, 1970.                                      |
| AU 2     | <i>Wolfgang Ratke: Allunterweisung. Part II</i> , edd., G. Hohendorf and F. Hofmann, Berlin, 1971.                                     |
| Bowen    | J. Bowen, <i>A History of Western Education</i> , Vol. I, 1972; Vol. II, 1975; Vol. III, 1981.   |
| BMZ      | H. Brückner, J.M. Meyfart and S. Ziegler, <i>Humble Relation (Vntertänige Relation)</i> .  |
| BriefT   | <i>Brief Treatment (Kurze Berührung)</i> .   |
| Didact   | <i>Didactica (Lehrartlehr – On Teaching)</i> .   |
| DolR     | <i>Dolium Ratichii (Ratke's Barrel)</i> .  |
| Encycl   | <i>Encyclopaedia</i> , Köthen, 1619.   |
| Epist    | <i>Epistemonica (Verstehungslehrartlehr – On Teaching Understanding)</i> .   |
| Eutact   | <i>Eutactica (Ordnungslehrartlehr – On Teaching Disposing)</i> .   |
| GC       | <i>General Constitution (Allgemeine Verfassung)</i> .  |
| GID      | <i>General Introduction to Didactic (Allgemeine Anleitung in die Didacticam)</i> .   |
| GIM      | General Introduction to Method (In Methodum Linguarum), in, Rhenius, ed., 1617, pp. 132–160.   |
| GR       | <i>The Giessen Report – C. Helwig and J. Jung, Kurtzer Bericht von der Didactica (Brief Report on the Didactic)</i> , Frankfurt, 1613. |
| GSuppR   | <i>The Giessen Supplementary Report – C. Helwig and J. Jung, Nachbericht der neuen Lehrkunst Wolfgangi Ratichii</i> , Rostock, 1614.   |

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- Index* *Index of all Disciplines (Register aller Lehren).*
- ID* *Introduction to Didactic (Anleitung in die Lehrkunst).*
- JR* *The Jena Report – A. Grawer, et al., Bericht von der Didactica oder Lehrkunst Wolfgangi Ratichii*, Jena, 1613.
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- K SS (2)* *The Köthen School Statutes – Further Instructions (Fernere Anordnung).*
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- Memor* *Memorandum (Memorial)*, 1612.
- Meyer A.E. Meyer, *An Educational History of the Western World*, New York, 1965.
- MGP* *Monumenta Germaniae Paedagogica. Schulordnungen, Schulbücher und pädagogische Miscellaneen aus den Landen deutscher Zunge*, ed., K. Kehrbach, Berlin.
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- Müller 1880c J. Müller, Handschriftliche Ratichiana, *Pädagogische Blätter*, IX, 1880, pp. 485–508.
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- NL *Die neue Lehrart. Pädagogische Schriften Wolfgang Ratkes*, ed., G. Hohendorf, Berlin, 1957.
- Noëmat *Noëmatica (Erkenntnislehr)*.
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- Rioux 1963b G. Rioux, La pensée pédagogique de Wolfgang Ratichius (Wolfgang Ratke, 1571-1635), *Paedagogica Historica*, 3, 1963, pp. 378-389.
- Schol *Scholastica (Schuldieneramtslehr - Of the Office of Scholar).*
- SDG *Wolfgang Ratkes Schriften zur deutschen Grammatik (1612-1630), ed., E. Ising, Berlin, 1959.*
- SI *Schulherrnamtslehr (Of the Office of School Inspector).*
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- TRR *Thorough and reliable report (Gründlicher und bestendiger Bericht).*
- VarP *Various points (Etliche Punkte).*
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**PRELIMINARY NOTE**

### Note on the dating of documents

In 1752 Great Britain replaced the Julian ('old style') with the Gregorian ('new style') calendar, dropping eleven days between Wednesday 2nd. and Thursday 14th. September. In doing so, she was adjusting to a practice which had been in operation in continental countries since its inauguration under Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. The adjustment had become necessary because the error in the Julian calendar (introduced under Julius Caesar) had become so great after 1500 years as to make the distortion in the calculation of the church's feast days (Easter, etc.) unacceptable. For several decades after 1582 it was common practice on the continent to date documents either in the old fashion ('*stylo veteri*') or in both styles. Documents quoted in the text are given as in the original. It should be noted that whereas the error had grown to eleven days when Great Britain adjusted to continental practice in the eighteenth century, the error in the seventeenth century required a correction of only ten days.

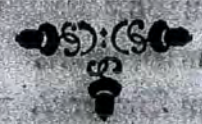
## Frontispiece

Title-page of Ratke's *Universal Grammar* in German (*Allgemeine Sprachlehr*, Köthen, 1619), showing his motto 'RATIO VICIT. VETUSTAS CESSIT' together with the words '*Nach Der Lehrart RATICHII*' ('According to the Didactic of Ratichius').



RATIO  
VICI, VE TUSTAS  
CESSIT

Allgemeine  
Sprachlehr:  
Nach  
Der Lehrart  
RATICII.



Zu Cöthen/  
Im Fürstenthumb Anhalt.  
M. DC. XIX.



'..the truth can not be suppressed completely,  
but emerges in the end, to be honoured by all  
right thinking people...'

W. Ratke, *Scholastica* III.27.viii.

## CHAPTER I

### Who was Ratke?

Wolfgang Ratke must surely be one of the most curious figures in the history of education, both from the point of view of the events of his life and of his treatment at the hands of educational historians. Outwardly, his career exhibited the whole range of human fortunes, from moments of great celebrity to moments of the deepest ignominy, culminating in two spells in prison. Ratke's character, too, displayed the most diverse traits. Clearly motivated by a genuine concern for education, he nevertheless emerges from the pages of history as arrogant, bigoted and avaricious. A particularly striking feature of his personality seems to have been his desire for secrecy. He refused, for instance, to reveal much about his methods to anyone who had not signed an undertaking — a *Revers* (a form of contract) — not to divulge anything about them without his permission.

Both the outward events of his life and the conflicts in his personality have found their reflection in the writings of historians, in the massively diverse judgments passed upon the man and his work. Wolfgang Ratke may fairly be claimed to have been the first person in modern times to have dedicated his life exclusively to education — the first fully professional educationalist, as it were. Before Ratke's time, the most important writings on education had been produced by teachers, lawyers, divines or politicians (if politics is the appropriate description of Montaigne's principal occupation). With Ratke, however, education took on a new dimension. At the end of the nineteenth century, no history of education which made any claim to completeness omitted his name. The great educational encyclopaedias all had a section devoted to him, in some cases of considerable length —



Rein,<sup>1</sup> Roloff,<sup>2</sup> Schmid (1859–78),<sup>3</sup> Schmid (1884–92),<sup>4</sup> to name but a few. Nevertheless, the picture of Ratke presented in this literature is nowhere wholly favourable.

The main features of this picture can be sketched in with a few strokes. It ranges from that of an educational reformer of real stature at one end of the scale to that of an unscrupulous charlatan at the other, who managed to sell his ideas to the naïve Prince of Köthen. The latter, when he discovered the truth about Ratke, threw him into prison for eight months until Ratke signed a written confession of incompetence. Thereafter, Ratke spent the remainder of his life in futile wanderings about Europe.

Adamson compared Ratke unfavourably with his English contemporary, Brinsley. For Adamson, Brinsley was 'the successful practical schoolmaster,' whereas Ratke was 'the adventurer, neither successful nor practical, who is pushing his fortunes by propounding schemes of a novelty well calculated to interest the great and powerful.'<sup>5</sup>

As far as Ratke scholarship is concerned, the years since Adamson wrote have seen – in the English-speaking world at least – continuity without development. Assertion and counter-assertion have been handed down from generation to generation without much effort being made either to consult original sources or to take account of ongoing research. It is not surprising, then, that the picture of Ratke which emerges from the currently available literature is both confused and confusing. Indeed, scholars seem to find it increasingly advisable to pass over Ratke's name in silence. Rowlinson,<sup>6</sup> writing specifically on the history of education in Germany, does not mention Ratke, and Bowen,<sup>7</sup> Broudy and Palmer,<sup>8</sup> Jarman,<sup>9</sup> Myers,<sup>10</sup> and Thut<sup>11</sup> have no index-entry under Ratke's name.

- 
- 1 W. Rein, ed., *Encyclopädisches Handbuch der Pädagogik*, 7 Vols., Langensalza, 1895–1899.
  - 2 E.M. Roloff, ed., *Lexikon der Pädagogik*, 5 Vols., Freiburg, 1913–1917.
  - 3 K.A. Schmid, ed., *Enzyklopädie des gesamten Erziehungs- und Unterrichtswesens*, 11 Vols., Gotha, 1859–1878.
  - 4 K.A. Schmid, ed., *Geschichte der Erziehung vom Anfang an bis auf unsere Zeit*, 5 Vols., Stuttgart, 1884–1892.
  - 5 Adamson, p. 20.
  - 6 W. Rowlinson, German Education in a European Context, in, T.G. Cook, ed., *The History of Education in Europe*, pp. 21–35.
  - 7 J. Bowen, *A History of Western Education*, 3 Vols., 1972–1981.
  - 8 M.S. Broudy and J.S. Palmer, *Exemplars of Teaching Method*, Chicago, 1965.
  - 9 T.L. Jarman, *Landmarks in the History of Education*, 1951.
  - 10 E.D. Myers, *Education in the Perspective of History*, 1960.
  - 11 I.N. Thut, *The Story of Education. Philosophical and Historical Foundations*, New York, 1957.

How could such a state of affairs arise? And who is right – those who present Ratke as a charlatan, or those who see him as a figure of substance and importance in the history of education? Who, indeed, was Ratke, and what claims has he on the historian's attention?

Wolfgang Ratke was born on 18th. October 1571, in Wilster, Holstein.<sup>1</sup> A 'certificate of birth'<sup>2</sup> made out on 16th. May 1603, before Ratke set out for Holland, states that he was conceived in wedlock and born within the town boundaries, the son of Andreas Ratke and his virtuous ('*dugentsamen*') wife Margrete.<sup>3</sup>

Ratke's early schooling was probably in Wilster. He went from there to the *Johanneum*, a grammar-school ('*Gymnasium*') in Hamburg which was later attended by another great educationalist, Johann Bernard Basedow, and which still flourishes today.

After completing his schooling, Ratke went to study at the Lutheran University of Rostock, situated on the estuary of the River Warnow where it flows into the Baltic. He matriculated in May 1593 as '*Wolfgangus Ratken Holsatus, Wiltricensis*'<sup>4</sup> with the intention of studying *philosophico et theologico*, oriental languages and mathematics.<sup>5</sup> Among his teachers at Rostock were Dr. Simon Pauli and David Kochaff (Chytraeus). Through these two teachers Ratke came under a Lutheran influence the importance of which, in view of the difficulties he later encountered with clerics of different denominations, should not be underestimated. This influence was not exclusively theological, however. Kochaff had assimilated the new Ramist<sup>6</sup> philosophy and this, too, was passed on to Ratke to become an important strand in his scientific work.

There are indications that Ratke made the acquaintance of other learned men at Rostock in addition to his teachers – Eilhard Lubin (Lubinus) for one. It also seems to have been during his years in Rostock that Ratke's interest in education and teaching-methods first developed. There is a tradition that Ratke's original intention was to enter the ministry. This aim, it is said, was thwarted by a speech impediment which is nowhere clearly defined. Motschmann, for instance, claimed that Ratke had to abandon his plans for the ministry 'because of a heavy tongue.'<sup>7</sup>

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1 Cf. Map I.

2 – '*Geburtsbrief*' in German.

3 Krause, p. 1, No. I/1.

4 A.Hofmeister, ed., *Die Matrikel der Universität Rostock*, Rostock, Vol. II, 1891, p. 243.

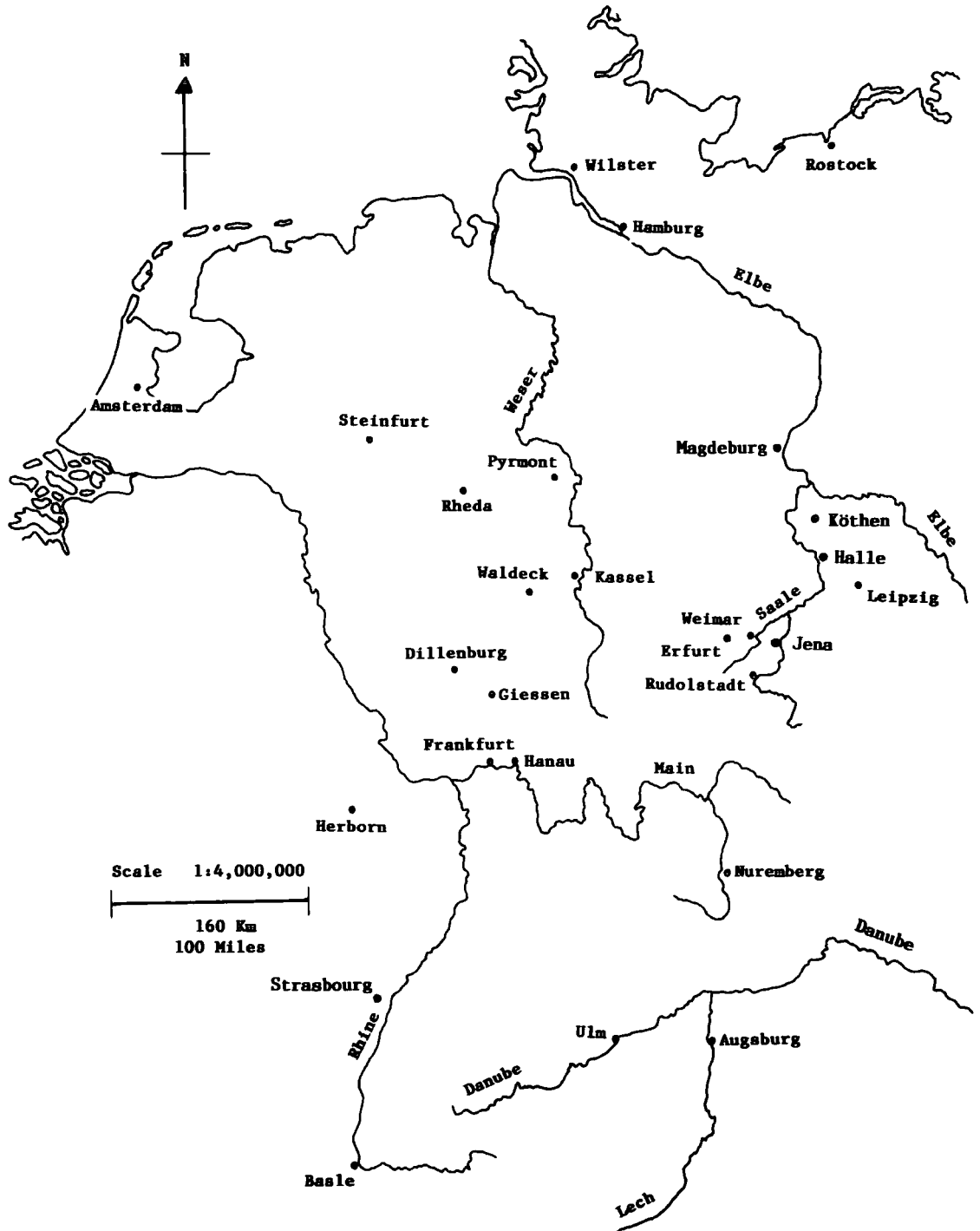
5 Rioux 1963a, p. 11.

6 From Pierre de la Ramée (Petrus Ramus) – 1515–1572.

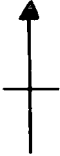
7 J.E. Motschmann, *Erfordia literata continuata oder Fortsetzung des gelehrten Erfurts, Erste Fortsetzung*, Erfurt, 1733, p. 67.

## **Map I**

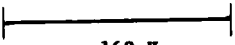
**Towns visited by Ratke up to his arrival in Köthen in 1618.**



N



Scale 1:4,000,000



160 Km  
100 Miles

Amsterdam

Steinfurt

Pyrmont

Rheda

Waldeck

Dillenburg

Giessen

Frankfurt

Herborn

Strasbourg

Basle

Wilster

Rostock

Hamburg

Elbe

Weser

Magdeburg

Köthen

Halle

Leipzig

Kassel

Weimar

Erfurt

Rudolstadt

Jena

Saale

Hanau

Main

Munich

Danube

Ulm

Augsburg

Danube

Lech

Rhine

Ising and Hohendorf, on the other hand, incline to the view that whatever form Ratke's handicap may have taken, it was secondary in importance to his own vocational leanings.<sup>1</sup> There is a further argument which would make Ratke's impediment appear to be of limited significance. It would seem odd for a man abandoning a career in the church on such grounds to turn to a profession so dependent upon speech as that of a teacher of languages. Ratke seems to have made his living by giving private instruction from at least the time when he was studying in Amsterdam,<sup>2</sup> and all through his life it was his policy to teach demonstration lessons before potential patrons.

The years 1600–1603 Ratke devoted to further study. From this point on, however, his movements are less clear. Rioux claims that Ratke left Wilster for London in 1603, returning to the continent in the same year. Krause, on the other hand, wrote that '...the assumption that [Ratke] went to London remains unconfirmed.'<sup>3</sup> Vogt initially assumed that Ratke undertook a longer journey to England, probably in May 1603,<sup>4</sup> but later described this himself as 'an absolutely unconvincing piece of information.'<sup>5</sup> Be that as it may, the claim that Ratke spent some time in England has Meyfart's authority behind it, even if no other documentary evidence appears to support it.<sup>6</sup>

That Ratke went to Holland is shown by a certificate made out for him by the Amsterdam clergy. This was a *Testimonium vitae et religionis* according to which Ratke 'behaved as a proper member of the community of the true Christian religion and confession of the gospels, attended sermons regularly, took the venerable sacrament of Holy Communion according to Christ's word, and...lived (as far as we could ascertain) a truly Christian life...'<sup>7</sup>

During this phase, Ratke seems to have been extending the knowledge he would need for his later work. Amsterdam, like Hamburg and Rostock, was very much open to the influences which its seafaring connections made accessible. In contrast to Hamburg and Rostock, however, events in the decades preceding Ratke's stay had left Amsterdam on the brink of becoming the foremost trading city in Europe.

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1 SDG, pp. 3–4; G. Hohendorf, *Wolfgang Ratke. Lebensbilder großer Pädagogen*, Berlin, 1963, p. 14.

2 C.F. Linderstrøm-Lang, *Wolfgang Ratichius. Et bidrag til pædagogikkens historie*, Copenhagen, 1903, pp. 24f; Rioux 1963a, p. 12.

3 Krause, p. 6, fn.

4 Vogt 1876, p. 4.

5 Vogt 1894, p. 10.

6 J.Meyfart, *Programma Publicum In exequiis Clarissimi & Excellentissimi VIRI DN. WOLFGANGI RATICHII, DIDACTICI*, Erfurt, 1635.

7 Krause, p. 2, No. 1/2.

The struggle for independence from Spain helped Holland to develop a national consciousness which became more pronounced towards the close of the sixteenth century. This consciousness manifested itself both in a growing liberalism which accompanied the increase in prosperity, and in a concomitant flowering of the arts and sciences. It also led to a lively discussion of the role of national literature and language. This discussion was pursued in the *Rederijkers-Kammern* or language societies which flourished above all in Amsterdam. Publications by such authors as Jan van der Werve and Simon Stevin made a vernacular vocabulary available in which technical and scientific developments could be discussed. The native language thus began to evolve as a viable alternative to Latin for these purposes. Since membership of the language societies — (unlike that of the later *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*) was not restricted to any particular social class, innovations and ideas were quickly transmitted through many levels of society.

That Ratke's ideas on educational reform had taken shape by the time he left Amsterdam in about 1610 is shown by the fact that he was able to lay comprehensive proposals before Prince Moritz of Orange in that year. Moritz offered Ratke financial support, but only on condition that he confined his reforms to improvements in Latin teaching. It is significant that as early as 1610 Ratke was sufficiently clear about his educational aims not to accept financial advancement at the expense of what to him was clearly an integral part of his programme. He turned down the prince's offer, and made his way to Frankfurt.

There were several good reasons for choosing Frankfurt. It was the cultural and intellectual centre of the empire, and the centre of the German printing trade. Further, Ratke had personal connections with the city. Within a month of receiving his *Testimonium* in Amsterdam on 9th. July 1610, Ratke is mentioned in the Frankfurt council minutes as having offered to instruct the city's children in Hebrew and Latin, and being permitted to offer a trial lesson.<sup>1</sup> The council declined to give Ratke the financial support he would have preferred. On the other hand, no impediment was put in the way of parents who wished to place their children with Ratke privately.

In the years 1610 and 1611 Ratke was in close contact with Wolfgang Wilhelm, Count Palatine of Neuburg, who thought sufficiently well of Ratke's proposals to provide him with both moral and financial support. Most important, the count used his influence to help further Ratke's cause. It seems to have been through Wolfgang Wilhelm that Ratke first made the acquaintance of Johann Lippius in 1611.<sup>2</sup>

Lippius, a gifted scholar who died at the age of only twenty-seven, was well known in courtly circles. Decisive for the course which Ratke's later career was

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1 B. Widmann, Wolfgang Ratich, *Der praktische Schulmann*, 19, 1870, pp. 115-116.

2 Not *Lipsius*, as in Padley, p. 109.

to take were Lippius' contacts with the house of Anhalt and with the Archbishop Elector of Mainz. Lippius was tutor to Anna Sophia, a princess of Anhalt later to become Ratke's most faithful and enduring patron. She was the sister of Duchess Dorothea-Maria and Prince Ludwig of Anhalt-Köthen, and the aunt of Duke Ernst ('the Pious') of Gotha.<sup>1</sup>

In February 1611, Ratke moved back to Amsterdam, returning to Frankfurt in early April. For the next year or so he remained in Frankfurt, devoting his energies mainly to his plans for reform, testing his ideas on teaching, and trying to gather round him a team which would enable him to put his reforms into practice. There is evidence, too, that Ratke's plans to produce a series of textbooks in accordance with his principles were taking more concrete shape.

On 20th. January 1612, in the midst of this phase of gestation and preparation, Rudolph II, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, died. The election of a Holy Roman Emperor was traditionally used as an occasion for re-modelling imperial policy. It was thus a unique opportunity for Ratke to make his proposals known to the assembled nobility of the empire. Through the good offices of the Archbishop of Mainz, Ratke was able to lay before the nobles the document for which he is best known and which has for more than three centuries been considered his main claim to fame, his *Memorandum (Memorial)*.

This document<sup>2</sup> contains the seeds of almost all Ratke's educational thinking, and hence provides the key to a proper understanding of his later work. At the same time, with its *Elucidation (Erklärung)* and subsequent *Report (Bericht)*,<sup>3</sup> the *Memorandum* offers important clues to the climate of opinion into which it was born.

Briefly, Ratke's three main claims in the *Memorandum* were that languages could be taught more speedily and effectively than was customarily done at the time, to both young and old, — and that he could give directions as to how this could be achieved; second, that he could show how school — (i.e. all the subjects of the curriculum) — could be taught in High German (as opposed to Latin); and finally, that he could show how unity of language, government and religion could be achieved and peacefully maintained throughout the empire.

The programme for national renewal outlined by Ratke in his *Memorandum* does not seem to have been adopted in any official form by the empire. On the other hand, it doubtless helped to crystallise more general feelings of dissatisfaction.

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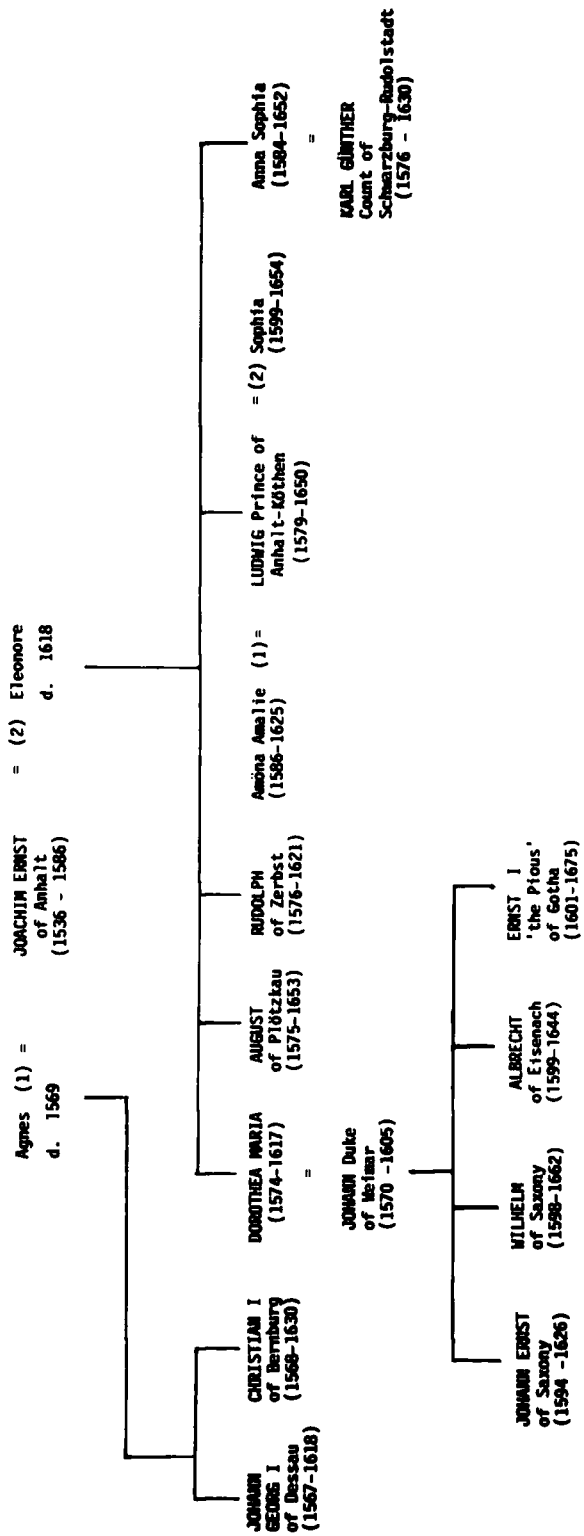
1 Cf. Table I.

2 Cf. Appendix I.

3 *Thorough and reliable report*, Appendix II.

**Table I**

**Genealogical Table of the House of Anhalt 1536–1675.  
(Extract).**



In the months following the election, a number of factors conspired to make Weimar appear the most promising place for Ratke to pursue his plans. First and foremost was the invitation he received from 'the young lord, his mother and the spinster' — (as Ratke confided to Wolfgang Wilhelm) — Duke Johann Ernst (Dorothea Maria's eldest son), Dorothea Maria and Anna Sophia.<sup>1</sup>

In the same letter, Ratke reported that he had attended Lippius' doctoral examination ('Promotion') in Giessen, where the professors had shown Ratke 'great honour and kindness'. Ratke also mentioned for the first time in this letter Christoph Helwig (Helvicus): Helwig 'has ... taken over three pieces of work to help me, and has already started, [and] offered to come and join me wherever I want him, [and] to help with all the means in his power...' It is small wonder that Ratke added, 'He suits me inordinately well.'<sup>2</sup> The day after dispatching the letter, Ratke left Frankfurt for Weimar.

Weimar had been ruled by the widow Dorothea Maria since the death of her husband, Duke Johann, in 1605. Education in the Duchy of Weimar at the beginning of the seventeenth century was generally poor. The methods used in educating the princes were traditional, and placed inordinate weight on the rote learning of pious texts. The results achieved in the elementary and Latin schools left the pupils of the first largely unable to read and write and with scant knowledge of Christian doctrine, and those of the second inadequately prepared for university. Over the years this had led to weaknesses in the administration of church and state which could not be overlooked.<sup>3</sup> In order to counteract these deficiencies, Dorothea Maria had been trying for some time to assemble a team of competent educationalists and teachers. It is not surprising, then, that Ratke's promises should have aroused her interest. However, Dorothea Maria was a judicious as well as a conscientious ruler, so that while inviting Ratke to demonstrate his methods, she also asked the universities of Giessen and Jena for assessments of Ratke's work and, interestingly, of his religious position.

Ratke's dismissal of Prince Moritz's offer in 1610 had shown that he was not prepared to compromise on his plans. On the other hand, he was dependent on financial support of some sort if these plans were to be brought to fruition. There is no reason to doubt, therefore, that Ratke's presentation at the Weimar court was of considerable importance to him. Ratke seems to have seen his main hope of success in attacking the inadequacies of the traditional methods of teaching.

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1 Ratke to Wolfgang Wilhelm, 27th. September 1612; Krause, p. 4, No. 1/5.

2 Krause *loc. cit.*

3 Rioux 1963a, p. 31; T. Steinmetz, Die Herzogin Dorothea Maria von Weimar und ihre Beziehungen zu Ratke und zu seiner Lehrart, *Pädagogisches Magazin*, 56, 1895, pp. 7-8; K.A.H. Stoerl, Wolfgang Ratke (Ratichius), *Neue Jahrbücher des Vereins für Philologie und Pädagogik*, 114, 1876, pp. 127-8.

Inevitably, Kromayer (the superintendent of the Weimar church), and the court tutors, were members of Ratke's audience, and thus able to hear his opinion of their work at first hand. Ratke seems to have come across at this meeting as intolerably arrogant, and uncompromising in his condemnation.<sup>1</sup>

Dorothea Maria, however, was well able to distinguish between emotion and reason, and remained unmoved by the injured feelings of some members of her court. Although after Ratke's presentation it was impolitic for her to appoint him to carry out large scale reforms in Weimar, Dorothea Maria arranged for Ratke to give lessons to herself and her sister, Anna Sophia, in Hebrew and Latin, and appointed him tutor to her son, Duke Wilhelm. In addition, in February and March of the same year two conferences were organized, one at Weimar under the auspices of Dorothea Maria, and the other in Erfurt at the invitation of Landgrave Ludwig V of Hesse-Darmstadt. The conferences produced no immediate results of any consequence for Ratke, but they did compel him to commit his ideas to paper in presentable form. The first saw Ratke's presentation of the 'New Method' (*Neue Lehrart*) which had just been completed, and a further document – probably written down by Gualther but signed by Ratke – was laid before the second conference on 14th. March, together with the Jena professors' report.

Landgrave Ludwig left Erfurt with his court on 30th. March, and, seeing no immediate prospect of gaining support for his plans, Ratke made his way back to Frankfurt. Despite a testimonial which Dorothea Maria gave him for the city fathers, Ratke entertained little hope of obtaining support from that quarter. In a letter to Wolfgang Wilhelm he wrote, '... Her Royal Highness gave me a generous letter for the honourable council here, recommending my project to the school inspectors and churchmen, but the good gentlemen are not very interested and don't much understand it; they think it enough simply to wait, wondering to see how it turns out, or almost-ridiculing it; Yes, they say, if it comes to anything we'll do something for it then...'<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, more positive signals were received from other quarters. Landgrave Ludwig seconded Helwig and his colleague Joachim Jung to assist Ratke in Frankfurt until Easter 1614. On 25th. August Helwig signed a *Revers* not to reveal anything of Ratke's methods without permission, – (Jung had signed his on 7th. June) – and work began in earnest.

The programme the men set themselves consisted of three broad tasks – to analyse the whole of Luther's writings; to prepare grammars of Hebrew, German, Greek and Latin; and to make drafts in tabular form ordering the subject-matter

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1 Rioux 1963a, p. 39; T. Steinmetz, Die Herzogin Dorothea Maria von Weimar und ihre Beziehungen zu Ratke und zu seiner Lehrart, *Pädagogisches Magazin*, 56, 1895, p. 10; K.A.H. Stoerl, Wolfgang Ratke (Ratichius), *Neue Jahrbücher des Vereins für Philologie und Pädagogik*, 114, 1876, p. 134.

2 Ratke to Wolfgang Wilhelm, 5th. July 1613; Krause, p. 4, No. I/6.

of the various disciplines. While this was in hand, the reports which had been prepared by Helwig and Jung (*The Giessen Report*), and by Brendel, Grawer, Gualther and Wolf (*The Jena Report*), were published. Copies were dispatched to scholars and theological faculties throughout the empire, and to selected Lutheran nobles, including Hoë von Hoënegg, the powerful chaplain of the Electoral Court in Dresden.

While Ratke, Helwig und Jung were working on their project in Frankfurt, the young Comenius was at Herborn, scarcely fifty miles away, where he had arrived at the age of nineteen to pursue his studies. The Giessen and Jena reports constituted Comenius' first contact with Ratke's pedagogical thinking.<sup>1</sup>

While work continued on the programme, Ratke weighed the advantages and disadvantages of possible locations for his project. To the east, Ratke had connections with Saxony (Dresden), Weimar and Rudolstadt, and to the north with Giessen, Lübeck (Jung's home-town), Stettin and Rostock. To the south-east lay Augsburg, from where enquiries were received in late 1613, and in the west was Wolfgang Wilhelm.

It was unfortunate for Ratke's<sup>X</sup> plans that in the course of these deliberations Wolfgang Wilhelm became a convert to Roman Catholicism. Further, Weimar was ruled out by the memory of Ratke's earlier presentation. By March 1614, however, a group of citizens calling themselves the *Corpus von Contribuenten* (Body of Contributors) had banded together in Augsburg with the aim of reforming the city's schools. In reply to initial enquiries by Dr. Paul Jenisch and Mattheus Höpffer, Ratke wrote in a letter which gives considerable insight into the direction his thoughts were taking, '...if I am to be of any use in the empire with this Christian work, the beginnings of this reform must be made under the Elector of Saxony, but not in the upper schools [= universities]; – or else in the town of Lübeck. I do not much feel like going to the elector, knowing well how things work at court. With regard to Lübeck, I have to remember that I shall have many hot-heads against me. One thing, however, is certain, – for this reason to be patient and attack the thing with fresh courage. But I would have liked...to draw Augsburg together with Lübeck in this work, in order to acquire more authority and influence among the towns, and to be able to press on spreading the work more quickly throughout the whole empire...'<sup>2</sup> He continued, 'Have you perhaps a trusted friend with whom you would like to come over; I would hope...to tell you with God's help so much within a week or fortnight that you would be able to pass on...inestimable benefits not only to your native country, your own child-

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1 J.A. Comenius, *Opera didacticae omnia*, Amsterdam, Vol. I, 1657, p. 3.

2 Krause, pp. 15-16, No. I/17.

ren and relatives, but also to the whole of Christendom in this auspiciously begun work.<sup>1</sup>

In late March, 1614, a commission of three men appointed by the *Contribuenten* set off from Augsburg to examine Ratke's proposals. They returned from Frankfurt on 9th. April well satisfied with what they had seen, and on 7th. May Ratke received an official invitation, as Stoerl called it,<sup>2</sup> to give demonstration lessons in Augsburg in Latin, Greek and Hebrew.<sup>3</sup>

On the strength of the invitation from the *Contribuenten*, Ratke left Frankfurt accompanied by his friends Philibert Vernat and Jung, and arrived in Augsburg in mid-May. Ratke soon discovered, however, that the situation was not quite so promising as he had anticipated. The invitation turned out to have been official in the eyes of the *Contribuenten*, but not in the eyes of the city of Augsburg. The signatories to the letter which the commission took with them included, it is true, important Protestant church and school dignitaries. They spoke nevertheless as private citizens. As a next step, therefore, the *Contribuenten* submitted a petition to the council to have assessors evaluate Ratke's work officially. This, however, the council refused to do. Despite this setback, Ratke began work and was rewarded with considerable success. He had not been refused permission to reside in the city, nor had parents been forbidden to send their children to him, with the result that not only were his classes attended by an increasing number of pupils, but a surprising number of scholars also came to observe Ratke's work. They arrived from as far afield as Cologne, Rostock, Lübeck, Altdorf, Coburg, Leipzig and Jena.<sup>4</sup> It is not surprising, if, towards the end of 1614, Ratke felt that his work was progressing smoothly.<sup>5</sup>

It was not long, either, before the council, which had initially declined even to observe the experiment, was forced by public opinion to look at it more closely. A deputation of fifty-four Augsburg citizens made representations to the effect that Ratke should be persuaded to remain in Augsburg indefinitely. Rather than accede to this demand, the council stalled and, deciding that a report would after all be a good idea, appointed six assessors on 10th. February 1615. This report no longer appears to be extant. However, it must have been sufficiently negative or indecisive to justify the council refusing once more to support Ratke's work in any official capacity.

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1 Krause, pp. 15-16, No. I/17.

2 K.A.H. Stoerl, Wolfgang Ratke (Ratichius), *Neue Jahrbücher des Vereins für Philologie und Pädagogik*, 114, 1876, p. 137.

3 Dr. Helmreich, Wolfgang Ratichius in Augsburg, *Blätter für das Bayrische Gymnasial- und Realschulwesen*, XV, 1879, p. 297.

4 Vogt 1894, p. 30; Rioux 1963a, p. 44.

5 Ratke to Dorothea Maria, 18th. September; Krause, p. 17, No. I/19, and Ratke to Anna Sophia, 20/30th. December 1614; Krause, p. 17, No. I/20.

At about this time, other problems began to manifest themselves. They concerned Ratke's relations with the *Contribuenten* on the one hand, but – most seriously – with the senior members of his team, Helwig and Jung on the other. According to Helmreich, Helwig and Jung were better teachers than Ratke, and they also had higher academic qualifications. Despite this, Ratke insisted on retaining sole authority over the project. That the rift had become public some time in the spring of 1615 is clear from a letter in which Ratke wrote to Anna Sophia that, 'through the special grace of God, the shameful ambition, ungrateful and loose buffoonery of my supposed assistants has been publicly brought to light in this town...'<sup>1</sup> Ratke went on to say that his beloved bride, 'the highly desired *Didactica*...folds her dear Ratke (to whom alone she has been...entrusted by Almighty God) in...her arms...'<sup>2</sup>

The stresses inside Ratke's team fuelled the uncertainty among the *Contribuenten*: would Ratke see his contract through to the end? – and what would become of the project after that? On 21st. March Ratke reassured the *Contribuenten*, and even offered to remain longer at his own expense, though not to teach. Nevertheless, five days later, the *Contribuenten* gave notice to Helwig and Jung, and declined to ask Ratke to stay on after the expiry of his contract on 26th. June.

Within eight weeks, the team had split up – for ever, as it turned out. Helwig left first, for Ulm, where he had a brother-in-law; Jung returned to his home town, Lübeck. On the 26th. June, Ratke, too, made his way to Ulm, but seeing little prospect of success there, moved on to Weimar.

Thus began three years of peregrination, in which Ratke wandered from place to place in the hope of finding a favourable environment for his reforms. Although his hopes had been disappointed in Augsburg, he could look back on the episode with at least some satisfaction. In practical terms, he had gained extensive experience with his method of teaching, and the petition presented by the citizens testified that his work was well received even where it did not enjoy official support. As far as his longer-term plans were concerned, a general outline or framework of scientific disciplines and a number of tables for individual subjects – in identical form, in accordance with Ratke's theory of harmony – were probably completed in Augsburg.

In the late summer of 1615 Ratke travelled to Leipzig, to deliver a copy of the *Praxis ac methodi* to Rhenius, and from Leipzig he went on to Erfurt, where he spent the winter.

The years 1616 to 1618 were to have important consequences for Ratke. In the spring of 1616 Ratke set out on a tour which took him from Kassel in the north to Basle in the south, and from there, ultimately, to Köthen. In the course of this

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1 Ratke to Anna Sophia, 30th. May 1615; Krause, p. 21, No. I/25.

2 Krause, *loc. cit.*

journey he spent more extended periods at the courts of Waldeck, Kassel, Pyrmont, Rheda and Steinfurt. The rulers of these houses – Christian of Waldeck, Moritz of Hesse-Kassel, Ludwig of Gleichen, Spiegelberg and Pyrmont, and Adolf von Bentheim – were all interested in reform, and hence receptive to proposals for the improvement of education. Ratke expounded his ideas with considerable success, and there is evidence of lasting influence on the school systems of many of the states he visited. In one, Kassel, Ratke's visit culminated in an important landmark in the history of German education, namely the Hesse statutes of 1618. These bristle with Ratician ideas, and even with echoes of Ratician formulations. Due to the importance they accorded to the vernacular, they constitute a watershed in German educational history.<sup>1</sup>

The period from October 1616 to June 1617 Ratke spent negotiating, without conspicuous success, in Frankfurt. There can be no doubt that he was fully occupied, since at this stage he was being pressed by Prince Ludwig to move to Köthen, and explained his inability to do so by pressure of work.<sup>2</sup> Curiously, as soon as Ratke did have time at his disposal, he made his way not eastward to Köthen, but down the Rhine valley to Strasbourg and Basle. It was a decision he was to regret. Basle was a Calvinist city and, almost before he had arrived, Ratke was arraigned for remarks he was alleged to have made in a tavern in Lörrach, on the German border. The evidence is that the Margrave of Baden saw Ratke as one of 'two harmful persons' currently in Basle. The other was one Origines Philippes, 'who claims to be head of the Rosicrucian brotherhood.'<sup>3</sup> Ratke was detained for questioning, released on oath, then detained again while the council debated his case. The record of his petitions makes pitiful reading.<sup>4</sup> The council declined to set Ratke free, but nor would it bring him to trial. Ratke was not finally released until January 1618, when he made his way back to Frankfurt via Strasbourg, arriving in early March. At this point, Ratke decided to accept Ludwig's invitation to Köthen.

Ratke arrived in Köthen on 10th. April 1618. As in Augsburg, the situation initially seemed promising – more so, in the sense that this time Ratke was arriving at the request of the ruling monarch. Not only did Ratke's reception seem to augur well, but cultural movements were also afoot which could only give added momentum to his work. In 1617 the first language society in Germany – the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* (Fruitbearing Society) had been founded in

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1 Hettwer, pp. 140f. For an assessment of Ratke's influence in the other states mentioned, cf. G. Vogt, *Raticianismus in den Fürstenthümern Waldeck und Pyrmont*, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Fürstenthümer Waldeck und Pyrmont*, II, 1896, pp. 115–133 and Vogt 1894, *passim*.

2 Ratke to Prince Ludwig, 30th. September 1616; Krause, p. 29, No. I/38.

3 The Margrave of Baden to the *General-Superintendent* of Sulzberg; Krause, p. 40, No. I/53.

4 Staatsarchiv Basle, Council minutes, 6th. January – 31st. December 1617.

Weimar on the initiative of Dorothea Maria, with Prince Ludwig as a prominent member. With its purpose of 'restoring...and freeing from its oppressive foreign yoke our noble mother-tongue, which has become watered-down and polluted by foreign ostentation,'<sup>1</sup> the society was bound to find much common ground with Ratke's aims, one of which was to raise the native language to a pre-eminent position in relation to the other languages taught in schools and universities.

The reforms which Ratke was proposing, however, meant considerable financial outlay. Within a few days of Ratke's arrival in Köthen on 20th. April, Prince Ludwig was writing to those of his brothers and half-brothers who were themselves rulers of states to see what kind of support he could expect from them. Their initial response was hesitant rather than negative. Perhaps as an extra safeguard, Ludwig allied himself with his nephew Johann Ernst of Saxony, one of Dorothea Maria's eleven sons, and on 11th. July they signed a contract with Ratke. By September, however, Ludwig's hopes of support from his brothers had all been dashed. Johann Georg died on May 14th. Rudolf wrote that while he found the project worthy of support, he was not prepared to enter into an open-ended commitment. And Christian, who more or less abandoned Bernburg to achieve prominence as chancellor to Frederick, Elector of the Palatinate, declined – on the strength of what he had heard about Ratke's activities in Augsburg and Basle – to have anything further to do with the plan.

Nevertheless, Ludwig pressed on with his reforms. The positive academic response to his initiative – in contrast to that of the rulers – soon led to a situation in which assistants and students wishing to become acquainted with the new art of teaching had to be registered ('matriculated'). Ludwig's matriculation decree named two administrators, Ernst von Freiberg and Friedrich von Schilling, to oversee its implementation.<sup>2</sup>

In August, Ratke left Köthen to visit Weimar, Rudolstadt, Halle and Jena, and by early November he was back in Köthen to attend a meeting with his patrons and the Jena professors Brendel, Gualther and Wolf. At this meeting, responsibility for individual tasks had to be assigned, for by now an impressive team of scholars had been assembled. They included Zacharias Brendel, Christian Gueintz, Ludwig Lucius, Jacob Martini, Nicolaus Pompejus, Martin Trost, Michael Wolf and Abraham Ulrich.

Work on the project continued through the winter months. A printing press with four employees was set up, and towards the end of 1618 the first book – a *Regula vitae* – was produced. On 12th. May 1619 a decree was issued inviting the registration of pupils. On 18th. June, Ratke's instructions for the organisation

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1 C. Busse, *Geschichte der Weltliteratur*, Vol. II, Bielefeld and Leipzig, 1913, p. 84.

2 Krause, p. 46, No. I/57.

and running of the schools appeared in the form of a modest statute (*Schulordnung*), and one day later 231 boys and 202 girls were registered for the first attempt to introduce institutionalised schooling for all children, with a common curriculum, in Köthen. There were to be six classes in all – four in German, together with one Latin and one Greek class. The schools were formally opened on 21st. June 1618.

Even at this point, however, storm-clouds were gathering. The first signs of unrest came from the superintendent of the Reformed Church in Köthen, Adam Streso. Ratke was a Lutheran, and the state of Anhalt-Köthen, like its ruler, Calvinist. From the time of Ratke's first appearance in Köthen, therefore, there were areas of potential friction. The power Ratke had been given to reorganise Köthen's schools must have made him appear as a potential, if not yet clearly defined, threat. Had he not claimed in his *Memorandum* to know of ways by which unity of religion could be brought about throughout the empire? If all children were to receive elementary education, Ratke and his colleagues would have access to all the youth of Köthen.

To secure the educational system which was being brought into being, Ludwig appointed two boards of supervisors or inspectors – for 'town' and 'gown' as it were. Four were to be responsible for staff and students: the Ernst von Freiberg and Friedrich von Schilling already mentioned, together with Balthasar Gualther and Michael Wolf. And as supervisors in the town schools, Ludwig appointed Streso and six other citizens. Since their function was to check pupils' attendance, and at least one of them was to be on duty daily in the schools,<sup>1</sup> their function gave them considerable influence over Ratke's work.

Their initial suspicions were fuelled by the discovery that Ratke's *Lesebüchlein* – the *Little Reader*,<sup>2</sup> – contained the Lutheran version of the decalogue, and prayers from the Lutheran liturgy, as well as the Lutheran creed and general confession. It made no use, on the other hand, of the Heidelberg Catechism preferred by the Reformed Church. Streso was too late to have the reader altered, but after a vigorous protest the problem was resolved through changes in the timetabling (one to two hours to be devoted to the Heidelberg Catechism every other week, for instance).

As the summer months drew on, relations between Ratke and the inspectors, and through them with the prince, worsened. In a memorandum dated 28th. August 1619, in which he threatened to withdraw from the project altogether, Ratke tried to have the inspectors' powers reduced. Ludwig reminded him, however, of their contract of 11th. July. On 9th. September a compromise between Ratke and the princes was achieved, which formalised certain changes to

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1 Ratke in fact called them *inspectores* – Vogt 1894, p. 77.

2 Cf. Illustration II.

## **Illustration II**

The opening pages of the *Little Reader (Lesebüchlein)*, Köthen, 1619.

A B C D E F G H  
 I K L M N O P Q  
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# Von dem Gesetze Gottes/

Wie es Gott selbst durch Mosem  
 gegeben / im andern Buch Moses  
 am zwanzigsten  
 Capitel.

**S** O GOTT redet alle diese Wort /  
 und sprach: Ich bin der Herr dein  
 Gott / der ich dich aus Egyptenland / aus  
 dem Diensthause / geführet hab. Du solt  
 kein andere Götter nebt mir haben. Du solt  
 dir kein Bildnis / noch irgend ein Gleichnis  
 machen / weder deß das oben im Himmel /  
 noch deß das unten auff Erden / oder deß  
 das in Wassern vnter der Erden ist. Vere  
 sie nicht an / vnd diene ihnen nicht. Denn  
 ich der Herr dein Gott / bin ein eyferiger  
 Gott / der da heimsucht der Väter misse  
 A ij

the earlier contract. Nevertheless, a further report by the inspectors led to Ratke being presented with a list of eleven points on which he was asked to comment. On October 2nd. Ludwig dispatched a blunt demand for action on the points mentioned, almost every one of which began with the words 'shall' or 'must'. So irritated was Ratke by this display of authority that he added the remark: 'If all this shall and must be, I shall and must have to comply.'<sup>1</sup>

Most interesting of Ludwig's demands was the requirement that Ratke should surrender the written description of his teaching method (*Methodum*) 'so that the inspectors may do their job better.'<sup>2</sup>

On 4th. and 5th. October Ludwig sent his inspectors to negotiate with Ratke. The meetings were minuted and the results passed to Ludwig. Whereas Ratke was protesting on 4th. October that he loved and honoured Prince Ludwig as much as his own father, within twenty-four hours he seems to have lost his head. By 5th. October Ratke had decided to keep his *Methodum* to himself. He asserted that if Gualther wanted to take over the project, then he was welcome to; – that he (Ratke) was responsible to no-one but God; – that no prince had ever treated him more tyrannically than Prince Ludwig; – and that Ludwig would not be permitted to misuse his (Ratke's) *Didactica* for the benefit of Calvinists.

Ludwig's response was to have Ratke arrested and thrown into Warmisdorf castle, about twelve-and-a-half miles west of Köthen. Thus, less than a year after starting work on his programme and less than four months after the opening of the schools, Ratke, as later commentators put it, had been exposed and discredited. From this moment on, Ratke's name was omitted from the title-pages of books printed in Köthen.<sup>3</sup>

As the winter months passed, however, the difficulties of running the project without its initiator and guiding spirit became increasingly apparent. Even having Ratke's description of his work in their hands could not replace the training which Ratke had been giving to his teachers 'as time and circumstances permitted.'<sup>4</sup>

For five months, Ludwig explored his options, and on 4th. March 1620 instructed his counsellors to prepare possible courses of action against Ratke. On 1st. May the counsellors reported that in their view the nature of Ratke's crimes would justify a sentence which could if required be pushed '*ad mortem*.' On the other hand, they said, the prince could demonstrate his magnanimity by imprisoning Ratke for a mere ten, fifteen or twenty years 'at not too great expense.'<sup>5</sup>

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1 Krause, p. 81, No. II/25.

2 Krause, *loc. cit.*.

3 Cf. Illustration III.

4 Vogt 1894, p. 62.

5 Krause, p. 162, No. IV/131.

### **Illustration III**

Title-page of the *Universal Grammar* in Italian (*Gramatica Universale*, Köthen, 1620. Ratke's name, emblem and motto were omitted from books printed in Köthen after his imprisonment in Warmsdorf, though the words 'According to the Didactic' were retained.

LA GRAMMATICA  
UNIVERSALE

PER  
LA  
DIDATTICA



A Coten  
*nel Principato d' Anald.*  
l'anno

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M. DC. XX.

Ludwig seems to have been more inclined than his advisors to the mildness for which he was renowned, and proposed a compromise by which he (Ludwig) would not insist on Ratke being brought to trial if Ratke would sign a *Revers* admitting his guilt. This Ratke did, on 11th. June 1620, thereby securing his freedom for the first time for more than eight months. He was released on 21st. June.

This *Revers* must be considered the greatest blemish on Ratke's career. When one considers, however, that the *Revers* was not the result of free negotiation between the parties, but was formulated in advance for Ratke to sign, and when one considers the possible consequences if Ratke had refused, then his confession of guilt appears in a modified light. It is interesting to note that according to the minutes recording Ratke's release from Warmsdorf on 21st. June, both his library and his written *Methodum* were the subject of negotiation. According to these reports, Ratke's library was already in the prince's possession. A condition of Ratke's release, however, was that he should surrender the last remaining copy of the *Methodum* in his possession. Why was Ludwig so interested in getting his hands on this copy, too? Ratke replied that since there were already two copies in Köthen, he hoped that he would be permitted to keep the third. Even this, however, the prince refused.

After his release from Warmsdorf Ratke made his way towards Halle, where a friend, Sigismund Evenius, was rector of the *Gymnasium*. Ratke's last contact with the Köthen court seems to have been at about six o'clock on the evening of 1st. July, when Gueintz and Stubenrauch reported coming across Ratke and Evenius coming down a hill — the Petersberg — on a haycart, on the road between Köthen and Halle.<sup>1</sup>

While Ratke was at work on the project in Köthen, the citizens of Magdeburg had been showing an increasing interest in Evenius. Despite the spread of the Thirty Years War, the authorities were anxious to remedy deficiencies in their school system. The Magdeburg *Gymnasium* was not without a headmaster, but the efforts of its incumbent, Joseph Götze, to introduce reforms had been hampered by poor health. In 1618 a new mayor, Siegmund Hesse, had been elected, and had made the reform of Magdeburg's schools one of his chief priorities. His first step was to ask Götze to produce a new set of statutes. In the event, Götze's proposals were a disappointment. His *leges scholae Magdeburgiensis* consisted mainly of a reprint of the third section of the statutes of 1553 (*de officio scholasticorum*) with a few alterations.<sup>2</sup>

The reputation of the grammar-school in Halle, scarcely thirty miles away, stood in sharp contrast to that in Magdeburg. Evenius' reorganisation of the school in the six years since he had been appointed rector in 1613, had drawn heavily on

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1 Krause, pp. 169-170, No. IV/35.

2 H. Holstein, *Das Altstädtische Gymnasium in Magdeburg von 1524-1631*, Pt II, *Neue Jahrbücher des Vereins für Philologie und Pädagogik*, 130, 1884, pp. 133-134.

Ratkean ideas, as he openly acknowledged. It is not surprising, then, that Hesse initiated discussions with a view to securing Evenius as adviser, at least, for the proposed reforms. For his part, Evenius supplied the council with a copy of his written observations on the lessons he had seen Ratke teach in Köthen, a report on his own improvements to the schools in Halle, and his proposals for changes to Magdeburg's schools – also in accordance with Ratkean principles.<sup>1</sup>

Evenius, however, felt disinclined to move to Magdeburg. What, then, could have seemed more opportune than for Ratke to arrive in Halle, jobless, after being expelled from Köthen? Evenius suggested that Ratke should get in touch with Hesse, and the two met for discussions within the month. The mayor was accompanied by a number of prominent Magdeburg citizens, such as the Pastor of the *Johanniskirche*, Andreas Cramer, and Professor Michael Meier. Ratke was encouraged to make a written application to the council for permission to introduce his *Didactica* in Magdeburg, which he did on 23rd. August 1620.

The application was couched in the form of an offer by Ratke to the city of Magdeburg. On 2nd. November 1620 Ratke was given a formal *Concession*, which allowed him to introduce his art or method of teaching – ‘his *Didacticam* as he calls it’<sup>2</sup> – in Magdeburg. This document specifically mentioned Ratke’s *Didactica* ‘both in things and in languages’; it acknowledged that Ratke’s intention was ‘fully Christian, praiseworthy and to the honour of God.’ Significantly, however, it also contained the phrase ‘without expense or cost to us.’

About five months later, on 16th. April, Ratke began giving lessons – first in Latin, Hebrew and German, later in Greek. His work was of course seriously hampered by the lack of his books, which had been impounded in Köthen. Efforts were made to persuade Ludwig to release Ratke’s library, but without success. On the contrary, the request prompted Ludwig to write to the Magdeburg council wishing them better success with Ratke than he had had, and enclosing a copy of the *Revers* for their information. But Ludwig’s communication left the Magdeburg councillors unmoved. They continued with their plans, promised to provide Ratke with qualified assistance and to advertise his work to the citizens by a proclamation. On 1st. May, Ratke wrote to the council reminding them of their promise and asking whether it would be possible to replace the words ‘without expense or cost to us’ in the *Concession* by the words ‘without anyone’s interference.’<sup>3</sup>

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1 Vogt 1894, p. 109.

2 Gloël, p. 182.

3 Gloël, *loc. cit.*

This prompted new debates inside the council, which continued over some weeks. One faction wanted the words 'but without prejudice to or interference with our present system of schooling' inserted.<sup>1</sup> At this, Cramer threw his weight behind Ratke's cause. He pointed out that if the intention were to preserve existing institutions from change, there was no point in inviting Ratke to reform them. If on the other hand they wanted Ratke, and this the council had already agreed on, then it was illogical to insist that his work should leave existing institutions untouched. Cramer's argument carried the day, and the proclamation appeared in the form he advocated.

At this stage there seemed to be not a cloud in Ratke's sky. The Magdeburg council looked favourably on his work. He had willing and capable assistants, the closest of whom was Peter Probst, and he enjoyed the support of a body of influential citizens – among them Cramer, Meier and one Johannes Angelius Werdenhagen. It is not without irony, then, as Hohendorf points out,<sup>2</sup> that having faced the opposition of the Roman Catholics in Augsburg, the Calvinists in Basle and the Reformed Church in Köthen, it should have been the Lutherans who brought about Ratke's downfall in Magdeburg.

Beneath its veneer of Lutheranism, Magdeburg was riven by internal dissent. In addition to the middle-of-the road Lutherans, a more extreme group had established itself, which followed the teachings of Daniel Hoffmann (1540–1622). Hoffmann, whom Leibnitz was later to accuse of Averroism,<sup>3</sup> had been a professor at Helmstedt University. He seems to have inspired an intense loyalty among his students, which expressed itself in violent polemics against non-Hoffmannite members of the Lutheran church. Cramer had been one of Hoffmann's students.<sup>4</sup> Further, Werdenhagen had been a lecturer at Helmstedt university until 1606, when he transferred to the diplomatic service. He left – or had to leave – Helmstedt on political grounds in 1618, and was later to leave Magdeburg for similar reasons.

The welcome which had so encouraged Ratke on his arrival in Magdeburg was thus not exclusively due to his educational ideas. Ratke appeared to the factions in Magdeburg as he may have appeared to Streso in Köthen, – as a means of gaining access to children's minds. Ratke had always maintained that school books should be designed in accordance with his theory of harmony – harmony of nature, harmony of languages and harmony of religion. Further, Ratke had insisted that education was a matter for the civil – and not, as was customary at

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1 Gloël, p. 182.

2 *NL*, p. 28.

3 Rioux 1963a, p. 94.

4 Rioux 1963a, *loc. cit.*, fn. 6.

the time, the ecclesiastical – authorities. Whoever controlled the schoolbooks would thus have at his disposal an instrument promulgating a single, unified religious standpoint. It is not surprising, therefore, that the more warmly the Hoffmannites embraced Ratke's cause, the cooler became the support of the other Lutherans. Most prominent among these was the pastor Gilbert de Spaignart. As Ratke's project increasingly came to be perceived as a threat, so efforts were made to contain it. Attempts to restrict Ratke's influence by negotiation within the church council failed, however: Cramer refused to give way. As a next step, therefore, Ratke's opponents turned to Köthen. On 2nd. January 1622, Ludwig received a written request for more information about Ratke. In his reply, Ludwig repeated the information he had already given to the council, and enclosed another copy of the *Revers* of June 1620, asking them to treat the material confidentially. Interestingly, Ludwig conceded in this letter that Ratke's method of teaching could indeed help improve the education of poor children.<sup>1</sup> Both from the point of view of its contents, therefore, and in the light of the request for confidentiality, the letter did not afford Ratke's opponents the assistance they had hoped for.

In the meantime, elections had been held in Magdeburg which had strengthened the moderates, as opposed to the Hoffmannites, in the council. The strategy which Ratke's enemies now devised was to sow doubt about Ratke's orthodoxy in the minds of the townsfolk, and to invite Ratke to give details of his plans before a commission consisting of members of the council, churchmen and citizens. This hearing took place on 9th. January 1622.

What Ratke must have anticipated as a routine meeting took an unexpected turn through a masterstroke of his opponents, for who should be sitting among their ranks than Evenius, from Halle. The faction which wanted to woo Evenius to Magdeburg had clearly not given up hope. The meeting appears to have been unsatisfactory for both sides. When accused by Ratke of plagiarism, Evenius first claimed that he owed nothing to Ratke's pedagogy. But when pressed he conceded that Ratke's ideas were effective, and that Ratke was indeed their author.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, attempts to persuade Ratke to reveal details of his methods only made him more adamant. Reluctant to give too much away in Evenius' presence, he declared that he would not reveal anything until the council had fulfilled its pledge to appoint inspectors and make arrangements for the introduction of his reforms in the city.

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1 Vogt 1894, p. 117.

2 Vogt 1894, p. 120.

In the context of events, it is hard not to detect some fear on the part of de Spaignart and his friends that if preventive measures were not taken, Ratke would become the natural successor to Götze. Evenius seems to have entered into negotiations concerning the headship of the *Gymnasium* even before Götze died on 19th. May. Throughout June and July, while Ratke and Cramer were pressing the city to honour its obligations, Evenius was appointed rector of the *Gymnasium* and inducted into his new post. From this point on, it was clear that the tide was turning against Ratke. Ratke himself seems not to have seen Evenius as an obstacle to his plans – in many ways their areas of interest were complementary rather than opposed, – and made another offer of co-operation with the city which was at first accepted. At the same time, the council invited Ratke to elaborate further on his views at yet another hearing, on 29th. July.

By the time this meeting took place, the positions of the two parties had become polarised. Taking no chances, Ratke brought his own legal adviser and witnesses to record exactly what was said.

Unfortunately, when Ratke's opponents drew attention to the *Revers* which Ludwig had had Ratke sign, Probst let slip an injudicious comparison between Ratke's treatment in Köthen and Christ's suffering at the hands of the Jews. The debate, in which de Spaignart again played a significant role, took on an increasingly ugly note until it was finally brought to an end. The next day, Evenius wrote to Martin Trost in Köthen, suggesting that Ludwig should be informed about the comparison between Ratke and Christ, but without mentioning Evenius. Evenius also arranged for the text of the Köthen *Revers* to be printed and

circulated anonymously in Magdeburg. Ludwig, when he heard the news, demanded that Magdeburg should send Ratke packing. Even at this stage, however, the council declined to defer to the prince's wishes, and worked out a compromise according to which a further report on Ratke's work would be commissioned. Ratke's enemies managed to ensure that the commission went to Jakob Martini. This report, dated 31st. August 1622, was damning, and effectively sealed Ratke's fate in Magdeburg.

In early September, Ratke turned his back on Magdeburg and made for Rudolstadt. The remaining thirteen years of his life saw no further experiments of the kind attempted in Augsburg, Köthen or Magdeburg. His activities were confined to the small triangle of Thuringia between Erfurt, Jena and Könitz, and were devoted mainly to attempts to negotiate the introduction of his reforms in the larger towns in the area or in the neighbouring states. At the same time, Ratke worked unremittingly at the programme of writing to which he had committed himself. The major productions of his later years – among them the *General Constitution of the Christian School*, the *Eutactica*, the *Didactica*, *Epistemonica*, *Logic*, *Scholastica* and *Archontica* were all written during this period, against the backcloth of the Thirty Years War. It is remarkable that at a time of the direst

physical destruction, when the vision which Ratke had outlined in his *Memorandum*, of a Germany united in language, government and religion, could scarcely have seemed further from realisation, he found the faith and perseverance to commit to paper his ideas on the reform of education, on its organisation and administration, and on the content and organisation of the curriculum.

Ratke worked in Rudolstadt for almost six years. There he received valuable support from Mylius, the deacon at Kelbra, and the physician Kolbe. At the same time, the war in which the princely houses were embroiled began to affect Ratke and his assistants ever more closely. In November, Johann Ernst left for service with the King of Denmark, and died without seeing Weimar again. Anna Sophia's hopes in this direction having been put to an untimely end, she turned her attentions to her other nephews, Wilhelm and Ernst.

The year 1625 and the early months of 1626 passed without much incident. In July 1626 Ratke produced a curious document – his *Dolium Ratichii* (*Ratke's Barrel*). The *Dolium* is interesting because it betrays a rare flash of humour. It was written, Ratke said, after the example of the philosopher Diogenes who, also at a time of conflict and imminent ruin, rolled his barrel backwards and forwards before the assembled nobles in order to show that he, too, was not being idle. In the *Dolium*, addressed to all the rulers and authorities in Germany, Ratke compared the nation to a ruined house which could only be made habitable by being renovated from the foundations upwards. He reiterated his view that the long-term solution to the empire's ills lay in the reconstruction of its education system.

Later the same year, Anna Sophia travelled to Weimar to discuss yet again the possibility of Ratke introducing his reforms in Weimar or Jena. Despite the Köthen Revers, Anna Sophia had little difficulty in persuading Wilhelm to invite Ratke to a meeting, with the full knowledge of his brothers Albrecht and Ernst. On 31st. October Ratke arrived in Weimar, and the next day negotiations began.

Ratke's behaviour at this conference seems to have been unusually diplomatic, but concrete progress, as so often before, was slow. Wilhelm's interest had been tempered by the sceptical assessment of Ratke's proposals which he had received from his advisers in Jena. Duke Ernst, on the other hand, showed genuine interest. Soon after Ratke's return to Rudolstadt, Ernst followed, to discuss Ratke's proposals with him at greater leisure.

All through the winter months Ratke waited for a summons – somewhere, anywhere, – but none came. In June 1628 Duke Ernst arrived on another visit, and on 11th. July Ratke was finally met by a counsellor of the Weimar court, von Kospot, to be escorted to Jena.

Ratke's three years in Jena were largely dominated by his relationships with Kromayer. Like veteran sparring partners, the men wandered from conference to conference without either being able to gain a decisive advantage. In the background hovered their patrons, never quite certain what the best solution for their

schools would be, and never quite able to agree. Kromayer had the advantage of being the man in charge in Weimar, and despite the occasional thaw in relations between himself and Ratke, he never let his grasp on the Weimar court slip. Things only improved from Ratke's point of view when Duke Wilhelm began to play a more positive role. Early in January 1629, he and Ernst invited a number of scholars to yet another meeting, at Jena, from Wednesday 21st. to Saturday 24th. January. Ratke laid before the meeting the *Aphorisms* which had appeared in similar form in Rhenius (1617); an *Outline of General Didactic*, and a *Rough Outline* which Reineke had committed to paper for him in Magdeburg.

The outcome of the meeting was predictable. Although a genuine exchange of views doubtless took place, once the meeting had disbanded, negotiations lost their momentum. As the year wore on, Ratke vented his frustration ever more openly, until even his most ardent supporters found him unbearable. At Easter, he went to Rudolstadt, where he met Duke Ernst once more. Ernst encouraged Ratke, promising a decision as early as possible. But he also made Ratke undertake 'to be still and be good.'<sup>1</sup> Another meeting was arranged, this time on the initiative of Duke Ernst, for 1st. July. Again, nothing concrete seems to have resulted. Instead, Ratke was advised that the completion of his *Grammar*, *Rhetoric* and *Dialectic* were the most urgent tasks. To help him, attempts would be made to secure the return of his library from Köthen. Further, two assistants – Lechelius and Sannemann – would be put at his disposal for half a year.

The winter of 1629–30 was not a happy one for Ratke. No books arrived from Köthen; nor did he have the assistance he had been promised. There is no sign that Lechelius ever arrived, and to Sannemann Ratke took an immediate dislike which was reciprocated. Ratke was now fifty-eight.

From 1630 onwards the events of the Thirty Years War began to impinge ever more closely on Ratke's life. In March 1631, Ratke left Jena briefly to visit Anna Sophia in Kranichfeld. As it became increasingly difficult to avoid the advance of Tilly's troops, Ratke left Jena again shortly after Whitsun. He turned southwards, this time, towards Könitz, not knowing he would never set foot in Jena again. During the next few months, the opposing armies, – the troops of the empire led by Tilly, and the Swedes under Gustavus Adolphus, – drew closer. On 15th. September Tilly's army entered Leipzig and three days later, on 18th. September, the Catholic forces of the empire suffered a crushing defeat at Breitenfeld, just four miles north of the city.

After the victory at Breitenfeld, the Swedish army made its winter quarters in Erfurt. Following further strenuous representations by Anna Sophia, Ratke was summoned to an audience with Oxenstierna, the Swedish chancellor, in early

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1 Vogt 1894, p. 166.

January 1632. Both Oxenstierna and Ratke were alumni of the same university, Rostock, and may even have been contemporaries. The only record of what was said at this audience stems, interestingly, from Comenius, who passed on what Oxenstierna reported to him in a meeting between the two men in August 1642.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly afterwards, Ratke moved to Kranichfeld, where for the next fifteen months or so he continued to work on various parts of his programme. On 12th. March 1633 he suffered a stroke, which impaired his speech and left his right arm paralysed. Some time in the course of the year he moved back to Erfurt. During the same period, Anna Sophia's persistence elicited from Oxenstierna the promise of a commission for yet another report on Ratke's work, this time from two members of the Erfurt city council – Dr. Hieronymus Brückner and Stephan Ziegler, – and from Professor Meyfart. This report – the *Humble Relation* – is of particular interest in that it summarises, at a late point in Ratke's career and after full consultation with Ratke, his aims, his projected programme, and the substance of his application to the Swedish chancellor.

Unhappily, when Meyfart's *Humble Relation* was presented to Oxenstierna on 10th. March 1634, Ratke was no longer in a position to carry out the reforms he was proposing. Just over a year later, on 27th. April, he succumbed to a further stroke, and was buried three days later in the church of the Franciscan friars in Erfurt.<sup>2</sup>

Irrespective of the outward vicissitudes of Ratke's life, a number of questions remain unanswered – Was Ratke right or wrong? good or bad? What did he really believe, and what were his aims? Was he a failure in educational terms, or a success?

These questions can not all be answered here. The brief sketch of his life offered above nevertheless suggests that he was at least motivated by a genuine desire to find a solution to the empire's ills. Later historians would confirm that Ratke did indeed accurately identify the stresses which would ultimately tear the empire apart.

Ratke's chief problem was the fact that reforms in the educational, political, social and economic spheres are ultimately inseparable: it is impossible to pursue educational reform while negating its social and political consequences. As King pointed out, 'formal education has been a political activity for at least 200 years.'<sup>3</sup> But in the cases he was writing of – Maria Theresa and Peter the Great – education was consciously exploited as an instrument of change from above. There is evidence to show that Ratke pursued educational reform as a political activity

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1 K.A.H. Stoerl, Wolfgang Ratke (Ratichius), *Neue Jahrbücher des Vereins für Philologie und Pädagogik*, 114, 1876, p. 162.

2 The *Barfüßerkirche*; cf. C. Kehr, Wolfgang Ratichius, *Pädagogische Blätter für Lehrerbildung und Lehrerbildungsanstalten*, VII, 1879, p. 527.

3 E. King, *The Education of Teachers. A Comparative Analysis*, 1970, p. 4.

over a hundred years earlier. His broad aim was to re–structure the contents and methods of education and to use these as an instrument for a wider reform of society.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike Peter the Great and Maria Theresa, however, the rulers with whom Ratke had to deal did not share his reformatory ambitions. Ratke was thus drawn into a kind of cat–and–mouse game with his potential patrons, trying to keep the real consequences of his reforms concealed from view, without blunting their cutting–edge.

Not only have historians disagreed over the evaluation of Ratke's achievements, they have also disagreed over what these achievements actually were and the events of Ratke's life. Some of the verdicts passed upon Ratke have been based upon misunderstandings or uncertain evidence. The most pressing task at this stage, therefore, if Ratke's life and work are to be given a fair assessment, is to establish the facts and unravel the errors in the Ratke scholarship to date. Where did the errors originate? How were they transmitted and how did they survive undetected for so long?

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1 F. Hofmann, Wolfgang Ratkes Entwurf einer Wissenschafts– und Bildungsreform, *AU 1*, p. 7.

## CHAPTER II

### Towards a historiography: Ratke's treatment in the literature.

The history of the reception and assessment of Ratke's work makes a fascinating study. Sufficient has been said in the foregoing sketch of Ratke's life to make it clear that he can not be dismissed as a mere charlatan or a mountebank. Nevertheless, uncertainty persists as to Ratke's true contribution to educational history. One need look no further than the references to his 'ineffectual wanderings' and his 'unsuccessful and unpopular' ideas on education and methods of teaching to find confirmation:

'Ratke, Wolfgang. German educationalist, born in Holstein, based a new system of education on Bacon's *Advancement*, which he put into practice at Köthen in 1618. A second trial at Magdeburg in 1620 also (*sic*) ended in failure, and after some years of ineffectual wanderings he died at Erfurt. Though his ideas on education and methods of teaching were unsuccessful and unpopular in his lifetime, they had some influence on later reformers, especially Comenius.<sup>1</sup>

Taken as a whole, the literature on Ratke — perhaps to a greater degree than for any comparable figure — throws up an astonishing range of errors. They concern names, dates, places, persons and publications. Many may be considered trivial. But even trivial errors have their interest for the historian. The errors documented below signal in some cases a lack of familiarity with the cultural and political background against which the drama of Ratke's life was played out. Cumulatively, they indicate that doubt is justified as to the accuracy of the facts reported, and that caution must be exercised in assessing the judgements they accompany.

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1 J.O. Thorne and T.C. Collocott, edd., *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*, revised ed., 1984, p. 1112, *sub* Ratich, or Ratke, Wolfgang.

The study of errors and their transmission is an important historiographical task in its own right. In Ratke's case, unravelling the conflicting statements about his work and personality, about his mystery-mongering and his almost pathological penchant for secrecy, leads to issues of deeper historical significance.

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, Ratke was frequently mentioned as a reformer of seminal importance in the history of education. To give an idea of the dimensions in which Ratke was often perceived, Howard Clive Barnard wrote that '... for a German educationalist of real note previous to them – [he was writing of Kant and Herbart – J.W.] – we must go back to Ratke.'<sup>1</sup> More recently, Stern mentions Ratke in the company of Ascham, Montaigne, Comenius and Locke as one of 'the major European teachers and writers who have something to say on language learning.'<sup>2</sup> However, of all those commonly accepted as major thinkers in the field of education, Ratke is the one about whom least is known. The works of the others have all been accessible in the original or in translation, for generations.

Not only is Ratke's work little known, it has also been the subject of wildly divergent assessments. At the same time as he has been proclaimed to be an important and original thinker, Ratke has also been presented as a person whose plans for reform could never really succeed, owing to insuperable flaws in his character. At one extreme he appears as the charlatan, cynically promising impossible reforms for hard cash, and at the other, as being well-intentioned, but doomed to failure by his mean and unco-operative nature.<sup>3</sup> In the literature on Ratke, words such as 'arrogant', 'fanatic', 'carping' and 'cheapjack' abound.

With few exceptions, the picture of Ratke presented in the literature has not changed materially over the last fifty years, nor has it kept pace with developments in Ratke scholarship. The points elaborated below, therefore, represent, as a first step, a composite picture of Ratke built up from the available literature. The extent to which the view of Ratke current today has been distorted only becomes clear with the reintroduction of a historical dimension.

The most striking aspect of Ratke's personality seems to have been his arrogance. Kemp captures the situation aptly when he writes that Ratke's 'comparative lack of success appears to have been due in no small part to his arrogance and tactlessness...'<sup>4</sup> Next to his arrogance, the feature which seems to have most captured the imagination of scholars was Ratke's desire for secrecy: 'Apart from

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1 H.C. Barnard, *The Little Schools of Port Royal*, Cambridge, 1913, p. 1.

2 H.H. Stern, *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*, Oxford, 1983, p. 79.

3 Meyer, p. 241.

4 John Wallis, *Grammar of the English Language*, ed., J.A. Kemp, 1972, p. 23.

all else, the thing that stands out about the man and his work is that he hoped to keep his methodology secret.<sup>1</sup> Compayré and Graves go on to describe Ratke as having 'something of the charlatan and demagogue'<sup>2</sup> and possessing 'many of the earmarks of a mountebank.'<sup>3</sup> It is said that Ratke made 'lofty promises' and 'attributed marvels' to his 'wonder-working principles.'<sup>4</sup> The same authors speak of 'strange performances'<sup>5</sup> and the 'spectacular ways' Ratke is supposed to have had of presenting his reforms.<sup>6</sup> Some authors claim that Ratke was avaricious and refused to divulge any information unless he had been paid in advance.<sup>7</sup> Spinka calls him a 'wealth-and-honor-seeking German.'<sup>8</sup> In addition, Ratke is said to have been 'difficult'<sup>9</sup> and 'narrow spirited.'<sup>10</sup> Eby writes that 'he had a carping, selfish spirit,' and that he was 'too crabbed and mean to accomplish any great reform.'<sup>11</sup> According to Meyer, 'not only was he an implacable, cross-grained Lutheran, he also took a dim and even bilious view of most non-Lutherans.'<sup>12</sup>

Equally diverse are the assessments of Ratke's importance for educational thought. For some, Ratke's chief contribution is to be found in the field of teaching-method. Others see it in relation to educational policy. Still others lay their main emphasis on Ratke's efforts at curricular reform, and for others again, Ratke's place in educational history 'depends mainly upon the increased use of the vernacular which he desired to introduce into the schoolroom.'<sup>13</sup>

Here again, not only do assessments differ, but some are contradicted by others.

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1 Power, p. 333.

2 G. Compayré, *The History of Pedagogy*, 1886, p. 121.

3 F.P. Graves, *A History of Education in Modern Times*, New York, 1913, p. 268.

4 Compayré, *loc. cit.*, F. Eby, *The Development of Modern Education*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1952, p. 166.

5 Compayré, *loc. cit.*

6 Graves, *loc. cit.*

7 J.L. Paton, *Comenius as a Pioneer of Education*, in E. Beneš, ed., *The Teacher of Nations*, Cambridge, 1947, p. 12; Meyer, pp. 239-40.

8 M. Spinka, *John Amos Comenius, That Incomparable Moravian*, Chicago, 1943, p. 51.

9 Paton, *loc. cit.*

10 R.F. Butts, *A Cultural History of Education*, New York, 1947, p. 278.

11 Eby, *loc. cit.*

12 Meyer, p. 239.

13 Adamson, p. 41; cf. also H.G. Good and J.D. Teller, *A History of Western Education*, New York, 1963, and G. Compayré, *The History of Pedagogy*, *passim*.

According to Adamson, Ratke's method 'cannot be considered of much importance'<sup>1</sup> and '... far from being an originator of modern pedagogy, Ratke's ideas in the field of method were, on the whole, not commendable.'<sup>2</sup>

The above judgements only imply error in so far as incompatible statements can not be true of the same object at the same time. Inevitably, they throw up such questions as, What were Ratke's views, and what was his contribution to educational history? – questions to be dealt with in greater detail below. For the moment, the most important task is to explore the misunderstandings concerning the religious and political context of Ratke's work, and places and persons, which have been mentioned above.

Even apparently trivial errors can prove revealing. Monroe, for instance, asserted that Ratke '... trained in the gymnasium at Hamburg,'<sup>3</sup> and Thompson that he 'conducted an experimental school one and one-half years at Köthen, Anstalt.'<sup>4</sup> *Gymnasium* is no more than the nearest German equivalent to an English grammar-school of the time. The choice of the word 'trained' leads one to suspect either that the author genuinely believed that Ratke spent some time training in a Hamburg gym, or else, uncertain of the correct interpretation, has tried to veil uncertainty by a deliberately ambiguous choice of words. As to the second quotation, Köthen is located in *Anhalt*. There is, though, a German word, *Anstalt*, which is used to designate, among others, such institutions as prisons or mental homes.

Further attempts to disguise uncertainty may lie behind other vague formulations. Power, for instance, claims that 'after his bitter experience in Köthen, Ratke wandered around Europe.'<sup>5</sup> In fact, when Ratke left Köthen in 1620, he spent the remaining decade-and-a-half of his life more or less within the narrow triangle between Erfurt, Rudolstadt and Magdeburg (cf. Map II). Erfurt, in the south, where Ratke died in 1635, is scarcely a hundred miles from Magdeburg at the northernmost tip. In the context of Ratke's earlier peregrinations, the expression 'wandered around Europe' is thus less than accurate.

Other divergent claims cluster round three points – the form of Ratke's name, the question of whether or not he visited England, and his relations with Francis Bacon.

Ratke's name appears in the literature in at least eleven different forms. Some of these can be ascribed to the lack of a fixed conventional spelling at the time – (Shakespeare, of course, spelled his name in more ways than one), – and one

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1 Adamson, p. 35.

2 Adamson, p. 42.

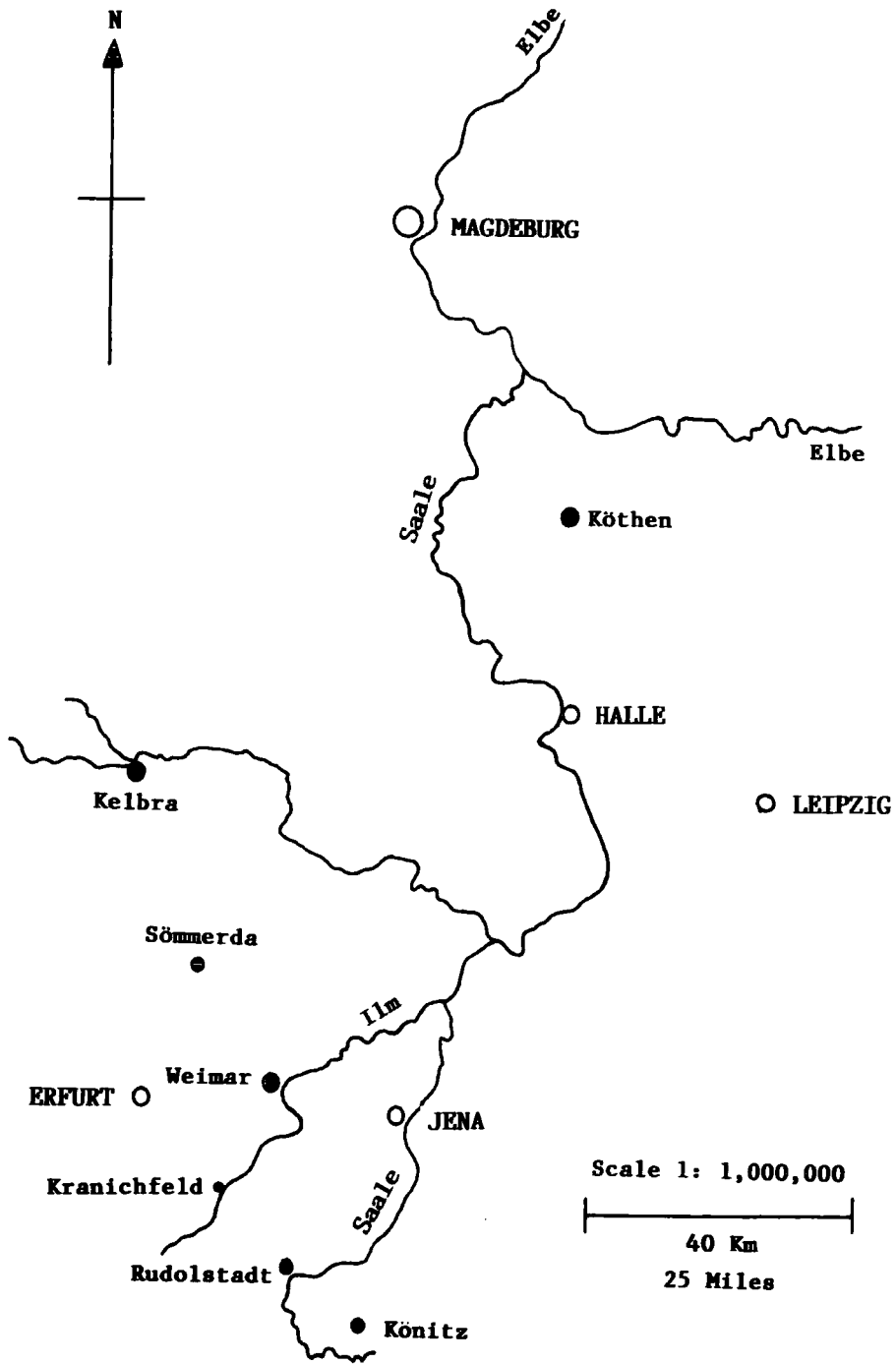
3 W.S. Monroe, *Comenius and the Beginnings of Educational Reform*, 1900, p. 28.

4 M.M. Thompson, *The History of Education*, New York, 1933, p. 41.

5 Power, p. 335.

## **Map II**

**Towns visited by Ratke 1620-1635.**



variant, *Ratichius*, reflects the practice of adopting a Latin or Greek form. Even when this type of variation has been eliminated, however, a bizarre array of nomenclature still remains. The commonest is 'Ratich', – which Paulsen called 'an execrable mutilation of the Latin form.'<sup>1</sup> This version, as Quick pointed out, is '... a name he (Ratke) and his contemporaries never heard of ... With our usual impatience of redundant syllables, we have attempted to reduce the word to its original dimensions, and in the process have hit upon Ratich, which is a new name altogether.'<sup>2</sup> Quick was casting his 'we' rather wide here, since the form 'Ratich' was by no means an English invention, but had been imported from the German literature. There are, however, other variants which would have seemed equally strange to Ratke – for example *von Ratke*,<sup>3</sup> *von Ratich*,<sup>4</sup> and *Rathke*.<sup>5</sup> Most surprising of all is *Raticius* – (presumably a misprint for *Ratichius*) – followed in brackets by 'born Ratke',<sup>6</sup> as if Ratke had been born a woman and had had his maiden name changed to *Raticius* by marriage.

On the question of whether Ratke visited England, opinions vary. Despite the statement in Meyfart's *Programma publicum* to the effect that he did, the dating of Ratke's *Geburtsbrief* in Wilster and the *Testimonium* from the clergy in Amsterdam would seem to rule out the possibility, and there seems to be no positive documentary evidence to support the claim. Nevertheless, Butts, Monroe and Quick all assert that Ratke did spend some time in England, while Graves claimed that Ratke studied here.<sup>7</sup>

Since almost all the writers mentioned link Ratke's postulated visit to England with a knowledge of Bacon's work, it is not surprising that the same lines of disagreement should be drawn over the question of his visit to England. Meyer stated that 'Ratke had come upon the *Advancement of Learning* while he was in England...'<sup>8</sup> The *Advancement of Learning*, however, was not published until 1605, so that if Ratke's *Testimonium*, which confirmed that Ratke had 'been resident in this town Amsterdam for eight consecutive years'<sup>9</sup> is to be believed, this possibility is excluded.

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1 F. Paulsen, *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts auf den deutschen Schulen und Universitäten vom Ausgang des Mittelalters bis zur Gegenwart*, Leipzig, 1885, pp. 460–461.

2 Quick, p. 105.

3 F.P. Graves, *A History of Education in Modern Times*, New York, 1913, p. 267.

4 S.S. Laurie, *John Amos Comenius, Bishop of the Moravians. His Life and Educational Works*, 1881, p. 15.

5 Slaughter, p. 61.

6 Meyer, p. 239.

7 Graves, *loc. cit.*

8 Meyer, *loc. cit.*

9 Krause, p. 2, No. 1/2.

Some authors claim that Ratke aimed to apply Bacon's ideas to education in general, others that these ideas were to be applied specifically to the teaching of languages.<sup>1</sup> Lawrence wrote simply that 'his [Bacon's – J.W.] theories were put into practice by Wolfgang Ratke in Germany...'<sup>2</sup> Laurie, on the other hand, went so far as to claim that '... Ratke and Comenius were the apostolic missionaries of the specific Baconian realistic movement in the field of education.'<sup>3</sup>

Against these, Adamson wrote, '... neither Brinsley nor Ratke has a suggestion which he owes to Francis Bacon or to the new men in science and philosophy, whose herald Bacon was,'<sup>4</sup> and '... there is nothing in the educational ideas which were undoubtedly Ratke's that requires us to assume any knowledge of Bacon's writings.'<sup>5</sup> Evidence has been published since Adamson wrote which shows that Ratke was indeed almost certainly acquainted with Bacon's work. A copy of the *De sapientia veterum libror* is recorded as having been in Ratke's library.<sup>6</sup> However, the volume referred to was published in 1617 and hence could not have been acquired by Ratke before 1610.

Turning, now, to the context within which Ratke scholarship must be evaluated, it is interesting to note that Kelly wrote of Melanchthon (1497–1560) and Ratke (1571–1635) as 'Ascham's German contemporaries'<sup>7</sup> though Ascham died in 1568. Further, there is uncertainty in the literature as to where the Ratichian experiments were carried out. Gotha is confused with Köthen, and Köthen with Augsburg. Monroe claimed that 'a printing-office was established at Gotha to supply the books...'<sup>8</sup> In fact, the printing-press was set up in Köthen in 1618 on the orders of Prince Ludwig, and there seems to be no documentary evidence that Ratke ever set foot in Gotha. The error may in part be explained as a confusion between Prince Ludwig of Anhalt-Köthen and Duke Ernst of Saxe-Gotha and Altenburg. But since Duke Ernst's accession did not take place until 1640, there can be no question of his having set up a printing-press in Gotha, as Monroe claimed, in 1616. The hypothesis that Monroe confused Prince Ludwig with Duke

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1 R.F. Butts, *A Cultural History of Education*, New York, 1947, p. 278.

2 E.S. Lawrence, *The Origins and Growth of Modern Education*, Harmondsworth, 1970, p. 94.

3 S.S. Laurie, *Studies in the History of Educational Opinion from the Renaissance*, Cambridge, 1903, p. 146.

4 Adamson, p. 20.

5 Adamson, p. 33.

6 Gotha Codex Chart. B 1026 A.

7 L.G. Kelly, *25 Centuries of Language Teaching*, Rowley, Mass., 1969, p. 217.

8 W.S. Monroe, *Comenius and the Beginnings of Educational Reform*, 1900, p. 31.

Ernst receives some confirmation from the fact that Monroe also wrote of 'Prince Ludwig of Anhalt-Gotha.'<sup>1</sup>

Padley was correct in locating Ratke's project, or one of them, in Anhalt-Köthen, but wrong in believing that Jung and Helwig were part of Ratke's team at that time.<sup>2</sup> The Köthen experiment began in 1618, but Jung, Helwig and Ratke had gone their separate ways when the Augsburg experiment ended in 1616.

Padley was guilty of another, not insignificant, error when he described 'the theologian Johann Lipsius (*sic*) of Strasbourg' as the most immediate influence upon Ratke's work. No scholar of that name contemporary with Ratke is recorded. The man Padley seems to have been referring to was *Justus* Lipsius (1547-1606) – one of the most eminent scholars of his time. There is no evidence, however, to link his name with Ratke's. The man who undoubtedly did play an important role in his career was Johann *Lippius*.

Padley was also in error with respect to some of Ratke's publications. In this area accuracy is essential, since it affects what is or is not deemed to belong to the Ratke canon. Padley claimed that Ratke proposed 'a general introduction to didactics which was later printed as the *Allgemeine Anleitung in die Didacticam*, Köthen, 1617...'<sup>3</sup> The Köthen press did not come into existence until Ratke arrived there in 1618, so that no Köthen imprints of 1617 or earlier exist. The *Allgemeine Anleitung* was first committed to paper after discussions which took place between Ratke and Gualther in the years 1612-1613.<sup>4</sup> A Latin version of this was published in 1615 under the title *Desiderata methodus nova Ratichiana*. The *Allgemeine Anleitung* as it is known today is a German translation from the Latin, first printed by Müller between 1882 and 1884.<sup>5</sup> The Latin text authorised by Ratke appeared in Rhenius (1617) as *In Methodum Linguarum generalis introductio*.

Three other Ratichian 'ghost' works need to be mentioned, since they are discussed in the literature without having any demonstrable physical existence. The first concerns a publication purported to have been the object of the Giessen and Jena reports. Laurie wrote, 'The Ratichian scheme, on which specially the University Laudation was pronounced, was printed under the following title: *Wolphgangi Ratichii de Studiorum rectificanda methodo Consilium*.'<sup>6</sup> This error seems to have originated, if unwittingly, with Comenius. Describing the begin-

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1 W.S. Monroe, *Comenius and the Beginnings of Educational Reform*, 1900, p. 31.

2 Padley, pp. 101-102.

3 Padley, p. 102, fn. 58.

4 *NL*, p. 38.

5 Müller 1882, pp. 269-274; 1884b, pp. 564-575.

6 S.S. Laurie, *John Amos Comenius, Bishop of the Moravians. His Life and Educational Works*, 1881, p. 24.

nings of his own interest in pedagogy, Comenius wrote of *Wolphgangi Ratichii de Studiorum rectificanda methodo consilium, ab Academii Jenensi et Gissena scripto publico laudatum*, – in other words, of Wolfgang Ratke's proposal for reforming the method of studies, praised in a public document by the academic staff of Jena and Giessen [universities].<sup>1</sup> Comenius was not here citing the title of a publication by Ratke, but merely mentioning the substance of Ratke's proposals. Laurie's error in misreading a statement of the content as a title is understandable, in that the words he quoted are set off in italics in Comenius' text.

Of the remaining errors, the first, by Keatinge, seems to have been a misunderstanding similar to Laurie's and may indeed have been influenced by it. Although there is no Ratician document which can be singled out as the object of the Giessen and Jena reports, Keatinge wrote of an 'essay on the Reformation of schools which had been authorised and approved by the Universities of Jena and Giessen...'<sup>2</sup> Finally, Meyer wrote of an otherwise unknown work, *An Address to the German Princes*. Since Meyer linked this title with the election of the Holy Roman Emperor in 1612, he was doubtless referring to Ratke's *Memorandum (Memorial)*, a document which did not appear in print in Ratke's lifetime. Titone, too, was referring to the *Memorandum* when he wrote that Ratke's 'chief didactic principles can be found in his book *Memorial (1612)*.'<sup>3</sup> However, the *Memorandum* contains no didactic principles. Further, none of the extant manuscripts extends to more than four folio leaves, and hence would hardly be referred to as a book by anyone who had consulted it.

The literature abounds in other unfounded assumptions and unresolved controversies concerning Ratke. The most fascinating of these, and one which deserves to be made the subject of further study, concerns Ratke's penchant for secrecy. First, however, the question must be answered of how the picture of Ratke came to be what it is, and, in particular, how the errors came to be transmitted from generation to generation.

The best way to answer these questions is to trace the steps by which the picture was built up. Where commentators make reference to specific sources, it is possible to reconstruct with reasonable accuracy the paths along which information was transmitted. Where this is not the case, other methods must be deployed.

Table II presents a profile built up from the statements made about Ratke by various authors. They cover the circumstances of Ratke's life, the nature of his contribution to educational thinking, and his personal qualities. The latter must be treated with some discrimination, since a person may be inclined to secrecy

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1 J.A. Comenius, *Opera Didacticae Omnia*, Amsterdam, 1657, p. 3.

2 J.A. Comenius, *The Great Didactic*, transl. M.W. Keatinge, 1896, p. 5.

3 R. Titone, *Teaching Foreign Languages, An Historical Sketch*, Washington, D.C., 1968, p. 11.

**Table II**

**The number of predications about Ratke shared by  
the authors listed.**



without being a demagogue, and being unpleasant does not necessarily imply insincerity. Seven characteristics attributed to Ratke's person are listed separately: that he was secretive, honour-seeking, avaricious, demagogic, fanatical, insincere — (covering the terms 'charlatan,' 'quack,' 'impostor' etc.), — and unpleasant — (to cover such terms as 'arrogant,' 'narrow-spirited,' 'carping.') Entered in the table are the predications of each of twenty-six authors who make any statement at all about Ratke. Eight of these authors make four or more of the statements in the list; most details of all are given by Eby. The next step is to consider how many features are shared by which authors. The results are shown in Table II.

Table II shows not only which authors have statements in common, but also how many factually similar statements each author shares with any other — (the numbers in the interstices). Laurie (1881), Monroe (1905) and Kemp present comparatively individual profiles. Meyer, on the other hand, shares statements with fourteen of the remaining sixteen authors; Quick and Eby share statements with thirteen; Monroe (1900) and Graves with twelve, and Adamson with ten.

It is not possible to represent conveniently in diagrammatical form the manifold connections which each author has with each of the others in the constellation, but if this field is reduced to those eight who make four or more of the statements in the list, the results are instructive. Table III shows that two or more of them make statements relating to each of thirteen different points. On some of these, there are explicit contradictions (represented by a 'minus' in the table). The bottom line of Table III shows the number of shared points which each author makes, and on the right, the number of authors who agree on each point. The distribution of pluses in this table reveals which authors present broadly similar pictures. Feature 9 — (that Ratke promulgated nine principles) — would seem to be particularly significant in laying bare the paths along which information was transmitted, since it does not seem plausible to suppose that authors borrowing from one another or from a common source would alter the number of principles Ratke is supposed to have enunciated. If, further, the last four points (10-13 inclusive), all of which denote some aspect of Ratke's personality, — are taken together, then not three, but seven of the eight authors agree on assigning at least some negative characteristic to Ratke's person — that Ratke was secretive and/or avaricious and/or unpleasant and/or a cheat.

The data still reveal nothing about how these authors obtained their information or about its accuracy. Some light can be shed on the manner of its transmission, however, by re-introducing a temporal dimension — that is, by establishing when the various publications appeared and how they stand in relation to one another from a chronological point of view. Here, a fact emerges which is not without significance: a number of the publications mentioned turn out to be reprints, of considerable antiquity. Thus Meyer (1972) made its first appearance in 1965; Eby (1952) was first published as Eby (1934), Quick (1904) becomes Quick (1868), and Adamson (1971) turns out to be a reprint of Adamson (1905).

If, now, the works of the authors mentioned are arranged in the order of their first appearance, they fall into one of three generations — the most recent covering approximately the years 1930 to 1965 and consisting of Eby, Butts, Power and Meyer; an earlier generation consisting of Monroe, Adamson and Graves; and a still earlier one represented by the lone figure of Quick.

Table III shows that Monroe shares eight, three, two and four features with Eby, Butts, Power and Meyer; Adamson shares two, one and one with the same four authors; and Graves six, three and five. Each member of the middle generation, however, also shares a number of features with Quick: Monroe and Adamson five each, and Graves six. In other words, Quick occupies a central position at the point where information on Ratke began to penetrate the English-speaking world. These results are supported by explicit references which the authors make to their sources. The results do not, however, take account of sources other than the works mentioned. Is it not possible that other literature was used, apart from what has been discussed so far?

Statements by the authors themselves show that this was indeed the case. Compayré, Graves, Kelly, Laurie, Monroe and Power all give additional references. Kelly's sources of information on Ratke included Escher (1919)<sup>1</sup> and (1928),<sup>2</sup> Ising,<sup>3</sup> Rioux<sup>4</sup> and Seiler (1931).<sup>5</sup> Titone's main if not only source appears to have been Quick. And at least three authors (Monroe (1905), Eby, and Power) name in addition to Quick's *Essays on Educational Reformers* Henry Barnard's *German Educational Reformers*.<sup>6</sup> Further, Adamson makes reference to the German works by Israel (in Rein's *Encyclopädisches Handbuch*),<sup>7</sup> Krause, Paulsen,<sup>8</sup> and also to Quick.

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1 E. Escher, *Essays on the Sources and the History of the Direct Method of Teaching Modern Languages until its establishment in France and Germany*, Chicago, unpubl. M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1919.

2 E. Escher, *The Direct Method of Studying Foreign Languages. A Contribution to the History of its Sources and Development*, Chicago, unpubl. Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1928.

3 SDG.

4 Rioux, 1963a.

5 K. Seiler, *Das pädagogische System Wolfgang Ratkes*, Erlangen, Diss., 1931.

6 H. Barnard, *German Educational Reformers. Memoirs of eminent teachers and educators in Germany*, New York, 1859.

7 A. Israel, Wolfgang Ratke (Ratichius), in W. Rein, ed., *Encyclopädisches Handbuch der Pädagogik*, Langensalza, 2nd. ed., 1908, Vol. VII, pp. 194-205.

8 F. Paulsen, *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts an den deutschen Schulen und Universitäten vom Ausgang des Mittelalters bis zur Gegenwart*, Leipzig, 1896.

**Table III**

**Information about Ratke shared by eight authors listed  
in Table II.**

**Table III**

<i>Points :</i> Ratke	Ada	But	Eby	Gra	Mey	Mon	Pow	Qui	Authors agreeing
1. visited England	-	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	6
2. knew Bacon's work	-	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	6
3. studied philosophy	o	o	+	o	o	+	+	o	3
4. studied Hebrew	o	o	+	o	o	+	o	o	2
5. studied in Rostock	+	o	+	+	o	+	+	+	6
6. wanted to enter the church	o	o	+	+	+	o	+	o	4
7. suffered from a speech impediment	o	o	+	+	+	o	+	o	4
8. had no teaching experience	o	o	o	+	o	o	o	+	2
9. promulgated nine principles	o	o	+	o	o	+	o	+	3
10. was secretive	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	7
11. was avaricious	o	o	+	o	+	+	o	o	3
<del>12. was unpleasant</del>	<del>o</del>	<del>+</del>	<del>+</del>	<del>o</del>	<del>+</del>	<del>o</del>	<del>o</del>	<del>o</del>	<del>3</del>
13. was insincere	+	o	o	+	-	o	o	+	3
<b>Totals of shared statements</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	

One conclusion which may be drawn from this is that on the English-speaking side Quick, Barnard and Escher exercised a key influence on the contours which the picture of Ratke developed, while on the German side a parallel role seems to have been played by Krause, Israel and Paulsen. Even these, however, were not the originators of the picture of Ratke which is current today, but constituted no more than a link in the historiographical chain. What, then, were the sources they drew on, in making their judgements?

Of the three on the English-speaking side, Escher completed his M.A. in 1919 and followed it nine years later with his Ph.D. thesis, neither of which was published. For his information on Ratke, Escher relied on only two sources: Schmid<sup>1</sup> and Adamson. The Schmid referred to by Escher was the editor of the *Geschichte der Erziehung vom Anfang an bis auf unsere Zeit*. The entry on Ratke in this volume was, however, not by Schmid but by August Israel – the same Israel as the one whose work was used by Adamson. The range of sources from which the main features of the picture of Ratke were drawn is thus narrower than might be supposed.

What materials did Quick and Barnard draw on in building up their picture of Ratke? On this question, Quick is refreshingly frank. In his preface to the first edition of his *Essays on Educational Reformers* Quick wrote, 'to Raumer [von Raumer's *History of Pedagogy* – J.W.]<sup>2</sup> I am indebted for all that I have written about Ratke, and almost all about Basedow.'<sup>3</sup>

Henry Barnard's *German Teachers and Educators* has a more complicated history. In 1859, Barnard published an *Educational Biography*, with the additional title *Memoirs of teachers, educators, and promoters and benefactors of education, literature, and science, Pt. I. Teachers and Educators. Vol. 1, United States*. By 1863 a second volume, 'second edition' had appeared, 'republished from the American journal of education.' The title printed on the spine of this book is *German teachers and educators*. However, this volume turns out to be nothing other (in the words of the National Union Catalogue) than 'the entire contents of the first two volumes of Prof. Karl von Raumer's *History of Pedagogy*, except the chapter devoted to Pestalozzi.' The initial impression of a broad array of independent historical assessments flowing together to make up a carefully delineated portrait of Ratke, must hence be modified still further.

The evident dependence on a decreasing range of sources helps to elucidate both the transmission of error in the English-speaking world and also its spread once

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1 K.A. Schmid, *Geschichte der Erziehung vom Anfang an bis auf unsere Zeit*, Stuttgart, 1894–1902.

2 K. von Raumer, *Geschichte der Pädagogik vom Wiederaufblühen klassischer Studien bis auf unsere Zeit*, 3 Vols., Stuttgart, 1853–1852.

3 Quick, pp. xvi–xvii.

the transition from German to English had been accomplished. At the actual point of transition, von Raumer emerges as the most significant – indeed for many authors the only – source of information, with one important exception – Krause.

According to Krause, it was his intention in publishing *Wolfgang Ratichius oder Ratke im Lichte seiner und der Zeitgenossen Briefe und als Didacticus in Cöthen und Magdeburg*, to offer a corrective to the work of an earlier generation of authors – Kämmel, Niemeyer, von Raumer, Schmidt and Schwarz – who, he believed, had presented an unjustifiably positive view of Ratke. Unlike the work of these authors, Krause's monograph reproduced almost exclusively original material – 142 documents from the 'Ducal Scientific Collections' in Köthen. In Adamson's eyes, Krause appeared to be a key witness, giving the lie once and for all to the picture of Ratke as a worthy and original reformer. Adamson's reconstruction runs as follows. 'The Ratke legend ... like most legends ... has a substratum of truth<sup>1</sup> ... The first modern study of Ratke was made by Niemeyer, of Halle, an enthusiast who appears to have built up his hero's fame by annexing the work of educators who had been associated with "the Didacticus"... and labelling the proceeds with Ratke's name. As this study was based upon contemporary documents in the archives of the Grand Duchy of Anhalt (*sic*) its truth was unquestioned for a generation and more ... This legend received the *imprimatur* of Raumer, the historian of education, and from his pages passed direct to other books. It is reflected in Mr. Quick's paper on Ratke in the *Essays on Educational Reformers* ... Then it was discovered that Niemeyer's examination of the documents had been very incomplete; closer investigation considerably reduced the claims made on Ratke's behalf, and it became possible to regard Ratke's work in a clearer light.'<sup>2</sup> Adamson concluded, 'Raumer and those who, like Mr. Quick, have followed Raumer, made claims ... on behalf of Ratke which are contradicted by the evidence.'<sup>3</sup> The person who conducted this 'closer investigation' was Krause.

Krause's publication was intended as a corrective to Niemeyer's work in particular. Niemeyer had done Ratke scholarship an important service in making available a selection of documents pertaining to Ratke and the Ratichians which had been preserved in the archives at Köthen. However, Krause claimed in the preface to his own documentation that Niemeyer – (in supposedly building up his hero's fame) – had relied on too circumscribed a set of materials. Krause wrote, 'the ducal archives in Köthen were, in the year 1839 [the year of Niemeyer's visit – J.W.] not in the best of order, and it so happened that only part of the materials relating to the schools were put at Director Niemeyer's disposal, whereas the

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1 Adamson, p. 32.

2 Adamson, *loc. cit.*

3 Adamson, p. 41.

documents relating to *Ratichius* remained on one side and overlooked, still stuck down and sealed as Prince Ludwig might have ordered in his own day.<sup>1</sup> However, just as Krause drew attention to the limitations of Niemeyer's work, so Hohendorf criticised Krause's – 'He, too, used only the Köthen archives.'<sup>2</sup> It can only be concluded that Krause, too, could not have arrived at the judgements he did, if he had looked a broader range of material.

A further point must be mentioned if Ratke's treatment at the hands of history is to be properly understood. Historians of education have to a striking degree allowed themselves to be drawn into writing assessments of Ratke's personality rather than his work. One reason for this may be the bias afforded by the most easily accessible material. Another may have been the old belief that the first prerequisite of a good teacher was to be a good person. There can be no doubt that personal qualities are important, indeed decisive, in bringing a venture to a successful conclusion. In Ratke's case it is not only legitimate, but essential, to take such factors into account. There can be no doubt either, however, that some historians have been unable or unwilling to disentangle judgements of Ratke's person from judgements of his work, and have presented their evaluations of the former as an evaluation of the latter.

Ratke has suffered in this respect through comparison with his younger near-contemporary Comenius. The particular circumstances of Comenius' life and the patience and fortitude displayed in his writings make him appear a figure of almost superhuman courage and virtue. One is reminded of Meyer's remark that 'in the hands of another – a far better – man [i.e. Comenius – J.W.] some of it [Ratke's pedagogy – J.W.] was to attain an unforgettable dignity and distinction.'<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, it is important for an objective appraisal of Ratke's work to keep the two strands of personality and scholarly achievement separate.

Nowhere is the confusion between moral virtue and fruitful pedagogical endeavour more striking than in Krause's case. Krause invited his readers to consider, in the light of his revelations, 'whether the shattered foundations of his [Ratke's – J.W.] fame may still be found sufficient for us to continue to accept him as a *reformer* intellectually and morally fit to work and suffer assiduously and honestly for the benefit of the school...'<sup>4</sup>

Although this attitude seems to be one which Krause shared with other nineteenth-century educational historians, his role is more central by virtue of the documentation which he brought to light. The question remains, – having made

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1 Krause, p. v.

2 *NL*, p. 10.

3 Meyer, p. 241.

4 Krause, pp. xi – xii.

the documentation available, why did he present it in the way he did, and why was Krause so anxious to modify the picture which he found so favourable to Ratke?

Despite its title – (*Wolfgang Ratichius or Ratke in the light of his own and his contemporaries' letters, and as Didacticus in Köthen and Magdeburg*) – there is evidence to suggest that the real hero of Krause's monograph was intended to be Prince Ludwig. Ludwig, Krause told his readers, was '... the sensitive and highly cultivated founder of the Fruitbearing Society, whose aims included the cultivation of the mother-tongue, its protection from corruption, and the promotion of morals...' It was something of a paradox for Krause, how the prince could so lose patience with Ratke as to have him imprisoned without trial for eight months. Krause had published a history of the Fruitbearing Society in 1885, and at the time of the publication of *Wolfgang Ratichius* in 1872, held the post of curator of the royal collections in Köthen. In other words, he was a successor of that archivist who, presumably on Ludwig's orders, had first sealed the Ratichian documents, and was himself an employee of the House of Anhalt-Köthen. That his publication was intended at least in part as an exercise in rehabilitation is confirmed by the preface to his monograph, in which he claimed that his documentation 'solved the riddle of the apparent harshness of the prince towards the *Didacticus* – and now the slight blemish which has overshadowed his [i.e. the prince's – J.W.] name in the educational literature to date will disappear.'<sup>1</sup>

That Krause's publication did not fail in its purpose is shown by a review which appeared in the same year as Krause's book. This contained a sub-heading: 'A contribution to the clearing-up of an old error in the history of education.' The review closed with the words: 'A reconsideration of these matters ought to lead us to the conclusion, once and for all, that henceforth the history of education will have to *throw out the section Ratichius or Ratich and his Didactic etc.* as worthless ballast.'<sup>2</sup>

If these were the main mechanisms by which the picture of Ratke was built up and perpetuated, the problem of his secrecy remains. Since this aspect of Ratke's nature was neither the product of an error in the transmission of information nor an invention of Krause's, it may serve as a case-study of the way in which isolated facts can lead to a distorted picture when divorced from their historical context.

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1 Krause, p. x.

2 Anon., *Ratichius und seine Didaktik*. (Ein Beitrag zur Wegräumung eines alten Irrthums auf dem Gebiete der historischen Pädagogik), review of Krause, *Pädagogische Blätter für Lehrerbildung und Lehrerbildungsanstalten*, 1, pp. 510–523. [Emphases in the original – J.W.]

The riddle of 'the absurd fuss and secrecy with which he [Ratke – J.W.] surrounds his *Didactica*'<sup>1</sup> is bound up with two paradoxes. The first is the difficulty of reconciling Ratke's secretiveness with his stated commitment to openness and his readiness to give demonstrations of his methods to others. The second problem, observed by Power, resolves itself into the question, 'how could educational reforms really be brought about if the reformer refused to put his means for reform in the public domain?'<sup>2</sup>

Ratke's efforts to keep control over his ideas and methods found formal expression in his requirement that anyone who underwent a course of induction into his system should sign a *Revers* promising not to reveal anything of his methods without Ratke's authority. The *Revers*, a form of contract, was perfectly common in Ratke's time. What was unusual was Ratke's extension of this contractual form into the field of education.

Other evidence exists, in addition to the *Reverse*, to confirm that Ratke chose very carefully the time when and the people to whom he was prepared to release information. Evenius reported to the Halle council, after observing Ratke teach in Köthen, 'it is true that Ratichius at the moment does not yet wish to reveal his method, and hence those persons who are being taught it must undertake not to reveal anything of it.'<sup>3</sup> (This also constitutes unmistakable evidence that Ratke's staff were indeed receiving systematic preparation for teaching). Three years later, one of Ratke's colleagues, Martini, complained that even the more senior members of Ratke's staff 'couldn't get anything out of him' when it came to the details, as opposed to the broad outlines, of Ratke's method.<sup>4</sup> Finally, Comenius retailed (at second hand) information on how envoys had been sent to Ratke from Goldberg in Silesia to obtain his advice, but without success: '... when they wanted to repair their school, which had been destroyed by war, and had sent an intelligent young man, Martin Moser, to Wolfgang Ratke in Germany, who was celebrating in public writings a new method of his own devising, he [i.e. Moser – J.W.] was still unable to get anything out of him after two whole years in his company, so tenaciously did he keep things to himself, not being prepared to communicate his secrets to anyone unless they were paid for at a great price by some king or prince.'<sup>5</sup>

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1 Adamson, p. 36.

2 Power, p. 333.

3 J.G. Hientzsch, *Kurze Geschichte des deutschen Volksschulwesens*, *Wochenblatt für das Volksschulwesen* 1, 1833, p. 42.

4 Martini to Magdeburg city council, 31st. August 1622; Krause, p. 180, No. V/9.

5 J.A. Comenius, *Continuato Admonitionis Fraternalis de temperando Charitate Zelo. Cum fideli Dehortatione a Pantherina Indole a Larvis, Joh. Comenii ad S. Maresium: etc.*, Amsterdam, 1669, § 41.

The desire to preserve his secrets also led Ratke to appear reluctant to publish. For this he was criticised in a letter from a well-wisher: 'Truly, you do not only the project itself ... but your own reputation and prospects insufferable and almost irreparable damage, in that ... you yourself bring nothing publicly to light and publish nothing.'<sup>1</sup>

Georgides' letter, while seeming to give substance to Ratke's reputation for secrecy, is not easy to reconcile with other facts which suggest that the forms which Ratke's secrecy took must be more carefully analysed. In his own writings, for instance, Ratke propagated a standpoint diametrically opposed to that of which he has been accused. In his *Scholastica*, under the heading *peritia* (= scholarship, learning) he distinguished three kinds of scholars who, though learned, are not suitable to be teachers: those who cannot apply their scholarship or teach what they have learned; those who keep their learning to themselves; and those who sell their learning for money. All are by implication equally bad. Of scholars 'who ... sell the same [their knowledge – J.W.] ... (Ratke wrote) ... this is a scandalous exploitation.'<sup>2</sup> On the face of it, therefore, it seems as though Ratke must either have been a hypocrite, or else he had something in mind different from his own projects. But even with his own projects, Ratke showed himself willing to teach demonstration lessons to interested parties – indeed he had to if, as Power pointed out, his work was not to become self-defeating. In his *Thorough and reliable report on the Memorandum*, Ratke wrote at least as early as 1613, '... should anything appear inconsistent to anyone, I offer once more to explain further in person. If asked to do so, I shall readily and gratefully accept...'<sup>3</sup> Finally, in the matter of publishing, Georgides appears to have been less than fully informed. His letter was written in November 1616. Krause does not record an answer to Georgides' letter, but Ratke had already handed the bundle of manuscripts which were later to appear as '*Raticianorum quorundam clarissimorum methodus in lingua Latina*' to Rhenius in the late summer of 1616.<sup>4</sup>

The accusation that Ratke was lacking in the scholarly openness and the readiness to participate in the free exchange of ideas which are among the hallmarks of modern academic life thus needs to be modified. Some of the ablest scholars of Ratke's time showed little interest in print as a medium for disseminating their ideas. Ratke's near-contemporary Thomas Harriot (d. 1621), a mathematician and scientist of the highest distinction, published only one book in his lifetime.<sup>5</sup> His most original and interesting work remained in manuscript until his death, though

1 Rosacrantzius Georgides to Ratke, 13th. November 1616; Krause, pp. 41–42, No. I/56.

2 *Schol*, II.20.ii.

3 *TRR*.

4 Vogt 1894, p. 36.

5 *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia*, 1588.

he did direct a friend in his will 'to pervse and order and to separate the Cheife of them from my waste papers, to the end that after hee doth vnderstande them hee may make vse in penninge such doctrine that belongs vnto them for publike vses...'<sup>1</sup> And Harriot was by no means unique in his views.

One factor which doubtless prompted Ratke to act in the way he did was his dependence on patronage. Like Comenius, Harriot, Dury and countless other scholars of the age, Ratke depended on patronage to live, and he could only secure patronage on the strength of his ideas. If his projects became common property, he would have nothing left to bargain with and there would have been no reason to employ him. This dependence on patronage would indirectly explain Ratke's insistence on signing a *Revers* with those who were to be given a more intimate understanding of his system. Scholars in Ratke's position must frequently have found themselves in an acute dilemma – on the one hand wishing to expose their ideas to a wider audience, on the other knowing that – to the extent that they did so – they were helping to make their services superfluous.

Others besides Ratke in the seventeenth century sought to protect their ideas in one way or another. There is much to be said for the view, however, that while the law frequently provided little protection, those who scorned what little there was, suffered. In England, Joseph Webbe went to the trouble of obtaining a patent for his teaching-method in 1626.<sup>2</sup> It is conceivable that England, with its centralised legal system, afforded greater protection than that which could be guaranteed by the weak and divided empire, and that for this reason Webbe's measures made sense. In view of the lack of effective protection in Germany, however, 'keeping one's schemes secret was necessary at the time as a safeguard against unscrupulous thieves.'<sup>3</sup>

Despite his endeavours, Ratke suffered the humiliation of seeing the *Desiderata methodus nova Ratichiana* appear bearing his name but without his knowledge or acquiescence in 1615, and he later complained of Evenius' *Methodum linguarum compendiosa* that the latter had 'used his [Ratke's – J.W.] method as a foundation, but without mentioning him.'<sup>4</sup> Comenius, too, was the victim of plagiarists. He published his *Janua linguarum reserata* in 1631. In Chapter XXII, §6 of the *Didactica Magna*, writing of the need to keep the vocabulary of works for language-teaching simple, and free from the jargon of special trades and professions, he remarked wryly, 'This is something which certain enlargers of our *Janua*

1 J. Shirley, *Thomas Harriot*, Oxford, 1983, p. 469.

2 V. Salmon, Problems of language-teaching: A discussion among Hartlib's friends, *Modern Language Review* LIX, 1964, p. 17.

3 H. Weimer, *A concise history of education from Solon to Pestalozzi*, 1963, p. 76.

4 J.G. Hientzsch, *Kurze Geschichte des deutschen Volks-Schulwesens*, *Wochenblatt für das Volksschulwesen*, 1, 1833, p. 41.

overlooked when they stuffed it with words which had long been out of use, and with contents far beyond the capacity of boys.<sup>1</sup> In the margin, Kinnerus and Docemius were named as examples. Docemius published his own edition of Comenius' *Janua*, which had been 'improved' in this way, in 1633.

These facts would in themselves suffice to explain Ratke's secrecy. There is, however, another aspect to the matter, involving Ratke's conception of his profession.

Ratke's later writings make it clear that for him pedagogy – *Didactica* – belonged to the practical, not the theoretical disciplines.<sup>2</sup> Ability in a teacher, he claimed, was to be developed through a combination of *peritia* (scholarship), *experientia* (experience) and *didactica progressio* (knowledge of pedagogy).<sup>3</sup> Of these, only scholarship could be effectively acquired from books. Experience and knowledge of pedagogy had to be acquired by other means. For this reason, Ratke saw little point in trying to teach the latter through the medium of print. Kolbe reported that it was 'almost impossible to describe in detail how to teach or to present the material to the learners, since it [the method – J.W.] subsists almost entirely in use...'<sup>4</sup>

The idea that the application of Ratke's pedagogy presupposed a personal induction into the method was forcefully propagated by Helwig and Jung: 'It is essential and logical that whoever seriously wishes to get to the bottom of the matter ... withhold their own ideas or renounce the old method until such time as they have properly assimilated the [new] matter, not allow themselves to be distracted by external circumstances or imagine the whole thing is exaggerated or treated with excessive secrecy, for we swear before God that we see and experience daily more in this work than we ourselves believed at the start, and that the reasons for proceeding in this manner are exceedingly weighty.'<sup>5</sup> In their eyes, every conceivable measure ought to be taken to forestall incompetence, for '... any kind of spare-time experts and half-trained practitioners must be forestalled.'<sup>6</sup>

What emerges from this is the view that pedagogy is a distinct discipline which is the product neither of learning nor experience in isolation, but one in which its practitioners need to be individually trained, and that this training takes time. In insisting that not everyone was equally suitable to receive such training, and by restricting access to this knowledge, Ratke established himself, in this respect at least, as an esotericist.

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1 J.A. Comenius, *Didactica magna, Opera Didacticae Omnia*, Amsterdam, 1657, col. 128.

2 For example, *GC*, III.3.viii; *Index, passim*.

3 *Schol*, II.20–22.

4 Kolbe, § 8.

5 *GSuppR*, p. 127.

6 *GSuppR*, *loc. cit.*

Western scholarship has a tradition of esotericism, or confining information to a privileged circle of initiates, which reaches back over two thousand years. Alexander the Great once remonstrated with Aristotle 'for having written lines which revealed to the average man the esoteric meaning which should be entrusted only to initiates ... Aristotle replied that what he had written could be understood only by those who had attended his lectures.'<sup>1</sup> In Ratke's time, academic privilege was protected by the possession of Latin (which controlled access to knowledge in general) and by the universities (giving access to the professions of law, medicine and theology via the faculties).

The control of information, then, was not something unique to Ratke. What was peculiar to Ratke was that he tried to exercise this control in a field which, until his time, had appeared not to possess a body of doctrine worthy of protection. Esotericism can thus be seen to be one important strand in the genesis of a profession. Among the criteria which Charlton proposed for assessing the degree of professionalisation within teaching was a body of learning 'acquired during a long period of education restricted to a particular skill that is non-manual and esoteric.'<sup>2</sup> The programme which was developed by Ratke and his colleagues, however embryonic, clearly possessed features of this kind. Helwig and Jung, like Ratke, emphasized the practical aspects of the induction, '... [it] can not at present be imparted in written form to people who are not present, since this method is embodied mainly in praxis and the living voice, and also departs completely from the old way...'<sup>3</sup>

While Ratke's secrecy was the expression of a professional esotericism at one level, on another, Ratke was the reverse of an esotericist. For one thing, his call was for education to be made freely available to all, young and old, high and low, male and female, and not to be the preserve of the privileged, the well-born or the wealthy. In addition, his claim that knowledge could in principle be imparted just as effectively in the vernacular as in one of the learned languages places him on the side of those who were to take the traditional professions out of their isolation and make them more freely accessible to the laity. This distinction of levels is what saves Ratke from the charge of hypocrisy. As he had claimed in the *Scholastica*, knowledge should be freely available to all. But this was not incompatible with his other claim that scholarly expertise alone was insufficient as a qualification for teaching, and that a period of training in the principles and methods of pedagogy properly belonged to the teacher's professional preparation.

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1 A. Savill, *Alexander the Great and his time*, 1959, p. 224.

2 K. Charlton, *The teaching profession in 16th. and 17th. century England*, in, P. Nash, ed., *History and Education. The educational uses of the past*, New York, 1970, pp. 26-27.

3 *GR*, pp. 45-46.

The attitudes of Ratke and his colleagues towards education in general, and to the need for professional training in particular — as manifested in Ratke's protective stance with regard to his theories, principles and methods, — were not fully in tune with his age. Ratke's conception of pedagogy as a body of professional doctrine different in nature from — and independent of — the subjects to be taught, also demanded a change of perception on the part of his contemporaries which few were able to follow. Ratke's external failures were thus in part, at least, a product of the impact of his aims and ideas upon a society as yet unequipped to deal with them. The very newness of his ideas lay at the root of some of the myths with which Ratke's name has been invested. An account of Ratke's failures requires, therefore, not only a study of his proposals in isolation, but a further-reaching analysis of the social and political context into which these ideas were launched.

## CHAPTER III

### Contexts of failure: Augsburg, Köthen, Magdeburg

It is tempting to view the plans of reformers such as Ratke as having sprung fully fledged from their author's heads, and to equate a reformer's originality with the degree of his remoteness from the society in which he lived. Even utopias, however, — and Ratke was no utopist — can usually be seen to be responses to pressures in society, however dimly perceived. Ratke's plans cannot be explained in terms of a solitary genius developing ideas in a vacuum. An examination of the political, cultural, social and educational context in which Ratke's work germinated is necessary in order to explain not only the direction which his reforms took, but also why they were doomed to failure almost from the outset.

In a superficial sense, Ratke failed in almost every state and city in which he attempted to gain a foothold. The episodes in Augsburg, Köthen, and Magdeburg, taken together, give some idea of the broader forces which militated against Ratke's success. At the same time, although these towns were part of the Holy Roman Empire, each had its own particular history with respect to its relations to the empire, the church, and its approach to education.

When Ratke put forward his proposals in the 1612 *Memorandum*, he could not have been aware that the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, to give it its official title, was stumbling towards war. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the empire had become an 'immense conglomerate of interdependent states.'<sup>1</sup> There were something like two thousand of them, ruled by a wide variety of nobles. These varied in the extent of their power and influence: 'There were perhaps two hundred whose wealth and lands gave them some claim to

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1 Wedgwood, p. 31.

consideration, and nearly two thousand whose economic position was the equivalent of that of an English country gentleman.<sup>1</sup> In addition, there were free cities, such as Nuremberg and Ulm, themselves in some cases owners of whole provinces.

While the most powerful possessed constitutional rights of government, including the right to vote in the election of the Holy Roman Emperor — (the elector was the '*Kur-fürst*'), there were others which, due to the vicissitudes of the hereditary laws, had become so small as hardly to be viable. One of these was Anhalt: '... in the little state of Anhalt, itself scarcely larger than Essex, there were in 1618 the four principalities of Zerbst, Dessau, Bernburg and Cöthen.'<sup>2</sup> But Anhalt was also part of Saxony. Saxony, which had possessed electoral rights since the fifteenth century, had been divided into two parts by the brothers Ernst (the Elector) and Albrecht (Duke) in 1485, giving rise to the Ernestine and Albertine lines. Both the Ernestines and the Albertines introduced the Reformation into their territories, thus placing them firmly in what became, during the Thirty Years War, the Protestant camp. Weimar and Gotha were thus related both to the House of Anhalt and to the Electorate of Saxony. Weimar had been made the capital of the Duchy of Saxe-Weimar in 1572. Gotha became the seat of the Ernestine Dukes of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg until 1825-26, when it was made a residence of the house of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.

It was against this background that the unwieldy constitution of the Holy Roman Empire operated. The emperor's programme of legislation was traditionally compiled from the petitions — '*Kapitulationen*' — submitted by the electors. However, the centrifugal impulses within the empire had by 1495 — (the date of the *Landfrieden* of Worms) — led to a situation in which it no longer possessed an effective executive to translate legislation into practical terms.<sup>3</sup>

The emperor was traditionally elected for life by an electoral college of seven. Three of the electors were Roman Catholic bishops — (one of them being the Bishop of Mainz, who supported Ratke's *Memorandum* in 1612) — and three others (Saxony, Brandenburg and the Palatinate) Protestant. The seventh elector was the King of Bohemia. The King of Bohemia was, however, himself chosen by election, and for several generations had been both Catholic and a Hapsburg. It was the efforts of Christian of Anhalt-Bernburg to procure the election of the Protestant Frederick, Elector of the Palatinate, to the kingdom of Bohemia, which helped plunge the empire into the Thirty Years War.

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1 Wedgwood, p. 35.

2 Wedgwood, p. 34.

3 H. Hassinger, *Politische Kräfte und Wirtschaft 1350-1800*, in, H. Aubin and W. Zorn, edd., *Handbuch der deutschen Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte*, Vol. I, *Von der Frühzeit bis zum Ende des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart, 1971, p. 609.

When the Emperor Rudolph II died in Prague in January 1612, his brother Matthias was elected to succeed him. Although Matthias was a more capable ruler than his elder brother had been, and could see only too clearly the direction in which events were moving, he was powerless in the face of the impending conflict. His inclination was to mediate, but in 1609 the Catholic League had been formed as a response to the Protestant Union (which Christian of Anhalt-Bernburg had helped to found in 1608), and it was these two alliances which between them were to tear continental Europe apart. Although other, deeper-seated rifts and pressures erupted into the Thirty Years War, there can be no doubt that the religious constellation within the empire both accelerated the process of polarisation, and offered convenient rationalisations for more private policies.

The religious forces which gave the Thirty Years War its shape had been gathering momentum throughout the preceding century. The framework within which Ratke hoped to realise his reforms thus had a longer history than might be suspected. 'Superficially, there seemed to be two religions in Europe, the Catholic and the Protestant, but in fact the latter was so clearly divided against itself that there were three hostile parties. The Reformation had had two outstanding leaders, Luther and Calvin, and was divided by their teaching ... into two successive and far from complementary movements.'<sup>1</sup> Not to be underestimated, however, were the sects and splinter-groups which also sprang up throughout the sixteenth century. Indeed, the age was characterised by the clarity with which it drew nice distinctions of belief, and by its degree of emotional commitment to these distinctions. During the years leading up to the Thirty Years War, – that is, the years in which Ratke was most active, 'the reaction from the materialism of the Renaissance which had begun towards the middle of the previous century had ... reached its widest limits; the spiritual revival had penetrated to the very roots of society, and religion was a reality among those to whom politics were meaningless and public events unknown.'<sup>2</sup> This faith in the rightness of one's own beliefs put paid to the irenic impulses which emanated from such places as the theological faculty at Heidelberg.

The split between the two major Protestant groupings in Germany arose from a dispute over the nature of the eucharist which surfaced in a debate at Marburg in 1529. In the same year, at a diet called by the Emperor Charles V in Speyer, the Catholic majority determined that Lutheranism could be tolerated as far as it had spread, but that it should not be permitted to encroach further. The diet also introduced the concept of *Landeskirchen* – state churches. Like the three later meetings – the *Interims* of 1541 and 1548 (two) – the diet of 1529 failed to resolve the conflict, so Charles called a new diet a year later in Augsburg. At this

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1 Wedgwood, p. 19.

2 Wedgwood, p. 17.

meeting, the Lutherans presented Charles with a confession of faith — the *Confessio Augustana*, formulated by Philip Melanchthon. Melanchthon continued to revise this *confessio* throughout his life. The most important revision, the *confessio variata*, was prepared in 1540, and in 1541 it was accepted by Calvin. This act of recognition brought the Calvinists into communion with the Lutheran Church.

In the meantime, Charles was still hoping to achieve a settlement between Catholics and Protestants. In 1535 the Peace of Augsburg was agreed, according to which a state's religion was to be the religion of its ruler: '*cujus regio ejus religio*'. This settlement, however, made no provision for any other Protestant belief than Lutheranism. In 1560 the Lutherans re-adopted the earlier version of the Augustan Confession (now called the *confessio invariata*) as the only valid expression of their faith. This of course, put the Calvinists back outside the pale of Lutheranism. The result was that the Calvinists came to hate the Lutherans even more than they hated the Catholics: 'The Calvinists exhorted all true believers to violence and took special delight in the more bloodthirsty psalms. But the Catholics and Lutherans were not innocent and force was everywhere the proof of true faith.'<sup>1</sup>

The entrenched religious fronts were not strong enough to guarantee stability within the empire. The vicissitudes of politics together with dynastic shifts and changes meant that rulers vacillated between religions. It is against this background that the conversion of Wolfgang Wilhelm, Count Palatine of Düsseldorf, to Roman Catholicism must be judged. Saxony, Brandenburg and the Palatinate lurched from Lutheranism to Calvinism and back again. Traditionally, the Palatine princes 'stood in the front of that active party in the Empire which might be termed the advanced, or militant, Protestant opposition. This party, among whose other members Landgrave Maurice (Moritz) of Hesse and Count Christian of Anhalt should be specially mentioned, derived its impulse entirely from Calvinist quarters.'<sup>2</sup> The University of Giessen, which Ratke visited in 1612, owed its very foundation to the religious conflict. When Moritz of Hesse tried to introduce the Reformed Confession in the University of Marburg in 1605 (unconstitutionally, it must be said) a number of Lutheran members of staff left to seek work elsewhere. They were permitted by Ludwig of Hesse-Darmstadt to settle in Giessen in 1605, which two years later obtained official recognition from the emperor for the foundation of a university.<sup>3</sup>

The vehemence with which religious differences were pursued extended beyond the boundaries of what had effectively become recognized churches. In addition to

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1 Wedgwood, p. 44.

2 A.W. Ward, *The Electress Sophia and the Hanoverian Succession*, 1903, p. 14.

3 L. Rosenberg, *Die Universität Giessen. Ihre Entwicklung und ihre Anstalten*, Düsseldorf, 1928, pp. 5f.

the religions adopted by heads of state, a number of sects with varying degrees of antiquity flourished in the sixteenth century. In this uncertain atmosphere, a charge of heresy was not always easy to refute, and could have dangerous consequences. The Rosicrucians, with whom Ratke's name has frequently been associated, came into prominence in the second decade of the seventeenth century. The aims expressed in the Rosicrucian manifestoes included the reform of society and general cultural renewal, — aims with which Ratke openly identified himself. There is no doubt that Ratke had personal contact with scholars who knew Rosicrucianism intimately, even though some of their most fervent supporters — notably Robert Fludd and Michael Meier of Magdeburg — denied being members of the fraternity themselves.

The question of Ratke's membership in the Rosicrucian brotherhood is usually left open, and indeed treated as not being capable of resolution. Nevertheless, in the absence of explicit proof, there are internal reasons for doubting too close an association. First, however, the external evidence. In addition to publications by Robert Fludd, Ratke possessed copies of the *Echo der Fraternität des löblichen Ordens des Rosenkreuzes*. Item *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreuz* (1616), *Fama fraternitatis oder Entdeckung der Bruderschaft des löblichen Ordens des Rosenkreuzes der Confession etc.* (1617), *Allgemeine und Generalreformation der ganzen Welt, beneben der fama fraternitatis* (1614)<sup>1</sup> — all early editions of major Rosicrucian publications. But how far do they signify actual membership of the fraternity, as opposed to a scholar's attempt to keep abreast of contemporary thought? Although, taken together, they seem to provide evidence of interest on Ratke's part, other works in Ratke's library testify to a wide-ranging concern with religion and philosophy in general. These include the Koran, the Talmud, works by Zwingli and Erasmus, and a number of publications on or by the Jesuits.

The internal evidence, too, for a close association between Ratke and the Rosicrucians is not convincing. True, the aims which the Rosicrucians claimed to pursue included the reform of education, a third religious reformation and general social reform, all of which come close to Ratke's own aims. However, the Rosicrucian writings are marked by a mystical and symbolic turn of mind quite foreign to Ratke's dry rationalism. Despite claims to the contrary, one would be hard put to it to demonstrate in Ratke's work any interest in the Kabbalah, hermeticism, mysticism, hieroglyphs, emblems or other metaphorical interpretations of the world. His appeal was always to reason, and his touchstones were God and Nature. It would seem wiser, then, to assume that Ratke knew the works of the Rosicrucians without himself being a member of the mysterious fraternity.

Until the boundaries of responsibility for education in Germany had been finally settled, the relationship between church and state was delicate. In the sixteenth

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<sup>1</sup> Gotha Codex Chart. B 1026 A.

century this relationship underwent a subtle change. So long as responsibility for education lay with the church, the church pressed rulers to help make provision for it. Concomitant with wider political developments, the rivalry between territorial princes and between states and the free towns intensified during this period. This development was partly the product of a changing perception of the ruler's role. It found its expression in a significant increase in the promulgation of decrees (*Ordnungen*) touching on many aspects of daily life. As church and state drifted further apart, the ruler's relationship to his subjects began to take on a quasi-religious character, with appeals being made to the 'common-wealth' – the '*gemeinen Besten*,'<sup>1</sup> – of the ruler and the various classes. These changes began to reverse the roles of church and state, with more and more states and cities calling on the church for assistance in organizing their schools.<sup>2</sup>

The main features of educational provision in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Germany developed along lines which had been laid down in the thirteenth. A distinction may be drawn between the Latin schools run by the church as cathedral, monastery, or abbey schools on the one hand, and the secular schools on the other. The latter, which grew up to meet the needs of the tradesmen and the lower middle classes, were largely town schools. After the Reformation, mention is also made of *Küsterschulen*, run by the verger or sexton of a parish to meet the simplest needs of all. The Latin schools were intended for future clergy. The requirements of their profession included, first and foremost, knowledge of the Bible; and first-hand knowledge of the Bible presupposed knowledge of languages. Knowledge of languages meant in turn philological study, the larger part of which was devoted to Latin.<sup>3</sup> The secular 'German' schools catering for the professional classes concentrated on 'the basics' of education – 'the three Rs.'

Although the German town-schools developed a life of their own to meet needs different from those of the Latin schools, the right to found schools remained the exclusive prerogative of the church. This frequently led to long-drawn-out quarrels between the clergy, the heads of the provincial churches (the *Superintendenten*), and the town councils. These quarrels often served as a channel for conflicts of other kinds, such as political and economic disagreements.

Among the decrees promulgated to regulate the various areas of life, none were more important than those relating to the organisation of the church – the *Kirchenordnungen*, or church statutes. The usual pattern was for them to be laid down by the supreme authority in any territory as global regulations governing the church, and for the school statutes to be laid down as sub-parts of the church regulations.

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1 Michel 1978, p. 20.

2 Hettwer, p. 14.

3 Hettwer, pp. 8-9.

It was the free towns which led the way in producing such regulations, the territorial princes following suit later. Initially, the vacillation of state rulers, the uncertainty concerning religious – and hence political – constellations, together with the upheaval which ensued as the Reformation worked its way across Europe, had led to a decline in the quality of schools. It soon became apparent that the church (to consolidate the Reformation), and the various towns and states of the empire (to deal with the increasing volume of administrative duties), required more theologically competent clergy on the one hand, and better educated clerks on the other. Both demands flowed together in the need to provide a sound education for able boys. The only institutions which could meet this need were the old Latin schools, and it was at these that reforming energy was initially directed.<sup>1</sup>

The more specific targets of educational reform can be seen as resulting from tensions between what the traditional system was able to offer, and the demands made upon this system by a changing society. Both church and state needed a supply of committed and capable servants. However, there were also groups with vested interests which could see only the dangers in making knowledge accessible to a wider section of the population.

Although Latin was still needed in the training of clergy just as it had been before, its role in the sixteenth century changed considerably. Until the Reformation got under way, Latin had been the *lingua franca* of the medieval church, – not always used well – but meeting a specific and practical need. As humanist ideas worked their way through society, values changed and eloquence, as exemplified in Ciceronian prose, became the new ideal. This shift in aims was accompanied by a change in content, due to the nature of the texts which were studied and used as models. Pressures for changes in content arose from two sources. One was internal – the increase in knowledge within the *artes liberales* themselves, not least through the rediscovery of classical learning. The other was external, from the demands made on the curriculum by the increasing pace of social change, differentiation and specialization within the trades and professions, and by scientific discoveries in areas not accommodated within the traditional *artes*. So long as Latin remained the medium of transmission for scientific discoveries, the success of the system in adapting itself to change depended not only on who knew Latin, but also on how effectively those who knew it could use it. The population of Germany around 1600 was about sixteen million. Of these, it has been estimated that no more than about 50,000 had enjoyed an academic education – just over 0.3% of the population.<sup>2</sup> These scholars, however, were concentrated in the church, the courts and the universities. The result was that the new knowledge

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1 Hettwer, p. 255.

2 W. Zorn, Sozialgeschichte 1500–1648, in, H. Aubin und W. Zorn, edd., *Handbuch der deutschen Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte*, Stuttgart, 1971/55, p. 470.

remained largely unexploited, and humanist learning was confined to a comparatively small circle. The prestige attaching to *eloquentia* as the prime aim also effectively prevented the natural sciences from penetrating very far into the traditional curriculum.

To sum up, by 1600 there had been far-reaching changes in both the aims and content of education, but at the close of the sixteenth century the main medium of instruction in the Latin schools and the universities was still Latin, and the methods of teaching it had not kept pace with the changes. It is small wonder that the system in which Ratke was educated showed increasing signs of strain.

The situation with respect to the German schools, with their emphasis on the so-called basic skills, seems to have been little better. Kromayer reported that of some ten thousand adults in the Duchy of Weimar in 1629, fewer than a third could read.<sup>1</sup>

This, then, was the backcloth against which the events of Ratke's life in Augsburg, Köthen and Magdeburg must be judged.

When Ratke arrived in Augsburg in 1614 it was a city almost without parallel for its commercial power. It was partly because of its wealth and might that Augsburg played in church history the role it did. It offered an appropriate setting in which the great and powerful could meet and negotiate. Later writers thought they detected in Augsburg a driving ambition which spread from the commercial and mercantile into other fields. In 1580 the St. Anne's *Gymnasium* was founded: '... they wanted to invite scholars from other rulers, too, and try and organise a school along the lines of which all the other schools in Germany could be reformed. The good people perhaps thought that just as religion had its beginnings in Augsburg, the same must therefore be the case in schools...'<sup>2</sup>

However, due to the rights concerning the foundation of schools, neither of the major confessions in Augsburg had things all its own way. The Augsburg council had a Catholic majority, but the schoolmen were largely Protestant. This was doubtless a factor of some significance in the negotiations which took place between the *Corpus of Contribuenten* on Ratke's behalf, and the council.

It might be thought that so long as the Protestants remained influential in Augsburg's schools, there would be no serious obstacles in the way of the Ratician reforms. Events in Augsburg showed that support for Ratke from the citizens, strong though it was, was nevertheless insufficient to sway the Catholic majority in the council, and it became impossible to place his reforms on a secure financial footing. Even when the council had given its final decision not to take responsibility for introducing the reforms, Ratke still agreed to stay on in Augsburg, but not to teach. At the same time, there were signs that even the Lutheran *Contrib-*

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1 Wells, p. 458, fn. 113.

2 J.B. Schupp, *Doct: Ioh: Balth: Schupii Schriften*, [Hanau, 1663], p. 122.

uenten were weakening in their resolve. This, however, was not a reflection on the quality of Ratke's work: 'As far as the main part is concerned, the work is truly good, and I can think of no-one who, having seen it in practice, did not commend it.'<sup>1</sup> Rather, tensions arose when it became clear that the city was not prepared to finance the project on a long-term basis. The dilemma of the *Contribuenten* comes out clearly in the same letter:

'... the *Contribuenten* had at first hoped to produce such a specimen of this highly useful work (to the confusion of those who hold nothing of it), that thereby an honourable authority itself here would not have been able to avoid taking up the matter seriously, and introducing it *publice* for the common good. But because R[atke], due to odious *Religion*, had reservations ... about revealing his method and work completely: they were, true, not quite agreed as to their *intent*, but have learnt this much, that considerable progress can be achieved through the new method with our youth, and for that reason there are no regrets concerning the considerable costs incurred, but particularly because they have heard this work commended by various prominent scholars (to whom Herr R[atke] has revealed his secret to a considerable degree). As far as the last point is concerned, whether the *Contribuenten* will continue to help with the project? I sense so much, that they consider that it is primarily the authorities' task to continue this work further, and [that] they for their part have done their bit. However, I have no doubt that they are by no means uninclined to support the work further.'<sup>2</sup>

The mention of 'odious *Religion*' in this letter is not without significance. There can be no doubt that Ratke's relations with the clergy in general, not only with the Catholics, deteriorated while he was in Augsburg. Meyderlin described the cause of the difference as private matters – '... intelligent people should still learn to distinguish *personam a re* [the person from the thing], and indeed in many cases injustice has been done to them [him]; – for example, he has been accused among other things of enthusiasm, and quarrelled somewhat with the *minister* here over private matters. But now he has been reconciled with them [him]...'<sup>3</sup>

Although Meyderlin described the accusations of enthusiasm made against Ratke as unjust, there is no doubt that Ratke was gaining a reputation at this time, for his suspected Rosicrucian leanings. According to Vogt, it was '... a reputation he himself nurtured, partly by consorting with people suspected of tendencies towards

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1 Meyderlin to Verbezius, 26th. June 1615, quoted in Helmreich, Wolfgang Ratichius in Augsburg, in *Blätter für das Bayrische Gymnasial- und Realschulwesen*, XV, 79, p. 295.

2 Meyderlin to Verbezius, 26th. June 1615, Vogt 1876, p. 32, fn.

3 Vogt 1876, *loc. cit.*.

alchemy, partly through injudicious talk and offensive emotional outbursts against the clergy ...'<sup>1</sup>

In the autumn of 1614 Dr. Lang of Weimar unleashed a bitter attack on Ratke and in 1616 Andreas Libavius published his *Wohlmeinende Bedenken von der Fama und Confession der Bruderschaft der Rosen-Creutzer*,<sup>2</sup> in which the Ratichian method was claimed to be intimately bound up with Rosicrucian aims. Although Ratke had left Augsburg by the time the book appeared, the period when Libavius' publication must have been in gestation overlaps almost perfectly with the time when the rumours concerning Ratke's involvement with Rosicrucianism were at their height.

Ratke's relations with the clergy are illuminated from another angle in an undated document printed by Krause, which must stem from late 1615 to 1616. It is headed 'Causes and declaration why *Ratichius* has no claim on me *D. Helvicum* and reviles me unjustly.'<sup>3</sup> It is a statement of the reasons why Helwig found it impossible to continue working with Ratke in Augsburg. One reason which Helwig gives is 'because he [Ratke] will not desist from his aggressiveness towards everyone, all theologians – not one of whom is good enough for him, – towards authority, princes and lords...'

Although for a Lutheran trying to push through reforms in a Catholic or a Calvinist context problems might have been predictable, it would not be true to say that this simple religious constellation suffices to explain Ratke's failures either in Augsburg or in Magdeburg. Striking in Helwig's text is the phrase 'aggressiveness ... towards *all* theologians...' [my emphasis – J.W.], which suggests that the situation in Augsburg was not one in which Ratke and the Lutheran clergy stood shoulder to shoulder in opposition to everyone else, but rather one in which Ratke preserved a considerable distance between his proposed reforms on the one hand, and theologians of all colours, including his own, on the other.

Ratke's insistence on treating education as an autonomous discipline, and above all as needing to be independent of the church for its provision and administration, was not accidental. Reinforced by his later experience in Köthen, Ratke's demand found its most pointed expression in Magdeburg, and represents an important landmark in the freeing of education from church control in a process of evolution which lasted for over two centuries.

One reason why Ratke might have wished to prevent his educational reforms from being enveloped by any single church was that his longer-term aims as outlined in the *Memorandum* were intended to encompass society as a whole, of

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1 Vogt 1876, p. 30.

2 *Well-meaning reservations concerning the Fama and Confession of the Brotherhood of the Rosicrucians*, Frankfurt, 1616.

3 Krause, pp. 21–22, No. I/26.

which religion was only a part. Church leaders in Germany, after almost a century of turbulence, had good reasons for seeking consolidation. One consequence of this was that the spectre of further religious reforms could be used to provoke fear and uncertainty. When Helwig had returned to Giessen after leaving Ratke in Augsburg, he wrote to Dorothea Maria warning her (while emphasising his own true and humble loyalty) against Ratke. Among the points he made was the fact '... that he [Ratke] is trying to change everything according to his will and his own ideas, and one does not know what he is really aiming at, particularly where religion is concerned.'<sup>1</sup>

The discrepancy between the total reform of society as Ratke envisaged it and the reform in the methods of teaching languages to which many of Ratke's patrons tried to reduce his plans, is thus highly significant. The radicalism apparent in Ratke's attacks on 'authority, princes and lords' must have been anathema even to those philanthropically inclined nobles otherwise well-disposed to his reforms. From the time of his first negotiations with Prince Moritz of Orange it must have been clear to Ratke that, while he saw eye to eye with many on the need for reform of the methods of teaching, there were other issues on which different sectors of society were bound to oppose him. The best strategy to adopt – perhaps the only one under the circumstances – was put to him by an acquaintance in Ulm, David Verbezius:

'... I have devoted considerable thought [to the question] of how the *Didactica* can be got under way, but the right approach in my view is for the Gentleman [Ratke – J.W.] to teach only languages at first, whether *privatim* (privately) or *publice* (publicly) and to say nothing *de reformatione Politici aut Ecclesiastici status* (of political or ecclesiastical reform), otherwise it will be everywhere suppressed and the Gentleman not make any headway with the *Didactica*. When he has done one course or two in languages, and at the same time published his *Grammaticas* and *Lexica*, he would find enough people who would offer him a hand in philosophy and, such a *Didactica Philosophica* once started, the Gentleman may then find *approbatores in facultatibus* (supporters in the faculties) and thus give the whole project momentum. But if the Gentleman proceeds in any other way, come where he may, he will find theologians and politicians in the council, and if he betrays anything whatsoever of universal reform he would be persecuted by them and not be able to make any progress anywhere...'<sup>2</sup>

The episode in Köthen exhibits parallels to that in Augsburg, but also some interesting differences. The outward events culminating in Ratke's arrest in Köthen on 5th. October 1619 are comparatively easy to reconstruct.

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1 Helwig to Dorothea Maria, 3rd. September 1615; Krause, pp. 159–60, No. IV/29.

2 Verbezius to Ratke, 22nd. July 1615; Krause, pp. 40–41, No. I/55.

The state of Anhalt-Köthen was, like its ruler, Calvinist. However, the preceding decades had not made for a sense of security in Köthen. For one thing, the House of Anhalt and its related lines were divided over matters of religion: Prince Ludwig was a Calvinist, but Dorothea Maria had been, and Anna-Sophia still was, militantly Lutheran. Even more important, so was Johann Ernst, Ludwig's nephew and partner in the Köthen enterprise. Ludwig himself had a reputation for tolerance. But what if Johann Ernst were planning to exploit this opportunity to further his own religious convictions among Köthen's youth? Anhalt had been Lutheran until 1597, so that fears that religious dissent could be fanned among the townsfolk were not unfounded.

When it became apparent that Ratke's educational programme foresaw the Lutheran Catechism, Decalogue, Creed and Confession to the neglect of the Heidelberg Catechism, Ludwig refused to accept it. Ratke's demands are contained in a memorandum to his patrons, consisting of nine points, dated 28th. August, 1619.<sup>1</sup> In it, Ratke skilfully linked his religious intentions with a demand for the absolute pre-eminence of his pedagogy. The first two points make it clear that in Ratke's view, teaching in schools should be organised in accordance with educational principles, and no others: '2) Now wherever this [i.e. *Didactica* – J.W.] is to be practised, one must allow oneself to be ruled and directed by her and her alone in the true fear of God.'<sup>2</sup> Under point (5) Ratke accepted the need for *exercitium pietatis* (the practice of religion), provided that it is 'in the manner of the *Didactica*.' Under point (8) Ratke went on, '... for the furtherance of the *Didactica*, the free practice of the unaltered Augsburg Confession by the staff and their relations should be graciously permitted, at Ratke's earnest entreaty.'<sup>3</sup> The demand couched in the word 'unaltered' ('*unverändert*') is unmistakable: '*unverändert*' is a direct translation of the Latin (*Confessio*) *in-variata*, and thus referred to that version of the *Confessio* which had already proved unacceptable to the Calvinists. To Ludwig, this must have seemed a blunt reminder of the religious gulf between the two men.

The real bombshell in Ratke's memorandum was, however, reserved for the last point. If, Ratke said, the *exercitium pietatis* for the children under point (5) were not organised along the lines laid down by him, '... he can not see how he can achieve solid results in accordance with the *Didactic*, [and] would in such an event be compelled to clear his conscience; and the means to unity and to achieve the aims he has set himself would thus be taken out of his hands;... in such an

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1 Krause, pp. 69–70, No. II/18.

2 Krause, *loc. cit.*

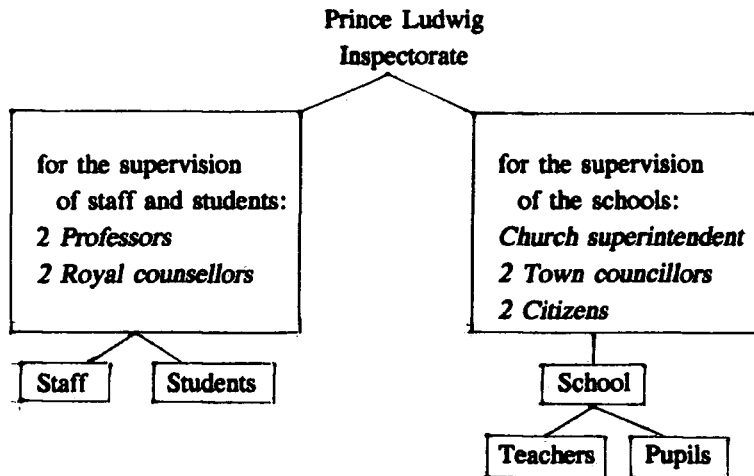
3 Krause, *loc. cit.*

unpleasant, unforeseen eventuality he would be compelled to seek an opportunity either in Halle, Magdeburg or elsewhere in the region...'<sup>1</sup>

This formulation was clearly a threat. Prince Ludwig's response was careful, reasoned and perceptive. But on the main points there was no sign of compromise, not even on the liberalising of worship which Ratke had so earnestly requested.

From this point on, it must have been clear that any intentions Ratke may have harboured of trying to use the Köthen schools as an instrument for bringing about unity of religion in a specifically Lutheran sense were doomed to failure.<sup>2</sup>

However, religious differences were not the only source of Ratke's problems in Köthen. Complaints of another kind are recorded in the inspectors' reports. In order to show how the administrative structure favoured Ratke's opponents, the system of supervision as it was set up in Köthen is represented below.



This diagram clarifies Ratke's own position in the chain of command: it does not appear. Regardless of his contribution to the scheme, Ratke, its architect, seems to have had little real authority. He appears not to have been responsible for the day-to-day administration, and the inspectorate reported not to Ratke but to Prince Ludwig. The paths of communication between Ratke and the inspectorate thus ran via Prince Ludwig, who transmitted messages back and forth between the opposing parties while trying to placate both sides as best as he could.

The messages which came from the town were mainly complaints about the pupils' lack of achievement, lack of discipline and the neglect of religion. They are recorded in the inspectors' report to Ludwig dated 28th. June, 1619. The

1 Krause, *loc. cit.*

2 There is some evidence for this in the undated draft of a letter Ratke wrote to Anna Sophia; cf. Krause, p. 66, No. II/14.

teachers, it said, worked hard 'but results and progress where the boys are concerned are at the moment little.'<sup>1</sup> The inspectors complained of *laxa et dissoluta disciplina* and the neglect of the Heidelberg Catechism. Judged in terms of the space devoted to it, discipline seems to have been foremost among the citizens' concerns. Parents complained '... because canes are to be used sparingly in the school or not at all.' Further, the townsfolk noticed that the children '... frequently spend their breaks running in and out, and fooling about in the alleyways...'<sup>2</sup>

These passages throw light on the expectations which the citizens seem to have entertained of the schools and their teachers. Their criticisms were doubtless an added source of difficulty for Ratke, who thus had to grapple not only with the problems of implementing his programme in the context of the religious tensions which already existed in Köthen, but also with the naïve expectations of a society largely unaware of the kind of reforms he was attempting to initiate.

The townsfolk expected rapid results. The first complaints about lack of achievement were recorded scarcely five weeks after the school had opened, and Ratke's patrons must themselves have felt under pressure to justify the expectations they had aroused and the outlay to which they had committed themselves. The parents were thus useful if unwitting allies for Streso and the Reformed clergy in their opposition to Ratke. There was a sense, however, in which town and clergy were more intimately allied.

One theme in the correspondence which flowed back and forth between Ratke and his patrons was that of interference and control. Ratke complained that he was unable to direct the project free from the meddling of other interested parties. One reason for this was that Streso and his clergy did not sit back to await the outcome of Ratke's work, but actively opposed it from the pulpit. Unlike today, the pulpit in the seventeenth century exercised a powerful influence on public opinion;<sup>3</sup> indeed it constituted at the time the only real medium of mass communication.

Ratke himself was aware that one source of difficulty lay in the perception of his work by the townsfolk, and took the unusual step of proposing that parents be informed as to the aims and nature of his project. Under point (8) of his memorandum Ratke asked Prince Ludwig to inform his subjects '... what the *Didactica* is, why it is being introduced, and how it is to be run in future.' And under point (6) Ratke wrote of Ludwig's 'highly laudable intention of having the fundamental character of the *Didactica* passed on and explained to the parents by M. Gualther...' The work of informing the parents seems to have been ineffective, however, or to have been overtaken by events, for on 4th. October, the day before he

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1 Krause, pp. 67-68, No. II/16.

2 Krause, *loc. cit.*

3 J. Lattmann, *Ratichius und die Ratichianer Helwig, Fürst Ludwig und Walther, Kromayer, Evenius und Herzog Ernst; auch Rhenius*, Göttingen, 1898, pp. 105-6.

was arrested, Ratke admitted that there were weaknesses in the project; but he added bitterly, '... he acknowledges these weaknesses as weaknesses ... stemming not from the *Didactica* but from external causes: namely, – that the preachers have belittled the work to the citizens, confused the parents and the boys, [and] reduced the *Praeceptores* [teachers] to desperation; – but, above all, the *Inspectores*, who did not understand the project and did not want to enquire into it...'<sup>1</sup>

From this point on, Ratke's tone became increasingly desperate, up to the closing words of his letter of 4th. October: 'should Y[our] R[oyal] H[ighness] interfere with the work and misuse it, may it prove so elevated that you rather miss your mark than achieve anything by it...'<sup>2</sup>

On the face of things, it would seem that under the pressure of the church and townspeople Ratke could see the project slipping out of his grasp, without being able to do anything to stop it. Certainly, opposition from the Calvinist clergy has passed into history as one of the main reasons for Ratke's failures in Köthen. Here again, however, the truth is both more complex and more interesting.

Martini, who assisted Ratke in Köthen without being fully committed to his work, and who later wrote the damning report on Ratke for the city of Magdeburg, denied that religious opposition lay at the root of Ratke's difficulties. Martini's comment on Ratke's claim that 'what happened was purely the result of Calvinist envy' was: 'I say this as a true Lutheran, that it is an untruth, and much too unjust to the laudable prince...'<sup>3</sup>

There is other evidence which suggests that Ratke himself had reservations about putting his work at the disposal of a Calvinist state, either because his masters might exploit it to spread their own fame, or else because they might present their achievement to the world linked with Ratke's name. One of the reasons Ratke gave Evenius for being attracted to Halle had been that he 'had never been committed to the *Calvinist* horror, and would not like to see this commendable scheme put into practice by the Calvinists, and they afterwards either win acclaim from others because of it, or proclaim Herr *Ratichius* as their comrade in heresy, etc.'<sup>4</sup>

In these terms, Ratke could not win either way. In fairness to Ratke, it should perhaps be added that Johann Sebastian Bach, also an orthodox Lutheran, had his difficulties in Calvinist Köthen, too. Despite his appointment, he never became a

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1 Krause, p. 81, No. II/26.

2 Krause, *loc. cit.*

3 Martini to Magdeburg City Council, 31st. August 1622; Krause, p. 180, No. V/9.

4 S. Evenius, *Relatio*, in, J.C. Förster, *Kurzer Nachricht von einem berühmten Pädagogen des vorigen Jahrhunderts*, Halle, 1782, p. 23 – [emphases in the original – J.W.]

citizen of the town, and his musical output during his appointment became reduced to exclusively secular compositions.<sup>1</sup>

A further point remains to be made, concerning the attitude of Ratke's assistants towards 'their inferior in learning and academic status.' Martini's remarks in his report that '... it was to me the height of absurdity that an idiot and an ignoramus should be permitted to dictate to learned people of knowledge, routine and experience, how they should write [and] teach the disciplines, sciences and arts ...'<sup>2</sup> reveal not only wounded professorial vanity but an inability to grasp the point of Ratke's conception, namely, that in order to teach the subject-matter of any discipline properly, skills, knowledge and abilities other than knowledge of the subject are needed. Martini's personal attitude, too, must have helped to foster the underlying tensions among the team in Köthen.

Any analysis which assigns the cause of Ratke's failure in Köthen exclusively to the religious, political or practical spheres — or even to the less attractive aspects of Ratke's personality, thus runs the risk of oversimplification. The events in Magdeburg support this conclusion.

Köthen had offered the most promising prospect for the implementation of his reforms which Ratke was ever to encounter. In Magdeburg, the political and religious situation offered a less attractive perspective. The conflict within the Lutheran Church in Magdeburg has already been alluded to. The scale of the religious skirmishes which took place there make Ratke's problems appear by comparison a minor diversion. When the Hoffmannite Cramer had decided to give his backing to Ratke, he already had the support of Werdenhagen, Meier and Probst. All four men were accused of heresy at one time or another. Further, Meier, together with Andreae, is mentioned some years later in a letter to Jung as one of the major Rosicrucian figures.<sup>3</sup> That the town was sensitive to the threat of religious instability is shown by the fact that long before an agreement with Ratke was contemplated, Evenius was asked to give an assurance that Ratke was no heretic. It would not be strictly true, therefore, to say that Ratke was the spark which ignited the smouldering antagonisms. If anything, he was more like a bone — one among many — thrown into a kind of dogfight between the warring factions. Even when Ratke was no longer in Magdeburg, the struggle continued. Given the circumstances, it is not surprising that Evenius — (Gilbert de Spaignart's preferred candidate) — having accepted the headship of the grammar school, should himself have become a target of Cramer's attacks.

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1 R. Schulze, *Köthen in Anhalt. Ein Führer durch die Stadt und ihre Geschichte*, Köthen, 1923, pp. 47-49.

2 Martini to Magdeburg City Council, 31st. August 1622; Krause, p. 180, V/9.

3 Morsius to Jung, 26th. August 1643, in, D.G.E. Guhrauer, *Joachim Jungius und sein Zeitalter*, Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1850, pp. 232-4.

In spite of his sectarian leanings and his volatility Cramer seems to have had a better grasp of the educational problems and of the true nature of Ratke's reforms than most of the citizens. He produced a perceptive analysis of the situation in the town's schools<sup>1</sup> and contrived to keep open the possibility that Ratke's reforms would be allowed to permeate Magdeburg's school system. Interesting among the points he made in his analysis, because of its similarity to Bacon's strictures, was his criticism of the humanist curriculum, and the concomitant divorce of form and content: '... one has ... allied and bound oneself so strongly to the heathen traditions and profanities, and penetrated them so deeply and entangled oneself, that one has concentrated ... not so much on the subject-matter as ... on the unproductive disputation, verbal and scholastic quarrels...' This (Hoffmannite) standpoint was not one which was shared by Evenius, who tended towards a more conservative position.

It was unfortunate for Ratke that Cramer's insight and zeal for reform were not united in an orthodox Lutheran clergyman. The citizens, in so far as they understood Ratke's reforms at all, seem to have been interested primarily in down-to-earth improvements in the schools' achievements – that is, in an increase in efficiency. They give the impression of wanting reform, but without the upheaval and expense which accompany it. In the presence of a reformer with the vision of Ratke, these differences must inevitably have constituted – as in Augsburg and Köthen – a source of conflict.

The control of the project in Magdeburg presented further areas of discord. The changes in the formulation of the *Concession* which Ratke asked for are significant in this respect. The striking out of the words 'without expense or costs to us' – ('us' in this case meaning Magdeburg City Council), – was evidently aimed at keeping open for as long as possible the question of how the reforms were to be funded, while the insertion of the words 'without anyone's interference' was designed to protect Ratke from the meddling he had complained of in Köthen.

In view of the situation in late 1621, when, it seemed, the Magdeburg council was behind Ratke and ready to grant (almost) his every wish, it is surprising to learn that privately Ratke was preparing to bring a civil action before the Imperial Court – (*Reichskammergericht*) – for breach of contract. It seems doubtful whether the action was ever brought, but relations between Ratke and the council had evidently soured between about December 1621 and the spring of 1622, and the substance of Ratke's proposals for reform constituted one point of dispute.

The unsatisfactory hearing of 29th. July 1622 has already been touched on. Although a number of points in the records of this meeting make it appear as though Ratke had indeed been unjustly treated, the council's subsequent decision

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<sup>1</sup> Gloël, pp. 179–180; Vogt 1894, pp. 235–237.

does not seem to have been blatantly unfair. The motion which found most favour was that '... he, Ratichius, should be permitted to teach outside the schools [and] without expense to the council [but] under the council's protection, and thus demonstrate his method in practice, when one would have the opportunity to take matters further...'<sup>1</sup> Here again, however, it is clear that Ratke's original conception for comprehensive social reform had been whittled down to a reform of teaching-method: one can demonstrate in the proposed manner a limited reform in method '*viva praxi*,' but not a comprehensive social, political and ecclesiastical reform.

In analysing the course of events in Magdeburg, the importance of personal motives must also be taken into account. De Spaignart, who had vehemently opposed Ratke from the beginning, was himself a Lutheran pastor, but at the opposite end of the spectrum from the Hoffmannites. Later historians have characterised de Spaignart as the single most destructive personality in Magdeburg during the 1620s. His inflammatory sermons helped to divide the citizens against each other, and ultimately were to make the town virtually ungovernable. De Spaignart is reputed to have denigrated Ratke from the pulpit, and even to have had a pamphlet printed — (which no longer appears to be extant, alas) — attacking him. In the unofficial minutes of the meeting of 29th. July, de Spaignart is recorded as having played a considerable part. He it was who demanded that Ratke should submit a full account of his pedagogy to the council in written form, — a one-sided demand almost certain to guarantee a breakdown in negotiations.

In demanding an exposition of Ratke's method not provided for in their contract, de Spaignart was exceeding the council's competence. Ratke mistrusted the council's motives — (the same issue had been a point of dispute in Augsburg and Köthen) — and he therefore complied with the council's request only with a proviso: '... he [Ratke — J.W.] wants to know to what end, why he should reveal his methods when not required to by the *Concession* [contract — J.W.] Is his work to be suppressed or promoted?' And Ratke closed with the words '... Ratichius is, like an architect, not bound to reveal the plan of his work to the council, so long as an honourable council does not yet intend to take on the role of client and provide funds.'<sup>2</sup> It was unfortunate for Ratke that de Spaignart was Evenius' brother-in-law.

The deeper currents of the time, together with some unhappy constellations on the personal level, thus made Ratke's plans in Magdeburg, as in Augsburg and Köthen, practically incapable of realisation. Looking back on the months he spent in Magdeburg, Ratke blamed for his lack of success the increasing isolation into which he had been driven through his association with Cramer, Werdenhagen and

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1 Gloël, p. 185.

2 Gloël, p. 186.

Probst. Only afterwards did he realise how his educational ideals had been exploited by the group surrounding Cramer, as a vehicle for their own political and religious ends. The clearest expression of this is to be found in a letter which Ratke wrote to Werdenhagen from Rudolstadt in 1623:

'...let the gentleman look into his own heart a little, and think hard whether such enmity and persecution do not rather stem from the Schilling matters<sup>1</sup> which you and M. Cramer have so far pursued with the universities of Helmstedt and Wittenberg, — yes, whether poor Ratichius was not rather driven out of Magdeburg by your enemies, so that you could not sally forth under [cover of] his pedagogy, as you all intend and as Cramer has also publicly stated ... I would to God you only knew how I have been plagued on your account and warned most urgently by pious and learned people, I hardly dare let it be known that I am acquainted with the gentleman, so hated and suspected are you one and all with your followers ... This quarrel would have been entirely unnecessary if the one hadn't thought he had to defeat the other, out of pure ambition...'<sup>2</sup>

A more detailed breakdown of the goals and contents of Ratke's 1612 *Memorandum* will show why his proposals were almost predestined to founder on the social, political and religious structures of the states and cities in which he worked. The *Memorandum* contained elements calculated to appeal to every sector of society. By the same token, for each item in the package there existed other social groups to whom the proposal was anathema. Further, those groups who stood to benefit most from change — namely, those who had traditionally been excluded from education — were those who had least power to implement it.

Ratke's attempts at reform failed because the ills he was trying to cure affected society as a whole, whereas the authorities who would have had to push through the reforms represented only limited sectors of society. Nobles seeking improvements in their schools were not looking for large-scale social and political change. The church, on the other hand, was even less anxious to act as an agent of reform. There reigned, and not only among orthodox theologians, the deep fear of a second, general, reformation.<sup>3</sup> City-states such as Augsburg, Magdeburg, or Frankfurt, had an interest in ensuring proper schooling, but were unwilling to enter into the kind of far-reaching financial commitment which Ratke's reforms would have entailed.

Finally, even the more humane aspects of Ratke's reforms contributed to his downfall where they conflicted with the expectations of the citizens. Parents who

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1 Ratke is here referring to the Hoffmannite controversy.

2 Gloël, pp. 187-188.

3 Michel 1978, p. 75.

believed that school was a place for discipline and concentrated learning were not going to be convinced by a scheme in which motivation and relaxation played a significant role. What they perceived of the school from outside was children enjoying themselves at play during regular breaks. The sensible measures taken in Köthen to inform the parents as to the rationale which underlay the reforms would seem to have been a case of too little, too late. These were the harsh realities, then, of the world into which the *Memorandum* was born.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Seeds of Ratke's Programme: The *Memorandum* of 1612

Every educational decision brings into play a chain reaction of consequences in the social, economic, and, eventually, the political field.<sup>1</sup> Ratke seems to have perceived the truth of this remark more clearly than most of his contemporaries. Indeed, his strategy for reform was based on it. The reception accorded to Ratke's initial proposals as contained in the *Memorandum*, however, was to force him to emphasise certain aspects of his programme at the expense of others: the political consequences of his reforms were played down.

Ratke's *Memorandum* bears the inscription: 'MEMORANDUM delivered to the German Empire, in Frankfurt on Election Day, 7th. May in the year 1612.'<sup>2</sup> It consists of a statement of Ratke's proposals, in a few lines, together with an *Elucidation* explaining and justifying the proposals, and suggesting how they might be implemented.

Though the *Memorandum* was later recognised as the heart of the Ratkean reform programme, it can have been known at first hand to comparatively few of Ratke's contemporaries. Its contents were familiar to the nobility assembled in Frankfurt, it is true, but it was not printed in Ratke's lifetime. Nor did it appear in Rhenius' *Methodus Institutionis nova quadruplex* in 1617 – understandably so, since it was a largely programmatic statement and had little to contribute to the debate on language-teaching method. Those copies of the *Memorandum* which survive were made by hand and circulated privately.

One is nevertheless justified in taking the *Memorandum* both as a bona fide statement of Ratke's intentions and also as a touchstone against which his later achievements may be measured. Coming when and where it did, the *Memorandum* is important in being not only, nor even primarily, an educational statement, but an essentially political one. It established the framework of Ratke's programme not

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1 E. King, *The Education of Teachers. A Comparative Analysis*, 1970, p. 80.

2 Cf. Appendix I.

in the sense that it made the steps in his subsequent career predictable — Ratke's life was too much subject to events outside his control for that to be possible, — but in the sense that much of his later work can be seen to have had its origins there. Further, the *Memorandum* contains both explicitly and by implication Ratke's diagnosis of the ills of his society.

Though not circulated in print during Ratke's lifetime, the repercussions of the *Memorandum* were felt in many states and cities far removed from Frankfurt. Before the end of the following year, the reports assessing the value and viability of Ratke's proposals had been published by the professors at Giessen (Helwig, Jung) and Jena (Brendel, Grawer, Gualther and Wolf) and read by such scholars as Alsted at Herborn and his student Comenius. Within twelve months, news of the Giessen and Jena reports had reached Scandinavia.<sup>1</sup> However, as might be expected given the complex religious and political constellations of the time, the reception of Ratke's ideas was mixed. Not everything he proposed could appeal to every sector of society. The difficulty was compounded by Ratke's having had, as he said, to commit his ideas to paper 'by gracious command, in extremely compressed form in the space of a few hours without warning...' The hurried quality of the writing led to a lack of clarity as to Ratke's intentions, and this in turn created unease in many quarters as to what the effect of Ratke's reforms might be. The result was that something of a suspicion of revolutionary, if non-violent, intentions attached to Ratke all his life. There is evidence, too, that the scope of Ratke's proposals was in the course of time narrowed. The first question to be addressed, therefore, is what Ratke's intentions actually were.

The answer is to be found partly in the *Memorandum*, but also in a group of documents written by Ratke's supporters and later associates. These include the Giessen and Jena reports, but reports were compiled by other observers from time to time throughout Ratke's life, on the basis of his work and of interviews conducted as part of negotiations with states, universities and nobles who were considering acting as patrons. The last of them was written for the Swedish Chancellor, Axel Oxenstierna, by Brückner, Meyfart and Ziegler in March 1634.

Documents are also extant, produced by the Ratichians, whose main function seems to have been to correct misunderstandings, clarify issues and to rebut counter-arguments and criticisms. Where explicit formulations of the arguments brought against Ratke's proposals are missing, these documents provide useful indications, by implication at least, of the directions from which the chief criticisms came. They include Ratke's own *Thorough and Reliable Report*<sup>2</sup> on his *Memorandum*, and a *Supplementary Report* published by the two Giessen profes-

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1 The Royal Library-National Library of Sweden in Stockholm possesses Swedish translations of both reports, dated 1614.

2 Cf. Appendix II.

sors. The fifth and later editions of the *Jena Report* also contain modifications which take account of the criticisms.

Ratke's proposals as set out in the *Memorandum* were simple. He was able, he said, with God's help and to the benefit and welfare of the whole of Christendom, to give directions:

1. how Hebrew, Greek, Latin and other languages may be easily learned and disseminated, even in a short space of time, both among young and old;
2. how a school may be set up not only in High German, but also in all other languages, in which all arts and sciences may be thoroughly learned and propagated;
3. how, throughout the whole empire, unity of language, unity of government and finally also unity of religion may be easily introduced and peacefully maintained.'

Ratke's diagnosis of contemporary ills followed in the *Elucidation* which accompanied the *Memorandum*. His first criticisms were directed at teaching method. 'The usual custom,' Ratke wrote, 'in use in all schools right down to the present day, is this, for the arts and sciences to be drilled almost with physical violence, and certainly not without great pains and efforts, into our precious youth, first in the Latin, then in the Greek and after that, though less frequently, the Hebrew tongue, through all sorts of lessons from a variety of books.

The most popular method, however, for helping our beloved youth to learn and retain them are these. First, they must learn a large number of lessons by heart, and repeat and recite them many times over. Then they must translate German into Latin, Latin into Greek etc. or, as it is called in schools, do many *exercitia* every day, and practise.'

Ratke's criticisms struck a sympathetic chord among the authors of the Giessen and Jena reports, some of whom were academics with many years' experience of teaching foreign languages. Their first complaint was that pupils were often able to repeat a lesson, but frequently without comprehension and hence without any benefit, 'from whence it happens that they not only fail to understand it, but also soon forget it again, because nature has been forced, since *nullum violentum diuturum* (what is accomplished by violence does not last).'<sup>1</sup>

Ratke's next point, the multitude and diversity of lessons, concerned the school curriculum. The authors of the *Jena Report* remarked that Ratke's criticism scarcely required proof, 'for why is it that the *Praeceptores* [teachers] in the school change with the hours, the boys on the other hand, morning and afternoon, have to have different *lectiones* [lessons], on and on. Isn't it because the *Praeceptor*,

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1 JR, p. 13.

who knows the subject and is experienced, can not teach so many different things for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more hours in one day, the burden is too great, he cannot manage it even with diligence and experience, whereas a boy whose *ingenium* [mind] and understanding are still tender understands nothing, – to learn so many different things for so many hours one after the other, it is against nature...<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the criticism that pupils had to learn too many different things, with the ensuing confusion of methods and books, the complaint was also made that even within individual languages ‘in almost every school, yes in the meantime in nearly all *classibus* [classes] a different grammar or “*Sprachkunst*” has been introduced in many places, so that the boys have been to no small degree confused, and not known where they were in the grammar.’<sup>2</sup>

With this point, Ratke and his associates touched on a theme which had occupied the attention of those concerned with language teaching since not long after the invention of printing. The problem had been acutely felt in England in the preceding century, and had led to a proclamation by King Henry VIII in 1542 forbidding the use in schools of all but William Lily’s Latin grammar. The definitive form of Henry’s proclamation, dated 1574, gave the reason for the measures as ‘the great encumbrance and confusion of the yonge and tender wyttes, by reason of the diversitie of grammer rules and teachinges. For heretofore every master had his grammer, and every schole dyvers teachinges, and chaunging of masters and scholes did many tymes utterly dulle and undoo good wyttes...’<sup>3</sup> The life of Lily’s work, later as the *Eton Latin Grammar*, extended until well into the eighteenth century if not beyond. In the nineteenth century, the Headmasters’ Conference tackled the problem anew, and the end of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century witnessed the movement inspired by E.A. Sonnenschein which shared the same purpose and culminated in the recommendations of the Joint Committee on Grammatical Terminology.<sup>4</sup> The problem, then, was not one confined to Germany, nor was it a problem of Ratke’s generation only.

Ratke’s other points on method concerned the practice of learning by rote and the use of translation. Both the Giessen and Jena reports condemned these practices, though with differing degrees of emphasis: ‘... through learning by heart the boys have to retain and recite what they have not yet properly understood. And the understanding, which is by nature free, is constrained: that is why such un-

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1 *JR*, pp. 8–9.

2 *JR*, p. 9.

3 Cited in J. Stanbridge and R. Whittinton, *Vulgaria*, 1932, p. xxxviii.

4 *On the Terminology of Grammar. Being the Report of the Joint Committee on Grammatical Terminology*, 1911.

natural memory-work without comprehension costs such a lot of effort and nevertheless lasts only for a short time.<sup>1</sup> The Jena professors' view was, '... we do not ... condemn learning by heart ... but only the *modum* or way of getting things by heart which has been in use with the boys so far in many schools and places ...'<sup>2</sup> The essence of this criticism was that the boys received no help from the teacher and that the learning was accomplished without understanding. In England, over two hundred years later (to judge by the references to it) this approach to teaching was as popular as ever. William Cobbett's advice to his son was: 'Never attempt to *get by rote* any part of your instructions. Whoever falls into that practice soon begins to esteem the powers of *memory* more than those of *reason* ... It is this mode of teaching, which is practised in the great schools, that assists very much in making dunces of Lords and Country Squires. They "*get their lesson*"; that is to say, they repeat the *words* of it; but, as to its *sense* and *meaning*, they seldom have any understanding.'<sup>3</sup>

As far as translation was concerned, the Ratichians distinguished between translating into the foreign language and translating into the vernacular. It was the first which was singled out for attack as an 'odd undertaking,' for 'whoever wants to translate something from one language into another must understand the language perfectly in order to grasp the author's meaning or intention properly. However, he not only needs to understand thoroughly the language into which he is translating, but be so far in command of it that he has a broad repertoire of varied *Phrasibus* or expressions, to be able to formulate his ideas in different ways and to choose between words. How, then, is a boy supposed to learn Latin by translating German into Latin? Or Greek through translating Latin into Greek? Isn't it the same as expecting him to already know Latin or Greek, which is what he is supposed to be learning?'<sup>4</sup>

The Giessen and Jena reports went into two further aspects of contemporary method which were not specifically mentioned by Ratke in the *Memorandum*. The first concerned the use of a foreign language (Latin) as the medium of instruction; the second aspect concerned languages and the curriculum. So long, it was pointed out, as the curriculum subjects are written in foreign languages, which the pupils understand only imperfectly if at all, their understanding of the subject-matter must suffer accordingly: '... boys in schools up to now have had to learn the

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1 GR, pp. 11-12.

2 JR, p. 12.

3 W. Cobbett, *A Grammar of the English Language, in a series of letters*, 1819, Letter XII, § 131, [emphases in the original – J.W.].

4 GR, pp. 12-13.

liberal arts such as *Dialecticam* and *Rhetoricam* ... [and] the languages at the same time, which, as everyone can see, is against nature...'<sup>1</sup>

Again, the same complaint was being made in England as much as a hundred and fifty years later: '... can any Thing be more absurd than our Way of Proceeding in this Part of Literature? To push tender Wits into the intricate Mazes of Grammar, and a *Latin* Grammar? To learn an unknown Art by an unknown Tongue? To carry them a dark Round-about Way to let them in at a Back-Door?''<sup>2</sup>

Since it is difficult to make progress teaching new subjects through the medium of a language only imperfectly understood, recourse was had in Ratke's day to methods which placed only small weight on understanding, such as dictation, copying, *repetendo* and *repscendo*. By *repetendo* was meant repetition, and by *repscendo* a form of oral question-and-answer exercise in which 'boys were required all too soon to reproduce or recite this or that, which they had not sufficiently understood or learnt, yes — scarcely heard once or twice...'<sup>3</sup>

The solutions which Ratke and his colleagues proposed were not in themselves controversial. Instead of having as many different grammars as there were schools or classes, there would, as in England, be one grammar ('*einerlei Grammatica*').<sup>4</sup> Of course, Ratke did not enjoy the power to impose a solution which Henry VIII exercised in England. Hence, his approach was rather different — indeed, the problem itself was not quite the same. Whereas Henry's advisers saw the chief problem in the multiplicity of grammars, methods, classifications and terminologies used for teaching a single language, Latin, Ratke was faced with a multiplicity of terminologies for the grammars of several languages. The chief instrument in Ratke's scheme was not to be the prohibition of competing grammars, but 'harmony'. One aspect of Ratke's conception of harmony presupposed a unified linguistic metalanguage, a grammatical terminology which could be applied to all the languages to be taught.

If there is one thread which, more than any other, runs through the Ratician critiques of contemporary practice, it is the lack of understanding which the chosen methods, orientated as they were towards form rather than matter, brought in their wake. According to O'Day, this aspect of the problem had been identified in England at an earlier date, and Ratke's native-language solution in part anticipated: '... developments in the teaching of Latin in England emphasised the use of

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1 *JR*, p. 10.

2 J. Greenwood, *Tatler*, No. 234, 7th October, 1710.

3 *JR*, p. 14.

4 *JR*, p. 27.

the vernacular in communicating rules to the pupil and in helping him to understand the content of the material used...<sup>1</sup> By the seventeenth century, however, this ideal seems to have been lost sight of.

Yet Ratke's method was not simply a question of using the vernacular to communicate rules and help the pupil understand the content. To make sure that the pupil understood what he was learning, Ratke would translate a coherent Latin text into the vernacular in advance. In other words, according to Ratke the new language was to be taught not by being itself used as the medium of instruction – (one feature of what has since been called the Direct Method) – but only, as the first step at least, via the vernacular. However, since Ratke's method, even though it was essentially inductive, also made use of grammatical terminology, his purpose meant in essence that not only the vernacular, but also the *grammar* of the vernacular, would have to be taught as part of the foundation for later learning. In eighteenth-century England this proposal, too, was advocated as a remedy for the parlous state of language teaching: '... by teaching them first the Grammar of their Mother-Tongue (so easy to be learned) their Advance to the Grammars of *Latin* and *Greek* would be gradual and easy; but our precipitate Way of hurrying them over such a *Gulph*, before we have built them a *Bridge* to it, is a Shock to their weak Understandings, which they seldom, or very late, recover. In the mean time we wrong Nature, and slander Infants who want neither Capacity nor Will to learn, till we put them upon Service beyond their Strength, and then indeed we baulk them.'<sup>2</sup>

However, what in Ratke's proposals seemed to be a relatively trivial shift of emphasis in method was to have consequences for the curriculum as a whole. If the medium of instruction were changed and the vernacular made the heart of the curriculum, then time would have to be found to teach it. And where could the time be taken from, especially in the context of a reform which claimed that the pupils were already taught too many things for too many hours a day? Further, the vernacular would have to be turned into 'a subject', like the other curriculum subjects; it would have to be given a shape, a syllabus, and properly ordered subject-matter.

The advantages of such a move, on the other hand, were obvious: access to other languages and to other subjects in the curriculum would indeed be revolutionised. Helwig and Jung drove the point home, '... every language can be taught much more easily straight from the mother tongue, all arts and sciences too can

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1 O'Day, p. 72.

2 J. Greenwood and Steele, *Tatler*, No. 234, 5th October 1710, [emphases in the original – J.W.]

with profit be studied easily and extensively in the German language, and hence in other useful languages almost with the same [small] amount of effort...<sup>1</sup> Ratke's proposals on method thus impinged on his second major concern, the curriculum.

With this point – 'how a school may be set up ... in which all arts and sciences may be thoroughly learned and propagated' – Ratke touched on a theme which was to dominate both his own endeavours and the educational debate in general throughout the first half of the seventeenth century.

The topic constitutes in reality a web of related problems: the content of the individual disciplines, the spectrum of subjects and the balance of the curriculum, and Latin as the medium of scientific communication.

Ratke placed great emphasis on the control of the subject-matter of each individual syllabus and its subsequent organisation. To achieve this, each discipline would have to be 'purified'. That is, its subject-matter would have to be submitted to careful scrutiny, and inappropriate matter – any unnecessary ballast, as it were, – thrown overboard. It seemed clear to Ratke, that, as Meyfart's report put it, 'up to now people have been in the habit of mixing in much extraneous matter, and many things derived from sheer idiocy and [pure] assumption, – with one subject and another.'<sup>2</sup> Ratke's touchstones for the acceptance or rejection of particular areas of subject-matter were, on paper at least, clear and specific: nature and the Holy Scriptures.

Ratke's proposal to extend the curriculum to include 'all arts and sciences' must be seen in the context of the widespread dissatisfaction which existed with the role of the classical languages in the educational system. This role had both a technical and a socio-political dimension. Technically, change of the kind Ratke advocated would mean juggling with a curriculum in which too much was already being taught in the limited time available. In socio-political terms, Latin was important in that it controlled access to knowledge and training in the professions. An oft-repeated complaint of the Giessen and Jena reports was the waste of ability resulting from this restriction. 'Up to now,' it said in the *Giessen Report*, 'all languages, arts and sciences have been bound to the Latin language, so that Latin rules like a tyrant over the other languages and arts in such a way that no-one can learn Hebrew, Greek, or knowledge and the arts before he has worked his way through the Latin language.'<sup>3</sup> And yet simply abandoning Latin would not solve the problem, since there was in effect nothing to replace it. German at that time was not yet a 'developed' language (in Halliday's sense of a language that is 'used freely in all the functions that language serves in the society in question ...') English in medieval England was not a developed language, since many of the

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1 GR, p. 20.

2 BMZ, p. 119.

3 GR, pp. 19-20.

social functions of language in the community could be performed only in Latin or in French.)<sup>1</sup> Similarly, German in the early seventeenth century was not equipped to take over the role of Latin in scientific and technical discourse. The unlettered man was thus in effect condemned to the mediocrity of elementary knowledge, and the scholar delivered into the slavery of Latin.<sup>2</sup> The extent to which

Latin dominated the curriculum meant that less time could be devoted to the study of anything other than philological subjects: Helwig and Jung wrote, '... in common schools, a boy ... will be stuck on Latin alone for many years, seldom learns to speak and write Greek or Hebrew, and after long torturing himself with the grammars he can do no more with it than turn a few words of Greek or Hebrew into Latin, unless he makes the effort through long, arduous labour to learn the language anew from the authors [i.e. from the Latin classics: Cicero, Terence etc. — J.W.]'<sup>3</sup>

Dissatisfaction at the disparity between learning language(s), as opposed to learning subject-matter (knowledge), increased as long as the traditional curriculum, a vehicle which had become too weak to carry everything which people wanted to load onto it, remained unreformed. The Jena professors posed the question 'whether it would not have proved more fruitful to devote the time which had been expended on the languages for so many years, to the liberal arts and sciences [instead].'<sup>4</sup> In England, Ashmole was to complain, 'Our misery now is, we spend a great part of our best and most precious time in learning *one Language*, to understand a *little Matter*...' He continued by saying that if only a language for universal communication were available, '*Arts* would arrive at a high perfection in a little space, and we might reckon upon *more time*, in the short account and measure of our *days*, to be employed in a *substantial study of Matter*.'<sup>5</sup>

The dominant position of Latin in the curriculum was both mirrored and conditioned by its role as the lingua franca of the sciences. Although this role, too, was attacked by Ratke, the war was not waged without opposition from within the scientific community. In Germany, it was Christian Thomasius (1655–1728) in Leipzig who, more than fifty years after Ratke's death, caused an éclat by becoming the first German academic to use German instead of Latin in his university

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1 M.A.K. Halliday, *Language as social semiotic: the social interpretation of language and meaning*, 1978, p. 194.

2 Rioux 1963a, pp. 224–5.

3 GR, pp. 17–18.

4 JR, p. 29.

5 J. Dee, *Fasciculus Chemiculus: OR, Chymical Collections*, translated into English with a prolegomena by James Hasolle (pseud. Elias Ashmole), 1650, Prolegomena.

courses. He was later forced to leave Leipzig, although lecturing in German was probably not the only or even the main reason.<sup>1</sup> Despite his defence of the vernacular, Thomasius, like Bacon, chose to write many of his philosophical works in Latin. Leibniz, too, (1646–1714) professed great respect for his native language, and yet his published works were invariably in Latin or French.<sup>2</sup> The practice in England during this period was not dissimilar, as the publishing history of Bacon and Newton shows. The dominant role of Latin in scientific publishing persisted in England until well into the second half of the seventeenth century. The reason for this was that the vernaculars were thought of as being inherently unstable languages. It was believed that they would not last, whereas Latin had proved its durability by having withstood the test of time over many centuries. Bacon, having some of his English works translated into Latin, explained to a friend that ‘these modern languages will at one time or other play the bank-rowtes [bankrupt – J.W.] with books: and since I have lost much time with this age, I would be glad as God shall give me leave, to recover it with posterity.’<sup>3</sup>

The three learned professions and university faculties of the time in Europe – Medicine, Law and Theology – also traditionally had Latin as their medium of professional communication. Paracelsus (1493–1541), an isolated forerunner of Thomasius in this respect, had a century earlier given some of his lectures on medicine in the vernacular, and Laurentius Fries had published a medical work in German, *Spiegel der artzeney*, in 1518. But these examples stand out by their rarity. Ratke’s suggestion in the *Memorandum* was that German should be made the language of medicine – (‘a doctor can heal and look after the body in good German, – it isn’t always done in Greek or Arabic anyway, languages which most of them are unfamiliar with’) – of the law, and of the liberal arts (philosophy): ‘If a philosopher can teach and expound his philosophy in Greek and Latin, why should he not be able to do the same in German...?’

The position of theology was somewhat more complex. On the one hand, it was logical for Ratke, as a Lutheran, to argue that everyone should have access to the Holy Scriptures in his or her native language. On the other, Ratke used religion as an instrument of curricular organisation, – that is, for deciding which languages should be taught and to what end. Having access to God’s word directly from the Bible meant learning Hebrew and Greek, but not the vernacular. Nevertheless, German remained in his scheme the first language to be taught to all children.

How could all this be achieved? Considering the modest compass of the *Memorandum*, Ratke devoted considerable space to this question. Basically, his proposals

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1 Cf. Wells, p. 465, fn. 16.

2 Wells, p. 270.

3 F. Bacon, Letter to Mr. Tobii Matthew, 26th June 1623; *Works*, ed., J. Spedding, R.L. Ellis and D.D. Heath, 1857–1874, vol. 14, p. 429.

involved a shift in the language ecology of his time. The concept 'ecology of language,'<sup>1</sup> includes 'the study of interactions between any given language and its environment ... its interaction with other languages... [and] ... its interaction with the society in which it functions as a medium of communication.'<sup>2</sup> Whereas Latin had been the first subject taught when Ratke was at school, in the *Memo-randum* the vernacular took pride of place: 'Now, the proper way and the course of nature is for our beloved youth to learn first of all to read, write and speak their inborn (*sic*) mother tongue, in our case German, correctly and thoroughly...' The remaining languages (to be taught specifically in this order) were Hebrew, Greek and Latin: 'These ... are the four main languages from which all other tongues mostly derive and in which they have their origin, and which must be learned and propagated above all else if anything worthwhile is to be achieved in church and state.'

Both the languages proposed and the order in which they were to be taught may strike an odd note today. But they did not seem odd to the seventeenth-century mind, in Germany or in England. Nancy Denton, goddaughter of Sir Ralph Verney, balked in the 1650s at having to acquire the conventional accomplishments for well-situated young ladies (French, singing, dancing, writing, and playing the guitar) wrote to her godfather to say that she intended to have instruction in the classical languages instead. Her cousins might out-reach her in French, she wrote, but she would outstrip them by learning 'ebri grek and laten.'<sup>3</sup>

Positive in Ratke's proposals is the evidence that a restructuring of the conventional curriculum was being advocated with reference to rational criteria. Differentiation within the curriculum would be necessary, for instance, according to the professional aims and interests of the student. Thus, 'Anyone who knows Hebrew well and desires to understand the Bible thoroughly, will find it absolutely essential to master in addition the Old Testament in Chaldean and the New in the Syriac language thoroughly and correctly.'<sup>4</sup> Further, Latin should be learned from one of Terence's comedies, '... unless one of the Latin students is thinking of studying Law, in which case it would be better to read and explain Justinian's *Institutiones*.'<sup>5</sup> The choice of foreign languages and the order in which they were to be taught were influenced primarily by religious considerations. The languages of the Bible were justified as the original languages of important texts. The

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1 Cf. C.F. Voegelin, F.M. Voegelin, and N.W. Schutz, The language situation in Arizona as part of the southwest culture area, in, D.H. Hymes and W.E. Bittle, ed., *Studies in Southwestern Ethnolinguistics*, The Hague, 1967, p. 405.

2 E. Haugen, *The Ecology of Language*, in his *The Ecology of Language*, Stanford, Calif., 1972, p. 325.

3 F.P. Verney, *Memoirs of the Verney Family*, Vol. III, 1894, pp. 66-74.

4 *Memor.*

5 *Op. cit.*

teaching of Latin and the vernacular had to be justified in some other way. With a reform as radical as Ratke was advocating, it might well be asked whether Latin should have been given a role to play at all. After all, if the Holy Scriptures were to be made accessible in the mother tongue, Latin would no longer be absolutely essential for their study, and its function as the medium of instruction for other subjects in the curriculum was one which was to disappear. The presence of Latin in the list suggests that Ratke believed that the time was not yet ripe for it to be discarded. 'If only,' it was exclaimed, 'liberal arts were put into our [own] German language ...!'<sup>1</sup> In other words, although a time would come when it would be possible to study any subject in German, for the moment the liberal arts 'lay all together imprisoned in the Latin and Greek language...'<sup>2</sup> For the moment, therefore, Latin would be necessary as the medium of access to professional knowledge, – an admission tacitly made in Ratke's reference to the student of Law.

Ratke's educational proposals, then, implied a revision of the curriculum, an overhaul of the content of individual subjects, the use of the vernacular as the medium of instruction for all subjects, and, in particular, the development of the vernacular as the language of science.

Ratke's third and final promise in the *Memorandum* was that he could show how unity of language, government and religion could be promoted and maintained throughout the whole empire. The first of these, unity of language, brings home the extent to which the dialects of seventeenth-century Germany – Saxon, Frankish, Swabian, Meissenish etc. – were perceived as a centrifugal force making communication in the vernacular above the regional level difficult. According to Rioux, Ratke's policy with respect to the native language was 'the keystone of [his] whole architectural design.'<sup>3</sup> Rioux believed that Ratke's words 'in our case German' in the *Memorandum* ('... for our beloved children to learn first of all to read, write and speak their own mother tongue, in our case German') – were less a statement of contemporary fact than an ideal to be aspired to: all children would have to be taught to speak the *same* German. In other words, Ratke was proposing the adoption of a single national, standard variety of the language. That language can be consciously exploited as a political instrument was demonstrated by Noah Webster, in the process of inventing North American English: 'Our political harmony is ... concerned in a uniformity of language. As an independent nation, our honor requires us to have a system of our own, in language as well as government...'<sup>4</sup> Not only did the variety of dialects pose a problem, the low

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1 JR, p. 38.

2 JR, *loc.cit.*

3 Rioux 1963a, p. 227.

4 N. Webster, *Dissertations in the English Language*, Boston, 1789, Dissertation I, p. 20.

prestige of German in the estimation of its speakers also constituted a barrier to its being accepted in the role which Ratke foresaw for it. These difficulties were compounded by opposition on religious grounds. It is not without a certain irony that some of the earliest literary monuments in German were the fruit of a movement to make the scriptures accessible in the vernacular. To this impulse is owed Wulfila's translation of the Bible into Gothic, as early as the fourth century. But apart from a brief flowering of the vernacular under Charlemagne, Latin remained the language of the church. It was only when Luther translated the scriptures into German that the tide began to turn in favour of the vernacular once more. At one stage it had been expressly forbidden to make the Bible accessible in the native language.<sup>1</sup> And Luther's activities were not viewed everywhere with wholehearted approval in the matter of language any more than in other spheres. Here, too, divisions opened up, and what was enthusiastically embraced by one party was anathema to others. By Ratke's time, German was treated by Roman Catholics with suspicion. They considered it to be the language of heresy, and better avoided wherever possible.<sup>2</sup>

Ratke's aim of introducing a standard High German was in part a consequence of his intention to teach the whole curriculum in the vernacular: where differing dialects coexisted but a standard orthography had not yet established itself — (a situation paralleled almost exactly in England during the same period) — preparing text-books in German would make the situation worse instead of alleviating it.

A further benefit predicted by Ratke, and one later to be actively pursued by the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* and similar societies, was the purification of the national language: its cleansing from foreign excrescences.

As with some of his other proposals, Ratke felt obliged to explain more precisely how his concept of unity of language was intended. Unity of language was 'not to be understood as if the whole world were to be forced into it. But because he [Ratke — J.W.] intends to set up a German school in the High German language in the German nation, he hopes only to spread such a language in so much better condition, use and practice among the Germans. Such ought indeed to be desired by the Germans, since in this way many odd and monstrous idioms would be got rid of.'<sup>3</sup>

Ratke anticipated no great difficulty with this part of his programme, and from the beginning identified the schools as the most suitable vehicle for its implementation. The dialect, too, which could most appropriately form the basis of the new, national standard was equally certain — that of Meissen. 'It is clear,' Ratke

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1 A. Schaeffer, *De l'influence de Luther sur l'éducation du peuple*, Paris, 1853, p. 136.

2 O. Behaghel, *Die Deutsche Sprache*, Vienna and Leipzig, 1911, pp. 57f.; and cf. G. Thiele, *Geschichte der preußischen Lehrerseminare*, Berlin, 1938, p. 136.

3 Mylius, § VIII.

wrote, 'from a number of circumstances, that all Germans are quite happy to speak the Meissen dialect.'<sup>1</sup> With this dialect, Ratke made an intelligent choice. Regardless of whether or not it was true that all Germans were happy to learn it, Meissenish was Luther's native dialect, and hence the one in which he wrote and into which he translated. It therefore had the advantage of offering copious written material, including the Lutheran Bible, which could act as a linguistic model.

With respect to unity of government, Ratke made it plain in his *Elucidation* that he was not, as might be supposed, suggesting a change of government in the empire, nor a reform of the electoral system, nor the suppression of political opposition, but a reform of its legal system. The problem of the language of the *corpus juris* has already been touched on; Ratke's aim with respect to the legal system was a thoroughgoing reform of the law. The touchstone for these reforms was to be Holy Scripture ('in conformity with the word of God') and their ultimate aim, justice.

Legal reform was the topic given least prominence in the whole of the *Memorandum*. Religion was something else. Of the three sources of disharmony in the empire – conflicting dialects, the competing legal systems, and religion, – it was religion which seemed to Ratke the most potentially destructive. The fragmentation of religious belief evident in the various sectarian movements which had gathered momentum during the sixteenth century and to which Ratke made explicit reference, could in his view be traced to the numerous pamphlets which kept the flames of conflict burning. Ratke's commitment to truth meant that by making the scriptures directly accessible to the people, differences of interpretation could be minimised. The problem would, he seemed to think, ultimately solve itself.

Ratke's *Memorandum* was written six years before the Thirty Years War erupted over Europe. What was presented in the *Memorandum* as a diagnosable and curable malady took on within a few years frightening dimensions. In retrospect, it seemed to Ratke as if his worst fears had been realised. In the last extant report on his work, written in 1634 when the war had been in progress for more than fifteen years, Ratke was reported as saying that 'the main cause of this continuing, indescribable disaster throughout the whole of Christendom was this, when not the word of God, but heathen knowledge and all kinds of worldly nonsense was taught in schools and put into the tender minds of children; from this, inevitably in all estates of life, but particularly among the clergy, the great disorder ensued.'<sup>2</sup> Bearing this in mind, it is surprising that Adamson should write of Ratke's *Memorandum* that, 'read in the light of subsequent history, [it] has an irony which none of those at Frankfurt could have suspected. Within six years of the outbreak of the Thirty Years War, Ratke invited the Diet to consider plans, whereby there

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1 TRR.

2 BMZ, in, P. Stötzner, ed., *Ratichianische Schriften*, Leipzig, Vol. II, 1893, § 1, p. 112.

might be “conveniently introduced and peacefully established throughout the whole Empire a uniform speech, a uniform government, and, finally, a uniform religion”...<sup>1</sup> It is not easy to see why subsequent events should make an irony of Ratke’s proposals. Almost any political or social analysis could by the same token be retrospectively branded as ‘ironic’ if war broke out within a few years of its publication. On the contrary, it seems that Ratke had correctly identified the very strains which were in fact to tear the Holy Roman Empire apart.

In sum, Ratke’s *Memorandum* laid out in concise form the guidelines for a social and educational reform which would have embraced the whole of the German Empire. Over the following two decades, Ratke was to pursue two parallel courses of action stemming from the *Memorandum*. On the one hand, he conducted negotiations with representatives of the towns and city-states, the nobility, and the universities wherever he thought he saw an opportunity to put his programme of reforms into action. At the same time, he worked with great assiduity on the theoretical content of his work.

There can be no doubt that Ratke’s intentions did indeed, as Michel put it, ‘correspond to the most pressing needs of the majority of the people of his time, who suffered greatly from war, poverty and social conflict.’<sup>2</sup> The point at which long-term improvements needed to be initiated was, as Ratke saw it, the educational system. Within the educational system, reform needed to be pursued on various levels. First, there needed to be improvements in the methods of teaching the various subjects. But teaching, as Ratke repeatedly pointed out, involved not one activity, but two: not only the performance of the physical act of teaching, but also the work of preparing materials. Further, the curriculum as a whole needed to be overhauled. However, none of this would be sufficient unless a network of schools existed to carry it. Helwig and Jung painted a despairing picture of the youth of the day who had no access to education: ‘We see how many a poor child wanders through the alleyways, abandoned by everyone, knowing nothing either of God or His Word, knowing neither virtue nor vice, honour nor disgrace; wandering like an animal, [he] has no reason or opportunity to learn anything, must often unavoidably become a scoundrel, thief, murderer – yes, a lost soul.’<sup>3</sup> Responsibility for these children was urged on the state: ‘Here, the authorities should be father to the orphans, and forestall such evil with properly organized schools [and] good education.’<sup>4</sup>

The authors also made an interesting connection between responsibility for education and the maintenance of social order: ‘They [the authorities – J.W.]

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1 Adamson, pp. 31–32.

2 Michel 1978, p. 24.

3 *GSuppR*, p. 117.

4 *GSuppR*, *loc.cit.*

ought also to consider carefully with what justification they want to punish these creatures, who they could easily have taught and educated properly in the tender years of youth, and yet so negligently failed to...<sup>1</sup> All these aspects were to engage Ratke's attention during the following years.

Running through many of the writings of Ratke and his associates is the idea of free access to education, to the Holy Scriptures and to the law. Lack of access to education meant that many children who could have benefited never had an opportunity to acquire any schooling. A repeated theme in the Jena report was the waste of ability which this system engineered. The implications of Ratke's proposed reforms in the language ecology – (that teaching through the vernacular would make both subjects and languages available to a much wider sector of the population), – were clear to all. They were spelled out in both the Giessen and Jena reports. To Helwig, Jung, Gualther and the others, the consequences appeared wholly beneficial. However, the reception accorded to Ratke's *Memorandum* shows that not everyone shared these views. Round this point crystallised a considerable proportion of the opposition to Ratke's ideas, and his views were perceived in some quarters as dangerously radical.

To judge from the reports, and the comments which Ratke himself made on his work in later life, opposition to his aims and ideas covered a broad spectrum of points ranging from the ideological (such as the question of whether unity of government and religion were in fact desirable aims) to the practical, (such as the question of how, even given the desirability of the aims, such reforms could be financed and how long they would take to implement).

On 23rd. January 1613, eight months after the election in Frankfurt, Dorothea Maria wrote to the Jena professors asking for their evaluation of Ratke's '*intent*' and '*methodus*.'<sup>2</sup> In their reply of 11th. March, the Jena professors remarked that the *Memorandum* 'had struck not only us, but also others as disturbing.'<sup>3</sup> However, they concluded that Ratke had correctly and sufficiently explained himself and were 'satisfied ... with his written elucidation.'<sup>4</sup>

Not everyone's fears were so easily allayed. The idea of unity of language may have been uncontroversial, but unity of government – a united, monarchist-absolutist state ruled over by the emperor – must have seemed to many of the small princes to be the opposite of any constellation which they could imagine for themselves.<sup>5</sup> And religious unity in any form other than the triumph of their own

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1 *GSuppR*, *loc.cit.*

2 Krause, pp. 6-7, No. I/8.

3 Krause, pp. 7-11, No. I/9.

4 Krause, *loc.cit.*

5 Michel 1978, p. 70.

faith over competing faiths, in itself an unlikely prospect, must have seemed even less of a desideratum.

It has already been noted that, in the wake of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, the clergy felt the need for a period of stability and consolidation. Ratke's remarks on the pernicious influence of theological commentaries and interpretations could only arouse fears of greater unrest and even violence. The authors of the *Jena Report* went out of their way to assure their readers that 'no general reformation is aimed at, as some like to suggest.'<sup>1</sup> In their letter to Dorothea Maria the Jena professors had expressed themselves satisfied with Ratke's *Elucidation* 'including where Theology is concerned,'<sup>2</sup> which, while it testifies to Ratke's orthodoxy, at the same time illustrates how sensitive to religious questions the states and their rulers were. The authors went on to explain that Ratke's talk in the *Elucidation* of getting rid of 'the polemical pamphlets and biblical glosses' did not mean that it was Ratke's intention to 'destroy useful books without distinction.'<sup>3</sup> On the contrary, using Ratke's methods, other peoples' books could also be made use of, so that 'no-one has anything to fear on that account,'<sup>4</sup> – a revealing phrase!

One reason why the Jena professors were able to evaluate Ratke's work so positively in their letter was because they confined their attention almost entirely to his proposals for the reform of teaching. Their reply to Dorothea Maria's enquiry of 23rd. January 1613 explained, 'We do not say anything concerning the *Corporis Juris civilis* because it does not belong to our profession;'<sup>5</sup> and earlier, they made it clear that their comments applied only to '*Herr Ratichi modo tradendi et docendi linguas ...* [method of passing on and teaching languages] since we go no further.'<sup>6</sup> This treatment of Ratke's *Memorandu* seems to have initiated a tradition of interpreting Ratke's pedagogy in the narrower, erroneous but widely propagated sense of teaching-technique – a tradition which persisted until the sixties of the present century. It is Dorothea Maria, however, who must be seen as the real initiator of this tradition, for in her request to the Jena professors, of the nine points to which they were required to give answers, only the question as to Ratke's '*intenf[ion]*' gives an indication that Ratke could have contemplated anything more ambitious than a reform of teaching-method.

To those who looked a little further and were able to draw out the implications behind what Ratke was saying, it must have been access to education which

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1 *JR*, p. 42.

2 Krause, pp. 7-11, No. I/9.

3 *JR*, p. 42.

4 *JR*, *loc.cit.*

5 Krause, pp. 7-11, No. I/9.

6 Krause, *loc.cit.*

appeared the most delicate issue. It was not the case that Ratke, with his proposals, burst upon the world with an idea which no-one had had before. Rather, his commitment was expressed in opposition to the belief that universal access to all subjects and languages was not a desirable goal. This kind of esotericism has had a long history in education, and the arguments put forward in the *Jena Report* were clearly deployed as an attack upon this position.

Among the fears the authors of the *Jena Report* were anxious to calm were, for instance, that: ‘... if it were so easy to come to the knowledge of languages, and the arts ... were put into the German language in the way mentioned, and this method used in teaching, [then] the arts [i.e. knowledge, subject-matter – J.W.] would become too common, yes, everyone without distinction would become learned, and thus the really learned be despised...’<sup>1</sup> There was opposition to Ratke’s proposals, therefore, from the learned and professional classes. That the proposals could also be perceived as a potential danger to the ruling classes is evident from the consequences of the reforms later introduced in the Duchy of Gotha by Duke Ernst. These reforms were so successful in raising standards of education that Duke Ernst was attacked in the *Reichstag* for making his subjects too learned.<sup>2</sup>

Mistrust and suspicion with respect to such developments were evident both in Germany and England. By translating medical advice into his native German in 1518, Laurentius Fries had risked the disapproval of his colleagues.<sup>3</sup> Over a century later, Nicholas Culpeper published medical books in English,<sup>4</sup> ‘in each of which he inveighs against the shrouding of scientific knowledge in unfamiliar languages...’<sup>5</sup> There are several indications which suggest that Culpeper took the law as his model: ‘... there was a time when those heavenly *Reformers* at *Westminster* voted down *Latine* for the Language of the *Beas*, and were clearly for throwing the whole practice of the *Law* into an *English Model*. In imitation of them the famous *Culpeper* brought the design to admirable effect in *Physicks*.’<sup>6</sup> And an otherwise anonymous ‘R.W.’ wrote in his preface to one of Culpeper’s works

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1 *JR*, pp. 33–4.

2 W. Boehne, *Die pädagogischen Bestrebungen Ernst des Frommen von Gotha*, Gotha, 1888, p. 186.

3 Wells, p. 215.

4 N. Culpeper, *A Physicall Directory*, 1649; *Directory for Midwives*, 1651; *Culpeper’s School of Physick, Or the Experimental Practice of the whole Art*, 1659.

5 R.F. Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language*, Stanford, California, 1953, p. 317.

6 J. Bramhall, *A Vindication of the Clergy, From the Contempt Imposed upon them by the Author of the Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy and Religion. With Some short Reflections upon his Further Observations*, 1672, pp. 53–54.

how 'the late Famous Mr. Noy of *Lincolns Inne*' had tried unsuccessfully to persuade his fellow lawyers 'to have the Law turned into English.'

Many lawyers believed that Latin was indeed better suited to certain functions than English: Bacon himself insisted on using '... the peculiar language of our law ... a language wherein a man shall not be to hunt after words, but matter...'<sup>1</sup> Suspicion nevertheless remained among the population as a whole that language was being used as an instrument to make free men dependent on lawyers. They railed against 'the unknownness of the law, being in a strange tongue; whereas, when the law was in a known language, as before the conquest, a man might be his own advocate. But the hiddenness of the law, together with the fallacies and doubts thereof, render us in a posture unable to extricate ourselves; but we must have recourse to the shrine of the lawyer whose oracle is in such request, because it pretends ['claims' – J.W.] to resolve doubts.'<sup>2</sup> The lawyers, for their part, when compelled by the Act of 1650 to write their law reports in English, complained that 'that part of the common Law which is in English hath only occasioned the making of unquiet spirits contentiously knowing, and more apt to offend others, than to defend themselves...'<sup>3</sup>

The perception that language could be used to bar, as well as facilitate, access to information extended equally to religion. Catholic and Protestant attitudes to the vernacular were divided in England as in Germany: although some '... say (as Romanists<sup>4</sup> doe) the Scripture in [the] mother tongue is dangerous for error, and hard to be understood of the people: shall not a man though hit his way better that knowes part of it, than hee that knowes neuer a Foot?'<sup>5</sup>

Keeping the scriptures in a foreign tongue and making access to them possible only via 'polemical pamphlets and biblical glosses' roused opposition in England which was couched in language reminiscent of Ratke's: 'No man lighteth a candle, and putteth it under a bushell. But little other doe they who keepe the world still in darknesse of a language vnknowne; and worse they who by their partiall translations and glosses, would make this light shine onely for their owne purpose; shutting and opening the same as they list, and carrying it (as it were) in a theeues or powder-traytors lanterne.'<sup>6</sup>

Though the questions of access to education and professional knowledge were doubtless the major issues in the reception of the *Memorandum*, even those who

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1 F. Bacon, *Works*, ed., B. Montague, Vol. 13, 1831, p. 140.

2 J. Warr, *The Corruption and Deficiency of the Laws of England, soberly discovered: Or, Liberty working up to its just height*, *The Harleian Miscellany*, Vol. 3, 1745, p. 247.

3 W. Style, *Narrationes Modernae*, 1658, Introduction.

4 Roman Catholics.

5 W. L'Isle, *Divers Ancient Monvments in the Saxon Tongue*, 1638, § 11.

6 L'Isle, *loc. cit*

accepted Ratke's long-term goals expressed reservations as to the financial viability of Ratke's project and also as to its time-scale.

To the former, Helwig and Jung devoted a section in the *Giessen Supplementary Report*: 'If the indescribable value of these things were properly weighed and the fruits which could be harvested considered as painstakingly as the expense they would entail, one would soon arrive at a different conclusion, and develop more zest for the development of the school.'<sup>1</sup> Particularly interesting is the argumentation which follows, in which education is presented as being in itself a worthwhile financial investment which would repay the initial outlay: '... towns and provinces — above all, those which take it up [Ratke's work — J.W.] and adopt it promptly, — will in this way incomparably arrive at such a blossoming of wealth and affluence, as to repay many many times over the ... sums invested.'<sup>2</sup>

As far as the time-perspective was concerned, Helwig and Jung were swift to allay fears that the project might be so vast as to be incapable of realisation within a reasonable time. They did not do this, however, by minimising the extent of the reforms — these remained 'broad and comprehensive'<sup>3</sup> — but by emphasising the need to establish priorities and pursue each along a different time-scale: '... everything need not be attempted at the same time; instead one will have to see what support is forthcoming, proceed gently with the work ... and ... set up all the projects in a sequence, so that a town or province is not burdened with everything [simultaneously] ...'<sup>4</sup>

The objections which Ratke's *Memorandum* provoked thus embraced both pragmatic and ideological considerations. These are in turn reflected in Ratke's own *Report*<sup>5</sup> on his proposals, written as an elucidation, as it were, of his earlier *Elucidation*.

The timing of this *Report* has never been satisfactorily established. Some authorities date it shortly after the presentation of the *Memorandum* in May 1612, others in the following year. It is generally accepted that it was Lippius who suggested to Ratke that an additional statement would help to allay suspicion. Vogt believed that this statement (the *Report*) was made eight days after the presentation of the *Memorandum*.<sup>6</sup> However, there are reasons for believing that the *Report* was not completed until about ten months after the election at Frankfurt. For one thing, the holograph copy in the Gotha archives<sup>7</sup> closes 'Weimar, 8th. March 1613.' Further, the nature of the changes Ratke made and the explanations he

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1 *GSuppR*, p. 124.

2 *GSuppR*, p. 124.

3 *GSuppR*, p. 125.

4 *GSuppR*, *loc. cit.*

5 *TRR*.

6 Vogt 1876, pp. 11-13.

7 Gotha Codex Chart. B 825 V.

gave, particularly where religious matters were concerned, suggest that hopes of obtaining support from Catholic rulers had in the meantime been abandoned. Finally, there are indications in the text that a passage of time longer than eight days elapsed between the completion of the *Report* and the *Memorandum*. Ratke wrote, for instance, of his opinion at the time when the *Memorandum* was submitted 'domals' ('then'), contrasting it with the present. 'The section almost at the end of the *Memorandum*,' he wrote, could indeed be subjected to an unfortunate interpretation, 'wie Ich neulich erinnert worden' – ('as I have recently been reminded'). There is evidence, then, for the later date, and hence that Ratke had ample opportunity to assess the response to his proposals and adjust his strategy accordingly.

Formally, the *Report* is divided into three numbered sections. Somewhat confusingly, Ratke assigned paragraphs (1) and (2) of the *Report* to the first topic of the *Memorandum* – (that is, to the extent of his proposed undertaking, and method); paragraph (3) deals with the second point of the *Memorandum* (the relationship between language and the curriculum); and the remaining (unnumbered) paragraphs are devoted to the problem of unity.

Ratke opened his *Report* by denying having claimed that he would be able to realise his programme single-handed. Further, the speed and efficiency with which he had said that languages could be taught were to be interpreted in a relative rather than an absolute sense. On the second point, Ratke reiterated his belief that a complete curriculum could be implemented in standard German. At the same time, he conceded that there were differences in clarity and ease of teaching between languages in relation to different areas of subject-matter, and insisted that at the higher levels of enquiry arts and sciences should be studied in the languages in which they had originally been set down. Nevertheless, he denied that there was any *a priori* connection between particular kinds of subject-matter and particular languages.

The third point (unity of language, government and religion) was dealt with as follows. Unity of language could be achieved through the medium of the schools, by imperial decree. The dialect of Meissen would be acceptable to speakers in all the German provinces as a standard dialect. Unity of government would be guaranteed both by setting up 'a single body for the maintenance of public order' and by a thoroughgoing legal reform. These two proposals expressed more pointedly what in the *Memorandum* had been somewhat programmatically formulated. The same vagueness in the *Memorandum* as far as religion was concerned had left the way open for each Church to interpret the text in its own way. After all, who could object to the restitution of 'the original catholic and apostolic teaching'? The *Report*, on the other hand, laid out Ratke's position with greater clarity. In it, he denounced any interpretation of unity which involved compromise. Not only the non-Protestant churches but non-Lutheran branches of Protestantism, too, were

here lumped together as heretical: the Roman Catholics, the Calvinists, Arians, Photinians, Anabaptists 'or whatever they ... may be called.'

Ratke's inclusion of the Calvinists in his list of heretics goes a considerable way towards explaining the mistrust Ratke was later to experience at the hands of the Calvinist clergy, while the inclusion of Catholicism suggests that the *Report* was directed towards a readership less wide than that of the *Memorandum*. This point alone would have sufficed to exclude a good number of the electors, including his own sponsor, the Archbishop of Mainz, together with many of the other princes and nobles of the Holy Roman Empire.

A further paragraph of the *Report* was devoted to explaining what Ratke had meant by 'old and young, women and children' having direct access to the Holy Scriptures through the medium of Hebrew and Greek. Ratke was at pains to point out that when he spoke of 'old and young without distinction,' he was not to be understood as saying that 'persons of all and every degree are always and in every way equally suitable to receive education.' Such a lamentable misunderstanding, he suggested, could only have occurred due to the haste with which he had had to formulate the original *Memorandum*, and because 'nothing can be so perfectly expressed in speech or writing, that [it] cannot be twisted and misrepresented by godless people, out of supposed acuity and unseemly excess of critical zeal.'

Ratke closed his *Report* with the claim that his sole intention had been 'to show how languages may more easily and effectively be learned, and to publish grammars, together with the appropriate textbooks ... and, after completion of the project, to advise on and discuss the other important points with learned people who have experience in the areas concerned.'

Bearing in mind that Ratke's aim was to secure patronage and that he was writing for a specific audience, the question of how much of his original programme as expressed in the *Memorandum* was left intact, and for how long, is an interesting one.

First, Ratke's sights seem to have been lowered from his original aspiration of involving the empire as a whole to involving only the Protestant princes. Unity of religion was reduced to a pursuit of the Lutheran cause, — (a point well calculated to find the support of Dorothea Maria). Nor was any further intention expressed of attempting to unite the warring religions. This position represented a hardening of opposition to the forces of the Counter-Reformation and to the irenic tendencies of the time, which were particularly strong in Heidelberg in the Palatinate.

Ratke's decision to concentrate on the Protestant – particularly the Lutheran – states had its consequences. His negotiations with Count Palatine Wolfgang Wilhelm ceased with the latter's conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1614,<sup>1</sup> and the petitions of Ratke's sponsors for financial support in Augsburg foundered on the Catholic majority in the City Council.

A second point to be noted concerning Ratke's shifts in position is that his long-term goal of wide-ranging legal, political and social reforms were given progressively less prominence in successive documents. It was to be Duke Ernst, of Gotha, who would take credit for ordering 'Men learned in the Law, to translate the Body of *Roman Laws* into the Vulgar Tongue, for the use of *German Readers*.'<sup>2</sup> Disclaimers as to any reforming intentions in these spheres appear in all the major reports up to Ratke's death: '... it is not Herr Ratichius' intention, so far as I can tell, to oppose governments and secure power for himself and at the same time mould the same into a new form, but to make plain and demonstrate to the authorities from the Holy Scriptures how the educational system could be better and more practically organized, so that everyone from childhood upwards would soon know and learn what duty and service are due to a lord from his subjects...'<sup>3</sup> Neither social revolution nor large-scale reform belonged to the central tenets of Lutheranism, so that on the one hand a withdrawal from a more radical position on Ratke's part need not come as a surprise. On the other, it seems probable that Ratke did not need to preach social, economic or political reform openly, since these would have followed as a more or less automatic consequence of his educational reforms.

Finally, there remains the problem of Ratke's real views on who should be allowed access to education. This point, too, seems to have been of central interest to potential patrons to the end of Ratke's life. Throughout, Ratke seems to have retained his conviction that it was in the interests of the state to recruit and educate capable administrators from whatever ranks it could. His educational reforms would mean, he said, '... that henceforth all posts, whatever they may be called, may be that much more easily replaced and occupied by industrious, loyal workers' offspring.'<sup>4</sup> His retractions with respect to young and old, women and children having access to the scriptures through the original languages are in reality evidence of an attempt to distinguish between different courses of study. 'It is not at all his intention,' wrote Brückner, Meyfart and Ziegler in their *Humble*

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1 E.W. Zeeden, *Das Zeitalter der Glaubenskämpfe*, in, B. Gebhardt, ed., *Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte*, Vol. 2, 1955, pp. 130–31; and cf. Michel 1978, p. 77.

2 J.T. Philipps, *The History of the Two Illustrious Brothers, Princes of Saxony*, 1740, p. 49.

3 Mylius, § VII.

4 Kolbe, § 3.

*Relation* to Oxenstierna, 'to saddle the children with the learning of many and unnecessary languages, but instead [he] considers this to be the most useful, – that every *studiosus* be made to learn those languages alone which are of most use to him in the *facultet* he wishes to study in, and which he really cannot avoid.'<sup>1</sup>

Superficially, the result of Ratke's re-working of his position would seem to be that not much more was left of his reforms than, as he seemed to indicate himself towards the close, a proposal for an improvement in language-teaching. And yet this conclusion contains an obvious paradox: it contradicts the earlier paragraphs of the *Report* itself, which deal with legal and curricular reform, and also Ratke's other avowed aims of unity of religion and language. How far, then, did the *Report* represent a genuine withdrawal from Ratke's ideological position and how far a tactical manoeuvre in response to the expectations of established social groups?

Ratke was under no illusions as to his position – it was left to others, usually his enemies, to warn the world at large as to the true extent of his reforming ambitions. Ratke confided to Evenius in 1618 that he believed it would be possible to build up an educational system in two years which would enable anyone to understand sermons in Greek and Hebrew, 'even ordinary females; about other political *commoditeten* [advantages] he wishes to say nothing at present.'<sup>2</sup> To Martini, the point seemed so important that it headed the list of complaints in his report to Magdeburg City Council: Ratke's intention was '... not confined to changing the schools, but was much more directed to reforming [the] spiritual and civil government in general...'<sup>3</sup> It looks, therefore, as though Ratke was compelled at an early stage to try to conceal the real thrust of his reforms under the mantle of his proposals for reforming the education system.

The proposals which Ratke put forward in the *Memorandum* were rejected by the empire. But for a brief moment in 1612, while the matter was under consideration by the nobles, the future of German education hung in the balance. For what would have been the result if the empire had opted for Ratke's offer? The answer is not merely a matter for speculation, for Ratke left behind, in his encyclopaedic work and in his tables, detailed plans as to what his system of education, and even the individual subject-syllabuses, was intended to look like. In a group of works, centred on the *Archontica*, Ratke elaborated the contours of an education system which could serve as a blue-print for reconstruction after the ravages of the Thirty Years War. And the principles which were to govern the relationship between teacher and taught, and the teaching of various subjects in the classroom, were set

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1 BMZ, in P. Stötzner, ed., *Ratichianische Schriften*, Leipzig, Vol. II, 1893, p. 119.

2 S. Evenius, *Relatio*, in, J.C. Förster, *Kurze Nachricht von einem berühmten Pädagogen des vorigen Jahrhunderts W. Ratichius nebst einigen Original-Beylagen*, Halle, 1782, p. 42.

3 Krause, p. 179, No. V/9.

down in the *Scholastica*, and in the shorter pieces which he wrote between about 1612 and 1616. Together, they offer a comprehensive statement of Ratke's views on education at all levels, – the curriculum, educational provision and administration, and teaching in the classroom.

## CHAPTER V

### The key to the plan : Ratke's *Encyclopaedia*

During the months which followed his presentation of the *Memorandum* in 1612, Ratke must have been full of optimism. His bold, programmatic statement in Frankfurt had attracted attention, even financial recognition, from a number of nobles, and his main problem, after deciding where he wanted to work, must have been to choose those parts of his programme which he wanted to develop first.

In deciding on education as the area through which his reforms were to be implemented, Ratke implicitly defined a number of tasks: there would have to be a structure to sustain the plan – a curriculum of some sort; there would have to be syllabuses for the individual subjects and textbooks to teach from; and if the promise of his manifesto were to be kept, there would have to be a unified method of teaching.

Ratke's work on the *Encyclopaedia* was to be the bridge between the concept of society which underlay his *Memorandum*, and the implementation of steps to bring this society into being through a system of education. One question which needs to be answered in this connection is, why did Ratke choose the encyclopaedia as his instrument of reform? His own *Encyclopaedia*, published in 1619, does not exceed thirteen pages. Nevertheless, it provides the key to a proper understanding of much of his life's work. Without it, much of what Ratke produced in the last twenty years of his life must appear piecemeal. In the context of the *Encyclopaedia*, however, his later works can be seen as individual logical steps, like the stones in a mosaic, towards the creation of a grand design.

By Ratke's time, knowledge had long been organized into disciplines. These had already crystallized into the seven liberal arts by the 1st. century B.C.<sup>1</sup> The concept of the encyclopaedia – *ενκυκλω παιδεία* or 'circle of disciplines' – developed later. In the Middle Ages the 'circle of disciplines' concerned only the

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1 J. Mayerhöfer, Conrad Gefner als Bibliograph und Enzyklopädist, *Gesnerus*, 22, 1965, p. 182.

middle schools, since higher education was accommodated within the traditional four faculties of theology, medicine, jurisprudence and philosophy. In the form of the 'circle of disciplines' the trivium and quadrivium of the *artes liberales* survived more or less unchanged for over a thousand years.

The great age of the encyclopaedia was the thirteenth century. Like the Renaissance, the thirteenth century witnessed a rapid increase in popular knowledge. This explosion of knowledge was fuelled by the Dominican and Franciscan friars, who had been entrusted with the task of raising the moral and educational level of the parish clergy.<sup>1</sup> The leaders of the religious orders soon found, however, that the education of even their own members could not keep pace with the growth in their numbers, let alone cater for the population as a whole. Furthermore, it was impossible for the majority of students to acquire at first hand a knowledge of every science, and most could not collect a library large enough to meet their needs. Writing encyclopaedias was the way in which the orders attacked this problem.<sup>2</sup>

The three most famous encyclopaedists of the thirteenth century were Bartholomaeus Anglicus, Thomas of Cantimpré and Vincent of Beauvais,<sup>3</sup> and the most popular encyclopaedia was Bartholomaeus' *De proprietatibus rerum*, written in nineteen books about the year 1230. The number and distribution of the extant Latin manuscripts, the translations into French, Dutch, Italian, English, Provençal and Spanish, and its subsequent printing history, all testify to the continued popularity of this encyclopaedia over almost three centuries. It was reprinted in Frankfurt as late as 1601 and again in 1609, – in other words, well into Ratke's lifetime.

It would be a mistake to believe that the thirteenth-century encyclopaedias were the product of a desire to spread knowledge *per se*. Rather, they constituted a sort of handbook to and commentary on the Bible, and their function was to supply deficiencies in knowledge, of whatever sort, without which a proper understanding of the Bible would not be possible. Bartholomaeus expressed his aim in the *Prohemium* to his *De proprietatibus rerum* as being to explain the allegories of the scriptures '*ad edificationem domus Domini*'. In this sense, secular knowledge in the Middle Ages remained the handmaid of theology.

By the sixteenth century, however, when the tradition became available to Ratke, different approaches to encyclopaedic work had begun to establish themselves. In the philosophical tradition, the question scholars were trying to answer

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- 1 M. Goodich, Encyclopaedic literature: child-rearing in the Middle Ages, *History of Education*, 12, 1983, p. 1.
  - 2 G.E. Se Boyar, Bartholomaeus Anglicus and his Encyclopaedia, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 19, 1920, pp. 177-178.
  - 3 Goodich, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

was, 'What is it possible to know?' This approach led from Isidore of Seville to the works or projected works of Bacon,<sup>1</sup> Alsted<sup>2</sup> and later encyclopaedic authors.

A second approach is exemplified by Gesner's *Pandectarvm sive Partitionum uniuersalium*.<sup>3</sup> This was an attempt to solve the problem of how books containing this knowledge could best be arranged, and was hence primarily bibliographical in orientation.<sup>4</sup>

A third approach may be seen as an attempt to answer the question of the best way to organize a curriculum for teaching, and it is in this tradition that Ratke's *Encyclopaedia* finds its proper place. The word 'curriculum', it should be noted, was not available to Ratke. He clearly intended his *encyclopaedia*, or 'circle of disciplines' to denote the same thing. Unless Ratke's encyclopaedic work is seen against this background, it is hard to understand how it could survive in competition with the massive tomes of Bartholomaeus, Alsted and others. There is, moreover, an interesting survival in this tradition of encyclopaedia-as-curriculum from as late as 1707.<sup>5</sup> This work, only eight pages long, is neither more nor less than a proposal for a reformed curriculum for a four-year programme of university studies in England.

Ratke, then, used his *Encyclopaedia* as a means of organizing the individual disciplines of his time, without at this stage specifying their contents. It functioned, in other words, rather as an empty vehicle – a logical structure within which content of whatever provenance could be transported.

In chronological terms, the Ratichian works developing the encyclopaedic theme were probably produced in the following order. Following the *Memorandum* of 1612, a draft, *Quasi in synopsi* (Outline of all the sciences) was committed to writing in Augsburg in about 1615. In 1619 Ratke's *Encyclopaedia Pro Didactica Ratichii* was published as one of the 'Köthen Series' of publications, together with – (in accordance with Ratke's theory of harmony) a German version: *Allunterweisung nach der Lehrart Ratichii*.

A comparison of these with the work of earlier encyclopaedists and contemporaries of Ratke, such as Alsted, shows that Ratke's thought was deeply embedded in a living tradition. Nevertheless, there are significant departures from this tradition. They were only fully worked out, however, in two later documents

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1 F. Bacon, *The two Bookes of Francis Bacon. Of the proficience and aduancement of Learning, diuine and humane*, 1605; *Novum Organum*, 1620.

2 J.H. Alsted, *Scientiarum Omnium Encyclopaedia*, Herborn, 1630.

3 Zürich, 1548.

4 J. Mayerhöfer, Conrad Gefner als Bibliograph und Enzyklopädist, *Gesnerus*, 22, 1965, p. 181.

5 ENKYKΛOΠAIΔEIA or *A Method of Instructing Pupils*, 1707.

which were not printed in Ratke's lifetime – the *General Constitution of the Christian School*<sup>1</sup> and the *Index of all Disciplines*.<sup>2</sup> Neither of these can be precisely dated. Both are presumed to have been written between 1626 and 1630 while Ratke was based mainly in Rudolstadt. However, whereas the *Index* gives the most succinct view of Ratke's thinking on the organisation of disciplines, it is the *General Constitution* which makes the more finished impression. Of the seven extant manuscripts, six contain a title-page with full title, place and date, and a summary table: *Die Allgemeine Verfaßung/ Der Christlichen Schule/ Welche in der Wahren Glaubens Natur/ vnd Sprachen Harmony Auß heiliger/ Göttlicher Schrift, der Natur vnd/ Sprachen, Anzustellen, Zu beste/tigen vnd Zu erhalten,/ Zu/ Der Lehr Art/ RatichJ./ Geschrieben/ durch u./ Rat. Symb./ Gewonheit verschwind/ Vernunft vberwind/ Warheit Platz find./ CRANICFELD M. DC. XXXII.*

This title exemplifies the formula adopted by Ratke in the later works written within this framework. The formula is: '(Title of the individual work)/ of the Christian School, to be initiated, confirmed and preserved in the true harmony of faith, nature and languages out of holy, divine scripture, nature, and languages, in accordance with the Ratichian didactic. Written by.../ Rat. Symb.' (At this point Ratke's emblem would be inserted). The formula continues: 'May custom disappear, reason triumph, room be found for truth. Kranichfeld, (year).'

This baroque formula is interesting not only as an expression of Ratke's aims, programme and philosophy, but also as an aid in determining which works Ratke himself viewed as complete, even if they did not happen to be printed in his lifetime. Works not ready for the press lack either the complete title-page or some detail of formulation, place or date. It is also important to note at this point that the word 'school' was not used in its modern, institutional sense, but rather in its more abstract, medieval sense, to denote a sphere or domain of academic doctrine ('schola').

To put Ratke's curricular organisation into the broader encyclopaedic context, it is useful to compare his works with other encyclopaedias which he may have known. These would include the works of Bartholomaeus Anglicus and Gesner. Alsted's *Encyclopaedia* may also be taken into consideration, since it appeared in Ratke's lifetime, though more than ten years after the publication of his own *Encyclopaedia*.

Bartholomaeus' *De proprietatibus rerum* is arranged in four sections. The first part (Books I–III) deals with incorporeal substances (God, the angels, the soul); the second section (Books IV–VII) deals with man; the third treats of both the visible world in general (Books VIII–XIII) and in particular - (Books XIV–XVIII).

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1 *GC*, – *Allgemeine Verfassung der christlichen Schule*, AU 1, pp. 89-144.

2 *Index*, - *Register aller Lehren*, AU 1, pp. 81-87.

The last book is devoted to a treatment of accidental properties (*accidentia*) - colour, taste, measure, tone etc.

Despite the fact that the *De proprietatibus rerum* was reprinted in Ratke's lifetime and more than fifty years after the appearance of Gesner's *Pandectarum*, the difference between the two could hardly be more striking. Gesner's embraces a range of disciplines almost entirely related to the aspirations of the Renaissance. Gone is the claim to be offering the knowledge necessary for a proper understanding of the Bible. In its place is a framework intended to encompass in twenty-one books the whole range of human wisdom.

Eighty years after Gesner's publication, the number of books in Alsted's *Encyclopaedia* has increased to thirty-five.<sup>1</sup> A range of new disciplines is listed, some splitting off from existing subjects, others seemingly new. In the Ratichian outline *Quasi in synopsi* of 1616<sup>2</sup> by comparison, only nine disciplines are mentioned, and these are divided as follows. The first division is into those disciplines pertaining to God (*Theosophia*) as against those pertaining to man (*Philosophia*). *Philosophia* is further subdivided into *Propaedia*, which contains the arts of discourse (Grammar, Dialectic, Rhetoric), and *Paedia*, or the philosophical arts proper. The latter are subdivided into theoretical and practical arts: Mathematics, Physics and Metaphysics (theoretical) as against Ethics, Economics and Politics (practical). *Didactica* is nowhere mentioned. By the time Ratke's *Encyclopaedia Pro Didactica Ratichii* appeared in 1619, the number of individual disciplines had been increased to eighteen, and the system of oppositions significantly altered.

A survey of the disposition of Ratke's 1619 *Encyclopaedia* is provided in a *Schematismus Encyclopaediae* attached in some copies on an unnumbered leaf at the end of the work. The first three sets of oppositions here, are: (1) *Dogmatica* v. *Didactica*; (2) liberal v. 'illiberal' subjects; and (3) *Realis* v. *Instrumentalis*.<sup>3</sup> The first of these oppositions assigned — conceivably for the first time in history — a major role to 'Didactic'. Alsted, it is true, included *Didactica* as one book in his 1630 *Encyclopaedia*, but the implications of Ratke's *Schematismus* are different.<sup>4</sup> Here, *Didactica* is not simply an item in an inventory, but is assigned a unique place in the structure of knowledge. Ratke's disposition implied that each 'content' subject had its corresponding pedagogy. By drawing a clear distinction between the subject-matter of a discipline (*Dogmatica*) on the one hand, and the teaching of this subject-matter (*Didactica*) on the other, Ratke opened the way to a general science of pedagogy or 'Didactics' whose laws would in principle embrace the teaching of all disciplines.

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1 Table IV.

2 Figure I.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Cf. Table V.

#### **Table IV**

The book-titles of Gesner's *Pandectarum* (1548) and  
Alsted's *Encyclopaedia* (1630).

Table IV

Gesner *Pandectarum*, 1558.

*Books*

I	De Grammatica & Philologica
II	De Dialectica
III	De Rhetorica
IV	De Poetica
V	De Arithmetica
VI	De Geometrica, Opticis...
VII	De Musica
VIII	De Astronomia
IX	De Astrologia
X	De Diuinatione
XI	De Geographia
XII	De Historiis
XIII	De Diuersibus Artibus illiteratis
XIV	De Naturale philosophia
XV	De seu Metaphysica
XVI	De Morali philosophia
XVII	De Oeconomia philosophia
XVIII	De re Politica
XIX	De Iurisprudentia
XX	De re Medica
XXI	De Theologia Christiana

Alsted *Encyclopaedia*, 1630.

*Books*

I	Hexilogia
II	Technologia
III	Archilogica
IV	Didactica
V	Lexica
VI	Grammatica
VII	Rhetorica
VIII	Logica
IX	Oratoria
X	Poetica
XI	Metaphysica
XII	Pneumatica
XIII	Physica
XIV	Arithmetica
XV	Geometria
XVI	Cosmographia
XVII	Uranometria
XVIII	Geographia
XIX	Optica
XX	Musica
XXI	Ethica
XXII	Oeconomia
XXIII	Politica
XXXIV	Scholastica
XXV	Theologia
XXVI	Jurisprudentia
XXVII	Medicina
XXVIII	Artes Mechanicae in genere
XXIX	Artes Mechanicae Mathematicae
XXX	Artes Mechanicae Physicae
XXXI	Mnemonicæ
XXXII	Historica
XXXIII	Chronologia
XXXIV	Architectonica
XXXV	Quodlibetica

Ratke's second opposition distinguished so-called liberal studies from practical or vocational studies – or, as he termed them, 'technologies'. The third opposition – the difference between the 'thing' (*Res*) and the 'instrument' – reflected an important distinction in Ratke's thinking. In the *Encyclopaedia*, '*realis*' (for the 'thing') was divided into divine and human, the human being further subdivided to give (with the divine) the four traditional university faculties: Theology, Jurisprudence, Medicine and Philosophy. The philosophical disciplines were in their turn divided into *contemplativa* (theoretical) and *activa* (practical subjects).

Ratke's *General Constitution* is presumed to have been written between 1626 and 1630, though the manuscript possesses a title-page with the inscription 'Cranichfeld M DC XXXII'. Like almost all of Ratke's later works, it is arranged in the form of question-and-answer, and is thus able to provide the philosophical and logical underpinning for the divisions which in the *Encyclopaedia* were presented without explanation.

In the *General Constitution* the 'thing': 'instrument' distinction taken over from the *Encyclopaedia* is elevated to become the backbone of the work's tripartite structure.

The first book of the *General Constitution* is concerned with the Holy Scriptures – their definition, causes and properties. At the core of Book I, Ratke says that revealed truth may be approached in two ways, – in terms of things and instruments. These are then elaborated according to Ratke's strict Ramist method in Books II and III, and examined from three points of view: their harmony, distinctions and order. The 'things' are then treated as being apprehensible either by the light of grace (*res in lumine gratiae*), or by the light of nature (... *in lumine naturae*).<sup>1</sup> Practical disciplines in the *General Constitution* are the province of prudence and 'arts'. Prudence is the ability to decide which things should be changed and which left untouched, and hence includes within its purview Ethics, Economics and Politics, whereas the 'arts' involve some sort of physical activity – e.g. *Medica*, and (on the 'illiberal' side) manual skills and Agriculture.

The third book of the *General Constitution* deals with the 'instruments', which are defined as everything useful for the dissemination of knowledge of subjects and languages.<sup>2</sup> The value of the instruments, which may be of two kinds – auxiliary ('*inserventia*') and directing ('*dirigentia*') is that they show the proper use of things, and provide economic ways of teaching languages with the greatest ease

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1 Not *lumen naturale*, as in Padley, p. 106 *et passim*.

2 GC, III.1.i.

and certainty; and they ensure that everything can be acquired and retained, enduringly and without frustration.<sup>1</sup> The auxiliary instruments include *Noëmatica* (the doctrine of perception or knowing), and *Organica* (the use of tools).

There is only one 'directing' instrument, and that is Ratke's new science of pedagogy – *Didactica*. This directing instrument is said to be something which permits children, – indeed, all those who want to learn, – to assimilate easily all subjects and languages.<sup>2</sup> 'Up to now,' Ratke wrote, 'no better has been found or demonstrated, though many have undertaken to produce something better. But since the harmony of both – subjects and languages – has been ignored, and people have not known how to proceed properly from the light of grace to the light of nature, which is most important of all, they have not only failed to produce much of any value, but have lost that good which they had, and wandered far from the proper path.'<sup>3</sup>

In the *Quasi in synopsi*, the *Encyclopaedia* and the *General Constitution*, Ratke worked out a framework to accommodate the new knowledge of his age. His *Index of all Subjects, in the true Harmony of Faith, Nature and Languages, taken from Holy Scripture, Nature and Languages* began to fill out this framework by listing exhaustively the disciplines which were the repositories of this knowledge.

At first sight, the *Index* appears to be no more than an inventory of subjects which in many cases overlap with existing trades and professions. It is possible, however, to recover from the *Index* the principles which determine its implicit structure. Ratke maintained, for instance, the distinction between disciplines knowable by the light of grace and those knowable by the light of nature. Those knowable by the light of nature were further subdivided in the *Index* into the theoretical and the practical. These two distinctions thus generate a broad tripartite scheme (similar to that of the *General Constitution*) which underlies the structure of the whole *Index*.

At first sight, the lists in the *Index* confuse by the sheer number of items they contain.<sup>4</sup> However, they all reflect finer subdivisions within this fundamental threefold structure. Five disciplines are assigned to the first section, which contains those knowable by the light of grace: *Theologica*, *Logodidascalica*, *Agapologica*, *Christologica* and *Pisteologica*. A further seven are listed under the 'theory' division of that which is knowable by the *lumen naturae*: *Metaphysica*, *Archeologica*, *Theognostica*, *Angelognostica*, *Psychognostica*, *Physica* and *Mathe-matica* – (whereby Physics has sixteen subsections and Mathematics fourteen). The third and final broad group of doctrines – the 'praxis' group – contains

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1 GC, III.1.xii.

2 GC, III.3.vii.

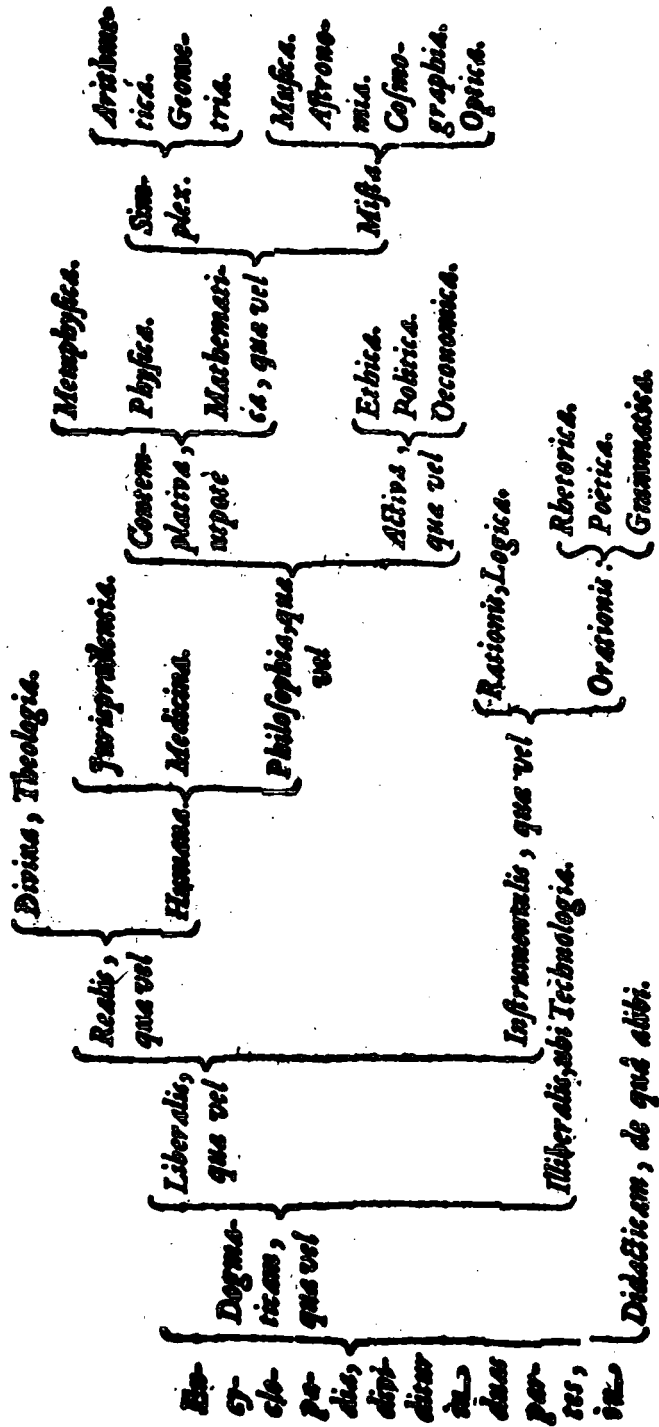
3 GC, III.3.viii.

4 Bollnow, for instance, found them 'pretty pedantic' – cf. O.F. Bollnow, Wolfgang Ratke im Licht neuerer Editionen, *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik*, 24, 1978, pp. 771 and 772.

## **Table V**

**The Table from Ratke's *Encyclopaedia*, Köthen, 1619,  
showing the division of subjects.**

# SCHEMATISMUS ENCYCLOPÆDIÆ



thirteen major heads. Of these, Politics has thirty-four further sub-sections, the *DienstLehr* (*Of Service*) has one hundred and twenty three (taking the civil *DienstLehren* together with those of the Lord's Court), *Paradigmatics* nine, *Medicine* six, *crafts* eighteen, *manual occupations* seventy-seven, *Agriculture* seventeen, *Noëmatica* nine, and *Didactic* six – (or seven, if the *Organicodidactica* is included).

The close relation between the *Index* and the *General Constitution* is revealed by a comparison with the table for Holy Scripture, which is embedded in the *General Constitution*.<sup>1</sup> This table is not as fully worked out as the *Index*, and the structures of the two differ in some details – the section *Of Service*, for instance, is not mentioned in the *General Constitution*. One interesting feature of this table, however, is that for many headings Ratke entered the precise number of sub-divisions they were supposed to contain, thus: 'Physics has 16'; '... cf. Mathematics, this 14'; – 'Politics has 34'<sup>2</sup> etc. The first of only two failures in correspondence between the *Index* and the table is that Politics in the *Index* has 35 and not 34 sub-headings. To accept this at its face value, however, would mean treating *Of Service* as one of the 'governing doctrines', which would be an obvious paradox.

The second failure of correspondence is that No. 19 in the list of disciplines in the *Index* – *Organicodidactica* (*Werkzeugehrartlehr*), though in terms of its morphology a '*lehrartlehr*', is not subsumed under No. 18 – *Lehrartlehr* (*Didactica*) – but placed on a par with it. With these two reservations, there is much justification for considering the *Index* and the table for the Holy Scripture as closely related treatments of a single theme.

Taken together, the four documents discussed so far constitute the ground-plan of Ratke's taxonomy of disciplines. When one considers the efforts Ratke made to find specialists in the various fields, and the quality of those with whom he did co-operate, it is reasonable to assume that his encyclopaedic work constitutes a fair representation of considerable areas of knowledge as perceived in his time. That this taxonomy could also serve as the framework for an educational curriculum in the broadest sense is beyond doubt, whereby it must be said that no claim was made at this stage as to exactly what should be taught to whom, at what age, or how. These questions were dealt with more extensively in Ratke's treatment of educational provision and teaching method.

Ratke's encyclopaedic work as it has been presented so far remains an essentially abstract conception. The only internal indications as to how far Ratke managed

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1 AU 1, p. 96.

2 AU 1, loc. cit.

to implement his curriculum are remarks inserted by Ratke himself at various points in the *Index*.<sup>1</sup> Further, the *Encyclopaedia* reveals nothing about how the next steps in Ratke's plan, from curriculum to syllabus, were to be achieved. This was, nevertheless, a task which Ratke attempted, and he tackled it with the help of three instruments – his theory of harmony, the principles elaborated in his *Eutactica*, and his tabellary method.

Before turning to these, however, it is important to say something about Ratke's terminology, partly in the interests of clarity but also because he exploited the morphology of his native German to reflect the logical and philosophical organisation of his work. Paying attention to linguistic order was one of Ratke's ways of imposing order on matter.

The element '-lehr' is used by Ratke in the sense of 'doctrine' or 'teaching'. For any object of study – 'X', Ratke was able to construct a term 'X-Lehr' – 'doctrine-of-X'. *Gott* (God) thus produced *Gotteslehr* (= *Theologica*, or 'doctrine-of-God'), and *Gotteswort* (God's word) gave '*Gotteswortlehr*' (= *Logodidascalica*, or 'doctrine-of-God's word'). By '*Lehrart*' Ratke understood 'didactic' or 'teaching, pedagogy' though not in so narrow a sense as teaching-method. Thus '-*lehrart*' suffixed to a word meant 'didactic-of', or 'teaching-[this thing]'. '*Sprach-lehrart*', for example, would mean 'didactic-of-language' or 'language-teaching'. In Ratke's eyes, teaching itself constituted a body of doctrine in its own right. To express this, Ratke applied 'doctrine' to a 'didactic', to give: '*lehrart-lehr*', with the meaning 'the doctrine-of teaching-X'. *Behaltungs-lehrart-lehr* thus meant, 'the doctrine-of teaching-memory'. Finally, the 'X' could also stand for any unspecified doctrine or '-lehr', to give *Lehr-lehrart-lehr*, or 'the doctrine-of the teaching-of [any] doctrine'.

Each of the twenty major disciplines listed by Ratke as being accessible through the *lumen naturae* constituted a doctrine or *-lehr* of this kind. Within each of these *lehren* were subdivisions such as those within the *Regierungslehr* (Doctrine of Government) with six different types, and *Amtslehr* (Doctrine of Office) with twenty-four further sub-sections, all ending in *-amtslehr*.

Ratke's interest in linguistic order is one expression of his penchant for systematising – a preoccupation of seventeenth-century scholars in general. This urge to systematise had both a formal and a substantial aspect. Where greater emphasis is laid on the formal aspect, the impression gained is one of rigid constraint: it 'represents the harmful side of Ramism, its confining of knowledge within obligatory dichotomies, its arid enumerations.'<sup>2</sup> Properly grasped, however, the formal system which Ratke used to develop his topics serves as a useful key to the

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1 E.g. – 'the above disciplines complete according to the Harmony in German and Latin tables'; the *Noëmatica* 'completed in the German language', *AU* 1, pp. 84, 86.

2 Padley, p. 52.

content. Ratke was meticulous in the preparation and execution of his works, and they were produced in accordance with a system which was itself explicitly articulated in the *Eutactica*. Works which taken piecemeal may appear arid can be shown to have a clearly articulated structure which, once the plan is understood, makes the work readily accessible and, as Ratke claimed, easier to assimilate. The tables constituted a 'universal skeleton key' which if 'properly applied' could unlock any of the arts or sciences.<sup>1</sup>

The best starting-point for an understanding of the first of the instruments which Ratke used in working out his plan – his concept of harmony – are the titles already alluded to which contain the words 'in the true Harmony of Faith, Nature and Languages...' For Ratke, the light of grace was defined as 'the enlightenment by means of which we perceive everything which – though too high for our mere reason – it is nevertheless necessary to know for our salvation.'<sup>2</sup> To the seventeenth century in general, and Ratke in particular, conflict between God's will and the created world was inconceivable. Ratke's intention in revising the curriculum for pedagogical purposes was to subject knowledge to two kinds of proof. Things known by the light of grace could be proved only from the Bible,<sup>3</sup> but things known in the light of nature were to be 'proved' both from the scriptures and nature.<sup>4</sup> The 'true Harmony of Faith' was thus to be used as a kind of filter to bring the content of individual subjects into line with the teaching of the scriptures. As Ratke's preface to the *Outline of the Christian School* made clear: 'Other honourable learned people before him [i.e. Ratke – J.W.] also took this path, searching for the source of earthly and worldly disciplines in the scriptures, as may be seen in [the work of] Francisco Valesius, Lambert Danaeus and others, but they only did it piecemeal and soon gave up. The aforementioned gentleman *Didacticus* [i.e. Ratke – J.W.] took it upon himself to examine all spiritual and worldly arts and sciences, has shown their foundations in the scriptures, [and] demonstrated their harmony among themselves. Whatever, too, could be found, taught and supplemented in the worldly disciplines – from other good books, both by christians and heathens – he has brought together like an industrious bee in accordance with his harmony, though still mostly in [the form of] tables...'<sup>5</sup>

'Harmony' was used by Ratke in two senses. The harmony of the disciplines among themselves (i.e. between faith and nature) was a product of God's creation, and hence not manipulable. The harmony, on the other hand, in accordance with

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1 A. Grafton, *Teacher, Text and Pupil in the Renaissance Classroom: A Case Study from a Parisian College*, *History of Universities*, 1, 1981, p. 47.

2 GC, II.2.i.

3 GC, II.2.iii.

4 GC, II.6.iii.

5 Gotha Codex Chart. B 827 B.

which the material of the worldly disciplines was gathered, sifted and prepared for teaching, was within the control of the professional *didacticus*. It was Ratke's intention to include within the domain of harmony everything pertaining to the preparation of a syllabus for teaching – the selection of content, its organisation, the language in which it was taught, down to and including its physical materials such as course-books. Mylius, Anna Sophia's deacon in Kelbra and author of a report on Ratke's work explained Ratke's principles as follows: 'I. The *Harmonia Didactica* is to be found in the things themselves and such is their foundation. II. The *Harmonia Didactica* is a principal, noble part of the *Methodi*, and the latter can not be complete without the former. III. All books except the Bible and other *scriptorum symbolicorum* can be worked out in accordance with this *Harmoni*.'<sup>1</sup>

When the subject-matter of a syllabus had been refined, checked for internal and external contradictions, and structured for teaching purposes, it would have to be formulated in a particular language. But the individual languages themselves – according to Ratke – also constituted part of the curriculum, so that they, too, would have to be subjected to the same treatment. (It had, of course, been the terminological confusion between grammars which had helped to trigger the calls for reform). Ratke's approach in this area was to treat the grammatical categories of Latin as universals in terms of which other languages could be described. Ratke's efforts in this field were appropriately characterised by Chomsky as follows: 'The goal of traditional "universal grammar" was ... to give a substantive general account of these categories, thus fixing a universal "vocabulary" for the generative grammars of all languages'.<sup>2</sup> It was this 'universal vocabulary' which formed the substance of Ratke's *Grammatica Universalis*. The problem was that the idea of teaching any subject, of which grammar was one, in different languages meant that the individual languages used as media of communication would function as multipliers. If, as Ratke had demanded in his *Memorandum*, all arts and sciences were to be taught in the vernacular, plus Hebrew, Greek and Latin, then his programme would logically have to contain at least the following components: (1) a curriculum of 'all arts and sciences' spiritual and secular; (2) a syllabus for each subject; and (3) appropriate text-books for each syllabus. These would then have to be multiplied by as many languages as they were to be taught in – a truly mammoth undertaking.

To the modern mind, the most striking features of Ratke's theory of harmony are first – (with respect to the harmony of faith and nature) – the way in which theology still provided the framework within which the natural sciences were

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1 Mylius to Anna Sophia, 27th. August 1628; Müller 1880c, pp. 490–2.

2 N. Chomsky, *The Logical Basis of Linguistic Theory*, in, H.G. Lunt, ed., *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Linguistics, Cambridge, Mass., August 27-31, 1962*, The Hague, 1964, p. 941, fn. 28.

pursued; and second, — (with respect to the harmony of languages) — how this has remained a theme, indeed an unsolved problem, until the present day.

The harmony between faith and nature which Ratke postulated belies the assumption that science successfully divorced itself from theology in the seventeenth century. In this respect, Ratke was in full conformity with his age. In his *Triumphus Bibliorum Sacrorum* Alsted wrote that the books of the Bible not only contained the knowledge necessary to lead mankind to everlasting salvation, but also '...whatever belongs to a more advanced knowledge of philosophy, medicine and jurisprudence.'<sup>1</sup> The issue was still the subject of debate in the Hartlib circle in England in 1646–47. John Hall wrote to Benjamin Worsley to ask 'Whether the Scriptures be an adequate judge of physical controversies or no?'<sup>2</sup> As Webster put it, 'because of its metaphysical implications, theology must be accepted as a factor directly relevant to the formation of scientific concepts, but theological beliefs were important in a much wider context, since no dimension of human speculation or action was untouched by their influence.'<sup>3</sup> The idea that the conduct of science was no more than a disinterested search for truth is 'based on a defective interpretation of seventeenth century natural philosophy, which underestimates the role of theology and arbitrarily assumes a divorce between social planning and technology on the one hand, and science and philosophy on the other; a dichotomy which cannot be sustained on the basis of the historical evidence.'<sup>4</sup>

With regard to the harmony of languages, the problem of conflicting systems, terminologies and methods of teaching languages had, as has been pointed out above, already become acute in England by Henry VIII's time. The movement initiated by Sonnenschein began in 1886 with the formation of the Grammatical Society. This had the aim of 'promoting the cause of simplicity and uniformity of terminology in the teaching of the "school" languages ... Why should not the experience acquired in learning one language be made more real help in the learning of others?'<sup>5</sup> — sentiments very much in the spirit of Ratke. Sonnenschein's initiative gave rise to the project which in its terms of reference came closest to the Ratichian scheme — the *Parallel Grammar Series*, which appeared between 1888 and 1899. The distinguishing features of this series were 'uniformity

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1 J. Alsted, *Triumphus Bibliorum Sacrorum*, 1625, Preface.

2 G.H. Turnbull, John Hall's Letters to Samuel Hartlib, *Review of English Studies*, New Series, Vol. IV, No. 15, 1953, pp. 228–229.

3 C. Webster, *The Great Instauration. Science, Medicine and Reform 1626–1660*, 1975, pp. 493–4, and cf. Slaughter, p. 7.

4 Webster, *loc. cit.*

5 *Journal of Education*, 1886, p. 169.



of classification and terminology ... uniformity of scope ...[and]... uniformity of size and type.<sup>1</sup> Sonnenschein carried these ideas over into the twentieth century, spreading them through the channels of the Classical Association, which he helped to found in 1903. In 1911, during the Association's debate on the Report of the Joint Committee on Grammatical Terminology<sup>2</sup> Professor Conway claimed, 'English and French Grammar have never been considered from this point of view, that the terminology used in one class-room shall be in harmony with the terminology used in the next...'<sup>3</sup> In 1916, in a special article on the subject in the *Times Educational Supplement* the complaint was made (about 'language'):

'...We do not teach it; we teach languages. We teach them on different methods and with different terminologies ... It is not our fault — it is the fault of a clumsy system; but we can at least prepare for the improvement of the system by teaching languages with continual reference to one another...'<sup>4</sup>

Finally, in an article published in 1924, Grattan speculated on the possibility '... of some pedagogic scheme which would set forth English and e.g. Latin grammar less as irreconcilable opponents than as allies whose individual characteristics are all equally worthy of respect and all equally fitted for profitable intercomparison and contrast'.<sup>5</sup> It was exactly such a prospect — a set of uniformly produced grammars, on the basis of a uniform grammatical system and with a unified terminology — which Ratke was propagating in the seventeenth century.

If harmony took pride of place for Ratke on the long road from curriculum via syllabus to teaching-materials, it was his theory of order which was to guarantee harmony. Ratke's theory of order was worked out in his *Eutactica*. This work consists of three books, dealing respectively with the Doctrine of Teaching Order, Order itself, and the Laws of Order. The aim of the *Eutactica* was twofold:

- '1. Primarily, so that one may learn to organise everything harmoniously.
2. Secondly, so that one may successfully apprehend the things ordered.'<sup>6</sup>

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1 E.A. Sonnenschein, *A Latin Grammar for Schools, Part II. Syntax*, 1889, p. 220.

2 *On the Terminology of Grammar*, 1911.

3 *Proceedings of the Classical Association*, 1911, p. 36.

4 *Times Educational Supplement* 19th. October 1916, p. 176.

5 J.H.G. Grattan, *On the Teaching of Case, Essays and Studies*, IX, 1924, p. 121.

6 *Eutact*, I.2.i.

It was a doctrine, in other words, which embraced both a logical and a didactic purpose. Each aim ('end') was, after the Ramist manner, enquired after and further explained. By 'harmoniously organized' was meant 'to arrange and compare all doctrines and things in such a way that nothing conflicts with anything else, and that things do not cancel each other out or negate each other, but [that] everything is treated and prepared correctly in its proper order, harmony and uniformity according to its nature and character'.<sup>1</sup>

This requirement provided the fundamentals of structure for any scientific discipline. The second aim, successful apprehension, meant 'nothing else than to understand and grasp things without force or pressure, easily, without [any] special pains.'<sup>2</sup> For Ratke, therefore, any discipline prepared for teaching purposes was to be organised not only in terms of its own internal structure, but also with reference to the structure of the human mind.

As the next step in the *Eutactica*, the doctrine was to be subjected to the customary proof by reference to the Holy Scriptures and to nature. To the first, Ratke quoted I. Corinthians 14, 33: 'For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace...' On the proof from nature, Ratke had this to say: 'Nature's tendency is always towards order, and she therefore hates chaos and avoids it wherever and however she can; she has also for this reason given guidance and impulse to further enquiry, to intellectually gifted and shrewd persons who have industriously studied her, by means of which a certain and convenient method of ordering has been revealed, according to which everything which belongs in her province may be neatly and congruously arranged'.<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of Ratke's method of ordering was said to be 'to bring together things which belong together, to treat fully what is necessary and relevant to the matter concerned, and on the other hand to eliminate whatever is superfluous and irrelevant, to make it graceful, neat and beautiful (because everything is graceful, neat and beautiful which is properly ordered) and to preserve reason and memory intact...'<sup>4</sup>

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1 *Eutact*, I.2.ii.

2 *Eutact*, I.2.iii.

3 *Eutact*, I.3.vi.

4 *Eutact*, I.5.iv.

Book II of the *Eutactica* contains ‘instructions according to which the doctrines and things related to teaching must be arranged and ordered.’<sup>1</sup> It treats in particular of ‘natural order’, of *Ordo artificialis* and *universalis*, and of synthetic and analytic order. The latter each contain three major subdivisions, but they are distinguished from each other as follows: in the synthetic order, the contents of a discipline, its cause and properties are treated in that sequence, whereas in the analytic order the elements are aims, subject-matter and means. Book II also goes into the details of formulating sentences and even the explanation of expressions (words), both composite and simple, as the correlates of concepts.

It is important, if Ratke’s intentions are to be properly understood, to note that the *Eutactica* did not confine itself to providing a statement of various types of order in the abstract, but coupled the groups of disciplines which Ratke distinguished in his encyclopaedic work – the theoretical and the practical – with the different methods of arrangement. Thus, those (theoretical) subjects ‘whose end is knowledge without any practice’<sup>2</sup> were to be ordered according to the synthetic mode. They included (in the light of grace) *Theologica* and *Christologica* (doctrines of God and Christ), and (in the light of nature) *Metaphysics*, together with all the doctrines dealing with knowledge of the sciences. The ‘practical’ disciplines, on the other hand, ‘whose end is knowledge together with an application’<sup>3</sup> were to be treated analytically. These included first, in the light of grace, the *Agapologica* and *Pisteologica* (doctrines of love and faith) and second, in the light of nature, the disciplines belonging to prudence, such as Ethics, Economics and Government, and crafts, such as Medicine, manual skills and Agriculture; and finally, the ‘instruments’ *inserventia* and *dirigentia*.

The third and final book of the *Eutactica* specifies the Laws of Order, of which there are six kinds, in detail. They are ‘General’ Laws of Order (9 Laws); Universal Laws (22); Synthetic Laws (10); Analytical Laws (10); *Leges Ordini Particularis* – Laws of Special order (to cover the formulation of sentences – 20) and finally *Leges Ordini Arbitrarii*, or Laws of Arbitrary Order (4).

What function was the *Eutactica* intended to have in Ratke’s scheme? As one of the ‘*lehrart-lehren*’ the *Eutactica* was linguistically marked as one of Ratke’s didactic disciplines. Like the others in this group, its format is that of question and answer:

*The 1. Chapter*

*Of naming*

1. What is the *Eutactica*?

The *Eutactica* is...<sup>4</sup>

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1 *Eutact*, II.1.i.

2 *Eutact*, II.4.iii.

3 *Eutact*, II.5.iii.

4 *Eutact*, I.1.i.

This catechetical mode of presentation invites the assumption that the *Eutactica* was written to be taught from. But its contents do not correspond to those of any school subject, traditional or modern. Unlike even logic, for which school-books 'Pro Didactica' were prepared, the *Eutactica* seems unfitted for – not to say irrelevant to – schoolchildren of any age. Instead, extensive sections of the *Eutactica* read more like the advice one would, perhaps as a publisher, give to a member of a team working to produce a series of text-books to a uniform specification. The question-and-answer format thus takes on more of the aspect of a stylised convention which did not necessarily presuppose teachers reading out each question aloud and classes (still less, the authors of academic textbooks) chanting the answers back in unison, as Padley surmised.<sup>1</sup>

Read as a manual for colleagues engaged on a common project, large areas of the *Eutactica* contain matter of universal relevance. Many of the nine Common Rules of Order (*Eutactica* III.2) and the twenty Laws of Universal Order (*Eutactica* III.3) could usefully be put in the hands of a text-book writer today.

Ratke summarised his intentions by saying that everything should be so fully and perfectly treated that, as far as it is possible for the human mind to grasp it, the projected teaching could be carried out and its goals achieved without abridgement, without doing violence either to subject or learner, and without confusion.<sup>2</sup> The disciplines themselves should be written up in the sequence Naming, Divisions, Rules and Examples.<sup>3</sup> Everything which is essential to the topic must be included, but nothing which is irrelevant.<sup>4</sup> The argument should be developed carefully, one thing following from another – 'no different from the links or rings in a chain, where each is joined on to the next, and all follow each other.'<sup>5</sup>

When it is recalled that Ratke coupled different types of disciplines with specific forms of order (synthetic and analytic), it becomes clear that instructions such as those laid down in the *Eutactica* would go a long way towards ensuring that his programme could be pushed through, even without his personal supervision. The *Eutactica* ought to be seen, then, as a kind of meta-work – a blueprint or manual on how to produce further works. It was crucial in the Ratkean scheme because it constituted the mechanism by which harmony could be ensured – not only in general, but specifically within the framework of the Ratkean encyclopaedia.

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1 One 'can only guess at the monotonous antiphonal chanting that must have gone on in practice,' Padley, p. 114.

2 *Eutact*, III.3.2(XX).

3 *Eutact*, III.3.2(XII).

4 *Eutact*, II.3.2(VI).

5 *Eutact*, III.3.2(IX).

The third and last important tool used by Ratke was his method of tabulating. Ratke's tables must be seen in the context of the general passion for classification which developed in the sixteenth century, and which led to this method being employed as a means of solving problems of scientific organisation until well into the eighteenth.<sup>1</sup> This passion was a response to two specific and urgent phenomena: the explosion in knowledge, and the increase in literacy which had been fuelled by the invention of printing.<sup>2</sup>

The tabulating method was based on Aristotelian principles of classification. By Ratke's time the method had already – largely through the influence of Ramus in the sixteenth century – reached a high degree of sophistication. 'Aristotelian classification performs ... two functions. It analyses the constituents of a thing and by so doing relates the thing to the next most inclusive category and arranges these categories of increasing inclusiveness in a hierarchical system in which each category and its members have a specific place...'<sup>3</sup> In exploiting these functions, the method of tabulating was the best instrument which seventeenth-century science had at its disposal to control and order the new knowledge.

The growth of literacy over the same period made possible the transmission of increasing quantities of information. However, both Latin – the traditional *lingua franca* – and the vernaculars were to prove inadequate to this new task. Tables provided a way of mediating between the increasing terminological demands being made on a language on the one hand, and the need to be able to capture and transmit the new information on the other. 'This is what links taxonomy with the emergence of specialized scientific language or terminology...'<sup>4</sup> (and specifically, it might be added in Ratke's case, with the development of the vernacular).

Physically, Ratke's tables look like structured diagrams, – outlines, as it were, of disciplines, waiting for flesh to be put on the bones. Their function had been alluded to by the Jena professors, who said that in contrast to the prevailing chaos, Ratke's method made possible a rationally ordered syllabus in which everything would be '*successive proponeret ... distincte, suo loco, et ordine*'.<sup>5</sup> From this point of view, the tables represent a significant step on the way towards practical text-books, since once tables for individual syllabuses had been worked out, all that remained to be done was to flesh out the structure, as it were.

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1 H. Heppe, *Geschichte des deutschen Volksschulwesens*, Gotha, 1858, Vol. I, p. 91ff. In England, a table for Grammar was included in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* from the first bound edition in 1771 until well into the nineteenth century.

2 Slaughter, p. 47.

3 Slaughter, p. 48.

4 Slaughter, *loc. cit.*

5 Professors Grawer, Major and Brendel to Dorothea Maria, 11th. March 1613; Krause, p. 9.

Like Ratke's work on the grammars, the tables must already have been well in hand by the time his team assembled in Augsburg. 'As far as the whole *cursum philosophicum* and the faculties are concerned', wrote Abraham Ulrich, 'he [Ratke] showed me numerous *tabellas*, which have been prepared under his direction by various learned people, in which *Philosophica* and several other things *quasi in synopsi* were outlined'.<sup>1</sup> The tables were thus clearly related to the disciplines listed in Lippius' outline of all the sciences, in which the various branches of human knowledge were to be described 'in their *terminis* and *vocabulis technicis*...'<sup>2</sup> The tables were also mentioned by Kolbe: '...that the disciplines can be much more accurately and harmoniously organized than has ever been done before is already clear from the tables which – now that he, *Ratichius*, has himself set to work on them – have so far been completed'.<sup>3</sup>

It is reasonable to doubt whether Ratke's gigantic undertaking, even under the most auspicious conditions, could ever have been brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Nevertheless, the reorganisation of the curriculum at the syllabus-level remained one of Ratke's major objectives over a considerable period. In 1628 Mylius mentioned the tables in a communication to Anna Sophia, saying that they 'are not, however, yet claimed to be finished'.<sup>4</sup> Attention is also drawn to Ratke's tables in the preface to the *Outline of the Christian School*, in which it was said that Ratke had gathered and supplemented the subject-matter for each of the 'spiritual and worldly arts and sciences' from both Christian and non-Christian sources, but 'still mostly in tables...'<sup>5</sup>

Ratke's tables were constructed by a method known as 'logical division'. In its simplest form, this meant that 'the genus is divided into its species by virtue of a fundamental difference. In taxonomic analysis, these are the constituents of a thing'.<sup>6</sup> The first division Ratke made in creating his tables was always between a science *in general* and *in particular*. Within the general division, Ratke's practice varied. In some tables the general was immediately subdivided into *cause* and *property*. Others contain two intermediate stages, dividing general first into *aim* and *subject-matter*, then subdividing subject-matter further into *locus* and *activity*, and only activity into *cause* and *property*. Apart from this difference, the 'general' divisions in all the tables show great similarities. This, however, is to be expected, – not only in view of Ratke's theory of harmony, but because the general division was intended to represent exactly what it claimed – that which was

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1 A. Ulrich to Prince August of Anhalt, 16th. June 1615, Vogt 1876, p. 35.

2 Vogt 1876, *loc. cit.*

3 Kolbe § 16.

4 Mylius to Anna Sophia, 27th. August 1628, Müller 1880c, pp. 490–2.

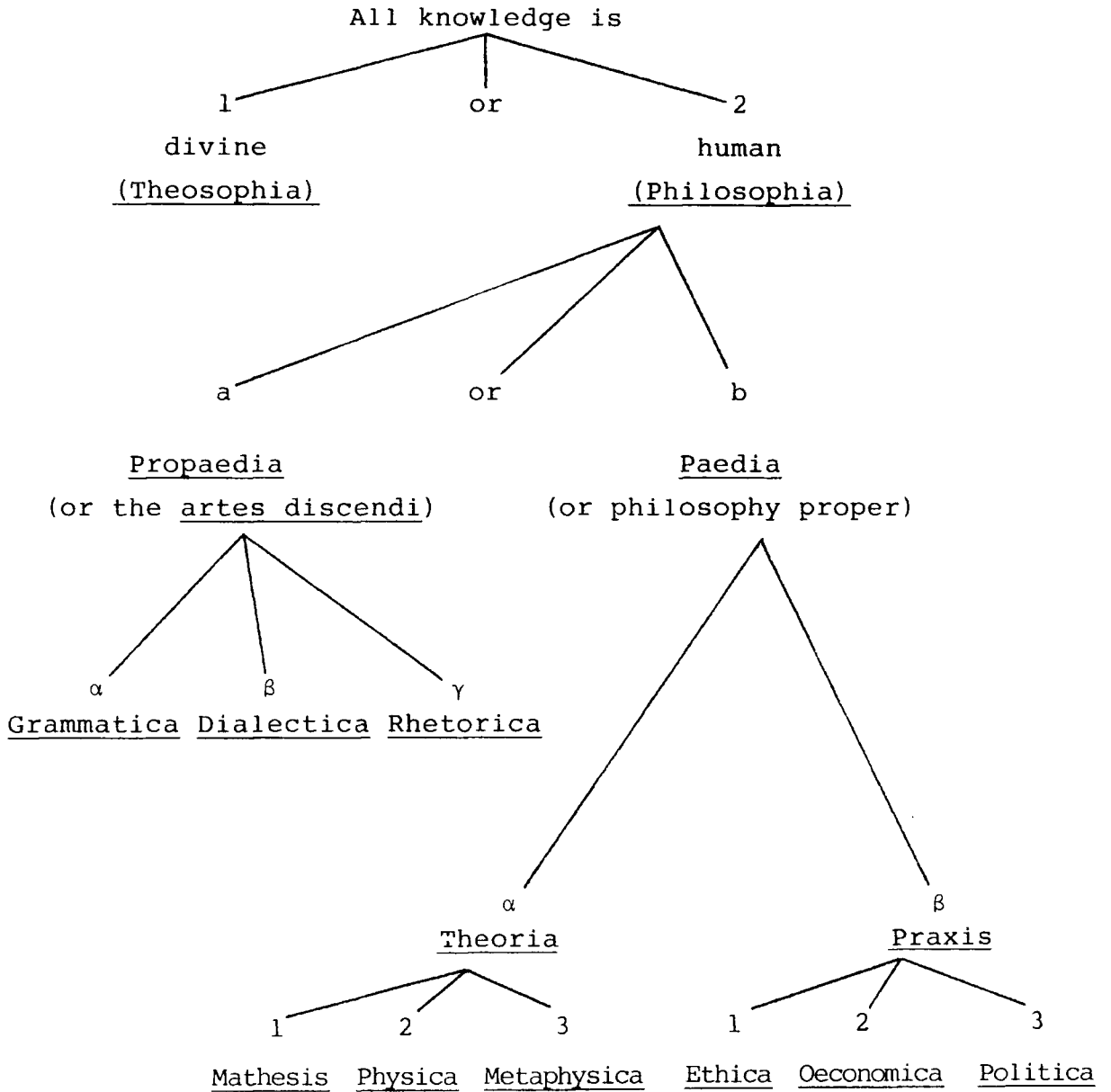
5 Gotha Codex Chart. B 827 B.

6 Slaughter, p. 47. Cf. Table IV as an example of the genre.

**Figure I**

**Outline *quasi in synopsi* of the curriculum.  
(Adapted from Vogt 1894, p. 35, fn.)**

Outline quasi in synopsi of the individual curriculum subjects



common to all disciplines. It was in the second major division of the tables, the 'particular', that differences between individual sciences would be brought out.

Nevertheless, some differences within the general divisions still remain. But why is there deviation of *any* kind? And how did the deviation come about: was it a slip made by Ratke himself? – the result of lack of co-ordination between himself and his assistants? – or an indication, perhaps, of a change in attitude as his work matured?

An examination of ten tables chosen at random reveals, first, that although they appear in different forms, there are never more than two. In terms of the differences outlined above, all the tables can thus be assigned to one of two types according to whether or not they contain the division into *aim* and *subject-matter*. These categories, however, are reminiscent of the distinction drawn in the *Eutactica* between synthetic and analytic order. In the first, it will be remembered, the discipline was structured according to (1) *contents*, (2) *cause* and (3) *property*, whereas under the second it was arranged in the sequence (1) *aim*, (2) *subject-matter* and (3) *means*. Is it possible to relate these systems to the two kinds of order expounded in the *Eutactica*? The first difficulty is that *content* does not appear in these divisions. It is, however, present as the *first* node, as it were, in the structure (and frequently explicitly designated as *content*). If this node is accepted as referring to content in the synthetic-analytic dichotomy, then it does permit a reduction to the required sequence.

A second difficulty, however, occurs in that although aim and subject-matter appear in the other form of the division, a further category – *means* – would be required to make the case complete. But here, too, further inspection does indeed reveal a category *means*, though it is not positioned inside the 'general' division. It is attached to the second node at the point where the whole discipline is divided into general and particular. It does, then, seem as though the differences between the two types of table are not random, but were intended to correspond to the kinds of order outlined in the *Eutactica*. This can be shown graphically by comparing the relevant parts of two sample tables and numbering the nodes in the order in which they would be treated in a fully written-up version.<sup>1</sup>

This hypothesis can be subjected to a further test. In the *Eutactica*, Ratke coupled the two orders with particular types of disciplines. If the hypothesis is correct, then the sequence of nodes in a table should predict the type of order to which the discipline is to be assigned. Of the following eleven tables – (1) 'Of Beasts', (2) 'Didactica', (3) 'Of the Emotions', (4) 'Holy Scripture', (5) 'Of Knowledge', (6) 'Logic', (7) 'Of Man', (8) 'Of the Office of Sovereign', (9) 'Of the Office of School Inspector', (10) 'Physics', and (11) 'Of Understanding', – numbers (2), (5), (6), (8) and (9) arrange aim and subject-matter in that order,

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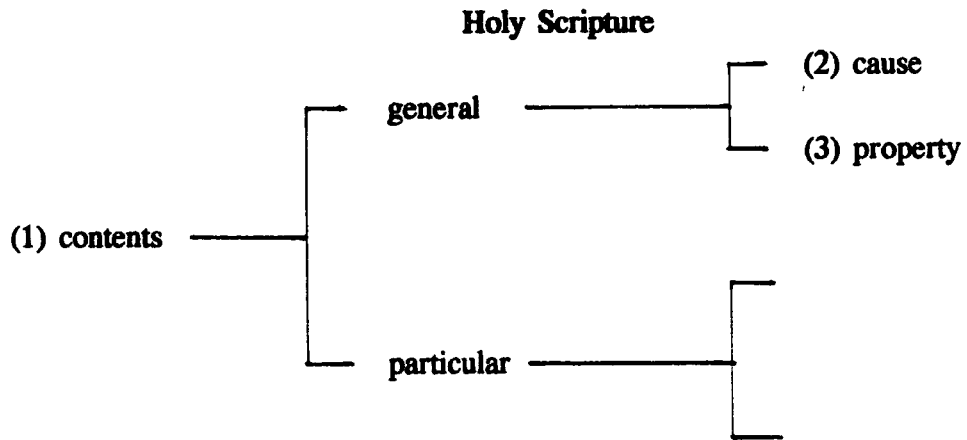
1 Cf. Figure II.

## **Figure II**

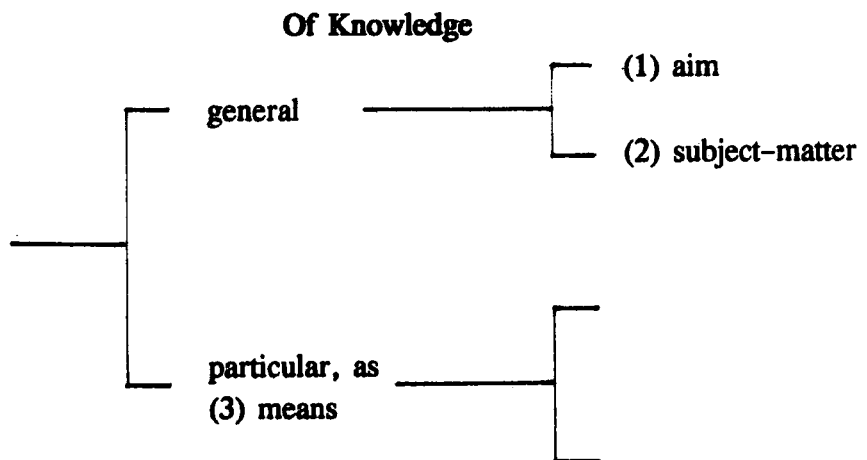
**Extracts from the Tables (a) *Holy Scripture* and  
(b) *Of Knowledge*, showing model dispositions for synthetic and  
analytic disciplines respectively.**

**Figure II**

(a)



(b)



but the others do not. Disciplines in this group – let us call it the ( $\alpha$ )-group – are thus organized analytically, and those in the second – ( $\beta$ )-group – synthetically. According to Ratke, those disciplines were to be treated synthetically which were concerned with knowledge for its own sake, without necessarily having an application for it (theoretical), whereas those concerned with both knowledge and its application (the practical and instrumental) were to be treated analytically. According to our hypothesis, the ( $\alpha$ )-group ought thus to contain practical and instrumental subjects and the ( $\beta$ )-group theoretical subjects. Of the tables concerned, 'Of Beasts', 'Of the Emotions', 'Holy Scripture', 'Of Man', 'Physics', and 'Of Understanding' would, according to this criterion, belong in the theoretical group. 'Didactica', 'Of Knowledge', 'Logic', 'Of the Office of Sovereign' and 'Of the Office of School Inspector' on the other hand, should all imply some degree of practical application. For many disciplines this assignment would seem to be relatively uncontroversial. Independent confirmation, however, is provided by reference to the *Index*, which shows that at least nine of these disciplines are indeed unambiguously assigned to either the theoretical or the practical class by number.<sup>1</sup>

Ratke's tables have been described as 'rigid' and 'aridly dichotomized'.<sup>2</sup> They are admittedly foreign to modern ways of thinking, but to the sixteenth century mind, the prospect that these logical maps could facilitate the teaching of any field of enquiry was 'a new and powerful idea.'<sup>3</sup> The part the tables were intended to play in Ratke's programme is now clearly established. The *Harmonia Didactica* was, as Mylius reported, 'adumbrated and structured by the tables...'<sup>4</sup> As far as the organisation of individual disciplines was concerned, work on the tables was clearly the central task. And yet despite Ratke's immense industry<sup>5</sup> and the achievement which the tables undoubtedly represent, they did not in themselves constitute the implementation of the scheme which Ratke had in mind. Drawing the various threads together – the *Encyclopaedia*, the harmony of languages, the *Eutactica* and Ratke's tabellary method as the most important tools, it may legitimately be asked how much of this programme Ratke actually succeeded in implementing in his own lifetime.

This question must be answered at more than one level: at the curricular or encyclopaedic level, at the level of the syllabus, and, finally, in terms of individual textbooks.

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1 AU 1, pp. 83-87.

2 Padley, p. 50 and p. 52.

3 D. Hamilton, The Pedagogical Juggernaut, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, XXXV, 1987, p. 23.

4 Mylius to Anna Sophia, 27th. August 1628; Müller 1880c, pp. 490-2.

5 Cf. Padley, p. 100.

In the *Index of all Disciplines* only five are listed as being accessible in the light of grace alone: *Theologica*, *Logodidascalica*, *Agapologica*, *Christologica* and *Pisteologica*. For these, Ratke left completed manuscripts with titles framed according to his formula (but without place or date) of 245pp., 228pp., 384pp., 242pp. and 117pp. respectively.<sup>1</sup> These works, which have not so far been published, constitute a thematically unified group in their own right, covering all the disciplines accessible through the light of grace.

Of the two major divisions within the disciplines accessible by the light of nature – the theoretical and the practical, – Ratke seems to have left extensive tables relating to the theoretical disciplines, but no completed works.

The practical disciplines are numbered in the *Index* from 8 to 19, and of these the groups headed Ethics, Politics, Of Knowledge, and Didactic are of interest. From this group Ratke left a completed manuscript on *Ethics* of 262pp.,<sup>2</sup> and two from Politics. These are the *Archontica (Of the Office of Sovereign)* (262 pp.)<sup>3</sup> and *Of the Office of School Inspector*.<sup>4</sup> The most interesting work in this group is the *Scholastica (Schuldieneramtslehr – Of the Office of Scholar)* – a manuscript of 198 pages covering the duties of teachers and pupils.<sup>5</sup> The *Scholastica* is of special interest not only because of its contents, but because it clearly documents Ratke's priorities. Education came immediately after the disciplines accessible in the light of grace.

The next important area where Ratke invested his energy was in the *Noëmatica (Of Knowing)*. This discipline is divided into nine subsections, which Ratke worked out in great – in many cases complete – detail. In accordance with his theory of harmony, manuscripts were prepared for German (seven disciplines), Latin (four) and Greek (one). They include *Logic* (in German, 120 pp.), *Correspondence* (German, 67 pp.), *Rhetoric* (German, 106 pp.), *Prosody* (Latin, 128 pp.), *Grammar* (German, 10 pp.), *Accidence* (German and Latin, 76 pp. and 80 quarto leaves respectively), *Etymology* (German, 32 pp.), *Orthography* (German and Latin, 41 pp. and 44 pp.), and *Of Reading* (German, 33 pp., Latin 29 pp., Greek 35 pp.),<sup>6</sup> In addition, the *Noëmatica* itself was also fully written up as an independent work.<sup>7</sup>

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1 Gotha Codices Chart. B 826 A, B, C, E, F and G.

2 Gotha Codex Chart. B 826 H.

3 Gotha Codex Chart. B 825 P, – *Regenten-Ampts-Lehre*, AU 2, pp. 17–257.

4 Gotha Codex Chart. B 825 S, – *Schulherrnamtslehr*, AU 2, pp. 447–462.

5 Gotha Codex Chart. B 825 R, cf. AU 2, pp. 259–446.

6 Gotha Codices Chart. B 825 F; 826 I; 828 A, B, C, I, P and Q; 833 D, E, F, G and H; and 834 B.

7 Gotha Codex Chart. B 825 B, cf. AU 1, pp. 145–173.

The pedagogical disciplines are the last to be listed in Ratke's *Index*. Their position betrays more about Ratke's methods of working out his distinctions than it does about the strength of his commitment to education. This is shown by the fact that extensive areas of the *Index*, Ratke's blueprint for an exhaustive curriculum, remain no more than lists of labels of trades and professions. The closing words of the *Index*, on the other hand, constitute a remark to the effect that 'the *Lehrart-lehren* have been put into German and Latin tables, and partly written up.'

The disciplines listed at the close of Ratke's *Index* are as follows: 18. *Didactica*. Under this heading are listed: 1. *Eutactica*, 2. *Epistemonica*, 3. *Mnemonica*, 4. *Glottodidactica*, 5. *Praxeodidactica*, 6. *Noëmaticodidactica*. These are followed by a new heading – 19. *Organicodidactica*.

Of these eight titles, Ratke left completed manuscripts for only three – the *Didactica*, the *Eutactica* and the *Epistemonica*, consisting of twenty-four and thirty-seven manuscript pages, and a hundred and thirteen printed pages respectively. Taken at their face value, they seem to constitute yet another incomplete fragment. Nevertheless, they are of unique interest in the history of education. What makes them of such interest is that Ratke, in his encyclopaedic tables, delivered the master-plan of which they are but a part. Many authors before Ratke had written works on education, pedagogy or teaching-method. With Ratke, however, for the first time in educational history, we find the framework of a system of pedagogy sketched out – the whole science as Ratke conceived it. Even if Ratke had never written up a single one of his projected titles, the tables for the *Didactica* would be of lasting value as laying bare with absolute clarity not only the internal logic of this new discipline, but its relation to other arts and sciences. Ratke's Ramist method of division reveals the justification for this structure, and explains just why the discipline consisted of eight parts – no more and no less.

In order to understand this, one must move from the titles listed in the *Index* to the table for the *Didactica*. Here, Ratke incorporated the essentials of the thinking which gave his science of pedagogy its distinctive shape.

The *Didactica* was a practical discipline and was thus organised analytically, with the *general* division being split into *aim* and *subject-matter*. The logic of Ratke's pedagogy begins to emerge within the *particular* division. The *particular*, as in all the practical disciplines, is concerned with the *means*, and the *means* of pedagogy are two: *order* and *directions*. In other words, Ratke viewed the teaching process as embracing two large and equally important components – the ordering or disposition of the material to be taught, and its actual teaching. This division provided Ratke with the first two titles of his pedagogical system – the *Didactica* as the meta-discipline, specifying the disposition and role of its component parts, and the *Eutactica*, as the discipline concerned with order.

*Directions* did not presuppose a title of its own, because further subdivision was necessary. The next distinction Ratke drew was between *directions* as they applied to the mind of the learner, and *directions* as they applied to what was to be

taught. With respect to the former, Ratke distinguished two major functions of the mind – *understanding* and *remembering*. These in turn provided the rationale for two further titles, the *Epistemonica* and the *Mnemonica* respectively.

The substance of what was to be taught was likewise subdivided further, into *languages* and *doctrines*. The art of teaching languages led logically to the *Glottodidactica*, while the doctrines were subjected to the familiar *things-instruments* dichotomy. The practice of teaching the doctrines of (any) thing were to be encapsulated in the *Praxeididactica* or *LehrLehrArtLehr*.

In the sphere of the *instruments*, Ratke drew a distinction between knowing and doing. The first was to appear as the *Noëmaticodidactica*, or the doctrine of teaching people how to know things, and the second as the *Organicodidactica*, or the doctrine of teaching people to perform operations, use tools, etc.

It is to be regretted that Ratke did not leave completed manuscripts for all these works. Given the extent of his undertaking, it was inevitable that much of it would be left in a fragmentary state. This fact, however, should not be allowed to detract from the very real achievement that Ratke left to posterity. In addition to the individual works which he did complete, he left a coherent blueprint for the structure of a specific area of education which was without a parallel in his time. Before Ratke, authors on education had committed their thoughts to paper as a distillation of experience, or – more commonly – as a response to a particular situation, such as a request for advice concerning the education of royalty. Irrespective of their contents, none of them gives any indication of being an integral part of a larger design. Each of Ratke's titles, by contrast, was a planned contribution to a more abstract and comprehensive concept of pedagogy.

From the foregoing, it is clear that in addition to his tables Ratke left an impressive array of single works, completed within his encyclopaedic framework. Many of them still await individual evaluation, or even – in the case of his theological works – publication. To give a properly balanced account of Ratke's achievement, due attention must therefore be given to both aspects – to the larger individual works and to his tables.

Ratke's literary estate contained at his death tables for over thirty broad subject-areas.<sup>1</sup> This fact alone, however, is a poor indication of their true extent. For one thing, the manuscripts in the Gotha archive do not cover exhaustively all the tables to be found in Ratke's completed works. Secondly, in accordance with Ratke's theory of harmony, the number of languages chosen to be the medium of instruction increases the number of tables by the language-multiplier. This means that for any title which is listed only once, the amount of work necessary was multiplied by the number of languages in which tables had to be prepared for it.

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1 Müller, 1884a, Nos. 106–116.

Ratke seems not to have worked out tables to any great extent for languages other than German and Latin. Even this, however, means an increase in the number of tables by a factor of two. Finally, many of the subjects for which tables were prepared were not single, coherent disciplines. As superordinate titles they included other – more finely specified – subjects within themselves, which in turn also had their tables. The *Noëmatica* and *Didactica*, each containing several lower-level subjects, are good examples. Mathematics, too, then as now, was a conglomerate of related sub-disciplines. The doctrines *Of Office* and *Of Service* are worked out in tables on thirty-five separate leaves, and every one of the sub-divisions mentioned is represented by one or more tables. When the tables still extant in the Gotha archives<sup>1</sup> are listed in detail, the number of disciplines for which tables were completed rises to over a hundred. Through the language-multiplier, Ratke thus worked out tables in German and Latin for over three hundred and fifty disciplines.

In view of the role they played in Ratke's plan, their interest in displaying the structure of the various disciplines as they were then perceived, and also in view of the time, energy and expertise required to generate them, Ratke's tables must be accounted a major achievement in their own right. As Hofmann pointed out, the working out of what were virtually subject-syllabuses for 'The Christian School' in this way demanded scientific knowledge of a high order.<sup>2</sup>

The last step on the long road from an abstract curriculum to practical materials for school use was the publication of books. Here, too, Ratke's achievement is most impressive. In the two years between 1619, when the Köthen press was inaugurated, and 31st. December 1621, when it was officially wound up, more than twenty-five volumes were printed.<sup>3</sup> A mere list of these publications would do less than justice to the structure of Ratke's concept. An attempt will therefore be made to summarise in a table<sup>4</sup> how far Ratke got with his programme.

In addition to those books known to have been in circulation, eighteen more are recorded as having been on the stocks at the time of the winding-up of the Köthen press.<sup>5</sup> Of these, the majority had been published before, but at least five were new. Six other books were in the process of being printed, one of which (*Le Bartas*) seems to have been being published for the *Fruchtbringende*

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1 Gotha Codex Chart. B 827 C.

2 F. Hofmann, *Das Schulbuchwerk Wolfgang Ratkes zur "Allunterweisung"*, Ratingen, 1974, p. 53.

3 Referred to as the 'Köthen Series' ('*Köthener Drücke*'). Full details are given in the Bibliography.

4 Table VI.

5 Krause, pp. 127-8.

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**Table VI**

**The implementation of Ratke's programme:  
The Köthen Series.**

The Köthen Series

SUBJECT	in German	in Latin	SUBJECT	in German	in Latin
1. <u>Encyclopaedia</u>	1	1	16. Greek Exercises	1	1
2. Universal Grammar	1	1	17. Reader	1	
3. <u>Compendium Gr. Lat.</u>		1	18. Writing Book	1	
4. <u>Gramm. Gallica</u>		1	19. <u>Logica</u>		1
5. <u>Gramm. Hebr.</u>		3	20. <u>Compendium Logicae</u>	1	1
6. <u>Gramm. Ital.</u>		1	21. Universal Rhetoric	1	1
7. <u>Gramm. Latina</u>		1	22. <u>Orationes Ciceronis</u>	3	
8. <u>Sprachlehre</u>	1		23. Plautus 20 Comedies	4	1
9. Conjugations	1		24. Terence 6 Comedies	1	1
10. <u>Dialogues franc.</u>			25. <u>Geometria</u>	3	3
11. <u>Dictionary</u>	3		26. <u>Institutiones Juris</u>		2
12. <u>Dict. Thematicum</u>		3	27. Introd. to Law	2	
13. <u>Dict. Hebr. Gramm.</u>		3	28. <u>Metaphysica</u>	1	1
14. <u>Dict. Hebr. Themat.</u>		3	29. <u>Physica</u>	1	1
15. <u>Dict. Gall. Themat.</u>		3	30. <u>Genesis</u>	1	1

NOTES

- (1) = Printed works and works recorded as being in stock at the winding-up of the press on 31st. December 1621.  
 (2) = Works in press on 31st. December 1621.  
 (3) = Mss ready for printing on 31st. December 1621.

*Gesellschaft*. Finally, a fourth set of titles consisted of works in manuscript waiting to be printed when the press closed down. Of these there are seventeen.

Altogether it will be seen that no less than fifty-two separate publications were prepared by Ratke and his team for the school in Köthen in the years 1618-1621 – an impressive achievement by any standards. Since the works concerned were selected and prepared in accordance with Ratke's curriculum and his theory of harmony, they, too, need to be considered as parts of an organic whole. When it is remembered that each subject could, theoretically, be taught through the medium of one of a number of languages, then it is possible to set off the subject-matter against the language-of-instruction thus:

Subject	Medium-of-instruction			
	1. German	2. Latin	3. Greek	4. Hebrew... <i>n</i>
1. Metaphysics				
2. Logic				
3. Grammar				
·				
·				
<i>n.</i> ... etc.				

Here, however, the possibilities of representation break down. For Ratke's system is itself a series of 'discipline' categories playing across various languages *as content*. In the *Noëmatica* for instance, nine different aspects of language – Logic, Correspondence, Rhetoric, Prosody, Grammar, Accidence, Etymology, Writing and Reading – are applied to various languages thus:

SUBJECT	APPLIED TO LANGUAGE			
	1. German	2. Latin	3. Greek	<i>n.</i>
1. Logic				
2. Correspondence				
3. Rhetoric				
4. Prosody				
5. Grammar				
6. Accidence				
7. Etymology				
8. Writing				
9. Reading				

The second box down in column 1 would logically yield a subject 'German Correspondence.' The fact that such a subject – (*correspondence*, relating to a particular language: German) – could be taught through the medium of different languages can not be represented in the diagram: the extra dimension is missing. Nevertheless, Table VI shows what Ratke did manage to achieve within the programme he had set himself.

To round off this survey of Ratke's encyclopaedic achievement, the following works are listed which, because of their special nature, could not be accommodated within the tables: the *New Testament* appeared in Syriac; *Dialogues* in French. Greek exercises were printed in Greek and German, and the *Universal Grammar* in Greek, French and Italian. A Syriac lexicon and Hebrew *Genesis* were ready for printing on 31st. December 1621; in addition, manuscripts for the conjugations of the verbs in French and Italian, and for Geography, Mathematics and Music are extant in the Gotha archives.<sup>1</sup>

Any assessment of Ratke's work which fails to take proper account of his achievements in the field of the curriculum hence does him a grave injustice. Both the abstract conception and its implementation, however fragmentary in the context of the work as a whole, must be given their due. What is not clear at this stage is how Ratke proposed to accommodate the disciplines he worked out in such detail, within an educational structure which could be practically implemented. To understand this, it is necessary to explore more deeply Ratke's programme for the provision and organisation of education.

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1 Cf. F. Hofmann, *Das Schulbuchwerk Wolfgang Ratkes zur "Allunterweisung"*, Ratingen, Kastellaun, Düsseldorf, 1974.

## CHAPTER VI

### Education: Organisation and content

Ratke was nothing if not practically minded. For him, education had a long-term reformatory social aim. However, education could only achieve its purpose if it were cast in a shape which allowed the consequences of the reforms to work their way through the system. Attention has already been drawn to the increasing demands being made on the system by technical innovations in such fields as mining, textiles, printing, the minting of coins, and the paper industry, and to the pressures created by the explosion of knowledge which accompanied the Renaissance and engendered a generation of taxonomists. The problem attacked by the taxonomists, using the encyclopaedia as one of their tools, was how to systematise the new knowledge in assimilable form. Ratke's contribution to the solution of this problem, of which his encyclopaedic work was but one component, forms a kind of deductive chain through the whole of his work, in which each link may be seen to be a logical step onward from the one before.

The curriculum content which Ratke worked out in his *Encyclopaedia* and in the tables would only be effective if it could be made accessible to those who needed it. A framework thus had to be evolved for a universal — (in the sense of accessible to all) — educational system. But a system of universal schooling could not be effective without capable teachers. There was widespread agreement in Ratke's time that much contemporary teaching was ineffective. Ratke seems to have recognized at an early stage that the teacher and his method were distinct — that it was possible to have good teachers but ineffective methods, and vice versa. Improvement in education was thus unlikely to be secured without an improvement in the quality and preparation of teachers on the one hand, and in teaching methods on the other.

Teachers themselves needed to be educated, however, — and not only in the subject they would ultimately teach. Other knowledge was required, which took the personality of the teacher, the character and ability of the learner, and the nature of the learning process into account. For Ratke, the latter was to be incorporated into a theory of understanding and coupled with a theory of learning.

These areas provided the foundations for the teaching activity. In order to be made fruitful, however, they also had to be translated into didactic principles which could be applied in the immediate learning context.

The two poles of Ratke's educational thought (the global level, which embraced the whole of society, and the more circumscribed level of pedagogy as a scientific discipline, – were elaborated in a series of major writings to which Ratke devoted a large part of the last decade of his life, and which, in view of their contribution to the reform of the educational system and the revitalising of German cultural and educational life during and after the Thirty Years War, deserve to be ranked in their field with the achievements of Descartes, Kepler or Comenius.

Elements of the broader framework which Ratke foresaw for education are mentioned or hinted at across a wide spectrum of his writings - from the *Memorandum* of 1612, through the *Articles and Aphorisms* of 1617, the *Introduction to Didactic* of 1620–1622 and the *Dolium* of 1626, to the *Humble Relation* of 1634. This framework is most carefully and coherently set out, however, in a small group of works which are entered in the *Index* under the political, or governing, disciplines. Listed there are the *Archontica (Of the Office of Sovereign)*, the *Schulmeisteramtslehr (of the Office of Schoolmaster)*, and the *Schulherrnamtslehr (Of the Office of School Inspector)*. The first and third of these were fully and extensively worked out, though the latter, unhappily, is extant only as a fragment. These works are supplemented by the *Scholastica (Of the Office of Scholar)* – at once Ratke's most extensive, mature and original single work on education.

The works in which pedagogy begins to emerge as a coherent discipline are listed under the titles of knowing and teaching: the *Didactica* is there shown to have six component parts: 1. *Eutactica*, 2. *Epistemonica*, 3. *Mnemonic*, 4. *Glottodidactica*, 5. *Praxeodidactica*, and 6. *Noëmaticodidactica*. Studied as a whole, these works permit a picture to be built up of the role in society which Ratke envisaged for education, his conception of the structure of an educational system, the mechanisms of supervision and control, the duties of teachers and pupils and, finally, the educational and psychological foundations upon which he believed successful teaching rested.

The aims formulated by Ratke – indeed his very choice of education as the starting-point for social reform – were closely determined by the way in which he perceived the ills of society and the nation as a whole. In 1612, when he presented his *Memorandum*, the empire was still at peace. The catastrophe which was to break over Germany was only vaguely discernible in the shape of disharmony in government, the law, religion and language. By 1626, when the storm had broken, Ratke, drawing on his favourite metaphor of the building and the architect, contrasted the hypothetical benefits of a well-organised state with the

very real experience of the war which was ravaging the empire. In the *Dolium* he spoke of the current state of Germany as one of 'collapse, conflict and ruin.'<sup>1</sup> Germany 'seems to be nothing more than a derelict house, looking more likely to collapse every day'. As the immediate cause of the crisis, Ratke pointed to the military activity, which showed no signs of abating, and the collapse of the currency. Interestingly, schools are mentioned at this point only as the starting-point for reform, not as the source of the malady. Fourteen years earlier, the authors of the Giessen and Jena reports had been in no doubt that the schools themselves were the source of the problems: 'the cause of the illness lies in the schools...In the schools must the remedy be sought'.<sup>2</sup>

When pinpointing the causes for dissatisfaction with the education system, the authors of the *Jena Report* had looked at various possibilities including, obviously, the teachers and the students: 'When one enquires nowadays why it is that boys learn either nothing at all in arts and languages or very little, or else slowly, one commonly hears nothing more than complaints either about the indolence and slovenliness of the teachers, or the laziness and lack of natural ability of the *discipulorum* or boys...'<sup>3</sup> Yet neither of these, in their view, lay at the root of the problem, least of all the claim that this boy or that laboured under a *stupidum ingenium*.<sup>4</sup> Instead, they concluded that teaching-methods in the narrower sense were the cause of the malady.

Helwig and Jung, while also placing weight on teaching-methods as one of the main targets for reform, looked further than the authors of the *Jena Report*, and related what went on in schools to social decay on a wider scale: 'Why is it that gluttony, drunkenness, whoring, swearing, blasphemy and other disgusting scandals and heresies make such massive inroads? – that embezzlement, avarice, and usury are so widespread in everyday life and commerce? Where do so much discord, sedition, unnecessary war, unchristian litigation [come from]? Why is it that...so few fathers and mothers are found who know how to educate and manage their children and servants...? What is the reason why there are so many complaints about teachers? – that there is so little enthusiasm, loyalty and diligence in the universities and even in holy orders; – and on the other hand [why do] so much envy, egoism and ambition make themselves felt? Isn't the whole lot the fault of outdated, bad, humourless, dull, wrong and ineffective teaching?'<sup>5</sup>

In contrast to the authors of the *Jena Report*, however, Helwig and Jung pointed beyond reforms in teaching-method, to the need for a reorientation in aims, and a

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1 *DolR*, § 5.

2 *GSuppR*, p. 120.

3 *JR*, pp. 3–4.

4 Slow-wittedness.

5 *GSuppR*, pp. 118–119.

more systematic organisation of education: 'Since teaching and discipline, art and virtue are not properly combined with each other, and neither the one nor the other [is taught] on a proper foundation of human understanding, will-power, senses and mind, but through pure unnatural force, widespread disorder is being produced'.<sup>1</sup>

On the basis of such diagnoses, Ratke made out a plausible case for reconstruction: '... it is essentially the duty of a competent architect, when he sees that a building looks likely to collapse, not to prop it up, but ... to examine the foundations thoroughly, [and] to repair them properly ... so that the great weight of the building may be more solidly borne ... Now the foundations in this case must be looked for only in the schools. The same must be repaired and improved, so that the harmony of faith, nature and languages may be firmly built on them and fully implemented in practice. Then there might with God's grace be hope in the future for a just settlement through all stations and levels of government...'<sup>2</sup>

Ratke postulated a close parallel between the structure of the state and the structure of education, 'for exactly as the government is, thus and no differently must education be established and organised.'<sup>3</sup> The parallel was thought to be justified by the close dependence of the state on its educational system, – 'for everything which is lost from a well-organized administration must necessarily be quickly replaced from the schools.'<sup>4</sup> The conclusion that within a few generations a state could be reformed not by stamping its image on the schools, but by having the schools project their own 'harmony' throughout the state, could scarcely be more clearly expressed.

When it came to translating these ideas into aims which could be anchored in an institutionalised system, the degree to which Ratke emphasised the needs of the individual is significant. The twin, and sometimes conflicting, poles which have determined educational aims throughout history – the requirements of the state on the one hand and the needs of the individual on the other – have received different emphases at different times. Ratke consistently stressed that his aim was to show 'how young people could quickly be led more directly to God, and how they might properly be taught from His ... words in *Theologicis*, as much as it is necessary for every Christian to know for his temporal and spiritual welfare, regardless of which faculty or station he might in future aspire to ...'<sup>5</sup> This, however, constituted a significant move away from the traditional Lutheran point of view.

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1 *GSuppR*, p. 120.

2 *DoIR*, § 6–7.

3 *DoIR*, § 7; cf. also *BriefT*, § 12.

4 *DoIR*, *loc. cit.*

5 *BMZ*, § 1.1.

The standard Lutheran position had been that the main role of education was, as the school statutes of the Electorate of Saxony put it, to produce students 'suitable to learn for the Church and otherwise to administer.' It could be argued that the station any boy might plausibly aspire to in Ratke's time was determined by his birth. The freedom of interpretation which Ratke's formulation permitted thus contained a potential source of tension for the rulers who were being invited to underwrite the reform, for the interests of the princes and magistrates 'lay not in an educational reform directed towards the welfare of society – (and even less, it might be added, of the individual) – but in a reform of schools in the interests of the state.'<sup>1</sup> Ratke's shift of emphasis towards the needs of the individual was justified by the waste of talent which the state was experiencing under the current system.

Evidence of the tension induced by Ratke's standpoint that children had a right to education for the sake of their own temporal and spiritual welfare is to be found both in his own writings and in those of Helwig, Jung and the professors of Jena. Periodically, Ratke felt obliged to make disclaimers to the effect that it was not his intention 'to set himself up against the government and take over the same himself and mould the same into a new form, but to expound clearly to the authorities and prove [to them] out of the Holy Scriptures and nature, how the educational system may be better and more conveniently organized ...'<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the consequences of educational reform are, as King pointed out, inescapably political, and there is evidence from other documents that Ratke was well aware of this fact.

At the more general level, the educational aims proposed by Ratke were marked by an increasingly utilitarian emphasis and, interestingly, by a concern for what would nowadays be called social learning.

The utilitarian emphasis was expressed in the *Scholastica* thus: '... for that is why they attend school, to learn something honourable and useful in ordinary life...'<sup>3</sup> Indeed, 'the putting into practice of what the pupils have learned is the end and aim of all their learning'.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of learning something is not to 'straight away bury or conceal it, but where necessary to use it and put it into practice.'<sup>5</sup>

Ratke's concern for aims which could not be accommodated by the curriculum as he conceived it, but which were nevertheless a logical consequence of his concept of school as a microcosm of society, included social harmony and

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1 Michel 1985, p. 440.

2 Mylius § VII and cf. *BriefT* – Epilogue, BMZ § I.

3 *Schol*, II.18.i.

4 *Schol*, III.18.ix.

5 *Schol*, II.18.i.

socio-communicative aspects of interpersonal behaviour, such as learning to behave appropriately to the occasion, place and time.<sup>1</sup>

The more concrete aims of education as Ratke formulated them are not easily encapsulated in a prototype of the kind envisaged by Simon.<sup>2</sup> It is hard to relate 'whatever is necessary for a child's temporal and spiritual welfare' to such prototypes as the excellent prince and well-schooled governor of Henry VIII's time, or the Elizabethan statesman, exemplar of courtliness and learning, or the complete English gentleman. But this may itself be seen as one mark of Ratke's openness towards the educational aspirations of the individual, and of his refusal to try to mould young people to match pre-determined ideals.

Until Ratke's time, and indeed for long afterwards, the church was the main provider of education in Europe. Ratke's proposals for curricular reform, the aims of education as he perceived them, and the reversal of the waste of natural talent, could only be achieved by a system which guaranteed universal schooling for all in a way which until then the churches had failed to do. The only authority which in Ratke's view was capable of guaranteeing such a scheme, and which could be legitimately expected to operate it responsibly, was not the church but the civil authority. This point, hammered home in document after document,<sup>3</sup> was to be another pillar in Ratke's programme for educational reform. Like Luther, Ratke fought to develop a greater sense of responsibility towards education among rulers and among the town and city councils. Luther had said it was 'wickedness [for sovereigns] not to think further than – 'Right! Now we want to rule; what business is it of ours what happens to those who come after us?' Such people should not rule over men, but over sow[s] and dog[s] – who seek nothing more in their power than their own profit and prestige.'<sup>4</sup> In the *Dolium*, Ratke stressed that rulers or sovereigns exist for their subjects, and not the subjects for their sakes,<sup>5</sup> – a standpoint which anticipates in a remarkable way the concept of an office held in trust (as opposed to the divine right of kings) which was later to play such an important role in the English revolution of 1689. In contrast to Luther, however, Ratke placed the church on a lower level of importance, and installed both church and schools under the authority of the sovereign: '...if the truth be told, the establishment and organisation of schools is the most important and necessary task in the whole of Christendom'.<sup>6</sup> Again, the close dependence of the government on the health of its education system is brought home, for '... whatever is erratically

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1 *Schol*, II.21.ii; II.22.ii.

2 J. Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England*, Cambridge, 1969, pp. 402f.

3 E.g. *Schol*, II.1.iv; *Schol*, II.15.iv; *Archont*, III.2.ii.

4 *DolR*, § 9.

5 *DolR*, § 2.

6 *Archont*, II.2.iv.

or incorrectly passed on [in the schools] ... must afterwards be paid for by the government and the whole country...'<sup>1</sup>

The demand for state education for all children implied changes in sensitive areas. It meant that education for certain age-groups would have to be compulsory,<sup>2</sup> and that members of certain groups traditionally underprivileged, whether on the grounds of social status or sex, would also have to be accommodated within the system. A programme of this kind inevitably raised such questions as how the system should be financed. At the same time, it provided the logic for making the vernacular the medium for teaching all curriculum subjects.

In Ratke's eyes, neither age nor sex sufficed as a reason for barring anyone from the benefits of education. Although education was only to be universally compulsory for a certain period in childhood, older people were not only to be given access to education, but were to be encouraged to educate themselves further.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, education was of equal importance for both boys and girls. In view of the frequently remarked discrepancies in history between theory and practice, it is worth remembering that in Ratke's only experiment which functioned on a sound administrative footing, that in Köthen, 231 boys were registered for attendance and 202 girls.<sup>4</sup>

The only uncertainty pertaining to the scope of Ratke's proposed system concerns the boundary between normal and subnormal pupils: '... if there is really no hope for them (which will perhaps never be the case or at least very rarely ... with those who are not right in the head or who ... suffer from incurable speech-defects) ... they can be sent back to their parents and recommended for training in some honest occupation.'<sup>5</sup> Elsewhere, Ratke seems to vacillate: 'Not all old and aged people, nor even all boys, are suited to learning ... Therefore they must, since it is rather nature's fault than their own, be and remain excused.'<sup>6</sup> Lest this should seem too easy a way of escape for the unwilling teacher, Ratke stressed that these decisions should not be taken lightly, and that children thought to be unable to benefit from education should only be sent back to their parents 'when all conceivable efforts have been made.'<sup>7</sup> Taken together, these features establish a framework for a single, uniform state-controlled system of education for all pupils except those diagnosed as ineducable.

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1 *Archont*, II.2.iii.

2 *Schol*, III.28.viii.

3 *Schol*, II.27.vii and viii.

4 Anon. Einige Nachrichten von dem berühmten Didaktikus des vorigen Jahrhunderts Wolfgang Ratichius, und seinen Schicksalen in den Fürstlich-Anhaltischen Landen, *Hannoversches Magazin*, 16, 1779, col. 248.

5 *Schol*, ii.14.VIII, and cf. *Schol*, I.3.ix.

6 *Schol*, III.27.vii and viii.

7 *Schol*, II.14.viii.

Ratke's concept of education reveals both similarities to, and differences from, comparable developments in England. Here, 'the church ... claimed an exclusive right to education, which of course it never fully exercised, and which was used by the government as an excuse not to follow the modest examples of France, Prussia and several of the United States in providing state assistance.'<sup>1</sup> According to Bowen, this situation obtained in England until 1800.

The dual nature of Ratke's work – the theoretical postulates on the one hand, and their practical results in Köthen (and in part in Weimar and Gotha) on the other, make it possible to rebut in his case the oft-complained of discrepancy between theory and practice. In England at about the same period as Ratke's reforms were being worked out, 'the gentry and middle classes recoiled from the beast which they had unwittingly unleashed and tried to build a protective fence.'<sup>2</sup> In other words, '... if there was an 'educational revolution,'/s Lawrence Stone has argued, it was one which was highly selective in its impact upon society. Educational provision expanded certainly; access to/ducation, however, remained limited. Above all it diminished sharply as the social scale was descended.'<sup>3</sup>

Ratke's scheme for education is usually described as being essentially a two-tier system composed of lower and upper schools. This is indeed the model proposed in the *Archontica*, although in the *Scholastica* a tripartite model was adumbrated which corresponded more closely to the reality of the times. In the *Scholastica*, when describing staffing arrangements, Ratke distinguished 'high' schools (universities) – with *Professores*, *Rector* and *Prorektorem* – from 'lower town-schools' with a *Rector* and *Untercollegae*, and village schools, in which the schoolmaster 'commonly also takes care of the clerical office.'<sup>4</sup> This description deviates from the system outlined in the *Archontica* in two ways. First, Ratke was an egalitarian, who believed that the staff of a school should function as a '*Collegium*' without anything approaching the post of head.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, he was concerned to raise the status of education as a whole, and that of teachers in particular. Part of his programme for achieving the latter consisted of freeing the profession of teacher from other – non-pedagogical – duties with which it had traditionally been associated. This meant paying teachers a salary sufficient to enable them to live decently without having to look for alternative sources of income.<sup>6</sup>

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1 Bowen 1981, p. 291.

2 O'Day, p. 183.

3 K. Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680*, 1982, p. 186.

4 *Schol*, I.3.iv.

5 *Archont*, III.5.v.

6 *Archont*, *loc. cit.*

In the systematic way characteristic of his method, Ratke outlined his plans for the systems of lower schools and the universities in parallel. Both were to be established by reference to such criteria as the size of the community to be served, the number of students to be accommodated, and the financial possibilities.<sup>1</sup> Lower schools were to be established 'in villages, areas and towns where children are to be found.'<sup>2</sup> Universities, on the other hand, were not to be bound by local considerations, though it would be sensible to select well-populated centres.<sup>3</sup> In smaller communities, the lower school would be accommodated within a single building, but in larger towns schools could be confessionally differentiated.<sup>4</sup> From an early stage in his thinking Ratke had proposed that 'schools differing according to language should also be ... established on different sites according to the resources of the towns,'<sup>5</sup> – in other words, in different buildings of the same type. Further, school buildings were to be well-maintained, and 'what has once been erected and designed for educational use may not be put to any other purpose.'<sup>6</sup>

This at first sight curious stipulation may be explained both by Ratke's hope of improving the standing of education in the public estimation, and by reminding ourselves of the way in which teaching was commonly carried out in Ratke's day. 'It is impossible to imagine how primitive these village schools were ... the pupils wandered with their 'schoolmaster' from house to house. Or else artisans who had a part-time job as a sexton used their own houses as a schoolroom for their lessons.'<sup>7</sup>

Similar to the way in which lower schools were to be accommodated in different buildings according to the medium of instruction – (German, Hebrew, Greek etc.) – the universities would have *Collegia* distinguished according to faculty, and with different rooms for teaching the various subjects and languages.<sup>8</sup> The universities would have well-equipped libraries.<sup>9</sup> Both the lower schools and the

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1 *Archont*, III.2.viii.

2 *Archont*, III.2.vii.

3 *Archont*, III.2.x and xi.

4 *Archont*, III.2.viii.

5 *VarP*, § 11.

6 *VarP*, *loc. cit.*

7 P. Lundgreen, *Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Schule im Überblick*, Göttingen, 1980, p. 22.

8 *Archont*, III.2.xii.

9 *Archont*, *loc. cit.*

universities should be endowed with special privileges, 'so that both subjects and languages can be taught without hindrance...'<sup>1</sup> For the universities, these privileges would include tax concessions.<sup>2</sup>

School age was of special concern to Ratke. It is clear from various texts that 6–7 was the age at which he thought compulsory schooling ought to begin.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, he spoke repeatedly of the benefits which his pedagogical system would bring to 'old and young, women and children.' Overtly, there was no obvious point at which 'the old' would fit into his institutionalised scheme. The conclusion must be that Ratke's statements on the ages of students were to be taken as recommendations rather than understood in an exclusive sense, and that his educational system was to be interpreted as being in principle an open one, accessible to all. It is noteworthy that among those registered for attendance at the school in Köthen were nine adults (sex unspecified).<sup>4</sup> At the higher level, lectures were to be in public.<sup>5</sup> Alternatively, older students would have access to education organised privately – a system of which Ratke did not entirely approve unless it was carried out under his control.<sup>6</sup>

The problem of access to education was also addressed in the *Scholastica*: 'Although all men are unskilled and unlearned by nature (which is why it is commonly said that no-one is *born* a scholar) – nevertheless such weaknesses can be fought against and compensated for ... in age through self-education.'<sup>7</sup> Helwig and Jung, too, had supported Ratke's proposals with the argument that '... everyone – whether they be ruler or subject, citizen or farmer, man or woman, old or young – will be able to take an hour or more a day without detriment to their work, and so learn other languages directly from their native language ... and study and learn God's word and other arts and sciences – whatever may be necessary or beneficial for their spiritual or temporal welfare, delight, plan, office, profession and everyday life...'<sup>8</sup> Ratke encouraged the view that it was not ignorance that deserved opprobrium so much as trying to disguise one's ignorance, '... no-one ought to be ashamed of admitting that he has not learned much, and

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1 *Archont*, III.2.viii.

2 *Archont*, III.2.xii.

3 E.g. *Practice*, § 3.

4 Anon. Einige Nachrichten von dem berühmten Didaktikus des vorigen Jahrhunderts Wolfgang Ratichius und seinen Schicksalen in den Fürstlich-Anhaltischen Landen, *Hannoversches Magazin*, 16, 1779, col. 248.

5 *Archont*, III.4.iv.

6 Lectures on or in four languages, Metaphysics, Rhetoric and Law were given in a 'Privat-Institution' at Köthen, partly in the castle, partly in the town. Vogt 1878, p. 26.

7 *Schol*, III.27.viii.

8 *GR*, pp. 22–23.

hence would like to learn further even at a more advanced age, if he could; he should be much more ashamed at trying to hide his lack of knowledge and keep it concealed...'<sup>1</sup>

For children, school was to last for no more than four hours a day, the teaching hours to be non-consecutive.<sup>2</sup> The practice in Köthen was to begin the day with prayers<sup>3</sup> and then have school from 7–8 a.m. and from 9–10 a.m., and in the afternoons from 3–4 and from 5–6 p.m. Saturday afternoons were free.<sup>4</sup>

Much has been made of Ratke's progressive thinking with respect to breaks and recreation, and when one considers what contemporary practice elsewhere in Europe looked like, this is understandable. The statutes of Chigwell School, founded by Samuel Harsnet, Archbishop of York, in 1629, prescribed teaching from 6–11 a.m. and from 1–6 p.m. in summer, and 7–11 a.m. and 1–5 p.m. in winter.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, 'Webbe's pupils [in the early seventeenth century, – J.W.] were expected, like all schoolboys of the time, to work very long hours – from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. with a two-hour break.'<sup>6</sup>

Ratke's conception of education did not draw such a rigid distinction between teaching and recreation as these words imply. In fact, he foresaw a variety of modes of interaction as playing a part in the educational process. Languages and subjects were taught in normal lessons, but sermons played a role in the instructional timetable, as they did in the English grammar-school. Further, in Köthen from 1–2 p.m. daily, singing was on the timetable, though not as part of the 'subject' curriculum. Most interesting of all, however, is Ratke's treatment of *conversatio* as a pedagogical form. This seems to have provided opportunities for relaxed social interaction outside formal lessons, but could at the same time be exploited for pedagogical purposes. *Conversatio*, said Ratke, was there for all those who wished to take part in it and enjoy it. It was especially valuable for the socially awkward. Such pupils, in particular, one should '... compel to take part, and make them stick at it, so that they shed their awkwardness through these activities and learn to get along with other people...'<sup>7</sup> The value of *conversatio* to the pupils was that it developed their social skills, it gave them an opportunity

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1 *Schol*, III.27.vii.

2 *Practice*, § 1; *Archont*, III.5.v.

3 This requirement found repeated expression in Ratke's works – e.g. *Art*, § 1; *Practice*, § 2; *Aphor* 29, § 1; *OGD*, § 4, XIV.

4 Vogt 1878, p. 27.

5 N. Carlisle, *A Concise Description of the endowed Grammar Schools in England and Wales*, 1818, Vol. 1, p. 418.

6 V. Salmon, Problems of language-teaching: A discussion among Hartlib's friends, *Modern Language Review*, LIX, 1964, p. 22.

7 *Schol*, II.23.v.

to refresh what they had learned and integrate it with other knowledge over a longer period, and it offered opportunities for self-assessment and fresh motivation.<sup>1</sup> For the teacher, *conversatio* provided opportunities to cement the social structure of the school outside the classroom, and to assess the pupils' dispositions: '... teachers may see from conversing what kind of personalities their pupils have, [and] what their main inclinations are, since things come out in social behaviour which in the individual in isolation may remain hidden and unknown...'<sup>2</sup>

A final point worth noting in Ratke's conception of education is the role which was to be played by parents. This role was not institutionally anchored in Ratke's programme. Nevertheless, there are repeated references to the ways in which lack of harmony between school and the home can be detrimental to children's progress.<sup>3</sup> In the *Scholastica* Ratke asked, 'What are the civil faults which deprive the teacher of respect?' The answer: 'When parents speak badly and disparagingly of the teachers in the presence of children they send to school, emphasise their faults and thus mislead the children and turn them from obedience to disobedience...'<sup>4</sup> In Köthen, Gualther had been singled out for the task of explaining 'the basic principles of the *Didactic* to the parents,' so that they should understand why it was being introduced and how Ratke proposed to develop it further.<sup>5</sup> Parents are also frequently mentioned in the inspectors' reports in connection with the enforcement of pupils' attendance and, as has been mentioned above, with problems of discipline.

Within the framework thus staked out, Ratke proposed as a first step a minimal basic curriculum. This was the same for all pupils at the initial stage, with no overt selection. The elements of this curriculum as outlined in the *Archontica* are easily recognisable as the traditional 'three Rs'.<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere, Ratke indicated that religion, too, constituted an essential element. At a later stage, pupils were to be selected to go further on the basis of ability and vocation, 'but all must first, whether they [go on to] study or not, be instructed in German theology.'<sup>7</sup>

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1 *Schol*, *loc. cit.*

2 *Schol*, II.23.viii.

3 Reineke, § 2.4; *Aphor* 29, § 23; *Schol*, III.23.iii.

4 *Schol*, II.5.xii.

5 Ratke's memorandum to Johann Ernst and Ludwig, 28th. August 1619; Krause, pp. 69–70, No. II/18.

6 *Archont*, III.4.iii and III.5.vi.

7 Mylius, § IV.

The problem of pupils considered to be ineducable has already been discussed in connexion with Ratke's views as to exactly *how* universal access to education should be. In principle, it seems, anyone deemed able to benefit from education should be encouraged to attend school for as long as possible. Even with pupils who were not considered suitable for education beyond a certain point, '... one should do one's best ... [for] as long as possible and not let them leave school until they have learned at least something...'<sup>1</sup> For the more able, two possibilities opened up once they had completed the first stage of their education: to continue in full-time education, or to take up an apprenticeship.

Ratke was clearly aware of the financial pressure parents were under to take their children from school prematurely to help support the family. In the manner of his customary Ramist dichotomy, Ratke divided the reasons for parents taking their children from school into *blameless* and *blameworthy*. It was blameworthy, he said, for parents to take their children from school without any real cause before they had learned anything useful, or simply out of meanness or avarice. It was blameless, on the other hand, for children to leave school provided they could '...at least read, write and do arithmetic, and after leaving school do not want to spend their time in leisure but in learning an honest trade or craft with which to provide honourably for themselves...'<sup>2</sup> According to the *Scholastica*, it was equally excusable for children to leave school due to their parents' inability to pay for their education.<sup>3</sup> However, there are signs that by the time he came to write the *Archontica*, Ratke had reconsidered his position somewhat.

The difficulties many pupils faced in completing their education made the funding of education a matter of urgent concern. Ratke, though far from happy with the situation, apparently saw at the time when he was engaged on the *Scholastica*) no immediately obvious solution: 'this [behaviour – i.e. parents taking their children from school prematurely] should not be condemned, but laid at the door of God the Lord, from whom come happiness and sorrow, poverty and riches...'<sup>4</sup> The solution Ratke put forward in the *Archontica* was different. There, it is repeatedly stressed that all should have equal access to education, regardless of their ability to pay. Responsibility for girls and for the children of the poor is mentioned explicitly: 'It is ... the duty of both [i.e. the sovereign and his wife - J.W.] to supply the children of poor people, who have nothing and cannot expect to get anything from their parents, with books, clothing and whatever they require ... until they can if necessary support themselves...'<sup>5</sup>

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1 *Schol*, II.14.viii.

2 *Schol*, III.28.v.

3 *Schol*, *loc. cit.*

4 *Schol*, *loc. cit.*

5 *Archont*, III.5.vii.

Bursaries and other forms of assistance were to be made available to young scholars. Grants were not, however, to be distributed on demand, but on the grounds of merit. There is no mention of grants being made on the basis of competition.<sup>1</sup> This difference between the *Archontica* and the *Scholastica* supports the hypothesis that there may have been a difference of intended readership between the two, as well as a possible difference in the time when they were written.

The foundation upon which the second stage of education rested thus consisted of religion, together with an introduction to the skills of reading and writing in the vernacular. For pupils able and willing to pursue their studies further, the sovereign should 'establish ... schools in Hebrew, Greek, Latin and other languages ... in addition to the content-subjects and instruments ... according to the method...'<sup>2</sup> The 'content-subjects,' in other words, were to be taught first in the vernacular, and then a second time in the new language to be learned.

This proposal alone represented a major change in the direction education was taking when compared with the Renaissance. First, the emphasis was being shifted from language to subject-matter. 'Prior to Ratich, the greatest part of the routine work of the grammar school consisted in the teaching of Latin grammar.'<sup>3</sup> The temporal and spiritual welfare of children, however, demanded something different from the ideals of literary excellence to which humanists such as Mulcaster, Sturm and Ascham had aspired. The advantage of learning a new subject in the native language first was that the pupils only needed to concentrate on what they were supposed to learn, and were not distracted by problems of language.<sup>4</sup>

In England, this issue had still not been resolved to everyone's satisfaction even in the eighteenth century: 'To enter at once [i.e. at the same time – J.W.] upon the Science of Grammar, and the Study of a foreign Language, is to encounter two difficulties together, each of which would be much lessened by being taken separately and in its proper order...'<sup>5</sup> And in the nineteenth it was said, '... this truth is only now making its way into the schoolroom ... Ratke's protest against this [i.e. the teaching of new subject-matter in a new language – J.W.] will always be put to his credit in the history of education.'<sup>6</sup>

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1 *Archont*, III.4.iv.

2 *Archont*, III.4.iii.

3 S.S. Laurie, *John Amos Comenius, Bishop of the Moravians*, p. 155; and cf. Michel 1976, p. 187; C. Webster, *The Curriculum of the Grammar Schools and Universities 1500–1660. A Critical Review of the Literature*, *History of Education*, 4, 1975, p. 57.

4 *Art*, § 5.

5 R. Lowth, *A Short introduction to English grammar*, 1762, pp. ix–x.

6 Quick, p. 112.

Apart from marking a change of emphasis from language to subject-matter, this shift also made out of the vernacular a universal curricular instrument. Ratke's demand for subjects to be taught in the native-language was, it is true, initially of academic interest only, since 'the liberal arts and faculties' had not yet been described in the vernacular – the necessary textbooks did not exist.<sup>1</sup> But the efforts which Ratke and his team made in this direction mark the beginning of a movement which was ultimately to make all areas of knowledge accessible through the medium of the native language. The long-term result would be, and was intended to be, that 'anyone who could speak and understand German could draw upon and learn the foundations of wisdom'.<sup>2</sup> The political and social dimensions of this thrust were of course not lost on the political leaders of the day, nor on those scholars who believed in protecting their knowledge as a kind of esoteric privilege.<sup>3</sup>

In England, Brinsley – with whom Ratke has occasionally been compared<sup>4</sup> – maintained the traditional priorities despite his flirtation with vernacular education. He acknowledged, for instance, that although 'duty insisted that they should accept the petties', teachers of his ilk 'would have preferred it otherwise'.<sup>5</sup> Brinsley's proposal was that 'preparatory instruction in English should be the concern of the 'usher' or assistant leaving the master himself... free to get on with the serious business of teaching Latin. To Brinsley goes the honour of having produced the first well planned Latin course in England...'<sup>6</sup> The long-drawn-out struggle to find a place in the curriculum for teaching the grammar of the native language is exemplified by the following quotation:

*'There are few parents so poor that they cannot afford to learn their children to read and write, and a little charge more will learn them the accidence and grammar of their mother tongue, and these few that are not, have charity schools to put them to, whose masters, I hope, will hereafter be ordered to take the boys and girls, after they can tollerably read and write, to the learning of the accidence and grammar of their mother tongue...'*<sup>7</sup>

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1 *VarP*, § 10.

2 *BriefT*, § 4.

3 Vogt 1894, p. 196.

4 Adamson, pp. 30 *et passim*.

5 K. Charlton, Ages of admission to educational institutions in Tudor and Stuart England: a comment, *History of Education*, 5, 1976, p. 224.

6 Padley, p. 154.

7 *The English Accidence*, 1733, p. vi.

Ratke's demand that schools should also be opened 'in Hebrew, Greek, Latin and other languages' invites the question of how a student could be expected to master such a curriculum. This problem evidently exercised the minds of Ratke's potential patrons, since he went to some lengths to point out that it was not his intention '... to saddle young people with learning many superfluous languages, but rather believed this to be the most useful, – that every student should only be required to learn those languages which would be most useful to him for the faculty he wishes to study in, and which he cannot well do without...'<sup>1</sup>

A hypothetical path through Ratke's system of education, then, would be: first, a compulsory 'core' curriculum for all children in the vernacular; at the second stage, a broader curriculum of subjects taught in the vernacular to all children able and willing to continue with education; and at the third stage, a narrower curriculum still, consisting of the subjects in which the student wished to specialise, taught in the languages to which they were best suited or in which the works being studied had originally been written.

The educational system designed by Ratke would thus have provided schooling for all boys and girls not mentally or physically handicapped. Financial support would be available according to merit. Pupils would move up from class to class (very much as is the case in Germany today) on the basis of their progress during the preceding year. There would be no selection by social station, age or sex.<sup>2</sup> Ratke did provide for segregation by sex, however: boys and girls were to be taught separately, the girls by female teachers. The latter was perhaps a utopian requirement in the seventeenth century, although the girls in Köthen are recorded as having had at least one female teacher.<sup>3</sup> Ratke also believed in some form of streaming or segregation by ability. The three fundamental types of student distinguished in the *Scholastica* – the 'heroic,' the average and the slower-than-average<sup>4</sup> – were not necessarily to be taught at the same speed even when they were covering similar ground, for 'the former should not be held back because of the latter, nor the latter be pushed on by force, and indiscriminately, for the sake of the former.'<sup>5</sup>

With this outline, the main features of the 'providing' half, as it were, of Ratke's system has been sketched in. This was matched by a controlling or super-

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1 BMZ, § 19, and cf. *Schol*, II.14.viii.

2 However, a remark in the *Archontica* does describe how the teacher should observe 'what each child, above all among the boys' wants, and whether it is suitable to go on to further study – *Archont*, II.5.vi.

3 Her name must have been Stiglitz; cf. Vogt 1878, p. 26; Niemeyer 1842, p. 28.

4 *Schol*, II.14.vi.

5 *Schol*, II.14.vii.

vising half, which may be loosely designated an 'inspectorate'. Its structure is outlined in the *Archontica* and in the incomplete *Schulherrnamtslehr*.<sup>1</sup>

Taken together, Ratke's statements on the supervision and control of education imply a chain of command from ruler to pupil spanning at least six levels. At the top was the head of state or civil authority. The sovereign was to be advised on all matters by government secretaries or counsellors (*Räte*) one step below. The next level down was occupied by the 'office' of inspector (*Scholarcha*). Unlike those of the counsellors above them, the duties of this office were confined to the education system. The office was subdivided into a higher and a lower grade. Below these came the object of the supervision: the education system itself.

To Ratke, the postulate that a school constituted a single society bound together by a common purpose, itself subdivided into two spheres – teaching and learning – was central. On the one hand it expressed a commonness of purpose and mutual interdependence between teachers and pupils. On the other, the fact that no more than two degrees of the 'office' of 'scholar' were foreseen implies a teaching-staff inside the school or university with no internal structure – that is, with no 'head' in the modern sense. This decision was not an oversight, but an explicit decision on Ratke's part, '... since the inspectors are at the same time the first or heads of the schools, whom everyone among the teachers and learners has to obey.'<sup>2</sup> This solution also led Ratke, or gave him the opportunity, to demand not only that teachers should be paid enough to free them from the necessity of taking on extra work, but that all members of staff should receive the same, or almost the same, salary, 'in view of the fact that every one of them has to perform his duties loyally...'<sup>3</sup>

It was the task of all inspectors 'to oversee discipline in the school and the work of the teachers, and also to pay attention to the improvement of the young scholars and whatever else belongs to the welfare of the schools, to punish backsliders but on the other hand to reward and assist the diligent...'<sup>4</sup> The chief duties of the lower grade of inspectors were 'above all to examine methods of teaching, diligently and personally' and to maintain discipline.<sup>5</sup> They were not, on the other hand, to introduce innovations, nor to change accepted practice without consultation.<sup>6</sup> It was the duty of both grades of inspectors to visit educa-

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1 *Of the Office of School Inspector*. In its final form, Ratke would presumably have entitled the work *Scholarchica*.

2 *SI*, I.3.iv.

3 *Archont*, III.5.v.

4 *SI*, I.3.ii.

5 *Archont*, III.5.iv.

6 *SI*, I.3.xii.

tional institutions personally and to attend examinations.<sup>1</sup> The two grades of inspectors were chiefly distinguished through their power and through their spheres of influence. The upper grade was 'to have authority over all the schools of a whole country'<sup>2</sup> but lower-grade inspectors were responsible only for individual schools, and thus exercised merely local authority.<sup>3</sup> The upper-grade inspectors were to have direct access to the ruler. The lower grades, on the other hand, had access to the ruler only through their superiors. A precisely structured hierarchy for the inspectorate was thus delineated.

A clearer idea of Ratke's concept is obtained from his thinking on the size of his proposed inspectorate. The number of lower or 'assistant' inspectors would logically depend on the number of schools which had to be supervised. The number of higher-grade inspectors was harder to lay down because the situation would differ from country to country. Nevertheless, wrote Ratke, each country should have at least four, 'since each of them must be knowledgeable in one faculty.'<sup>4</sup>

In view of the fact that no intermediate post was foreseen between the higher inspectors and the sovereign (they were the persons who 'after the ruler have the greatest power over all schools')<sup>5</sup> and in view of their spheres of responsibility and the professional competence required of them, their position would have been similar either to that of a minister today, or else to a post of corresponding importance in the administration.

The recruitment of the higher inspectors was to be from the commons rather than the nobility, and they were to be appointed by the sovereign. Appointment was, however, to be 'through the unanimity of the votes of those who suggest to the ruler persons judged to be competent as inspectors...'<sup>6</sup> The lower-grade inspectors were to be chosen from among the councillors and citizens of a town or city.<sup>7</sup> In other words, at this point a degree of democratic, non-ecclesiastical control was being injected into the system.

With these proposals for a scheme of educational supervision Ratke took two important steps: he provided a systematic framework for controlling the curriculum and methods of teaching, and he divorced the task of teaching from problems of discipline.

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1 *Archont*, III.5.iv.

2 *SI*, I.3.x.

3 *SI*, I.3.xiii.

4 *SI*, I.3.x.

5 *SI*, I.4.iii.

6 *SI*, *loc. cit.*

7 *Archont*, III.5.iv.

The high degree of control exercised in Ratke's system of education is reflected in many statements limiting the teacher's room for manoeuvre. Ratke wrote, it is true, of teachers deciding 'what they should or should not teach, in terms of the *Didactic*'<sup>1</sup> But since 'the *Didactic*' laid down the curriculum and specified the method in considerable detail, the teacher's freedom of movement was not as great as it appeared. 'No-one', wrote Ratke, 'should deviate from the common distinction of the subjects, neither in writing nor – and much less so – in teaching, without special and weighty cause...for the prevention of which a special law and ruling may be decreed and given by the authority...'<sup>2</sup> And, 'no teacher should be permitted to change anything in his class – whether in the 'content'–subjects or in languages – on his own initiative without the prior knowledge of the sovereign and the minister.'<sup>3</sup>

These statements may suggest to the modern mind an unacceptably high degree of constraint. They must be understood, however, in the context of what they were designed to replace – namely, a situation of freedom so unconstrained as to have degenerated into chaos. Further, to anyone who had pinpointed education as a starting-point for social reform, the remedy could only lie in greater constraints. This attitude was by no means peculiar to Ratke. 'Early writers on education advocated the most rigid kind of control over the content of the curriculum.'<sup>4</sup> To the contemporary mind, this evidently appeared the best, if not the only, possible solution.

Nevertheless, Ratke's constraints had a surprisingly modern consequence: namely, the hierarchy of authority as embodied in the inspectorate doubled as a hierarchy of communication. This was no accident. It was Ratke's expressed aim that teachers should contribute to the increase and improvement of educational knowledge. In other words, research, in Ratke's eyes, was intended to be an integral feature of a self-renewing system of pedagogy. The concept Ratke seems to have entertained may perhaps be described as that of the 'teacher-researcher'. The strict hierarchy he advocated guaranteed that useful results would not remain in unproductive isolation, but would be disseminated through all parts of the system. Although it was true that a teacher was not to be permitted to introduce change on his own initiative, 'if... he should discover or notice something beneficial, he can bring it to the attention of the sovereign and the minister, and then, if it is found to be necessary and valuable, it can be accepted by the ruler...'<sup>5</sup>

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1 *Archont*, III.5.iv.

2 *Schol*, II.15.vii.

3 *Archont*, III.5.v.

4 O'Day, p. 167.

5 *Schol*, II.22.iii.

The criterion by which something was adjudged to be 'necessary and valuable', moreover, was not a subjective assessment by the sovereign and his ministers, but empirical examination. Teachers were explicitly instructed '... to introduce nothing in their official capacity which has not been tested beforehand and can produce significantly greater benefits among numerous individual pupils'.<sup>1</sup> The fact that in Europe generally 'there was no built-in network for the dissemination of the theories or practical advice of Mulcaster, Coote, Brinsley and Hoole'<sup>2</sup> was one factor which doubtless limited the effectiveness of initiatives for reform.

In the light of the comments concerning Ratke's arrogance, Ratke's commitment (documented here) to an open-ended, self-renewing concept of education comes as a surprise. The strictures concerning 'notifying authority' and 'receiving permission' had their positive aspects both in maintaining the harmony which played a key role in Ratke's scheme – for how could unsupervised experiments be pursued in one part of the system without leading to confusion and disharmony in another? – and in ensuring the effective dissemination of innovations which had proved effective, throughout the whole system.

The purpose of the second feature which Ratke coupled with his system of supervision – the separation of teaching from the maintenance of discipline<sup>3</sup> – is not immediately apparent to the English mind, (though fully familiar to the French). First, Ratke was not opposed to discipline *per se*, and the claim that '...the maintenance of order and discipline was to be left to the children'<sup>4</sup> is without documentary foundation. Ratke did, however, make a clear distinction between punishing children for failure to learn, on the one hand, and punishing them on moral grounds, on the other. He saw no point in the first, and indeed believed that learning which involved force was the worst kind of learning, '...for what boys learn through force and with opposition ...they do not remember for long, but forget it and develop a loathing both for their studies and their teachers...'<sup>5</sup> For this reason '... no boy should be beaten and punished by his *Praeceptore* for learning's sake, but only for wickedness and mischief...'<sup>6</sup> Ratke appreciated, on the other hand, that children could be naughty, and deliberately so: 'Wilful and deliberate procrastination should be eradicated by appropriate punishment, and under no circumstances be tolerated'.<sup>7</sup>

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1 *Schol*, II.22.iii.

2 O'Day, p. 170.

3 Cf. *Aphor* 29, § 20.

4 Meyer, p. 241.

5 *Schol*, II.14.ix.

6 *VarP*, § 9.

7 *Schol*, II.14.viii.

But when pupils did have to be punished, the punishment was to be administered by someone other than the teacher.<sup>1</sup>

The conclusion is clear. Ratke saw responsibility for punishment as an unacceptable burden on the relationship between pupil and teacher, and as self-defeating in a situation in which mutual trust and affection were called for. Since the same conclusions *mutatis mutandis* apply today without this responsibility being shouldered by the inspectorate, it might be asked what led Ratke to look for this kind of solution. Again, the answer lies in the currently prevailing situation. Reading Montaigne's description of schools, one is tempted to suspect exaggeration: 'Go in at lesson-time, you hear nothing but the cries of tortured boys, and masters drunk with rage ... How much more appropriate would it be for their classrooms to be strewn with flowers and leaves than with the blood-stained remains of willow-canes...'<sup>2</sup> There is evidence, however, that such scenes were not at all unusual, even inside families, and that Montaigne spoke for many.<sup>3</sup>

Attitudes to punishment such as Ratke's were viewed in nineteenth century England as having been in advance of their time, and are usually ascribed to the influence of Rousseau and the Enlightenment. Ratke clearly anticipated the latter by more than a century.

At the lowest level of the educational hierarchy Ratke placed the office of scholar. It is perhaps a mark of Ratke's originality in his perception of the symbiotic relation between teacher and taught, that he defined the 'office of scholar' not, as might be expected, in terms of the pupil alone, nor even of the teacher, but as a single office with two aspects: teacher and learner.

As might be expected, the *Scholastica*, in which this relationship is elaborated, follows the tripartite pattern typical of Ratke's mature writings, with Book II ('*administratio scholae*') being devoted to the teacher, and Book III ('*perceptio disciplinae*') to the pupil. These two books show closely parallel structures. Simply put, they are divided into things-to-be-attended-to – the qualities and 'virtues' of the respective office – and things-to-be-avoided. Each book contains a section on the ending of the relationship.

Certain aspects of the teacher's role, such as the duty to carry out research, and the importance of teaching 'according to the pupils' skills, ages and abilities,'<sup>4</sup> have already been mentioned. Of the greatest interest, however, is what Ratke considered it to be necessary for a teacher, or a trainee-teacher, to know. This information is contained in the section of the *Scholastica* which deals with the

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1 *VarP*, § 9.

2 M.E. de Montaigne, *De l'institution des enfans*, *Essais*, Bordeaux, 1580.

3 Cf. e.g. K. Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 1965, pp. 212-13.

4 *Schol*, II.15.i.

things which the teacher needed to pay attention to in the teaching situation, and in particular those things of *immediate* (as opposed to *mediate*) importance.<sup>1</sup>

According to Ratke, a teacher's qualities were of four kinds: (1) 'natural' - (i.e. physical and temperamental qualities); (2) 'acquired' - (scholarship; teaching ability; grace of gesture; virtue;); (3) 'institutional' - (under which were subsumed the outward signs of the social and professional role of the teacher, such as appointment by authority, ceremonious induction into office etc.); and (4) 'artificial'. The latter included the teacher's dress, (for 'the judicious man uses clothing as a signal for people to recognise'<sup>2</sup> and jewelry such as rings, – 'for apart from the fact that they adorn the hands, both the gold and the precious stones set in it quietly strengthen and sustain the body with their inner power.'<sup>3</sup> Of these four kinds of qualities, Ratke devoted most attention to the second (acquired) characteristics. They are treated under two heads: *prudence*, and *skill*. Prudence covered wisdom in discriminating between different types of persons and things. With this 'person': 'thing' distinction Ratke took up once more the two fundamental postulates of his theory of teaching: that it must take account of the nature of the learner on the one hand and of the subject-matter on the other. In the *Scholastica* Book II.14, Ratke provided a complete breakdown of the different types of learner as he saw them, together with instructions to the teacher as to how the different types could be identified and the consequences which needed to be drawn for teaching purposes. In *Scholastica* II.15, *Sagacitas in discernendis rebus docendis*, Ratke related the differences in the innate dispositions of pupils to their implications for the structure of the curriculum. Thus teachers may not 'teach everything to their schoolboys without distinction,' but must instead teach 'with great care and discrimination, since not all [pupils] are equally suited to everything.'<sup>4</sup>

Skill in teaching is said to flow from three sources: God, who by His blessing gives a teacher perseverance and diligence, and an innocent and upright life; nature, from whom the teacher acquires his or her innate disposition and *bona educatio*; and 'ability', by which Ratke meant learning, experience and knowledge of *didactica progressio*.

Ratke devoted considerable space to the relationship between these three aspects of skill. By learning or scholarship Ratke meant the kind of learning required for the office of teacher, for 'there is ... a great difference between a scholarly teacher and a scholarly man'.<sup>5</sup> Scholarship by itself was therefore not enough to single out the teacher: '...not every scholar is competent to pursue the profession

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1 *Schol*, II, Chapters 13–22.

2 *Schol*, II.5.viii.

3 *Schol*, *loc. cit.*

4 *Schol*, II.15.i.

5 *Schol*, II.20.ix.

of teacher; ...learning alone, without experience and knowledge of how to teach according to the didactic, is not sufficient'.<sup>1</sup> Although everyone has admittedly had the experience of learning, the two must be distinguished for pedagogical purposes, since 'experience is acquired through lengthy practice in teaching young people in schools, but learning is gained much more quickly than the former, through study'.<sup>2</sup> Ratke's view was that of the two, experience was more valuable to a teacher than scholarship.<sup>3</sup>

In this scheme, the framework for a programme for training teachers is clearly visible. It is tripartite, in that it possesses a 'subject' component, a didactic or method component, and a practical component. In its broad outlines this is the pattern which underlies much teacher training in Germany even today.

Although the *Scholastica* was doubtless conceived by Ratke as his definitive statement on the qualities and preparation required by the competent teacher, it would not be correct to claim that he proposed any form of institutionalised teacher training in the 'higher' schools or universities. The matriculation of trainees which took place at Köthen before their initiation into Ratke's method of teaching seems to have been more an expedient to control numbers and to get the programme off the ground quickly than the realisation of a considered policy. Ratke's energy in this area of teacher education was almost entirely absorbed by problems of content; its outward form seems to have concerned him comparatively little.

In this respect, Ratke may have overlooked an opportunity of strengthening his profession (and it is one phase in the long development of the professionalisation of teaching which we are here witnessing) by failing to propose some kind of formal recognition for properly qualified teachers. Training, qualification and control have been postulated by Charlton and others as important steps in the process of professionalisation. It seems, however, as though professional competence were of greater interest to Ratke than formal academic qualifications. At a time when it was by no means unusual for a man to go down from university without taking a degree, this is perhaps understandable. Ratke himself took no formal degree following his studies in Rostock and Amsterdam.

More important than formal recognition in Ratke's eyes were the acceptance of education by the state as its foremost area of responsibility, and the exercise of this responsibility in providing security – (hence the *Amt* or 'office') – and proper remuneration for teachers.<sup>4</sup>

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1 *Schol*, II.20.v.

2 *Schol*, II.21.ii.

3 *Schol*, *loc. cit.*

4 Cf. e.g. *Schol*, I.3.iii.

The dependence of many teachers on additional – usually ecclesiastical – employment has already been mentioned. But while Ratke and others were struggling to give the teaching profession shape as an independent vocation, the evidence shows that the trend in England at the same period was going the other way: ‘...the ‘clericals’ were apparently on the increase in the later seventeenth century’.<sup>1</sup> Less than ten years after Ratke’s death, Hezekiah Woodward complained that ‘a good Scholar will not come down so low, as the first elementary, and to so low a recompense also; it shall bee left to the meanest, and therefore to the worst’.<sup>2</sup> In some schools, this situation persisted for over 150 years. In Lancaster, for instance, ‘...Richard Hall was the first master of the Friends’ School to be regarded with status beyond that of merely being an odd-job man’.<sup>3</sup> Until then the master’s job had involved cleaning the school, opening and closing the windows, making the fires and digging graves.

Ratke’s work thus represents one important step along the road to the professionalisation of teaching. Nevertheless, the teacher’s ‘office’ was, together with the pupils’, the lowest in Ratke’s educational hierarchy. In the *Archontica* and the *Scholastica* an institutional structure was proposed within which pupils could be educated in accordance with the aims set up for the system as a whole. The effective pursuit of these aims inevitably presupposed a system of tight controls – control of the system (hence no private schools), control of teachers and pupils, control over the curriculum and control over method. Despite the emphasis on control which emerges from this analysis, it is worth remarking that Ratke’s faith in administrative efficiency stopped short of making him believe, like Comenius, that ‘even teachers with ‘no natural aptitude’ would ... be able to use his methods ‘with advantage’...’<sup>4</sup>

The last of the areas named, teaching method, demands separate treatment, not least because for centuries it was the only area for which it was claimed Ratke deserved to be remembered. Ratke’s approach to method also merits consideration, however, because it was built on a fully-fledged theory of educational psychology – an area which according to Adamson played no part whatever in the method of teaching advocated by Ratke.<sup>5</sup>

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1 P.K. Orpen, Schoolmastering as a profession in the seventeenth century: The career patterns of the grammar school master, *History of Education*, 6, 1977, p. 190.

2 H. Woodward, *A Light to Grammar*, 1641, p. 47.

3 R.H.S. Randles, *History of the Friends’ School, Lancaster*, Lancaster, 1982, p. 34. Hall was master of the Friends’ School from 1780–1803.

4 D. Hamilton, The Pedagogical Juggernaut, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, XXXV, 1987, p. 26.

5 Adamson, pp. 41 and 45.

## CHAPTER VII

### The Practice of Teaching: Ratke on Method

Within the educational framework he had worked out for himself, Ratke knew that teaching methods would have to play a central role if his plans for reform were to be successful. It was through his condemnation of the methods currently in use that he had first won support for these plans. Furthermore, if Vogt is correct, Ratke's work on the curriculum, educational policy and administration only developed out of his initial preoccupation with improved teaching methods.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the claim made in the *Memorandum* that Ratke could show 'how a school may be set up not only in High German, but also in all other languages, in which all arts and sciences may be thoroughly learned and propagated...' reveals intentions even at that early date which clearly extended beyond teaching method.

Ratke's views on method seem at the earliest stage to have been less the product of a specific theory of learning than of his own experience as student and teacher. His work on method was largely complete by about 1617, when Rhenius' *Methodus institutionis nova quadruplex* was published. Ratke was always careful, however, even during the later phases of his educational and curricular work, to assign an explicit place to method within his pedagogical structure. It was only in his later years that he produced a more theoretical work, the *Epistemonica*, which may justly be described as a work of educational psychology.

The key to the role which method was to play in Ratke's scheme is to be found in his *Didactica*. It has been explained in Chapter V how this work systematically defined the areas to be controlled by Ratke's pedagogical scheme and assigned them names. As the organizing force governing the teaching of all subjects according to the principle of harmony, Ratke's concept of pedagogy embraced both the organization of the curriculum and teaching method. Didactic, or pedagogy, unlike Law, Medicine and Philosophy, had of course no faculty of its own in the univer-

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1 Vogt 1894, p. 187.

sities, neither in real life nor in Ratke's proposals as outlined in the *Archontica*. The reason is clear: pedagogy appeared to have no distinctive subject matter. But here, too, one of the many paradoxes associated with Ratke comes to the fore. On the one hand, it was said that pedagogy was said to have 'no proper substance of her own'<sup>1</sup> and yet it had at the same time to supply general principles applicable to all disciplines: 'its real subject-matter is all doctrines and languages with which didactic has to concern itself, and which are subject to it.'<sup>2</sup> With these remarks, Ratke fired one of the earliest salvos in a battle which education had to wage over centuries, before it could establish itself as an independent discipline.

Applied to Ratke's favourite division of the world into things, instruments and language, pedagogy (the 'directing instrument') generated the seven disciplines named in the *Didactica*. The purpose of the *Didactica* was to ensure harmony, both between disciplines and within each individual subject. It was hence divided into two major parts – *ordo* and *methodo*, with Books II and III of the *Didactica* respectively being devoted to them. The concept of *ordo*, or harmonious ordering, was more fully worked out in the *Eutactica*, and applied to Ratke's work on the curriculum as realised in the Köthen Series and in the individual subject tables. Method, on the other hand, received no comparable systematic treatment at Ratke's hands after the publication of the pieces in Rhenius' *Methodus*.

Where method was concerned, the aim of pedagogy was said to be '... to present [school] subjects with particular benefit, to get rid of all frustration, to awaken a desire for and pleasure in all learning, to make things complete and definite, to remove doubt, to allow man his natural freedom, the languages their character and the subjects and arts their proper course...'<sup>3</sup>

The somewhat schematic treatment of teaching-method in Book III of the *Didactica* works from a twofold distinction between the demands made on method by the nature of the subject-matter on the one hand, and by the learner on the other.<sup>4</sup> Ratke's examination of the demands made on teaching by the nature of the learner took him into the field of educational psychology, an area more fully elaborated in the *Epistemonica*. The most interesting question to the historian here is how far Ratke adopted the faculty view of psychology prevalent at the time, and how far he was able to free himself from it and point out new paths.

The view of psychology prevalent in Ratke's time was that human cognitive and perceptual behaviour was controlled by more or less separate faculties. This view, together with its consequences for language-teaching, were worked out with a high

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1 *Didact*, I.4.iii.

2 *Didact*, *loc. cit.*

3 *Didact*, I.5.iv.

4 *Didact*, III.1.v.

degree of sophistication in an unpublished series of letters which passed between William Brookes and Joseph Webbe in England, probably in the 1620s.<sup>1</sup> According to Brookes, 'the habitt of a language... [is] ... implanted partly in the understanding, in respect of flexion and dependance, & partly in the memory in respect of idiom & composition, the actions causing this habitt are to be wrought by both these faculties together.'<sup>2</sup> The logical consequence of this approach was for the faculties to be exploited separately: memory for learning words, paradigms and rules, and the understanding or judgement for generating sentences. Webbe, the more progressive of the two,<sup>3</sup> rejected this approach:

'...hee that will teach his Schollare, to understand the wordes before the clause, or at the same tyme with the clause, shall neuer hitt the marke of Custome, that wee ayme at. And my grounds are these. Euery Language hath a different Custome [character — J.W.] And the difference is either in whole clauses, or in the parts of words of clauses...'<sup>4</sup>

Webbe's argument for rejecting faculty psychology as the dominant paradigm was that 'the secret dependencies or hidden sympathick relations & actions that are betweene the senses, memory, and the understandinge...' make a separation into 'a pure action of the senses' impossible. 'Consequently ... the externe senses worke not in languages without memorie nor eyther of them sincerly without the understandinge...'<sup>5</sup>

The position Ratke might be expected to adopt in this debate is clear. Since he was not an important innovator in any individual area of the curriculum, we would expect him to take over contemporary positions with respect to the content of the individual disciplines, in this case faculty psychology, more or less unaltered. Applied specifically to language-teaching, this would have predictable consequences. A belief in the faculties of memory and judgement lead one to expect an emphasis on the memorising of word-paradigms and the learning of rules or precepts, together with their cognitive application. The first of these predictions can be tested against Ratke's treatment of understanding in the *Didactica* and *Epistemonica*, the second against his principles of language-teaching method.

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1 V. Salmon, Problems of language-teaching. A discussion among Hartlib's friends, *Modern Language Review*, LIX, 1964, pp. 13-24.

2 BL Sloane 1466, fos. 291r and 291.

3 Salmon, *ibid.*, p. 18.

4 BL Sloane 1466, fo. 261.

5 BL Sloane 1466, fos. 270-271.

The prerequisites of understanding, according to Ratke, were five: the external senses; knowledge of language; reason; some object to be apprehended; and an equivalence between 'reason' and the object of apprehension.<sup>1</sup> In its essentials, this scheme provided the foundations for a clearly articulated theory of concept-formation. Apprehension was subdivided into preparation (*praeparatio*) on the one hand, and a number of stages of apprehension on the other.<sup>2</sup> Apprehension was mainly concerned with 'five internal powers or workings of the soul ... which must necessarily come into play for genuine understanding...'<sup>3</sup> These five were the intellect, memory, the will, the common sense, and the imagination. Though Ratke does not use the term 'faculty' in this context, the influence of faculty psychology is clearly discernible.

With this constellation of 'internal powers' Ratke combined a belief in the *tabula rasa* theory. In the *Noëmatica*, Ratke wrote that reason 'is by nature like a smooth, polished and unmarked tablet upon which, though nothing has been written, many things can be written.'<sup>4</sup> Hence, '... there can be nothing in the mind unless it has first been apprehended by the senses...'<sup>5</sup>

So far, the evidence suggests that Ratke, like Brookes, would have believed in a set of more or less independently operating components to which, in the context of language teaching, different grammatical areas and exercises could be assigned. There are other indications, however, which suggest that Ratke was not unaware of some of the less desirable implications of the faculty view. For example, to the question in the *Epistemonica* of whether apprehension was to be distinguished from reason, he replied: 'In truth and in reality it is not distinct from it, in consideration of the fact that apprehension is nothing other than the operation or genuine power of reason, which, when it is idle, cannot grasp anything, but when it is active can assimilate anything capable of comprehension'<sup>6</sup> – clearly a more integrative view, acknowledging the 'hidden sympathick relations and actions that are between the senses...' Ratke made the same point in his discussion of the distinction between will-power and reason,<sup>7</sup> and between will-power and the intellect.<sup>8</sup>

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1 *Epist*, I.2.iv.

2 *Epist*, I.4.i.

3 *Didact*, III.2.ii.

4 *Noëmat*, I.2.v.

5 *Epist*, I.3.viii.

6 *Epist*, II.1.iv.

7 *Epist*, I.2.xi.

8 *Epist*, II.10.xi and xii.

In these passages Ratke's point of view seems to be closer to Webbe's than to Brookes'. At this point, one might well ask why, if Ratke's approach to the psychology of learning was more integrative than the conventional 'faculty' view, he went to the trouble of making distinctions as delicate as he did. Ratke discussed the question at some length:

'Although it probably appears to those who are not properly aware of it, as though nothing more belongs to each [act of] apprehension than the act [itself], together with whatever the act may apprehend, and [as though] ... everything happens haphazardly in a flash without distinction or order, – if one considers apprehension carefully and properly, one finds that the ... process does not take place in an undifferentiated fashion, much less haphazardly, but [that] nevertheless one thing follows another in sequence, and nothing can be transposed with anything else, if apprehension is to function correctly.'<sup>1</sup>

This answer is the answer of a scientist rather than that of an educationalist. Ratke is arguing that the only hope one has of understanding complex processes is to split them into smaller components, each of which is more amenable to further study than the process as a whole. His earlier caveats show, however, that while it may be convenient to postulate discrete components for the purpose of scientific analysis, as a teacher he did not thereby feel committed to constructing his teaching programme in terms of these components.

These, then, were the psychological principles which Ratke postulated to underpin his teaching methods. Much of what Ratke had to say about the more detailed aspects of teaching method was expressed in the form of axioms or aphorisms. These principles, axioms and aphorisms cover, in a comparatively unordered way, a wide field: some are specific to foreign-language teaching, others apply to language-teaching in general or the teaching of the vernacular in particular, while still others are relevant to the teaching of all subjects. Finally, some principles do not strictly speaking pertain to method at all. They deal with such questions as access to education, the role of religion, the nature of the curriculum, the respective duties of inspectors and teachers, the relationship between home and school, the arrangement of the timetable, buildings, seating and the printing of textbooks.

To date, no systematic study of Ratke's principles has been made. In the treatment which follows, principles not strictly relevant to teaching method have been excluded from consideration. The remaining principles can be distinguished according to whether they pertain to teaching-method in general, teaching the vernacular, or foreign-language teaching. They will be dealt with in this order.

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<sup>1</sup> *Epist*, II.36.ii.

Nature occurs constantly as a touchstone in Ratke's discussions of method. However, prior to (and at a more abstract level than) his references to Nature was the claim that certainty in all things could be attained through induction and experiment: '*Per Inductionem et Experimentum omnium certitudo.*'<sup>1</sup> Induction is conceivably being treated here as a way of attaining knowledge, but since Ratke equally propagated inductive methods of teaching, the sentence forms a useful bridge between scientific method on the one hand and Ratke's pedagogy on the other.

The more general principles of Ratke's method depend in important ways on his conception of Nature. However, Nature is a difficult concept in Ratke's canon because it is called on to justify different procedures at different times. The aphorism '*Juxta Methodum Naturae omnia*'<sup>2</sup> betrays for instance nothing about what 'the method of Nature' is supposed to be. Other versions of the principle, however, shed more light on the problem. Elsewhere, Ratke wrote, '... everything must be done according to the order of Nature, who in all her works customarily proceeds from the simpler and more ordinary to the great and higher, and thus from the known to the unknown.'<sup>3</sup> From this point of view, such axioms would be thought to be 'according to the method of Nature' as that easy things should be taught before difficult,<sup>4</sup> and necessary things before unnecessary. If one asks, now, 'What is 'Nature'...?' the answer must be something like 'naïve logic' or 'common sense'. The axioms quoted characterise 'a practical approach that aims to be 'naturgemäss' (in conformity with Nature, a cardinal Ramist requirement)...'<sup>5</sup>

Other aspects of the Ramist view of Nature are more complex. Ratke argued that it would be equally against Nature to proceed from the individual to the many, rather than the reverse. This looks suspiciously like beginning with the complex and moving to the simple – a procedure which would potentially stand in conflict with the principle of moving from the easy to the difficult. Nevertheless, to treat the general before the particular was indeed a central Ramist precept: *generalia generatim et semel.*<sup>6</sup> Ratke tried to explain the precept thus: '... the following would be against the order of Nature, first to begin with one thing, but afterwards to proceed to many – instead of doing a lot of things all at once [and] also in all activities proceeding from the simple ... to the larger, and thus from the known to the unknown...'<sup>7</sup>

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1 *Aphor* 29, § 17.

2 'Everything according to the method of Nature,' *Aphor* 29, § 2.

3 *VarP* § 4.

4 Cf. *Schol*, II.15.ii; *Didact*, III.1.iv; *OGD* 1.XI.

5 Padley, p. 50.

6 – 'the treatment of the general at the outset and once only,' Padley, p. 49.

7 *BMZ*, § 8.

This procedure, it will be noted, was consistent with Ratke's division of apprehension (*apprehensio*) into preparation (*praeparatio*) on the one hand and the different stages of apprehension on the other. It was also consistent with the doctrine of *praecognita* or 'praecognition'.

Praecognition constituted one of the central concepts in seventeenth-century teaching, though its role has not to date been satisfactorily explored. A precise elucidation is not easy to arrive at, since the term is glossed differently in different contexts. In essence, however, it implied equipping the mind with some kind of general outline ('*idea*') of what was to come, as an important step in the teaching process. It seems to have been based on the assumption that learners will learn more readily if they can relate their new knowledge to knowledge which they already possess. In Ratke's case, the importance of praecognition may be seen as a consequence of his inductivism.

Elsewhere in the *Aphorisms* Ratke went on to relate the concept of Nature to another principle: 'Not the manner of the thing before the thing itself'<sup>1</sup> and apply it to a different area – the structure of his own curriculum. The doctrines concerning the instruments, Ratke explained, had to follow those of the things, 'simply because Nature keeps to this order, that she makes the [doctrines of] things known before those of the instruments ... and because the same [i.e. the instruments – J.W.] could not be understood without the things, and thus one should extract the *exempel ex ipsis rebus*<sup>2</sup> and [from] the doctrines derived from them, to explain the rules contained in them. But, on the other hand, where one tries to deal with the instrumental doctrines before the doctrines of things, and hence *modum rei ante rem* ('the manner of the thing before the thing [itself]'), the understanding would be blocked, – yes, frequently quite ruined...'<sup>3</sup>

In the face of explanations such as these it is hard not to conclude that, far from making a study of Nature the basis of his principles of teaching, Ratke invoked Nature to justify a course he had already decided on. More light is shed on Ratke's intentions when one considers the teaching of languages in detail. There, it is striking how he insists that the learner should be fully informed at the outset as to the aims and programme of the teaching. Plots of plays and even of individual acts were to be summarized before the pieces were read. These strictures accord well with the theory of praecognition mentioned above. It may well be that this is what Ratke had in mind when he wrote of 'doing a lot of things at once,' and proceeding from the general to the particular.

After Nature, in order of prominence, come statements on completeness in teaching, harmony, more specific individual methods, private revision, and on the

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1 'Ne modus rei ante rem,' *Aphor* 29, § 14.

2 – 'examples from the things themselves.'

3 BMZ, § 15.

respective roles of teacher and pupil. Among the Ratkean principles were the requirement that things once started should not be left unfinished, and that nothing new should be taken up before a topic had been properly completed.<sup>1</sup> These strictures were closely connected with the aphorism '*Non nisi UNUM uno tempore*'<sup>2</sup> – one which was dear also to Comenius' heart and which was probably adapted from Publilius Syrus' maxim 'To do two things at once is to do neither.'<sup>3</sup>

The aphorisms relating to harmony have passed into the educational literature as one of the hallmarks of the Ratichian scheme. Although it is said to have been anticipated, in part, at least, by Vives, Ratke's concept of harmony struck his contemporaries as original and complex.<sup>4</sup> At the meeting in Jena in 1629, it was in connection with Ratke's theory of harmony and his tables that most reservations were expressed. One function of this theory was to make the curriculum–subjects both compatible with each other, and coherent in their internal organisation. the *Encyclopaedia* and the *Eutactica* were the instruments which were to ensure this compatibility and coherence. Teaching methods admittedly operated on a different level from curricular organisation, but in this area, too, harmony was to be a powerful organising principle: '... everything should be directed towards harmony and unity, so that ... all languages [should be] taught in a uniform way or manner...'<sup>5</sup>

With respect to method in the narrower sense, Ratke advocated frequent repetition of the material to be taught, but abhorred rote-learning, which he associated with teaching by force. He attacked the use of *memoria localis*, although at other points he seems to have vacillated as to its use. *Memoria localis* (mnemonics, frequently rendered in Ratke's time as 'artificial memory') was defined as 'a disposing or placing of sensible things in the mynde by imagination, wherevnto the natural Memorie hauing respect, is by them admonished that it maye be hable to call to mynde more clearely and distinctly such thynges as are to be remembered'<sup>6</sup>

The technique of mnemonics has had a long history. Its use was mentioned by Cicero, Quintilian and Pliny, who referred to it as 'figurative or symbolic memory.' In its commonest manifestations it made use of rhythm as an aid to

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1 *Schol*, (1) 8; *Didact*, § 11; *OGD*, 1.III; *Aphor* 17, § 12.

2 'Only one thing at a time,' *Aphor* 29, § 3.

3 J.A. Comenius, *Linguarum Methodus Novissima, The Analytical Didactic of Comenius*, transl. with an introduction and notes by V. Jelinek, 1953, p. 175, fn. 5.

4 Vogt 1894, p. 189.

5 *VarP*, § 7.

6 W. Gratarolus, *The CASTEL of Memorie (Englished by Willyam Fulvvod)*, 1563, CH. VII.

memorising, or of the initial letters of a sequence of words – (for instance, *Richard Of York Gained Battles In Vain*, from which the colours of the rainbow can be reconstructed: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet) – or it replaced numbers by letters, which, as the initial letters of words, could be cast in verse and learned by heart. It appeared in language-teaching in the form of jingles to help children retain general rules and lists of exceptions:

'i before e except after c,  
– except, if you please,  
in that little word *seize*;

or:

*Bijou, caillou, chou, genou,  
Hibou, joujou, pou,*

for words in French taking an 'x' in the plural instead of the usual 's'.

Ratke's apparent ambivalence with respect to *memoria localis* was the result of different applications of the term. Of its use as a tool for memorising grammatical precepts to be applied to the generation of sentences (one of the logical consequences of the faculty view of psychology), Ratke wrote, 'this is such a forced, artificial and tortuous method that some people are driven insane by it, and no-one has yet been found who produced anything laudable or worthwhile on the basis of such tortured memorising.'<sup>1</sup> When, on the other hand, it was related to the layout of text on a printed page, it accorded with the principle of harmony, because it meant that textbooks could be produced in a uniform format. In this context, therefore, it was to be exploited wherever possible.<sup>2</sup>

Another of Ratke's principles was his refusal to allow pupils to prepare work at home without supervision. As with *memoria localis*, he wavered in the details, but the principle was clear: '... they [i.e. the pupils – J.W.] are absolutely forbidden to read the Latin Terence, as all other Latin books, alone...' or even to take the Latin Terence home with them.<sup>3</sup> His reasons were cogent: the pupil 'may easily stumble and get onto the wrong track, and hence learn something wrong which he later has to re-learn with considerable effort...'<sup>4</sup> As a result, Ratke specified precisely the conditions under which homework could be done, and the kind of work it should be.

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1 *Art*, § 7.4.

2 *Aphor* 17, § 19, *Aphor* 29, § 24.

3 *Reineke*, § I, 3.

4 *Art*, § 14.4.

The last group of more general principles concerns the relations between teacher and pupils: teachers should take care that their initial presentation should be accurate,<sup>1</sup> pupils should not be made to learn things by force,<sup>2</sup> boredom was to be avoided at all costs,<sup>3</sup> teachers were not to use violence against the pupils,<sup>4</sup> and pupils were not to come to school with fixed expectations.<sup>5</sup> Ratke's opposition to violence was of course, a corollary of his separation of disciplinary functions (which were assigned to the inspectors) from teaching proper.

Of the principles governing the relationship between teacher and pupil, those which have most engaged the attention of later commentators have been the requirements '*In discipulo silentium Pythagoricum*' and '*Omnia agat praeceptor*.'<sup>6</sup> They were seized upon by Comenius, who wrote, '*Non bonum nobis canonem Didactici quidam nuper dederunt. Omnis labor recidat in Docentem, Discenti nihil praeter silentium Pythagoricum relinquitur* (The canons of a certain *Didacticus* which were formerly given do not [appear] to us to be good: All the work to be done by the teacher; Nothing more remains to the pupil than a Pythagorean silence)<sup>7</sup> The theme was taken up enthusiastically by later commentators. It is so striking as to make it worth enquiring into the reasons which could have prompted Ratke to insist on such a strict division.

Perusal of a variety of Ratichian texts which were not accessible to Comenius shows that, as in the case of homework, after the statement of the principle a number of conditions were specified under which the method could be used after all. That questions by pupil to teacher were not only permitted but an integral part of Ratke's method is confirmed by Chapter 10, Book III of the *Epistemonica*, which is actually entitled '*Interrogatio*'. That Ratke was not here thinking only of the teacher's techniques of questioning is shown by the definition which, according to his usual pattern, opens the chapter:

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1 *Didact*, § 9; *OGD*, § 3.II.

2 *Aphor* 17, § 7; *Art*, § 7; *VarP*, § 9.

3 *Didact*, § 12; *OGD*, § 3.I.

4 *Didact*, § 6; *OGD*, § 1.XI; *Art*, § 7.1; *VarP*, § 9.

5 *Aphor* 17, § 24; *Art*, § 15.

6 'The pupil [to keep] a Pythagorean silence,' and 'The teacher does all the work,' *Aphor* 17, §§ 10 and 9 respectively.

7 J.A. Comenius, *Methodus linguarum novissima*, X, 24, in, *Opera Didacticae Omnia*, Amsterdam, 1657, Part II, p. 100.

‘1. What do you call an enquiry?’

*Enquiry is ... when a pupil asks either his teacher or someone who knows something about it for an explanation of something unknown...’<sup>1</sup>*

In other words, it was not Ratke’s intention that pupils should not ask questions, it was rather that they were not to ask questions when specific methodological steps were being gone through with the teacher. Ratke reserved a special place for questions in the mode of teaching he called *Conversatio*, described in the *Scholastica* Bk. II, Ch. 23. In answer to the question of what is to be understood by *Conversatio* he replies, ‘maintaining upright and serious talk, when a teacher tells his pupils memorable and historical things, reminds them of things which one or the other has to remember, asks, answers questions they might have...’<sup>2</sup> It may be thought, as Comenius apparently did, that Ratke’s assignment of active and passive roles in teaching betrays a lack of flexibility. It does seem, however, that it was the reverse of Ratke’s intention to prevent pupils from asking questions: in the *Epistemonica* they are described as ‘highly necessary.’<sup>3</sup> Ratke simply assigned them to specific points in his teaching programme. The problem is, why? – and why so precisely?

Some justification for this procedure is to be found in the context of teaching to which it was clearly a response. The seventh criticism of contemporary methods made by the Jena professors was that pupils were required to recite or reply to things which they had not sufficiently learnt or understood, with the result that they quickly became shy or obstinate through uncertainty as to whether or not what they were saying was correct.<sup>4</sup> Ratke went to great pains to ensure that pupils should not be asked to say anything unless the teacher was reasonably certain that they could get it right. In other words, speech by the pupil was deferred rather than eliminated, and the responsibility for progress in teaching laid at the teacher’s door. This was done out of concern for the child, and it constitutes at least an arguable alternative to the practice of teachers beating their pupils for failing to repeat their lesson correctly, as opposed to taking the responsibility on themselves for having failed to teach properly.

The most pressing constraint which manifested itself in Ratke’s principles was the need for speed and efficiency. If Ratke had won support for his programme on the basis of his criticism of the inefficiency of contemporary methods, then he had to engineer a system which would produce convincing results within a reasonable time. In the *Scholastica*, the teacher was urged to press on briskly with the

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1 *Epist*, III.10.i, [emphasis in original – J.W].

2 *Schol*, II.23.ii.

3 *Epist*, III.10.ii.

4 *JR*, pp. 13–14.

teaching: 'It must be carried out ... not sleepily nor slowly (which produces great frustration) but vigorously and with appropriate speed, and thus completed.'<sup>1</sup>

This constraint goes some way towards explaining a number of features of Ratke's system – not only the responsibility placed on the teacher and the silence enjoined on the pupil, but also Ratke's emphasis on the close control of method, curriculum and textbooks. To this end, Ratke divided his teaching material very carefully, and assigned the portions to precisely-timed steps. Allowing pupils too much freedom of discourse would have made it impossible to keep to the programme.

If the strict apportionment of a receptive role to the pupils and an active role to the teacher is that feature of Ratke's method which has most exercised later commentators, equally significant for the time, though less widely remarked on, was Ratke's commitment to motivation as the motor of learning. This commitment is expressed in Ratke's rejection of force as an alternative to motivation, in his advice to teachers to be on the lookout for signs of boredom and to respond to them flexibly, and in his insistence – in contrast to much contemporary practice – on comparatively limited periods of teaching interspersed with adequate breaks. Some of these features have been made the object of criticism. Two points, however, must be made clear at the outset. Claims that Ratke's methods 'often consisted in making fanciful analogies with natural phenomena...'<sup>2</sup> and that 'the problem of method with which he dealt exclusively was that of language-teaching'<sup>3</sup> have no basis in fact. Simile and metaphor are rare in Ratke's work; if anything, it was Comenius who tended to elaborate analogies of the kind mentioned.

As to the second point, the relevance of Ratke's principles for *all* teaching had been recognised from the beginning. One reason why Helwig and Jung had urged the Ratichian reforms so forcefully was because 'one can make use of this Didactic even more easily and to greater advantage in the arts and sciences than in languages.'<sup>4</sup> This assessment was endorsed by Quick: 'From these rules of his we see that Ratke did much to formulate the main principles of didactics...'<sup>5</sup> The applicability of Ratke's principles to all subjects may be seen as one consequence of his universalist approach, itself a product of his theory of harmony. As Padley put it, '... the methodological procedure that characterises all his

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1 *Schol*, II.22.vi.

2 F.P. Graves, *A History of Education during the Middle Ages and the Transition to Modern Times*, New York, 1919, p. 270.

3 Adamson, p. 42.

4 *GR*, p. 5.

5 Quick, p. 116.

different '*Lehren* [are] a tightly organised framework, and a practical approach that aims to be ... universally applicable to every subject of the curriculum...'<sup>1</sup>

The last area for which Ratke has been criticised is the boredom which, it is claimed, must have resulted from his emphasis on repetition. It is indeed a legitimate question how far Ratke's demands for repetition can be reconciled with his dismissal of rote learning.<sup>2</sup> As Padley says, 'One wonders what it must have been like to be at the receiving end of Ratke's reforms, and can only guess at the monotonous antiphonal chanting that must have gone on in practice, whatever the good intentions...'<sup>3</sup> The solution to this problem may lie in a misunderstanding, with the Latin word *repetitio* at the root of it. In the Ratkean context the word is always translated 'repetition', though this raises certain difficulties. First, there is the difficulty already mentioned of reconciling Ratke's advocacy of repetition with his rejection of rote learning. Then there is the ideological conflict between repetition on the one hand, and Ratke's emphasis elsewhere on the importance of motivation and understanding. Finally, there is the difficulty that at those points in his writings where Ratke specified the steps for teaching individual parts of the curriculum, the instructions which would lead to the kind of picture drawn by Padley are missing. There is no requirement at any point in Ratke's descriptions of teaching, that the pupils should chant anything in chorus, nor were they required to repeat texts orally. What emerges from Ratke's instructions for language teaching is that the pupils should thoroughly understand the content of what they were being taught, as opposed to merely retaining its form. In the context of Ratke's method as a whole, then, *repetitio* is better understood to mean a frequent working-through of the material and its cognitive assimilation, rather than any form of oral repetition.

The methods of teaching advocated by Ratke may have placed a disproportionate burden on the teacher. On the other hand, his strict limits on the time to be devoted to his kind of teaching, and the evident care and sensitivity with which he approached the problem, go some way towards mitigating the criticism. Most interesting, though, is the fact that contemporary testimony on Ratke's teaching, made by an independent observer, contains no suggestion of boredom on the part of the pupils. Here, if anywhere, one would expect a phenomenon predicted with such confidence by Ratke's critics to be recorded. When Evenius made the twenty-two mile journey from Halle to Köthen in 1618 to report to Halle Town Council on Ratke's method at first hand, his observations covered two lessons. The most interesting section of Evenius' report is § 14: 'Nothing is learned by heart, only frequently inculcated by the teacher until it sticks; the beginners, once they know the letters, soon learn to read without doing it letter by letter, and that

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1 Padley, p. 50.

2 Adamson, p. 42.

3 Padley, p. 11-14.

so quickly and with such avidity that there are no grounds there for beating them – instead, they drive themselves on, and do everything with the greatest eagerness...<sup>1</sup>

Ratke's system of teaching languages may be seen as an extension and refinement of his more general principles. He advocated teaching the vernacular as a foundation for the later acquisition of foreign tongues, a standpoint which was itself a logical consequence of his postulate of proceeding from the known to the unknown. It also paralleled a development which had been manifesting itself increasingly in England throughout the sixteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

The first task in vernacular education was to teach the pupils to read and write, but there were differences of opinion as to how this could best be done, and differences particularly with respect to the time to be allotted to the learning of the two skills.

The first class in Ratke's programme at Köthen had almost the function of a pre-school class. Academically speaking, it aimed to do no more than help the children recognise the forms of letters on the blackboard and in the book. Its main role, however, was to give the children confidence in speaking and to lay the foundations for religious and social behaviour.<sup>3</sup>

First steps in the systematic teaching of reading were taken in the second class, when the pupils were six to seven years old. The teacher wrote the letters on the blackboard, and named them. The choice of letters was not governed by the order of their occurrence in the alphabet, but was dictated by perceptual considerations. In accordance with his principles, Ratke started with the simplest letter-forms first, and worked towards the more difficult ones later. Letters based on similar shapes were grouped together, and the differences explained.

He began with the letter 'i', writing it – according to the Köthen statutes – in red, in several rows across the blackboard:

i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i  
i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i  
i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i  
i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i

Once they had seen how the letters were written, the pupils were encouraged to copy them, with the teacher guiding their hand where necessary to help them form

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1 S. Evenius, *Relatio de Wolfgangi Ratichii Didactica*, in, J.C. Förster, *Kurze Nachricht von einem berühmten Pädagogen des vorigen Jahrhunderts Wolfgang Ratichius*, Halle, 1782, pp. 31–32.  
2 K. Charlton, *The teaching profession in 16th. and 17th.-century England*, in, P. Nash, ed., *History and Education. The educational uses of the past*, New York, 1970, p. 37.  
3 *K SS (3)*, I. Claß, § 13.

the letters. The rationale behind the close conjunction of writing and reading in this, the Reading-Writing Method,<sup>1</sup> was that the two skills would reinforce each other. In the Köthen statutes, it says of reading and writing, 'of these the latter, so that it is better learned, should have the former as an aid.'<sup>2</sup>

Once the pupils knew the letters, they were taught to combine them into syllables:

*ab, ac, ad, af, ag;*

*ab, eb, ib, ob, ub;*

*ba, ca, da, fa, ga;*

*ba, be, bi, bo, bu;*

— and so on. Two to three hours would be devoted to this phase.<sup>3</sup>

As soon as this step had been completed, the first book, the *Little Reader*,<sup>4</sup> was put into the pupils' hands. The teacher read aloud from this book for up to an hour at a time, with the pupils following. In addition to the decalogue, the creed, the Lord's Prayer, the confession and a collection of morning and evening prayers, the book contained (after the letters of the alphabet and Roman and Arabic numerals) extracts from *Exodus* Ch. 20 and *Matthew* Ch. 22, and closed with sections on the pronunciation of German and Latin numerals and multiplication tables up to 10 x 100. Naturally enough, the *Little Reader* contained no fictitious material of the 'Janet and John' type, and almost all of what the pupils read must have been thoroughly familiar to them in advance, particularly if the instructions given in the statutes for the first class had been followed. Ratke estimated that the *Little Reader* (it was only thirty-two pages long) could be completed in two to three days.

The next book Ratke turned to was the *Little Book of Sayings* (*Spruchbüchlein*) compiled from the Bible and arranged in short chapters. Since the teacher read and the pupil followed, it would not have been difficult to keep to Ratke's plan, — five chapters per hour, twenty-five chapters in fourteen days, the whole book in twenty-eight days. Rigid as the programme may sound, this degree of care in the selection and arrangement of material to ensure a steady increase in skills was a novelty in educational history. Furthermore, twenty-five chapters in fourteen days at a rate of five chapters per hour meant that nominally, at least, only five

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1 W.J.F. Davies, *Teaching Reading in Early England*, 1973, p. 136.

2 *K SS* (3), II. Claß, § 3, and cf. *ibid.* IV. Claß, § 2.

3 *GIM*, IV § 5.

4 *Lesebüchlein / Für die Angehende / Jugend / Nach / Der LehrArt / RATICHII*, Köthen, 1619. Cf. Illustration III.

hours would be devoted to this exercise in a fortnight, which hence left a generous margin of tolerance.

At the end of the first month, Ratke claimed, ‘the whole Christian religion with its sayings has been taught to the pupil without force, simply by having them read to him, and he has learned to read at the same time’<sup>1</sup>

It was only at this stage that the pupil made his first efforts to read aloud, under the watchful eye of the teacher: ‘... as soon as the teacher notices that he [the pupil – J.W.] has difficulties in reading and makes frequent mistakes, he should stop him immediately, so that he does not go on making them and get used to stumbling and doubting, but let him listen a while longer...’<sup>2</sup> From this point on, the syllabus became increasingly flexible. For six months, practice in reading was combined with attendance at sermons given in German for half an hour in the mornings and afternoons with a view to expounding the texts the pupils had been reading.

The reader used during the second and third months was still the *Little Book of Sayings*, with options as to whether the pupils were to move on to do the whole of the New Testament, an undertaking for which Ratke set aside thirteen weeks (i.e. a quarter). For the fourth to ninth months of the school year, *Sayings from the New Testament* were combined with sermons, with *Sayings from the Old Testament* as a possible option. Thus, within a year the pupils would have acquired a sound knowledge of the Bible. This knowledge was to be extended in the following year, but if teachers thought that going through the material yet again would be too boring, they had the option of beginning German grammar instead. What was taught, and how, depended to no small degree on the pupils, ‘The method,’ wrote Ratke, ‘will choose itself; for both the *ingenia* [abilities] are different and the ages, if many boys are taught together. For this reason the teacher, and the inspectors, too, must be sensitive in the matter, because one is not in this case tied to any specific way...’<sup>3</sup>

Teaching the grammar of the native language was at this time a novelty in Germany. There, as in England, ‘grammar’ normally meant Latin grammar. Teaching vernacular grammar had the function in Ratke’s scheme of providing a foundation in the known from which the pupil could proceed to the unknown, – in this case the grammars of other languages. But, itself being an unknown, the grammar of the vernacular had also, according to the same principle, to be taught from the known. But how? Here as elsewhere in Ratke’s writings, the known constituted not a set of unrelated sentences, but a coherent work by a single author. For German grammar it was Luther’s translation of the New Testament

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1 *ID*, p. 13.

2 *ID*, *loc. cit.*

3 *ID*, p. 16.

which was to serve as a foundation. The way in which this procedure built on the initial teaching of reading is obvious. Once pupils were familiar with the contents of the New Testament, they were shown in their books, as the second step, the tables of conjugations and paradigms. As the third step, the teacher pointed out examples of the inflected forms in the German text, which the pupils already knew. This was followed by the *praecepta grammaticis* taught from examples in the book, together with the definitions.

The next step was the systematic treatment of the *etymologia* or the eight parts of speech, beginning with the noun. Ratke insisted that this phase should be gone through rapidly, taking no account of exceptions or *special observationes*. The rationale underlying this requirement was Ratke's principle that the individual and simple should not be taught before the complex whole. Ratke's justification was that it was the teacher's task in the first lesson 'to give the boy a rough outline or *Ideam* of the whole grammar, so that he knows what *Grammatica* is and what it treats of...'<sup>1</sup> – another instance of the role of praecognitions.

At this point the teacher was himself to act as a model of how he intended to develop the lesson, by formulating simple questions about morphology and answering them himself. The sixth and seventh steps were reserved for syntax, and *speciem* and *figuram* respectively. For every hour spent working on the grammar, Ratke recommended one to two hours reading the text.

In the sense that the paradigms were to be referred to on the basis of examples discovered in the text ('The rules do not prepare, nor yet guide, but confirm')<sup>2</sup> this essentially inductive method is difficult to reconcile with Padley's representation of Ratke's method as a '... catechetical approach, in which the master no doubt intoned the seemingly endless questions beginning with 'Was ist' etc. and the pupils chanted back replies beginning with the inevitable Ramist 'Zweyerlei' ('twofold')...'<sup>3</sup> There is no *a priori* reason to associate the dialogue form favoured by Ratke specifically with choral repetition. 'The method of *Question* and *Answer*' remained a popular form of presentation in England throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>4</sup>

According to Priestley, this method was chosen as being 'the most intelligible to the scholar and the easiest for the master,' without necessarily involving the vacuous mouthing of poorly-understood content. On the contrary, the logic with which the various parts of the Ratkean system were interlocked becomes ever more apparent. The 'little books' with sayings from the Old and New Testaments

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1 *ID*, p. 18.

2 *Aphor* 17, § 14.

3 Padley, p. 223.

4 Cf. for instance D. Knight, *Accomplishment or dogma: Chemistry in the introductory works of Jane Marcet and Samuel Parkes, Ambix*, 33, Part 2/3, November 1986, pp. 94-98.

provided material for practising reading, but they also provided a body of data from which the German grammar could be illustrated. Once this point is grasped, other aspects of Ratke's scheme fall neatly into place. The sayings from the New Testament, for instance, provide a natural starting point for the introduction of Greek, and those of the Old Testament for teaching Hebrew. (In fact, the Old Testament sayings were supplemented by the German translation of *Genesis*.) Parallel to the introductions to different languages, the harmony between the grammars would permit the pupil to move with the minimum of difficulty between the grammatical categories of his native German (elaborated in the German edition of the *Grammatica Universalis*),<sup>1</sup> and those of Latin, Greek, Hebrew and other languages: 'When the boy ... knows and sees what grammar is, he can afterwards be introduced to other languages, with inestimable benefit. For the grammars are prepared according to the same system for all languages, and correspond to each other as far as the character of each language permits.'<sup>2</sup>

Ratke's plan for teaching the vernacular covered three years, and included both communicative skills and cognitive grammar. From its initial introduction in connection with the letters, writing was integrated with reading both in terms of timing and content. In the context of the writing methods which the world has seen since, Ratke's approach is distinguished by taking a coherent body of subject matter as its basis, and by asking the pupils to write only things with which they had already become familiar through reading: '... the pupils continue to receive daily practice in writing, whereby care should always be taken that the pupil practises what has been read the same day, and writes no unfamiliar material...'<sup>3</sup>

The procedure as outlined by Ratke stood in contrast to the received doctrine on this topic in England. O'Day has rightly pointed out the danger of divorcing the study of method from its socio-economic context – the 'how' from the 'what'.<sup>4</sup> Reading could be taught with the aim of creating greater personal freedom, but also as a means of explicit or implicit indoctrination: '... the Protestant emphasis on educating the laity in religion ... consisted of a stress on the acquisition of knowledge and approved doctrine and not on a cultivation of critical and creative techniques.'<sup>5</sup> The propagators of the Reformation in England and Germany doubtless shared many common aims – the texts which Ratke's pupils were given to read are evidence of this. But one can not infer from this that Ratke shared the

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1 *ID*, p. 19.

2 *ID*, *loc. cit.*

3 *ID*, p. 16.

4 O'Day, p. 43.

5 O'Day, p. 45.

aims of those clergy who saw the religious reformation as accomplished, and 'sought to curtail further change.'<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, Ratke seems to have perceived this danger and worked to avert it. His touchstone was the welfare of the individual rather than some preconceived ideal. With regard to the teaching of reading and knowledge of the Scriptures, Ratke wrote that it was not only preachers or *studiosis theologiae* who were to be made, or permitted, to acquire this knowledge: 'Every individual has the right to his own salvation, so it is not right to let only a few boys go to school and leave the others out, and keep the girls out of school betimes, and *it is not enough – as far as the fear of God is concerned – to do nothing else in school than learn the Catechismum by heart*; instead, *one should have young people in general, boys and girls, learn to read, write, practise and thoroughly know the Holy Scriptures in addition to the foundations of Christian belief.*'<sup>2</sup> In this context, Ratke's reservations with respect to rote learning acquire more than merely methodological significance.

A second point of difference from English practice concerns the details of reading. Ratke has been credited with 'the first recorded use of colour in teaching reading.'<sup>3</sup> In the context of Ratke's work as a whole, this is a minor detail and may not even be correct. Although considerable attention is paid to the matter in the *Köthen School Statutes (3): More detailed instructions*, Ratke shows no interest in the question elsewhere in his writings, not even at the points where one would most expect it,<sup>4</sup> so that one must suspect the insertion to have been the brainchild of some other member of Ratke's staff. This conclusion seems plausible when one considers that the *More detailed instructions* to the Köthen School statutes, unlike the first version and the *Further instructions*, were drawn up in December 1619 while Ratke was languishing in Warmsdorf castle. Ratke, it is true, had mentioned the use of red lettering at his meeting with von Freibergk and others on 4th. October,<sup>5</sup> but as a suggestion put forward by Gualther rather than as something advocated by himself. According to Vogt, Prince Ludwig had asked Ratke to adopt this modification on 2nd. October 1619, after it had been suggested by Kromayer as part of the Weimar reforms.<sup>6</sup>

A further difference from contemporary practice in England concerned the point at which the transition was made from reading to writing. In Ratke's scheme, teaching the two skills was almost fully integrated. The English, on the other hand, preferred a separation of the two, methodologically and chronologically.

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1 O'Day, p. 45.

2 *ID*, pp. 9–10 – [emphasis in the original – J.W.]

3 W.J.F. Davies, *Teaching Reading in Early England*, 1973, p. 136.

4 For instance, in the *GIM*, 'Von dem METHODO Oder arth Zu lehren.'

5 Krause, p. 81, No. II/26.

6 Vogt 1894, p. 96.

Hart wrote that children should 'first learne to reade before they should learne to write, for that it is farre more readie and easie.'<sup>1</sup> And Mulcaster followed Hart's lead a decade later.<sup>2</sup> From a methodological point of view, this demonstrates that the idea of using writing to reinforce the skill of reading 'had not yet been accepted as a fundamental or even functional part of the teaching of reading in England.'<sup>3</sup> From a socio-economic point of view, the English practice effectively prevented a considerable proportion of the population from learning to write at school age. It has been argued that English children were not considered an economic asset before the age of seven, and by that age many relatively poor children mastered the art of reading. But if one accepts that writing was taught only after the achievement of a satisfactory reading standard, and hence not until the eighth year, then those children who were drawn into the economic system at that age were seriously disadvantaged.<sup>4</sup>

Again in contrast to Ratke's disposition of the skills, 'Writing [in England – J.W.] was not accepted as one of the skills taught in the elementary school. More commonly, writing was taught by a peripatetic scrivener for a fee ... But if writing was to form an accepted part of the curriculum of the early years at school, the Elizabethan and Jacobean schoolroom was ill designed for its practice. There were no desks.'<sup>5</sup> This fact might help to explain the otherwise curious observation that when Prince Ludwig's clerks registered the pupils for attendance at Köthen's schools, they also made an inventory of the available tables.<sup>6</sup>

Ratke's method of teaching foreign languages, too, was developed from his general principles, and built on the foundations laid in the mother-tongue. The placing of a coherent text on a single theme in the centre of the teaching was a step which, under the conditions prevailing in Ratke's time, should not be underestimated. The practice of offering gobbets of thematically unconnected speech in the teaching of reading and languages continued the tradition of Stanbridge and Whittinton, and persisted into the twentieth century. It was only in 1892 that Mangold could claim that, in Germany at least, the view that foreign-language teaching ought to make use of coherent reading materials, combined with an inductive approach to grammar, had finally received official recognition.<sup>7</sup>

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- 1 J. Hart, *A Methode or comfortable beginning for all unlearned, whereby they may bee taught to reade English, in a very short time vvith pleasure*, 1570, Preface.
  - 2 R. Mulcaster, *The First Part of the Elementarie which entreateth chesefelie of the right writing of our English tung*, 1582.
  - 3 W.J.F. Davies, *Teaching Reading in Early England*, 1973, p. 137.
  - 4 O'Day, p. 46.
  - 5 O'Day, p. 60.
  - 6 Niemeyer 1842, p. 24.
  - 7 W. Mangold, *Gelöste und ungelöste Fragen der Methodik auf dem Gebiete der neuen Fremdsprachen*, Berlin, 1892, p. 6.

The text which Ratke used to teach Latin ('the author') was not one which the children would normally have read in their vernacular lessons, but the plays of Terence. Ratke's justification for his choice of author is interesting, because it reveals the importance which a coherent text and subject-matter possessed in his eyes: '... that author is suitable who exhibits pure and choice language and whose subject-matter is attractive and pleasant. For such a book arouses in the hearts of the learner the desire and love of listening. Books of this sort are: stories, comedies, tragedies [and] conversations. For this reason one must be particularly careful in the choice of the author. For the content or subject-matter of the book serves several purposes; (1) [it] sparks off the desire to learn; (2) [and it] provides a supply of words and expressions...'<sup>1</sup>

The fact that Ratke suggested a text which was not part of his programme of initial reading, coupled with his requirement that pupils should proceed from the known to the unknown, meant that the pupils' first step in learning Latin would logically have been to have Terence's plays read to them in German. And indeed, a translation to serve just this purpose was published as one of the Köthen Series in 1620.<sup>2</sup>

Terence's six extant comedies would first be read out to the pupils in six days at the rate of one a day.<sup>3</sup> Great care was taken with the introductory phase. The role of praecognition at this point was to make sure that the pupils knew what to expect and what the purpose of the teaching was. As part of the principle that the treatment of the individual and specific should not precede the global treatment of complex material, Ratke insisted that the teacher should give in advance a summary of the plot of the act which was about to be read. One pupil would then read the *Argumentum*, another the *Prologue*, and pupils and teacher would take it in turns to read the parts, completing the whole comedy in about three hours. After school, pupils would take the books home with them, explain to their parents what they were doing, and re-read the comedy at home.<sup>4</sup>

The pupils would only start Latin in the following week, when they had become familiar with the plots and characters of the plays in the vernacular. Each pupil was given a Latin copy of the *Terence*, told what the aims of the course were, the time it was expected to take, and warned to be on his toes.<sup>5</sup> By allotting six weeks to this phase, Ratke was able to cover one comedy per week, each conveniently divided into five acts which could be dealt at the rate of one per day

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1 *GIM*, 'Von dem METHODO Oder arth Zu lehren,' § 6.

2 Cf. H. Egerland, *Köthener Drucke von Schulbüchern zur 'Allunterweisung' Wolfgang Ratkes*, Köthen, 1985, p. 14.

3 Reineke, § 2.2.3.

4 Reineke, § 2.2.5.

5 Reineke, § 3.1.2.

from Monday to Friday. In practice, this meant going over each act twelve times in a day. However, Terence's acts are not very long, the pupils would not attend school for more than four hours in a day, and there would be breaks in between 'because the boys can not sit for so long.'<sup>1</sup> Precise instructions were given as to the steps to be followed at each stage.<sup>2</sup> The second set of three readings was accompanied by explanations by the teacher – *ad sensum* rather than in terms of a precise translation. The third time, the act would be read through without explanation.

Pupils would begin to use Latin words and phrases from the first lesson in the Latin *Terence* onwards, when the teacher would lay emphasis on some of the commonest words and expressions, pronouncing them a little more clearly, repeating them and explaining them – "*poeta*, the poet; *credidit*, he believed, thought" etc. – but without trying to ensure that the pupils remembered them. The pupils should say 'as often as they like what they have remembered from the Latin lesson,' both in and out of school. What they should not be required to do was to 'try to turn their thoughts, formulated in German, or whatever else occurs to them, straight into Latin.'<sup>3</sup>

In this phase, pupils would not be allowed to take the Latin *Terence* home. By using this method, Ratke believed, provided there were no printing errors in the text and no errors on the translator's part, the pupils 'cannot have learned anything wrong.'<sup>4</sup> If they were allowed to take the Latin version home, on the other hand, they could easily internalise errors in the quantity of the Latin verse – something which it is 'not easy to correct afterwards.'<sup>5</sup> Pupils who wished to work at home during this phase were advised to read the German *Terence* instead, and particularly to read in advance the act which was to be dealt with the following day, so that they would be familiar with its contents.

For the procedure so far, Ratke allowed six weeks. In the seventh, the teacher would go through the material again for the third time, asking the pupils themselves to read. The transition to grammar was made in this phase. The last fifteen minutes of each lesson would be spent teaching the paradigms by the same sequence: the pupils first having them read out, followed by explanation and repetition. Examples of the conjugations and declensions would be taken from the plays.

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1 Reineke, § 3.1.2.

2 Gotha Codex Chart. B 825 N, pp. 17ff.

3 *GIM*, § II.2.

4 Reineke, § 3.1.3.

5 Reineke, *loc. cit.*

At this point, the grammatical material which the teacher dealt with was still determined by what appeared in the author's text. This run-through was thus characterised by a division of time between the author's text on the one hand, and the grammar section on the other.

When this phase had been completed, the pupils would be able to recognize nouns, pronouns, participles and verbs from their inflections. They would then go through the text again. At this stage, Ratke once more insisted on a broad treatment of complex phenomena preceding the detailed treatment of individual items, 'so that he [the teacher – J.W.] implants in the learner's mind a rough and general idea...'<sup>1</sup> The effect of this was to concentrate attention on the main regularities of the language, and not allow the pupil to be distracted, as was otherwise too often the case, by an excessive devotion to rare exceptions. Before the pupils turned to the grammar-book proper, the teacher went through the text once more, this time concentrating on the morphology of the language as exhibited in 'the author.'

Once the pupils had mastered the morphology sufficiently well to be able not only to explain the examples given in the book, but also to decline and conjugate new nouns, pronouns and verbs according to the same pattern, they began to decline and conjugate larger syntagmatic units also taken from the author:

*Adimo mettum atque expleo animum gaudio*  
*Adimis mettum atque exples animum gaudio*  
*Adimit mettum atque explet animum gaudio, etc.*

When the pupils had covered all four Latin conjugations in this way, they could begin to construct dramatic scenes of their own, modelling them on the ones they knew from 'their' author.

By this time, four or five months would have elapsed and the author's texts, together with the paradigms, would be more than familiar to the pupils. The next step was the syntax. This would be dealt with in the same way, with the teacher reading the rule and illustrating it by five, fifteen or twenty examples from the author – the more general features first, the finer points and exceptions later.<sup>2</sup>

The pupils would then have spent six to eight months learning Latin<sup>3</sup> and, if all had gone according to plan, would have acquired a sound knowledge of the language. At this point an important change occurred: the pupils began to translate the Latin text into the vernacular. Care was taken, however, that the change should not be too abrupt. With this in mind, the pupils were allowed to translate

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1 *GIM*, 'Von Dem METHODO Oder arth Zu lehren,' § 11.

2 *GIM*, 'Von Dem METHODOD Oder arth Zu lehren,' § 17.

3 *GIM*, 'Von Dem METHODO Oder arth Zu lehren,' § 19.

short passages from Terence into the vernacular from the fifth and sixth months onwards. If the pupils found they had forgotten something, they were enjoined to jot their questions down on paper and ask the teacher 'after the repetition and reading aloud had been completed.'<sup>1</sup> But if they were unable to wait so long, then they could turn to 'a small dictionary, which will be produced according to the New Method for each language.'<sup>2</sup>

When the pupils had learned to translate into the vernacular, the last stage could begin. Here the teacher would select short sentences from the German *Terence* and have the pupils give the equivalent in Latin, in other words – begin translating into the foreign language. This would be continued until the pupils could translate out of and into the foreign language with ease.

Structurally, Ratke's method as outlined above falls into five major phases: familiarising the pupils with the text in the vernacular; familiarising the pupils with the same text in the foreign language; cognitive grammar-learning; translating the text into the vernacular; and translating the text into the foreign language. Although it is not easy to calculate precisely how much time Ratke set aside for each phase, it is hard to see the whole process requiring more than one academic year. As teacher and pupils worked through each successive phase, the pupils became increasingly active in taking over the roles which the teacher had modelled for them. Despite the fact that he had committed himself to strict time-limits, Ratke repeatedly warned against excessive haste, being over-ambitious, or asking pupils to tackle exercises before they were capable of mastering them.

Some of Ratke's proposals concerning foreign-language teaching have attracted criticism. In assessing this criticism, it is important to understand both the criticisms and those aspects of Ratke's work which gave rise to them. As a prerequisite for this undertaking it must be remembered that not only Ratke's theory and practice, but also the criticisms themselves, are products of history. As theories of language-teaching and learning evolve, so do the vantage-points from which they are judged subtly shift. Ratke's advocacy of a phase of 'Pythagorean silence' for the pupil is a case in point. More recent developments in foreign-language teaching have called in question the earlier notion that pupils should be active (i.e. repeat utterances in the new language) from the first day. It has been observed that children exposed to a second language under natural conditions may pass through a long phase of receptive processing of language, in which little or no speech in the new tongue is produced.<sup>3</sup> On the basis of such observations it has been argued that provision for a similar phase should also be made in the

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1 *GIM*, 'Von Dem METHODO Oder arth Zu lehren,' § 19.

2 *GIM*, *loc. cit.*

3 S. Ervin-Tripp, Is second language learning like the first? in, *TESOL Quarterly*, 8, 1974, pp. 111-127.

foreign-language classroom: '... listening comprehension has been traditionally treated as a passive skill; the emphasis on instruction, therefore, is almost exclusively on the overt linguistic behaviour, the common assumption being that if speaking ability is developed, listening comprehension will follow. Nothing, however, can be further from the truth since ... expressive language depends on receptive processes for its development.'<sup>1</sup> No-one, of course, would claim that Ratke's strictures had the same empirical or theoretical underpinning as Ervin-Tripp's or Postovsky's observations. On the other hand, they do seem less deserving of criticism when assessed from a viewpoint other than that of the strict audio-lingual method. They also testify to considerable insight on Ratke's part into the nature of the language-learning process.

To gain an idea of what language-teaching practice looked like elsewhere in Ratke's time, one need only consider the situation in England. Here, '... the boy's life would be bounded by parsing and construing, the making of Latins or 'vulgars' and the building up of a vocabulary. Drill and repetition would be the dominant method...'<sup>2</sup> The dominant method, in other words, was still that of 'precept and example' which had been practised by Stanbridge and Whittinton a hundred years earlier. The difference between this procedure and the phases of Ratke's method are striking: '... first the scholar shall learn the precepts; secondly, he shall learn to note the examples of the precepts in unfolding other men's works; thirdly, to imitate the examples in some works of his own...'<sup>3</sup> These differences in method point to underlying differences in aims. Ratke's postulate, it will be remembered, was '*Linguae ad usum loquendi docentur*'<sup>4</sup> – all languages were to be taught to be spoken. In England, by contrast 'from both Martindale's and D'Ewe's accounts of their Latin studies we can detect that composition and declamation (oratory) were emphasised at the expense of conversation.'<sup>5</sup>

Seen as a whole, Ratke's principles of teaching-method thus signal a shift away from the dependence on memory which had reigned since the Middle Ages. Padley saw the move towards teaching by reason rather than memory as running counter to the approach adopted by the Jesuits;<sup>6</sup> this view accords well with Ratke's relegation of the learning of paradigms to a late stage in the learning

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1 V.A. Postovsky, *Why Not Start Speaking Later?* in M. Burt, H. Dulay and M. Finocchiaro, ed., *Viewpoints on English as a Second Language. In Honor of James A. Alatis*, New York, 1977, p. 20.

2 K. Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 1965, p. 106.

3 W. Kempe, *Education of Children*, 1588, Sig. F.2.

4 *Aphor* 17, § 22.

5 O'Day, p. 72.

6 Padley, p. 137. The Jesuits' *Ratio Studiorum* had been published in 1599.

process. On the other hand, although Ratke rejected learning by heart, one component of his teaching, its content, did depend on the memory; but it was memory-work without explicit memorisation.

Ratke's proposals concerning teaching method were only one weapon in his campaign for educational reform. They occupy an important place alongside the re-structuring of the education system and the reform of the curriculum. Ratke demonstrated his commitment to method as the starting-point for reform by assigning it the key position in the complex constellation of factors involved in the process of teaching and learning: it was no good placing the blame on the pupils for failing to learn, he insisted: teaching-methods had to be improved. The price for choosing methods as the point of attack, however, was a high degree of control: control of procedure, but also control of the interaction between teacher and pupil. It is against this background that the more controversial points in Ratke's plan must be understood.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Success or failure? Ratke's influence on educational thought

In view of the energy which Ratke devoted to his educational endeavours in the course of a long life, one might be forgiven for concluding that he has been less than well served by educational historians. The overwhelming conclusion in the literature seems to be that Ratke was, as an educationalist, a failure. Those who do acknowledge the value of his work point to his lack of practical success in the realisation of his plans; many place him in the narrow tradition of the reformers of foreign-language teaching method. Otherwise, he is unfavourably compared with Comenius, and his failures are contrasted with the peaks of educational achievement elsewhere in seventeenth-century Germany associated in particular with the Duchy of Gotha and with Prussia.

According to Meyer, Ratke, 'failed ... ignominiously.'<sup>1</sup> His work is said to have had 'little permanent result in practice,'<sup>2</sup> and his influence was 'limited,'<sup>3</sup> 'curtailed by the fact that he tried to make his method a sort of carefully guarded trade secret and even more by his failure to institute a successful school built on his principles.'<sup>4</sup> More recently, Padley wrote that 'despite his [Ratke's - J.W.] immense industry his ideas made little headway.'<sup>5</sup> Taken as a whole, then, 'Ratke's life was practically a failure. He did not succeed in his scholastic work...'<sup>6</sup> The most which many authors are prepared to concede is that 'though

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1 Meyer, p. 241.

2 H.C. Barnard, *The Little Schools of Port Royal*, Cambridge, 1913, p. 111.

3 R.F. Butts, *A Cultural History of Education*, New York, 1947, p. 278.

4 J. Brubacher, *History of the Problems of Education*, New York, 1947, p. 206.

5 Padley, p. 100.

6 S.S. Laurie, *John Amos Comenius, Bishop of the Moravians. His Life and Educational Works*, 1881, p. 17.

his ideas on education and methods of teaching were unsuccessful and unpopular in his lifetime, they had some influence on later reformers, especially Comenius.<sup>1</sup>

The view that Ratke's reforms 'when examined do not amount to much more than a better method of teaching languages'<sup>2</sup> (the tradition in which Bowen, too, places him),<sup>3</sup> is significant because of its long history. As has been shown above, a significant feature in the reception of Ratke's work from the beginning has been a tendency to associate it exclusively with the teaching of languages.<sup>4</sup> Power wrote of Ratke's methods: 'When the students undertook Latin, they did not study Latin grammar first. Rather, they gained a knowledge of the Latin tongue by reading and speaking, and later learned grammatical structure by its application to what they had read. This innovation in the teaching of language is certainly part of the general realistic outlook, and may well have been Ratke's most important contribution to the history of pedagogy.'<sup>5</sup>

To those who view Ratke's claims as in any case hollow and his work as suspect, his name deserves only to be remembered in conjunction with others. According to Adamson, for instance, 'Ratke's claim to high rank in pedagogic history is made to spring from an assumed connection with Bacon,'<sup>6</sup> but for most commentators it is as forerunner to Comenius that Ratke is best remembered: '... his most important contribution to the history of education was that he prepared the way for a greater man'.<sup>7</sup>

Ratke's work is also unfavourably compared with 'the one educational undertaking of any real consequence in Seventeenth Century Germany'<sup>8</sup> — the reforms initiated by Duke Ernst 'the Pious' (1601–1675) in Gotha. Bowen sees the Gotha reforms as the logical continuation of the Lutheran strand in German educational history: 'At the elementary level the Protestant regions had taken the lead under the stimulus of Luther and Melancthon to provide schools ... The first compulsory school-attendance requirements were in Saxony where the city of Weimar (*sic*) passed laws in 1619 requiring all children between six and twelve years of age to be in attendance the full year except for the harvest month when they were

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1 J.O. Thorne, and T.C. Collocott, ed., *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*, rev. ed., 1984, p. 1112, sub Ratich or Ratke, Wolfgang.

2 O. Browning, *An Introduction to the History of Educational Theories*, 1881, p. 53.

3 Bowen, 1981, p. 86.

4 Cf. Dorothea Maria's letter to the professors at Jena, dated January 1613 and their reply of 11th. March; see also the *Giessen Report*, § 3, and Kolbe 1624, §§8 and 9.

5 Power, p. 336. Cf. also Meyer, p. 241.

6 Adamson, p. 33.

7 Power, p. 336.

8 W. Boyd, *The History of Western Education*, 1952, p. 148.

to work in the fields, and this precedent was followed at nearby Gotha in 1642, which prescribed fines for noncompliance.<sup>1</sup>

The other peak of educational achievement in seventeenth-century Germany was in Prussia. To strengthen the independence of his kingdom, Frederick I founded his new university not in Berlin but in Halle. To it, he attracted 'two of Germany's great educational reformers, Christian Thomasius and August Hermann Francke (1664–1727)...'<sup>2</sup>

Thomasius, in addition to having been the first German to give his university lectures in his native language instead of in Latin, made an important contribution to the development of a body of terminology in law and logic. Francke, Thomasius' colleague in Halle, is famous for having founded the first German *Realschule* there, a type of school which renewed the connection between the real world and the society in which the school was embedded but from which it had so long been isolated. Francke is not only important for having founded the *Realschule*, however, he is also significant for other reasons: 'On the continent August Francke ... started training the teachers of his schools in Halle at the end of the century; but it was not until the early nineteenth century that teachers in England began to be trained in the normal schools of the Anglican National Society and the nonconformist British and Foreign Schools' Society.'<sup>3</sup>

One difficulty with the conventional view of educational history, as far as Ratke is concerned, is that it too often leaves key terms undefined. How, for instance, are success and failure to be measured? Some of those who judge Ratke's work to have been a failure, such as Quick, contrast it with Comenius' success – '... he did not toil in vain...'<sup>4</sup> – but there are others who judge the work of both men to have been equally ineffective: 'For all the results that they [Comenius' writings – J.W.] produced, they might as well have perished in the flames of Lissa.'<sup>5</sup>

The explanation for these divergent judgements is that different criteria are being applied. If the criterion for success were the institution and running of schools, then the history of education, particularly modern education, would be chiefly a history of education authorities. In Ratke's case, the effective running of a school is an inappropriate criterion to apply, since it is not one he chose for himself. Ratke's use of the metaphor of the architect, and his refusal to seek the headship of any individual school, together with the evidence of his own writings,

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1 Bowen 1981, p. 161.

2 Bowen 1981, p. 162.

3 K. Charlton, *The teaching profession in 16th. and 17th. century England*, in, P. Nash, ed., *History and Education. The educational uses of the past*, New York, 1970, p. 47.

4 Quick, p. 134.

5 M.W. Keatinge, *The Great Didactic of John Amos Comenius*, Part I, 2nd. ed., 1921, p. 98.

makes it clear that ‘... he saw himself primarily as a theorist, and preferred to leave the daily work in schools to his colleagues ... furthermore, the *Didactica* meant for him only part of a much more extensive encyclopaedic task, to which he devoted his whole life...’<sup>1</sup>

More serious than the charge that an educationalist was unsuccessful in practical terms is the charge that he was unsuccessful in terms of influence. The problem with treating influence as a measure of success is that it is more difficult to provide evidence of influence than it is to provide evidence of the practical running of a school. Only rarely are ideas transmitted as in a pipeline, complete and unaltered. More frequently they are modified or transmuted in the process of reception; some things may be added to them and others stripped away, until they are assimilated into the mainstream of educational thinking. In terms of this definition of success, even one’s opponents can serve to spread ideas, by passing on to others the knowledge of what it is they reject.

A further difficulty with the conventional historical picture is the apparently piecemeal development which it leaves unexplained. By presenting a condensed view of history in the way he does, Bowen makes it seem as though progress is achieved in a series of scarcely credible leaps. Ideas originating with Luther and Melancthon are claimed to find practical expression a century later in Weimar and Gotha. Yet Luther died in 1546 and Melancthon in 1560. What happened in the almost hundred years between Luther’s death and the Gotha *Special- vnd sonderbarer Bericht* of 1642<sup>2</sup> or the more than half a century which elapsed between Melancthon’s death and the promulgation of the Weimar statutes? How did the Lutheran concept of education find its way from Luther’s Wittenberg to Duke Ernst’s Gotha?

Bowen’s interpretation leaves a large gap unaccounted for, and the obvious candidate to fill this gap is Ratke. But why was it Gotha which saw the full flowering of the Lutheran educational reforms – why not neighbouring Bavaria, for instance, or Brandenburg, – or some other country such as Austria or Sweden? And why did this flowering take place just when it did – at a singularly unpropitious moment in history, when the Thirty Years War had not yet run its course? Why not later, or earlier?

Both Ratke and Comenius have been claimed to have influenced the Gotha statutes, and through them the development of Gotha’s schools. Before comparing the evidence in favour of each, however, it would be well to look at the Gotha school system in a little more detail.

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1 O.F. Bollnow, Wolfgang Ratke im Licht neuerer Editionen, *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik*, 24, 1978, p. 770.

2 The so-called Gotha *Schul-Methodus*.

In Gotha, the statutes ordered ‘... under severe Penalties that all People should send their Children to School, as soon as they were five Years of Age, to be instructed in Reading, Writing, Arithmetick, the Catechism; and if they seem’d to have a proper Genius, to be likewise taught Musick;’<sup>1</sup> ‘... his Highness [Duke Ernst – J.W.] order’d a select Number of learned Men, eminently vers’d in their respective Professions, to prepare compendious Systems, in a more distinct and easy method than heretofore extant, for every Art and Science...’<sup>2</sup> In addition, ‘The poor Mens Children were taught and furnish’d with Books, at the Expense of his Highness; and if he Espy’d, in any of these young Nurseries, an early distinguishing Genius, he order’d him to be forwarded in his Studies in a more particular Manner ... and allow’d him a certain Sallary for his Maintenance...’<sup>3</sup> In other words, the Gotha reforms instituted compulsory universal education, a reform of the curriculum, the preparation of appropriate teaching materials, which were provided free of charge, selection on merit, and maintenance grants for disadvantaged pupils. In addition, ‘teachers were paid salaries which for the time were large and pensions for their widows and children were provided...’<sup>4</sup> The Gotha system well deserves the title which Cubberley gave it, ‘the pedagogic masterpiece of the seventeenth century’.<sup>5</sup> ‘Those good Regulations had that Success in all the Dominions of Gotha, and its Dependencies, that it became a Proverb still in Use, the Boors of *Thuringia* are more knowing than the Gentry inhabiting the Towns and Villages of other Countries ... so far as is necessary for the Uses of Life.’<sup>6</sup>

Though the names of both Ratke and Comenius are mentioned in connection with the Weimar and Gotha reforms, there appears to be little agreement as to the extent of their influence or how it was exercised. According to Good, ‘Ratke’s influence was most evident in the Weimar ordinance of 1619; and that of Comenius in the school programs of Saxe-Gotha, Brunswick, Hesse and other German states and cities,’<sup>7</sup> while Boyd wrote, ‘... though Comenius exercised no direct influence on subsequent education except through his two famous school books ... he had an indirect share in ... the remarkable reform of popular education in the little State of Gotha, initiated by Duke Ernst the Pious...’<sup>8</sup>

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1 J.T. Philipps, *The Life of Ernestus the Pious, first Duke of Sax-Gotha*, 1750, p. 22.

2 Philipps, *ibid.*, p. 23.

3 Philipps, *loc. cit.*

4 E.P. Cubberley, *The History of Education*, 1920, p. 317.

5 Cubberley, *loc. cit.*

6 Philipps, *ibid.*, p. 22.

7 H.G. Good, *A History of Western Education*, New York, 2nd. ed., 1960, p. 196.

8 W. Boyd, *The History of Western Education*, 1921, pp. 252-3.

The influence which Comenius and Ratke are said to have exercised on the education system in Gotha seems to be postulated on the basis of the similarities between the Gotha statutes and the written records of the two men's ideas - the parallels between the main features of the Gotha system and Ratke's ideas, for instance, are indeed too striking to be overlooked.

The question remains, however, - why Gotha? Duke Ernst was born in 1601, thirty years after Ratke, the son of Duke Johann of Weimar and Dorothea Maria. Among Ernst's uncles and aunts, therefore, were Prince Ludwig (Dorothea Maria's brother), and their sister, Anna Sophia.<sup>1</sup> There is no reason to suppose that Ernst would take much notice of Ratke's activities during his mother's lifetime: she died when Ernst was sixteen. Nevertheless, Ratke visited the court in Weimar from 28th. September 1612 to 17th. March 1613,<sup>2</sup> and again from August to October 1615.<sup>3</sup> Wilhelm, Dorothea Maria's son and Ernst's elder brother by two years, claimed to have had Ratke as his tutor during this period. The eighteen years between the death of Dorothea Maria and Ratke's death spanned Ernst's sixteenth to thirty-fourth years, the period at which Ernst's interest in political and educational ideas developed to full maturity.

Ratke's negotiations in Anhalt, Saxony and Thuringia did not collapse on the death of Dorothea Maria. Instead they continued first with Prince Ludwig in Köthen, then with Anna Sophia in Rudolstadt, but also, and parallel to these, with the court at Weimar. Ratke visited Weimar in August 1618<sup>4</sup> and again from 31st. October to 3rd. November 1627.<sup>5</sup> There can no doubt that during this period Ernst was fully conversant with the discussions, and probably an active participant. He seems to have remained unmoved by Ludwig's quarrel with Ratke, and maintained good relations with both sides after the break between them. Ernst's interest in the politics and content of education seems to have grown steadily, for in late November 1627 he is reported to have visited Ratke at Anna Sophia's court in Rudolstadt<sup>6</sup> and, together with his brother Wilhelm, he acted as host to the negotiations concerning Ratke's 'Didactica' which took place in Jena between 21st. and 24th. January 1629<sup>7</sup>

When Duke Ernst came to power in 1641 he must have been one of the best informed rulers on educational matters ever to succeed to a title. He had made his priorities evident long before his accession. He had secured the services of Even-

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1 Cf. Table I.

2 Vogt 1894, pp. 16-18.

3 Vogt 1894, pp. 41-42.

4 Vogt 1894, p. 57.

5 Vogt 1894, pp. 144-146.

6 Vogt 1894, p. 142.

7 Vogt 1894, p. 152.

ius, himself well acquainted with Ratke's work, as educational advisor to the Duchy of Weimar in 1634, and in 1640 Ernst succeeded in attracting Andreas Reyher to Gotha with the prospect of reforming the school system there. On 13th. October 1641, shortly after his accession, Ernst set in motion a pilot visitation of the Gotha schools, which was completed within a month. On 12th. November, he initiated a full-scale visitation of all the churches and schools in his territory, which was to take five years to complete. As the visitations proceeded, Reyher had the task of framing the statutes which were to govern the future organisation of Gotha's schools.

While Ratke's dedication to the cause of educational reform doubtless had its influence on Duke Ernst, there is evidence of even closer connections between the two. According to a signed note in the Gotha archives, Ernst removed ten documents from Ratke's effects on 12th. May 1635, scarcely a fortnight after Ratke's death.<sup>1</sup> They included manuscripts of the *Scholastica*, the *Eutactica*, the *Epistemonica*, the *General Introduction*, a copy of the Köthen school statutes, the *Sprachkunst* (Grammar in German), *Specimen Conpendii Geographiae Teutsch* (Geography, in German), *Pro Tirone Geographicam* (Latin tables to the foregoing), and *Tabulae Geographicae Teutsch* (the same in German).

The Gotha *Schul-Methodus* was first printed in 1642, but revisions and supplements to it continued to appear until as late as 1685.<sup>2</sup> During this period, Duke Ernst made at least two other attempts to get his hands on more of Ratke's works. On 25th. January 1643 Anna Sophia, then aged fifty-nine, passed a further bundle of Ratke's effects, together with a 'list of his things which have been sent over,'<sup>3</sup> to her nephew Ernst, and Boehne records a letter from Duke Ernst dated 2nd. April 1651, begging Anna Sophia to make a copy of Ratke's method of teaching accessible to him as a matter of the utmost urgency.<sup>4</sup>

There is no reason to believe that the Gotha school system mirrored Ratke's thinking in every detail: Ernst and Reyher were well able to sift and improve upon Ratke's work. What is now undeniable, however, is the close connection which existed between Ratke's thinking and the changes which were taking shape in Gotha. This connection goes a considerable way towards explaining why the Gotha experiment took place where and when it did. In view of the foregoing, it is no exaggeration to say that, notwithstanding differences between Ratke's and Ernst's

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1 Gotha Codex Chart. B 1026 B.

2 *Die evangelischen Schulordnungen des 17. Jahrhunderts*, ed., R. Vormbaum, 1863, pp. 295–362.

3 Gotha Codex Chart. B 1026 B.

4 Gotha Codex Chart. A 391; cf. W. Boehne, *Die pädagogischen Bestrebungen Ernst des Frommen von Gotha*, Gotha, 1888, pp. 204–5.

conceptions of education, Gotha rather than Köthen represents the most comprehensive expression of Ratke's thinking which educational history has seen.

When one turns to a consideration of the reforms pursued in seventeenth-century Prussia, it becomes evident that both Thomasius and Francke worked consciously or unconsciously in the Ratkean tradition. That Thomasius was acquainted with Ratke's work at first hand is shown by the references he made to it in his *Introduction to Logic*.<sup>1</sup> The tone, it is true, is disparaging. However, Thomasius' criticism was directed at some of the vernacular terminology introduced by Ratke to replace the traditional Latin terms. Here, two points need to be made. First, Thomasius has himself gone down in history as a major figure in the development of the vernacular as a medium of scientific discourse, an area in which Ratke was one of the pioneers. It is doubtful whether Thomasius would have made the progress he did, had not Ratke and his colleagues prepared the way. Secondly, Thomasius' and Ratke's publications are separated by a span of seventy years.<sup>2</sup> It is scarcely plausible that a scholar in any branch of knowledge would be content to take over uncritically the terms of a metalanguage coined seven decades earlier.

Francke's connection with Ratke was less explicit, but there can be no doubt that he, too, was brought up in the tradition of the Ratician reforms. Born in 1663, he was the son of one of Duke Ernst's own employees and a pupil at Reyher's school, — perhaps one of those picked out by his sovereign as 'an early distinguishing Genius,' as Philipps put it. Probably the most eminent product of the Gotha school system, Francke was hence well-placed to assimilate Ratkean and Ernestine principles and, after his appointment to a professorship in Halle, to develop the tradition further in Prussia.

Whereas commentators have hitherto been divided as to the precise nature of Ratke's connections with Gotha, the influence which Gotha exercised on later educational history is less controversial. 'We have here the beginnings of the transfer of educational control from the Church to the State, the ultimate fruition of which was to be the great work of the nineteenth century.'<sup>3</sup> The reforming influence which spread outwards from this tiny German Duchy thus laid the broad foundations for educational provision in much of the western world. In 'the momentous transfer of educational authority from Church to State ... Germany was to be the pioneer among the nations of Europe...'<sup>4</sup>

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1 C. Thomasius, *Einleitung zu der Vernunft-Lehre*, Halle, 1691, pp. 17-21.

2 The *Kurzer Begriff der Verstandlehr* was published in Köthen in 1621.

3 E.P. Cubberley, *The History of Education*, 1920, p. 319.

4 W. Boyd, *The History of Western Education*, 1921, p. 253.

The developments in Gotha illustrate the importance of personal contact for the spread of ideas, and if Ratke's influence is to be traced in other fields it is worth considering the paths along which this influence, too, could have been transmitted.

The two major modes by which ideas could be propagated in the seventeenth century were via print and by personal contact. Anyone interested in Ratke's work, as Comenius was, would have had access in Ratke's lifetime to the *Giessen Report* of 1613, the *Jena Report* (also 1613), the *Giessen Supplementary Report* (1614), the pirated *Desiderata Methodus Nova Raticiana* of 1615, the Raticiana edited by Rhenius in 1617, and the works published in the Köthen Series between 1619 and 1621. Of these, many went through more than one edition and must therefore have enjoyed considerable popularity. Vogt records at least seven editions of the *Giessen Report* between 1613 and 1621, and nine of the *Jena Report* in the same period.<sup>1</sup> At least three editions of the *Giessen Supplementary Report* appeared between 1614 and 1621.<sup>2</sup> Rhenius' *Methodus institutionis nova quadruplex* contained the following Ratician works: 1) 'In Methodum Linguarum generalis introductio;' 2) 'Raticianorum quorundam;' 3) 'Aphorisms;' and 4) the 'Articles upon which...' To judge from the discussions of the Ratician reforms by later writers, the works published by Rhenius seem to be those with which they were most familiar. Comenius, for instance, when discussing methods of language teaching, gave a very close paraphrase of Ratke's 'Aphorismi' §§ 8 and 9 (*Omnis labor recidat in Docentem, Discenti nihil praeter silentium Pythagoricum*) explicitly in connection with Ratke's name.<sup>3</sup> Rhenius' *Methodus*, it should be noted, was reprinted in 1626. Finally, the works printed in the Köthen series were advertised in the catalogues of the Frankfurt Book Fair for Easter 1621 and again at Easter in 1624.<sup>4</sup>

Ratke's work was not everywhere welcomed as enthusiastically as it was by the academics of Giessen and Jena. One would not expect it to be. There are records of several writings in the seventeenth century (no longer extant, alas) which were critical of Ratke's methods.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, and despite Michel's claim that nothing of significance was written about Ratke's work before 1733,<sup>6</sup> knowledge

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1 G. Vogt, *Quellen- und Hülffsschriften zur Geschichte des Didaktikers Wolfgang Raticius, Programm des Königlichen Gymnasiums zu Cassel*, Kassel, 1881–82, pp. 2–4, Nos. 1–17.

2 Vogt, *ibid.*, p. 5, Nos. 18–20.

3 J.A. Comenius, *Novissima Linguarum Methodus*, in his *Opera Didacticae Omnia*, Amsterdam, 1657, col. 100.

4 Vogt, *ibid.*, pp. 7ff.

5 Vogt, *ibid.*, p. 5, and Comenius, *ibid.*, col. 81, § 17.

6 Michel 1985, p. 441.

of it spread very rapidly, to Denmark and Sweden in particular. The Giessen and Jena reports were translated into Swedish with remarkable speed,<sup>1</sup> and in Denmark Johannes Whitte published at least two treatises on language-teaching method, both of which mention Ratke's work by name.<sup>2</sup>

It would be unwise to try to be too specific about the influence exercised by these works. Unlike the more concrete areas commonly dealt with in school statutes, the Ratkean ideas propagated in the above titles are as dependent for their effect upon the needs and perceptions of the reader as they are upon the intentions of the author. At the level of curriculum and method, however, it is easier to reconstruct the spread of a specifically Ratichian influence. The dislodging of Latin from its pre-eminent position in the curriculum and the institution of the vernacular as an independent subject and as the medium of instruction can be traced in detail from statute to statute.

The most extensive study to date of German school statutes from the Reformation to 1800 has been undertaken by Hettwer.<sup>3</sup> What emerges from this work is that the German states were covered by two or three networks of interconnected statutes. Hettwer demonstrates the unmistakable similarities in content between the statutes of Hessen (1618), Weimar (1619) and Gotha (1642), together with the influence of Gotha upon the 1702 statutes for the Orphanage in Halle which was founded by Francke, and the importance of the two latter for later eighteenth-century statutes such as those of Waldeck (1704), Eisenach (1705), the *Generallandschulreglement* of 1763 and the 1773 statutes of the Electorate of Saxony.

But why was it that in some cases the reforming ideas spread rapidly over considerable distances while in others, statutes were laid down which took no account of them? The most likely explanation seems to be that underpinning the intellectual network of educational ideas was a social network united chiefly, and in some instances uniquely, through the person of Ratke and the members of his team. A few examples will suffice.

Ratke's importance for the Gotha reforms of 1642 has already been demonstrated. His ties with Weimar were, if anything, still closer. Kromayer, in charge of the Weimar schools, while understandably defending his position against Ratke, was well able to assimilate the Ratichian principles and transmute them into effective practice. Furthermore, Weimar was ruled from 1626 by Ernst's brother Wilhelm, who, it will be remembered, had himself been briefly tutored by Ratke,

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1 Cf. p. 66, fn. 1.

2 J. Whitte, *De Wolfgangi Ratichii in Linguis Tradendis Methodo*, Copenhagen, 1706; and *De Auctoris Medicinae Mentis Linguis Tradendis Methodo*, Copenhagen, 1707.

3 H. Hettwer, *Herkunft und Zusammenhang der Schulordnungen*, Mainz, 1965.

so that 'the school in Weimar became a field of experiment for Ratke's reforming ideas for over a quarter of a century.'<sup>1</sup>

Both the Weimar statutes of 1619 and the Gotha statutes of 1642 concerned the lower schools. There is evidence, however, of even earlier penetration of Ratician ideas both into these and into the Latin schools. The Hesse statutes were among the very first attempts to reform the schools of a state (*Land*) according to Ratician principles.<sup>2</sup> The Landgrave Moritz had been actively interested in the reform of church and education in Hesse from about 1593 onwards.<sup>3</sup> In the wake of a commission he had appointed in 1613 to speed up ecclesiastical reform, and perhaps impressed by the programme outlined in Ratke's 1612 *Memorandum*, Moritz accelerated his plans, the work culminating in the Hesse statutes of 1618.<sup>4</sup> Ratke, it will be remembered, had accepted an invitation to go from Waldeck to the Kassel court in 1616, and remained there giving demonstration lessons from April to June, before moving on to the courts of Pyrmont, Rheda and Steinfurt.<sup>5</sup> The Ratician features which appeared in the Hesse statutes were thus obtained from Ratke at first hand.

Similar movements were under way in the lower schools of Bavaria during the same period. From about 1616 the church schools in villages and small market towns there began the change from being German-Latin to purely vernacular schools.<sup>6</sup> The author puts forward two alternative hypotheses to explain this 'not-to-be-underestimated step forward':<sup>7</sup> the influence of Ratke, not least through the *Memorandum*, or that of Comenius, who in his *Didactica Magna* proposed the establishment of vernacular schools as a preliminary step to the Latin school.<sup>8</sup> The change seems more likely to be the result of Ratke's than Comenius' influence. Since the *Didactica Magna* was not published until 1631, it is difficult to see it having exercised much influence in Bavaria in 1616. (Comenius could scarcely have been more than twenty-one at the time).

A further point may be added. May 1614 to June 1615 was the period spent by Ratke and his team working in Augsburg at the invitation of Hoeschel and his

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1 P. Krumbholz, *Geschichte des Weimarischen Schulwesens*, MGP, Vol. LXI, Berlin, 1934, p. 8.

2 Hettwer, p. 140.

3 Vogt 1894, p. 45; Hettwer, pp. 140-41.

4 *Ordnungen Vnser Moritzen ... Wie es hinkünfftig mit Vnterrichtung der Jugend ... gehalten werden soll*, Kassel, 1618, in, *Die evangelischen Schulordnungen des 17. Jahrhunderts*, ed., R. Vormbaum, 1863, p. 177-191.

5 Vogt 1894, pp. 45-46.

6 G. Lurz, *Mittelschulgeschichtliche Dokumente Altbayerns, einschließlich Regensbergs*, MGP, Vol. XLI, Berlin, 1907, p. 73.

7 Lurz, *ibid.*, p. 74.

8 Lurz, *loc. cit.*

friends. Augsburg lies in the very heart of Bavaria, scarcely forty miles north-west of Munich. What would be more natural than for the interest which Ratke's experiments undoubtedly generated to spread outwards from such a powerful centre?

The Augsburg episode is also interesting as providing evidence of how Ratke's ideas could prove fruitful even in places in which he was supposed to have been a failure. An eighteenth-century Augsburg chronicler, writing of the ravages of the Thirty Years War, recorded: 'But even in the midst of these woes the council did not forget the welfare of the school children, by ordering the inspectors of the time ... to make suggestions for new regulations, and how teaching could be made easier and better, according to the Ratichian way, and also how poor people's children could be kept at school by providing them with the fees out of ... endowments.'<sup>1</sup> The decree which the chronicler quoted was passed in 1634. The city of Augsburg was thus trying to incorporate Ratichian principles into the school statutes, under dire conditions, almost twenty years after this phase of Ratke's work had come to an end.

The influence of the statutes of Kassel, Weimar and particularly Gotha spread in the seventeenth century to Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel (1649), Altenburg (1659), and from there to the Catholic states;<sup>2</sup> and in the eighteenth century similar statutes were issued in Prussia in 1716 and 1717 by Frederick William I, and reissued in more comprehensive form in 1763 by his son Frederick II, the Great (r. 1740–86). Neighbouring states followed suit, so that 'similar regulations spread throughout Protestant Germany, the Scandinavian kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden and the United Netherlands Provinces...'<sup>3</sup>

Parallel to the spread of Ratichian ideas through the school statutes, a similar influence in the field of German grammar and the development of the vernacular as a vehicle for scientific discourse also made itself felt. In all these areas it is worth considering how far Ratke's colleagues and negotiating partners were instrumental in making his work known. The question of their personal feelings towards Ratke, too often placed in the foreground, is here of secondary importance. Those who were familiar with Ratke's work were in most cases well able to distinguish what was fruitful in his thought from his unpredictable temperament, so that even when they parted in discord it did not necessarily mean that his ideas remained without influence. The mere process of expounding, demonstrating and defending his position meant that Ratke passed on to patrons, sympathisers and opponents alike ideas and insights which could find other outlets.

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1 P. von Stetten, *Geschichte der des Heil. Röm. Reichs Freyen Stadt Augspurg*, Frankfurt, 1758, p. 260.

2 H. Weimer, *Concise History of Education from Solon to Pestalozzi*, 1963, p. 85.

3 Bowen 1981, p. 161.

Among the circle of those who knew Ratke's work most intimately must be counted the sixteen or more members of Ratke's academic staff at Köthen,<sup>1</sup> but probably more influential still were his earlier friends, colleagues and correspondents Helwig, Jung, Evenius and, indirectly, Comenius.

Helwig and Jung were scholars of international repute; their works were known from London to Scandinavia, and in some cases reprinted over many decades. Helwig, alas, died only two years after leaving Augsburg in 1617, at the early age of thirty-six. Despite his early death, Helwig's influence remained a powerful one for many decades. His first action on returning to Giessen in 1615 was to obtain further leave of absence from his employer, Ludwig V of Hesse-Darmstadt, for the following winter, in order to devote himself to the development of the *Didactica* and to induct his colleagues into its effective use. In 1616, his *Colloquia Helvici*, a re-working of earlier colloquies in conformity with the Ratician pedagogy, appeared. This work enjoyed immediate success and went into many editions. 'The appearance of this book ushered in ... a period of progress ... the *Colloquia* had the purpose of establishing Wolfgang Raticius' method of Latin teaching in the Giessen education system.'<sup>2</sup> The method, '*die neue Lehrart*,'<sup>3</sup> was officially introduced in Giessen in the spring of 1616, and in the same year a book of exercises to accompany the *Colloquia* also appeared. The impetus of the reforms Helwig initiated was maintained after his death partly by his brother, partly by his son-in-law, Balthasar Schupp, and in part by his former colleague, Mentzer. Schupp, who later made a name as a reformer in his own right,<sup>4</sup> probably obtained his knowledge of Ratician ideas through Helwig, whereas Mentzer had become acquainted with Ratke personally, on the occasion of the latter's visit to Giessen in 1612.<sup>5</sup> 'The evidence everywhere of dependence on the new Ratician method is striking,' wrote Diehl of Mentzer's reforms, and it is worth noting that these reforms were being implemented in 1629, again a considerable period after Mentzer's last personal contact with Ratke.<sup>6</sup>

In Jung, Ratke found an even more illustrious collaborator. Sixteen years Ratke's junior, he was twenty-five when first seconded, with Helwig, to assess Ratke's work in 1612. Jung seems to have been in the forefront of developments

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1 Cf. Krause, pp. 50-52, No. II/1.

2 W. Diehl, *Die Schulordnungen des Großherzogtums Hessen, MGP*, Vols. XXVII and XXVIII, Berlin, 1903, Vol. II, pp. 25-26.

3 The title, it will be noted, was identical with Ratke's.

4 *NL*, p. 9, fn. 1.

5 Krause, p. 5, No. I/6.

6 W. Diehl, *Die Schulordnungen des Großherzogtums Hessen, MGP*, Vols. XXVII and XXVIII, Berlin, Vol. II, p. 167.

in every field which engaged his interest. It is Jung's pioneering work in the natural sciences which has mainly received the attention of later scholars,<sup>1</sup> but although after leaving Giessen he was appointed to professorships in mathematics at Rostock and medicine in Helmstedt, in 1629 he gave up these appointments to take over the headship of Ratke's old school, the Johanneum, in Hamburg, and it was during his tenure of this appointment that he carried out the scientific work for which he is best known, while at the same time pursuing an influential career in teaching.

One of Jung's pupils was Schottel, who '... stands at the beginning of all the scholarly and 'literary' grammars which dominate the study of German until the nineteenth century...'<sup>2</sup> When one reads that '... with Schottel and his colleagues [i.e. Georg Harsdörffer, Philip van Zesen - J.W.] grammar assumed a symbolic, patriotic function...'<sup>3</sup> one is reminded of the impassioned language of the *Giessen Report* of 1613 and the *Memorandum* which gave rise to it, in a generation which had to be won over to the idea that the vernacular was not too trivial to be studied and taught.

Most impressive is the esteem in which Jung was held by the English. Fogel stated that Jung's work was made known in England by Cavendish, Slezer, Comenius and Hartlib.<sup>4</sup> Sir Charles Cavendish travelled to Hamburg to study mathematics under Jung, and in recommending him to do so John Pell, himself one of England's foremost mathematicians, wrote, 'The most barbarous nations had something to worship; and there are few men, that have not some idol, some man or woman, whom they esteem and admire above all the rest of mankind; and Jungius is mine ... all other writers must pardon me, if I profess to expect more solidity in JUNGIUS's writings than in any other man now living...'<sup>5</sup> This admiration was shared by many members of the Royal Society.<sup>6</sup>

Sigismund Evenius and Christian Gueintz (a member of Ratke's academic staff in Köthen) were also instrumental in spreading Ratician ideas. The break between Ratke and Evenius which occurred when Evenius took over the headship of the *Magdeburg Gymnasium* did not prevent him from exploiting Ratician methods.<sup>7</sup>

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1 E.g. H. Kangro, *Joachim Jungius' Experimente und Gedanken zur Begründung der Chemie als Wissenschaft*, Wiesbaden, 1968; E.O. Lippmann, *Urzeugung und Lebenskraft*, Berlin, 1933, pp. 62-63; Slaughter, *passim*.

2 Wells, p. 224.

3 Wells, p. 225.

4 Kangro, *ibid.*, p. 247, fn. 435.

5 John Pell to Sir Charles Cavendish, 1644. Quoted in T. Birch, *The History of the Royal Society of London*, Vol. II, 1756, 168/9, p. 342, fn. b.

6 Birch, *ibid.*, Vol. I, 1756, pp. 234 and 305; Vol. IV, 1757, p. 512.

7 Rioux 1963a, p. 268.

He was extremely well-informed as to Ratke's theories, as he himself admitted, and was happy, like many others, to take what he found effective in them and put it to good use. Evenius is also important as having opened for Comenius another avenue of access to Ratke's educational thinking. It is known that Evenius and Comenius had contact with one another,<sup>1</sup> Kvačala thinks through the mediation of Jonston, a Scotsman living in Lissa: '... the important works of Evenius do indeed seem to constitute in many instances the bridge between Ratke and Comenius...'<sup>2</sup>

There can be no doubt that Ratke's work engaged Comenius' interest over a considerable period. Comenius encountered it first as a student of Alsted's at Herborn, when he was just twenty-one years old; he refers to it at several points in his own published writings;<sup>3</sup> he discussed what he knew of it with the Swedish Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna in 1642;<sup>4</sup> and the references to Ratke in his letters testify both to his esteem – he calls Ratke 'our Ratke (prince among the didactics)'<sup>5</sup> – and to his efforts to acquaint himself with it more intimately. Comenius travelled widely in Germany between 1625 and 1628. Kvačala concludes, '... it is highly probable that in the course of these journeys he [Comenius – J.W.] informed himself *in extenso* as to the fate of Ratke and his reforms...'<sup>6</sup>

Most of the negotiators with whom Ratke had to do in the course of his life were less prestigious figures than Jung, Helwig, Evenius or Comenius, but their influence should not be underestimated. In the course of an invitation to a court, Ratke would expound his ideas and demonstrate his methods over a period of weeks, or even months, before moving on to the next. Most of these visits concluded with disappointing results in financial terms. On the other hand, many rulers were keenly interested in educational reform and readily incorporated whatever Ratician ideas they could assimilate into their statutes, even when they were not willing to put the whole programme on a sound financial footing. There is not space here even to list the authorities with whom Ratke negotiated, but they included more than twenty noble houses, states, free towns and cities. A few, like Augsburg, having failed to come to a satisfactory long-term agreement with Ratke, nevertheless show evidence of lasting influence. The most spectacular of

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1 Cf. A. Patera, ed., *Jana Amosa Komenského Korrespondence*, Prague, 1892, pp. 3–4.

2 Kvačala, Vol. II, 1904, p. 18.

3 E.g. *Novissima Linguarum Methodus*, in his *Opera Didacticae Omnia*, Amsterdam, 1657, cols. 80–81; 100–101.

4 J.A. Comenius, *De novis Didactica studia continuandi occasionibus*, in Part II of *Opera Didacticae Omnia*, Amsterdam, 1657.

5 Comenius to Jonston, 1630 or 1631, in, A. Patera, ed., *Jana Amosa Komenského Korrespondence*, Prague, 1892, p. 10.

6 Kvačala 1904, p. 17.

them was the court of Landgrave Moritz of Hesse in Kassel, but Ratke's influence also made itself felt in the principalities of Waldeck and Pyrmont.<sup>1</sup>

One final route by which Ratke's ideas could be spread was through the Fruit-bearing Society: '... in a Germany carved up into petty and parochial absolutist states the societies provided forums for exchanging ideas.'<sup>2</sup> It has already been remarked that despite the close similarities which existed between the aims of the Fruitbearing Society and his own aims, Ratke never actually became a member. The society was 'aristocratic and exclusive,'<sup>3</sup> although many years later non-aristocratic members were eventually elected. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that so long as Ratke was working in Köthen, '... through his connection with Prince Ludwig he contributed to the pedagogical activities within the Fruitbearing Society.'<sup>4</sup>

The Fruitbearing Society also plays an interesting role in the tracing of possible paths of Ratichian influence, because the list of the society's members parallels to a striking degree the connections which Ratke enjoyed with noble houses and other scholars. Among its more prominent members were Axel Oxenstierna and Johann Valentin Andreae; the Princes of Anhalt (Ludwig and his brothers); the Count of Bentheim; Moritz, Landgrave of Hesse; the Dukes of Saxe-Weimar (including Wilhelm and Ernst), the Dukes of Brunswick; Christian Gueintz (the teacher of Philipp von Zesen) and von Zesen himself; and Justus Georg Schottel. A society united by the common aims of cultivating the vernacular and furthering educational reforms could scarcely fail to provide a means of spreading the kind of ideas which Ratke was expounding.

In the course of the discussion concerning Ratke's supposed failures, the question of any influence Ratke may have exercised upon educational thought in England has never been raised. It has already been pointed out that there is no definite proof that Ratke visited England, and English is one language he nowhere mentions.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the years 1640-1655 were a period of great reforming zeal in England, and it is interesting to note how the years of greatest activity occurred when outwardly, through the Thirty Years War in the one case and the Civil War in the other, conditions could scarcely have seemed less propitious. Many of the changes advocated in England bear interesting resemblances to Ratke's proposals, though they appear a generation later. From about 1620-1650 there were demands in England for a broad spectrum of reforms, including the

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1 G. Vogt, *Ratichianismus in den Fürstentümern Waldeck und Pyrmont*, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Fürstentümer Waldeck und Pyrmont*, 2, 1869, pp. 115-133.

2 Wells, p. 286.

3 Wells, p. 286.

4 Wells, p. 222-3.

5 The only meaning which attaches to 'englisch' in his work is 'pertaining-to-angels'.

decentralisation of government, reform and decentralisation of the law, the laicisation of education and an alternative to Aristotelianism. At about the time of the Battle of Naseby, John Dury was invited to come over from Germany to preach in the House of Commons. His message was that 'Parliament must settle and purge the universities so that the clergy learn 'the true language of Canaan' instead of the gibberidge of scholastic divinity; it must reform the law and the law courts throughout the land; and it must embrace all native and foreign Protestants in a comprehensive church'<sup>1</sup> - not very different from the demands for the reform of language-teaching and the law, and for unity of religion, made in Ratke's *Memorandum*. These were 'the positive ideals of the Puritans.'<sup>2</sup> They reveal not only similarities with Ratke's position, however, but also the limits of comparison. The Country Party in England, which held these views (the generation of 1620) consisted of enemies of court, - austere parochial, religious men, puritans, rebels and republicans. Later, 'there would be a new spate of pamphlets proposing law reform, educational change, new models of government.'<sup>3</sup>

Most prominent in this period were the publications of such men as Harmar, Milton, Nicholson, Snell, Peter and Dell.<sup>4</sup> The most comprehensive of the proposals were those of George Snell. Among them was a suggestion that, after learning their primer, boys should learn the grammar of their native language, for this would make them better able to study Latin and any other 'Grammatized languages.'<sup>5</sup> A grammar and lexicon of English would by decree make English refined and, above all, stable. But Snell's linguistic proposals were embedded in a larger plan. Colleges ought to be established in every larger town, and 'general colleges' would be devoted to the training of teachers. Schools would offer two curricula - one in Latin, the other in the vernacular. All subjects would be available taught in the mother-tongue, because 'as it is more easie for the eies of the body to see through a clear perspective glass then through one that is obscure and darksom, so it is more facil for an English man, by the eie of reason, to see through the *Medium*, and light of the English tongue; then by the more obscure

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1 H. Trevor-Roper, *Three Foreigners: the Philosophers of the Puritan Revolution*, in his *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change*, 1967, p. 277.

2 Trevor-Roper, *ibid.*, p. 276.

3 Trevor-Roper, *loc. cit.*

4 S. Harmar, *Vox Populi*, 1642; J. Milton, *Of Education. To Master Samuel Hartlib*, 1644; B. Nicholson, *The Lawyer's Bane*, 1647; G. Snell, *The Right Teaching of Useful Knowledge*, 1649; H. Peter, *Good Work for a good Magistrate*, 1651; and W. Dell, *The Right Reformation of Learning*, 1653.

5 G. Snell, *The Right Teaching of Useful Knowledge*, 1649, p. 28.

light of anie forrein language: to learn unknown arts and terms, a speech and language less known then our own doth make learning by much more obscure and hard.'<sup>1</sup>

However strong the echoes of Ratichian thought may appear in these proposals, similarity does not necessarily point to direct influence. Many of the programmes put forward during this period were clearly common currency, the kind of responses which any group of intellectuals might be expected to propose in a similar situation. On the other hand, it would be wrong to assume that the proposals put forward by individual reformers were indistinguishable from each other. Specific characteristics and differences of emphasis can be discerned.

The ferment during the Commonwealth is regarded by Trevor-Roper not as being of exclusively native origin, but as having its source primarily in the work of 'three foreigners' - Jan Amos Comenius (a Czech), Samuel Hartlib (a Pole) and John Dury (a Scot). The question is, how far were these men the originators of these reforming ideas, and how far were they acting as channels for the transmission of ideas from Europe, particularly Germany? More specifically, is there any evidence that they knew anything of Ratke's work?

The first point to note is that a much more complex network of communications existed across seventeenth-century Europe than might be suspected. Of the foreign students matriculated in Oxford between 1620 and 1642, half were from Germany. Furthermore, many of the major European figures of the time were well aware of each other's work even where it had not been published, and were acquainted by correspondence if not personally. Snell wrote of his 'verie loving Friends' Hartlib and Dury,<sup>2</sup> and Comenius was known personally to both the latter. While Dury was pursuing his irenic missions on the continent, it was Hartlib who suggested that he and Comenius should be invited to England 'to establish a version of the New Atlantis in the form of an academy to produce universal books and a universal language and to stimulate universal schools.'<sup>3</sup> This community of scholars thus formed a closely-knit group. Of the three, it was Hartlib who, through his tireless epistolary activity, acted as the nerve-centre of the group. Could he have known of Ratke's ideas?

Salmon, describing the debate between Webbe and Brookes discussed in Chapter VII, drew attention to a group of manuscripts in the Sloane collection of the British Library which consists largely of papers collected or copied by Hartlib and his friend Dury. The records of the Webbe-Brookes correspondence are to be found in Sloane 1466, and 'among the methods mentioned or described in these

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1 G. Snell, *The Right Teaching of Useful Knowledge*, p. 208.

2 Snell, *ibid.*, A Missive shewing the occasion of the hastie Printing of this Tractate.

3 W.H.G. Armytage, *Four hundred years of English education*, Cambridge, 1965, p. 20.

papers are those well-known teacher-reformers Ratichius and Lubinus and of course Komensky [Comenius - J.W.]...'<sup>1</sup>

Hartlib's connections included many other figures whose relations with Germany were extremely close or who were themselves Germans. One of these, Joachim Hübner, who spent some time in Oxford, certainly knew about Ratke and his aims. He began one letter to Hartlib with the remark, 'I have read the report of Ratichius' didactic with no little delight...'<sup>2</sup> Hübner did not say whether he had in his hands a copy of the Giessen or Jena report. However, his enthusiastic reference to Luther's 'exhortation' later in the same letter suggests that he was probably referring to the *Giessen Supplementary Report*, which appeared bound on pp. 106–131 of the same volume as the 1614 edition of Luther's *Loyal remonstrance*. Be that as it may, it is not without significance that those most closely involved in plans for educational reform in England were showing interest in a Ratichian publication more than twenty years after its first appearance.

As has been pointed out, Hartlib's connections with Comenius were very close, and there can be no doubt that Comenius acted as a filter for Ratke's ideas, both directly, through his own contacts and work, and indirectly via Hartlib: '... all the more important educational reformers of the century in Germany gradually came into contact with Comenius and ... all contemporary currents of reform flow into his ...'<sup>3</sup> In concrete terms, this meant that Comenius was well acquainted with Ratke's work both at first hand through Ratke's publications, and also through Jung and Evenius. Further, Comenius was familiar with developments in Gotha through his contacts with Evenius and Reyher, and with the ideas of Schupp through Buno and Weinheimer.

The above outline gives some idea of the degree to which Comenius, and Hartlib in England, were familiar with the work which was being done on the continent, particularly in Germany. What opportunities would the third member of Trevor-Roper's trio, Dury, have had of becoming acquainted with Ratichian thought?

Dury's life was dominated by one of Ratke's great dreams: unity of religion. In pursuit of his irenic mission Dury spared no effort in covering the length and breadth of Protestant Europe. The years from 1635, when Ratke died, to 1641 were spent travelling in the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany and Denmark. His letters from this period confirm his deep preoccupation with the long-term goal of church unity. In his other writings, however, he betrays an informed and lively

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1 V. Salmon, Problems of language-teaching; a discussion among Hartlib's friends, *Modern Language Review*, LIX, 1964, p. 14.

2 Hübner to Hartlib, 6th. June 1637, BL Sloane 417, fol. 144.

3 Kvačala, Vol. II, 1904, p. 159.

interest in education, too, and here there are many striking similarities between his ideas and Ratke's.

Contact with people who were familiar with Ratichian ideas would not have been hard to come by in Germany, because some of the rulers of noble houses with whom Dury negotiated were the same as those with whom, a few decades earlier, Ratke had also tried to negotiate educational reform. The Princes of Anhalt and the Landgrave of Hesse in Kassel were among the most prominent, and it was in fact in Kassel that Dury died in 1663, a pensioner of the Princess of Hesse.

There can be doubt then, that Dury came into contact with Ratichian thinking. The pity was that in contrast to the blossoming which Ratke's ideas enjoyed in Gotha, the movement for reform in England gradually lost its impetus. 'What a contrast,' exclaimed Rae, 'this formed to what might have been if the right atmosphere had ... obtained. What might have been is less a matter of guess than of observation, for the remarkable achievements of Duke Ernst of Saxe Coburg Gotha (*sic*) gave its pattern and its shape.'<sup>1</sup>

Strangely, Duke Ernst's experiments enjoyed a further revival of interest in England in the mid-eighteenth century. Jenkyn Philipps, tutor to the children of George II and official historiographer to the king, published biographies of both Ernst and one of his brothers.<sup>2</sup> These were followed by Bolton's *Ghost of Ernest*.<sup>3</sup> What was the reason for this renewal of interest in Gotha and, more important, how was it that awareness of Ernst's achievements survived in England the decades between his death in 1675 and the 1740s?

In 1736 the Prince of Wales married Augusta of Saxe-Gotha, the great-granddaughter of Duke Ernst. The marriage clearly stimulated the natural inclination of a royal tutor to look for appropriate models to be held up for imitation. But how did Philipps know of the system of education which had been built up by Duke Ernst almost a century earlier?

In 1704, a volume of *Miscellanies* had been published, whose author was Dr. John Worthington, Master of Jesus College, Cambridge.<sup>4</sup> Worthington had died in 1671, but thirty years after his death Worthington's papers were thought by his executor to deserve posthumous publication. Worthington had corresponded with many of his most eminent contemporaries, and bound into the *Miscellanies* were copies of twenty-four letters which Worthington had written to Hartlib. In a letter

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1 T.M.H. Rae, *John Dury, Reformer of Education*, Marburg, 1970, p. 342.

2 J.T. Philipps, *The History of the two illustrious brothers, Princes of Saxony, 1740, and The Life Of Ernestus the Pious, first Duke of Sax-Gotha*, 1750.

3 R. Bolton, *The Ghost of Ernest ... With Some Account of his Life*, 1757.

4 J. Worthington, *Miscellanies*, 1704.

dated 24th. February 1661, Worthington wrote of 'that Excellent Prince *Ernestus Duke of Weymar*.<sup>1</sup> I remember 3 or 4 years since Mr. *Dury* spake of some things to this Purpose; and perhaps he wrote the Letter that gives his Character...'<sup>2</sup> I have not been able to trace the letter Worthington was referring to, but it is clear from the above that Dury had been sufficiently impressed by the reforms being implemented in Gotha to spread word of them among his English connections during the years 1657–58. If this were not enough, Worthington remarked of Dury's 'Character' of Ernst, 'Were it enlarged into more Particulars, so as to make a little Golden Manual; it would be an excellent *Idea* for some to look upon, when it is thought fit to be published.'<sup>3</sup> A brilliant idea for a book, one might think, and what could have seemed to Philipps a more apposite occasion for such a work than Duke Ernst's great-granddaughter's marriage into the royal family?

The foregoing does not of course prove that Dury ever heard the name of Ratke. But Hartlib and Comenius certainly had. Nor does it prove that any of the three saw themselves as pursuing Ratician reforms as opposed to their own. In view of their acquaintance with Ratke's work, however, and in view of Comenius' admitted interest in it, it seems plausible to assume that those aspects of it which they found congenial were assimilated into their own programme.

It must now be clear that the conventional view of Ratke in educational history requires revision. Adamson's verdicts, that there is 'more than a suspicion of the cheap-jack and the quack' about Ratke, that his educational reforms 'truly are not of a startling character' and that his method 'cannot be considered of much importance' no longer stand up to examination. Nor does the view that Ratke's main claim to fame depends on his having propagated an inductive method of teaching Latin, or having been a mere precursor of Comenius. Ratke's real contribution to education was of a different nature.

Ratke grew up in a world in which the educational reforms pursued by Luther and his successors had lost most of their impetus. Despite the high intentions and the energy which had gone into re-shaping the education system in sixteenth-century Germany, it had become apparent by the end of the century that the system was failing to meet the needs both of the individual and of society. Nor had it adapted itself to take account of the new knowledge which advances in exploration, technology and science were bringing to light.

Ratke represents the bridge between the older Lutheran ideals and their transmutation into educational practicality. The measures which he advocated signalled at the same time a shift in the direction in which German educational thought was

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1 J. Worthington, *Miscellanies*, 1704, p. 315. 'Duke of Weymar' was Ernst's title from his parents' house, before he became Duke of Sax-Gotha and Altenburg.

2 Worthington, *loc. cit.*, - [emphases in the original - J.W.]

3 Worthington, *loc. cit.*

moving. They mark the beginning of the end of the humanist ideals with which education had so long concerned itself. Man was being dethroned from his position at the centre of academic study (*literae humaniores*) to be slowly but surely replaced by the study of nature and natural things: '*realia*.' Ratke's approach to Latin literature was to treat it no longer as the repository of all that was best in human thought, but as a means of acquiring an additional medium of communication: '*Lingua ad usum loquendi docentur*.'<sup>1</sup>

According to Hubert, compulsory universal education was proclaimed earlier in Germany than in neighbouring states such as France or England.<sup>2</sup> In evidence, he adduces the Weimar statutes of 1619. Other Ratkean proposals, such as those concerning the relation between church and state, or the status of the vernacular, helped to set the course for the way in which education in Europe and beyond was to develop through the seventeenth century and later. These changes can be documented as they filtered through from statute to statute, moving slowly but unmistakably outwards from Thuringia and Saxony towards the fringes of the Holy Roman Empire.

If one is not prepared to see these reforms as united in the person of Ratke, then some other explanation for their timing and direction must be found. Simply to register piecemeal developments spreading across Protestant Germany without rhyme or reason is not sufficient: it is like registering a series of shock-waves on a seismograph while denying the existence of an epicentre. It seems more plausible to see Ratke as the figure who, above all, drew together in his person the various strands of reform. The paths along which the reforms were implemented were, as has been shown, to a significant degree determined by the network of communications of which Ratke and his colleagues were a part.

Ratke's work is distinguished from that of many of his contemporaries by its aims, its modernity, and also by its fundamental rationality: his choice of motto (*RATIO VICIT*) was entirely in keeping. Ratke's aims, not least through their comprehensiveness, were, for the society in which he lived, revolutionary. He sought to lay down the foundations of a complete state educational system which would embrace the whole spectrum of human activity and not be confined either to a conventional 'school-age' nor to the traditional curriculum. The reforms which Ratke worked out in pursuit of these aims covered extensive areas of educational policy, the articulation of education as a scientific discipline, a reform of the curriculum, and revolutions in teaching-method and text-book production.

Ratke's modernity and rationality are in one way a disadvantage. The evident logic of many of his proposals make it tempting to dismiss considerable areas of his thought as no more than the kind of conclusions which any right-thinking

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1 *Aphor* 17, § 22.

2 R. Hubert, *Histoire de la pédagogie*, Paris, 1949, p. 121.

pedagogue would arrive at anyway. A careful study of the reception of Ratke's work shows, however, that on the contrary many of Ratke's ideas were in conflict with contemporary theory and practice and evoked considerable opposition, not least from the established teaching and academic professions.

It is equally easy to underestimate Ratke's humane reasonableness. While one can trace similarities between Ratke's proposals for educational reform and those being advocated in England in the 1640s and 1650s, it is worth noting the differences, too, both here and on the continent. Contrary to what is sometimes asserted in the literature, his work exhibits none of the less attractive traits of the Rosicrucians, such as their mysticism, nor does he show any interest in alchemy, hieroglyphics, hermeticism or the Kabbalah: Padley's assertion that Ickelsamer 'extended Kabbalistic analyses to the vernacular, thus sowing the seeds of traits which will appear in the work of ... Wolfgang Ratke'<sup>1</sup> appears to be without foundation. Nor was Ratke a utopist: he described no Christianopolis, City of the Sun, New Atlantis or Macaria. He may have been too lacking in imagination to produce such visionary works, but perhaps for this very reason his proposals remain satisfyingly down-to-earth. There is scarcely any trace of the Comenian chiliasm in Ratke's works, nor does he show any interest in applying mathematical and astronomical science to extract the truths of Scripture from the prophetic books of the Bible.<sup>2</sup> To the superstition which persisted in England into the second half of the seventeenth century there is again nothing comparable in Ratke's works. 'Though past the middle of the seventeenth century, men calling themselves philosophers, and so styled by the multitude, yet cherished a belief in witchcraft, which, supported by Royal Authority ... and countenanced by Bacon, was almost universally adopted by the people...' <sup>3</sup> It is also worth noting that James I wrote a *Daemonologie*; and the questions he set down for the interrogation of Thomas Harriot in connection with Gunpowder Treason 'centred on the casting of horoscopes.'<sup>4</sup> Ratke was also free of some of the less attractive facets of Dury's puritanism.<sup>5</sup>

Though Ratke's life was plagued by apparent failure, many of his proposals were shown in retrospect to be coherent, practical and politically implementable in different contexts. The more extreme directions which Hartlib and his friends chose to follow from the 1640s onward, by comparison, brought their group into

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1 Padley, p. 87.

2 Cf. H.R. Trevor-Roper, *Three Foreigners: The Philosophers of the Puritan Revolution*, in his *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change*, 1967, p. 253.

3 C.R. Weld, *A History of the Royal Society*, London, 1848, 2 vols., pp. 87–88.

4 G.R. Batho, *Thomas Harriot and the Northumberland Household*, Durham Thomas Harriot Seminar Occasional Papers, No. 1, 1983, p. 11.

5 E.B. Castle, *Moral Education in Christian Times*, 1958, pp. 100–11.

disrepute: 'from the late 1640s ... Hartlib and his colleagues were more interested in gadgets than in experimental science ... Hartlib was in many ways the crank element of the new science which Swift satirized...' <sup>1</sup> The result was that 'they never constructed more than a ramshackle skeleton of their Macaria, their ideal state.' <sup>2</sup>

As a man, Ratke took two things fully seriously - his Lutheran religion and his profession of '*Didacticus*.' The events of his life showed that his environment was less than well-prepared to assimilate the ideas he was feeding into it. Nevertheless, and despite the vicissitudes which Ratke's reputation suffered after his death, the truth - as he himself wrote in a different context - 'can not be suppressed completely, but comes out in the end, to be honoured by all right-thinking people.' It is to be hoped that time will give to Ratke's work the recognition it deserves.

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1 Slaughter, p. 106.

2 H.R. Trevor-Roper, *Three Foreigners: The Philosophers of the Puritan Revolution*, in his *Religion, Reformation and Social Change*, 1967, p. 257.

## **APPENDIX I**

## MEMORANDUM

delivered to the German Empire, in Frankfurt,  
Election Day, 7th. May, 1612

Wolfg. Ratichius, with God's help, and to the benefit and welfare of the whole of Christendom, is able to give directions:

1. how Hebrew, Greek, Latin and other languages may be easily learned and disseminated, even in a short space of time, both among young and old;
2. how a school may be set up not only in High German, but also in all other languages, in which all arts and sciences may be thoroughly learned and propagated;
3. how, through the whole empire, unity of language, unity of government and finally also unity of religion may be easily introduced and peacefully maintained.

The better to prove this, he can produce in addition a specimen written in Hebrew, Chaldean, Syriac, Arabic, Greek, Latin and High German, by means of which the whole project may be thoroughly assessed.

### Elucidation

The usual custom, in use in all the schools of the empire right down to the present day, is this, for the arts and sciences to be drilled almost with physical violence, and certainly not without great pains and effort, into our precious youth first in the Latin, then in the Greek and after that, though less frequently, in the Hebrew tongue, through all sorts of lessons from a variety of books.

The most popular methods, however, for helping our beloved youth to learn and retain them are these. First, they must learn a large number of lessons by heart, and repeat and recite them many times over. Then they must translate German into Latin, Latin into Greek etc. or, as it is called in schools, do many *exercitia* every day, and practise.

Not only are such customs, like the methods, completely and totally at odds with both nature and language, but in addition extremely damaging and highly

onerous, as will be sufficiently demonstrated at the proper time, and what is more, indeed, with God's help be proved.

Now, the proper way and the course of nature is for our beloved youth to learn first of all to read, write and speak their inborn mother tongue – in our case German – correctly and comprehensively, to be better able to understand and follow their teachers in other languages. For this, the German Bible may be used with particular advantage.

After that, Hebrew, as the mother of all languages, must be thoroughly and correctly taught to our youth from the Hebrew Bible.

Greek should be learned from the New Testament as the third language, so that our beloved youth may learn to understand and follow God's word and will from His word alone, from childhood onwards.

Latin may be learned fourth, with pleasure and amusement, from Terence's comedies, unless one of the Latin students is thinking of studying law, in which case it would be better to read and explain Justinian's *Institutiones*.

These, then, are the four main languages from which all other tongues mostly derive and in which they have their origin, and which must be learned and taught above all else, if anything worthwhile is to be achieved in church and state.

Anyone, however, who knows Hebrew well and desires to understand the Bible thoroughly, will find it absolutely essential to master in addition the Old Testament in Chaldean and the New in the Syriac language thoroughly and correctly.

All these languages – German, Hebrew, Chaldean, Syriac, Greek and Latin – can be profitably learned and disseminated by means of the above-mentioned books. As soon as the grammar or *Sprachkunst* of each individual language has been prepared (something I already have in hand and with God's help intend to complete, all together according to their kind and properties) and in such a way that anyone who has really mastered and can speak and understand just one of all these languages properly will find no great difficulty with the others.

Further, we should not overlook the fact that the arts and sciences are not bound to any particular languages and, conversely, the languages to no particular arts and sciences. Thus our beloved German nation enjoys at the present time (God be praised) not only the light of nature, but also that of the gospels and the true knowledge of God. In this respect, there is no shortage of books and scholars, so that a complete school in High German could certainly be established, by means of which the German language and nation could be considerably raised and improved.

If a philosopher can teach and expound his philosophy in Greek and Latin, why should he not be able to do the same in high German, provided only that the necessary vocabulary (*vocabula artium*) has been developed, and the subjects systematically described and practised in it?

Lawyers of all ranks, too, can recognise very well what the law is in German, and could prepare in the same language a body of laws (*corpus juris*) which was

in conformity with the word of God and which would do away with all injustice, so that justice alone could be cultivated and maintained throughout the empire.

A doctor can heal and look after the body just as well in good German – this isn't done in Greek or Arabic anyway – languages which most of them are unfamiliar with.

The theologians, too, will not have much left to quarrel about when God's will is learned exclusively from God's word and not from human opinion, as at present the wicked world is in the godless and accursed habit of doing. For when old and young, women and children can themselves commune with God, and read and understand the Holy Scriptures in Hebrew and Greek, no-one will easily be led astray. Yes, as soon as the polemical pamphlets and glosses have been got rid of, then the original catholic and apostolic teaching will remain pure and unchallenged, and be peacefully maintained throughout the whole empire.

But these things are not easily explained hurriedly in writing. I am therefore prepared to give a detailed explanation in person – as far as my modest ability permits – to all lovers of truth, at any time, without distinction of religion, and also to put this plan, and more, into practice for the benefit of the German nation, and with God's help bring it to completion, provided that I receive help from the empire with books and staff.

## **APPENDIX II**

## THOROUGH AND RELIABLE REPORT

on my Memorandum delivered in Frankfurt on the 17th May in the year 1612 etc.

Written and delivered at the request of elevated and noble personages,  
for the prevention of all malicious misinterpretations.

1. At the beginning it says that I intend to give directions how each part or section of the whole project may be put into operation. It is not that I would be able or would dare to undertake the realisation of the whole project single-handed. I explicitly point out in further explanation at the end of my *Memorandum* that I hope to have books and staff put at my disposal by the empire to help me.

2. That the languages mentioned may easily be taught and disseminated even in quite a short time etc. is not to be understood literally, but relatively. If, namely, one weighs and considers the many difficulties and the protracted time taken up by traditional methods as against this new one, and also the difference between the words *learn* and *disseminate*, then one must agree that my instructions do indeed constitute a method for, and an introduction to, every language (and not much progress is made through the traditional exercises used in our schools at the present time) and that after proper instruction as much as possible may afterwards be achieved by the learner himself, although here as in other fields a whole life-time would scarcely suffice to achieve perfection.

3. As far as the second point is concerned – how in all languages the arts and sciences may be thoroughly taught and improved – it is true that a given subject may be more clearly, comprehensively and attractively taught in one language or another, according to its particular nature and character (which is why the arts and sciences, though accessible in High German, should still for the sake of fuller understanding and greater certainty be investigated and studied in the language in which they were first set down) – however, since the liberal arts are not significantly bound to particular languages, such a suggestion is not to be counted impossible. But who might be a suitable person to initiate and carry through such a momentous and important programme, in view of the numerous serious obstacles, may properly be judged from the aims set out in the *Memorandum*.

The third point consists of three parts. First, how a unified language may easily be introduced in the empire, i.e. how High German may be introduced in Saxony, Franconia, Swabia, Thuringia etc. and its subsequent uniform use guaranteed. This I believe can be brought about through the German schools, since for other areas, too, it has wisely been ordained that, to the maintenance of the royal house and the welfare of the empire and of Germany, legal verdicts must be delivered in High German, both in the royal courts of justice and in other law-courts. Apart

from this, it is clear from a number of circumstances that all Germans are quite happy to speak the Meissen dialect. Then, in addition, Dr. Luther's German Bible, and other books on the liberal arts translated into High German may be of considerable assistance, not to mention the fact that all other foreign nations spread their native languages as far as they possibly can, both through the liberal arts described in them and through foreign ambassadors, who for a variety of reasons are best understood not in their own language, but in the usual language of the country.

Second, that a single body for the maintenance of public order and a unified government must be set up in the empire is to some extent evident from the body of laws (*corpus juris*). Of these, those paragraphs which have become outdated must be repealed, and something done about the countless abuses of one kind or another, in accordance with Holy Scripture and in the interests of justice.

Third, — how to achieve unity of religion. One should not impute to me the offensive and unchristian intention of wanting to unite or reconcile all warring religions, or somehow conceal — with sly and devious arguments — grave error, as was attempted for example not long ago with the *Interim* or, as recently, the Heidelberg theologians and other supposedly experienced persons undertook to bring together light and darkness, Christ with Belial. What I wanted to say was that I would like to provide, by God's will and grace, a means of putting a stop to the Papists, Calvinists, Arians, Photinians, Schwenckfelders, Anabaptists etc. or whatever they and the other heretics may be called, and (more than is at present the case, and using christian methods — methods sanctioned by God's word) provide a means of introducing, furthering and maintaining the pure, true, apostolic and Lutheran doctrine. And indeed this (among other measures which, due to serious reservations, people formerly hesitated to adopt towards their religious opponents and adversaries) is not the least useful: namely no longer to rely on the glosses and commentaries of the church fathers or other theologians when instructing youth, but only on the correct explanation of the Holy Scriptures. This is so that our youth should not be distracted from the diligent study of writing, for this can solely and exclusively be schooled through the understanding of languages, and then of the Old and New Testaments, and through diligent, pious study and perseverance, if we are not to fall into error two or three times as great as that of the Papists.

From now on, we should accept the writings of all the holy fathers and theologians of whatever kind only in so far as they are in accordance with our only guide — the divine word. The task of exegesis of the Holy Scriptures should therefore be begun without taking any notice of glosses or commentaries. As far as the eradication or removal of the glosses to be found in most books in almost every language are concerned, it is certainly not my opinion that useful expositions such as those of messrs. Luther, Brentzius, Jacobus Andreae, Chemnitzius, Hunnius, Philippus Nicolai etc. and other excellent, unimpeachable teachers should

be completely got rid of, because, when used at the proper and appropriate time, they all have their particular and inexpressible value. For where the Holy Scriptures are concerned, some possess the gift of expounding God's word to a greater degree than others. The Holy Spirit, too, has endowed some of his servants with special gifts in this respect.

The section almost at the end of the *Memorandum*, which says it is possible to commune with God through the Hebrew language etc., really can, as has recently been pointed out to me, easily be subjected to an unfortunate misinterpretation. However, my view is this and this only: God's nature and will may be better and more completely understood through the medium of those languages in which, by prophets and apostles, they were first expressed than if one has to rely exclusively on translations. Since although to God the Holy Spirit one language is as familiar as another, it still does not follow that we can equally surely and deeply penetrate the nature and character of Hebrew and Greek through this or that translation.

When, too, I spoke of young and old without distinction, intelligent readers will easily appreciate that I did not mean that all persons of any degree whatever can always and in every way equally easily be educated. This is my decided opinion, which – my conscience is witness – at the time when I submitted my *Memorandum*, I had to commit to paper by gracious command in extremely compressed form in the space of a few hours, without warning, as a further explanation of my ideas. If, as I would have wished, I had been quickly able to gather round me learned persons of true religion and masters of the German language, the more controversial points would perhaps have been formulated with greater clarity and precision. I remain hopeful, however, as before, that upright Christian hearts will be more inclined to generosity than malice, and bear in mind that, as they say, every man is the best interpreter of his own words, and refuse to make a judgement on the basis of the explanations and interpretations of others, although in this corrupt and wicked world it is unfortunately the case that nothing can be so perfectly expressed in speech or writing that it cannot be twisted and misrepresented by godless people, out of supposed cleverness and unseemly excess of critical zeal. However, should anything appear inconsistent to anyone, I offer once more to explain further in person. If asked to do so, I shall readily and gratefully accept. For I, too, am one of those who can err. However, putting these things on one side for the moment, I intended simply and solely to show how languages may more easily and effectively be learned, and grammars, together with the appropriate textbooks, published; and after completion of the project to advise on and discuss the other important points with learned people with experience in the areas concerned. May almighty God lend His support to this auspiciously conceived good work, to the praise, glory and honour of His name, to the benefit of the

whole of Christendom, and in particular to the renown of our dear fatherland the German nation. For the sake of His dear Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Wolf. Ratichius mp<sup>um</sup>

## **APPENDIX III**

## **Articles upon which the Ratician Art of Teaching is principally founded**

### **1. Everything to begin with prayer**

All hours or lessons begin with a prayer which is the same in all language classes, specially directed to this end.

### **2. Everything according to the order or course of Nature**

For nature requires a particular order peculiar to herself, through which the human mind grasps things; account must be taken of this, including in teaching, since everything which is against nature — and all brutal or forced teaching and learning — is harmful, and weakens nature.

### **3. No more than one thing at a time**

Nothing obstructs understanding more than when one wants to learn several things at the same time and all together. It is as if one wanted to cook purée, porridge, meat, milk [and] fish all together in one pot. Instead, one should take things one after the other in an orderly fashion, and deal with one thing properly first, and then, in accordance with the Article, go on to the next.

1. One should use one single author for each individual language — a good one — from which to teach the language. When this author has been learned and thoroughly digested, one may also teach others.

2. One should not proceed to anything new until the preceding thing has been thoroughly and satisfactorily assimilated.

### **4. One thing frequently repeated**

It is incredible what frequent repetition can achieve. Take an example from reading. For anyone practised in reading can read a line [or] a page in a trice, where otherwise a beginner has to look at one letter after the other, and really even put the syllables together. One may conclude from this that one particular piece of

subject-matter only should be dealt with, every day in every lesson, mornings and afternoons. For whatever is frequently gone through will be properly and thoroughly learned. But if one presents something only once or a few times, and then something else, and many things all mixed up, nothing can be properly retained and the mind will be confused, overwhelmed and weakened.

### 5. Everything in the native language first

For the advantage of [using] the native language is that the pupil only needs to concentrate on what he is supposed learn, and does not have to worry about the languages further. When, through the medium of the native language, he has understood everything which he has to learn, then it is no trouble for him to practise the same in foreign languages, too, so long as one kind of book and one kind of order are used in all schools of languages. There is also this benefit, that when all the disciplines which are useful and necessary in ordinary life have been put into German and are taught in it, everyone, whatever his social station, will then be able to improve his knowledge, so that he will be able to make decisions better in all fields and form an opinion. What consequences this will have in matters of religion and government, and in human life generally, is easy to judge when one considers what a state of ruin, ignorance and inexperience now exists and is still spreading, and how those who possess sufficient learning and experience nevertheless seldom, and few among them, really get down to the task of putting all aspects of human life in order, everything in its own place.

### 6. Out of the native into other languages

1. First from German into Hebrew: partly because it is the main language, [and] partly, too, because the oldest holy scriptures are written in it.
  1. Chaldean, and for those who wish to proceed further, from Chaldean into Syriac and Arabic.  
For these are all closely related to one another.
  2. Greek, in which the Christian doctrine was originally written.
2. from Hebrew into
3. From Greek into Latin.

## 7. Everything without compulsion

1. Children should not be beaten to make them learn and for the sake of learning. For other means are available; one should use these, as follows below. Through force and blows one engenders a distaste for study among young people, so that they become an enemy to it. It is also against nature. For boys are customarily beaten for failing to remember what they have been taught; but if you had taught properly, as should be done, they would have remembered it and there would have been no need for blows. But now, they are made to pay for your error, that you did not use the proper method to teach them with, which is an overwhelming injustice. The human mind is so constructed that it must take in with pleasure what it is supposed to retain. You spoil all that with your outbreaks of rage and your blows. Where ethics, morals and virtue are concerned, on the other hand, it is different, it says: Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him, as Solomon has it.<sup>1</sup>

2. The pupil must not feel loathing for his teacher, but must like and respect him.

This follows automatically from the preceding. For when the teacher does his job correctly – that is, teaches properly, – the boy will not fail to acquire a liking for him and for his studies, and to realise that he means well with him, for which he will respect him. This is much better than respect which has been knocked into him, for the pupil frequently wishes the teacher every imaginable disaster in his heart, and would rather haul rocks than go to school and get beaten by his teacher for the sake of learning.

3. Nothing should be learned by heart.

Reason: 1) It is [to use] force against nature, one does violence to the mind, which is why experience shows that whoever relies heavily on rote-learning loses much in understanding and sharpness of intellect. For, since the mind must be occupied with the words, it has not freedom to consider the meaning properly. 2) It is unnecessary and can be replaced by better methods – namely, when something has been properly assimilated by the mind through being repeated frequently, retention follows automatically without any effort.

4. The use of *localis memoria* is absolutely forbidden.

*Localis memoria* is when one tries to remember something by means of certain figures put into certain sequences and committed to memory. This is such a forced, artificial and tortuous method that some people are driven insane by it, and no-one has ever been found who produced anything laudable or worthwhile on the basis of such tortured memorising.

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1 *Proverbs*, 22. xv.

5. Several hours should be set aside for pleasure and amusement every day, so that spirits do not flag, and listlessness and resentment towards one's studies develop. It should not, though, be silliness, but acceptable honest games, walks, rides etc.

6. The master should not ask a pupil to answer any question until he can be certain that the pupil has understood [the matter] thoroughly. For otherwise it is compulsion, and unacceptable, as already explained in § 1.

7. One should not teach for two consecutive hours. For 1) usually it dampens motivation; 2) in particular, because this method of teaching is carried out orally, and the ear gets tired more easily than the other senses, so it is not advisable to teach a lesson for longer than an hour at a time.

### 8. Uniformity in all things

1. There must be uniformity in all languages, arts and sciences, both as far as the teaching-method and books are concerned, and the *Praecepta*, as far as humanly possible.

Thus the *Grammatica* in German must agree with the Hebrew, Greek, Latin etc., as far as the properties of the language permit. For this is a great help to the mind, and every language will be the easier and better understood and remembered. Uniformity, therefore, makes a noticeable difference, too, in other arts and sciences, and it develops through them intelligence, so that one really sees how one language differs from another and where they coincide, and where one discipline differs from another.

2. Nothing extraneous should be mixed up with the definition of a subject. For it causes confusion, and the mind learns erroneous things, so that it believes that things belong here when they really belong elsewhere.

3. All unclear words should be avoided. Therefore, also, unclear ways of speaking which can be understood ambiguously, or which have many interpretations or meanings, for that conflicts with the *Finem docendi*,<sup>1</sup> since it prevents human understanding, and confuses people.

4. No technical term in a discipline shall conflict with any other. None must interfere with another, but as a term is understood in one discipline, so must it be understood in the other, or else it must be eliminated and replaced by a more appropriate one.

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1 The end, or aim, of teaching.

### 9. First the thing itself, then the manner of the thing

1. No rules should be given until one has dealt with the subject-matter, the author and the language.

This seems quite absurd and illogical, but experience shows that it is nevertheless true. For what can anyone do with a language who has not yet read anything nor heard anything read from a single author, may he be stuffed never so full of rules? Nothing, for one rule conflicts with another, and the mind is confused, drowned and overwhelmed, so that it is unable to make use of any of them, but ties itself in knots with them, and is forced in the end to learn to understand and use the rules in one or many *Autoribus*<sup>1</sup> one after the other, and with frequent repetition. What is the point, then, in him plaguing himself unnecessarily with the rules in advance? And it is just the same in the other arts, only in languages much more so, since there is simply no rule for them which does not have exceptions, through which the mind is then mightily confused.

2. No languages should be taught from the grammar, but from a single particular author.

For otherwise the language is forced into the pattern of the grammar, and many erroneous things must be learned that way. If, however, one teaches the language from one good author, one inculcates into the pupil properly the real character of the language. One may be sure, for instance, that according to the grammar it would not be wrong to say *facere orationem*<sup>2</sup> but in terms of the character of the language [it would be] silly – yes, clumsy and wrong, because one says, *habere orationem*<sup>3</sup> not *facere*. It is like this in all languages. But what is the point of learning something at great expense of effort which can still not give me certainty, but easily leads me to make mistakes? It has already been mentioned how rules without content can confuse the mind in this way. And do not say that one would reply that examples are given for every single rule. For they are hacked, chopped and cobbled together from a hundred scraps, piecemeal and patchwork with no connection between them, so that the examples themselves doubtless wonder how, from such varied authors, they managed to get into each other's company. How can the mind possibly really usefully grasp, remember and properly analyse them all at the same time without becoming confused? Let every man just reflect for himself whether all the examples which he had to learn with so much effort in the grammar did not turn up (I will not say 'in the first years,' but 'also') all his life in the authors. I will cite only the rules in x.<sup>4</sup> Has anyone ever come across all

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1 Authors.

2 'To do a speech.'

3 'To have a speech.'

4 The Latin nouns ending in 'x'.

the examples to be found, together with the exceptions, in the grammar? What use is it to them, then, to have had to learn by heart, by dint of great effort, with beatings and blows, what they have had to forget afterwards anyway because of other studies? Thus the *Patronymica*<sup>1</sup> — how they torture the poor children, and are still nevertheless seldom used; that is why it's absurd to want to begin by hammering in the grammar and then to teach the language afterwards. The motto is: first get your corn, and then start looking for a sack; first get your money, and then buy the purse you're going to put it in.

3. Rules should not be used as preparation, nor as a guide, but mainly for confirmation.

This follows automatically from what has just been said, and this is the point which all schools get wrong. But it is the truth, however paradoxical it may seem. One [person] wonders, who hasn't thought about it, 'Well, what else are the rules for, except to guide the beginner and prepare him to learn the languages that much more quickly? But practice and experience show that there is nothing in such speculation. That is why it would be unintelligent were anyone to want to join in with the ignorant assumption and claim, 'That can't be true. *Don't* rules prepare? Do they give no guidance? How can one then usefully put an author into the pupil's hands if he has not got *some* rules, at least?' These are all prejudices, because a pupil's mind can, without the labour of learning rules by heart, learn more of the rules by himself in a few hours than in many hours otherwise spent in doing grammar without any application of the rules. In a nutshell: the decision must be made in accordance with *Praxis*<sup>2</sup> not speculation.

4. A rough idea of the material (*habitus*) must be present in the mind before the rules are taught. This all follows from the foregoing. For since the author is worked on throughout and the paradigms are also afterwards added, and things are dealt with several times in a number of places, the mind works out an impression by itself, and learns each rule without any effort before really hearing much about grammar. When the rules are then added, later, the pupil understands them properly and remembers them, and everything is done with pleasure and without discouragement, and also without confusing the mind, for otherwise all kinds of examples and authors get mixed up together like chaff and mixed feed; for such a mixture, which has no coherence, is not enough to provide a proper foundation nor introduce anyone to the character of a language.

5. No language should be taught before the subject-matter to be dealt with in the language has been properly learned and understood in the native language first.

This requires no further explanation; it is sufficiently clear from the foregoing and from Article 5.

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1 Patronymics.

2 Practice, experience.

### 10. Everything through experience and experiment

No rule nor any technique is to be permitted which has not been thoroughly examined and found to be right by testing it, irrespective of whether many or all who have written about it think one way or the other. For certainty and reliability are required, and these can in no way be based on authority. Then one knows that one cannot fail.

1. Hence no authority can be accepted at its face value without cause and reason.
2. No attention is to be paid to long custom, either, for it gives no certainty in the matter.

### 11. Nothing except the chosen authors

Nothing outside the particular chosen author should be dealt with at any one time, until he has been well and thoroughly assimilated and so to speak digested. The grammar is an exception to this, however.

1. One should not, therefore teach any words out of vocabulary-books. For this takes the pupil outside the author and creates two workshops for him. However, each and every language and discipline should have one workshop of authors. In vocabulary-books nothing has anything to do with anything else, there is no continuity of sense for the human mind to hold on to.

2. In the grammar, no examples should be given with the rules. However excited schoolmasters may get about this, they should try it out themselves first and blather about it afterwards. Instead, the examples are to be picked out from the author by the teacher, and applied.

3. The master should use no other examples than ones taken exclusively from the author.

4. The pupil should certainly read no book apart from the author. With the exception of the grammar, as mentioned above; and yet even that, not without being told to by a teacher, nor afterwards without his permission. This is clear from what has been said before, since when one sticks to one thing only, the understanding penetrates more deeply and is not distracted, and the pupil relies wholly on his teacher, which gives him certainty.

### 12. All disciplines are to be described twice

First in brief terms, through which the pupil makes his first acquaintance [with the subject] and afterwards more comprehensively, from which [description] the

master when necessary can get information — and even the pupil himself, provided he has got so far.

### 13. All the work falls to the teacher

For he has to read out and explain in the native language what the pupil is supposed to learn, and that frequently, as mentioned above. But this is a much easier task than has so far been the case in schools, for he does not have to slave away at hearing lessons, testing, beating and caning, but teaches his lesson as he ought, and is sure of getting results. He cannot fail, provided only that he performs his teaching duties correctly and in accordance with the proper *Methodo*.

### 14. The pupil's task is to pay attention and keep silent

But there is more on how he can be persuaded to [do this] below.

1. The pupil should not speak in the course of the lesson nor ask any questions.

For otherwise he hinders both the master and his fellow-pupils from completing the lesson on time. Should he, however, need to ask something, he should make a note of it on the side. He has time enough to ask when the lesson is finished.

2. The pupil should not be asked to recite anything nor called upon to speak until he has been taught enough to leave scarcely any doubt that he knows it. The cause has already been indicated. For if one wants him repeat something, one must first teach it properly, i.e. impress it upon him well, explain and repeat it frequently, clearly and comprehensively. One need not, however, worry that in this way one could encourage carelessness or make unnecessary work for the teacher. For, first, one knows for each day how often it is necessary, and also what is enough. Then, sufficient indications have been given in the report<sup>1</sup> as to the means by which one can win the diligent attention of young learners.

3. The pupil should neither speak nor write the language he is still learning, nor translate, until the teacher gives him permission, or until the time is ripe. But the time is ripe when he can conjugate, decline, and analyse words; the teacher must be best able to judge this. But the pupil will not be able to do this until he already has a wide supply of phrases from the set author, words and so on, because the conjugations and the grammar are not taught until the teacher has made the pupil thoroughly familiar with the author.

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<sup>1</sup> The third section of *In Methodum Linguarum*, which was printed in the same volume, is presumably being referred to here.

4. The pupil should not revise anything nor learn anything new at home himself.

Particularly in a foreign language. The reason: he may easily stumble and get onto the wrong track, and hence learn something wrong which he later has to re-learn with considerable effort, and unnecessarily. For he hears it often enough from the teacher in the course of time, so that he is sure not to get it wrong. Otherwise he can never be certain whether he has got it right, and so it is neither necessary nor useful to him, but it is just as if someone were to want to fly before he had grown any feathers. In other words: make haste slowly. It is much harder to unlearn something wrong than to get used to something right. Not to mention the fact that force is at work; for one tortures the understanding and tries to compel it to learn, whereas that is what the teacher is there for in the first place – to teach it.

#### 15. The pupil must not come with fixed expectations

For if he thinks he knows how to become wise and scholarly by himself, and how to learn and be taught, he does not need a teacher.

1. For this reason he should not try and dictate to the teacher nor interfere, but obey what he [the teacher] considers to be right.

2. The pupil must do nothing which the teacher has forbidden.

Apart from the fact that it is more seemly. For this reason the teacher must be properly trained to know what is useful and what not. Many [pupils], for example, believe it is better to practise at home, read, go through the lesson by themselves, and have the cheek to do what the teacher does regardless of whether the teacher forbids it and warns against it. Only afterwards do they realise that they learn much better and more thoroughly in an orderly fashion, and gradually, than if they plague themselves with it alone at home, and take uncertainties for certainties – yes, even learn wrong things, since they have difficulty in unlearning such things or getting them out of their minds.

#### 16. The teacher should do nothing but teach.

**Discipline is the job of the inspector**

There are many reasons for this: 1. The teacher stays within his proper field and need not trouble himself with any thoughts apart from this; 2. the timing of the hours and lessons can be kept to, where everything is divided up and worked out; 3. the pupil can be prevented from developing antipathy towards the teacher, but likes him more and more, which is very important for learning.

**17. All children, without exception, should be sent to school**

Even if they do not learn more than how to read and write. For if the Jews can teach all their boys and girls to read and write, or at least enough to be able to read their prayers, how much more is it our duty as Christians to do the same? Indeed, it is a scandal to have to remind people and supply them with reasons and arguments, when even heathens have recognised this for themselves.

**18. No hour or lesson should be missed**

By the pupil, particularly. For if the teacher has to miss a lesson for some important reason, he can catch up later, but the pupil can not catch up on a missed lesson. Where sickness or other emergencies are concerned, it is a different matter.

**19. There should only be one teacher per subject**

For once the pupil has got used to a teacher's language or pronunciation, gestures and manner of teaching, it can easily be a hindrance to be taught the same subject by a different teacher. Similarly, if a teacher is only appointed for one subject, he can concentrate on it properly, and when in the course of time he has thoroughly mastered it he can more easily note the advantages for teaching and benefit his pupils more, which is not easy to do when he has to occupy himself with different subjects.

**20. The pupils must all sit within sight of the teacher, each in his own seat unless the teacher orders otherwise**

But it may happen that he changes the boys' seating arrangements, to have those sit nearest to him whose attention wanders most easily.

**21. Discipline at school and discipline at home must agree with one another**

So that the parents do not diminish and spoil through wicked living the good which the children have learned at school. Nor must they, the parents, undermine the teacher's authority by telling the children to do anything other than what the

teacher has told them to do; otherwise one destroys with one hand what one has built up with the other.

**22. Attention must be paid to uniformity and a uniform layout  
in print where one can get them**

Where not, no matter. For it is not essential. But where this is possible, attention should be paid to it because it helps the memory considerably and leaves a sharper distinction in the mind. This *Aphorismus* can be added to the eighth above.

**23. The languages should be learnt according to their own  
fundamental character**

For this reason the exercises usually used in schools should be abolished. One gives the boy something in German, namely, which he has to put into Latin or Greek by himself. Everlasting God — what a mess that is! What miserable confusion one sees there! It is just as if he were already supposed to know Latin or Greek before having been taught it. It results in such pitifully mutilated Latin and Greek as to make one weep; that is why a boy is often thrashed for 5, 6 and 7 years at school and still cannot write a Latin letter properly. What is the reason? He has not learned it according to the character of the language, but partly from the *Dictionari*, partly from the grammar, partly from the phrase-book, partly cobbled together from a variety of authors, and still none of them can help him. But if he had been introduced to the true character of a particular author he would have learned more in one than in all those 5, 6 or more years.

One only turns to the *Exercitia* when the pupil already understands the grammar, together with the author.

But he must not understand the author superficially, but have virtually devoured him, and be skilled in conjugating, declining, comparing and analysing; then let him be given the task of translating the author into his native language, and not the native into the foreign language. For otherwise he may easily miss the character of the language, which is quite unknown to him.

**24. The languages, therefore, must be taught to be spoken**

Not as hitherto Greek and Hebrew have been taught, for people only to read what has been written in them but not to speak them; it plays an important role in learning the character of a language, when one learns to speak it.

25. Above all, children should be instructed  
in divine wisdom

For the noblest and most precious, and the most necessary, obviously takes precedence, and then, too, greater blessing and success in all things are to be expected. The heathens, also, said, ‘*A Jove initium.*’<sup>1</sup>

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1 ‘The beginning is with Jove.’

## **APPENDIX IV**

## Aphorisms (1617)

- 1) Only one thing [at a time].
- 2) The same thing frequently repeated.
- 3) Everything in German first.
- 4) From German into other languages.

In addition:

- |                             |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1) From German into Hebrew. | From Hebrew into  |
| 2) From Hebrew into Greek.  | Syriac, Chaldean, |
| 3) From Greek into Latin.   | Arabic.           |
- 
- 5) The manner of the thing not before the thing itself.

In addition:

- 1) The rule not to precede the language, author, subject-matter.
  - 2) No language [to be taught] from the grammar, but from a particular author.
  - 3) Honest recreation to be permitted every day.
- 
- 6) Everything according to the Method of Nature.
  - 7) Everything without coercion.

In addition:

- 1) All private revision in the absence of the teacher is forbidden from the beginning.
  - 2) Nothing to be learned by rote.
- 
- 8) Everything to be preceded by prayers.
  - 9) All the work to be done by the teacher.
  - 10) The pupils [to observe] pythagorean silence.

In addition:

- 1) Let the pupil listen attentively.

- 2) Let the pupil ask nothing, nor speak, particularly during the lesson itself.
  - 3) The pupils should neither try to speak nor write in a new language before being ordered to by the teacher.
- 11) All subjects [to be presented] in two forms:
- 1) in the briefest of summaries,
  - 2) in a complete system.

In addition:

- 1) The summaries to appear in different books for the beginner.
  - 2) The system [to be bound] in a single volume for the teacher and for advanced pupils.
- 12) Nothing new [should be given] until the preceding has been thoroughly assimilated.
- 13) [The pupils should be given] a rough idea from examples before [they are given] the rules.
- 14) The rules do not prepare nor yet guide, but confirm.
- 15) Nothing [to be learned] except from the set author, until this has been thoroughly digested.

In addition:

- 1) Thus, examples in the grammatical rules should be avoided.
- 2) Let the teacher teach nothing in grammar from the author, nor let the pupil read anything apart from the author, except only rules which the teacher has gone through beforehand.
- 3) All vocabulary-lists are to be rejected.

Here, the master is not bound.

- 16) [Pupils should have] the same seats in school all the time, and all in view of the teacher.
- 17) The teacher should do nothing but teach; discipline is the responsibility of the inspector.
- 18) No boy or girl should be overlooked.
- 19) Local memory should be taken into account in the authors and when printing rules, if possible; if not, no matter.
- 20) Everything in harmony.

In addition:

- 1) [As] in all languages: so in all arts and sciences.
  - 2) A subject should be completely finished before another is taken up.
  - 3) Ambiguity should be carefully avoided, particularly in the terminology.
  - 4) There should be no extraneous material in a discipline.
- 21) Everything by induction and experiment.

In addition:

- 1) No authority, therefore, should be accepted without reason.
  - 2) Nor is anything to be ordained more or less because of its age.
- 22) Languages are to be taught for speaking.
- 23) The behaviour taught at school should not be undermined at home.
- 24) The pupil to have no fixed expectations in advance.
- 25) The beginning of all teaching, in general and in particular, to be in religion.
- 26) Only one teacher per subject.

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