



Ludwig Boltzmann Institut
Neulateinische Studien

*Wir erlauben uns, herzlich zum **Vortrag***

**No Latin for the People –
The Social Risks of a Classical Education
(France 18th–20th centuries)**

von

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(CNRS – Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris)

am Dienstag, 8. Oktober 2013 um 18.00 Uhr

*im Zentrum für Alte Kulturen („Atrium“, Langer Weg 11, SR 3)
einzuladen.*

Under the Ancien Régime, Latin – the basic subject taught in schools – was viewed as a noble discipline, and became a sign of aristocratic distinction. As such, it possessed a powerful attraction for the lower classes of the society. In the 18th century peasants and artisans wanted their sons to study Latin. Governments, reformers, and educationalists were strongly opposed to this pretension: to allow the people access to Latin, they held, would be fatal for society, undermining its traditional ways, and overturning the established order. Description of the ensuing social evils made it clear that Latin would become an instrument of subversion if it fell into the hands of the people.

The paper explores this unfamiliar aspect of Latin and will focus on texts from 18th century France, taking some examples from other European countries for the purposes of comparison. A glance at the 19th century shows that there was little change on this point. Another kind of comparison – with views of women – will underline fears of the social consequences of a Latin education for those who had no need of it and no right to it : giving Latin to girls Latin would upset the natural order too.