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## **HISTORY TEXTBOOKS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: CONSIDERATIONS FOR AUTHORS**

Improving the quality of school textbooks is an important of the effective organization of educational process. The school textbook, as the material basis for the organization of students and teachers' activity, has to be composed in accordance with the general theoretical and methodological principles, accepted and consciously selected by the educators (both at the theoretical and practical level).

Thus, the article aims at revealing the challenges of creating textbooks, discussing possible solutions to them, and defining the priorities that should direct the process of writing a textbook. In other words, we are trying to answer the question of what the modern textbook should be like to become the material basis for individual spiritual development, a means of organizing various kinds of students' learning activity, and, consequently, the necessary condition for their successful self-realization in class, as well as the basis for interiorizing the meanings of the history and culture of the humanity and of their native country.

Modern didactic and methodology approach to the creation of textbooks in the light of different conceptual aspects is reflected in the researches of V. Bezpalko, M. Burda, N. Burynska, V. Vlasov, L. Zankov, D. Zuyev, Ya. Koldyuk, B. Korotyayev, V. Krayevsky, V. Kurylo, I. Lerner, O. Pometun, O. Sokhor, N. Talyzina, V. Snegiryova, O. Topuzov. Scholars devote close attention to the competency-based approach, which defines the principles of selecting, structuring, and presenting educational material. For instance, O. Pometun states: "A mature historical competence of a student includes not only the knowledge of facts and dates, but also his/her ability to work with the sources of historical information, analyze, describe, explain, and compare historical perspectives, present and defend his/her

own views, appraisals, attitudes. A modern textbook should be analyzed taking into consideration these points” [1, p. 477]. So, how should a modern textbook be changed to be able to solve educational tasks, live up to the expectations of students and their parents, serve as the foundation for successful and effective learning and pedagogical activity?

The analysis of school textbooks on history allows us to make the following conclusions. Nowadays, in the textbook development, two main directions illustrating the theoretical views of their authors can be distinguished. The first – encyclopedic approach – defines the textbook as a book that contains basic scientific information on the subject (according to the state standard) and is the source of information for students. Another – so-called functional approach – sees it as a means of organizing students’ learning, which, in addition to the informational function, is charged with the developmental function as well, being a medium for building basic and subject competences of students [1, p. 478]. We are firmly convinced that school textbooks should, in an integrated way, realize the informative, developmental, and educational functions of teaching/learning. Therefore, we are to analyze these three aspects in detail.

The representatives of the encyclopedic approach see the academic study and scientific information as the content focus and the greatest value of education. Such an attitude determines the quality and quantity of educational information included in the textbook. This approach seems to be natural for scholars. As a consequence, its supporters are concerned that the composition of a school textbook should reflect the content of the fields of academic study. In this case, the mental aptitude and developmental profile of students are not taken into consideration to a full extent. In their study of the challenges facing modern secondary schools, the Ukrainian scientists B. I. Korotyayev, V. S. Kurylo, V. V. Tretyachenko mention, on the one hand, the excessive amount of factual information and, on the other, the lack of attention to students’ individual development, their cognitive needs and abilities [2, p. 62]. The analysis of the volume (number of pages) of the textbooks revealed that

middle school students had to read from 15 to 25 thousand pages in four years [2, p. 62].

Moreover, if the information (the texts in the chapters) given in history textbooks for middle school is selected in accordance with the school curriculum, then, in terms of content, approaches, and structure, it is on the same level with the academic courses in history that are designed for and taught in higher educational establishments. As a result, a university history student deals with the same curricular content, in the same way, and according to the same logic, moving from ignorance to knowledge of the subject matter, as he/she was introduced to at school. The comparative analysis of the content units of *Ancient History* course at school and at university suggests that they are very similar in structure, logic of historical information introduction, and the selection of important facts presented. The aforementioned tendency can be illustrated by the analysis of the content of *History of the Roman Empire* course at university and the content of the textbook covering this topic. The university course includes such topics: 1) *Early Roman Empire (509 – 265 BC)*. The social struggle of plebeians and patricians. The Roman invasion of Italy. 2) *Late Roman Republic (264 – 27 BC)*. Rome acquires the status of the World Government. The First Punic War. The Second Punic War. The Third Macedonian War. 3) *The fall of the Republic and the Establishment of the Empire*. The Third Punic War. The Gracchi brothers. The end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. Sulla's dictatorship. Spartacus Revolt (The Third Servile War). Rome of the 60s and 70s. Civil War. Gaius Julius Caesar. Octavius Augustus and Mark Antony. The fall of the Republic [[http://homo.fizteh.ru/courses/culture/a\\_4t332j.html](http://homo.fizteh.ru/courses/culture/a_4t332j.html)]. Six-graders (10 – 11 years of age) studying the topic *Ancient Rome of the 8<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> Centuries BC* cover the same content: §35. The Geography of Italy and the Origin of the City of Rome. §36. The Roman Republic, the 5<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries BC. §37. The Roman Republic, the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> Centuries BC, etc. But the time (three academic hours or three class sessions) assigned to these topics is obviously not enough to master the selected material. Let us analyze the content of paragraph §37. The Roman Republic (the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> Centuries

BC) discusses the information on the following topics: The wars between Rome and Carthage (The Second Punic War (218 – 201 BC). The Third Punic War (149 – 146 BC). The influence of the wars on the economic and social life (The Gracchi brothers and their land reform). The key factors that affected the social and political life of Rome in the 80s – 60s of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC (Sulla's dictatorship, Spartacus Revolt, Triumvirate establishment). Including the main texts, illustrations, tasks, the documents quoted, etc., this chapter is five pages long. It should also be mentioned that, despite a substantial number of historical facts covered (for instance, there are fourteen dates in bold which should be remembered), none of them is exposed in the specific historical, moral, and aesthetic context, but, on the contrary, the learning material is presented in the form of a summary. As a result, the information about The Battle of Cannae and The Servile Rebellion under the leadership of Spartacus is put in two sentences, and the Fall of Carthage during The Third Punic War is described in three [3, p. 197 – 202].

Historical material analysis allowed us to identify one of the shortcomings modern textbooks have. The learning material in history textbooks most often introduces the student to the development and collapse of countries and civilizations (civilizational approach), namely to the history of “the state and the law” and the history of social processes in the past. It does not teach history as composed of the stories about people and their deeds, outstanding events, which disclose the meanings and values of human life and provide the opportunity for historical thinking development. It fails to present the historical event as a process unfolding in space and time, starting from its causes, proceeding to the facts revealing its essence, and concluding with the results and consequences, and, in this way, capturing the course of the “fate” of an individual, nation, community (according to O. Spengler). Teenagers' knowledge of life is obviously insufficient to interpret the life of people in the past on the basis of the generalized information about social and economic processes. We believe that students' spiritual development by means of history education at school can occur if their attention is drawn to those historical facts that reveal the meaning of human existence and can serve as clues to understanding the

deeds of people nowadays. The excessive amount of historical information presented in the texts in the form of a summary runs counter to the formation of students' interest in the past and to the process of cognition, transforms their naturally enthusiastic attitude to historical events into the negative one, discouraging them from learning history. The afore-mentioned raises the question of whether there is any rational ground for presenting excessive factual information if their moral and aesthetic meaning is not revealed, but, on the contrary, seems to be hidden. For example, Chapter 37 discussed above fails to provide any references to either commendable or immoral actions of people or their features of character [3, p. 197 – 202]: it does not mention Hannibal's military talent (in The Battle of Cannae), the heroism of people defending their motherland (the citizens of Carthage standing the siege), the yearning for freedom, and the courage, and the virtue of the rebels (Spartacus Revolt and its consequences), the fight for dignity and a better life (the Gracchi brothers, who sacrificed their lives in the fight for the land for ordinary people), etc. [3, p. 197 – 202].

So, how can a student understand these facts and what should a history teacher do to reveal their meaning, if the time allocated for their study is so limited? Is it possible to introduce those historical events (which are essential both in terms of their specific historical value and cultural importance, significant for exposing moral and aesthetic meaning of people's fates, intentions, deeds, the sense of existence and life in general) just listing them within a short period of time? Moreover, is it reasonable to put students and teachers under constant pressure of "mastering the program material"? History is not learned or mastered, it cannot be crammed like the multiplication table stating that "2 X 2 = 4". Understanding history requires the work of the brain and the soul, necessitates "drawing live pictures" in teenager's imagination and consciousness, which would reflect not only the circumstances of people's lives, but the sense of their cravings and actions. These "pictures" enable the students to feel, experience, and realize that learning is about the life of people and not exclusively about historical processes, and the lives of people are essentially the same: they come to this world, they hope, work, and fall in love, they strive for

prosperity and liberty. As such, the textbook and the information it contains should allow the student to understand that it is about “stories”, i.e., facts, actions, events that happened to people at a particular time, in a specific place, and under certain circumstances. These stories are personal and existential; they are clues from the past for future reference. Such views on history were supported by M. Berdyayev, P. Sorokin, P. Florensky, et al.

The above-mentioned poses the question of why learn about the rebellion of slaves-gladicators, if students do not feel or, rather, have no opportunity (from the textbook material) to perceive the meaning (existing in the moral and aesthetic plane) of this fact from Ancient Rome history. Why did the authors of the textbook fail to present Spartacus Revolt as an unparalleled, well-organized, and continuous fight of slaves for their freedom as a value and an condition for the human life proper? At present, when slavery and human trafficking are seen as critical social issues, the position of school history curriculum and textbook composers appears strange, at the least, as it deprives students of the opportunity to be “introduced” to such influential events of the past, and, in doing so, feel, emotionally experience, and realize the meaning of the past and learn the lessons that history brings about.

With these considerations in mind, we cannot but refer to *The History of Greece and Rome: a Systemic Course* by Ya. H. Huryevich, published in 1880 – 1889 in Tsarist Russia (St. Petersburg) and awarded Peter Prize). In this textbook, the information concerning the rebellion of slave-gladicators unfolds on two pages [4, p. 234 – 235]. In the preface, the author of the textbook explains his intentions and tasks: “Trying to evoke the students’ interest in the subject matter and to facilitate the understanding of its essence, we avoided introducing the material in a condensed and factual manner, as we are firmly convinced that too succinct a presentation usually leads to dry and colorless listing of facts and, therefore, demands memorization rather than creativity and wit... The more concise the material is, the more efforts are required to master it rationally, the faster it vanishes into the thin air from the student’s head... The textbook should provide students with a detailed and lively account of the subject matter... We deem it sufficient for the student to become

aware of the most important facts in their inner relatedness and sequence and be able to remember the outstanding events after graduating from school” [4, p. 6 – 7].

In F. P. Korovkin’s textbook entitled *The History of Ancient World*, which was reprinted 34 times in the Soviet period, Spartacus Revolt is discussed in a separate paragraph (§49) and during a separate class session [5, p. 201 – 204].

The examples provided and the analysis of the text on *The Roman Republic (the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> Centuries BC)* from a modern textbook on Ancient History [3] demonstrate that the paragraph, as well as the whole textbook, contains the amount of information that is excessive for the six-graders, but, on the other hand, is not informative enough to satisfy their cognitive needs, which are the foundation for cognition. The text, including too much scientific information in the field of study, reflects the encyclopedic approach to textbook composition. Being written in a summary format, it fails to become the basis for the actualization of individual cognitive needs. In addition to that, every individual event (a complex historical fact) does not contain the necessary information that could guarantee acquisition and comprehension by students of specific historical, moral, and aesthetic meanings naturally encapsulated in it. Therefore, we believe that the history textbook has to be created as not only a container of some scientific information, but also as a means of individual spiritual development, a tool that positively influences teenagers’ emotional sphere, their ability to empathize and experience the meanings of “the historical” as the meanings of their own life (according to M. Berdyayev).

Another approach to textbook composition – the functional one – sees it as the main tool for students’ development. It, therefore, measures up to modern competency-based approach to educational process organization. The representatives of the functional approach to textbook creation compose sets of questions and tasks to the texts and other components of the chapters. These questions and tasks are aimed at the organization of students’ learning. For functionalists, the textbook is a means to properly organize students’ learning. As such, in addition to the informative function, it fulfills the developmental one as well, providing for the formation of basic and subject competencies [1, p. 478]. The analysis of the tasks to Chapter 37 on the

Roman Republic in the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> Centuries BC demonstrates that the authors intended the textbook to develop the subject competences of the students [3, p. 197 – 202]: the didactic aim of the lesson precedes the text of each chapter: “At the lesson, you will learn: 1) to determine the causes and effects of the Roman wars of conquest in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC, 2) to establish the correlation between the Roman wars and the changes in economic and social life of the Republic in the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> Centuries BC, and 3) to explain the causes of Sulla’s dictatorship establishment and of the crisis of the Roman Republic in the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> Centuries BC. The tasks given at the end of the chapter are also directed towards the achievement of the goal [3, p. 197 – 202]. Having studied the tasks suggested in the chapter, we have presented the results in chart 1 below.

Chart 1.

**The Tasks to the Text in Chapter 37 from *Ancient World History* Textbook**

№	The task	The description of the tasks in terms of their nature and purpose
11.	What territories were conquered by Romans in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Century BC? What provinces were founded?	<i>A practical task</i> , aimed at the development of subject special skills (competences)
22.	Explain the notions: a legion, a people’s tribune, dictatorship, triumvirate, the optimates, the populars, a gladiator.	<i>A cognitive task</i> , aimed at historical notions acquisition
33 – 10.	Give answers to the following questions: How did Rome become the most influential maritime power in the Mediterranean? How did the establishment	<i>Cognitive tasks</i> , aimed at the formation of cause-and-effect relations



	of new provinces influence the economic life of Rome? What was the cause of confrontation in the Roman society? What encouraged the Gracchi brothers to conduct the reforms? How did the reform of Gaius Marius threat the republican order in the country? What were the specific features of Sulla’s reign in Rome? How and when was the first triumvirate established? Can the triumvirates be called dictators?	
111 – 12.	What were the manifestations of the republican crisis in the 1 <sup>st</sup> Century BC? What caused it?	<i>Creative and heuristic tasks, aimed at the search for the causes of the crisis in Rome in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC</i>

Therefore, the goal and the tasks of the chapter are oriented at the identification of specific historical meanings of the described social and political events and processes in the history of Ancient Rome. We do not doubt the rationale behind the inclusion of these specific historical questions and cause-and-effects relations, neither do we challenge the necessity to develop students’ subject competencies, since they are a means to realize the developmental aim of the academic subject. What is questionable here is whether it is possible to deal with the afore-mentioned tasks in 45 minutes, whether it is necessary for students at the age of 10–11, and whether these questions are related to real life. None of the tasks listed directs the student towards the search for the moral, aesthetic, individual meanings of the events, phenomena, processes studied; none of them requires expressing their own attitude towards them, or is aimed at revealing the meanings of human life in general. This text fails to reveal, even to an adult, those “meanings of the historical” (according to

M. Berdyayev) that are the only reason why history should be studied by both adults and teenagers. M. Berdyayev stated: “It is important for the subject of history learning to experience and open in himself/herself the historical [6]”. But the text sometimes deprives the student from the slightest chance to learn history in this way. The authors of the textbooks are carried away by the processes of the rise, flourishing, and collapse of the republics, empires, and civilizations, but are not so enthusiastic about individual fates, deeds, and facts that would describe the features of humanness, exploits, service and inspiration, the characteristics of the beautiful in an individual and his/her life or, on the contrary, could introduce the students to the examples of cruelty, mercenaries, savageness, treachery as those phenomena that lead to the distress and the destruction of the human in an individual. Thus, if the course is conducted on the basis of this *Ancient World History* textbook, the educational potential of each chapter and the discipline in general is not realized to the full extent, and the system of spiritual values of the students in terms of cognitive (the quest for the Truth), ethic (the quest for the Good), aesthetic (the search for the Beautiful) attitudes to reality has no possibility to develop naturally.

We are firmly convinced that “the history of humanity” should be presented to the students of middle school in a manner that will, first, remove the excessive amount of scientific information; second, actualize, by means of historical content and the respective aesthetic manner of its presentation, the cognitive needs of middle school students and encourage their positive attitude towards the subject matter; and, third, guide the selection of historical information for the textbook to the integrated description of the specific historical meanings of the facts, as well as the moral and aesthetic meanings of the past. Therefore, the factor of paramount importance, the one that governs and determines the choice of the content of historical information for history classes and the system of tasks developed for them, is the students’ personality, his/her abilities, aptitudes, and needs.

Thus, the facts to include into learning texts should be selected according to the following principles: their amount should be sufficient to reveal specific historical, moral, and aesthetic meanings of the events and phenomena; the historical

information featured in the history textbook should ensure the fulfillment of not only the informative and developmental function, but the educational and axiological as well as. The textbook should become a means of spiritual needs activation and the foundation for teenagers' prospective identification in the system of cultural, spiritual, and life values in the historical and, respectively, modern perspective.

We believe that the modern history textbook should become a vital *tool* for: a) exploring the world and understanding the most significant meanings of the natural and human being; b) building one's personality in co-existence and co-operation with other people; and c) conscious self-realization in various kinds of learning activity. Thus, it has to change into a means of the realization of emotional and value attitudes along the following vectors: "I – the World", "I – Nature", "I – Society", "I – History", "I – Activity", "I – Other People", and "I – I." The history textbook should turn into the main means of learning about the facts, laws, and meanings of the natural and human life, interiorization of those spiritual values and cultural goalposts that can form the foundation for environmental and healthy lifestyle awareness, tolerance and acceptance in human interactions and provide students with the necessary energy and strength for individual development or actualization in the consciously selected workplace.

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### **Турянська О. Ф. Шкільний підручник з історії: яким йому бути?**

У статті визначено основні проблеми, наявні у сфері підручникотворення, запропоновано шляхи їх вирішення та визначено основні принципи, що мають детермінувати процес укладання навчальної книги. На основі аналізу сучасних підручників з історії автором виокремлено два підходи до створення шкільних підручників, що відбивають пріоритети авторів щодо відбору змісту навчального історичного матеріалу, а також методичної обробки текстів. Автор висловлює думку про те, що підручник з історії повинен не тільки бути носієм навчальної інформації наукового характеру, але й стати дидактичним засобом, що розкриває підліткам етико-естетичний зміст історичних подій, тим самим спрямовуючи й орієнтуючи їх у світі духовних і моральних цінностей.

*Ключові слова:* підручник, засіб навчання та розвитку, смисли історичного матеріалу.

### **Турянская О. Ф. Школьный учебник по истории: каким ему быть?**

В статье определены основные проблемы, которые существуют в сфере создания учебника, предложены пути их решения и определены основные принципы, которые должны детерминировать процесс создания учебной книги. На основе анализа современных учебников по истории автором выделены два подхода к созданию школьных учебников, отражающие приоритеты авторов в

отношении отбора содержания учебного исторического материала, а также методической обработки текстов. Автором высказывается мнение о том, что учебник истории должен не только быть носителем учебной информации научного характера, но и стать дидактическим средством, раскрывающим подросткам этико-эстетические смыслы исторических событий, тем самым направляя и ориентируя их в мире духовных и нравственных ценностей.

*Ключевые слова:* учебник, средство обучения и развития, смыслы исторического материала.

### **Turyans'ka O. F. History Textbooks for Future Generations of Secondary School Students: Considerations for Authors**

The article discusses the main issues related to the process of school textbook creation, outlines possible solutions to the challenges, and determines the fundamental principles that should govern the process of composing a textbook.

On the basis of the comparative analysis of modern history textbooks, the author distinguishes two approaches to the composition of school textbooks (encyclopedic and functional) and describes their advantages and disadvantages. These approaches reflect their authors' priorities with regard to the selection of the content of history studies, as well as the methodology of preparing the texts for such studies. The author emphasizes that an excessive amount of scientific facts, usually given in a form of summary, should be avoided, because it can discourage students from learning about the past, learning in general, and destroy students' inherent interest in history. On the contrary, modern history textbook creators should attempt to stimulate students' cognitive needs, describing historical importance, as well as moral and aesthetic meaning of the facts. A history textbook should not be seen as a medium of transmitting learning information of scientific nature, but must be turned into a didactic means, which exposes the ethic and aesthetic content of historical events. A textbook meeting this requirement can be critical to opening the world of spiritual and moral values to students.

*Key words:* textbook, means of educating and developing a students, the senses of historical material.

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