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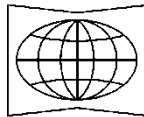


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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
HISTORY EDUCATION
AND CULTURE (IJHEC)
YEARBOOK
OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
FOR HISTORY DIDACTICS (ISHD)

Heritage in History Education



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PREFACE

Angelos Palikidis

The Journal of the International Society for History Didactics (ISHD) follows a long and significant tradition in history education. Over the last fifteen years, in particular, our Society has developed a global academic network of researchers and educators through its conferences and initiatives, opening up debates on innovative fields of research. The conferences it has organized have provided opportunities to engage in dialogue among different epistemological trends and perspectives on history education, as well as to interact with the social and political sciences, generating stimulating exchanges within interdisciplinary areas. Moreover, a constant goal of ISHD has been to bridge the gap between academic historiography and history teaching. In many countries around the world, this gap appears to be widening, as history education in schools and public spaces is largely controlled by the state or parastatal centers of power.

In recent years, ISHD and its journal have broadened the scope of academic dialogue without depreciating or distancing themselves from the core of their research activities—namely, the teaching and learning of history in the context of both formal and non-formal education. This expansion is evident in the themes of its conferences and journal issues: *Colonialism, Decolonization and Postcolonial Historical Perspectives: Challenges for History Didactics and History Teaching in a Globalizing World*; *Cultural and Religious Diversity and its Implications for History Education*; *History and Edutainment*; *Nostalgia in Historical Consciousness and Culture*; *Developing Creative Interactions of Local, National and Global Topics of History Education*; *History Didactics and Public History*; *History Education and Migration*; and the last issue, *The Anthropocene and History Education*.

The evolution of the title of ISHD's journal is also indicative of its intention to develop in multiple directions: *Yearbook of the International Society of History Didactics* (until the issue 35/2013), *International Journal of Research on History Didactics, History Education and History Culture* (from issue 36/2014), *International Journal of History Education and Culture* (from issue 44/2023 on).

To these ends, the presidents, managing editors, members of the editorial board, and the academic advisory board have worked hard.

All of them have contributed to various stages of the process –inviting both young and senior authors, reviewing, proofreading, publishing, and disseminating the journal issues to the academic community. The originality, quality, methodological excellence, diversity, and geographical representativeness of the papers have established a fruitful tradition to which we are deeply committed.

As I take on the role of managing editor for the first time, I would like to express my gratitude to all those who helped me complete this demanding task: my fellow board members, especially our President Joanna Wojdon, who served in this position for 12 years; the peer reviewers; the proofreaders for the English language; the authors for their patience and cooperation; and the publisher.

With reference to the very successful conference of ISHD held in Tallinn in August 2023, the leading theme of the current issue is “Heritage in History Education.” The majority of the articles focus on the various forms of heritage (digital, visual, patriotic), while also including empirical studies on school and university history education.

Following the 2024 conference in Providence, USA, the leading theme of the 2025 issue will be “History and Its Discontents: Theory and Practice, Stories from the Classroom.” Members and friends of our Society are warmly invited to submit papers or contribute as peer reviewers.

Prof. Angelos Palikidis
Managing Editor

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A NEW HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED THEORY OF HISTORIANS' RESPONSIBILITIES*

Antoon De Baets

Previous theories of historians' responsibilities have been based on organizing principles such as their scope, addressees and performers, and the context of these responsibilities. In contrast, the theory presented here is based on human rights and uses the performative nature of responsibilities as its criterion, distinguishing responsibilities to respect, protect and promote. The theory argues, first of all, that the source of responsibilities is located in human rights: one has responsibilities because one has rights. It also discusses the differences between responsibilities, duties and virtues. It then specifies the basic responsibilities of states toward history and historians and the basic responsibilities of historians toward history and other historians. Finally, it examines the relative strength of the responsibilities to respect, protect and promote, arguing that the first is absolute while the other two are not. The new human-rights based theory of historians' responsibilities presented here provides a foundation on which other responsibilities can be built.

1. Introduction

Over the years, many principles have been proposed for organizing the duties and responsibilities of historians.¹ One such organizing principle emphasizes their *scope* and subdivides them into professional, civic, social, cultural, political and other responsibilities. A second principle highlights the *addressees* and subdivides them into responsibilities toward past, present and future generations. A third principle foregrounds their *performers* and subdivides them into the responsibilities of individual historians and responsibilities of the community of historians. A fourth principle, finally, emphasizes the *context* and distinguishes responsibilities in times of war, during public emergencies and in peacetime.

None of these organizing principles will be used in the new theory of historians' responsibilities presented here, although they are compatible with it and many of their key elements return in it. This

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new theory is based on human rights and distinguishes three main responsibilities, using their *performative nature* as its organizing principle: one responsibility requires them ‘to respect’, another ‘to protect’, a third ‘to promote’. This new theory is, in fact, a general human-rights based theory of responsibilities that is applicable to all states and individuals² and that I propose to apply to history-related responsibilities, particularly those of historians.

2. The Relationship between Human Rights and Responsibilities

The most important human rights instruments – the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – refer to both duties and responsibilities. They are particular profuse over the duties and responsibilities of states, but relatively sparse over those of individuals. From the outset, since human rights were intended to shield individuals against the arbitrary power of states, the drafters of these human rights instruments were quite explicit about states’ responsibilities but not about individual responsibilities. This was because they feared that states would use any clauses about the duties and responsibilities of individuals to restrict rather than promote the latter’s human rights.³

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights contains only two responsibilities: the responsibility of everyone to act in a spirit of brotherhood (Article 1) and the responsibility of individuals to the community (Article 29). The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights have a largely identical preamble which refers to both state and individual responsibilities. In one paragraph, it says that it is ‘the obligation of States under the Charter of the United Nations to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and freedoms’. In a later paragraph, it echoes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in stipulating that ‘the individual, having duties to other individuals and to the community to which he belongs, is under a responsibility to strive for the promotion and observance of the rights recognized in the present Covenant’.

Since the Covenants ask all individuals to assume the responsibility for promoting human rights, society can rightfully make claims upon its historians to help promote some of these rights. In particular, the

(human) rights of everyone to access information, receive an education, participate in the cultural life of the community and share in the benefits of scientific progress seem to provide a basis for society to make some claims of responsibility upon its historians.⁴

Interestingly, Article 19.3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which describes the permissible restrictions on the right to freedom of expression, clarifies the *basis of our theory of responsibilities* set out in this paper. It stipulates that ‘The exercise of the rights [to freedom of expression] carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions ...’ This clause throws light on the source of the responsibilities held by individuals: individuals have responsibilities *because* they have rights. Rights are prior to responsibilities and provide a rationale for them.⁵ The logic of the relationship lies in the fact that the right has to be guaranteed to the maximum and that any restrictions originating in individual responsibilities when exercising it must be carefully justified.⁶ In short, a human rights perspective on ethics for historians expressly links the responsibilities of historians to human rights, something that is strangely absent in most theories of ethics for historians, which focus exclusively on virtues and responsibilities.

3. Responsibilities, Duties and Virtues

Strictly speaking, ‘duties’ are general ethical or moral obligations, while ‘responsibilities’ are obligations that are legally binding under existing international law;⁷ however, both terms are used interchangeably here, as is general practice.⁸ Therefore, when I speak of responsibilities, I also mean duties and obligations. I agree with the legal philosopher Ronald Dworkin in distinguishing two main types of responsibilities: responsibilities to oneself (or virtues) and responsibilities toward others (or relational responsibilities).⁹ As for virtues,¹⁰ I further distinguish *recommended* and *essential virtues*. Curiosity, modesty and open-mindedness would be recommended intellectual virtues. If historians do not comply with them, the quality of their work may suffer, but no great harm is done to others. In contrast, honesty (an ethical virtue) and accuracy (an epistemic virtue) are essential virtues because non-compliance with them (for example, when historians lie or act with reckless disregard for the facts) may lead to harmful consequences for others, as well as to history as a discipline.

Judges' rulings on complaints against what historians have said or written will evaluate the latter's defence based on virtues as a sign of good faith, but a defence based on relational responsibilities will be more convincing.¹¹ They will almost always refrain from determining 'the historical truth' themselves. Instead, they usually verify the 'procedural aspects' of the historical work that is the target of a complaint, asking whether historians carried out their research into the subjects of study honestly in accordance with the public interest and using generally accepted standards of accuracy that prudent historians usually observe.¹² We see that essential virtues such as honesty and accuracy occupy a middle ground between recommended virtues and relational responsibilities because failing to comply with them may harm others. The ethical framework, then, is clear: when historians act, they are protected by rights, guided by virtues, and restricted by responsibilities. Rights set claims, virtues set best practices, responsibilities set floors. Together they foster *responsible history*. We may now ask: What exactly *are* these responsibilities?

3.1 *The Responsibilities of States toward History and Historians*

The state's *responsibility to respect* history and historians means that states should abstain from direct or complicit involvement in attacks on historians, including history educators, memory activists, archaeologists, archivists and heritage professionals.¹³ The state also has responsibilities to respect the freedom of scientific research and to recognize the benefits of international scientific co-operation.¹⁴ The *responsibility to protect* requires states to proactively take measures to prevent, condemn, prohibit, investigate and prosecute attacks on historians and related professionals at risk from third parties, as well as offer remedies for the victims of such attacks.¹⁵ A state's *responsibility to promote* requires it to set up a solid and equitable legislative framework for educational and research institutions that conduct history-related work, and for archives and museums and similar cultural institutions. It also requires states to take policy measures to foster development of the field.

3.2 *The Responsibilities of Historians toward History and Historians*

If I pass from states to the level at which historians operate, I discern an analogy. If historians as a community want to operate

autonomously – if, in the words of the philosopher and historian Arthur Lovejoy, they want to be a ‘self-governing republic of scholars’¹⁶ – they have to accept responsibilities analogous to those assigned to states:

3.2.1 *A responsibility to respect history and historians*

The responsibility to respect *history* requires respect for the principle of scientific integrity when approaching the past as historians.¹⁷ Integrity, or the attitude of being honest and accurate and not acting corruptly, implies that being a historian is coterminous with working in good faith; historians acting in bad faith are not historians.¹⁸ This integrity principle is so obvious that it is seldom made explicit. In the Faurisson case (a case of Holocaust denial), the United Nations Human Rights Committee stressed the principle of honesty in historical research,¹⁹ thus essentially echoing the views of Max Weber, who spoke about *intellektuelle Rechtschaffenheit* (intellectual integrity) as the central scholarly value as early as 1918.²⁰ In UNESCO’s words, the task of responsible science is ‘an honest search for truth’.²¹ A responsibility to respect *historians* means that one should always respect the rights of other historians and of students, as well as ensure a fair discussion of contrary views.²²

3.2.2 *A responsibility to protect history and historians*

This responsibility requires historians to *oppose* abuses of history and attacks on history by third parties.²³ Among the most serious abuses are the intentional denial or misrepresentation (fabrication, falsification, plagiarism) of historical facts and opinions; among the most serious attacks are ‘crimes against history’ – that is, attacks that are criminal under domestic or international law – for example, when historians are assassinated for political reasons.²⁴ Abuses of history and attacks on historians harm not only historians but also history itself. Their chilling effects usually result in fewer and less active speakers and fewer and less receptive listeners to historical debates than otherwise would have been the case.

The responsibility to *oppose* attacks on, and abuses of, history can be broken down into a series of steps ranging from preventing to investigating, disclosing and sanctioning these abuses and attacks, as well as expressing solidarity with those attacked.²⁵ The first of these steps – prevention – is the responsibility of all historians, but the other steps are usually carried out collectively by historical

associations, institutions, or journals, or by the judicial apparatus. Prevention of abuse is fostered through the cultivation of a careful and honest work habit in the first place, especially by generously acknowledging intellectual debts in notes and references, and by carefully distinguishing quotations from paraphrases. Standard-setting through the development of professional codes of ethics is also important. Awareness can be raised by teaching professional ethics to students, including research into and teaching about the history of the attacks on and abuses of history. Solidarity with colleagues at risk requires first and foremost defending the latter's human and professional rights.

3.2.3 *A responsibility to promote history*

This responsibility requires the creation of favourable conditions for research and teaching, in the first place by establishing equitable research ecosystems and high-quality education curricula free from indoctrination. It also requires the arrangement, as far as possible, of responsible and dignified scientific and public debates about the dark sides of history, including its atrocities. Occasionally, human rights bodies have suggested how the responsibility to promote has to be understood. The United Nations Human Rights Committee has emphasized the principles of objectivity, neutrality and non-discrimination in (history) education,²⁶ and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights has noted that history teaching should be free from political or religious indoctrination.²⁷ Indoctrination is seen as a violation of the right to education.²⁸

4. Discussion of the Responsibilities of Historians

Whereas the responsibilities to respect and promote defend responsible history, the responsibility to protect fights irresponsible history. The responsibility to respect is the most important of all: it is a responsibility of result without which the responsibilities to protect and promote become meaningless. For how can one protect and promote history if one does not respect it in the first place? In contrast, the responsibilities to protect and promote are responsibilities of effort, of means, and of conduct governed by risk-reducing precautionary and due diligence principles. Within the ambit of the responsibility to protect, the responsibility to prevent is weightier than the responsibilities to investigate, disclose, sanction or

express solidarity because all historians are able to contribute to prevention.

The responsibility to respect is absolute: it cannot be waived under any circumstances. In contrast, historians' responsibilities to protect and promote can be tempered by three factors. To begin with, they are mitigated by the degree to which historians' rights are respected. We have responsibilities *because* we have rights, making it logical to assume that responsibilities to protect and promote diminish when rights diminish. If historians' rights are not respected, or not completely, and in particular, if their physical safety is threatened and they are living under duress, their responsibilities to protect and promote diminish to the same degree.

Second, the responsibilities to protect and promote are tempered by the degree of autonomy they are granted by society when it requires them to promote specific human rights. In order to do so, historians need a margin of liberty. There can be no accountability toward society and no protection or promotion of human rights without a substantial form of autonomy (including academic freedom).

Finally, historians' responsibilities to protect and promote are toned down by their potentially conflictual character: historians fulfil several social and professional roles and belong to diverse local, national, and global communities. As a result, responsibilities emanating from these roles and communities may conflict and should be balanced against one another. Virtues, for example, can compete: 'Complete honesty may clash with prudence, justice with compassion, benevolence with fortitude'.²⁹

This conflict of responsibilities can be clearly illustrated in the field of history education. According to Article 13.1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the right to education should be realized in the service of human rights, international understanding and peace. According to the historians' own set of responsibilities, however, historians should respect the integrity of history, that is, they should honestly search for the historical truth. These aims – human rights and peace versus integrity and truth – can conflict because the findings of historical research (including those taught in the classroom) often do not point to respect for human rights, international understanding or peace but rather to conflict and violence. While the aims of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are certainly valid,

reading them dogmatically into history can distort the latter, ultimately, perhaps, discouraging history teachers and students from embracing them.³⁰

5. Epilogue

This is, in a nutshell, what a human-rights based theory of historians' responsibilities looks like: it uses the logic of human rights theory to formulate the fundamental responsibilities of historians, which form the basis on which other responsibilities can be built. In support of this new theory, the words of the sixteenth-century French humanist François Rabelais are appropriate: 'Science without conscience is but ruin of the soul'.³¹

Notes

¹ This is the text of an address at the Final Session of the Third Forum on History Education – an intergovernmental project of the Council of Europe and its Observatory on History Education in Europe – on 'Reinforcing Historical Awareness and Culture through Higher Education: Threats and Challenges', held at the University of Bologna on 17 May 2024. It also forms part of Chapter 4 ('A Human Rights View of History') in Antoon De Baets, *A Human Rights View of the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming [2024]).

² Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, International Human Rights Law, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-and-mechanisms/international-human-rights-law>. To my knowledge, the triad first appeared in the Maastricht Guidelines on Violations of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1997), §6, and in the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *General Comment 13* [Right to education] (E/C.12/1999/10) (1999), §§ 46–50.

³ See United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, *Report* [Challenges to freedom of expression] (A/71/373) (2016), § 8; Douglas Cassell, 'Steering Clear of the Twin Shoals of a Rights-Based Morality and a Duty-Based Legality', in *Between Rights and Responsibilities: A Fundamental Debate*, eds. Stephan Parmentier, Hans Werdmölder and Michaël Merrigan. Cambridge, etc.: Intersentia, 2016, 59–63.

⁴ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 217(III)A (1948), Articles 19, 26–27, which correspond to Article 19.2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2200(XXI)A (1966), and Articles 13.1, 15.1(a)–(b) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Political Rights, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2200(XXI)A (1966).

⁵ Compare Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, 181: ‘Assertions of rights are typically intermediate conclusions in arguments from ultimate values to duties’.

⁶ Cassell, ‘Steering Clear’, 59–60.

⁷ René Foqué, ‘Human Rights and Human Responsibilities: Setting the Ethical and the Conceptual Scene’, in *Between Rights and Responsibilities: A Fundamental Debate*, eds Stephan Parmentier, Hans Werdmölder and Michaël Merrigan. Cambridge, etc.: Intersentia, 2016, 25–27.

⁸ See, e.g., United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Human Responsibilities, *Final Report* [Human responsibilities] (E/CN.4/2003/105) (2003), Article 1.

⁹ In his theory of responsibility, Ronald Dworkin (*Justice for Hedgehogs*, Cambridge MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011, 102–104), distinguishes virtue responsibilities (subdivided into intellectual, practical, ethical, and moral responsibilities) and relational responsibilities (subdivided into causal, assignment, liability, and judgmental responsibilities).

¹⁰ For the virtues of historians, see Herman Paul, *Historians’ Virtues: From Antiquity to the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022, 1–8, 52–53.

¹¹ See also Toby Mendel, ‘Reflections on Media Self-regulation: Lessons for Historians’, *Storia della Storiografia / History of Historiography*, nos. 59–60 (September 2011), 60–61.

¹² Antoon De Baets, *Responsible History*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2009, 85–89.

¹³ Attacks on historians are threats or uses of force by state or non-state actors against historians or their work with the intent to silence them.

¹⁴ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Articles 15.3 and 15.4.

¹⁵ United Nations Human Rights Committee, *General Comment 31* [General legal obligation] (CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13) (2004), § 8.

¹⁶ Arthur Lovejoy, ‘The Profession of the Professorate’, *Johns Hopkins Alumni Magazine*, no. 2 (November 1913 – June 1914), 181–192.

¹⁷ For the concept of integrity, see Arthur Alfaix Assis, ‘Objectivity and the First Law of History Writing’, *Journal of the Philosophy of History*, 13 (2019), 107–128; Mark Bevir, *The Logic of the History of Ideas*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 142–150; Tony Gibbons, ‘The Concept of Integrity’, in *Integrity and Historical Research*, eds Tony Gibbons and Emily Sutherland. London: Routledge, 2012, 1–12; Martin Jay, ‘Historical Truth and the Truthfulness of Historians’, in *Integrity, Honesty, and Truth Seeking*, eds Christian Miller and Ryan West. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020, 240–273; Lutz Raphael and Benjamin Zachariah, ‘Intellectual Honesty and the Purposes of History’, *Bloomsbury History: Theory and Method*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021; Bernard Williams, *Truth & Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002, 84–148.

¹⁸ Antoon De Baets, ‘Historians and Human Rights Advocacy’, in *The Professional Historian in Public: Old and New Roles Revisited*, eds Lutz Raphael and Berber Bevernage. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023, 323.

¹⁹ United Nations Human Rights Committee, *Faurisson v. France* (550/93) (1996), concurring opinion of Evatt, Kretzmer, and Klein, §§ 6, 10. See also Antoon De Baets, ‘The United Nations Human Rights Committee’s View of the Past’, in *Law and Memory: Towards Legal Governance of History*, eds Uladzislau Belavusau and Aleksandra Gliszczynska-Grabias. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, 45–46.

²⁰ Max Weber, *Wissenschaft als Beruf*. Munich: Duncker & Humboldt, 1919.

²¹ UNESCO, *Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel* (1997), § 33.

²² UNESCO, *Recommendation*, § 33.

²³ Attacks on history are defined in note 13. Abuses of history are uses of history with the intent to *deceive* for political or other purposes: see De Baets, *Responsible History*, 9–48. See also International Committee of Historical Sciences, *Constitution* (1926, as amended in 1992 and 2005), Article 1: ‘[...] It [the Committee, *ad b*] shall defend freedom of thought and expression in the field of historical research and teaching, and is opposed to the misuse of history and shall use every means at its disposal to ensure the ethical professional conduct of its members’.

²⁴ See *Provisional Memorial for Historians Killed for Political Reasons*, <https://www.concernedhistorians.org/memorial>. See also Antoon De Baets, *Crimes against History*. London: Routledge, 2019.

²⁵ De Baets, *Responsible History*, 2009, 35–39; De Baets, ‘Historians and Human Rights Advocacy’, 324.

²⁶ In United Nations Human Rights Committee, *Hartikainen v. Finland* (40/1978) (1981), § 10.4; United Nations Human Rights Committee, *Ross v. Canada* (736/1997) (2000), § 11.6. See also De Baets, ‘The United Nations Human Rights Committee’s View of the Past’, 44–45.

²⁷ United Nations Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights, *Report* [Writing and teaching of history] (A/68/296) (2013), §§ 64–70, 86– 88. See also United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *General Comment 13*, § 6.

²⁸ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 13.

²⁹ Gibbons, ‘Concept of Integrity’, 11.

³⁰ Antoon De Baets, ‘The Impact of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the Study of History’, *History and Theory*, 48 no. 1 (February 2009), 31–33.

³¹ ‘Science sans conscience n’est que ruine de l’âme’, in François Rabelais, *Pantagruel: Édition critique sur le texte de l’édition publiée à Lyon en 1542 par François Juste* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997), 110.

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MOVIES AND HISTORY EDUCATION; PROBLEMATIZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORMAL AND INFORMAL HISTORY EDUCATION*

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Learning history is a complex sociocultural phenomenon depending on a wide public area of history communication. However, there has been little research focused on the ways that children deal with the different versions of history. Based on small-scale qualitative research, we explore the effect on history formal learning through its exposure to the informal history environment. The case of movies as a dynamic informal version of history -especially the cinematographic narrative of Troy versus the school version of Trojan War -is chosen to investigate the relationships in formal and informal History Education.

The findings show (a) that the cinematographic narrative seems more powerful than that of schools, but it is not accepted as a whole, (b) the capacity of the children to combine and finally reformulate the historical accounts produced within and outside their schools and (c) the importance of the dominant historical culture in the process of reframing the given narratives and constructing their own narration.

1. Informal History Learning and Movies

The concept of informal learning and the investigation of its relationship with learning procedures have constituted a key concept in the frame of progressive and renovative investigation into, and reflections on, learning, already from the beginning of the 20th century. Its commencement is firstly seen in the pioneering work of John Dewey and the correlations he drew between learning and experience (Dewey, 1997). In general, experience, its place in learning procedures and its connection with the entire learning parameters, is the cornerstone on which the development of learning theories, regarding informal learning, lies. However, during the last few decades, the concept of informal learning has undergone a significant

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renaissance (Bekerman et al., 2007). It has been associated from the beginning with the prevalence of constructivist and social theories of learning which regarded learning as a process of searching and constructing meaning based on previous schemes through which experience acquires meaning. By these schemes and in their broadening capacity in order to include new experiences, the learning process is supported. Thanks to Vygotski (1986), this learning process acquires a strong social, historical and cultural value. Learning is considered a complex cognitive, social and cultural phenomenon which occurs within an equally rich formal, non-formal and informal educational environment. The concept of informal learning is even more enhanced in the framework of overall social transformations which take place within the information society or the learning society. The digital environment and the web-based learning communities generate on the one hand new discussions about informal learning and on the other, they problematise the actual dividing lines between the formal and the informal education (Hayden & Ribbens, 2017). Learning is considered “as something to happen in a variety of places” and places are thought as “sites that generate learning in variety of forms” (Bekerman et al., 2007:2). Thus, we should think about education “far beyond matters of schooling” (Giroux, 2001:584) including all the public spaces in which meaning is produced and negotiated. Henry Giroux argues that “we live at a time in which the educational influence of the larger culture has become the major force in producing subjectivities, desires and modes of identification” (2001: 586). It is this “public pedagogy” that represents a new cultural politics in which pedagogy has become central. Silberman-Keller introduces the notion of “nonformal pedagogy” and points out that its main characteristic practice is the “active creation and reflection of images of place and time” (Silberman-Keller, 2007: 251-273).

In History Education, the informal learning environment, the “public pedagogy” is the domain of public history defining as a social form of knowledge grounded in contemporary life (Samuel, 1994). Public History has undergone considerable growth due to an increasing public interest in the past. History has always been not only a discipline but furthermore an intellectual activity concerning a circle of people larger than historians and scholars. Nevertheless, since the last decades of the 20th century a huge web of activities concerning history has become a global phenomenon. As it is argued,

the shift is qualitative “in the sense that increasing interest in the past, defined either as popular or commercial, constantly addresses wider audiences and persistently develops in new directions” (Gazi, 2004: 7) History is everywhere and this produces a lot of history or matters that concern history, many of which contradict each other and are in fact controversial. History becomes increasingly the refuge for new and different collectivities. “Never before have so many linked themselves to so many and different pasts” (Lowenthal, 1996: 5). According to Pierre Nora, it is the age of memorialism because of the unprecedented world-wide boom of references to the past (Nora, 2002)

The new huge domain of public history is the dynamic informal learning history environment, the public pedagogy for history. No other school discipline has such a large, complex and challenging area of informality as history. No other school discipline has to deal with so many places producing relative meanings. The research on children’s representations, conceptions, beliefs or ideas reveals the importance of this extra - school informal history environment in the formation of historical consciousness which includes any learning procedure inside and outside schooling (Angvik & Von Borries, 1997). Historical representations, conceptions, beliefs or ideas formed and reformed in the public area are considered to be ‘mediational means’ or ‘cultural tools’ which play a fundamental role in shaping the form of the produced historical account (Wertsch, 1985 & 1991).

Within this public domain of history, the place of the movies, especially historical films fiction and/or documentaries, is considered to be predominant. Rosenstone (1988: 1174) even argues that “the chief source of historical knowledge for the majority -outside of the much-despised textbook- must surely be the visual media?”. According to Giroux, given that our encounter with the past is more and more visual, movies, combining entertainment and politics (Giroux, 2001) and belonging to the dominant cultural platform have a unique cultural force of representing the past and shaping historical identities (Davis, 2000). Because of the outstanding position of the movies as chief carriers of producing meanings about the past, there is an abundant literature both academic as well as pedagogical concerning movies and history (Paxton & Marcus, 2018). In the academic level, it is only since the late 1960s, under the influence of innovative ideas formulated by feminists, postcolonial theorists,

anthropologists, narratologists, philosophers of history, deconstructionists and post-modernists, who started to question openly the validity of the claims of traditional history (Rosenstone, 2006) that historians have been preoccupied with the relationship between film and historical knowledge. Until then, the engrossment of historians in more traditional ways of seeing the past –politics, economic, social and cultural life- prevented them from having access to popular culture, in general, and cinema products, in particular (Rosenstone, 1995: 11). Academic historians also had objections and doubts about the filmic use of history and in a certain way there are historians who continue to feel this way (Kansteiner, 2018). Against this kind of suspicion, there are significant epistemological developments that point out the multiple modalities to deal with the past. According to these approaches, history, written, oral or visual, follow different conventions of representing the past. History on film is history narrated through different conventions and does not necessarily lack epistemological validity. Hence, the shift from the written text to the visual does not necessarily mean a transition from reliability to the fictionalisation of history but, rather, a shift from the conventions of language and linearity to the conventions used in the film industry (Raack, 1983; Walkowitz 1985; Toplin, 1996; Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998; Rosenstone, 2009). These filmic conventions and fictionalisation can be exploited in pedagogical action to open new perspectives on the way students evaluate and perceive sources of historical knowledge (Mavrommati & Repoussi, 2020). Perhaps it is too early to speak of a “shift in consciousness about how we think about the past” (Rosenstone, 1995: 15) but nowadays not only do historians pose the questions of how current film could be used as a source of historical knowledge and how it could be used as a teaching tool in the classroom, but also how film functions outside the pedagogical action, as a source of informal learning (Francaviglia & Rodnitzky, 2007) and understanding the past. Movies are now conceived as a chief carrier of historical messages and especially history movies as part of a “cultural curriculum” (Wineburg et al., 2007) are considered to have a very strong influence on public consciousness (Metzger, 2010:128). Rosenzweig and David Thelen’s (1998) research of 808 randomly selected Americans and 645 additional African Americans, American Indians and Mexican Americans interviewed on the popular uses of History in American life, presents a high level of frequency of the

past through the movies and television programmes (81% of the national sample, while 20% participating in a group devoted to studying, preserving or presenting the past) even though their trustworthiness is contested (50% of the national sample, college history professors 73 %, high school history teachers 66%). Wineburg, Mosborg, Dorat & Duncan research both on parents and children's narratives of the Vietnam War demonstrated among other findings the 'peerless influence' of the film *Forrest Gump* as a shared text of two different generations, the parents who have experienced the event in their own lifetimes and the children for whom the event has become history (2000, 2007). Peter Seixas' research (1993) on young people's understanding on history of Native American-White relations through popular films has opened a new area of study related to the conditions under which a film is used by the students to construct knowledge of the past. Richard Paxton and Alan Marcus argue that according to research "a great deal of what students think they know about the past comes ...from movies" (2018: 580) as part of the visual culture which has been the dominant cultural platform for modern societies' encounter with the past (Kansteiner, 2018).

History Education researchers could not remain indifferent towards the power of the movies in history education. Recognizing the influence of movies history teachers also tend to use films more and more in history classrooms (Stoddard & Marcus, 2006). Thus, the educational use of movies in history classrooms is highly recommended and interesting approaches are suggested for their effective integration in schools as a way of promoting historical thinking and learning (O'Connor, 1990, 2007; Metzger, 2010; Mavrommati & Repoussi, 2020). It is generally suggested that not only does the utilization of movies during the lesson make history teaching more attractive, but it also helps students to learn to critically analyze visual materials and therefore gives them the opportunity to deal with the kinds of media they will face outside school (O'Connor, 1987:3). Filmic conventions (picture, sound, music) lend film an illustrative character, which cannot be found in any other type of document (Bernard, Farges & Wallet, 1995: 25) and can be used in various ways. Perhaps it is not expected for film to replace the school textbook; however, it can function as a helpful pedagogical medium which facilitates the acquisition of certain types of knowledge. For example, the visualization of landscapes, people and historical situations is easier through film than the textbook

(Bernard et al.1995: 25). Moreover, film introducing students to a different way of representation of the past, urges them to contemplate the conventions of the medium and the way content is linked to form (Poirier, Laporte & Raynaud-Nguyen, 1993: 11). History teaching through film improves students' understanding of the notion of the "point of view" and the different temporalities that co-exist within the film during the process of its projection: the time represented, the time of representation, and the time of projection (Le cartable de Clio, 2007: 8). Additionally, the examination of textbook and film contradistinctively familiarizes students with the differences between visual and verbal language. For example, the connections between historical facts, the succession and simultaneity of events, and the ruptures of history are rendered in different ways in film and in textbook (Poirier et al., 1993)

Films are conceived as sources of historical knowledge in many different ways due to the diversity of film genres, and for that reason many attempts have been made to categorise them. They usually separate films that carry historical knowledge into two broad categories: films which present history as drama and films which present history as document. There is also a further elaboration of the categorisation above, which crosscuts these two categories. First, cinema products can be seen as historical documents or, to put it more accurately, as the viewpoint from which a society chooses to contemplate its present. This approach concerns not only newsreels but also fictional movies, because cinema, as a popular medium for mass entertainment, construct realities in order to deliver a new aspect of them. Therefore, a comedy or a musical can also open a window to the past and show us what people were thinking in a certain period of time. Second, historical dramas, films with historical content, can show us the way a society contemplates its past (Herlihy, 1988). Thus, historians and teachers can deal with films in many ways: as representations of history, as sources for social and cultural history, as evidence for historical fact and for the history of film (O' Connor, 1990; 2007; Metzger, 2010; Rosenstone, 1995: 3; Repoussi & Mavrommati, 2022). A new term *historical film literacy* has come to highlight a new purpose for history education: the ability to interpret and analyze all the audiovisual and filmic representations of the past (Mavrommati & Repoussi, 2020).

Finally, the use of films in teaching history is considered to bridge the gap between formal and informal knowledge (Bernard et al.,

1995: 25), between the pedagogically approved textbook and the flood of informal historical sources students come in contact with outside the classroom. Therefore, since teachers train students to be critical towards written texts, they need to prepare them to critically evaluate the increasing audiovisual messages they receive. Through this process, on the one hand, teachers provide students with skills necessary to perform as responsible citizens, and on the other, help them to adopt habits of lifelong learning (O'Connor, 1987:3).

Although the usefulness of movies in history classrooms is not only generally accepted today but highly recommended; (Briley 1990; Toplin, 2002; Marcus & al. 2006)), there are open questions about the relationship between history taught at schools and movies. Given the predominance of the movies in the formation of historical ideas and representations, according to the relative literature, what happens when the school version of history encounters the movie based one? What is the effect on students learning when the two versions are conflicting? Which is the version appropriated by the students? Is there a relation with dominant historical narrative and collective historical culture? These are the leading questions of this study.

Possessing data about the impact of the two versions of history - movies' and schools', informal and formal- in students' historical ideas and representation of the past, makes it possible to plan instruction taking this in consideration.

2. Materials and Methods

The starting point of the study was the topic of the Trojan War, which is a unit of third grade history for children of 8-9 years old in the curriculum of Greek elementary schools and a very popular topic in Greek historical culture. The aim of the study was to investigate the influence that the cinematographic version of history exerts on children's formulated images of history and representations of the past. The study is based on a cinematographic narrative and, in the case presented here, on *Troy*, a blockbuster movie released in 2004.

2.1 The Story of the Trojan War

In order to render the case intelligible, we have to remember the story of the Trojan War and give some elements of the place of this story within Greek historical culture. In Greek mythology, the Achaeans waged the Trojan War against the city of Troy after Paris

of Troy stole Helen from her husband Menelaus, the king of Sparta. The war is among the most important events in Greek mythology, and was narrated in many works of Greek literature, prominently the famous poetic narration of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* by Homer. The *Iliad* relates a part of the last year of the siege of Troy, while the *Odyssey* describes the journey home of Odysseus, one of the Achaean leaders. Other parts of the war were told in a cycle of epic poems, which has only survived in fragments. Episodes from the war are the material which is provided about Greek tragedy and other works of Greek literature, and for Roman poets like Virgil and Ovid.

The ancient Greeks thought the Trojan War was a historical event that had taken place in the 13th or 12th century BC. In modern times, both the war and the city were widely believed to be non-historical. In 1870, however, the German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann excavated a site which he identified as Troy; this claim is now accepted by most scholars. Whether there is any historical reality behind the Trojan War is an open question. Many scholars believe that there is a historical core to the tale, though this may simply mean that the Homeric stories are a fusion of various tales of sieges and expeditions by Mycenaean Greeks during the Bronze Age. Those who believe that the stories of the Trojan War derive from a specific historical conflict usually date it in the 12th or 11th centuries BC.

The Trojan War is part of school history as well as of the collective Greek historical culture, not only as a tale or an interesting chapter of Greek mythology or a great achievement of epic Homeric literature but also as a historical event which proves the timeless courage, bravery and ingenuity of the Greek male. Achilles and Odysseus are the prototypes of the above talents, the former for his bravery and the latter for his ingenious talent. The wooden horse is a main symbol of the eternal virtue and intelligence of the Greeks. The teaching of the Trojan War in the Greek primary schools is based on the Homeric tradition.

2.2 *The Story Taught in Schools*

The war of Troy is taught in the third class of primary school devoted to *Very Ancient Times*, concluding mythology and history until 1100 BC. In Greece, we should underline, history teaching starts after the units on mythology. Thus, children either have misconceived history as the continuity of mythology, or mythology as an

introduction to history. At the time of the research, the Trojan War took up two chapters in a total of 53 and one revision unit, in which it was attempted to display the historical causes of the campaign and highlight the poetic and mythical way in which Homer narrated the war. The structure of the textbook was firstly to teach the children the Trojan War as if it was historical fact and secondly to try to complete Homer's poetic construction by supporting it with historical elements.

The first chapter on the topic has the title *The Achaeans campaign to Troy* and the second *The Trojan Horse*. The textbook narrative has been based on Homer's original poem, so we had, in summary, all the chain of events: the Apple of Eris, the Goddesses' Dispute, the Judgement of Paris, the Abduction of Helen, the gathering of the Achaeans in Aulis, the sacrifice of Iphigenia, the sailing of the Achaeans, the arrival at the Troad, the dispute of Agamemnon with Achilles, the wrath of Achilles, the death of Patroclus, the fight of Achilles with Hector, the deaths of Hector, Achilles, and Paris, the invasion of Odysseus with the wooden horse and finally the sacking of Ilium, the 'Iliou Persis' and the victory of the Achaeans.

The text narrative of the history textbook is supplemented firstly by three documents. The first is an excerpt from the drama of Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, titled "The sacrifice of Iphigenia in Aulis". The second, entitled the wrath of Achilles, is a description of the dispute of Agamemnon with Achilles. The third is an excerpt from Homer's *Iliad*, entitled Good omen towards the famous dictum of Hector 'the best omen is to fight for your homeland'. The text was, moreover, completed by an iconographic 'paratext' or visual text. The first sketch shows Paris holding the apple of Eris with the three Goddesses. The second represents an Achaean in front of the strong and impregnable walls of Troy to exalt the difficulties of the conquest. The third represents the dispute of Achilles with Agamemnon and the rest of the sketches are devoted to war scenes, the fights of Hector with Patroclus, Achilles with Hector and the death of Achilles with the arrow wound in his heel.

2.3 *The Filmic Story*

The huge commercial success of *Gladiator* in 2000 led to several other "similar" major films in the following years: *Alexander*, the HBO television series *Rome*, *300*. Among them was *Troy*, inspired by the

Iliad; it was an epic movie concerning the Trojan War, directed by Wolfgang Petersen and written by David Benioff. It was released in 2004 with Brad Pitt as Achilles. It is loosely based on Homer's *Iliad* but includes material from Virgil's *Aeneid* and other myths. *Troy* made over \$497 million worldwide temporarily placing it in the #60 spot of top box office hits of all time. It received a nomination for the Academy Award for Best Costume Design and was the 8th highest grossing film of 2004. The film caused a lot of discussions from a variety of perspectives in which a major one was its correspondence to the *Iliad*. In 2007, a volume edited by Martin Winkler testified to scholars' interest in the filmic narrative of *Troy* (Winkler, 2007).

The cinematographic version of *Troy* differs importantly from Homer's poetic narration. In the movie, the abduction of Helen of Sparta is a result of her physical attraction to Paris and vice versa, as well as her friction with Menelaus who is portrayed as a great womaniser. Consequently, it lacks the interference of the goddess Aphrodite, who, according to Homer, rewards Paris for having given her the apple. At the same time, in the film, the Trojan War is presented as the means of destroying Troy. The war is dated as 3200 years ago and according to the film, lasts only a few days. The Greeks and not the Achaeans etc. set out from somewhere in Greece which could be Sparta. Subsequently, the cinematographic narration presents many major and minor differentiations, among them that Agamemnon was killed in Troy, Achilles was dead, the horse was built and deployed, Menelaus was killed by Hector on the first day of battle so didn't return home with Helen as Homer claimed, and Helen and Paris escaped from Troy, as well as Hector's wife Andromache and his child Astyanax.

	School Trojan War	Movie Trojan War
<p>Causation Double causation. The answer to 'why'</p>	<p>Mythical: the Trojan War was the result of godly intervention taking the form of Helen's abduction by Paris. Historical: The Trojan War occurred because the Achaeans were aiming to expand their power on the eastern shore of the Aegean Sea and extend their control of mineral trade.</p>	<p>Mundane: The Trojan war was the result of the love drama of Menelaus-Helen and Paris and of the personal ambition of Agamemnon to destroy Troy. According to the film causation, Agamemnon exploited the personal drama of his brother to campaign against Troy.</p>
<p>Time. Chronology and duration. The answer to 'when'</p>	<p>The time of the event is missing. It mentions Homer's duration of the war: 10 years.</p>	<p>The time of the war is claimed to be 3200 years ago. The duration of the war as presented seems to be only a few days.</p>
<p>The person-ages. The answer to 'who'</p>	<p>Achaeans mainly against Trojans. A lot of personages are mentioned.</p>	<p>Greeks against Trojans. Few, according to Homer's narration.</p>

The places. The answer to 'where'	Sparta, Aulis, Troy	Sparta, Troy
The facts. The answer to 'how' e.g. the death of the main person-age, Achilles	Achilles died of Paris' arrow wound in his heel.	Achilles was dead; the horse was built and deployed.

Table 1. The differentiation of two stories

The children's story is inevitably mediated by the research, the researcher, the methods and the tools chosen. The research was conducted by the researcher and a research assistant, who was the history teacher in the class at the time, in the third grade of a public primary school in the centre of Thessaloniki, a typical representative urban school with children coming from a low and average sociocultural level, including children of economic migrants and expatriots.

A qualitative approach was adopted, as we were interested in an in-depth search for the factors that shape children's historical ideas. Given the young age of the research subjects, the semi-structured, non-directive interview (Cohen, et al.: 356; Luo & Wildemuth, 2017) was preferred among the available research instruments. According to Cannel and Kahn (1968: 530), research interview is defined as “*a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation*”. Its advantages include its high adaptability and the possibility of collecting data in greater depth than other methods. As Bell suggests, we tried to follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings, as the way in which a response is made (the tone of voice, facial expression, hesitation and so on) can provide information that a written response would conceal (Bell, 2010: 161).

Over the course of the year, a special teacher-student relationship and mutual trust had developed, so the interviewees felt comfortable. Although there was a very good rapport with the children, the interviewer prepared accordingly before the interviews. At the beginning, the interviewer explained the purpose of the study and that there are no wrong or right answers. They should only say what they know about the Trojan War.

The children were in the third grade of elementary school in which the Trojan War is taught, and the questions were based on the events, as well as the missing or the controversial points presented either in the cinematographic or in the school version of the event. A separate unit of questions was prepared to investigate the children's conceptions about the discipline of History. In developing the questions, we focused on key ideas traditionally taught in third grade Greek history courses. More specifically, the goal was to elicit the propositional historical knowledge that the children retained in terms of 'why,' "when," "who," "where," "how," as well as "how do we know it/them", a question related to understanding the disciplinary nature of history. The semi-structured interview gave us the opportunity to change the standard wording and order of questions so that all topics were covered and depending on the interview group and additional unplanned questions could be asked to follow up on what the interviewee had said (Robson & McCartan, 2016: 285).

The data consists of interviews, observations and material produced by the children in class, such as written essays and drawings.

A preliminary questionnaire was given to the children to detect the target group of the research. Finally, 4 groups of children [A, B, C, & D] with four children per group were formed. Each was composed of two boys [b1 & b2] and two girls [g1 & g2].

1 st Group	2 nd group	3 rd group	4 th group
Having seen the movie	Not having seen the movie	Not having seen the movie	Not having seen the movie
4 children	4 children	4 children	4 children
Ab1, Ab2, Ag1, Ag2	Bb1, Bb2, Bg1, Bg2	Cb1, Cb2, Cg1, Cg2	Db1, Db2, Dg1, Dg2
Interview	Interview	Taught the relevant chapters	Taught the relevant chapters
		[a week later] Interview	[a week later] Seen the movie at school using video projector
			[a week later] Interview

Table 2. The groups.

Interviews were videotaped and transcribed for analysis, using a unique code for each student.

In analysing the data, we focused on multi-level qualitative aspects of the students' responses that provided clues to their underlying historical conceptions, not on computing percentages of right answers (Brophy & VanSledright, 1997, p. 73).

3. Results

3.1 *Group 1: Children Who Saw the Movie*

The children had seen the movie without being warned or obliged. They had not been taught the relevant chapters. These children stated from the beginning that they knew about the Trojan War not only from the movie but also from books, comics and stories from relatives. In fact, all the images they had in mind were mainly visual.

According to their accounts, the Trojan War was between the Greeks and the Trojans which happened after the expedition of the Greeks to Troy to take Helen back or the lands the Trojans had taken from them [Ab1]. In the replies of these children there is no mention of time, not even if the war was BC or AD and references to other wars are intermingled. Their accounts presented elements from other ancient campaigns or wars. They answered that the Greeks or the good guys won, they mentioned the trick with the wooden horse and they only remember the heroes who are portrayed in the film on the side of the Achaeans. It's worth noting that they narrate through pictures, having retained the impressive cinematographic shots and they can answer very well about what the warriors or the Trojans inhabitants wore. They often told the story showing with their bodies the movements the heroes made. They all considered that what they saw in the film was the reality and that we know it mainly from museums.

How do we know today that these events happened?

From museums that have been found

What have they found?

Artefacts.

One of the children in the group considered the film as the primary source of the knowledge about the Trojan War:

How do we know today what happened in those days?

...from the cassettes we see

How did the people who made the cassettes know how to make them?

They had then (imitating the use of a camera) and they filmed it or other people acted it who had seen it.

What had they seen?

Other people may have lived, and they acted it out.

They certainly mentioned that Achilles and Odysseus were in the wooden horse according to the movie. They knew exactly how Achilles was killed but not Menelaus and Agamemnon. The movie addressed the emotions of children directly, making them feel sadness at the death of Achilles. They joyfully felt the victory of Achilles and the Achaeans, even when they burnt down the whole of Troy.

3.2 *Group 2: Children Who Did not See the Film and Were not Taught the Lesson*

At first the children stated that they knew nothing about the Trojan War. However, they answered certain questions the researcher asked, concerning mainly common collective memory, 'lieu de memoire', about the Trojan War: Greeks against Trojans and the wooden horse.

How did the warriors get there?

By ship

How do you know that?

I had seen the Trojan War, a.....

A what?

A picture with ships.

Another child who had also previously declared no knowledge:

Do you remember perhaps how they won and who won?

They had made a wooden horse.

They also used references to answer questions like, for example, how they were dressed, what weapons they had, how they fought, using the set of images they had from respective TV series concerning ancient times and myths.

They also hypothesized about how we know about the Trojan War.

They must have excavated and found the wooden horse.

3.3 *Group 3: Children Who Had Been Taught the Lesson and Completed the Revision Unit*

All the children declared that they knew about the Trojan War. They mentioned the Achaeans and not the Greeks as the Trojans' adversaries, choosing the school book version. They couldn't answer questions which revealed a more general picture, for example:

How did the Achaeans get there?

On horseback (adding that they carried the horse manually)

How do you know that?

The teacher makes us learn it all by heart.

Learning by heart was obvious in their narratives. They used the actual words of the school textbook to talk about the Trojan horse.

Although the school textbook narration and one reference text mention Aulis as the departure place of Achaeans, none of the children knew about the place where the fleet gathered. As an explanation for the acceptance of the wooden horse, children mentioned that the horse was the symbol of the Greek god Poseidon who was the protector of the Trojans, using exactly the same words as the textbook. Children in this group were also ignorant of the time of the Trojan campaign. Only one child knew, from her teacher, that the war lasted ten years. All the children mentioned the “why” of the war as the abduction of Helen. To the question “how they were dressed, what weapons they had, how they fought”, they knew either nothing or answered using only a few words describing school textbooks images and sketches. One child mentioned that “*it is not difficult to imagine their clothes and their weapons because I had seen many pictures from books and videos*”. They didn’t know how they fought because the textbook didn’t refer to this.

They used the book expression for people who were inside the wooden horse, “the bravest ones got in”. One child used the myth of the Argonauts to talk about the Trojan War, but generally the use of other references was limited. As they had been taught the lesson, they considered they must reply or narrate according to the book.

The school textbook mentions a lot of names but only two of the four children mentioned even Achilles, Odysseus, Patroclus, Paris, Hector and Priam were mentioned once. Answers about the place Achilles was killed were, as expected, exactly according to the schoolbook narration: “he was wounded in his heel by an arrow by Paris outside the Trojan wall”. Just one student mentioned that Menelaus was Helen’s husband and Agamemnon was his brother. Nobody mentioned that Agamemnon was “a strong king of Mycenae” and “chief-commander” of the campaign according to the textbook.

Regarding the dispute of Agamemnon with Achilles, only one mentioned that his teacher has said that something happened and nothing further from the textbook.

Their answers to the question “what did they do after the Odysseus’s invasion with the wooden horse” was according to the textbook, “they looted and burnt the city”. Finally, when they were asked how we know about all these stories, all the children claimed in general from the courses, and particularly, one child said “because we

have a history book that tells various stories about these things, about Achaeans... about Troy...”

3.4 Group 4

The children felt very confident about telling the story and declared they knew the Trojan War. They retained all the visual knowledge provided by the film like the children of the first group. As emerged from the interviews, their account was a mixture of the two narratives, the school story and the movie story. They participated in order to complete the missing points of the two narratives. In the controversial issues, they chose the ‘easier’ and more attractive answer which was mainly that of the movie, and they tried to explain the events in a common-sense way. For instance, concerning the reasons for the Trojan War, they forgot the historical causation offered by their schoolbook. They preferred the cinematographic one, the love drama of Menelaus with Helen and of Helen and Paris. When they asked, “Why did Paris steal Helen?” they answered:

Because she was very beautiful, and he said that he loved her.

How did he meet and love her?

There was a celebration, and he went to her room and abducted her.

They continued to use the same stereotype to resolve a series of problems during their account. In answer to the question: “Which of the leaders were killed?”, the children mentioned Achilles, Patroclus, Hector – common elements for both narratives – but Menelaus as well, who, according to their book, hadn’t been killed. Trying to resolve the problem of how and when, they invented episodes of a fight between Paris and Menelaus over the love of Helen.

When they were required to account for the controversial points, the children often chose the cinematographic version, but they preferred to choose the textbook version as more credible than that of the movie.

For example, the textbook relates a relevant sketch which shows Achilles dying outside Troy with an arrow in his heel, but the children believed he died in the city of Troy after he got out of the wooden horse. They insisted on that, even after the researcher emphasized the textbook version.

I think that he was killed at the end of the battle as we saw in the movie.

Only one admitted that “he was killed outside the Trojan walls because the books are more correct”. But after that he continued answering according to the movie version.

According to the children’s answers, the Achaeans or the Greeks were against the Trojans. They retained the visual knowledge found in the first group as well and all children mentioned names characters in the wooden horse. They quoted Odysseus, reported both in the textbook and the movie, but also Achilles, whom the director made a close-up of, but according to the textbook, he was killed outside the walls. Using their imagination, they even mentioned Agamemnon. The interesting point is that the children mentioned that they couldn’t remember the source of their specific knowledge, neither textbook nor movie.

They mentioned many more names than any other group. Except for Achilles and Odysseus, they mentioned Agamemnon, Menelaus, Patroclus, Paris, Helen, Priam and others. They also knew details about clothes of that era:

How they were dressed, what did they wear?

The warriors were in armour, bows, helmets, knives, swords and the other kings were with... with something... somehow like dresses... cloaks...

Cloaks?

Yes, Priam, because Menelaus and Agamemnon wore some armour.

Where do you know these from?

From the movie.

A very interesting finding is that some of the children of this group mentioned Aulis as the place where the fleet gathered, which they learned from their teacher. Probably this happened because all children of this group saw in the movie that the Achaeans went to Troy by ship, and they may have linked this information to the lesson.

Emotions were much stronger in this group because they had recently watched the movie. They felt joy about the victory of the Achaeans and the destruction of Troy. Conversely, they felt sadness about the death of Achilles and the other “Greek heroes”. It is remarkable that they were gratified by Menelaus’ death although he was Greek, because he was presented as behaving savagely to his wife and seemed to be unprincipled and had an immoral life at the start of the movie.

<p><u>Causation</u> Double causation</p> <p>The answer to 'why'</p>	<p>Although children in the fourth group [who had also seen the movie] tried to follow the line of the school textbook, they acceded to the movie's version which is simultaneously the common collective representation of the cause of the Trojan War. Agamemnon hated and envied the Trojans because Paris saw Helen in a feast, felt in love and abducted her.</p>
<p>Time: Chronology and duration.</p> <p>The answer to 'when'</p>	<p>No children of this age were able to specify either the time or the duration of the Trojan War. It seemed they couldn't operate historical time without a special concern on the part of the teacher and the textbook. The historical time of the Trojan War is, in addition, not included in the master collective public narrative of the Trojan War.</p>
<p>The person-ages</p> <p>The answer to 'who'</p>	<p>Children who had seen the film mentioned twice as many personages than any other group. Personages of the factual school history faded next to the living and actors of the movies. However, the most important finding in this category is that the children, with the exception of those who belonged to the 3rd group and had not seen the film, replaced the word "Achaioi", which is used in the textbook, with the word "Greeks". Their answer is compatible not only with the film narration but also with the master narrative, according to which the heroes are of Greek identity.</p>
<p>The places</p> <p>The answer to 'where'</p>	<p>The answer to 'where' showed that children knew the main places where the Trojan War was waged. They mentioned Troy as the place the war was waged, Aulis, known from their teacher, and Sparta as the place of the beginning. Their answers were affected by the school narrative.</p>

The facts	Regarding the death of the main personage Achilles, which constituted the main contradictory element of the two versions showed, as in all the other cases, most of the children reached a settlement that things happened as they saw in the movie.
The answer to 'how'	Answers about how they dressed, fought etc. were also according to the movies, not only <i>Troy</i> but many other historical movies.

Table 3. Summary of findings

4. Discussion

The present study sought to explore the interaction between the filmic representation of the past and history taught in schools, for elementary school learners of 8-9 years old. Our intention was to see if and to what extent the cinematic version of the past exceeds the version taught in schools and if, in this process, there are correlations with dominant historical images and representations. For this reason, we chose a film that narrates the story of the *Trojan War* that is taught in the history classroom of the Greek primary school as other scholars did with films like *Schindler's List* (Goldstein, 1995), *300* (Metzger, 2010), or the *Pianist* (Metzger, 2012). Furthermore, the concrete cinematic production of the Trojan War presents narrative differences from the story of the Trojan War taught in Greek schools so we were able to identify exactly which version is more influential for children's historical representations. At the same time, the *Trojan War* is one of the cornerstones of the Greek national narrative proving the courage, the brightness and the cleverness of the Greeks. Projecting to the past of the Trojan War the Greek nation which is an invention of the 18th century, the heroes of the Trojan War were not Achaioi but Greeks.

In this section, the findings are discussed and compared to earlier research on the influence exerted by movies on children's and students' ideas about the past as well as how children and students deal with different versions of knowledge, formal and informal.

In the field of History Education, it is a common assumption that we learn history in multiple places and school is just one of them (Stearns et al. 2000, 195). In line with previous work (Angvik & Von Borries, 1997; Wineburg, 2000, 306-325; Marcus et al.2006)), it was found that the students in our qualitative study come into contact

with the past and history in many and different environments and receive information from many and different sources, in a conscious or unconscious way. Much of the previous research has focused on secondary grades but there is also an number of studies for elementary students or 4-and 5 year-old children. (Brophy & VanSledright, 1997). In tune with these studies, when the elementary students in our investigation come to school, they already have at their disposal a historical platform structured by a lot of visual and oral information from their relatives such as parents and grandparents, as well as from discussions with friends or different visual media. The historical platform at their disposal is dependent on master historical images and stereotypes embedded in dominant historical culture. As previous research regarding stereotype images of Native Americans has shown (Brophy, 1998), our students share the stereotyped images of the *Trojan War* that dominate in Greek popular historical culture. Visual media play the central role for their representations, confirming all the results of the relative studies vis-à-vis the impact of visual culture as the main modality for our encounter with the past (Levstik & Barton, 1994; Davis, 2000; Metzger & Paxton, 2016; Afflerbach & VanSledright, 2001). Their understanding is linked to images and via the appropriated images with which they construct their narration. The school textbook and teacher also constitute frequently reported sources of children's information. Finally, they report many other sources of information such as historical books, comics, television series, animation, cinematographic films, museums and statues.

The children in our study showed a clear inclination towards the film version of the past as previous research has also showed for the adult population (Rozenzweig, 2000) or for students using films to learn history (Weinstein, 2001; Marcus et al., 2010). Despite this tendency, they verbally attributed cognitive supremacy to official school textbooks and printed medium against other sources of information and they expressed the supremacy of books. They believed that the books were written to commit truth to paper. Textbooks pivot on what Roland Barthes (1970) called the "referential illusion", the notion that the way things are told is simply the way things were, using many linguistic conventions such as speaking in the omniscient third person (Wineburg, 2001). As previous research has also shown (Marcus et al. 2006), despite the expressed trustworthy supremacy of the school version, the children

appeared to converge more and more around the cinematographic narration. They feel that they did not have to select between two equivalent contradictory narrations, but between a History and a visually experienced situation. “Seeing” the past and “experiencing” what it was like to live in other times seems to be the principal advantage of the filmic narrative. Like in previous research (Seixas 1993; Rosenstone, 2001), the movie functioned substantially as a window through which the children in our study had the impression of seeing exactly what happened in the *Trojan War* unfolding in front of them. So the descriptions of children about clothes, arms and everyday life were a direct reference to visual knowledge that they had acquired from the concrete film *Troy* or previous pictures or movies. It is clear that any film they had seen have a great impact on their ideas about *Ancient Greek History* in general and the *Trojan War* in particular.

Findings of previous empirical research on film in history classroom (Stoddard, 2012; Marcus et al., 2010; Kansteiner, 2017 Briley, 1990; Poirier, 1993; O’ Connor, 1990; 2007; Mavrommati & Repoussi, 2020; Donnelly, 2014; 2016) are not easily comparable with our findings as the research questions were not comparable. Most previous research is concerned with an effective use of the medium in history education so as to promote historical thinking or empathy or multiperspectivity or even to correct films from misinformations and /or historical inaccuracies in films, which was not the concern in the frame of this study. In addition, we were not interested in “correcting” the filmic representation of the past or warning children of the historical inaccuracies of the movies as other research did (Butler et al.) (2009). But even though research questions were different, our findings could be comparable in some points. For instance, in our study it was confirmed that when the information given by the film is consistent with the information in the textbook, the “correct recall” according to the Butlers’ and al. (2009) research, the “textbook recall” is increased according to our rationale. In other words, the “filmic story” strengthens the “textbook story” if it is consistent with it. Our findings agree also that when students are confident in the accuracy of the information they produced, they misattributed it to the textbook which they considered more accurate vis-a-vis the film (Marcus et al. 2006)

Compared to previous research, this small-scale qualitative study provides further evidence that children are capable of renegotiating

given narratives. Even if it is not possible on the basis of this small scale research to draw powerful generalizations about young learners' capacities, we have to say that the students in our research actually reformulated the historical narrations produced on the one hand by their textbook and the filmic story by the other and created a proper mixed narrative, based on the different historical versions presented in the formal and informal accounts. The cinematographic narrative seems more powerful than that of school but it is not accepted as a whole. It is recreated. It is more a result of selection from the two versions influenced by many factors, for instance, the vividness of the film or the time that had elapsed since the relevant lesson. Another qualitative research's study (Goutzamanis, 2006) conducted in the pedagogical department in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki on the film *Alexander* also confirm our findings about children's capacity to combine different visual sources of information in order to create their own narrative. However, the factor which seems determinant for their selection is the comparability of their narrative with the dominant historical version, the master national narrative. Their account for instance is deeply affected by an anachronistic historical mode of thinking which is common and predominant mainly in the informal history environment.

The capacity of the children to deal with different, supplementary and/or contradictory, versions of the past is an indication of students' ability, even in elementary school to reorganize the received information coming from different sources of information. It supports the criticism formulated mainly by Henry Giroux (Giroux 1983) concerning the dominant research paradigm in Education Studies for many years in which children as subjects, receivers and negotiators of messages as well as agents, were missing. According to our research, children are absolutely capable of reshaping any given narrative, not accepting it as a whole and renegotiating all the versions of the past delivered in formal and informal History Education. These findings therefore can be used to argue in favour of theories which consider the complex relations and correlations that develop in education between subjects, experiences, educational structures and school practices (Apple, 1982; Giroux, 1983).

Finally, a number of limitations remain with regard to the present study. The first one is that participants were not selected randomly but were the children in a class in which the research assistant was the history teacher at the time. The second and more important

limitation is related to the concept of “historical culture” that was not taken greatly into consideration at the time of the design of our research. Finally, according to our findings, the dominant stereotypes embodied in Greek historical culture are determinant for considering formal -schools’-and informal -movies’- historical versions toward their impact for the formation of students’ historical ideas. Thus, it would be particularly interesting if future research could integrate the concept of ‘historical culture’ in relevant research.

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DEVELOPING HISTORY-RELATED EPISTEMOLOGICAL BELIEFS OF UNDERGRADUATES IN HUNGARY*

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The aim of our study was to develop university students' history-related epistemological beliefs with the combination of two approaches supported by relevant previous research. Participants discussed epistemological questions and the characteristics of historical inquiry, and they also carried out an inquiry-based research task. Epistemological beliefs were assessed at the beginning and end of the course using a questionnaire and self-reflective essays. Epistemological profiles of the participants were defined on the basis of quantitative and qualitative data as well. Both data supported the effectiveness of the intervention course; however, they showed a different picture of the development. Although the questionnaire data reflected slight changes in epistemological positions, the essays indicated major changes. In accordance with the literature, the difference between the two analytical procedures suggests that the combined use of quantitative and qualitative methods can provide a nuanced, more complete picture of epistemological beliefs.

1. Introduction

In a knowledge-based society, a lot of information is flowing in, thus increasing the public criticism of the media and authorities. The decline in trust has led to doubts about evidence-based allegations, a decline in public trust in scientific results, a strengthening of the argument based on personal impressions, and an increasing rejection of allegations contradicting personal opinions (Chinn et al., 2021).

These crucial changes have motivated the transformation of history education and the growing importance of developing historical thinking. This can be achieved successfully when the teaching process focuses on the understanding of the nature and main concepts of history and the critical analysis and interpretation of historical sources. The development of historical thinking can be

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achieved in the classroom with traditional methods or with inquiry-based learning.

Before historical thinking skills could be effectively promoted, history-related epistemological beliefs must be investigated and developed. In our study, we designed a university course to develop students' epistemological beliefs related to history. Two approaches were combined: we analysed questionnaire data and self-reflective essays to determine the epistemological stances of the participants. Our aim was to verify the effectiveness of the course with the help of quantitative and qualitative data.

2. Epistemological Beliefs in History

In recent decades, the study of personal epistemology, how people think about knowledge, how knowledge is constructed (Schommer, 1990) and how it affects learning (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997; Hofer & Bendixen, 2012) has received intensive attention. One domain-specific epistemological belief system can be the views someone has about history; these ideas function as mental resources, which are activated when someone is thinking about the past (van Boxtel & van Drie, 2018).

History-related epistemological beliefs are frequently investigated by the Beliefs of History Questionnaire (BHQ). The theoretical framework of the instrument suggests three possible epistemological positions: copier, borrower, and criterialist stances, which reflect the possible developmental trajectory of beliefs. First, the learner accepts that history is a collection of facts that is given; then the learner understands that there are different narratives, but they attribute them to biased historians. Finally, the learner understands that history is a construct, but historians follow scientific steps when developing their narrative (Maggioni, et. al., 2009). Further investigation of teachers revealed that categorising participants according to these categories is not so straightforward. VanSledright and Maggioni (2016) identified “wobblers” whose beliefs are not consistent: they tend to agree with the statements of various epistemological positions.

The evaluation of epistemological beliefs is focused not only on the developmental level of beliefs but also on their content. Building on BHQ, Stoel et al. (2017a) developed their own questionnaire, which combines the two approaches. It assesses the nature of historical

knowledge (what are the characteristics of historical knowledge, e.g., the works of historians are facts, opinions, or interpretations) and the nature of historical knowing (how historical knowledge is constructed) (see Hofer & Bendixen, 2012) on three developmental levels (naïve, subjective, and nuanced epistemological stances). However, in their study, Stoel et al. (2017a) could not empirically confirm the 5 scales they had expected. Their outcomes only confirmed the adequacy of three scales, which are the following. On the naïve level, the two subdimensions (*historical knowing: naïve*, *historical knowledge: objective*) function properly, while one more scale related to the nuanced level was verified. This scale captures the nature of historical knowing; nevertheless, the researchers found that participants who frequently agree with naïve statements can also agree with the statements of this scale. They named this factor the *historical methodology* scale (Stoel et al., 2017a).

An interesting trend of research on epistemological beliefs is that quantitative studies have become dominant and have only presented group-level means of scales that express agreement with the different epistemological stances. Only a few studies focused on the categorisation of participants and reported the epistemological stance to which the researchers assigned them (Stoel et al., 2022). For example, Voet and de Wever (2016) found that majority of their participants could be categorised as criterialists. Sendur et al. (2022) also revealed that most of their participants have criterialist views. Their study deserves more attention because their sample covered a heterogeneous background (science and engineering, art and social sciences, and management undergraduates). However, Elmersjö and Zanzanian (2022) identified consistent objectivist (24%), consistent critical (20%), semi-consistent (28%) and inconsistent (28%) groups. The common point of these studies is that they rely not only on the data from the questionnaires but also on qualitative data.

As Stoel et al. (2022) emphasised, both research approaches have pros and cons. From the perspective of teachers, the most important question is how they can assess the development of epistemological beliefs in the classroom. Although group-level quantitative data can provide an overview of the effectiveness of the educational process, student-level qualitative data can suggest ideas about what questions should be discussed in the future.

Another trend is the investigation of teachers, prospective teachers, and students. The latest studies have raised the question of

context-dependency of epistemological beliefs (Stoel et al., 2022; Maggioni, 2024). This concern opens the way for new research that explores not only the beliefs of “professionals” but people who do not have a special interest in history. Maybe these inquiries would enrich our perspective on epistemological beliefs and provide useful comparison of “professionals” and “laymen”.

3. Developing Epistemological Beliefs Related to History

Only a few investigations have been aimed at developing participants’ epistemological beliefs, helping them reach a more nuanced epistemological position. Two main strategies can be distinguished: the discussion of epistemological questions related to history or active learning tasks (e.g. inquiry-based learning) (Stoel et al., 2022).

The first strategy is to build on the positive effect of teaching general epistemological questions of historical knowledge (Parkinson & Maggioni, 2017) or discussing epistemological questions related to history (Mathis & Parkes, 2020) to make students reflect on their own epistemological beliefs. Group-level analysis of epistemological beliefs showed that explicit development of historical thinking through encouragement of reasoning and discussion of epistemological questions had a positive effect on participants. The students in the intervention group agreed more with the criterialist statements (Stoel et al., 2017b). Student-level analysis also confirmed the effectiveness of this approach. Nevertheless, the results highlighted that developing university students’ epistemological beliefs, helping them enter a higher epistemological position, is not a straightforward process. Participants in this type of intervention showed mixed results. Some of them could develop a higher epistemological position, while others did not (VanSledright & Reddy, 2014). Similar results were obtained by Chang & Kuo (2024), who prepared teachers to apply dialogic methods to develop students’ epistemological beliefs and historical thinking. The intervention had positive effects; however, the researchers found it difficult to define the epistemological positions of the participants.

The second strategy seeks to use the potential of active learning (Greene & Yu, 2015). Research showed that students who frequently participate in inquiry-based learning activities have less naïve beliefs about history (Wiley et al., 2020). During these tasks, students usually analyse historical sources; however, much depends on how it

is done and what sources are analysed. For example, when this process was supported by epistemological scaffolds, the epistemological knowledge of the students increased, and they significantly more frequently mentioned the justification and trustworthiness criteria of sources (Barzilai et al., 2020). Mierwald et al. (2019) also revealed differences between epistemological beliefs of students using different types of sources. Students in conditions where authentic and less authentic sources were applied supported the BHQ criterialist scale more than students who used only the sources from the textbook during inquiry-based activities.

Intervention studies emphasise the importance of diverse data that help capture the complexity of epistemological beliefs. As Mierwald and Julius (2022) pointed out, participants interpret the BHQ items differently, putting the validity of quantitative data collection at risk. The study reported problems mainly related to the objectivist scale, but items from the other scales also proved to be too complex, ambiguous, or not easily comprehensible. This evidence suggests that studies aimed at developing epistemological beliefs may have a reduced validity if they only use BHQ to evaluate participants.

Furthermore, the contextuality of epistemological beliefs are hypothesised, which can explain the inconsistencies of outcomes and makes it more important to investigate the construct in diverse settings (Stoel et. al., 2022; Nitsche, 2024). Maggioni (2024) also argued that these inconsistencies are natural characteristics of cognition and development. The cognitive stage of the studied participants affects how they will react to information contradicting their beliefs. For example, adolescents can recognise the rules of a professional community and understand how history is written. They tend to accept them, and it is hard for them to question these rules. The critical evaluation of the learnt information and the personal interpretation of a phenomenon only occur in adulthood. At the same time, changing epistemological beliefs is also challenging because of the “pain”, the frustration that this change causes. These circumstances can all be responsible for “wobbling”, i.e., the inconsistencies in epistemological profiles.

Based on the reviewed literature, two questions emerge. How will the combination of discussion of epistemological beliefs and active learning affect student beliefs compared to the mixed results of previous studies? What will be the connection between the

categorisations of undergraduate students who do not participate in special history training based on quantitative and qualitative data?

4. Methods

4.1 *Context of the Study*

The objectives and content of history education have changed considerably in Hungary in recent decades (Fischer-Dárdai & Kaposi, 2022). The revised version of the National Core Curriculum emphasises the development of historical thinking (e.g., asking research questions, analysing causes and consequences of historical events and processes, drawing conclusions from historical sources). In contrast, few studies have explored the characteristics and development of historical thinking of students in the Hungarian context. Majkić (2022) took the first steps when she translated and adapted the Stoel et al. questionnaire (2017a) into Hungarian. She also collected data on the epistemological beliefs of Hungarian secondary and university students (Majkić 2022). Furthermore, university student profiling and the connection between different content-related epistemological beliefs were also investigated (Korom, Nagy, & Majkić, 2023). This study joins this line of work aiming to broaden the assessment methods of historical thinking and epistemological beliefs.

4.2 *Participants*

13 students completed the elective course we developed and 11 of them gave permission to analyse their data, but not all of them completed every task. The elective course was offered to prospective history teachers, but only two participants were recruited from this group. The other participants came from various training programmes: 2 psychology, 1 pedagogy, 1 sociology, 3 English teacher, 1 biology, 1 tourism and catering and 2 computer science students participated. The average age of the participants was 20 years. All of them completed the mandatory History matriculation exam at the end of their secondary education.

4.3 *Procedure*

The two possible developmental approaches were combined during the design of the intervention course. The participants discussed the

goals of history education, the changing historical paradigms, and the main methods of historical research with the instructor. They learnt about the sources of historical inquiry and what questions should be investigated before source analysis (e.g. Who is the author? Why did he/she publish the text? What is the context of the source?) The course presented the general steps of historical inquiry: asking research questions, collecting and analysing relevant sources, interpreting the sources, and answering the research questions.

During the lectures, the participants not only learnt about these steps, but they also conducted their own historical investigation. The research questions and necessary primary (e.g., newspaper articles) and secondary sources (e.g., research reports, book chapters) were provided by the instructor. The offered research topics were related to the 20th century history of Hungarian education. Since the knowledge of participants about this period was considered heterogenous, the course included a lecture on the main events and trends of the Hungarian education system in the 20th century.

The students worked in pairs and could select which topic they wanted to investigate from the predefined ones. For example, one of the pairs examined socialist education. Their research questions were the following: What are the main characteristics of socialist education in Hungary in the period of 1950-1970? How would you evaluate the socialist educational ideas? The students were required to analyse the sources using the research methods they acquired during the course: they had to decide on the relevance and reliability of the sources, they collected information from the sources related to the research questions with a guided mind map, and finally, they prepared a research report answering the research questions.

4.4 Instruments

To measure epistemological beliefs about history in their complexity, both quantitative and qualitative methods were applied. For the quantitative data collection, students completed the Hungarian version of Stoel et al. (2017) questionnaire (Kósa 2020; Majkić 2022). Three of the instrument's scales (*historical methodology*, *historical knowing: naïve*, *historical knowledge: objective*) have been empirically verified (Stoel et al. 2017a), and the Hungarian version (Majkić, 2022) of these three scales was used. All statements were evaluated on a 6-point scale (1= do not agree at all, 6= completely agree).

In essence, historical methodology and historical knowing: naïve scales measure the beliefs about the process of how historical knowledge is constructed (Stoel et al., 2017a). The historical methodology scale contains advanced and nuanced statements (for example, *in history, you must learn to deal with conflicting evidence*), while historical knowing: naïve scale consists of basic and rudimentary views of history (for example, *it is not possible to write adequately about the history when sources contradict each other*). The third scale is about the nature of historical knowledge, it captures naïve beliefs which assume that this knowledge is fixed, not modifiable, and comes from external sources (for example, *all history professors will probably give the same answers to questions about the past*).

During qualitative data collection, participants wrote two self-reflections at the beginning and end of the course. In their first self-reflection, they formulated their views on history, history as a school subject and as a scientific field. At the end of the course, they were asked about their views on history as a scientific field, on historical inquiry, and on their experiences gained during the course.

4.5 Data Analysis

Data collected from the questionnaire were used to categorise the epistemological positions of the participants. The procedure of VanSledright and Reddy (2014) was followed. They recoded the BHQ data (6=3, 5=2, 4=1, 3=-1, 2=-2, 1=-1) and calculated the mean of the weighted values by scale. Based on scale mean values, the researchers manually classified and decided whether their epistemological position reflects nuanced or naïve beliefs. To do this, they set strict criteria values: if the mean is higher than 2.5, it reflects strong agreement with the scale, while values lower than -2.5 express strong disagreement. Not all students could be easily classified, therefore, they introduced a transitional position if the participant's beliefs were ambiguous.

The data collected from the self-reflective essays of the students were content analysed. Two independent coders read the essays and used the theoretical model of Stoel et al. (2017) to categorise the statements based on whether they belong to the naïve, subjective, or nuanced level. The agreement of the coders was calculated using Krippendorff's alpha. There was a high degree of agreement between the evaluators (alpha was 1).

5. Results

5.1 *Changes in students' epistemological profiles*

Using the questionnaire data, three groups were identified: students with nuanced, slightly nuanced, and transitional epistemological beliefs (Table 1). After collecting data with both questionnaires and categorising the students' epistemological profiles, the participants were grouped according to the changes in their epistemological stances in the time between the two measurements. In the case of four students (participants 6, 8, 11, 12), there was no change in their epistemological profile. There were three students (participants 2, 4, 9) whose epistemological stance moved from slightly nuanced to nuanced position. Two participants being in transitional position moved to a higher level, participant 7 became slightly nuanced, and participant 13 became a nuanced thinker at the end of the course. It should also be mentioned that the beliefs of participant 7 became uncertain.

Six students (participants number 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9) were profiled as nuanced or slightly nuanced thinkers during the first data collection, but they are not an entirely homogeneous group. For example, participants 2, 4 and 9 received slightly nuanced classification at the first measurement, but, in the end, their agreement with the historical methodology scale increased, while they were less supportive about the statements of the historical knowledge: naïve scale.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed some undesirable effects of the course. In the case of participant 7, growing rejection of the naïve and objective scales was found, while the same happened to the historical methodology scale. Participant 8 must also be mentioned, who was categorised slightly nuanced at both points. The student strongly supported the historical methodology scale and had a slight support for the naïve scale at both measurement points. The course increased their support for the methodology scale and decreased their agreement with the objective scale, but the naïve scale was unaffected.

Number of the Participant*	Measurement time	Mean weighted values of the scales			Epistemological profile
		Hist. methodology	Hist. knowing: naïve	Hist. knowing: objective	
2	1	2.80	0.75	-1.80	slightly nuanced
	2	3.00	-0.75	-0.80	nuanced
4	1	2.40	-0.25	-1.60	slightly nuanced
	2	3.00	-1.00	-2.20	nuanced
6	1	2.60	-1.00	-0.25	nuanced
	2	2.80	-0.25	-0.25	nuanced
7	1	2.60	-0.50	-1.80	nuanced
	2	2.40	-0.75	-2.00	slightly nuanced
8	1	2.80	1.50	-0.20	slightly nuanced
	2	3.00	1.50	-1.60	slightly nuanced
9	1	2.20	-0.25	-1.40	slightly nuanced
	2	2.80	-1.00	-0.20	nuanced
10	1	2.20	0.25	-1.00	transitional
	2	2.60	1.00	-0.40	slightly nuanced
11	1	1.40	-1.00	-1.00	transitional
	2	1.40	-0.75	-1.60	transitional
12	1	1.80	-1.00	0.40	transitional
	2	2.00	0.00	0.00	transitional
13	1	1.60	-1.25	-2.60	transitional
	2	2.60	-2.50	-1.80	nuanced

*Participants 1, 3 and 5 did not take part in the questionnaire phase of the research.

Table 1. Epistemological profiles of the students at the two measurement points based on the mean weighted values of the three scales

Another subgroup is made up of two students (participant 11 and 12) whose beliefs could be categorised as *transitional*. Their common characteristic is that the course influenced their views, but it was not significant enough to reach a higher epistemological stance. After the intervention, participant 12 could not decide on the naïve and objective scale, while participant 11 rather rejected them, but their agreement was the lowest with the methodology scale compared to other students.

Finally, the case of participants 10 and 13 is intriguing as they received different classifications based on the results of the two measurement points, and their beliefs developed considerably during the course. Participant 13 represents the ideal development curve that was intended to achieve. After the course, the student strongly agreed with the methodology scale, while the other two were rejected by them. An interesting fact is that this participant was one of the prospective history teachers. The epistemological beliefs of participant 10 also developed: after being a transitional thinker, they finally became a slightly nuanced thinker.

Another focus of the research was the analysis of the self-reflective essays, where the evaluators established six categories: naïve, naïve with subjective elements, subjective, transitional, slightly nuanced, and nuanced (Table 2).

There were four participants (participants 1, 2, 4 and 6) who were classified as *nuanced* thinkers at the end of the course. At the beginning of the course, participant 1 and 4 showed a relatively detailed reasoning about the characteristics of history. This trend remained stable until the end of the course. A change can be observed in the case of participant 2 and 6, as their views crystallised and became detailed by the end of the course.

Number of the participant*	1 st measurement		2 nd measurement	
	Questionnaire	Self-reflection	Questionnaire	Self-reflection
1	-	nuanced	-	Nuanced
2	slightly nuanced	transitional	nuanced	Nuanced
4	slightly nuanced	nuanced	nuanced	Nuanced
6	nuanced	subjective	nuanced	Nuanced
8	slightly nuanced	naïve	slightly nuanced	naïve with subjective elements
10	transitional	nuanced	slightly nuanced	Transitional
11	transitional	naïve	transitional	Transitional

*Participants 3, 5, 7, 9, 12 and 13 did not take part in the self-reflection essay part of the research.

Table 2 The epistemological profiles of the students based on the questionnaire and their self-reflections at the beginning and at the end of the course

To present the positive effects of the course, the content of the essay written by participant 2 deserves a closer look. During the first measurement, it became obvious that the student's views were very nuanced, at the same time, uncertainty could also be identified: *"For me, history is a kind of strange, chaotic past and those elements that we consider important and highlight retrospectively. [...] I often felt that it was a dry sequence*

of events, full of dates, and I missed the humanity in it, even though it talked about people and communities, societies, nations.” In the second essay, participant 2 was clearly a nuanced thinker who understands the complexity of historical narratives: *“However, if we consider, using the principle of benevolence, that the given historian strives for objectivity, then we can say that the work of historians is objective. Nevertheless, as it turned out in the research work, it cannot be neglected who the author was, what his social position was, or his political orientation. If we take these factors into account, we get a more complete picture.”*

After the intervention, the epistemological beliefs of participants 10 and 11 were uncertain and could not be clearly categorised; therefore, they were labelled as thinkers whose views are in a transitional phase. Nevertheless, at this point, it is important to note that their development had a completely different direction. Although participant 11's views went to a higher developmental level as a naïve thinker who became transitional, the beliefs of participant 10 were not as clear as at the beginning of the course, thus they changed from a nuanced thinker to a transitional one. It is also to be noted that the transition phase is characterised by uncertainty. Some elements of the beliefs are nuanced, and others are at a naïve level. In this state, even very small effects can affect the direction of changes. Perhaps this undesirable effect occurred due to the discussion of scientific frauds. As part of this topic, the instructor emphasised that although natural sciences are considered ‘real science’ compared to social sciences or historical research, researchers conducting natural scientific research can also be biased and subjective in some cases.

Based on self-reflections, participant 8 had naïve beliefs in both assessments. These naïve views were also present at the end of the course; however, progress can be discovered, as subjectivity appears in the participant's explanations. A new aspect can be seen, i.e., the individual and their point of view being included in their reasoning, which indicates that their views have begun to change.

5.2 Comparison of the Profiles Identified by the Questionnaire and the Self-reflective Essays

When comparing the categorisations based on the questionnaire and the self-reflections, the following statements can be drawn (Table 2). At the first measurement point, only one match can be detected (in the case of participant 4). After the intervention, a completely

different picture can be seen. From the six available data pairs, four of them (in the case of participant 2, 4, 6 and 11) matched, therefore, epistemological profiles based on the questionnaire and on the essay were the same.

The “distance” between the results of the two analytical procedures also needs to be inspected. First, the categories were quite far from each other. A student who was classified as a nuanced thinker proved to be someone who supports the subjective interpretation of historical knowledge (participant 6). Also, another student who appeared to have slightly nuanced beliefs according to the questionnaire was categorised as someone who had naïve views about history (participant 8). In the second round of measurement, the “distance” (i.e., the correspondence of the results of the two procedures) was less than previously.

Another interesting result was the difference between the number of categories. The questionnaire works with fixed scales, which limits the number of possible detected epistemological positions. On the contrary, the epistemological profiles inferred from the essays varied over a wider range. This is due to the open response format, which allows participants to use their own words and express their own ideas.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

The different methodologies applied to determine the epistemological stances of the participants produced interesting results. The quantitative data analysis resulted only in nuanced and transitional categorisations, which suggests that the students represent a group that interprets history in a modern way. Based on the analysis, the impact of the course appears satisfactory: the categorisation of five students changed in a positive way. They moved from transitional or slightly nuanced categories to nuanced epistemological stances. Undesirable effect was also found in the case of participant 7, their beliefs became less strong and from a nuanced position moved to a slightly nuanced one.

Qualitative data analysis demonstrates different developmental paths. While the epistemological position of three participants changed in the desired way, one student (participant 10) showed doubts about their previous views and became a transitional one from a nuanced thinker. This undesirable effect shows that the

content and activities of the course did not only have positive influence but also unwelcome impacts. The case of participant 8 is intriguing because their situation cannot be easily judged. Subjectivity is part of historical research; the use of proper methodology can reduce it, but the personal viewpoint of the researcher is still there. This way of seeing history as a scientific field involving subjectivity can be a sign of nuanced thinking; on the other hand, it can also indicate a shift in epistemological cognition and the growing support of subjectivism. This latter explanation seems to be more probable if we consider that the participant's naïve beliefs were more noticeable.

Both assessment methods identified “wobblers” as did previous studies. In the case of the questionnaire, the arbitrary cut point of VanSledright and Reddy (2014) was used. With this method 40% of participants were categorised as transitional thinkers during the first measurement point and 20% at the end of the course. In the case of the essays, 1 participant out of 7 was identified as a “wobbler” (14%) by the coders in the first assessment, their ratio grew to 43% (3 out of 7). Sendur et al. (2022) worked with a similar heterogeneous sample and used multiple data sources. In their cross-sectional study they found that questionnaire and interview data aligned with each other. However, in their study they used only one assessment point, and their measurement was embedded into a historical context. It was found that the alignment of the two methods slightly grew over time. These outcomes highlight the need to consider the context of the qualitative assessments. They may prove to be more useful when “professionals” are investigated (who are familiar with the general notions of historical inquiry) or at the end of an intervention.

Overall, the course proved to be successful in promoting nuanced epistemological beliefs. Both analyses showed positive changes in the epistemological positions of the participants, while the essays highlighted some of the negative effects of the course. In the context of the background of the participants, this result seems excellent as most of them did not study to become a history teacher and only had a personal interest in history. Based on the data, it seems that the combination of direct methods (the discussion of epistemological questions, teaching of the steps of historical research) and the inquiry-based learning task is a potential and effective way of developing epistemological beliefs among undergraduates who can be considered “laic” historians compared to prospective history teachers and actual teachers. Of course, the goal of history education is to

develop students' historical thinking, which essentially needs the development of epistemological beliefs. For instance, teachers working with high school students encounter similar challenges as we did.

The comparison of the two data reveals interesting tendencies and raises questions. First, it seems that the quantitative approach “overestimated” epistemological positions. According to weighted values, students proved to be sophisticated thinkers about history similarly to the results of previous studies (Voet & de Wever, 2016) investigating prospective history teachers. Compared to them, most of our participants do not even learn history in a history teacher training programme.

This outcome can be explained by the difference of answer formats and by the data collection process. During the completion of the questionnaire, participants assessed closed-ended questions, which is easier than writing freely about their views on history, history education, and historical inquiry. In the latter case, respondents can only rely on their own thoughts and knowledge about science and scientific inquiry. They might not have had the essential knowledge about it (e.g. reliability, validity, research question, hypothesis, ways of investigating sources, etc.) when they wrote the first self-reflective essay. The low match rate of the categories created by the two data sets supports this idea. At the same time, at the end of the course, when they had learnt about the general characteristics and methods of historical inquiry, their categorisation was more coherent. Although the results of Mierwald and Julius (2022) are related to another instrument and are from a cross-sectional study, their assumptions can also apply to the present case. Students learnt the “professional language” of history and historical inquiry and could interpret the questionnaire statements easier. Finally, the context-dependency of epistemological beliefs addressed by Maggioni (2024) should be considered as one of reasons why the categorisations differ. Filling out a questionnaire during the class and writing a self-reflective essay about historical inquiry will mobilise different ideas.

Furthermore, in the first reflective essay, participants had the opportunity to write freely about the suggested topics (their views on history, their learning experiences, and their ideas on historical inquiry). Perhaps they wrote less about their epistemological beliefs related to history and concentrated more on covering all the topics

(this was one of the tasks with which participants could collect points required to complete the course). Compared to the first essay, the second one's theme may have been more focused, which made it possible for the participants to write more about their history-related epistemological beliefs.

Our study highlights the complexity of history-related epistemological beliefs and the joint use of quantitative and qualitative methods. Although the questionnaire captured epistemological beliefs in a standardised way, reflective essays gave participants the opportunity to express their views freely and illustrate their thinking about the topic. Another conclusion of the study may be that history teacher training programmes or any teaching programme that involves learning history cannot exclude the methods of historical inquiry. Since if students learn basic notions, they can use these concepts during inquiry-based learning and become more aware of the “invisible” steps of scientific inquiry. Raising attention to these steps and the challenges (e.g., finding source bias, being aware of their own bias, relying on reliable and relevant sources during interpretation) students must overcome during historical research can provide profitable experiences about the nature of historical knowledge and historical knowing.

Finally, limitations and further directions need to be discussed. The cut-off point defined by VanSledright and Reddy (2014) was used in our analysis, which was selected arbitrarily by the researchers. As Stoel and his colleagues (2022) concluded, the assessment of epistemological beliefs struggles with methodological problems. Group-level reports on the support of epistemological positions are useful when we intend to evaluate a training programme or compare educational systems. However, in the classroom context, it provides scarce information. In the case of 30 participants, a quite drastic development in beliefs was required to detect significant changes. In contrast, for teachers and university instructors, individual-level information gives more feedback and provides more information on the necessary instructional steps. The next step may involve developing standardised qualitative methods to complement questionnaires in investigating personal-level beliefs and their changes.

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HERITAGE AND PATRIOTISM IN HISTORY EDUCATION IN INDEPENDENT ESTONIA: THE 1990S COMPARED TO THE 1930S*

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The evolution of Estonian history education, as reflected in textbooks, reveals a complex journey towards identity reaffirmation amidst social transformation. This paper delves into the narrower theme of imparting patriotic or national education in history education by analysing a selection of history textbooks and curricula from the 1990s while drawing comparisons with materials from the 1930s. The 1990s, when Estonia was transitioning from Soviet influence to renewed independence, witnessed deliberate efforts to foster national pride and resilience. This era saw a deliberate return to pre-Soviet curricular ideas, echoing sentiments from the 1930s. Textbooks portrayed the enduring characteristics of Estonians. While romanticized views of early history persisted, the focus shifted to preserving political freedom in response to Soviet occupation. Education's centrality in identity formation persisted, with recurring themes across both periods. Negative portrayals of Baltic Germans and Russian rule underscored historical grievances. Acknowledgment of demographic challenges resonated with 1990s textbooks, reflecting sombre tones amidst the challenges.

1. Introduction

The concepts of national identity, heritage and patriotism have always been central to history education. Notions of identity are imparted, and cultural heritage is both introduced and upheld, in history lessons and through history textbooks. At certain times, building or rebuilding national identity and imparting patriotism has received comparatively more attention in Estonian history education. 1930s were one of those periods, and as researchers have already noted, so were the 1990s (Ahonen, 1992; Oja, 2016).

After the independence war of 1918–1920, Estonia experienced liberal democratic development. This also meant a reassessment of nationalist ideas and their importance. Independent statehood was seen as the guarantor of the survival of Estonian culture and people.

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The initial liberal-minded enthusiasm was dampened by the Bolshevik uprising in 1924, after which patriotic values, and the role of the school system in propagating them, received more attention. Nationalism was always a component in developing the education system in inter-war era Estonia, but it became more important after the shock of 1924, and even more prominent after the authoritarian turn of 1934.

The authoritarian turn of Konstantin Päts in 1934 had complex internal reasons, but other significant international influences at that time were the worldwide economic crisis and the crisis of democracy elsewhere in Europe. The 1930s also saw structural change in the school system.

Estonia regained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, and after the ideological and political control of the Soviet period from 1945 to 1991, the 1990s were another period of independent state-building. The school system was thoroughly reformed, and in history education, there was a return to the pre-1939 Estonia-centred narrative. For the wider public and for schools, the Estonian histories of the 1930s were seen as the last national narratives to be untouched by the Soviet ideology. The decades under question can be interpreted as bridgeheads that form a connection over the Soviet era, with the 1990s being the first decade of re-established independence in Estonia and the 1930s being the last decade of independence in the interwar period. As such, the 1990s and the 1930s invite comparison, as both epochs represent periods of significant educational change amidst social flux.

History education and curricula in Estonia have previously been studied from diverse perspectives and with different time periods as their focus. There are several studies providing a wider context for the topic under discussion here. Larger processes of transitions in history education in Estonia during the 1990s, as well as the new textbooks, have been analysed by Mare Oja (Oja, 2016, 2021), while Sirkka Ahonen has compared the re-orientation of history curricula from 1986 to 1991 in Estonia with a case study of East Germany in the same period (Ahonen, 1992). In a broader study, Heikki Haljasorg has examined history curricula in Estonia from 1874 to 2016 (Haljasorg, 2017). Also of relevance to this study are articles exploring the image of the other in Estonian textbooks (Oja, 2013; Raudsepp and Hiinema, 2013). The development of history curricula and connections to patriotic education in the interwar era of 1920–

1939 has previously been studied by the author (Loper, 2023). In the International Society for History Didactics' yearbooks, the problematics of patriotism in history curricula have been addressed most recently by Denise Bentrovato and Joshua Chakawa using the example of Zimbabwe (Bentrovato and Chakawa, 2022). The theme of patriotism was also explored in the ISHD's 2008–2009 yearbook when analysing textbook controversies in a globalizing world (Popp, 2009), in public debates on a textbook in Greece (Liakos, 2009), in controversies over global trends in history education (Repoussi, 2009) and in discussions of history education in Australia (Leadbetter, 2009). Patriotism in history education has been explored in numerous articles, for example, in Finland (Virta, 2010), in teaching the history of the Cold War in Switzerland (Ritzer, 2012), in the portrayal of a novel in Romanian history textbooks (Wagner, 2012), in work on the political uses of history and history education (Wojdon, 2013), in more focus by Helen Ting on Malaysian patriotic citizenship (Ting, 2013), and in considering the Rwandan genocide (Buhigiro and Wassermann, 2017).

This paper delves into the narrower theme of conveying patriotic or national education in history education by analysing comparatively a selection of history textbooks and curricula from the 1990s while drawing comparisons with materials from the 1930s, thus providing more historical perspective to the study of the 1990s. Questions asked include how the most important topics in presenting patriotism compare between the two periods, what are the most important changes in the assessment of these themes, what remained the same and which assessments from the 1930s saw a return in the 1990s. The selection of 1930s textbooks includes examples by an author (J. Adamson) whose history schoolbooks were the most popular according to a 1937 survey by the Estonian Ministry of Education (Estonian National Archive: ERA.1108.4.823; ERA.1108.4.824; ERA.1108.4.825; ERA.1108.4.826), plus the series for a primary-school course from Adamson's main competitor (J. Parijõgi), as the primary-school history course was especially important in imparting patriotic education. It should be noted that the 1930s textbooks have had many reissues, usually with only minor changes. The selection from the 1990s includes all the original Estonian history textbooks published in 1990–1997. Source material also includes history curricula from the 1930s and 1990s, most importantly the 1937 and 1996 versions. The paper consists of two parts, the first comparing

changes in history curricula between the two periods, the second addressing changes and continuity in comparisons of history textbooks.

2. National Education in History Curricula

In the context of Estonia's educational landscape during the inter-war period, nationalism emerged as a central force shaping educational policies and practices, echoing broader trends across Europe. This influence is notably underscored by the two congresses on national education held in 1927 and 1935, both organized by the Estonian Eugenics and Genealogy Society. Eugenics, a prevalent discourse in Europe at the time, permeated discussions during these congresses and particularly dominated in 1935 (Aavik et al., 1926; Lüüs et al., 1935). Both congresses illustrate ideas about the state's responsibility in bringing up children and the way school was seen as the crucial institution for doing so in the 1930s (Loper, 2022). These developments amplified the role of schools as central agents in fostering nationalism and moulding 'good citizens'.

Estonia's educational ethos in the 1930s was not completely insular; it also harboured a concurrent inclination towards international cooperation and understanding. The alignment of Estonia's curricula with the goals outlined by the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation attests to this dual commitment to national identity and international engagement. It must be noted, though, that although it presented an alternative course for history education, the League of Nations' agenda had little real international impact (Osborne, 2016). This duality of national and international goals in Estonian curricula persisted into the 1990s, underscoring a continuity despite the socio-political upheavals of the intervening decades.

The challenges faced by Estonia's public school system in the early 1930s, compounded by the global economic downturn, prompted a reassessment of its educational priorities and practices. The school system had consisted of a compulsory and free six-grade primary school followed by a five-grade secondary school with tuition fees (Avalikkude algkoolide seadus [Law on Public Primary Schools], 1920; Avalikkude keskkoolide seadus [Law on Public Secondary Schools], 1922). The subsequent reform efforts, culminating in the restructuring of the educational tiers and the introduction of

differentiated pathways, aimed to address the perceived deficiencies in the system. The age for finishing compulsory education was lowered from sixteen to fourteen, the system now consisting of a free and compulsory four-grade primary school, which could be followed by a five-grade middle school and a three-grade gymnasium with tuition fees (Avalikkude algkoolide seaduse muutmise dekreet [Decree on Changing the Law on Public Primary Schools], 1934). However, the reform did not eradicate six-grade primary schools, leading to the unregulated creation of three-grade middle schools and the eventual revision of the reform in 1937, which allowed students from six-grade primary schools to enter three-grade science schools, and those from four-grade primary schools to enter five-grade progymnasiums. Three-grade gymnasiums could specialize in either the sciences or humanities (Keskkoolide seaduse muutmise seadus [Law on Changing the Law on Secondary Schools], 1937).

By contrast, the educational reforms of the 1990s were propelled by Estonia's reassertion of sovereignty, necessitating adaptations to align with evolving social needs and global educational standards. Education became compulsory until the completion of middle school or until the student turned seventeen. The transition from an eleven-year to a twelve-year programme for full secondary education in Estonian-speaking public schools was completed in 1989 (Sirk and Varik, 2018: 147).

Changes and reforms necessitate new curricula and corresponding updated textbooks. In the 1930s there were two sets of curricula, the 1928 primary school and 1930 secondary school curricula, which remained in place with amendments until they were replaced by revised curricula for all school levels in 1937 (Algkooli õppekavad [Primary School Curricula], 1928; Keskkooli õppekavad [Secondary School Curricula], 1930; Algkooli, keskkooli, gümnaasiumi õppekavad [Curricula for Primary, Secondary, and Upper Secondary School], 1938). For the 1990s, there were the 1989 curricula that had marked a shift in education, provisional curricula from 1992 and 1993, and the first official curricula in 1996 (Eesti põhi- ja keskhariiduse riiklik õppekava [Estonian Primary and Secondary Education National Curriculum], 1996; Läänemets, 1992; Oja, 2016: 408–9).

	1928 primary 1930 secondary	1937	1988	1989	1992 & 1993 provisional	1996
4 th grade	Key periods of Estonian hist.: ancient freedom, resisting crusaders 'good old' Swedish rule, Russian rule, national awakening, the War of Independence	Over-view of Estonian hist.: ancient freedom, resisting crusades, education, national awakening, War of Independence	Scenes: history of the USSR and Estonian SR	-	-	-
5 th grade	Episodes (mainly culture) of general hist. from ancient times to Reformation + parallel Estonian topics until the Livonian War	Episodes of general hist. from pre-history to the North-ern War, together with topics of Estonian history	General history: ancient era	Intro course	Introductory course through episodes in Estonian history	Intro course: general history and Estonian history
6 th grade	Estonian hist. from the Swedish era to present day + key general hist. topics from modern times	Estonian history in modern times + episodes of general history	General history: medieval era	Prehistory and ancient eras	Prehistoric and ancient eras	Prehistory and ancient eras in general history + Estonian prehistory
7 th grade	General history: pre-historic and ancient eras	Episodes from ancient general history to medieval times	USSR and ESR until 1790s	Medieval era until 1490s	Nations: Western Europe, Asia, Slavic, Scandinavian, Estonian, Baltic	Medieval and early modern eras (476–1600) + parallel Estonian history topics

8 th grade	General history: medieval era + Estonian history: pre-historic culture, Livonian Crusades 'gradual enslaving' of peasants, resistance	Episodes of general history from pre-modern times to 1848 revolutions	General history: modern era until Paris Commune ; USSR and ESR in 19 th c.	From 1490s to the French Revolution	States: Europe, Russia, Asia, Americas, Scandinavia, Baltics	Modern times (1600–1918) + parallel Estonian history topics
9 th grade	General history + Estonian topics from early 1500s to 1629	General history from mid-19 th c. to present times, thorough revision of Estonian history based on primary school curricula	General history until interwar era; USSR and ESR until October 1917	Modern times to the end of 19 th century	20 th century from WW I	20 th century + parallel Estonian history topics
10 th grade	General history + Estonian history from Swedish era to the reforms in early 19 th c.	Estonian history from pre-history to the Livonian Crusade / pre-history to Swedish era	USSR and ESR from 1917 to 1938; General history: interwar era	World history from 1900 to 1938	1993 <i>provisional</i>	Two courses of Estonian and Baltic history. Three courses of world history.
11 th grade	General+ Estonian history from mid-19 th c. to present, emphasis on social, national and cultural development	Estonian history from medieval times to early 19 th c. / from Swedish era to national awakening	USSR and ESR: 1938 – present day, General history: same era	Estonian history, full course	Themes from 20 th century divided into topics: economy, politics, wars, social history, culture-science	Three courses on 20 th century, including Estonian history
12 th grade	-	Estonian history from national awakening to present	-	World history from 1939 to present		

Table 1. History curricula compared

During the 1930s, the Estonian history curricula underscored the primary objective of national education, which was to instil a sense of unity through a shared historical narrative while simultaneously cultivating a citizenry capable of understanding and respecting other nationalities. This emphasis on fostering both national identity and intercultural respect was echoed in the educational reforms of the 1990s. The provisional programs of 1992–1993 placed a particular emphasis on bolstering Estonian identity, reminiscent of the principles of the 1930s, by centring history education on Estonian heritage and promoting patriotism alongside respect for other nationalities. Furthermore, the educational paradigms of the 1930s and the 1990s shared a common overarching objective for secondary schooling: the cultivation of citizens aligned with the ideals of the independent state. The 1996 curriculum repeated sentiments from the 1930s, emphasizing desirable character traits such as love for the fatherland, thus highlighting continuity in educational goals across decades (*Eesti põhi- ja keskkooli riiklik õppekava* [Estonian National Primary and Secondary Education Curriculum], 1996).

In the 1930s, Estonian history topics served as a means of national upbringing, with specific focus areas including ancient freedom, resistance to the Livonian Crusade, the development of education since the Swedish era and the national awakening period. Over time, the significance of events such as the War of Independence and the establishment of an independent state gained prominence within the curriculum, reflecting evolving historical narratives and national priorities. Notable revisions to the primary school curriculum in 1937 expanded the portrayal of Estonians' historical agency, emphasizing narratives of resilience and heroism, alongside the celebration of national figures like President Konstantin Päts and General Johan Laidoner (*Algkooli, keskkooli, gümnaasiumi õppekavad* [Curricula for Primary, Secondary, and Upper Secondary School], 1938; Loper, 2023). These educational endeavours were underpinned by a broader social concern for the preservation and vitality of the Estonian state and its people.

Along similar lines, the history curricula of the late 1980s and early 1990s sought to elevate Estonian history, notably through the introduction of dedicated courses on both world history with Estonian perspectives and a standalone Estonian history course.

These initiatives aimed to supplant Soviet-centric narratives and foreign historical perspectives with a renewed emphasis on Estonian heritage and identity. The approval of the first official program in 1996 reaffirmed the educational system's commitment to nurturing Estonian culture and identity while embracing the principles of humanism and democracy in alignment with European integration efforts (Oja, 2016: 196–9).

This continuity between the educational frameworks of the 1930s and the 1990s is further exemplified by the reissuing of history books and textbooks originally published in the interwar period (for example: Kampmann, 1994; Libe et al, 1996a, 1996b, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c). This was driven by the scarcity of non-Soviet educational resources and a heightened interest in historical subjects. By reintroducing historical ideas and perspectives from the 1930s into the educational sphere, alongside the incorporation of texts from that era into the new schoolbooks, Estonia's educational system maintained a continuum of historical perspectives across generations.

3. Continuation and Changes in History Schoolbooks of the 1930s and 1990s

Analysis of schoolbooks on Estonian history printed between 1990 and 1997 reveals a nuanced blend of ideologies, showcasing a transition from Soviet interpretations while also incorporating influences from the interwar period. While remnants of Soviet narratives persist in certain topics, there has been a discernible reassessment of Estonian history with clear echoes of the main perspectives of the 1930s. Additionally, new themes and subjects emerge, reflecting advances in historical scholarship.

In the schoolbooks of the 1990s, Estonians are depicted as among the oldest indigenous peoples in Europe, characterized by traits such as tranquillity, reverence for the land and a deep connection to their homesteads (Arjakas et al., 1991: 13–14; Laar et al., 1997: 20, 24; Mäesalu et al., 1995: 14–15, 19, 33; Sarapuu, 1994a: 18; Toomet, 1993: 82–3, 118). One source even posits that this ancient heritage imbues Estonians with a unique wisdom capable of addressing global ecological challenges (Toomet, 1993: 108, 268–70). This notion of a distinctive cultural heritage, bridging prehistory and modernity, was also discussed during the third congress for national education in 1996 (Maanso, 1997: 47–54, 97–101). These depictions contrast with

those from the 1930s, when ancient origins were not emphasized and Estonians saw themselves as a nation only after they had separated from the Finno-Ugrian tribes and settled along the shores of the Baltic Sea. However, primary school history books from the 1930s elaborated more extensively on national character, accenting virtues like honesty, bravery and a profound love for the homeland (Adamson, 1930: 26, 33; 1938: 22–4, 29, 40; Parijõgi, 1931: 42–3). Students were expected to learn to value the work of their forebears and their rural lifestyles through their history lessons. The idealization of a rural lifestyle reflects a broader agrarian nationalism that is observed in various contexts, for example in Finland, but also in Japan (Gordon, 2003: 194; Vasara, 1997: 712).

Despite the temporal differences, both sets of textbooks adopt a romanticized view of early history, valorising political independence and depicting peaceful everyday life through a literary lens. In the 1930s, this romantic narrative was still influencing the historical discourse, particularly accentuating the bravery of ancient Estonians against overwhelming adversaries during the Livonian Crusade (Adamson, 1933: 49–52; 1938: 57–8; Parijõgi, 1931: 59–68). Gymnasium-level education emphasized the significance of collaboration among Estonians and the efforts of invaders to disrupt this unity (Adamson, 1935: 41, 43, 47). Similarly, textbooks from the 1990s uphold the valorous resistance of Estonians against aggressive German forces during the Livonian Crusade, attributing their eventual defeat to numerical and technological disparities, as well as a lack of cooperation among Estonians and their neighbours (Arjakas et al., 1991: 43, 58; Laar et al., 1997: 37–8, 48, 50; Mäesalu et al., 1995: 49; Sarapuu, 1994a: 54, 79; Toomet, 1993: 126, 134, 140). Both sets of schoolbooks portray Estonians simultaneously as inherently peace-loving, but formidable warriors when provoked, exhibiting a continuity of national character across historical epochs. An additional significant theme prevalent in schoolbooks from the 1990s is the emphasis on preserving the memory of political freedom predating the 13th century, which served as a source of inspiration for Estonians to strive for greater independence across subsequent historical epochs (Mäesalu et al., 1995: 56; Õispuu et al., 1992: 6; Sarapuu, 1994a: 80; Toomet, 1993: 140). This perspective represents a departure from the interwar era schoolbooks, while reflecting the emergence from decades of Soviet occupation, as the ideals of political freedom were of heightened significance during the 1990s.

The schoolbooks from the 1930s and the 1990s both underscore the crucial role of education in Estonian history, tracing the theme back to the Swedish era, with its establishment of schools for peasant children. In the 1990s, Estonians are portrayed as a nation deeply valuing education, with texts highlighting education's role in fostering self-confidence and envisioning a brighter future (Arjakas et al., 1991: 112–13, 154, 157, 192, 217; Laar et al., 1997: 85, 109; Sarapuu, 1994b: 22; Toomet, 1993: 176–80). Similarly, the importance of education was acknowledged in the schoolbooks of the 1930s, albeit with fewer explicit connections to future social developments. Also, there is consistent criticism of Baltic Germans as the landlords throughout both periods, reflecting a general desire to diminish their historical role and elevate Estonians as active and significant actors in the narrative (Adamson, 1933: 73–6; 1935: 48–50; 1938: 127–8; Parijõgi, 1931: 102–5).

This negative portrayal of Baltic German landlords persists in both the 1930s and 1990s schoolbooks, depicting landlords as haughty, exploitative and hindering Estonian progress, while maintaining their own lavish lifestyle (Adamson, 1938: 103, 109, 129–35; 1937a: 100; 1936a: 35, 40; 1933: 61, 66, 85; Arjakas et al., 1991: 181; Laar et al., 1997: 73; Mäesalu et al., 1995: 148; Toomet, 1993: 145). Similarly, there is a recurrent negative stance towards the Russian government, particularly regarding the policy of Russification under both Tsarist and Soviet regimes. The texts from the 1990s depict Russification as suffocating and oppressive, paralleling historical narratives from the 1930s which also highlighted the detrimental effects of Russian rule on Estonian national aspirations (Adamson, 1937b: 63–71; 1936b: 109–10; Arjakas et al., 1991: 226–7; Laar et al., 1997: 143–4, 146; Laur et al., 1995: 16; Mäesalu et al., 1995: 110, 133; Parijõgi et al., 1937: 199–203; Sarapuu, 1994b: 55). The emotional resonance in the 1990s depictions of Russification might stem from a reaction to the recent Soviet occupation and the memory of second Russification policies, as well as echoes of the Soviet historical narrative portraying Tsarist rule as inherently oppressive.

In the schoolbooks of the 1990s, there is a notable emphasis on the resilience and vitality of Estonians following significant demographic crises, such as the Livonian War (1558–1583), the Great Famine (1695–1697) and the Great Northern War (1700–1721).¹ These texts highlight not only the devastating effects of these events but also the rapid population recovery thereafter (Arjakas et al., 1991:

140–1; Laar et al., 1997: 81; Mäesalu et al., 1995: 110, 133; Toomet, 1993: 171, 183). This contrasts with the perspectives presented in the third congress on national education, which depicted the demographic situation as dire and the state as in need of comprehensive reforms (Maanso, 1997: 43). In comparison, the schoolbooks from the 1930s also addressed these demographic catastrophes but did not frequently emphasize vitality. One example references the high birth rates following the Great Northern War, while others note the slow recovery process required in both rural and urban areas (Adamson, 1936a: 14, 22; Parijõgi, 1931: 113–16; Parijõgi et al., 1937: 53).

The negative effects of foreign rule on public health, particularly excessive alcohol consumption, are highlighted in schoolbooks from both the 1930s and the 1990s. These texts point to external factors, such as the influence of landlords before the Livonian War or Tsarist and Soviet policies, as contributing to destructive lifestyles (Adamson, 1937a: 109; 1936a: 23–4; Arjakas et al., 1991: 163, 436; Laur et al., 1995: 130). Concerns about public health and lifestyle choices were also echoed in presentations during the congresses on national education, underscoring persistent social concern (Aavik et al., 1926; Lüüs et al., 1935; Maanso, 1997: 43).

Another theme prevalent in the schoolbooks of the 1990s is the significance of folklore and song festivals in defining Estonian identity. Estonians are portrayed as a ‘singing nation’, with folk songs carrying ancient wisdom across the generations. The tradition of song festivals is depicted as a cornerstone of Estonian heritage, fostering national unity and pride (Arjakas et al., 1991: 219, 228; Laar et al., 1997: 133–4; Laur et al., 1995: 10; Toomet, 1993: 202, 207). This emphasis on song festivals may reflect the resurgence of interest in the tradition and in folk culture during and after the Singing Revolution of 1989. Similarly, the schoolbooks from the 1930s also underscored the importance of song festivals, but with fewer overt connections to their contemporary period, portraying the festivals as instruments for boosting national confidence and unity in the aftermath of oppression (Adamson, 1933: 100–1; 1936b: 104–5; 1937b: 50–1; Parijõgi, 1931: 123–5).

Regarding the Independence War, the schoolbooks from the 1930s extensively cover the challenges and triumphs of the conflict, emphasizing the effective organization of Estonian forces and the successes they achieved. While the tradition for Victory Day

celebrations began in the mid-1930s, the celebration is only mentioned in few textbooks from the end of the decade, whereas the Tartu Peace Conference is accentuated, (Adamson, 1933: 116–27; 1936b; 131–45; 1937b: 98–108). The late 1930s textbooks also emphasise the high fighting morale of the Estonian troops (Adamson, 1939: 283–284; Parijõgi et al., 1937: 246). In contrast, the schoolbooks from the 1990s place more emphasis on the victory over the German *Landeswehr* as the culmination of a prolonged struggle dating back to the 13th century, although the Tartu Peace Treaty also receives due attention. Also, a notable weight is placed on the role of individual leaders such as Commander-in-Chief Johan Laidoner and Prime Minister Konstantin Päts, reflecting evaluations from the 1930s. However, later schoolbooks from the period acknowledge the doubts and challenges faced by Estonians during the war, signalling a shift in representation over time (Arjakas et al., 1991: 259, 265, 269; Laar et al., 1997: 162, 164–5, 168–9; Laur et al., 1995: 47; Õispuu et al., 1992: 74, 77–8, 85; Sarapuu, 1994b: 74, 78–9, 83; Toomet, 1993: 220, 223).

The treatment of the rightist Vaps movement, the mass anti-communist and populist political organization that emerged out of the association of veterans of the Estonian War of Independence in the early 1930s, underwent a notable evolution between the 1930s and the 1990s in their respective schoolbooks. In the 1930s, the Vaps movement received limited attention, with some schoolbooks omitting it entirely. Instead, the focus was placed on criticizing flaws in the first constitution and discussing the prospects for constitutional improvement (Adamson, 1937b: 111–113). Conversely, in the 1990s, the Vaps movement emerged as a significant topic, with two distinct themes prevalent regarding its characterization and the subsequent coup of 1934.

Early 1990s textbooks often portrayed the Vaps movement as fascist and treat the coup of 1934 as a necessary measure to prevent a fascist takeover. This narrative, perhaps influenced by the Soviet interpretation of the Vaps, justified the authoritarian regime that followed (Arjakas et al., 1991: 295–304; Õispuu et al., 1992: 103–5).

A more neutral view emerged in textbooks by the mid-1990s, portraying the Vaps movement as rooted in domestic political tensions rather than solely as fascists. The subsequent coup led by Päts and Laidoner was characterized as a military takeover, under the pretext of addressing the Vaps threat. The ensuing authoritarian

regime was depicted as imposing severe restrictions on democracy, with later moves towards democracy being viewed sceptically (Laar et al., 1997: 176; Laur et al., 1995: 68–74; Sarapuu, 1994b: 103–4; Toomet, 1993: 228). This nuanced portrayal reflects a departure from earlier justifications, as well as a deeper analysis of historical events. Comments on signing the pact on military bases in 1939 also portray different levels of criticism towards the Päts regime, accenting either the desire to avoid bloodshed or noting that the military and people were ready to resist (Laar et al., 1997: 181; Laur et al., 1995: 95; Õispuu et al., 1992: 157; Sarapuu, 1994b: 107; Toomet, 1993: 240).

Additionally, schoolbooks from the 1990s placed significant stress on the tragic consequences of World War II and the Soviet occupation, acknowledging the severe population losses, mass repression and deportations, and sometimes even using the term genocide (Arjakas et al., 1991: 351–2, 395; Laar et al., 1997: 204; Laur et al., 1995: 108, 120; Õispuu et al., 1992: 215, 218; Sarapuu, 1994b: 116, 120; Toomet, 1993: 16, 242, 248–6). This recognition of national trauma and loss reflects a departure from the suppressed narratives of the Soviet era and underscores the impact of historical upheavals on Estonian society.

Moreover, the portrayal of rural depopulation as an existential threat to the Estonian nation persisted from the 1930s through to the 1990s. This continuity underscores a shared concern for maintaining cultural and demographic integrity amidst social transformations. Phrases such as ‘empty farmsteads’ and ‘ruined villages’ are recurrent, drawing a parallel with the aftermath of the Livonian Crusade or the Great Northern War in inter-war period textbooks. In the 1990s textbooks, such passages about demographic crises in previous history are often followed by confirmation about the vitality of the Estonian nation, but not in the case of the aftermath of the Second World War and the effects of the Soviet occupation. Most of the texts note that Estonian nation has not recovered from the demographic catastrophes inflicted in these periods, and some add that it never will. The 1990s schoolbooks also address the challenges faced by rural life in the post-Soviet era, reflecting contemporary realities such as agricultural reforms, privatization and urbanization (Arjakas et al., 1991: 405, 423; Laar et al., 1997: 204; Laur et al., 1995: 119; Õispuu et al., 1992: 244–6; Sarapuu, 1994b: 118, 120).

4. Conclusion

The evolution of Estonian history education, as reflected in school textbooks, illuminates a multifaceted passage towards identity reaffirmation and continuity in the face of historical upheaval and social transformation. The 1990s, marked by the transition from Soviet influence to renewed independence, saw efforts to reshape the education system to foster a new sense of national pride, identity and resilience.

As Estonia grappled to redefine its educational landscape, there was a deliberate return to the curricular ideas that were prevalent in the inter-war period. The emphasis on Estonian history and the promotion of national values in education echoed the sentiments of the 1930s. The reissuing of history books and textbooks from that era and the incorporation of texts from the 1930s to the new textbooks underscored an effort to reconnect with a historical epoch untainted by Soviet influence.

The portrayal of the Estonian people as one of the oldest native groups in Europe exemplifies the negotiation between historical continuity and the evolving demands of identity. In the 1990s, textbooks depicted Estonians with persistent characteristics—calmness, love of the land and a deep connection to their homesteads. This narrative resonates with the agrarian nationalism that was prevalent during the 1930s. The idea of indigenous wisdom, offering solutions to contemporary ecological challenges, is a novel twist reflecting the changing global context.

The romanticized view of early history, highlighting bravery and independence before the 13th century, persisted across the decades. In both eras, Estonians were portrayed equally as peace-loving and as fierce warriors when facing external aggression. The shift in the 1990s to emphasise the preservation of political freedom before the 13th century, perhaps in response to the recent Soviet occupation, underscores the enduring importance of political identity in shaping historical narratives.

The centrality of education in Estonian identity also emerged as a recurring theme. This continuity aligns with the 1930s focus on education, albeit with a heightened connection to future aspirations in the 1990s.

Throughout both periods, Baltic German landlords were usually portrayed negatively, being described as haughty, greedy and

obstructive of Estonian progress. The emotional tone of these portrayals reflects historical grievances and echoes the inter-war call to minimize the emphasis on Baltic German history. This resentment points to the lasting impact of historical conflicts on collective memory and identity formation. The negative stance toward Russian rule and Russification was more pronounced in the 1990s, reflecting a response to the recent Soviet occupation.

The acknowledgment of demographic catastrophes and the subsequent vitality of the Estonian nation resonates across both eras. However, the 1990s textbooks, in addressing the trauma of the Second World War and the Soviet occupation, often conclude on a more sombre note, suggesting a lingering impact on the nation's demographic health. The echoes of a concern for rural life and its impact on national well-being reflect not only historical narratives but also contemporary challenges.

Note

¹ Regarding the term 'the Great Northern War': in contemporary Estonian a shorter term 'the Northern War' (Põhjasõda) is mainly used. The Russian term also translates as 'the Northern War'. In English this shorter title might be confusing, as the term 'Northern Wars' is used for the series of wars in Northern and Eastern Europe from the 16th to the 18th century. The longer title used in the text has been in use in Estonian before, and the event is called the 'Great Northern War' also in Latvian, German and Swedish, for example.

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FORMING THE HISTORICAL AWARENESS OF THE STUDENTS OF THE FIRST SLOVAK SECONDARY GRAMMAR SCHOOL*

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The main function of teaching history is to cultivate the historical consciousness of the pupil as a whole person and to preserve the continuity of historical memory in the sense of transmitting historical experience, whether from a local, regional, national, European or world per DOI: 10.46499/2661.3414

spective. The teachers of the first Slovak grammar school, which opened its doors in September 1862, approached the teaching of history with very similar goals. The teaching of history at the secondary school exclusively in the Slovak language was the culmination of several decades of effort by Slovak scholars. Its main goal was to build national awareness also with the help of a thorough knowledge of the history of the Slovaks. The study briefly presents the development of education in the territory of present-day Slovakia with an emphasis on the teaching of history in the Slovak language. Then, with the help of preserved written sources, it examines the form and content of history teaching at the first Slovak grammar school in Revúca, which existed between 1862 and 1874.

1. Introduction

The study of history in schools, learning about history, historical events, phenomena and personalities of national and world history, especially with the help of a teacher and history textbooks, is one of the basic prerequisites for acquiring a proper historical awareness. Of course, many other (external) stimuli influence its formation, both at the time of attending school and afterwards. Today, we work consciously or unconsciously with our historical knowledge on a daily basis, not only in the context of our own micro-history (e.g. when we go back in our memories to our past and evaluate it, unconsciously also according to the time in which it took place), but also, for example, under the influence of ongoing war conflicts. Today, in the public space, we are often confronted with historical facts that serve

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as positive or negative examples, and we consciously or unconsciously accept, or better still, evaluate these facts on the basis of our historical awareness. For this reason, too, it is now a fixed part of history teaching not only to accept the bare facts (mostly) in chronological sequence, but also to practise the use of the acquired knowledge, to verify it by independent work, to define the interrelationships between them, and to think more comprehensively about history. The study of history in schools provides a space for the cultivation of historical consciousness and space for the formation of national awareness, leads to the creation of a collective identity, a sense of belonging and responsibility towards society. While historical consciousness is possessed in some form by every individual, working with specific scientific historical knowledge, primarily in the school environment, is directed towards the formation of historical awareness.¹

The aim of the present paper is to describe the teaching of history at the first Slovak patronage secondary grammar school in Veľká Revúca (today the town of Revúca in Slovakia) (1862–1874) and then to evaluate the form of formation of historical awareness in the given school area. The role of historical awareness was fundamentally different in that period than it is today. In the second half of the 19th century, the formation of national awareness became an important part of the national emancipation efforts of the various national movements in the Habsburg Monarchy. After the Revolution of 1848/1849, education was an important instrument of Austrian government policy for influencing public opinion, and the teaching of history was intended to serve in political struggles to create a picture of the past that would counteract the diversity and specificity of the historical development of the various parts of the monarchy. There is an attempt to unify the school system. The territory of today's Slovakia was at that time (until 1918) part of the Kingdom of Hungary, since 1526 incorporated into the Habsburg Monarchy (since 1804 the Austrian Empire), it did not have its own administration, education and national institutions for the development of science and culture.²

The knowledge of this issue is important from the point of view of Slovak history, since in the case of the school under study we have for the first time ever the opportunity to evaluate the course of secondary education in Slovakia, which was realized entirely in the Slovak language. Until then, it was not possible to conduct

gymnasium education in Slovak in Kingdom of Hungary. For the first time ever in the case of this school, we have the opportunity, thanks to the preserved sources, to observe in detail not only the organisational structure of the school, including the number of lessons of individual subjects, but in more than one case also their content. This also applies to the school subject of history, for which, although the teachers and students naturally did not yet have regular textbooks by which we could find out what they were learning, the teachers compensated for this lack by rigorously excerpting the available specialist books on history. They then dictated their manuscript extracts to the grammar school pupils through lectures. Today we have the opportunity to evaluate the content of history teaching at this school not only through the preserved notes of the teachers, but also of the students themselves. What is evident from these notes is that the predominant method of teaching is mainly interpretation. In addition, we can also explore the issues raised through the state and level of the school's library, which undoubtedly contributed to the formation of historical awareness not only of students, but also of the teachers. The library was built from the very first days of the school's existence. The first books were provided by Samuel Hlaváč, a teacher of the local evangelical folk school. Gradually, books were added to the library as donations from other teachers, also from the gymnasium itself, from various writers, nationalists, and gradually also from alumni of the gymnasium. In the list of books we also find the work "*Didactica magna*" by the leading Czech pedagogue, humanist Jan Amos Komenský (1592 – 1670), which fundamentally guided the concept of teaching among Slovaks even in the 19th century.³

The evaluation of the set objectives provides important data for the assessment of the form and level of historical awareness of the graduates of the first Slovak grammar school (566 in total). Knowledge of this is particularly important in the period of the second half of the 19th century, because at that time Slovaks, striving for the formation of national identity in the complex mechanism of the multinational Hungarian state, rightly attributed a great role to historical knowledge of their past in this endeavour. In this way, they were reacting to efforts to distort historical consciousness by the state ideology of Hungary and its instruments. And not only that. Behind historical awareness they also saw people's ability to take a stand on selected historical realities, to defend them through historical

argumentation (Kučera, 1977: 217). At the time of the existence Kingdom of Hungary, one of the main tasks of Slovak national life was the preparation of the educational stratum, which was expected to strengthen the leading elements of Slovak political and social life.

In addition, research on the topic is also important in terms of subsequent historical events and more effective ways of assessing developments after 1874, not only in terms of the formation of historical awareness among Slovaks, but also in terms of its use. It is precisely the evidence of historical argumentation in the national emancipation efforts of Slovak scholars (often graduates of Slovak grammar schools, forcibly abolished in 1874) in the times of intensified Hungarianisation in the state of Hungary that can be considered one of the manifestations of the legacy of history education in the first Slovak grammar schools, where history was taught in the Slovak language and with a focus on the history of the Slovaks.

Professors and students of the gymnasium in Veľká Revúca were also strongly aware of the historical significance of teaching professional subjects in the Slovak language for the first time. After all, as it was emphasized in his speech by A. H. Škultéty, the administrator of the gymnasium, on the occasion of the opening of the school in 1862: *'It was necessary to establish this Slovak-Lutheran gymnasium in order to educate and prepare the youth for life by means of the Slovak language, so that the Evangelical Church and the Slovak nation would be in a position to spread the enlightenment and education that we have lacked and lacked up to now.'* (Škultéty, 1889: 41).

2. History of Education in the Territory of Today's Slovakia

The first Slovak patronage gymnasium, in Veľká Revúca (1862), in Turčiansky Svätý Martin (1866) and in Kláštor pod Znievom (1869), were founded after a long struggle of Slovak scholars to learn also vocational subjects at secondary schools in their mother tongue. This period was preceded by the slow development of education and history education in the territory of today's Slovakia, and thus the formation of historical awareness in the school area. This development was strongly influenced by the conditions in which the territory of today's Slovakia, gradually settled by the ancestors of the Slovaks since the end of the 5th century, developed. From the end of the 10th century onwards, this territory and its inhabitants were

gradually incorporated into the Kingdom of Hungary, led by dynasties and power elites of non-Slovak origin. After 1526, the Kingdom of Hungary, and with it the territory of present-day Slovakia, became part of the large Habsburg monarchy centred in Vienna, a situation that persisted until 1918.

During the Middle Ages, mainly rural parish schools operated in the territory of today's Slovakia, in towns schools at parishes and chapters, to which additional classes were gradually built with the possibility of higher education in specialized subjects. From the 16th century onwards, a network of schools providing education at secondary to higher level – grammar schools, colleges (mainly under the administration of the Jesuits) and lyceums – grew in every major town. Except for the short duration of the Istropolitan University in Bratislava (1465–early 90s), students from Slovakia had the opportunity to study at a university in their home region only from 1635, when the University of Trnava was founded.

While in the medieval period teaching in secondary and higher schools was based exclusively on texts in Latin, in the modern period German and Hungarian were gradually promoted as the language of instruction alongside Latin as the language of textbooks. In some schools it was even decreed that the use of the mother tongue at school should be excluded (Vajcik, 1955: 81).

In the earlier period, pupils in rural parish schools were exposed to history mainly through catechism and religious instruction. Students of urban schools also through reading the works of Greek and Roman classics (Vajcik, 1955: 41). In urban schools, history and geography became a fixed part of the curriculum during the 16th century. Dissertations on a variety of specialized topics, including those in history, served to reinforce and deepen the curriculum. The first domestic textbooks (in Latin), at least partly related to history, were produced (Stöckel, 1570). After the establishment of the University of Trnava (1635), a number of scholarly works on the history of Hungary were published by the professors of the University (which subsequently served as textbooks in the municipal schools). Thanks to the lively activity of the university printing house, a number of works on historical subjects were also published. These works were quickly reaching the rural community as well (Lopatková & Ristovská, 2021: 208–209). From 1773 onwards, after the introduction of the university reform, textbooks (in Latin) dominated the production of the printing house, and to a lesser extent also those

for teaching the history of the Kingdom of Hungary (Kowalská, 1990: 64). Secular history was not directly taught at the university; this changed only with Maria Theresa's decision in 1770 (Lopatková, 2011: 57). However, it should be noted that even if the official subject of history did not exist in schools during the modern period, pupils could come into contact with history. But this depended on the interest and erudition of their teachers.

History was only introduced into the lower schools by the first school reform during the reign of Maria Theresa (1740–1780) and the school regulation known as Ratio educationis of 1777. It prescribed the subject of history of the fatherland as a special subject only in the so-called normal schools (higher classes of the folk schools), where it was to be taught in German. After the second edition of this regulation in 1806, the language of instruction was changed to Hungarian. In secondary (Latin) schools, history was taught at the highest level of these schools (teaching in the mother tongue was not allowed in the higher grades). In addition, in some schools it is also assumed that domestic history was taught in Slovakized Czech in this period. However, there were still no official history textbooks in Slovak for folk schools (Kowalská, 1990: 67, 73).

In the first half of the 19th century there was a network of several secondary and higher (especially vocational) schools in the territory of today's Slovakia, which were taught mainly in German and Hungarian from textbooks in various languages other than Slovak. The Slovak National Revival opened a new chapter in the struggle for a Slovak school. Efforts to create a system of schools with Slovak as the language of instruction became an important part of the Slovak national political programme. The centre of Slovak national life in the 1830s and 1840s was the Evangelical Lyceum in Bratislava, with many outstanding teachers and pupils. An important place here belonged to one of the most important personalities of Slovak history of the 19th century, a politician, linguist and pedagogue Ľudovít Štúr (1815 – 1856), who himself pointed to the most acute problem of national schools, namely the lack of textbooks in the mother tongue. He came up with a special request for history textbooks that would contain a short Hungarian and general history. In teaching, he recommended the work of an evangelical priest Michal Semian written in Slovakized Czech (Czech language enriched with Slovak linguistic elements, used by Slovak evangelicals since the 16th century) *Kratičké historické vypsání knížat a králů uherských* (1786). Another

recommended work ‘for school youth and adult folk’ was the work of the evangelical priest Andrej Šoltýs, also written in Slovakized Czech, *Jadro histórie všeobecné* (1829) (Janovský, 1984: 126).

The school reforms of 1848/1849 represent a milestone in the development of education. In line with the centralising efforts of Habsburg policy, the idea of state supervision of education and upbringing was promoted. The organisation of the school system in the Habsburg monarchy was regulated by the law on secondary schools issued by the Minister of Education and Religion, Count Leo Thun, in September 1849, *Entwurf der Organisation der Gymnasien und Realschulen in Oesterreich*, and the government decree of 9 October 1849, published under the title *Grundsätze für die provisorische Organisation des Unterrichtswesens in dem Kronlande Ungarn*. The state exercised supervision mainly in organizational matters, the supervision of the actual teaching in the schools was left to the churches, including the language of instruction. According to the new curricula, history did not become a separate subject but was taught together with geography. *Entwurf* became the basis for the creation of the curriculum and syllabus at the Veľká Revúca grammar school and enabled the Slovak Lutherans to establish their first own secondary school with Slovak as the language of instruction (Viršínská, 2022: 12–28).

3. Teaching History at the first Slovak grammar school in Veľká Revúca

3.1 Aims and Curricula of History Education

The establishment of the gymnasium in Veľká Revúca in 1862 is one of the most significant events in the history of the Slovak nation in the 19th century. During its twelve years of existence, it played an important role in the process of national awareness and in the development of Slovak education. The content of history teaching is a key tool for the formation of both historical and national awareness of Slovak students. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to those historical events that prove to be crucial in the formation of their historical and national identity.

The curricula of the Gymnasium were published annually in the school reports for the relevant school year. From the reports we learn brief information about the content of individual subjects, including the names of the teachers who taught these subjects. With the third

highest hourly allocation among all subjects during the entire course of study, history became one of the most important subjects and became a solid part of the then Slovak secondary (grammar) school education.

Teachers and students of the Slovak Patronage Gymnasium in Veľká Revúca were equally aware of the importance of historical education. Knowledge of their own past was to help shape the historical awareness of the young Slovak intelligentsia and to contribute to the improvement of the position of the Slovak nation within the Kingdom of Hungary. Through the past, students were to get to know their nation, its mentality, customs, traditions and, thanks to this, to participate in shaping its future (Škultéty, 1889: 44). The knowledge of the past was to fulfil the ideas of the teachers and administrators of the gymnasium about raising a generation of people capable of resisting the Hungarian state policy of cultural and linguistic assimilation and carrying out the Slovak national political programme, as emphasised by the parish priest Samuel Tomášik from nearby Chyžné at the consecration of the new gymnasium building on 4 February 1873 (Ormis, 1873: 23).

The concept and structure of history teaching was based on the *Entwurf*, which is evident in the curriculum. History was not taught as a separate subject, but as part of the combined subject of geography and history. It was divided into two teaching cycles, namely the joint teaching of history and geography for lower secondary schools from the first to the fourth year and for upper secondary schools from the fifth to the eighth year. In each year, from the lowest to the highest, the allotment for this subject was 3 hours per week, but the extent of the teaching hours changed, decreased and increased frequently during the existence of the grammar school, which was mainly due to the school's personnel possibilities (Viršinská, 2022: 23).

In the first year, only separate geography was included in the curriculum. In the second year, emphasis was already placed on history teaching, with the focus of the curriculum being the teaching of ancient history. In the following third year, the general medieval and modern periods were taught in history (Škultéty, 1869: 19). In the fourth year, history teaching was devoted to the earliest Hungarian history (Škultéty, 1869: 21). From the school year 1866/1867, the curriculum of the geography-history subject was extended from the fourth year onwards to include a geographical overview of the Austrian Empire.

History teaching continued with various alterations in the next, higher level of grammar school education, from the fifth to the eighth year. In the fifth year, the students expanded their knowledge of the history of the 'Old Age', i.e. Antiquity. However, it is a peculiarity that history was not part of the curriculum in the sixth year in 1866/1867, nor was it in the seventh year. Pupils were introduced to history in Religious Studies that year, where Church History – the history of the Church from the earliest times, with a special look at the history of the Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of Hungary – was covered (Homola, 1867: 16).

More detailed information on the content of the history curriculum is provided in the report for the school year 1868/1869. History teaching was dominated by the history of the Kingdom of Hungary from the earliest times to the last rulers of the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty. Pupils were to acquire knowledge of all the kings of the Kingdom of Hungary from its foundation to the most recent times (Škultéty, 1869: 17). In this school year, history teaching continued in the fifth year, focusing on the expansion of knowledge about Antiquity. In contrast to the previous school years, history was also taught in the sixth grade. Although there was no separate history teaching in the seventh grade, church history from the founding of the church to the development of the Reformation was the subject of religion lessons (Škultéty, 1869: 19). The teaching of history continued in the eighth year with the history and statistics of the Kingdom of Hungary (Škultéty, 1869: 20).

The limitation of history teaching at the upper grammar school level probably resulted also from the fact that history did not function as a separate graduation subject at the grammar school in Veľká Revúca. However, this does not mean that students did not need to demonstrate their knowledge of history in the final examination. The students used their knowledge of history especially in their written matriculation papers in the Hungarian language, when in the school year 1868/1869 the topics of the written Hungarian papers were: The Battle of Mohács and its influence on the spiritual development of Hungary and an overview of national economic ideas that were current in the times of Charles V, Louis XIV and G. Washington (Škultéty, 1889: 82).

In the last years of the grammar school's existence, thanks to the increase in the number of history teachers, history as a part of the geography and history subject was taught in every year of the lower

and upper grammar school, from the first to the eighth year. In the lower grammar school in the first year, 2 hours were set aside for the teaching of history, in the second and third year the number increased to 4, and from the fourth to the eighth-year history was a permanent part of the timetable in each school year, uniformly at the rate of 3 hours per week (Ormis, 1873: 15).

3.2 *History Teachers*

The teaching staff played an important role in the formation of historical awareness. It brought together a number of outstanding teachers and, above all, active representatives of the Slovak national movement. The teachers were mostly priests by profession without special education, which they had to supplement during their teaching career (Gallo, 1969: 49). This is also encountered in most history teachers.

The most important figure was the administrator of the gymnasium August Horislav Škultéty (1819–1892), who studied theology and before coming to Veľká Revúca worked as a Lutheran priest in the nearby village of Rozložná. The beginnings of his educational and outreach activities date back to his pastoral work around Veľká Revúca in the middle of the 19th century. In addition to history, he taught religion and Slovak language at the grammar school and was also involved in organizational activities (Michalička, 2003: 30). Another history teacher was Samuel Ormis (1824–1857), a well-known educationist and writer, who had previously taught at the grammar school in Rožňava and had also worked as a Lutheran pastor shortly before coming to Veľká Revúca. He even founded a publishing association in Veľká Revúca, which issued textbooks to some teachers (Michalička, 2003: 31, 32). Gustáv Schmidt (1841–?) was one of the favourite teachers from the beginning. Having previously studied for a year at the Mining and Forestry Academy in Banská Štiavnica, he put his technical skills to practical use in teaching. He was an excellent map draughtsman and taught his students how to draw maps so that the students acquired knowledge of history and geography mainly through maps (Bodický, 1933: 20).

As the school years passed and the number of pupils increased, the number of teachers teaching history gradually increased. In the following years Miroslav Kovalevský, Július Botto, Ľudovít Čulík, Karol Viest, Gustáv Hostivít Lojko were added among the history

teachers. Among them, Mieroslav Kovalevský and Július Botto should be mentioned. Kovalevský (1838–1916) came to Veľká Revúca in 1867 after his short service as a Lutheran priest in Skalica. He had no experience in teaching history until then. He passed the professor's exam, which entitled him to teach Magyar language, Hungarian geography and history, on September 13th in 1869 (Mieroslav Lad. Kovalevský, 1916: 125). Július Botto (1848–1926), a native of the nearby village of Rozložná and later a lawyer and historian, began his career as a teacher in Veľká Revúca. Botto came to Veľká Revúca as an assistant teacher from Prešov, where he studied theology. In Veľká Revúca he began to show his interest in history, which he also taught and later began to devote himself to it professionally. In his historical work he focused on the history of the Slovaks and the territory of today's Slovakia, being the author of several historical popular science articles and the author of a monograph on the history of the Slovak nation *Slováci. Vývin ich národného povedomia* (Slovaks. The development of their national consciousness). Thanks to this monograph, he is considered the creator of the modern concept of Slovak history (Lábaj, 2006: 252).

Since it was taught for the first time in the Slovak language at the grammar school, most of the subjects were taught according to manuscripts, as there were no Slovak textbooks for several subjects in this period. The history teachers were also forced to prepare their lectures in the form of manuscripts, gaining knowledge from contemporary historical works.

3.3 Content of History Education

We conclude our paper with an insight into the content of the teaching of history at the grammar school in Veľká Revúca, which we examine in our research on the teaching of history at Slovak secondary schools since 1862. In analysing the content of history teaching, we focus on those details that may have been crucial in shaping the national consciousness of Slovak pupils. In the preserved manuscripts (textbooks, pupils' notes) we note the description of the earliest history and origins of the Slovaks. We map which events, personalities and phenomena professors gave prominence to in the teaching of history, what from our past they considered to be the nation's glorious deeds, or whom they considered to be the most important representatives. We trace which themes, events, and

phenomena in general professors used to shape students' overall historical awareness. We are interested in the depth with which they presented these topics to pupils, with what emphasis, from what point of view. Finally, in our research we also note the representation of stereotypes and myths in their teaching, as well as the description of selected events for which they did not yet have enough professional information at that time.

The history teachers at the first Slovak grammar school had a clear idea of its definition and mission. We saw it in school reports. At the beginning of each school year, teachers emphasised the importance of history to pupils. As A. Horislav Škultéty writes in his notes, *History is a credible narration of serious and memorable events that have influenced the development and education of mankind, and for this reason should be of interest to every rational person. History varies widely in content and volume. According to content, history is: civil history, history of education; according to volume: biography, national history, and general history. General history covers the whole of mankind. It traces the ways and actions by which mankind has always come to a more perfect education of its spiritual powers and moral inclinations; for example, individual nations and individual people have not once gone astray on this path. And so general history presents us with a very instructive and entertaining, as well as cautionary, picture of the education of mankind through God.* (Škultéty, 1889: 44)

What is remarkable from the point of view of the teaching of history at this school is the emphasis on the importance of sources providing knowledge and evidence of particular facts. Their general introduction belonged equally to the introduction of the teaching of history (Kordoš, 1869: 5). Constantly pointing out specific sources (both written and unwritten) was also a fixed part of the teaching itself.

From the preserved notes of history professors as well as from the notes of grammar school pupils, the separation of the teaching of domestic history (History of the Kingdom of Hungary) from the teaching of general history is evident. This history was taught chronologically. In the notes we encounter a division into the Old Age, the Middle Ages and the New Age. The different periods were then divided by the teachers into several special periods, parts, sections and districts.

On the following lines we provide part of the analysis of selected periods and events in the notes of two history teachers (M. Kovalevsky and S. Ormis) and one pupil (J. Slávik). M. Kovalevsky's

notes on the history of the Kingdom of Hungary began with a description of Pannonia (referred to as the first land of Hungary) in late Roman times and ended (according to the surviving notes) with the reign of Joseph I (1705–1711). Already at first glance we can recognize in the periodization of older history, as well as in the formal structure of the text of the notes, a great inspiration in the work of F. V. Sasinek (1830–1914), the most important Slovak historian of the 19th century, a pioneer in the systematic study of the earliest Slovak history, but above all a self-taught scholar who, without any school training, mastered all the important methods of historical research. Kovalevský drew his data on the earliest history of the Slovaks and the territory of Slovakia from Sasinek's *Dejiny dřívěných národů na území terajšěho Uhorska*, which was first published in 1867 and soon came to the attention of the professors of the gymnasium in Revúca as well as to his library. Kovalevský copied from this work, which placed the Slovaks on the same level as the other peoples of multi-ethnic Hungary, almost all the data for the period until the downfall of Great Moravia. Many sentences and passages he wrote out word by word. Like Sasinek, he also gave the most space to the period before the establishment of Hungary (44 letters in total). Kovalevský accepted Sasinek's autochthonous theory of the ancient presence of Slavs in Pannonia and in the territory of present-day Slovakia, so that there would be no doubt about the Slovaks' entitlement to national development in the Kingdom of Hungary, as claimed by the Hungarians. However, in excerpting his notes, Kovalevský made a number of inaccurate and incomplete notations, which he subsequently recited to his pupils. Thus, it happened that instead of Sasinek correctly identifying Rastislav (in order the second ruler in Great Moravia in the years 846–870) as Mojmir's nephew, he referred to him as his son (Sasinek, 1867: 160, Kovalevský, 1869: 28). However, what we consider to be the greatest interference in the formation of the historical awareness of Kovalevský's disciples is his interpretation of Sasinek's work without assumed conclusions, which he presented as a *fait accompli*, unlike Sasinek. He did so probably because of the space he had at his disposal in comparison with Sasinek's extensive work.

The period after the extinction of Great Moravia until 1009 (11 letters in total) was conceived by Kovalevský from another Sasinek's work (*Dejiny počátků terajšěho Uhorska*), which Sasinek published in the same year 1867. Professor in Veľká Revúca also adopts from

Sasinek his diction directed e.g. to the history of the Hungarians, supposedly dating back to biblical times (Sasinek 1867: 51, Kovalevský, 1869: 52). He considers their antiquity to be exaggerated and thus dated only for one purpose, to surpass the history of the Slovaks. In describing the period after the extinction of the Arpad dynasty (1301–1526, 70 letters in total), Kovalevsky based the structure of his notes on F. Sasinek, *Dejiny královstva Uhorského II.*, published in 1871. However, in the content of the notes themselves we can see a certain departure from Sasinek's work. For example, he identifies the reason for the military expedition of King Charles Róbert of Anjou to Wallachia against voivode Basarab I as the correct persuasion of the king for this expedition by the voivode of Transylvania, Tomáš and Dionýz Széchy. Yet Sasinek mentions only Dionýz Ivánka, and that without mentioning his family affiliation (Kovalevský, 1869: 74; Sasinek, 1871: 37). We find various deviations from Sasinek's text further on. They suggest to us that Kovalevsky had an overview of the events in question from other, but not as accurate, sources as Sasinek's work. While Sasinek correctly lists several real reasons for the uprising of the Hungarian nobility against King Sigismund of Luxemburg, Kovalevsky incorrectly attributes them only to Sigismund's promise to leave the Kingdom of Hungary to his brother Jošt after his death (Sasinek, 1871: 104–105; Kovalevsky, 1869: 87). In this part of his remarks, we also encounter probably his own judgements. Such include, for example, the condemnation of King Sigismund of Luxemburg as a licentious, lascivious and cruel man, which we know was not fairly accepted by Slovak historiography for quite a long time in the 20th century. Kovalevsky's personal contribution can also be the titles of individual chapters and subchapters, which we do not encounter in Sasinek's work. Often, we can indirectly see behind them Kovalevsky's attempt to fill the history of the Kingdom of Hungary with Slovaks and Slavs (e.g. in the title of the chapter on the period of the rule of the originally Polish Jagiellonian dynasty – The Age of Slavic Predominance (Kovalevsky, 1869: 106).

Kovalevsky paid particular attention to the issue of the Habsburgs' ascension to the Hungarian throne after the Battle of Mohács in 1526, in which King Louis II from the Jagiellonian dynasty died. Kovalevsky attributes the failure of the Hungarians in the battle to the refusal of the Hungarian grandees to provide the king with troops and finances. The monarch also disobeyed the advice of the voivode

of Transylvania, John of Zapolya, not to start the battle before his arrival on the battlefield with his own army. Kovalevsky described 29 August 1526, the day of the defeat of Mohács, as the most unfortunate day in the history of Hungary. The subsequent Ottoman advance into Hungary caused a catastrophe in which many Hungarian soldiers perished. The Ottomans plundered what they could in Hungary, turning it into a desert. They burnt down houses, churches, murdered thousands of the local population or took them into slavery. In Hungary, a struggle began between the candidates for the Hungarian throne, the voivode of Transylvania, John of Zapolya, and the Archduke of Austria, Ferdinand of Habsburg, which resulted in several years of civil war. According to Kovalevsky, the greatest credit for the subsequent decline of Hungary was due to Zapolya's ambition, which for several centuries plunged Hungary into Ottoman rule and led to the division of the Hungarian state into three parts (Kovalevsky, 1869: 109–114). Kovalevsky, in line with Sasinek's view, places most of the blame for the domination of Hungary on John of Zapolya (Sasinek, 1871: 388).

Kovalevsky presents the period of the modern age through the figures of the rulers of the Kingdom of Hungary and the Habsburg monarchy. He examines the reign of each king separately, focusing on the most important moments of their reigns. He calls the period from 1526 to 1604 the Age of Western-Eastern Affairs (Kovalevsky, 1869: 114). At that time, Hungary was struggling with the Ottoman Empire on the one hand, and on the other hand, there was a division of spheres of influence. The territories east of Belgrade came under the administration of John of Zapolya, while the territories of western and southern Hungary, including Croatia and Dalmatia, fell to Ferdinand of Habsburg. Kovalevsky mainly discusses the foreign policy conflicts in which Hungary was involved during the reigns of the various rulers, and in the context of domestic politics he focuses mainly on the issue of the Reformation and the attitude of the various rulers towards the Lutherans. He devotes most space (9 letters in total) to the monarch Leopold I (1657–1705), (Kovalevsky, 1869: 135–144), which is understandable in view of the fact that he was the longest reigning Habsburg on the Hungarian throne up to that time, and Hungary underwent a turbulent development during his reign, when it had to face a number of problems on both the domestic and foreign political scene. On the one hand, Kovalevsky stresses that during his reign the Ottomans were pushed out of

Hungary; on the other hand, this period was negatively affected by Leopold's strict recatholization policy.

The reign of the last Hungarian monarchs can be found in the notes of the teacher Samuel Ormis, recorded by his pupil Ján Slávik. It is interesting that Ormis focuses only on Maria Theresa's (1740–1780) struggle to remain at the head of the Habsburg Empire, while domestic reforms go unnoticed. In contrast, the reign of her son Joseph II (1780–1790) is assessed in a more or less positive light. He portrays Joseph II as a free-thinking monarch, influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution, who wanted to implement them in Hungary as part of his reforms. However, according to Ormis, in introducing them he neglected old customs and manners, which ultimately led to their rejection in Hungary. On the positive side, Joseph gave freedom of the press and limited the powers of the Catholic Church. He praised the adoption of the toleration patent (Slávik, 1874: pp. 1183–1187). Highlighting selected key events of important figures of Hungarian and national Slovak history created a fundamental pillar of forming the historical awareness of the young Slovak generation.

4. Conclusion

The forming of students' historical awareness becomes an important part of history teaching in the 19th century. Thanks to the first Slovak secondary schools, which were established in the Kingdom of Hungary in the 1860s, Slovak students also had the opportunity to be educated in the Slovak language and to acquire knowledge of history. Although at the first Slovak gymnasium in Revúca the subject of history was not a separate subject, but together with geography it formed one subject, it ranked among the most important subjects in terms of the number of hours it was given. History was taught by several teachers who were forced to prepare their own history textbooks due to the lack of textbooks in the Slovak language at that time. The pupils of the Gymnasium studied history in great detail from the earliest general history as well as the history of the Kingdom of Hungary up to 1848. The history of the Slovak ethnic group was an integral part of the history of the Kingdom of Hungary, with little space devoted to the history of the Slovaks themselves. Undoubtedly, this was also a reflection of the state of Slovak historiography. The

systematic elaboration of Slovak history was only in progress, and the first syntheses were published in print at the time of the Gymnasium's existence. In any case, the scope of the lectured topics and the depth of their description can only surprise us today and at the same time confirm us in the fact that Slovak intellectuals of the second half of the 19th century attributed an extremely important role to the forming of historical awareness. This approach gave Slovak students the opportunity to learn about Slovak history, which helped them to strengthen their Slovak identity and reflect on their place in history, including in relation to other nations in the multiethnic state.

Notes

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¹ For more on historical consciousness and awareness, see, for example, Rösen, 2004: 63-85, Aisiah – Suhartono – Sumarno, 2016: 108-121.

² For the development of historical and national consciousness and awareness in the territory of today's Slovakia, see, for example Alberty, 2010: 278-295, Marsina, 1993: 9-12.

³ A list of the books that have made up the school's library during its existence is available online: <https://muzeum.revuca.sk/historicka-kniznica-1.html>

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EXTERNAL EVALUATION AS AN INFLUENCER OF HISTORY TEACHING: ANALYSING THE FINAL EXAM IN ESTONIA'S BASIC SCHOOLS*

Mare Oja

Assessment is relevant both in the curriculum development process and in the daily organization of teaching and learning in order to receive feedback on the quality of the learning process and support students' development. Assessment has a very large impact on learning, which is why assessment provokes discussions with both supporters and critics. The aim of this article is to analyse whether the basic school final examination is in line with the requirements of the history syllabus of the national curriculum, meets the learning outcomes and subject emphases, and is accessible to students. The analysis of the examination paper showed that it was prepared based on the principles and learning outcomes of the history syllabus, and the tasks were thematically balanced, diverse, and of varying difficulty. The examination paper was accessible to students, but it also revealed topics and tasks that needed more attention in learning. The introduction of the basic school final examination helped to transform the teaching of history from fact-based to skills-building. The preparation and assessment of examination papers developed and harmonised teachers' understanding of teaching as assessment. It was meaningful for students to receive an evaluation of their level. However, external assessment is not the only form of feedback on learning. When planning an assessment, it is always important to consider what you want to find out and what conclusions can be drawn from this knowledge. The main idea of assessment is to improve learning.

1. Introduction

In a broad sense, the task of assessment is to collect information on the extent to which the set learning objectives have been realised, i.e. whether the teaching and learning methods used facilitate the achievement of the desired objectives, and to draw conclusions on how the set objectives can be achieved more easily or whether and

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how they should be changed (Lindgren 1994). When we consider the implementation of the national curriculum and control of the quality of education, these principles apply both to the work of particular teachers and their students, and to the wider level of society.

Assessment has a very large impact on learning, as it highlights important knowledge and skills for the learner. It also fosters student learning, allowing them to identify what is expected of them. A strong and explicit link between the objectives and assessments of performance better enables students to develop self-reliance in achieving that purpose. Feedback makes an essential contribution to improving performance. Assessment determines whether a student has achieved the objectives of a course to a satisfactory standard and is used to demonstrate that relevant knowledge and skills are being addressed in aggregate across a subject syllabus (Assessment Handbook 2018). Research suggests that challenging tasks contribute to deep and long-term learning (Bjotk and Bjork 2011). Other positive effects of assessment include stimulating the processing of more complex and deeper cognitive information, more efficient retention and transfer of learning, the strengthening of memory traces and connections, and the anchoring of learning in long-term memory (Dunlosky et al. 2013). However, assessment creates anxiety in students, poor performance having a negative impact on their self-esteem and motivation to learn (Kausar 2010, Putwain 2008, Hinze and Rapp 2014).

Centrally prepared tests based on the national curriculum guide learning through their content and tasks, influencing the development of learning activities in the direction of the objectives of the subject, which are given importance through the assignments. If external assessment is knowledge-based, teachers try to train the same knowledge in teaching in order to provide students with better preparation for taking exams or level assignments. While external assessments emphasize skills, teachers also try to develop such skills through subject teaching. The advantages of external assessment can also be considered to involve a reduction in the subjectivity of assessment, the ability to assess students from many schools on the same basis, and drawing conclusions about the quality of education in the country in order to develop a national curriculum based on this knowledge.

The question of how exam results are assessed and whether and in what ways this affects the student's progress to the next level of

education is a topic of discussion. The question is whether a stressful situation allows the student to focus on performance or rather inhibits performance. Studies show that high-stakes test situations, including final exams, are often anxiety-provoking (Putwain 2008, Segool et al. 2013) and can also lead to the search for cheating opportunities (Wenzel and Reinhard 2020). In addition, one threat to the learning process is when teachers focus only on exam topics and ignore other, equally important learning outcomes and topics in the curriculum (Jönsson and Leden 2019). If schools are ranked based on exam results and are recognized based on rankings, this increases the tension between teachers and school leaders. It can also influence parents' decisions when choosing schools and can increase educational inequality (Jackson 2021).

The aim of this article is to analyze whether the final exam for basic schools is in line with the requirements of the national curriculum's history syllabus, meets the learning outcomes and subject emphases, and whether it is affordable for students.

2. Estonian Education System

Estonia regained its independence from Soviet occupation in 1992. After the restoration of independence, major laws on education and national standards were adopted. The Education Act the Republic of Estonia (1992/2022) provided the legal basis for the formation, functioning and development of the education system and outlined the principles and rights of equal opportunities for everybody. The first national curriculum in 1996 stipulated the educational standard to consist of basic values and principles of the curriculum and the learning goals, learning outcomes and content of the various subjects. It also united the Estonian educational space, i.e. all schools had to follow the same national curriculum. Due to the large number of Russian-speakers in the population, after the restoration of Estonia's independence, two languages of instruction remained valid in education: Estonian and Russian. The transition to Estonian-language education has taken place gradually. In 2022, the transition to Estonian-language education alone was legalized from 2024 (Act amending... 2022.; Basic and Upper Secondary School Act 2024).

The education system is described in the Education Act of the Republic of Estonia (2022). Educational institutions in Estonia can be state, municipal or private, but all belong to the Estonian

Education System. In the current academic year, there are 510 schools in Estonia, of which sixty are private schools, funded by private organizations (Haridussilm 2024; EHIS 2024). Private schools can offer different forms of education that are not covered by the municipal or state schools, such as confessional religious education. A private school must nonetheless observe the national curriculum (Private School Act 2019).

The Estonian education system begins with pre-school Education. The compulsory age of schooling is 7-17 years. Pre-school education is delivered to children between the ages of 18 months and 7 years in dedicated educational institutions (Preschool Childcare Institution Act 2024). Compulsory basic education lasts from grades 1 to 9. The principles of inclusive schooling are implemented, meaning that students with special educational needs usually study in an ordinary class of their school. General secondary education is acquired at the upper secondary school level (Basic and Upper Secondary School Act 2024).

Compulsory education is organized with a view to supporting the development of every student, and schools are given flexibility in organizing their educational processes. Upper secondary schools are designed to help students become creative, multi-talented, socially mature and reliable citizens (Basic and Upper Secondary School Act 2024)

Educational standards are set out in the national curriculum of the basic school (2011/2024) and in the national curriculum of the upper secondary school (2011/2023) and count as regulations of the Government of the Republic. Based on the national curricula, the school prepares a curriculum, which is the basic document for studies at the school and in which, above all, the choices arising from the special nature of the school are highlighted within the framework of the national curricula.

Previous national curricula have been adopted in 1996, 2002 and 2011. The first national curriculum (1996) marked a very large change in understanding about the learning process. In Soviet times the teaching of history was knowledge-centered, teachers being provided with detailed content and a timetable for their teaching. After the reform, attention was turned towards skills and knowledge together, to the development of general competencies, cross-curricular topics and subject-based competencies. National curriculum 2011 increased the choice for schools and students: compulsory and optional

courses, grouping subjects into subject areas, widened the school environment.

The 2023 updated national curriculum increased schools' autonomy even more, and left teachers to make decisions considering the needs of their students and the specificities of the school. The curricula for upper secondary school are divided into compulsory (63) and optional courses, totaling 96 individual courses as a minimum. The curriculum provides descriptions of the subjects by field. History belongs to the subject field of social subjects together with civics, citizenship education and human studies, and it stipulates the learning outcomes at the end of the school stages¹.

In the school's curriculum, learning outcomes and subject content are specified by class. The school also has the right to decide on the choice of learning methods, learning environments and teaching materials. To support schools and teachers, the Ministry of Education and Science prepared descriptions of learning processes, which contain recommended instructions and various examples of organizing learning (Curriculum materials).

The high degree of autonomy given to teachers in organizing the learning process requires a high level of professionalism. The qualification, issued by universities, for basic school and upper secondary school teachers are a master's degree or equivalent qualification, a teaching qualification (Teacher professional standard. Level 7) and knowledge of the Estonian language in accordance with the requirements established in the Language Act and on its basis.

3. History Teaching in National Curricula

In a rapidly changing world, students should acquire skills from school that will help them function in the society of the future, critically orient themselves in the abundance of information, cope with problems, cooperate and take responsibility, and be creative and empathetic (OECD 2018). Education should support the formation and development of various competences in young people, including cultural awareness and cultural self-expression (Council of the European Union 2018). History education is expected to be inclusive, shape democratic values, consider cultural differences, and value one's own identity and that of others (Council of Europe 2018).

As the goal of history education, the national curriculum (2023) outlines the requirement to develop students' competence in

analyzing and understanding the world in which they live in and to learn about circumstances and events from world history. As a result of studying history, students should have knowledge of their home country and the world's past, cultural heritage, different value systems, the ability to relate past events to each other and to the present, and an understanding of reasons for different interpretations of historical events (National curriculum for basic school 2023/2024).

The purpose of history education is to support the development of students' historical consciousness and historical thinking, and to strengthen their relationship with historical culture. Historical thinking means the ability to observe meaning in history, to use primary sources as evidence, to recognize changes and permanency in historical events, to analyze causes and consequences, to perceive the historical context and to understand the ethical dimension of historical interpretations (Lee 2011; Rösen 2012; Seixas 2017 and others). This can be done by expanding and consolidating historical knowledge and developing skills by applying inquiry-based learning (Chapmann 2011), rather than through a textbook or retelling of primary sources. The aim is to make students understand that the past cannot be interpreted based on what is characteristic of today's society, and to realize that different eras had their own rules, customs and values (Lee 2011). People in different situations, positions or roles value the past differently. It is important to open students what the principle of multiperspectivity means in interpreting and evaluating the past (Stradling 2001, 2003, 2005).

The subject begins with introductory basic teaching in the 5th grade and continues with the study of ancient times (6th grade), the Middle Ages (7th grade), modern times (8th grade) and recent history (9th grade). In the basic school, history is taught in the 5th grade for an hour a week (35 hours a year) and in the other classes for two hours a week, thus a total of 70 hours every year. There are six compulsory history courses in the upper-secondary school: "General history", "Estonian history I (until the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries)", "Estonian history II (until the end of the 19th century)", "Recent history I - Estonia and the world of the first half of the 20th century", "Recent history II - Estonia and the world in the second half of the 20th century" and "Recent history III - main features of the development of the 20th century: Estonia and the world". The length of each course is 35 hours. It is possible to choose two more

optional courses described in the curriculum: “General history - history of European countries and the United States” and “General history - world history: civilizations outside Europe”. The school can develop an optional subject plan itself. Local cultural history is popular with students.

In describing the subject, the focus is on the basic school, as the article analyzes its final exam. The description of the subject at the upper-secondary level represents the same principles, but is more demanding than in the basic school.

Estonian history is studied as part of the world history course. The topics of Estonian history presented separately in the syllabus are discussed thoroughly and systematically, and parallels with world history are drawn. The principle of the approach is to move from closer to further away, starting with the history of the home area, where it is important to create a personal connection with the topic and places. In the basic school, the student’s strengths, human-centered approach to history, living conditions and culture are prioritized over other dimensions of history education. The history of the world is discussed through selected topics, which do not seek to develop a complete picture of historical periods. It is important to create connections between the historical events and phenomena of the past and the present, and to form the understanding that, without turning to the past, it is difficult to understand the key issues in history, for example, the nature of crisis centers. Students learn to value local cultural heritage and people’s right to self-determination and freedom, to analyze ethical choices and to condemn aggression and occupation and all crimes against humanity.

Through history education, knowledge is expanded, a historical vocabulary is acquired, and various skills are developed. Among the skills are: 1) the ability to orientate oneself in time and analyze the development of the historical environment, highlighted separately; 2) knowledge of historical concepts and the ability to use them in context; 3) the ability to ask and answer questions about history; 4) functional literacy, critical thinking skills, reasoning skills, the ability to draw conclusions and create connections, and the ability to form and justify one’s position; 5) empathy, or the ability to put yourself in the situation of a person in the era concerned; cooperation and conflict resolution skills; and 6) source analysis and the ability to work with a historical map, to find, use and evaluate information from various information sources, to express oneself verbally and in

writing, and to use IT tools. The level of skills attainment is described as history teaching objectives by grade level (National curriculum for basic school 2024, Appendix 6).

It is considered important to introduce students to different conceptions of history through history teaching and to develop the understanding that history writing depends on the era and point of view of the historical researcher. To do this, one needs to develop a critical attitude towards different ways of thinking and compare the treatment of historical events and phenomena in different sources (Haydn and Stephen 2022). Students learn to understand that the past can be interpreted differently from different positions, to differentiate between interpretations of propaganda and to understand that not all sources are equally reliable and not all interpretations equally relevant (Lee 2011).

4. Organization of Assessment in Legislation

The principles of assessment during study are stipulated in the general parts of the national curricula. The assessment that takes place continuously during the course is understood as a formative assessment, while assessment of the learning results at the end of the study topic count as a summative assessment. This forms the basis on which it is decided whether the student can be transferred to the next grade. The summative assessment is based on a five-point system: 5” is assessed for a student who has achieved 90–100% of the maximum possible number of points, with a grade of “4” 75–89%, with a grade of “3” 50–74%, with a grade of “2” (incomplete) 20–49% and with a score of “1” (weak) 0–19% (National curriculum for basic school and national curriculum for upper secondary school 2023).

Descriptive verbal assessments, which have no numerical equivalent, may be used in the evaluation of the student in stages I and II of the basic school. A basic school may use a different grading system within the school instead of the five-point system. When the student leaves the school, the grades are converted to a five-point system.

The purpose of the external evaluation of learning outcomes is to provide the student, parent, school, school administrator and state with feedback that is as objective and comparable as possible about the achievement of the learning outcomes stipulated in the national

curriculum and the effectiveness of learning in the school. Its goal is also to provide the state with the necessary information for making educational policy decisions (Basic and Upper Secondary School Act 2023).

5. A Historical Overview of the External Evaluation System

Estonia introduced a national external evaluation system in 1997 for state monitoring purposes.

The system of state exams organized at the end of upper secondary school started during the 1995/96 school year by conducting experimental state exams in English and German and in chemistry in schools where this was requested. In history, preparatory test for the state exam was carried out. In the spring of 1997, the national upper-secondary school final exams were already being held in five subjects, including history, as were experimental exams in two more subjects (External ...1996-2013).

For the first time in Estonia's history, the basic school final exam was held in 2000. It was preceded, as in the case of the state exam in 1999, by a nationwide test through which the suitability of the format of the work was checked and teachers and students were given experience of the type of questions to be answered in the upcoming exam (External ...1996-2013).

In 2014, the concept of the external evaluation of general education was adopted "Tasks, principles and foundations of development of external evaluation of general education until 2020", following which changes were implemented: The results of the basic school final exams are not linked to graduation; the exam result remained one of the bases for the student's continuation to the next level of study (Tasks ...2014).

In the spring of 2024, e-test exams were held in English, Estonian and Estonian as a second language. E-trial exams were optional for 9th grade graduates. The purpose of the test exam was to check the technical readiness of the schools, to practice the new exam format, to give feedback on the exam organization process, and to get input on whether the systems for introducing e-exams are functioning smoothly (Forms and..., 2024).

6. External Evaluation in the Academic Year 2023/2024

External evaluation of learning results is awarded through level (stage) assignments, unified basic-school final exams and national exams after upper-secondary education.

Level control work is carried out in grades 4 and 7 with low-stakes tests in mathematics, literacy and other subjects, including the social sciences. The purpose of conducting level tests is to assess the acquisition of general competences, field competences, cross-cutting topics and the learning outcomes of the national curricula. The tests have been computer-based since 2017. The sample includes at least 5% of the students of the corresponding class of the entire country across different groups of students and groups of educational institutions. Schools find them a valuable tool of quality measurement and participate in them voluntarily. The result of the level (stage) assignment is not considered as the basis of the summative assessment, and is not graded (Level works...2023).

After the basic school, the student takes three state-prepared basic-school final exams, of which the following are mandatory: 1) Estonian or Estonian as a second language; 2) mathematics; and one of the ten nationally prepared subjects chosen by the student. The exam score must be 50% of the maximum score. The examination papers of the unified basic school final examinations are evaluated by the (school) final examination committee, based on the examination paper evaluation guide for the relevant subject (Forms and ... 2023).

Forms and times of state exams, subjects, forms and times of unified basic-school final exams and level papers are established as regulations of the Minister of Education and Science (Forms and...2023). The results of the state exam and the final exam of the unified basic school can be appealed to the Ministry of Education and Research (Basic and Upper Secondary School Act 2023).

In addition, schools can use centrally compiled baseline tests, diagnostic tests and general competence tests (E-assessment tools 2024).

The baseline test is a more extensive subject test, with the help of which the teacher can assess the mastery of the topics covered in the previous period (academic year). These tests are especially suitable for use at the very beginning of the school year to specify further study

and to find students who need to improve their prior knowledge. They are prepared in history for classes 6-9 (Baseline tests 2023). Diagnostic computer-based tests (d-tests) are small-scale subject tests that are used to assess knowledge related to one topic or sub-skill in current studies. They are suitable for use at the beginning and/or end of a topic in order to identify existing prior knowledge or to notice gaps in knowledge that have arisen during the learning process. The tests are subject-specific and available in the social sciences as well (Tests and ... 2023).

General competence tests are e-tests for feedback on students' performance according to different general competences (e.g. learning competence, communication competence). In the case of competences, an assessment is given of the student's knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, etc., on which his or her ability to cope both at school and in everyday life in general depends. The results help teachers understand the individual characteristics of the students and to notice the areas where the student might need support in the case of different competencies (General competence tests 2023).

7. Basic School Final Exam in History in 2023: Analysis of the Exam Paper

7.1 Method of Analysis

The examination papers were analyzed in comparison with the history syllabus (National curriculum for basic schools) and the requirements for preparing examination papers (regulation of the Minister of Education and Research No. 54 2015/2023).

The following aspects were observed: 1. Does the examination paper meet the requirements for history teaching; 2. Does the examination paper meet the requirements for preparation: thematic balance; variety and difficulty of examination tasks; 3. Is the examination paper within the reach of the students?

The analysis prepared by the Education and Youth Board has been used to analyze the accessibility of the examination and draw conclusions.

The examination paper is available: [Exam 2023](#).

7.2 Exam Format

According to the regulation (Principles...2002), the purpose of the basic-school final exam is to assess the acquisition of general competences, subject field competences, cross-curricula topics and learning outcomes of the third school level of the national curricula in order to assess the quality of education and to give feedback to different interested target groups.

The exam paper was developed by a committee consisting of practicing teachers based on the organizational instructions of the Education and Youth Board. An expert evaluated the content validity of the exam paper. Based on the evaluation, clarifications and corrections were made to the tasks and assessment instructions.

The work consisted of a written optional exam, which took 2 hours and 30 minutes to complete. The exam could be taken in both Estonian and Russian, and exceptionally also in Ukrainian. Exam papers were evaluated at the school based on the evaluation manual prepared by the Education and Youth Board. The exam was considered passed if the student achieved at least 50% of the maximum result. In the school, the exam was organized by the school's exam committee, which has three members (for mandatory exams, there is also an external observer). Analysis of the exam results is performed centrally based on the sample.

Preparation for the exam paper is based on the basic-school national curriculum and the principles formulated in the history syllabus, including the skills developed through subject teaching. A maximum of 20% of the points in the examination papers (except for language subjects) of the unified basic school final exams must be for performance at the recognition level, 30% at the reproduction level and 50% at the application level (analysis, generalization, evaluation). Requirements are on the basis of the regulation (Conditions... 2015). When answering the questions in the examination paper, the student is allowed to use the "History atlas for basic school". The exam requirements are explained to teachers and become available at the beginning of the school year (Certificate ... 2024).

7.3 Exam Characterization, Compliance with Compilation Requirements

The topics of the exam paper are based only on the content of the 9th grade. The tasks covered two broad topics: Estonian history (30 points) and world history in the 20th century (30 points). These themes were divided in their turn into seven narrow sub-themes.

Field/topics	Allocated points	Share weight in %
Short essay	15	20
Estonian history 1918-2004 (3 topics)	30	26.7
World history 1918-the collapse of the Eastern Bloc (3 topics + culture and living conditions)	30	26.7
Total	75	100%

Table 1. Distribution of points in the exam paper by exam parts and topics

The exam paper is thematically balanced, with equal weighting of points for Estonian and world history.

The structure of the exam paper consisted of a written essay (part I) and 19 tasks (part II), for which it is possible to score 75 points.

As for the essay (15 points), the student could choose the most suitable of four topics, one from Estonian, two from world history and one from culture. Five questions were prepared for each topic, which helped to open it up (see the examination paper: [Exam 2023](#)).² It was added as a guideline, keeping the length of the discussion to a minimum of 120 words.

All essay topics required historical knowledge, knowledge of basic concepts, understanding of the historical context, and characterization, as well as giving examples, reasoning, and evaluation.

Part II (60 points) had nineteen tasks, which contained a total of nearly fifty individual questions/subtasks, through which both knowledge and skills were checked: source analysis; map recognition; knowledge of relevant facts, persons and concepts; knowing features characteristic of the period/theme, characterizing, comparing, creating connections, evaluating, giving an assessment. Students could choose the order in which they solved the tasks themselves. Assignments were evaluated in full points. When asking only for

knowledge, a sub-point scale was applied, the number of correct answers scoring a total of 1 point.

The tasks covered different levels of thinking, as required by the regulation:

1. knowledge (concepts, facts, knowledge of laws);
2. understanding/comprehension (describing, explaining, paraphrasing);
3. application of knowledge (use in a new situation, forecasting);
4. analysis and synthesis (showing connections, comparing, grouping, differentiating, connecting facts and patterns);
5. evaluation (making conclusions and decisions).

	Estonian history	World history	Together
Cartoon	5	3	8
Choosing and justifying an example	4		4
Source (text)	4+3+4	4+3	18
Concepts	3	2+3	8
Ranking	3		3
Image and text	2		2
Timeline placement (before and after)	2	2	4
Picture		3+1	4
Characterization		2	2
Knowledge of geography (map)		2	2
Political power (map)		3	3
True and false statements		2	2
Total	30	30	60

Table 2. Thematic distribution of tasks in points

In most tasks, different levels of knowledge were combined. Only knowledge was asked for 12 points, i.e. 16% of the entire exam paper. The task based on the source excerpt stands out with the highest number of points, followed by knowledge of concepts and cartoon analysis.

If we compare the exam tasks with the learning outcomes of basic-school history, we see that the exam paper represents orientation in time; making a choice, making an independent decision and justifying it; knowledge of basic concepts and international organizations; analyzing and responding to different types of sources (photo, cartoon, text, graph) based on the sources; and placing an event, phenomenon and manifestation in context. The exam paper did not only present empathy, or putting oneself in someone else's situation, among the skills to be developed through history teaching. The authors of the exam pointed out in the analysis that the exam's internal reliability was good (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.91$, values from 0.7 are considered acceptable, values between 0.9 and 0.95 are targeted in high-stakes tests) and the standard error of the test was within normal limits (SEM = 3.30; SEM 95% confidence level +/-6.47 points). Difficulty (p-values for difficulty index ranging from 0.68 to 0.91) and discriminating powers (rit values ranging from 0.36 to 0.8 and rir values ranging from 0.31 to 0.64) were also rated as suitable for almost all tasks. The only thing that differed from the others was the very last task of the exam, "Sports, culture and politics" (p = 0.5, rit = 0.22, rir = 0.17), where students had to decide on the truth of four presented statements (Oll, Liivas 2023).

When preparing the tasks, the expectations of the task's difficulty level, the principles highlighted in the description of the history subject and the skills to be developed with the subject teaching have been followed.

7.4 Overview of Exam Performance: Results

The overview of exam results is based on the data presented in the summary of the basic school history exam prepared by the Education and Youth Board (Oll, Liivas 2023).

The average result of the exam papers in 2023 was 58.5 points (of 75) or 78%, the median was 61 points. Two students achieved the maximum result, i.e. 75 points, and the minimum result this year was 7 points. The standard deviation of the exam results was 11.04 points, which is similar across years.

Since the history exam in basic school is a choice for students, it is expected that students who are interested in history will take it. In 2023, 329 students (225 boys and 174 girls) took the exam. The exam

paper was within the reach of most of those who took it. 96% of students scored more than 50%.

Over the years, more than two-thirds of students who took the history exam have been boys and less than a third have been girls (68.4% and 31.6%, respectively, in 2023). For years, boys' results have been slightly better.

Gender	N	Average	Average %	Max	Min	Success %	Quality %
Boys	225	59.4	79.2	75	7	97.3	67.1
Girls	104	54.3	75.4	75	24	93.3	55.8

Table 3. Exam results and success and quality indicators by gender in 2023

According to the organizers of the exam, the steady deterioration of girls' results over the past two years is worrying.

As a positive development, the results of examinees who took the exam in Estonian and Russian have become equal again this year after a long time, and the differences between them are no longer statistically significant. In 2023, the history exam could also be taken in Ukrainian as an exception. Seven students choose this option, and they did well, especially considering that half of the exam content consisted of tasks related to Estonian history. The results of those who took the exam in Ukrainian ranged between 30 and 65 points, with the average result being 64.2%.

Language	N	Average	Average %	Max	Min	Success %	Quality %
Estonian	245	59.1	78.8	75	7	96.7	64.9
Russian	77	57.5	76.6	75	24	94.8	62.3

Ukrainian	7	48.1	64.2	65	30	85.7	28.6
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Table 4. Exam results and success and quality indicators by language of performance in 2023

There are statistically significant differences in the three parts of the exam by language of performance. Russian-speaking students know the topic of World War II a little better than others, but the effect is very small. However, Estonian-speaking students have an advantage in topics in Estonian history, and here the effect is slightly larger.

The statistical indicators are similar across years. I will present the results of the last three years for comparison.

Year	Sample	Average	Average %	Max	Min	Success %
2021	317	57	75.9	75	4	90.2
2022	253	60.1	80.2	75	11	93.7
2023	329	58.5	78.0	75	7	96.0

Table 5. General information on the results of the history exam 2021–2023

On average, 11.2 points (of 15) were obtained for the essay (maximum 15). The essay was assessed using a set of assessment guidelines that have been in place for a long time and are well-known to teachers. However, writing an essay continues to be a challenge for students.

	Average	Structure	Analysis	Context of the era	Facts	Conclusions	Spelling
Total	74.81	76.0	70.8	87.2	76.4	72.8	68.8

Table 6. Essay performance percentages for aspects of assessment guide

Gender	N	N%	Average	Average %	Max	Min
Boys	225	68.4	11.3	75.35	15	0
Girls	104	31.6	11.0	73.65	15	0

Table 7. Essay results by gender

Language	N	N%	Average	Average %	Max	Min
Estonian	245	74.5	11.4	76.27	15	0
Russian	77	23.4	10.6	70.74	15	0
Ukrainian	7	2.1	10.3	68.57	13	4

Table 8. Essay results by language of performance

The most popular theme was the outbreak of World War II (49.8%), which also had the highest average performance. General topics, which require students to use examples from different eras and analyze the bigger picture, have not been particularly popular with students, even though they provide a better measure of skills that topics focusing on individual periods or events. When comparing different aspects of discussions, analysis continues to cause difficulties for students. Instead of analyzing events, students often simply retell events. The subtopics of the exam are fairly clear to all students equally. The average solution of tasks was between 50-91% and the solution of individual questions was between 46.8-94.8%.

Four complete tasks were rather easy for the students (the task "Occupations" containing cartons of Stalin and Hitler (91%), the source task "March Bombing" (91%), the source task "Germany" (89%) and the task containing diagrams on "Estonians outside Estonia" (87%).

The last part of the exam stood out for its weaker results: The development of culture and technology in the 20th century (61%), which had achieved high results in previous exams. In the analyzed exam paper, the questions in the task “Sports, culture and politics” were too difficult for students. A disproportionately large number of students who otherwise performed well in the exam made mistakes. The exam organizers pointed out that students could have been allowed one mistake to receive maximum points.

The results were also slightly lower than average on the topic of the Cold War and the collapse of the Eastern Bloc (74%).

In the individual questions, students still had difficulties in knowing about the June coup in Estonian history (46.8%), knowing the alternative name for the Cuban Missile Crisis (missile crisis, Caribbean crisis) (48.9%), naming the invention that contributed to the emergence of a consumer society (conveyor/production line) (51.1%), and knowing about the domestic politics and economy of the Republic of Estonia in the period 1918–1934. As already noted, Russian-speaking students know the topic of the Second World War a little better than others, but the effect is very small ($t(329) = -1.89$, $p = 0.06$, Cohen’s $d = -0.25$). Estonian history 1918–1944 ($t(329) = 3.13$, $p < 0.01$, Cohen $d = 0.41$) and Estonian history 1944–1991 ($t(329) = 3.16$, $p < 0.01$, Cohen $d = 0.41$). However, Estonian-speaking students have an advantage in parts, and here the effect is slightly larger.

Oll and Liivas found that the 2023 basic-school history exam can be considered a success. The exam paper was suitable for evaluating the history learning results in the exam ($M = 58.5$, $SD = 11.04$, Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.91$, $SEM = 3.3$) and was within the students’ ability. The latter was confirmed by both the statistics of the tasks and the feedback received from the teachers (Oll, Liivas 2023).

8. Discussion

Assessment is an organic part of the curriculum. Curriculum theory provides that the national curriculum is a social agreement, the creation of which establishes what students must know and be able to do, i.e. the result that is expected to be achieved (educational standard, learning outcomes). The next question is how the expected results are reached: methodology, and subject content choices. The age appropriateness of what is being learned is arranged based on the

principle of what is learned at what age, and then control and evaluation to get an overview of how the stated learning outcomes have been acquired (Tyler 1949; Beyer and Liston 1996). The basic school and national exams were a step towards re-establishing the standard. Thus, external evaluation may have influenced the actual teaching even more than the national curriculum.

History teaching manuals that explain the different aspects, goals and methods of assessment highlight that the first question to consider when planning an assessment is what you want to find out through the assessment and what conclusions can be drawn from this knowledge. The main idea of assessment is to improve learning, not just to judge progress (Haydn, Stephen 2022: 283).

A former minister of education, Tõnis Lukas,³ recalled that the main argument of the critics of national exams was that schools are not trusted with the organization of exams. Exam preparation affects the educational process and school choices. Upper-secondary schools want high exam results and reject students with lower academic results. Since the national curriculum adopted in 2011 prioritized the natural sciences and IT, it was decided to introduce the Estonian language, mathematics and a foreign language as compulsory national exams. Since, in addition to the three state exams, students had to complete a mandatory research paper and one school exam, optional state exams, including history, which could be taken between 1997 and 2013, could no longer be included in the selection, and it was decided to stop preparing them centrally (Lukas 2024). Elective exams after the basic school remained.

This decision had both critics and supporters. According to Aimi Püüa,⁴ head of the tests and evaluation department of the Education and Youth Board, the system of state exams worked well: students had a choice, and all exams were chosen. For teachers, participating in the examination process as both task-makers and evaluators counted as training (Püüa 2024).

At the same time, the question of whether state exams are necessary at all has been a topic of discussion in society all the time. The discussion intensified in 2019, when Parliament discussed a bill that would abolish basic-school final exams and give schools the right to decide whether a student has completed basic education. The press asked: “Are we really throwing final exams into the dustbin of history?” (Saarte Hääl 2019). The school director confirmed that the

exam is necessary to clarify what level the student is at in this subject (Anton 2019). A 9th grade student's position was that some kind of exam-like work should still be set at the end of the 9th grade, otherwise basic education would be given too lightly and would not be meaningful enough for school graduates. It was also meaningful for the student to receive an assessment of their level (Liiv 2019). The retention of final exams with uniform tasks for basic schools was supported by the trade union of education workers (Estonian Education Workers' Union) and 23 teacher subject unions. (Uued Uudised 2019).

Teachers' attitudes towards exams are also not uniform. In the columns of the teachers' newspaper *Õpetajate Leht*, the media discussion about basic-school final exams was summarized in an article discussing whether the exams are necessary, what their positive impact is, or whether they show a lack of trust in teachers who assess students at school on a daily basis (Savi 2019). The article was accompanied by nineteen comments, highlighting the necessity of exams, but also agreeing with the view that teachers could be trusted as assessors.

One history teacher argued that basic-school final exams with uniform tasks provide a good overview of the effectiveness of teaching across the country. Their elimination would increase the gap between schools' respective levels of learning and eliminate the national analysis of results and the systematic in-service training of teachers based on it. Preparing exam papers in schools would increase teachers' workload (Somelar 2019). Exam papers prepared by teachers in one school may not achieve the same quality as those prepared by a national committee. Also, in the case of exam papers prepared in schools, the opportunity to assess students' knowledge on the same basis is lost, since exam papers may have different levels of difficulty from school to school. Another teacher supported John Hattie's 138 influence factors (2009), which are related to positive or negative learning outcomes. The learner's expectations for their progress came first. Thus, the most important role of a teacher is to raise students' expectations of themselves. Success encourages students to keep the bar higher if this is not associated with excessive effort. In light of this changed approach to learning, final exams may no longer play such a big role, despite the teacher's daily activities in motivating students to make an effort (Rekaya 1919).

Since the exam paper was prepared based on the principles and learning outcomes of the history syllabus, the exam changed the teaching of history from fact-centered to skills-building. It was especially important in the second half of the 1990s to overcome the Soviet-era fact-oriented teaching practice, supporting the view that assessment can shape the learning process in the desired direction (Assessment Handbook 2018.) When the examination paper required writing an argument, analyzing sources and a map, forming your own position and justifying it, this was also applied in the learning process.

The external evaluation system ensures the same conditions for all examinees. The central preparation of the work and anonymous evaluation ensured a more objective result. Centrally prepared work excludes copying the teacher's "handwriting" in assignments and shows whether students also understand assignments formulated in a different way if they are used to answering with their teacher. Assessment based on centrally prepared guidelines is therefore more objective and uniform than school evaluation. The coincidence or difference between the grades of the study paper and the result of the examination paper gives the teacher food for thought about the objectivity of the assessment, as well as about the emphasis in the study: whether the learning outcomes of the syllabus, based on which the assessment was made during the study process, have been based.

Based on the evaluation manual, teachers could evaluate their students' work themselves and obtain immediate feedback on which topics and tasks their students succeeded in and which they did not, and which skills the students had acquired, but which still needed work. The examination paper's analysis seminars, where the examination papers were evaluated together and the students' answers were jointly analyzed, helped to harmonize both the assessment principles and the understanding of a meaningful answer. The assessment guidelines and schemes were introduced in the teaching. High-quality exam tasks were compiled as sample materials for use in teaching.

Since the exam result was not as weighty for the student as the state exam result, and national rankings were not compiled in the press, the teachers were less stressed. However, some teachers complained that school principals expect good results and thus teachers are placed under pressure. There have been cases where a school prevents a student from choosing a certain exam because the performance may not be high. However, the exam result is mostly

related to the student's ability and motivation. Another concern related to the exam was the fear that teachers would only focus on exam topics in their teaching, as well as the fact that schools pay the main attention to exam subjects by offering optional subjects as well, as Jönsson and Leden have argued (2019).

With the rapid development of technology, new problems are added - how to ensure an equal situation for all learners and avoid the possibility of using the aid of technology if it is not allowed. This requires thinking through the organization of the exam as well as the development of the exam paper itself in accordance with the development of technology.

According to Aimi Püüa, today's exam is yesterday's task. We must be ready for the electronic passing of exams with regard to content development, assessment and technical equipment (school computer parks). If we have an e-state and e-environments are used more and more, education must follow the same path, including external evaluation, so that the student is not just a user of technology, but has critical competences and skills. For this, it is important to be ready for new developments (Püüa 2024).

Each form of external evaluation provides feedback to the state about the quality of education. At the same time, it affects the teaching of subjects, highlighting what is more important. In conclusion, it must be recognized that external evaluation has had a great impact on history education.

9. Limitations of the Article

Few teachers actively express their opinions, and the positions published in the press do not represent the opinions of all teachers. The author of the article was not able to become acquainted with the opinions of teachers and students on the 2023 exam paper I analyzed. The Education and Youth Board, which organizes the exams, encourages teachers to provide feedback, but very few make any use of it. It would also be interesting to know whether students' evaluations of the complexity of exam tasks coincide with statistical indicators, which tasks were more interesting for them, and which posed greater challenges. This would require further research.

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Notes

¹ The school stages of basic schools are: 1) stage I – grades 1–3; 2) stage II – grades 4–6; 3) stage III – grades 7–9. National curriculum for basic schools (2024): <https://www.rigiteataja.ee/en/eli/529042024002/consolide>.

² See the Exam Paper here

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/15dT9xEEXI-F6-vvwx7Wm3lvnywbGpwRE/edit>

³ Tõnis Lukas was the Minister of Education in 1999–2002, and Minister of Education and Research in 2007–2011 and 2022–2023.

⁴ Aimi Püüa has long experience of working in the education system (2003–2024).

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PERCEPTIONS AND THE USE OF DIGITAL HERITAGE COLLECTIONS IN A CLASSROOM CONTEXT: AN EXPLORATORY SURVEY OF HISTORY TEACHERS IN FLANDERS*

Joris Van Doorselaere, Lise Foket, Eef Rombaut

Growing attention is being paid to a disciplinary approach in literature on history education. In this regard, in addition to the textbook, digital heritage collections have increasing potential to find usable sources for historical inquiries and to design student-centred lessons or projects. This study explores if and how history teachers in Flanders rely on digital heritage collections in their general classroom practice and how they conceive the notion of (digital) heritage. Conducted through an exploratory survey, the results show that history teachers' knowledge about digital heritage collections appears to be limited, leading to their overlooking these resources. This reaffirms the existing challenge of establishing sustainable connections between the field of (history) education and cultural institutions. The implications of this study underscore the importance of educators' epistemic beliefs regarding (digital) heritage, showing how these beliefs shape their instructional practices in the classroom.

1. Introduction

Historical inquiry can be considered an overarching pedagogical approach that goes by different names, and which is valued for its apparent ability to engage students actively (Moreno-Vera, Monteagudo-Fernández and Gómez-Carrasco, 2023; van Boxtel et al., 2021). It is contrasted with activities that are more teacher-centred, such as lecturing content (Kiem, 2019; Stearns et al., 2000). Consequently, in the last decade there has been a broad consensus among history education scholars on the importance of including historical inquiry as a core teaching strategy in classroom practice (Bain et al., 2024 Brush and Saye, 2014; Cooper, 2017; Levstik and

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Barton, 2023). This rise in scholarly interest coincides with the growing attention to a disciplinary approach that is being addressed in the specialist literature (Lee, 2011; Seixas, 2017).

Historical inquiry draws on the use of primary and secondary sources and works with them. When setting up such student-centred activities, history teachers must look for these sources themselves in order to select and present them to students in the context of a classroom inquiry. However, empirical evidence from North America (Cuban, 2016; Lévesque and Zanazanian, 2015) and European countries (OHTE, 2023) suggests that history teachers largely implement traditional methods such as textbook usage and the sources or other materials that come with textbooks, even when students experience them as uninteresting (Haydn, 2011). Moreover, van Boxtel et al. (2021) point out that in most cases textbooks provide very limited support for historical inquiries, which may be one of the reasons why most teachers appear reluctant to organize such activities.

At first sight, and along with the rise of the Internet in recent decades, there seems to be an abundance of opportunities where history teachers can find primary and secondary sources. Cultural institutions, such as archives, museums and heritage organizations have holdings consisting of, for example, newspapers, photographs, or artworks. Stimulated by policy developments, in recent decades cultural institutions have attempted to valorise collections by making them digitally accessible in a sustainable way for a broad audience (Terras, 2022). This coincides with the increasing digital availability of collections, thus reducing further the threshold to implementing the use of such sources in the classroom. For example, a number of international projects, including the Europeana online platform and the Google Arts and Culture platform, have been launched to enhance accessibility to digital heritage collections (Europeana, n.d.; Google Arts and Culture, n.d.). Similar efforts are also being pursued nationally or regionally. For instance, Flemish policy regarding the ‘Targeted Digital Transformation Program (2021-2023)’ is to boost cultural participation by connecting diverse cultural offerings with interested participants and by establishing data-driven policies and standards (Vlaanderen Department Cultuur, Jeugd and Media, n.d.). Thus the use of digital heritage provides low-barrier opportunities for implementing historical inquiry in the classroom.

From this perspective, digital heritage collections have increasing potential, in addition to the textbook, to find usable sources for historical inquiries and to design student-centred lessons or projects. Yet there is little evidence of how this is implemented in the classroom. This study aims to explore if and how history teachers in Flanders rely on digital heritage collections in their general classroom practice. The central premise is that teachers' perceptions and experiences are critical to the success of national or supranational initiatives that promote the use of digital heritage. To support this study, the theoretical framework discusses two recent developments in history education research concerning historical inquiry: a growing interest in the use of digital heritage; and a need to foster the integration of educational technologies. The results will be used primarily to inform history teachers' initial training and professional development. However, the results will also be relevant for teachers active in the field of arts and culture.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Growing Interest in the Use of (Digital) Heritage

As the term 'digital heritage' is both ambiguous and a buzzword (Rahaman, 2018), this paper will mostly use UNESCO's definition and refer to digital heritage as 'cultural, educational, scientific and administrative resources, as well as technical, legal, medical and other kinds of information created digitally, or converted into digital form from existing analogue resources' (UNESCO, 2003). Recently, scholars have also used the term 'digital heritage' more broadly to refer to broader digital applications to heritage as well, such as how augmented reality or virtual reality can invoke new ways of engaging with heritage (Münster, 2019; Alberti et al., 2020). This paper also refers to digital heritage collections as compilations of digital heritage that are organized, curated and preserved by cultural institutions, such as libraries, archives, or museums, and that are made available to wider audiences on the Internet on platforms or in databases. The explosive growth of digital media has increased access to cultural heritage and expanded the ways in which heritage can be shared and presented online (Meyer et al., 2007; Grammalidis and Poullos, 2019). With the growing availability of digital heritage collections, it can be argued that they also have increasing potential for history education (Zhao et al., 2015). Therefore, such collections need to be considered

an important resource for teachers in addition to the textbook when finding usable primary sources to design and set up inquiry activities in history education (Martin, 2003; Walsh, 2017).

The importance of digital competences in the field of education has been recognized by policy-makers. For example, the European Parliament and the Council of Europe (2006) have adopted a framework of key competences, which stresses the use of digital technologies for learning. However, Tribukait (2020) argues that the framework on the European, supranational level concerning digital learning is rather vague and not fully adapted to implementation in history curricula nationally, as it relies on student-centred learning described in terms of efficiency. According to Tribukait, this rationale does not apply to history education, where the use of digital technologies in support of a disciplinary approach undoubtedly requires a greater investment of time and effort from teachers. In this regard, the Observatory in History Teaching in Europe (OHTE, 2023) indicated that there is a growing need for the training of ICT skills among in-service teachers, and therefore stressed to stimulate more research into how online resources are used for teaching history.

Thus, there is an emerging need for a more constructive dialogue between history education and public history (Demantowsky, 2018). Although both can be considered subdisciplines within the overarching field of history, scholarship has recently been targeting the common ground between them (Cauvin, 2022). The educational departments of cultural institutions, for example, have difficulties in addressing the specific needs of history teachers. In response, the European Association of History Educators (EUROCLIO) has provided archives, museums and other heritage institutions with relevant recommendations in an attempt to establish productive connections between the field of education and cultural institutions (Stegers, 2020). Nevertheless, it remains unclear how, if at all, history teachers make use of the various initiatives.

Scholarship has been advocating the use of heritage in the broad sense whenever more student-centred activities are desired in history education practice. In general terms, heritage has the potential to enrich history lessons and make them more relevant and interesting. This claim draws on the fact that different forms of heritage, such as languages and their dialects, statues, monuments, or traditions, often surround students in their everyday lives when they could also be

contributing to a vivid experience in the classroom and allow them to reflect on the relationship between past, present and future (Grever van Boxtel and Klein 2015). Subsequently, teaching practices that revolve around heritage are mainly described in the literature as a way of actively engaging students to acquire a critical understanding of history and culture (Delgado-Algarra and Cuenca-Lopez, 2020). Besides a focus on cognitive goals, there is also a line of argument to rely on heritage and its affective dimension, for example, when designing meaningful historical inquiries for students (Barton, 2016). Therefore, heritage could increase the relevance of a disciplinary teaching of history, an idea that tends to be somewhat abstract for students.

Although in the past decade the apparent educational potential of heritage has been sufficiently stressed in the literature, its integration into practice seems limited. History teachers are not always keen on leaving the classroom and engaging with learning on location. This is reflected in the fact that museums, heritage places, or local manifestations of heritage such as traditions are infrequently used as a resource (OHTE, 2023). In this sense, digital forms of heritage that can easily be integrated within a classroom context seem to be a worthy alternative. However, despite a unified conclusion that digital heritage guarantees to be re-used in an educational context, if and how this happens is not always clear or transparent. A literature review by Valencia Arnica (2023) pointed out that the integration of technology into a didactic model for heritage education remains challenging, a notion echoed in earlier work by Rahaman and Tan (2010), who argue that many digital heritage projects were not designed nor developed in a user-centred manner, with most projects focusing predominantly on describing the heritage in a digital form. In order to create truly usable digital resources, its users, and particularly their needs, must be central throughout the development process (Warwick, 2012). Furthermore, in our digital age, digital-born heritage is increasingly relevant, presenting its own set of challenges for the cultural sector, particularly in terms of preservation (UNESCO, 2003). Rutten et al. (2018) relied on interviews and focus groups to uncover the needs and conditions of teachers for re-using digital cultural content. The report identified that many teachers struggle to access and find cultural resources. Multiple interconnected factors were identified: ICT infrastructure, or a lack of communication and collaboration between the cultural sector and

education (Rutten et al., 2018). Therefore, understanding history teachers' perceptions of digital heritage is a crucial step in designing resources that are truly useful and reusable in these educational contexts.

To put the potential into practice, a subfield of scholarship has been initiated that explores the perspectives of teachers across different subjects regarding the use of heritage in the classroom (Estepa Giménez et al., 2008; Jiménez-Perez et al., 2010). In the case of history education, the majority of the research focused on pre-service teachers' reasons for improving teacher-training programmes. Although it is found that these studies value the use of heritage, this line of research also points to the importance of a thorough understanding of the heritage concept to employ it for active and student-centred methodologies. A limited conception of heritage – for example, when it is solely described in material terms or is characterized by a one-sided focus on the past while neglecting its present or future perspective – restricts its didactic potential (e.g., Felices-De la Fuente et al., 2020).

2.2 Fostering the Integration of Educational Technologies

Digital heritage collections are to be considered examples of educational technology. Since the turn of the last century, the concept of educational technology has undergone a paradigm shift as a result of the influence of constructivist learning theory (Januszewski and Molenda, 2008). In this approach, the learners and their (prior) experiences are assigned a central role in the creation of knowledge and meaning, while instruction is focused on guiding the learning process instead of relying on more direct forms of instruction (Schunk, 2020). For this reason, educational technology is defined in terms of facilitating the learning process (Januszewski and Molenda, 2008). Besides the apparent ability to stimulate active thinking, Morel and Spector (2023) also point out that the introduction of educational technology into the learning process has to provide added value in light of its purpose.

In the field of history education, the purpose of the integration of technology is often framed as a tool for inquiry. In this regard, and keeping in mind the growing curricular interest in disciplinary historical thinking skills, Hicks and Doolittle (2003) advocated the use of technology relying on the theoretical foundations of

constructivism. For example, they encouraged the teaching of history in schools by setting up authentic student inquiries, both individually and collaboratively, such as collecting and digitally archiving oral histories or searching for relevant primary sources in online digital libraries. Two decades later, their idea of active and inquiry-based learning through the use of digital resources still resonates among scholars and practitioners (Campillo-Ferrer and Sánchez-Ibáñez, 2023).

Such web-based and authentic inquiry tasks relying on digital media are essential to a disciplinary approach to teaching history (Blasszauer, 2013; Kelly, 2013; Tally and Goldenberg, 2005). They are often contrasted with the memorization of facts and are put forward by scholars to bring a hoped-for change in educating students in a world that is becoming increasingly digital, with all kinds of reliable or unreliable information close at hand (Goulding, 2019; Moreno-Vera, Monteagudo-Fernández and Gómez-Carrasco, 2023; Wineburg, 2018). However, these kinds of tasks can also be considered challenging for students (Nygren, 2014) and therefore they are mostly described in the literature as a form of higher-order thinking (Haydn, 2003). In this respect, educational technology is often credited with the ability to support students in their learning process.

Although for this reason, educational technologies are increasingly finding their way into the history classroom, there is still much to be gained in terms of how they are actually perceived and used in the field. In this regard, history teachers' beliefs can be considered crucial and have become a topic of study themselves (Doppen, 2004). For example, in their qualitative study relying on semi-structured interviews, Voet and De Wever (2017) found that history teachers in Flanders are inclined to value the integration of educational technologies positively, supported by a belief in the added value of such technologies. Nevertheless, the teachers overwhelmingly reported they used technology as a resource to bring content to the students without setting up historical inquiries and engaging students in higher-order thinking skills.

3. Research Questions and Context

In the developments discussed above, teachers are to be considered important agents of change. This warrants acquiring a better

understanding of their perceptions and experiences regarding the use of digital heritage and the possible barriers they face in finding or using such digital content in the history classroom. Moreover, this study also aims to explore how teachers in Flanders perceive the notions of heritage and digital heritage. A better understanding of teachers' perspectives could contribute to mapping the potential of heritage as a didactic resource in history education. Additionally, understanding these perceptions and barriers can help inform a better understanding of the needs so that digital heritage collections are better tailored for re-use in an educational context. Three research questions were formulated to address the gaps formulated in this paper:

RQ1: How do history teachers understand the notion of heritage?

RQ2: How do history teachers understand the notion of digital heritage?

RQ3: How do history teachers perceive or experience the use of digital heritage collections?

This study was conducted in Flanders, the northern, Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, with secondary history teachers. Full-time secondary education (from 12-18 years old) consists of three stages of two years each. History is a mandatory course and mostly takes up one or two hours a week depending on the study track students choose.

In teaching history in the first stage (12-14 years old), a professional bachelor's degree in secondary education is required. This teacher training lasts three years, during which two teaching subjects have to be selected, of which history may be one. To be qualified to teach history in the third stage (16-18 years old), a Master's degree in history and a teacher's degree are required. For the second stage (14-16 years old) there is an overlap, where both the professional Bachelor's degree with history as a teaching subject and the combination of a Master's degree in history with a teaching degree are accepted.

In September 2019, a new curriculum framework and associated standards for secondary education were gradually deployed in the field. A set of sixteen key competences were devised, based on the eight key competences adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of Europe (2006). For history education, these standards revolve around the concept of historical thinking (Van Nieuwenhuyse, 2020). Flemish history teachers possess considerable

autonomy in the selection of content or didactic methods and are also free to choose whether or not to make use of a textbook, as there are no conditions set by the government (Van Nieuwenhuysse, 2020). However, research conducted when previous standards were in use showed that history teachers tend to focus on transmitting historical knowledge and employ sources in a rather illustrative manner (Van Nieuwenhuysse et al., 2017), while historical inquiry has found little ground in classroom practice (Voet and De Wever, 2017; 2019). Moreover, the digital competence in the Flemish curriculum for secondary education has no requirements for the use of educational technologies in history lessons specifically, nor vice versa, though history teachers have the freedom to do so if they wish.

The recent introduction of historical thinking invites us to explore how history teachers in Flanders search for additional relevant content online. Meemoo, the Flemish Institute for Archives, has been the primary institution driving the promotion of the (re-)use of digital heritage in the region. Together with content partners such as archives, museums, heritage libraries, or other government organizations, it has set up a platform, the Archive for Education, that makes audiovisual heritage freely accessible for teachers. During the development of this Archive, meemoo conducted several surveys and held focus-group discussions and co-creative workshops with the aim of tailoring the archive to the general needs of teachers (meemoo, s.d.). Meemoo continues to evaluate overall teacher satisfaction using the platform (Schroeven and De Ridder, 2021), although it has not assessed its use among history teachers specifically.

4. Materials and Methods

4.1 Participants

This study follows a qualitative research design where data were collected through an online survey that explored the participants' views and experiences. The target population consisted of active history teachers in Flanders. A convenience non-probabilistic sampling technique was adopted to recruit as many participants as possible on a voluntary basis. A link to the online survey was disseminated via the professional networks of the researchers, the newsletters of pedagogical support services in Flanders and social media channels. The call for participation opened on 5 October 2023

and ended on 22 December 2023. A total of 132 participants started the online survey. However, as not all the items were mandatory, the response rate differs for each question.

The participating teachers varied according to the stage in which they were active: first stage ($n = 17$), both first and second stage ($n = 11$), second stage ($n = 20$), both second and third stage ($n = 34$), third stage ($n = 31$), all three stages ($n = 2$), or left the question open ($n = 17$). A majority of the teachers ($n = 43$) held a licentiate or a Master's as the highest degree, with only a small number ($n = 2$) that did not have a specific focus on history. The other teachers either had a three-year Bachelor's to teach in secondary education as their highest degree ($n = 21$), or another professional Bachelor's degree without a specific focus on history education ($n = 3$). The teachers ranged in years of experience from 3 years or less ($n = 13$), 3-10 years ($n = 26$), 10-20 years ($n = 33$), 20-30 years ($n = 29$) and more than 30 years ($n = 13$). In total, 33 teachers indicated that they only taught the subject of history. The other teachers combined history with other subjects, such as Dutch ($n = 14$), English ($n = 14$), geography ($n = 12$), cultural sciences ($n = 11$), citizenship ($n = 10$) and art sciences ($n = 10$). A majority of teachers ($n = 92$) indicated they made their own materials. However, textbook ($n = 45$) and workbook ($n = 37$) usage was also mentioned as a teaching resource.

4.2 *Research Instrument*

To address the central aim, an online survey was designed in Dutch and administered via Qualtrics (see Appendix 1). It was validated initially by senior researchers ($n = 3$) and pilot-tested by departmental staff members of the history teacher-training programme ($n = 3$) of Ghent University. Minor changes were made based on the feedback. The final version of the survey consisted of two sections. The first section (items 1-5) focused on professional characteristics through the use of multiple-choice questions with the option to add an open-ended response where applicable. The items probed participants' educational background, how long they were working as a history teacher, the stage(s) they were teaching, which other school subject(s) they taught, and which educational materials they used in the history classroom.

The second section (items 6-14) focused on participants' conceptual understanding and practical use of heritage. The first

three items were open-ended and asked participants to provide a description of heritage and digital heritage based on their understanding. Then a set of five items using a five-point Likert scale was presented with room for open-ended comments (in items 9, 12, and 13). This set of items explored participants' online search strategies for additional content, their use of digital heritage collections in general and meemoo in particular, and the barriers they face or experience during preparation and actual classroom practice. The final item in this section (item 14) asked for participants' professional needs in this regard through the use of a five-point Likert scale.

The online survey was preceded by obtaining informed consent explaining the purpose of the study and stating that all responses would be collected and analysed anonymously and would only be used within the context of this study. Respondents could leave their email address at the end (item 15) if they wanted to be informed of any follow-up research. These addresses were stored separately from the answers received.

4.3 *Data Analysis*

The data were exported to an Excel spreadsheet and loaded into the software package Atlas.ti 24. Analysis was performed based on the guidelines of reflexive thematic analysis, as it allows engagement with the data by relying on the prior experiences and assumptions of the researchers (Braun and Clarke, 2006). After familiarization with the data, the analysis focused on one research question at a time.

For RQ1, responses from the first two open-ended items were coded close to the data. The organization of the codes relied on the categories developed by López-Fernández et al. (2021): past, present, space, identity, and type. The analysis of RQ2 and RQ3 followed a more inductive approach, without relying on preconceived categories. Initial codes were generated on the sentence level and were subsequently used to develop distinctive categories. After further refinement and validation, relevant excerpts were selected in support of the generated categories.

5. Results

5.1 *Research Question 1: How Do History Teachers Understand the Notion of Heritage?*

More than half of the participants ($n = 77$) answered item 6. In their responses, references that corresponded to the category 'type' were most frequent (see Table 1). Moreover, it was found that a description relying on material elements prevailed. None of the participants addressed aspects of natural heritage. The use of references to 'past' and 'identity' was also prevalent. In this regard, almost all participants seemed to stress the historical dimension of heritage in their description, while the identity dimension was mirrored in the frequent use of the word 'important' coupled with words like 'society' or '(groups of) people'. References to 'space' and 'present' were less common. Regarding the former, a local connection was emphasised most, with five mentions. In general, no significant distinction was noticeable in the descriptions according to the participants' prior education or years of experience.

Category	Amount	%	Examples
Past	90	29.0	'from previous generations', 'legacy', 'inherit', 'history'
Present	13	4.2	'for present generations', 'now', 'today'
Space	15	4.8	'local', 'connected to an area', 'regions'
Identity	86	27.8	'ancestors', 'important', 'our', 'society', 'a group of people'
Type	106	34.2	'material', 'movable', 'objects', 'immaterial', 'testimonies'
Total	310	100.0	

Table 1. Categories of the participants' understanding of heritage

All the participants who answered item 6 ($n = 77$), also responded to item 7 by providing at least two examples of what they considered

heritage. Examples that the participants gave within their description in the first question were included as well. The results show a predominant focus on material heritage (see Table 2). Within this category, a majority of the examples could be grouped under the term ‘immovable heritage’, as participants mostly mentioned monumental examples, such as ‘castles’, ‘cathedrals’, ‘statues’, or ‘belfries’. Archaeological remains or other heritage sites were given only sporadically. To a lesser extent, the participants also referred to movable heritage, such as ‘objects’, ‘paintings’ and ‘documents’. Although intangible heritage was less prevalent than material heritage, a wide range of examples were mentioned. Finally, only three examples could be grouped under the term ‘natural heritage’, while ‘digital heritage’ was not referred to at all.

Category	N°	%	Examples
Material	147	58.6	‘cathedrals’, ‘statues’, ‘objects’, ‘paintings’, ‘documents’
Intangible	80	31.9	‘festivities’, ‘oral traditions’, ‘social practices’, ‘languages’
Natural	3	1.2	‘Verdronken Land van Saeftinghe’ [a tidal marsh] ‘inliers’
Undefined	21	8.3	‘everything on the list of UNESCO’, ‘religious heritage’
Total	251	100.0	

Table 2. Categories of the participants’ examples of heritage

5.2 Research Question 2: How Do History Teachers Understand the Notion of Digital Heritage?

More than half the participants ($n = 76$) filled in item 8, which solicited their understanding of the concept of digital heritage. Many participants interpreted digital heritage as being converted into a digital form through digitization (see Table 3). The notion of ‘born-digital heritage’ was considerably less prevalent in the responses. Additionally, notions of the preservation and accessibility of heritage

were recurrent throughout the responses. In contrast to the digitization of heritage, which is a task with a clear ending, digitally preserving that resource is rather a continuous, long-term process that is more time-intensive. A few other teachers ($n = 5$) interpreted digital heritage as neither digital reproduction nor as born-digital heritage, but rather as information about heritage. Additionally, a considerable number of participants ($n = 17$) demonstrated signs of difficulty in answering this item. Some participants ($n = 7$) answered that they did not yet have a clear interpretation, while others ($n = 9$) either explicitly expressed uncertainty about their responses, or conveyed uncertainty by using question marks.

Category	N°	%	Examples
Digitization	29	28.2	<i>'Sources that have been digitized', 'Digitized pieces from museums, archives, libraries, ...'</i>
Accessibility	17	16.5	<i>'Heritage that is made digitally accessible to the general public?'; 'Historic documents that are accessible online'; 'All heritage that has been made available digitally? The internet as a medium?'</i>
Preservation	14	13.6	<i>'Everything digitally that is worth preserving for the future'; 'Stories, documents, reports... that deserve to be preserved.' (Virtual) preservation as data of heritage that cannot be physically maintained or that has been stored in a currently unused carrier'</i>
Heritage institutions	13	12.6	<i>'I would think of a digital archive?'; 'Archival collections of, for example, Amsab'; 'Digital tours in museums'</i>
Born-digital	8	7.8	<i>'All digital elements that we as humans find important to keep or remember. [...]'; 'Digital material which has exerted a major influence on our current culture/society.'</i>

Information about heritage	5	4.9	<i>'Information about heritage which you can find online.'</i> <i>'I use museum sites a lot to view the collections, look up information and beautiful images.'</i> <i>'Online heritage, to consult to have more information about heritage'</i>
Uncertainty	17	16.5	<i>'None, never heard of it.'</i> <i>'I don't actually know. I would think of a digital archive?'</i> <i>'None.'</i> <i>'?'</i>
Total	103	100	

Table 3. Categories of the participants' understanding of digital heritage

Although the survey did not ask the participants to give examples of digital heritage, about a third of the responses ($n = 32$) used examples within their interpretation. Among them, some wrote down only examples rather than giving an interpretation. There were as many mentions of digitized heritage as there were of born-digital heritage (see Table 4). When the examples given could belong to both categories, such as 'photographs' or 'images', the example was labelled as 'undefined'.

Category	N°	%	Examples
Digitized heritage	17	41.5	<i>'Digitized manuscripts', 'VR visits of a monument'</i>
Born-digital heritage	17	41.5	<i>'Software', 'digital art', 'film', 'websites', 'games'</i>
Undefined	7	17.0	<i>'Photos', 'images', 'reports'</i>
Total	41	100.0	

Table 4. Categories of the participants' examples of digital heritage

5.3 Research Question 3: How Do History Teachers Perceive or Experience the Use of Digital Heritage Collections?

This research question included six items in the online survey, which were answered by 76 (item 9), 76 (item 10), 76 (item 11), 72 (item 12), 71 (item 13), and 77 participants (item 14).

A majority of participants frequently mentioned searching for additional online materials ($n = 66$) in item 9 (responses included 'often' and 'very often'). Using a conditional open sub-question (after responses 'sometimes', 'frequently', or 'very frequently'), these participants mainly indicated consulting general educational resources (see Table 5). Within these results, Flemish resources stood out, with 'The Archive for Education' and 'Klascement' being the most frequently mentioned sites overall ($n = 27$). The latter is an educational initiative of the Flemish government for teachers in general, where they can upload and share their materials with their peers. Interestingly in light of the research question, only a small number indicated regularly using the digital collections of heritage institutions, provided through their institutional platforms.

Category	N ^o	%	Examples
General educational resources	27	21.4	'Archive for Education', 'Klascement'
Historical resources	20	15.9	'Historical magazines', 'Historianet.nl', 'Historiek.net', 'Histoforum.net', 'VGN Kleio', 'Canon'
Media / Press	17	13.5	'VRT', 'Online newspapers', 'BBC', 'Radio 1'
Heritage Institutions	15	11.9	'Museum websites', 'Erfgoedbank', 'Liberus.eu'
Online Encyclopedia	11	8.7	'Wikipedia'
Video platform	7	5.6	'Youtube'

Academic resources	5	4.0	<i>'Stanford', 'KULeuven',</i>
Unspecified	24	19.0	<i>'Everywhere', 'Diverse websites', 'Google'</i>
Total	126	100.0	

Table 5. Categories of the participants' search strategy for additional online materials

The results of item 10 show no clear indication of when exactly the participants employ digital heritage collections, for example, during lesson preparations, or as a way to illustrate lesson content (see Appendix 2: item 10). However, most of the participants (never: $n = 28$; rarely: $n = 29$) indicated that they do not let students use such collections independently in the context of an inquiry assignment. This is in line with the results of item 11, which specifically asked when they relied on the Archive for Education. Again, a majority of the participants (never: $n = 36$; rarely: $n = 22$) indicated not letting their students use this collection in an independent way during inquiries (see Appendix 2: item 11).

Next, the participants were asked to indicate whether they experienced barriers when employing digital heritage collections during lesson preparation (item 12) and actual classroom practice (item 13). In both cases, they could specify via an open conditional sub-question (after responses 'sometimes', 'frequently', or 'very frequently'). It was found in general terms that most participants did not experience obstacles during lesson preparation (see Appendix: item 12). Within the open responses, the 'findability' of digital heritage collections was the most recurrent challenge, followed by 'accessibility' (see Table 6). These results seem to correspond with the barriers experienced during actual classroom practice (see Appendix 2: item 13). The responses show that 'accessibility' is the most recurrent challenge, and more specifically, issues surrounding the registration and login process (see Table 7).

Category	N°	%	Examples
Findability	12	37.5	<i>'Hard to find', 'Searching for sources is not easy', 'No clear keywords'</i>
Accessibility	10	31.3	<i>'Paywall', 'Hard to access', 'Logging in', 'Not everything accessible without a password'</i>
Ease of use	5	15.6	<i>'Databases are confusing', 'functioning of the site'</i>
Re-usability	3	9.4	<i>'Unusable in a class context', 'Sharing the material'</i>
Content not relevant	2	6.2	<i>'Material often Flemish', 'little heritage from prehistory and the ancient Near East'</i>
Total	32	100.0	

Table 6. Categories of barriers during lesson preparation (n = 23)

Category	N°	%	Examples
Accessibility	12	54.5	<i>'As a student, limited access'; 'Need to register'; 'Log in, share and make available'; 'Not everything accessible without a password / login'</i>
Skills students	4	18.2	<i>'Deficient language comprehension (Dutch) of students'; 'Students lack elementary digital skills'</i>
Findability	2	9.1	<i>'Students have difficulty finding specific information'</i>
Ease of use	2	9.1	<i>'Usability is not great'</i>
Re-usability	2	9.1	<i>'Hard integration in digital education systems'</i>
Total	22	100.0	

Table 7. Categories of barriers when using digital heritage collections during classroom practice (n = 21)

Finally, the results of item 14 show that the participants mainly agree on the need to employ digital heritage collections in such a way that students can make use of them independently during assignments. Moreover, most of them indicate a lack of knowledge about usable digital heritage collections. This is also reflected in the call expressed by a majority for professional development initiatives regarding the use of such collections in the history classroom (see Appendix 2: item 14).

6. Conclusion and Discussion

This study's main aim was to explore if and how history teachers in Flanders rely on digital heritage collections in their classroom practice (RQ3). Leading up to this aim, the study also contributed to the existing history education literature by shedding light on how they conceive the notion of heritage (RQ1) and digital heritage (RQ2). Nevertheless, the convenience sample in this study must be mentioned as a limitation as its representativeness is unknown, making it difficult to generalize the findings.

The responses to RQ1 indicate that Flemish history teachers have an understanding of heritage that is predominantly material. Such a traditional interpretation, with a focus on material and immovable heritage, was already observed in a large-scale study of heritage education in Flanders, which, however, did not target history teachers specifically (Van der Auwera, Schramme, Jeurissen, 2007). More recent findings from a case study of Flemish pre-service teachers showed that the traditional interpretation was still prevalent (Van Doorsselaere, 2024). Although not much is known in international terms, several studies in the Spanish context during the past decade have provided similar results (Marin and Fontal, 2020; López-Fernández et al., 2021). These studies mainly came about to counter the passive and teacher-centred employment of heritage in classroom practice. For example, Ferreras-Listán et al. (2020) showed that pre-service teachers used heritage in a rather illustrative or descriptive way. Such an approach would be detrimental to actively engaging students through the use of digital heritage collections.

In addition, this study finds that history teachers have an understanding of heritage that is mainly past-oriented and associated with identity. History teachers can hardly avoid focusing on the past, but when this becomes too one-sided, they could easily overlook the

contemporary temporal dimension, which makes them pass over the various opportunities to include heritage for student-centred learning. In this regard, Grever, van Boxtel and Klein (2015) stressed that this is an arduous task and asserted that history teachers should have sufficient knowledge of the notion of heritage. For example, from a more present-day perspective, students not only learn that heritage encompasses something that has come to us from the past, but also that it is a socio-cultural construct in which they can take on an active role. This seems meaningful in light of citizenship goals, as such an understanding, alongside the identity component, allows history teachers to tackle social or sustainability issues and create lessons that revolve around inquiry, dialogue and multi-perspectivity (Delgado-Algarra and Cuenca-Lopez, 2020).

The results also show that the relevance of digital forms of heritage do not occur to history teachers spontaneously. Furthermore, their interpretation of digital heritage, as addressed in RQ2, appears to be focused mainly on the digitization process of what they already considered as heritage. Although this shows that a considerable number of history teachers realize that digitization initiatives are being taken, the positive impact on general accessibility was not frequently indicated. Moreover, there seems to be less awareness of born-digital heritage. Whilst history teachers were able to give as many examples of born-digital heritage as of digital reproductions of heritage, a global understanding of the concept seems to be lacking. The prevalence of vague or blank responses and a reliance on examples rather than interpretations suggest a general lack of clarity regarding digital heritage among history teachers.

This lack of a notion of born-digital heritage among history teachers again shows that history teachers have a past-oriented view of heritage. The failure to recognize digital sources, which have only become common in the last two decades, also underscores a tendency to overlook contemporary forms of heritage. However, if history teachers were to grasp the concept of digital heritage, and particularly born-digital heritage, more thoroughly, this could be aligned with cultivating a more future-oriented perspective on heritage. Whilst the notion of 'preservation', which is inherently forward-looking in nature, was present in the responses to some extent, it was not widespread. Therefore, it can be argued that if history teachers were to understand digital heritage better, they could

acquire a more multi-perspective view of heritage overall, interconnecting its relevance in the past, present and future.

Regarding the responses to RQ3, finally, one notable finding is that history teachers in Flanders are daring to let go of the textbook and commonly rely on online searches to find information and sources that enhance their classroom activities. Additionally, as history teachers did not often mention specific websites, it can be concluded that they are most likely to start from general search engines, such as Google, rather than start from specific websites. When teachers did mention specific sites, they seemed to favour more generic websites or platforms with general educational resources. Whilst not absent in their responses, we can conclude that there is a limited tendency for them to use digital-heritage institutional platforms. Within the four most frequently mentioned categories, namely general educational resources, historical resources, media/press and heritage institutions, Flemish initiatives were the most recurrent, with Dutch initiatives coming second. This indicates that Flemish history teachers gravitate to platforms providing access to digital content that are local and created within the regional language. This is substantiated by the clear absence of more overarching international digital heritage initiatives, such as Europeana, or the Google Arts and Culture platform.

The recurring mentions of general educational platforms, which are tailored to the needs of teachers, substantiate the importance of addressing user needs and of involving users in the development process. The Archive for Education, which was the most frequently mentioned specific website overall by teachers in this survey, can be regarded as a best practice. During its development, meemoo researched teachers' needs and also involved them through co-creative workshops (meemoo, s.d.; Schroeven and De Ridder, 2021). Thus, to increase the re-use of heritage within education, it is recommended that heritage experts follow such human-centred design strategies (Mason and Vavoula, 2021).

Despite the concerted efforts of heritage institutions to digitize their collections and unlock them through their institutional platforms, history teachers often overlook these resources. This reaffirms the existing challenge of establishing sustainable connections between the field of (history) education and cultural institutions (Wojdon, 2018; Stegers, 2020). Moreover, it affirms that digital heritage initiatives in general can benefit from a more user-

centred approach (Rahaman, 2018). It can be stated that history teachers' knowledge about digital heritage collections appears to be limited, which likely influences classroom practice, as such collections are hardly incorporated into lesson preparations or actual classroom assignments. Whilst overall, history teachers did not indicate their experiencing many barriers or difficulties when dealing with digital heritage collections, we assume this is due to a lack of experience in using those collections. The teachers who did express encountering issues consider findability and accessibility to be significant barriers to integrating digital heritage collections further. These challenges could be interpreted as a reason why they rather rely on general educational resources. Moreover, they also indicate the accessibility of digital heritage collections as the most limiting factor from the students' perspectives, as it might stop them from integrating more student-centred learning activities that rely on historical inquiry.

However, to improve understanding of how teachers search for digital heritage collections and what obstacles they encounter in doing so, additional in-depth research is needed, for example, interviews or focus groups, or by reviewing the interactions of teachers with a certain digital heritage platform through user studies. Looking ahead, the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in history education could transform the discovery, accessibility and integration of heritage collections, greatly improving their re-usability within an educational context. AI could also shape the way educational digital resources and student-centred learning activities are designed, which could help bridge digital heritage and history education. Future research should explore these possibilities, as well as examine critically the limitations of AI in this domain.

The implications of this study are valuable in teacher preparation and professional development. Specifically, they underscore the importance of educators' epistemic beliefs regarding heritage and digital heritage, showing how these beliefs shape their instructional practices in the classroom. As the shift in historical thinking has been initiated and established in Western countries during the past two decades, including more recently in Flanders, adjustments in teacher training are required. In terms of this shift, historical inquiry as a teaching strategy is gaining an important place, which requires a more specific knowledge of concepts and skills in the discipline of history. For this reason, the curriculum of initial teacher training or programmes of professional development should focus more on the

epistemological knowledge of history as a discipline (Mathis and Parkes, 2020). Furthermore, and in line with the recent recommendations of the OHTE (2023), learning in terms of (digital) heuristics and methodology needs more attention as well. In this respect, history teachers' knowledge of where to find relevant partners in the field of heritage requires enhancement. Only then will they have the necessary capabilities suggested in the history education literature to design meaningful historical inquiries in which digital heritage collections can act as an educational technology tool to support students in their learning.

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Sitography

- <https://meemoo.be/nl/audiovisueel-materiaal-in-de-klas-met-het-archief-voor-onderwijs> (28/03/2024)
- <https://www.europeana.eu/nl> (28/03/2024)
- <https://www.klascement.net/> (28/03/2024)
- <https://en.unesco.org/themes/information-preservation/digital-heritage> (28/03/2024)
- <https://www.vlaanderen.be/cjm/nl/cultuur/digitale-transformatie/visie-en-beleid> (28/03/2024)

<https://www.vlaanderen.be/cjm/nl/cultuur/onderzoek-en-publicaties/onderzoek-en-publicaties-digitale-transformatie#doelgerichtdigitaaltransformeren> (28/03/2024)

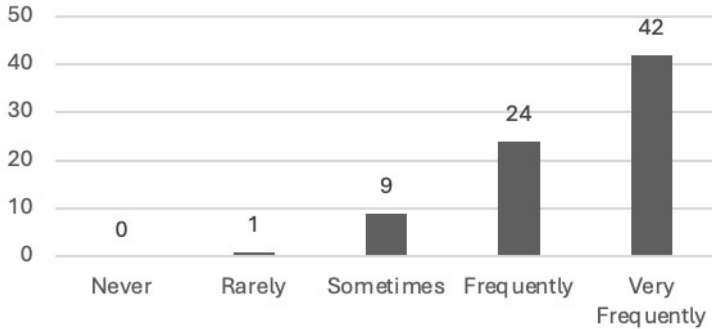
Appendix 1. Table with Survey Items

Item	Question	Question type(s)
1	Describe what professional or academic course(s) you attended in higher education (subject area and degree).	open
2	How long have you been working as a history teacher?	multiple choice (< 3; 3-10; 10-20; 20-30; < 30)
3	what stages do you teach? (multiple answers possible)	multiple choice (first; second; third)
4	What other subjects do you currently teach besides history (multiple answers possible)	multiple choice additional open (cultural sciences; project general subjects; social education; citizenship; art sciences; philosophy; another subject, namely...; none)
5	Please indicate what you use in the subject of history (multiple answers possible)	multiple choice (own course or material; textbook; workbook; something else, namely...; none of the above) additional open
6	Describe what you understand by the term 'heritage'.	Open
7	Give at least two concrete examples of what you consider heritage.	Open
8	What interpretation do you give to the term 'digital heritage'?	Open
9	To what extent do you agree with the following statement? I search for additional material	five-point Likert scale (never; rarely; sometimes; frequently; very frequently)

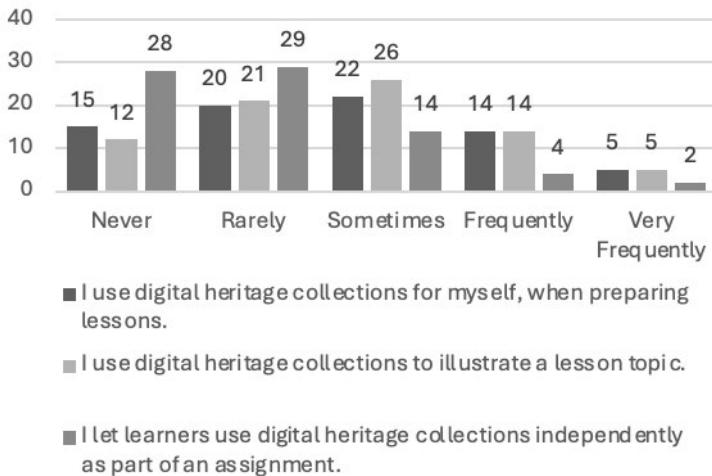
	<p>for my lessons online</p> <p>Conditional question: If you indicated 'sometimes', 'frequently', or 'very frequently', where do you look for material for your lessons online?</p>	<p>additional open</p>
10	<p>When do you use digital heritage collections (e.g. an online database from the museum or heritage sector)?</p> <p>I use digital heritage collections for myself, when preparing lessons.</p> <p>I use digital heritage collections to illustrate a lesson topic.</p> <p>I let learners use digital heritage collections independently as part of an assignment.</p>	<p>five-point Likert scale (never; rarely; sometimes; frequently; very frequently)</p>
11	<p>When do you use the Archive for Education?</p> <p>I use the Archive for Education for myself, when preparing lessons.</p> <p>I use the Archive for Education to illustrate a lesson topic.</p> <p>I let students use the Archive for Education independently as part of an assignment.</p>	<p>five-point Likert scale (never; rarely; sometimes; frequently; very frequently)</p>
12	<p>To what extent do you agree with the following statement?</p> <p>When I engage with digital heritage collections during lesson preparation, I experience certain barriers or difficulties.</p> <p>Conditional question: If you indicated 'sometimes', 'frequently', or 'very frequently', what barriers or difficulties do you experience?</p>	<p>five-point Likert scale (never; rarely; sometimes; frequently; very frequently)</p> <p>additional open</p>

13	<p>To what extent do you agree with the following statement? When I engage with digital heritage collections during my lessons, I experience certain barriers or difficulties.</p> <p>Conditional question: If you indicated 'sometimes', 'frequently', or 'very frequently', what barriers or difficulties do you experience?</p>	<p>five-point Likert scale (never; rarely; sometimes; frequently; very frequently) additional open</p>
14	<p>To what extent do you agree with the following statements? There should be more attention for digital heritage collections to allow learners to work independently around an assignment.</p> <p>I have a good overview of digital heritage collections that could be useful in history lessons.</p> <p>I need professional development (e.g. in-service training) in the use of digital heritage collections in history classes.</p>	<p>five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree; rather disagree; no opinion; rather agree; strongly agree)</p>
15	<p>We thank you for completing this questionnaire. If we may contact you for follow-up surveys, please enter your e-mail address below.</p>	<p>Open</p>

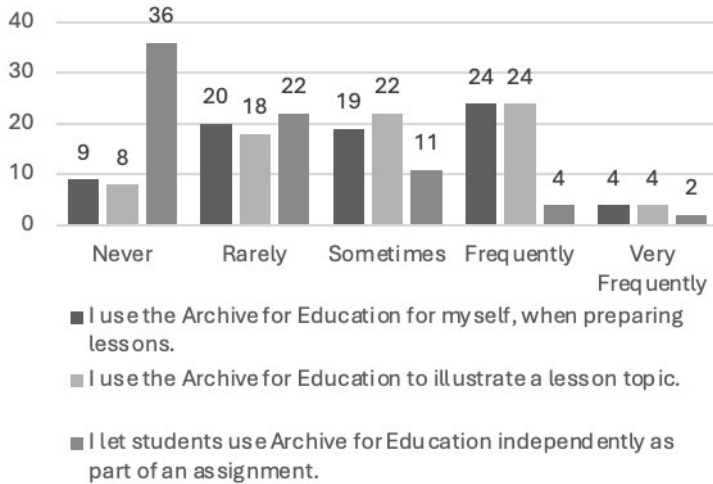
Appendix 2. Survey Results



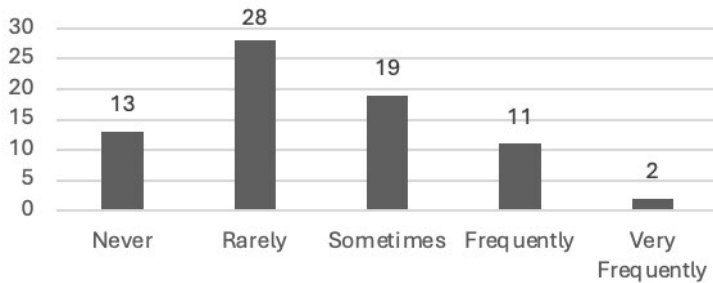
Item 9. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: “I search for additional material for my lessons online.”?



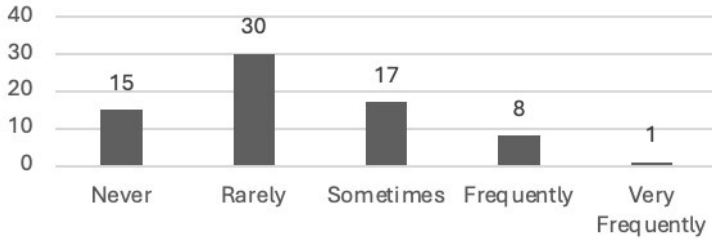
Item 10. When do you use digital heritage collections (e.g. an online database from the museum or heritage sector)?



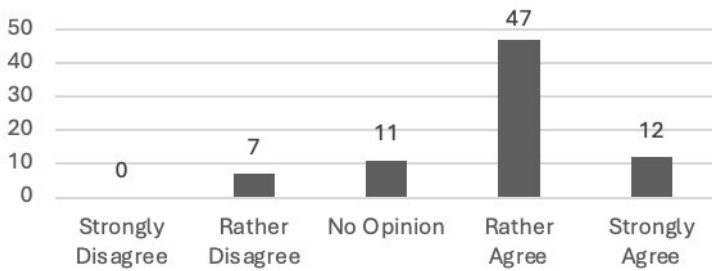
Item 11. When do you use the Archive for education?



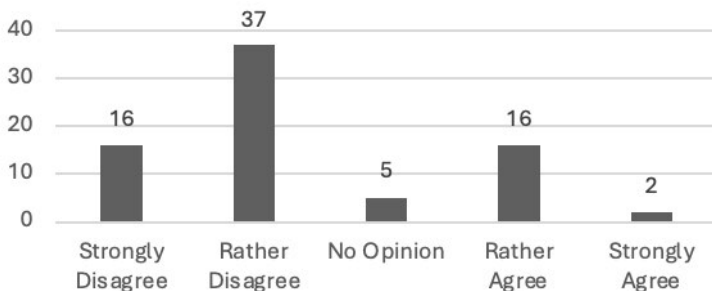
Item 12. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: “When I engage with digital heritage collections during lesson preparation, I experience certain barriers or difficulties.”?



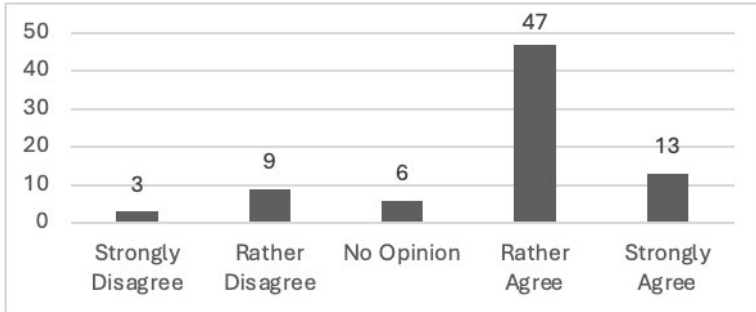
Item 13. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: “When I engage with digital heritage collections during my lessons, I experience certain barriers or difficulties.”?



Item 14. To what extent do you agree with the following statements: “More attention should be paid to the use of digital heritage collections to allow students to work independently on an assignment.”?



“I have a good overview of digital heritage collections that can be useful in history lessons.”



“I need professional development (e.g. further training) on the use of digital heritage collections in history lessons.”

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CHANGES IN THE CONTENT REGULATION OF HISTORY EDUCATION IN HUNGARY IN RECENT YEARS IN THE LIGHT OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS*

József Kaposi, Richárd Fodor, Judit Tóth

This study describes the characteristic processes of history education in Hungary in recent years in the light of international developments, using documents on the state regulation of the content of such teaching. The focus of the paper is on the changes to the curricula and examination requirements. The authors highlight the professional actors, organizations and innovations that showcase the prestige of the profession of history teaching in Hungary. The paper also covers the preparation and introduction of core standards, changes to development goals, and the content canon of the subject, as well as the emphasis on curricular content, the new approaches, source processing methods and tools that have resulted from these changes. It concludes that centrally generated and directed efforts to change attitudes have had a negative impact on institutional professional autonomy in Hungary, as well as on the development of critical thinking and social responsiveness. The contradictions between the intention to change and the lack of appropriate implementation activities have unfortunately failed to promote a shift in pedagogical culture. Moreover, they have not sufficiently supported the objective of modern history teaching to ensure that future generations possess adequate historical literacy.

1. International Patterns and Processes in Content Regulation

The establishment of education systems can be traced back to the Enlightenment, when nations were being formed. In the nineteenth century and beyond, it was the nation that was responsible for organizing social and political affairs, with the state playing a more prominent role (Bray et al. 2014).

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Europe's educational systems can be categorized into two models in terms of the level of centralization and state involvement, namely Archer's substitutive and restrictive models (Archer, 1979). Both models of development begin with a shared starting point: a dominant social group, typically a church organization, with monopoly on controlling the content and organization of education. As a second step, competing groups emerge to challenge the existing system and propose alternative ideas. They may come from the middle classes, the peasantry, the aristocracy or even the state bureaucracy. The emergence of new alternatives leads not only to competition but also to conflict for control over education. In the substitutive model, competing groups create their own schools, leading to a general expansion of education. Parallel networks of institutions coexist and eventually become national through negotiation and bargaining. Examples include the Anglican Church in Britain, the urban bourgeois schools, the schools of the British labour movement and Denmark's Lutheran denominational schools. In the restrictive model, one competing group can use state power to create an exclusive system based on its ideology. This results in a highly centralized, homogenous national model, similar to the French, German (Prussian, Habsburg) and Tsarist Russian systems of the nineteenth century.

Outlining a similar dichotomy, Kozma (2006, 2012, 2015) and Németh (2013, 2015) distinguish between centralized European continental models and decentralized Anglo-Saxon/Atlantic models, focusing on geographical regions and philosophical foundations. The continental model includes the Hungarian, German and French education systems, while among the Atlantic systems, countries with close political, historical and cultural links with England are identified. The French education system is still highly centralized, like examples in Eastern Europe (OHTE, 2023). Countries with decentralized education systems today include, among others, English-speaking countries and nations with close cultural links to them. The authors distinguish between the two models of education systems based on several aspects (e.g. historical roots, the basic social function of education), but the most important difference is the level of centralization in the regulation of curricular content. In this respect, the regulatory documents of the Atlantic model are more flexible, less prescriptive and typically curricular compared to the continental system. Education actors (e.g. school districts or school

boards, teachers) are characterized by greater autonomy, with limited involvement by the state. Nahalka (2020) refers to the curricula of substitutive/Atlantic education systems as autonomous, while normative prescriptive curricula are also referred to in the English literature as 'teacher-proof curricula'. These two 'poles' are still identifiable today, since after the Second World War, the developed English-speaking countries essentially implemented neoliberal curricula. In the latter case, the involvement of the state decreased due to the marketization of the education system. Due to several new global phenomena, the education systems of our time can no longer be clearly divided into two categories based on these typologies, and instead should be seen more as hybrid systems resulting from different development models. As a result of these changes in education systems, the purpose of teaching history has also become more complex. It is now inconceivable to define subject objectives in terms of nation-building alone.

In addition to the homogenization of the instrumental approach to education, international trends also show the diminishing importance of history education in Western societies, leading to the devaluation of the subject itself (Furrer & Gautschi & Fink, 2023). The globalization of education policy is further fragmented and complicated by the effects of the dismantling of Europe's national borders (e.g. Rizvi, 2009; Guorui & Popkewitz, 2020; Tony, 2020; Halász, 2022). Furthermore, the *knowledge turn* has reshaped the purpose of education in terms of its curricular focus (Chapman, 2021).

All these complex phenomena have also transformed the objectives of history teaching: *historical thinking* (Wineburg, 2001, 2018), *historical consciousness* (Körber, 2015) and the development of *historical literacy* have come to the fore. The *study of depth* and the experiential, activity-based, resource-based, skill-developing teaching of history have become widespread (Kaposi, 2017; F. Dárdai & Kaposi, 2021a). *Historical thinking concepts* (Seixas & Morton 2013), *historical reasoning* and research on epistemological beliefs in history have become more prominent (Majkić, 2022), alongside research on *oral history*. New models of measurement and assessment in the field of history have also surfaced (VanSledright, 2011; Ercikan & Seixas, 2015; Resch & Seidenfuß, 2017; Rozendal & van Boxtel, 2022; Domínguez et al., 2021). Alongside the expanding toolkit, the research on master narratives, multiperspectivity and the

decolonization of content regulation have become widespread (Moncrieffe, 2020; Lévesque, 2021). Moreover, the history of the underprivileged, women, children and previously less well-known social groups, as well as research into their histories and further new topics (e.g. the history of gastronomy; Forrest et al., 2017) have become part of history teaching. Due to the rise of digitalization, social media and the internet, the development of media literacy and information literacy have become a key focus in history teaching, including the development of *civic online reasoning*, that is, the ability to identify and evaluate various sources of information on the internet (McGrew et al., 2018).

These phenomena justify the need for comprehensive international comparisons (OHTE, 2023; Lamassoure, 2023), especially since different, sometimes contradictory approaches to history teaching may coexist (e.g. Repoussi, 2009). In the field of content regulation, the OECD and the European Commission's Eurydice comparative reports can provide a basis for a comparative understanding of different educational systems, as can the reports of the *Observatory on History Teaching in Europe* in the field of history didactics.

While, for example, Serbian and Turkish teachers still prioritize national history, only 42% of teachers in Luxembourg consider it important (OHTE, 2023). This could be connected to an international process that is shifting the way history is taught, moving away from a binary view of national and world history. New perspectives have become known that deal with the Anthropocene, as well as with other challenges of teaching history in the global era (Retz, 2022; Popp, 2023, 2024; Nølgård et al., 2020; Taylor, 2020). The concept of history teaching has advanced beyond its nineteenth-century nationalist origins, with modern liberal approaches emphasizing evidence-based instruction, multiperspectivity and critical thinking. However, nationalist ideas have gained traction in recent times, placing liberal values under pressure (Popp, 2024).

In January 2024, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the European historical consciousness (European Parliament, 2024), which proposes a revision of the curricula of the member states with a view to strengthening the European perspective. According to the OHTE report (2023), only four member states have provided a detailed and extensive European perspective focusing mainly on the integration process of EU member states. The European perspective

as an objective has already been implemented in Hungary's regulatory environment in the 2012 National Core Curriculum (NCC, 2012) by presenting the European integration process in detail, among several other topics.

2. Changes to Education Policy in Hungary

Hungarian education policy has been characterized by a shift from decentralized to centralized control since 2010. The political changes have radically transformed the world of education in Hungary (Kaposi, 2022). Centralized education management has undergone changes. Education no longer has independent representation at the ministerial level, while vocational training and higher education have been separated from public education. Policy advocacy has been weakened, as shown by the fact that expenditure on public education as a share of GDP fell below 3% after 2016, ranking close to last in Europe (Varga, 2022). There have been increasing and expanding state involvement and strong centralization efforts in the maintenance of, employment in, content regulation and control of pedagogical work, while the pre-existing inequalities among pupils and in school selection have continued to grow, as have teacher shortages (Nahalka, 2021). In public education, the state has become the largest school provider in place of local governments, and a new system of school districts and supervision was established after 2010. Compared to the previous period, the number of pupils in church institutions has increased dramatically, rising to 15% in primary schools and almost 25% in secondary schools by the early 2020s. (Varga, 2022). New national curricula and exam requirements (2012, 2020, 2022) have been implemented, leading to restrictions in the education market, particularly in textbooks and pedagogical services.

3. The State of History Didactics in Hungary

The recognition of history didactics as an independent discipline is a complex issue in Hungary, as the work of the past decade has meant the organization, (re)launching, fostering and deepening of professional initiatives, conferences, journals and international relations. Hungary's history teaching profession has continued the decades-long tradition that began in the 1970s under Ottó Szabolcs, board member of the ISHD and former president of the Hungarian Historical Society. However, academic life and higher education do

not adequately highlight the many professional innovations and latest research findings.

Although independent departments in history didactics, institutes and doctoral programs do not exist, students interested in the theoretical and methodological aspects of history teaching can join doctoral schools in history or education (Fischerné-Dárdai, 2010). Most research topics and research opportunities in history didactics can be followed at the University of Pécs, the Eszterházy Catholic University of Eger and the University of Szeged. One should also mention the Selye János University in Slovakia, where there is a Hungarian-language doctoral school programme in history didactics led by Barnabás Vajda. The doctoral school in history didactics at the university enriches the profile of Hungarian-language doctoral programmes.

The oldest of the professional organizations to have kept up wide-ranging activities in the last decade is the Hungarian Historical Society Teachers' Division (Magyar Történelmi Társulat Tanári Tagozat) supported by the academic research sector, possessing high-quality programmes and professional links with the historical research community. The Association of History Teachers (Történelemtanárok Egylete) is an information and advocacy organisation for teachers working mainly in public education, without research activities. The Professional Association of History Teachers (Történelemoktatók Szakmai Egyesülete), with considerable government support, has recently contributed to changes in history education in Hungary by revising documents regulating content, such as textbooks.

The Hungarian Historical Society Teachers' Division plays an important role in the dissemination of international scientific discourse and professional innovations in history didactics for the Hungarian teaching community. In 2018, it laid the foundations for discourse by presenting and comparing the history teaching of neighbouring countries under the title 'Save as... - history teaching in the Carpathian Basin' (Mentés másként – történelemtanítás a Kárpát-medencében) in 2019 (Bárány, 2019). In 2021, taking advantage of the increase in online discussions during the pandemic, the Division organized an international conference with leading European and North American presenters entitled Perspectives: International and National Trends in the Theory and the Practice of History Teaching (Dallman, 2021). In 2022, a workshop on teaching historical concepts

of the Kádár era and regime change was organized in collaboration with the Research Institute and Archives for the History of Regime Change and the Committee of National Remembrance (Tóth et al., 2022a).

The tradition of the methodological journals of earlier years was continued in 2010 by the *History Teaching* online journal (Történelemtanítás: Online történelemdidaktikai folyóirat), with a broader perspective and a wider didactic focus. The journal was co-founded by the University of Pécs, Eötvös Loránd University and Pázmány Péter Catholic University. The journal on history didactics is published exclusively online, creating a professional forum for researchers, PhD students and practicing teachers to improve and renew the teaching of history. To celebrate the journal's tenth anniversary, a volume of studies was published containing the most significant papers in paper form (F. Dárdai & Kaposi & Katona, 2020). The Division, which has played a prominent role in the reestablishment of this journal, has also been involved in several international projects in the period from 2019 to 2022, including the International Visegrad Fund-sponsored project titled *Online Teaching in the Visegrad Region*. In continuation of this cooperation, between 2023 and 2025 the Division is participating in the development of a curriculum for secondary schools within the framework of a five-sided Central European cooperation between Czech, Polish and Slovak partner organizations and *EuroChio: European Association of History Educators*, which will explore the common historical experiences of the Visegrad countries in the twentieth century. The members of the Division have been involved in various major European conferences and project meetings in Graz, Bologna, Prague, Vilnius and Budapest as coordinators, developers and speakers. Their research findings have been published in international journals (e.g. F. Dárdai & Kaposi, 2021b).

It is important to note that in recent years much empirical research and significant professional developments have taken place in the field of history didactics. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences – University of Szeged *Oral History* research group, coordinated by Csaba Jancsák, has investigated the potential and success of video interviews in the classroom on three prominent historical topics (Jancsák et al., 2021). Researchers on the Committee of National Remembrance have created an online didactic exercise book to support history lessons in both secondary and primary schools

(Committee of National Remembrance, 2023). The Research Institute and Archives for the History of Regime Change established a History Didactics and Pedagogy Working Group in 2022, which organized a series of activities, including extraordinary history lessons and teacher training. Both the Committee of National Remembrance and the Research Institute and Archives for the History of Regime Change rely on the expertise of the Teachers' Division. At the 2021 conference of the Association of History Teachers (a founding member of EuroClio) a key theme was how to integrate human rights into the practice of public education, which included the participation of rights organizations (Herczeg, 2021). In 2022, it organized a roundtable discussion and lecture reflecting on the Russo-Ukrainian war (Maróti, 2022). More recently, the aim of supporting cooperation in the depiction of the shared Slovak-Hungarian history has been identified.

A major highlight of 2023 was the publication of *Trends in History Teaching* (F. Dárdai & Kaposi & Popp, 2022) as a special issue of the *Hungarian Educational Research Journal* featuring contributions from both national and international authors. Additional notable academic innovations include the release of volume studies entitled *Modern History Teaching: New Ways and Solutions* (Kojanitz, 2023) published by Belvedere Meridionale, a special issue on history didactics in the *Belvedere Meridionale* journal (Tóth, 2023a) and the publication of *History as a Discipline and as a School Subject* (Engel & Korpás, 2023) published by Selye János University.

4. Changes to the Public Education Curriculum 2016-2020

Since the early 2000s, a two-pole (central, local) and three-level curriculum regulation has been established in Hungary. The central parts of the regulation are the National Core Curriculum (NCC) issued by the government and the Framework Curricula (or specifier syllabi) issued by the Ministry of Education, while the local level is represented by the pedagogical programme of each school. Since its publication in 1995, the National Core Curriculum has functioned as a framework of regulations and a core curriculum-type regulator, the content of which has been broken down into local school levels and types of school by means of the prescriptive Framework Curricula (specifier syllabi). The local curricula were adaptations of the Framework Curricula at institutional level made according to the

specific requirements of each school. The matriculation exam requirements (Educational Authority, 2020, 2021), which define the requirements for the two-level matriculation examinations, further extend the scope of public education studies.

History education in Hungary continues to play a significant role in the regulatory framework. History is a compulsory subject from grades 5 to 12 (ISCED 2 + 3). Pupils study world, European and national history in two cycles. First, from fifth to eighth grade, and then from ninth to twelfth grade, they learn history in chronological order from antiquity to the 21st century, with a concentrated, in-depth approach in secondary school. The number of lessons per week varies depending on the type of institution and the grade, but on average students study history two to three times a week. In the first two years of secondary school, the total number of history lessons is 136 hours, while in the second two years it increases to 186 hours. Additionally, students have the option to study history as a specialization, where they can take extra lessons on the subject (Educational Authority, 2020).

After 2010, the new education policy, following a change in the legal mandate, adopted a new core curriculum in 2012, which in fact reverted to the 1995 version. The document maintained its previous developmental focus and literacy domains, reintroducing detailed literacy requirements into the curriculum under the title of *common literacy canon contents* (Kaposi, 2012). The introduction of the 2020 NCC has resulted in a significant shift from an autonomous to a normative curriculum, as it differs significantly from the 2018 draft, which reflects a modern learner-centred approach,¹ although some elements are included in the regulatory document (Nahalka, 2022; Chrappán, 2022).

In terms of history teaching, the removal of *social and civic competences* from the list of key competences is a change which is also difficult to interpret because nowhere in the drafting process were there any indications that the expectations from the previous version of the NCC would be invalidated. '*Civic competence enables us to participate actively in public affairs, using our knowledge of social processes, structures and democracy*' (NCC, 2012). Although the text on citizenship and democracy education has been retained unchanged in terms of its development, there is no explanation as to why *critical thinking* has been replaced by *reflective thinking*.

In Hungarian legislation, one traditional feature has been the grouping of subjects aggregating related disciplines. However, the title and composition of the group including history teaching has changed in recent years. In the former NCC, the parts called *fields of education* appear as *fields of study*. The title '*People and Society*' has been replaced by '*History and Citizenship*'. The former domain of *People and Society* included philosophy, history, civics and ethics. Philosophy no longer appears as a separate subject in the new structure. However, the subjects of ethics, faith and morals have become separate areas of study.

The history and civics study area currently consists of three subjects: *history, civics, and national and ethnographic studies*. Citizenship is a separate subject in Years 8 and 12. This change has secured the agreement of practising history teachers, while departing from the previous integrative approach to the field of education, which aimed to develop complex social studies literacy (Table 1).

2012	2020
Field of activity: <i>People and Society</i>	Field of study: <i>History and Citizenship</i>
Principles, objectives	Principles, objectives
Structure of the development tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific features of the teaching of the subject
1. Acquiring knowledge, learning	Main topics in chronological order
2. Critical thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years 5-8 (primary school) (25 main topics)
3. Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years 9-12 (secondary school) (29 main topics)
4. Orientation in space, time	Learning outcomes
Common literacy canon contents	1. Historical knowledge
1. Recurring, longitudinal themes	2. Knowledge acquisition, use of resources
2. Chronological themes (11 themes)	3. Subject-specific communication
	4. Historical thinking

Table 1. Structural comparison of the National Curricula

The objectives of history have not changed significantly compared to the 2012 NCC. The narrative approach has been retained and even strengthened, and the development of historical thinking based on key concepts has continued. For the primary-school age group, a history-based approach to teaching history and portrait-type topics on historical figures are still emphasized, complemented by complex topics on life history and longitudinal synthesis of in-depth topics. The objectives of secondary education are still guided by the use of historical sources, the chronological principle and the development of current knowledge. One essential change is that, in the objectives of both school levels, Hungarian history is treated significantly more prominently and more extensively (Kaposi, 2022). This is also indicated by the fact that, in the primary school phase, *'phenomena and processes typical of universal history are presented primarily through Hungarian examples'*, while in secondary school *'only phenomena from universal history that have an impact on Hungarian history are presented; classical event history and the history of individual countries are not'* (NCC, 2020, 344-345).

The *developmental areas* in the previous National Curricula have been reformulated as *learning outcomes* in the 2020 version. This change is forward-looking, as it reflects a modern output-oriented approach. However, the detailed learning outcomes cannot really be interpreted as standards-based outputs, as this would have required levelling expectations, which was not done. Although the document builds on earlier versions in many respects, the autonomy of the recurrent longitudinal themes has been removed, although its use as a general organizing principle at secondary-school level could have been a major element of modernization. The predominance of chronological topics is maintained, but the broad, framework-like wording used in previous versions of the NCC for the naming of topics has been abandoned. The number of subject headings has increased, making them more detailed. Previously, there were 11 at both levels, rather than 25 subject headings at primary school and 29 at secondary school. Despite the increase in number – when compared to the previous framework curricula, detailed Matura requirements – has not been accompanied by an increase in the number of subjects, and in fact the expectations regarding content have decreased.

In the selection of themes and sub-themes, as well as in the titles, ideological and topical political aspirations can sometimes be identified. For example, motifs that reinforce the eastern origins of Hungarians have been valorized: The Hun Empire has become a

prominent theme. The role of Christianity and the Kingdom of Hungary's struggle against Islamic expansionism in the Middle Ages and the early modern period were given greater emphasis. The presentation of the sins of the communist past was expanded, for example, through the detailed treatment of the short-lived Soviet Republic after World War One, or highlighting the content of teaching about Kádár's dictatorship. At the same time, the view that from the eighteenth century Hungary witnessed the developing civilization of Western Europe, the assertion of expanding freedoms and large-scale economic transformation as a model and national goal to be achieved was weakened.

The legal position of the *Framework Curricula* has been weakened because they are not published as ministerial decrees but as 'official statements'; moreover, their regulatory function has been reduced, as they are more of a complementary instrument. Their structure is looser than the version of 2012, but they have made the possibilities for educational policy and maintenance control more concrete by reflecting the expected learning outcomes and defining the proposed teaching activities. Their methodological function has been strengthened by including recommended learning activities for each learning area.

The regulatory approach, structure and learning concept of the history framework curricula were closely aligned with the NCC. The era boundaries that had been disputed in the 2012 version have only changed in that the world history-era boundary for grades 7 and 11 has been changed from 1945 to 1961. Thus, in grades 8 and 12, Hungarian history after 1945 became even more pronounced and detailed, with the time limits extending from 2004 to 2012, the date of the new Fundamental Law (Table 2). The level of detail was also helped by the inclusion of social and economic knowledge of the present in a separate subject, *citizenship*.

The role of the NCC as a content regulation tool has increased since 2020, because it also incorporated the functions previously reflected in the framework curricula (e.g. number of lessons, subject-specific pedagogical expectations for pedagogical stages). But presumably its impact on everyday teaching could not be very marked, as only eight months passed between its publication and its introduction. At the same time, the role of the framework curricula supporting their introduction was reduced because their legal status had changed, and because no versions were produced for the

different types of school. They were published two months later, with no meaningful implementation activity for local curriculum development. Practical implementation of the curriculum changes took place partly during the COVID-19 period, when teachers' work was dominated by the transition to digital teaching practice, meaning that their substantive impact was not noticeable in the classroom.

Year	Last topic world history (W)/ Hungarian history (HH)	
	2012	2020
7	W/HH. The end of World War II, 1945.	W. The end of the Cold War, 1961; HH. The end of World War II, 1945
8	W. The new challenges of globalization, 2004. HH. Hungary as a member of the EU, 2004.	W. Globalization to the present day HH. The Fundamental Law (Constitution), 2012.
11	W/HH. The end of World War II, 1945.	W. The end of the Cold War, 1961 HH. The end of World War II, 1945
12	W. The new challenges of globalisation, 2004. HH. Hungary as a member of the EU, 2004.	W. Globalization to the present day HH. The Fundamental Law (Constitution), 2012.

Table 2. History curricula boundaries

The 2020 curriculum regulation has placed greater importance on the issue of *citizenship education*, partly by treating it as a separate subject rather than part of history, and partly by significantly expanding and, to some extent, modifying the subject's topics and content. The new regulations emphasize the family, national identity and the strengthening of the sense of identity, while general social studies and aspects of the world of work are hardly mentioned at all. The financial and economic knowledge section, which appeared in the 2012 curriculum, has been incorporated into the geography curriculum, to the delight of most history teachers.

The curricular changes in the 2010s have had little impact on teachers' classroom activities: explanation and demonstration continue to be the dominant element of classroom work, accounting for around 50% of class time. Independent student work accounts

for only about 20% of the time. In class, maps, textbooks and digital tools are used most often, while workbooks and exercise books are used the least. The most common ways of checking students' knowledge are through quizzes and oral assessment. Digital tools are used most often for visualization (PPT, Prezi, Youtube, Zanza Tv, NKP website). Digital tools are used least for collaborative digital-learning projects and video interviews² (Kamp, 2024). In addition to the interpretation of visual resources, visualization and discussion are also widespread (Dancs, 2023). Secondary-school history teaching presents a more methodologically consistent picture, possibly due to the content-methodological framework imposed by the matriculation exams.

5. Changes in the Matriculation Examination Requirements

In Hungary, most secondary-school students (high school, vocational high school) are required to pass the history matriculation exam at least at the intermediate level. Thus, over 70 000 students take the examination every year, of which almost 10% (7 000 students) choose the advanced level. However, preparation is the same for both levels: in secondary school, all students study more than the intermediate level but not enough for the advanced level, which is supplemented by an optional course in the final year for students who have chosen that level. There are significant differences between the average results of the two levels of examinations, which include a written part and an oral part: while at intermediate level the average grade for the written examination is 3.5 on a 5-point scale, the average grade for the advanced level is 4.4. The written part has a more pronounced even distribution of results (Bell curve) due to the higher degree of objectivity, whereas the oral part is dominated by good (4) and excellent (5) results.³

The modification of the requirements of the history matriculation examination in 2021 was justified by the alignment with the NCC and the framework curricula issued the previous year, as well as the intention to standardize the written tasks further through mechanical scoring. Unfortunately, the changes are in many respects in contradiction with both the 2005 matriculation examination design, which was based on competence development and focused on differentiated historical thinking of pupils, and the curriculum reduction results of the 2020 NCC. Implicitly, the reproduction of

knowledge appears as a priority rather than as inferences drawn from resources. The amendment appears to disrupt the previous balance between knowledge and competence assessment. This is most evident in the fact that, from its introduction in 2005, both exam levels required the same amount of lexical knowledge, but from 2021 the advanced level requirements has listed significantly more lexical expectations. The increase in the level of the requirements and the difficulty of the exam is also difficult to understand since from 2023 the compulsory requirement of an advanced-level exam in at least one subject was removed from the higher-education admission system.

The new 2021 history matriculation exam has modified the competency-based requirements only in the sense that, in line with the terminology used in the 2020 NCC, it has renamed the previously used aspect of *exploring factors that shape events, critical and problem-oriented thinking* to *historical thinking and historical knowledge*, explicitly referring to the increased emphasis on lexical data as a component of knowledge (Table 3).

2005	2017	2024
Use of resources	Acquiring knowledge, use of resources	Acquiring knowledge, use of resources
Orientation in space and time	Orientation in space and time	Orientation in space and time
Use of technical language	Communication and use of technical language	Communication and use of technical language
Exploring the factors that shape events	Exploring factors that shape events, critical and problem-oriented thinking	Historical thinking and historical knowledge
Problem-focused presentation of historical events and phenomena		

Table 3. Changes in competence requirements

2005	2012	2021
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1. The culture of antiquity	1. Prehistory and the Ancient East 2. Antiquity	1. Antiquity
2. The Middle Ages	3. Medieval Europe	2. The Middle Ages
3. The creation and heyday of the medieval Hungarian state	4. The beginnings of Hungarian history and its integration into Europe	
4. Intellectual and social changes in the modern age	5. The world and Europe in the early modern age	3. The Early Modern Age
5. Hungary in the Habsburg Empire	6. Hungary in the 16-18 th centuries	
6. The civic transformation, the era of nation states and imperialism	7. Revolutions and the Age of Civilization in Europe and Hungary	4. The New Age
7. The beginnings and development of urbanization in Hungary	8. The age of nation states	
8. From the First World War to the break-up of the bipolar world	9. Our country and the world in the first half of the 20 th century	5. The era of World Wars
9. History of Hungary from the First World War to the collapse of the Second World War		
10. Hungary from 1945 to the regime change	10. Our country and the world in the second half of the 20 th century	6. The Cold War Era
11. Present Age	11. The globalizing world and Hungary	7. The present
12. Contemporary Hungarian society and lifestyle		

Table 4. Topics covered in matriculation examination

The examination requirements have brought a radical change in the content topics, as 7 of the 29 topics designated in the National Core Curriculum have been given general titles, as shown in Table 4. This rearrangement of topics contradicted the practice followed since 2005 of matching the subject headings of the NCC/ Framework Curricula with those of the matriculation examination requirements. Furthermore, the test tasks contained one subtopic from each curriculum topic in the exam in chronological order. This gave teachers and students a high degree of predictability in preparing for the exam.

As a further radical change in the subject areas, in addition to the content defined in the 2020 NCC/framework curricula, a significant amount of additional knowledge was prescribed for candidates taking the matriculation exam at the advanced level, with a detailed list of the additional subjects and lexical items required. (In 2020, the framework curriculum required 848 lexical items, but in 2021, at the advanced level, the candidates had to know an additional 375 items, i.e. a total of 1,223 names and dates. The picture is further complicated by the fact that this number does not include the social, economic and civic knowledge covered by the 2012 Framework Curricula). In the previous regulation, both levels of examination could be based on specific lexical data as set out in the requirements of the basic and secondary framework curricula, but this practice continues only for the intermediate level examinations under the new regulation entering force from 2024.

A review of the *concepts, personal names, chronological and topographical data* in the curricula from 2003 (2012, 2020) and the 2021 examination requirements (Kaposi & Katona 2023) shows that almost half of the lexical data at intermediate level (48.2%) and just over one third (37.2%) at advanced level have been retained. This means that, over the past two decades, nearly two-thirds of the data required for the history exam have changed. The largest differences can be identified in the world history and Hungarian history sections after 1945. This low level of consistency also raises serious questions because this large-scale change did not take place after regime change in 1990, when the rejection of the theory of class, the incorporation of democratic norms and the emergence of a European perspective naturally induced the incorporation of many new historical-social concepts and data to be dropped; however, this only took place from 2003 onwards. To some extent, the *dumping of quantified changes* can

be explained by the fact that the curricula and examination requirements (2003; 2012; 2020-2021) were prepared and entered into force at different times, and were driven by different logics of educational policy regulation, perspectives and value perspectives (Nahalka, 2022, Chrappán, 2022), despite the fact that the 2012 and 2020-2021 documents were prepared under the leadership of the same government.

The problem with the significant changes indicated by the data is not only that they can have a very negative impact on daily teaching practice, which requires stability, but also that they are particularly problematic because experience shows that examination requirements have a major impact not only on the examination itself, but also on everyday school practice through their washback effect (Vígh, 2007). It is feared that the revised requirements may reinforce overly knowledge-centred teaching practices, rather than encouraging the development of narrative competences, problem-solving and activity-based learning.

It is unfortunate that after 2014 the reform of the matriculation examination system, which had been launched in the middle of the previous decade, was aimed at redesigning the two examination levels, introduced adaptive testing in matriculation examination conditions and anticipated the possibilities and conditions for adapting the paper-based examination to a digital basis, was dropped (Molnár & Pásztor-Kovács, 2015; Szepesi, 2017, 2019a, 2019b). The development proposal that would have allowed for a project-based exam instead of an oral one, based on the voluntary choice of the students, also stalled. The negative consequences of not having this option have been exacerbated by the closures caused by the pandemic. Unfortunately, the changes did not result in the professionalization of task design, which, in addition to the content aspects, included cognitive standardization, the didactic role of resources (e.g. presence of pseudo-source-based⁴ items), and the psychometric characteristics of the examination tasks (e.g.: cognitive validity). These also require improvement (Kojanitz, 2022; Tóth, 2022b, 2023b, 2024), including the redesign of essay tasks (Kaposi, 2023). The development of new levelled tasks, regular in-service training for teachers, the use of modern assessment procedures, and the continuous development of those involved in assessments process (F. Dárdai & Kaposi, 2008) have also been neglected, which

could have prompted a new methodological repertoire for the effective acquisition of modern historical literacy in practice.

6. Summary

The changes in content regulation in Hungary in recent years, especially the swing of the regulatory pendulum in a centralizing direction, have been quite controversial. In the absence of professional implementation activities, the changes have not led to systemic, profound results and tangible quality improvements. The changes to the National Core Curricula (1995, 2003, 2007, 2012, 2020), and in particular to the matriculation examination requirements (2005, 2015, 2021), show a change in emphasis in the content of the curricula on the one hand, and a change in approach and source processing methods on the other. There is a greater focus on 20th and 21st century content, and a very diverse set of objectives can be seen. The successive changes in content regulation, in inverse proportion to the accelerating pace of their production, have become less and less embedded in everyday practice and have become more and more declarations of educational policy rather than curricula in action. Among the lessons to be learned is that, in the absence of a wide range of professional discourse and autonomy, implementation activities in an ever-changing (state) central regulation are mostly ineffective and fail to promote democratic attitudes.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the prestige of history remains high. It retains its complex holistic, multidisciplinary and chronological approach. Students are immersed in Hungarian, regional, European and global processes. Every year, thousands of students participate in various history competitions and quizzes, and at local level many new innovations (e.g. novel source processing methods, experiential approaches) enrich everyday pedagogical practice.

Notes

¹ Prepared by: EFOP 3.2.15 VEKOP 17201700001 'A köznevelés keretrendszeréhez kapcsolódó mérési értékelési és digitális fejlesztések, innovatív oktatásszervezési eljárások kialakítása, megújítása' [Development and renewal of measurement assessment and digital developments, innovative education management procedures related to the framework of public education]. <https://www.oktatas.hu/koznevelo/projektek/efop3215> Research Director: Valéria Csépe.

² 2019 data retrieved from 612 students, nationwide coverage (Kamp, 2024).

³ Source: <https://www.ketszintu.hu/publicstat.php> (13.04.2024).

⁴ An item where the content of the source is ostensibly required to answer the item, but is in fact a 'multi-step', indirectly worded question that tests lexical knowledge (Tóth, 2021: 80).

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VISUAL HERITAGE: ON THE COGNITIVE ROLE OF SOME DIGITALIZED SCHOOL HISTORY MAPS*

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Various sorts of digital learning materials are rapidly appearing in large quantities in public education, a process that also involves history as a school subject. In Hungary, such educational materials for the purposes of teaching history can typically be found on two platforms: digital or digitalized school textbooks, or digital content-sharing portals. Our research was triggered by our own teaching experience and our observations that so-called 'reproductive tasks', which require nothing but memorization from students, are remarkably common in these digital teaching materials. Thus, most of the questions and tasks linked to cartographical sources aim almost exclusively at the simple localization of historical sites. In this study, our main focus is on the cognitive levels that are represented by the questions and tasks related to digital school history maps in terms of the levels and sophistication of the students' thinking, their cognitive operations. The aims of our study are twofold: while focusing on questions and tasks related to school history maps, we examine first, what characteristics can be used to describe Hungarian online digital school history maps, and second, what sophisticated questions and tasks are required from students. It is important to note that, even though our research draws on a very limited range of samples, it still aims to dig deeply into a carefully selected set of examples in an attempt to formulate some relevant conclusions.

1. The Context of Research

1.1 The Sources of Research

Before elaborating our study in detail, we will clarify the concepts and definitions we have used in our analysis.

Digital curriculum unit. The smallest digital element we have analysed is the curriculum unit. This is an independent element that can be used in several pedagogical environments and which functions as an

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essentially independent unit of the curriculum or the course as a whole. In our study, Learningapps.org meets this definition.

Digital learning materials. Digital learning materials are a quantitatively larger group than digital curriculum units, and as a rule they are designed as complex websites. On the one hand, digital learning materials include several small digital curriculum units, but, based on their scope, they can cover a complex curriculum content or even an entire subject. In our study, the learning materials found in the Reformed Textbook Repository (Hungarian abbreviation Reftantár) meet the definition of digital learning materials.

Digital or digitized textbooks. There are several categorizations of digital or digitized textbooks in both the Hungarian and international literature. There seems to be agreement among scholars that any multimedia interface or platform that is made up of digital learning materials can be classified in this category (Lee et al. 2012). In this regard, it should be noted that most often not only are digitized versions of paper-based textbooks categorized in this group; so too are digital tools. That is, we list any online interface or platform that can provide a suitable technical environment for implementing digital learning materials, their transmission and processing, for which their paper-based (analogue) counterparts are not suitable.

In this study, we do not distinguish between digital books and digitized books, mainly because the Hungarian examples show that both can have technical properties that paper-based books do not. From the point of view of our present study, digital and digitized features include, for example, the zoom in/zoom out function on maps, or the ability to place individual visual layers over the maps, i.e. any learning situation in which students can interact in order to select specific visual layers on maps, or to focus on specific historical phenomena (e.g. changes to state borders) that depict complex historical processes.

Following the guidelines set out in the above definitions, we have included in our research the following books and workbooks: The publications of the Mozaik Publishing House (Hung. Mozaik Kiadó) the digital textbooks and smart textbooks of the 'National Public Education Portal' (Hung. Nemzeti Köznevelési Portál, abbr. NKP) and the digital materials of the 'Reformed Textbook Repository' (Hung. Református tananyagtár, abbr. Reftantár).¹

The fourth subject of our research was the Learningapps website, given the fact that it proved to be the most frequently used digital

interface among Hungarian teachers (Fekete 2020a, 2020b). The reason for the popularity of Learningapps from the teachers' point of view is its ease of use and also the fact that students can receive immediate feedback on their answers in these digital curriculum units. The latter aspect is especially important for present-day students. Indeed, the ability to provide immediate feedback on digital learning materials is considered a key feature by both general education specialists and history teachers (e.g. Tomesz 2017; Wojdon 2011).

1.2 The Scholarly Literature Used in Our Research

In researching our topic, we used books and studies written by Hungarian specialists and history teachers. In addition to Ágnes F. Dárdai's work, 'Fundamentals of textbook research' (2002), other scholarly literature on curriculum analysis and taxonomization can be classified here, such as works by András Gyertyánfy (2022), József Kaposi (2017), András Katona and József Sallai (2002), Miklós Száray (2010), Barnabás Vajda (2018), Alfréd Kamp (2023, 2024) and Richárd Fodor (2022). These works do not always address the specific topic of digital maps, but they all discuss the relevant educational aspects of textbook and task analysis.

Among the books and studies dealing with the perspectives of digital school history maps, the cornerstone of our work was a digital textbook analysis on the situation in Hungary (Hülber et al. 2014). Although it does not focus exclusively on school history textbooks and maps, it nevertheless uses a very novel approach compared to other traditional textbook analyses. We have used the following works specifically to understand the approach and evaluation of the quality of school history maps and digital history education: Asche and Hermann (1994), Koussoulakou (1994), Maier et al. (2010), Erdmann (2007), Parrellada and Carretero (2022), Wojdon (2011), Manjarrez and Carratero (2021), K. Bartos (2006) and Kamp (2024).

1.3 Why Does the Cognitive Level of School History Maps Matter?

In connection with the importance and educational potential of maps used in school history education, it should be noted that, as far back as the nineteenth century in Hungary, certain curricular prescriptions can be found stipulating that 'the overview of the main events of world history in investigative contexts must be connected with a certain knowledge of the necessary geographical conditions' (Bartos

2006: 187). In the curricula and examination systems currently being used in Hungary, 'the identification of historical events in time and space and their interpretation' (NAT 2020) have been used for evaluation. School history maps are undoubtedly an important issue in the teaching process, as they are able not only to display earlier physical spaces, but also to help visualize former historical events and processes. With adequate teacher support, school history maps can help enhance students' critical thinking to a great extent (Bolick 2006). The analysis of maps and digital teaching materials is also important because, according to a 2019 survey of more than 600 teachers in Hungary, school history maps have hitherto been the resources most commonly used by the history teachers we surveyed, while digital supplementary teaching materials were also used by more than 80% of the respondents (Kamp 2024).²

Although most teachers may prefer online school history maps over paper-based (analogue) maps, mainly due to their technical advantages, we consider it important to emphasize the impact of these online methodological aids on historical thinking. The disadvantage of analogue school history maps (including maps in printed textbooks, school history atlases and wall maps) is that they are linked to a pre-determined narrative depicted in graphic elements. While analogue school history maps significantly influence and limit the perceptions of their viewers (Manjarrez and Carretero 2021: 164-191), the interpretation space of digitized school history maps is much more open (Vajda 2018: 17, 80).

Today's digital school history maps surpass their traditional competitors in many ways, thereby making history learning more efficient and understandable in many directions. Authors Cristian Parellada and Mario Carretero list five main arguments for the educational advantages of digital school maps:

- digital history maps can be animated
- students can interact with them
- digital maps allow the use of a rich spatial colour palette
- in case of digital history maps, it is possible to superimpose maps dynamically, thereby depicting different time layers and eras
- the digital environment enables faster and more direct access to the historical maps. (Parellada and Carretero 2022: 143-161).³

1.4 Methods Used in the Research

In this study, we do not sharply separate *digital* and *digitized* books from each other, as previous studies show that both categories can have features, characteristics and properties, both technical and educational, that paper-based books do not. From the point of view of our study, an important restriction is the way we apply the concept of the school history map (Hungarian *iskolai történelmi térkép*; Slovak *školská historická mapa*). Based on Kratochvíl (2019: 154–155), we use this term strictly in the sense that a school history map is a didactically prepared visual tool, including specific joint questions and tasks, the main function of which is to help students understand historical events, i.e. helping them in the cognitive processing of historical phenomena in the same changing geographical space. Further on, as far as our research into the cognitive role of digitalized school history maps is concerned, we have used as our leading methodological guide the research results of Parellada and Carretero (2022), Gyertyánfy (2022) and Maier et al. (2010).

In analysing the contents of the questions and tasks related to the school history maps found in the teaching materials, we used Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy.⁴ This taxonomy is well known for distinguishing six interdependent cognitive functions that determine students' thinking operations (Bloom 1956). As is also commonly known, Bloom and his scientific team created a taxonomical system of educational objectives, including the taxonomy of test questions and tasks. His six interdependent cognitive functions include: (level 1) knowledge, or remembering information; (level 2) comprehension, or explaining the meaning of information; (level 3) application, or using abstractions in concrete situations; (level 4) analysis, or breaking down a whole into its component parts; (level 5) synthesis, or putting the parts together to form a new and integrated whole; and (level 6) evaluation.⁵

Our preliminary assumption was that we would find higher-level Bloom tasks in the digital teaching materials; if we did not, we would consider their absence a disadvantage, or more precisely view it as a low level of exploitation of the existing online educational opportunities. Given that we only examined a certain type of task, namely questions and tasks related to maps, we therefore chose a specific historical event, namely the Second World War, in which, in accordance with Hungarian educational traditions, school history

maps occur as a frequent element in all textbooks and digital learning materials (Engel and Fekete 2023; Kamp 2023).

2. Research Outcomes

2.1 Limitations of the Research

In our research, we focused on maps as *cartographical resources* available on the above-mentioned online educational platforms and in digitized textbooks, and analysed the questions and tasks connected to them. Our study specifically focuses on one type of task only, namely questions and tasks related to maps. On the platforms and digital textbooks that are our focus, we selected the topic of the Second World War as a specific curriculum content (topic) in which we assumed that the cartographical sources, as well as questions and tasks regarding them, are quite common.⁶ The last important aspect of our research was that we only examined the questions and tasks intended for elementary school students in terms of age group.⁷

2.2 Questions and Tasks Related to Digital Maps on the Second World War

Following the traditions of paper-based textbooks, the Second World War has had a fairly large corpus of teaching materials in the form of Hungarian digital textbooks and teaching materials. The reason for this is not only Hungary's tragic historical involvement in these events, but also the fact that students seem to be particularly interested in this topic. In addition, the Second World War is surrounded by an abundance of primary and multi-faceted sources in almost all history textbooks.

Regarding the historical context of the time, during the Second World War, the Kingdom of Hungary was allied to the Axis Powers, a coalition that was headed by Germany, Italy and Japan that opposed the Allied Powers in the Second World War. Hungary joined the Axis alliance in November 1940, an alliance which it expected to support to its territorial claims on its immediate neighbours, especially Czechoslovakia and Romania, and its attempts to incorporate ethnic Hungarian areas in neighbouring countries into Hungary. The Axis pact was subsequently joined by Slovakia (November 1940) and Bulgaria (March 1941). As an Axis member, the Hungarian military participated alongside German troops in the

invasions of Yugoslavia (April 1941) and the Soviet Union (June 1941).

2.2.1 Critical remarks

Of all the online platforms we surveyed, Learningapps has the largest number of educational materials related to the Second World War, but only a very few questions and tasks (assignments) related to cartographical sources. In addition, the qualitative research shows that questions and tasks targeting Bloom's cognitive levels 1 or 2 were dominant among the assignments we examined. Of the eleven tasks that occur, ten simply expect students to name locations, such as:

- territories taken back by Hungary before and during the Second World War
- territories occupied by Germany
- some cities in Europe
- locations of concentration camps.

In addition to these localization tasks, which can be considered 1st or 2nd level tasks according to Bloom's taxonomy, there is only one higher-level task out of eleven in the digital curriculum unit in which students are required to *interpret* symbols or colours (e.g. of boundary lines) depicted in maps of Europe from 1942 until the end of the Second World War. This is the only particular task in the digital curriculum unit we examined that expects students to identify and consequently interpret map legends. This, however, does not mean a qualitative surplus compared to the educational materials of the Mozaik Publishing House, in which five out of the 25 map tasks can be placed in Bloom's 3rd or 5th cognitive categories.

At first glance, it may seem that the webpage of the Reformed Textbook Repository (in short, the Refantár interface) contains much more complex questions and tasks for students than the other online platforms we surveyed. On the digital platform of the Reformed Textbook Repository, in the section entitled 'Hungary during the Second World War', we find an example where the authors of the task apparently expect students to compare several sources, and which are texts, audiovisual resources and some maps, too. However, a detailed examination shows that the implementation, which is intended to be multi-faceted, is misleading. In fact, students can solve the majority of these tasks (four out of six) just by reading

the descriptive text, i.e. without using the map, as it is shown in Figures 1 and 2.

A térképek, a szövegek és a visszaemlékezések segítségével oldd meg a feladatokat!

A 2. magyar hadsereg feladata a széles doni arcvonal védelme volt. 1942 végére Jányi Gusztáv hadseregarancsnok látta, hogy ez lehetetlen lesz a létszámban és harcokcsik terén is főlényben levő szovjet erőkkel szemben. Ezért többször is további fegyvereket és erősítést kért, ezeket azonban nem kapta meg.



A korabeli magyar filmhíradók tudósításai a doni harcokról (A képek melletti dátumokra kattintva tudod megnézni a tudósításokat.)

1942. december

1943. január

1943. január

1943. február



Image 1: A cartographical resource that looks like a task, from the Reftantár interface⁸

The caption at the head of the clipping reads: ‘Solve the tasks using the maps, the texts and the memoires!’ There is indeed a map on the upper half of the image (‘Eastern Front 1943/1943’), showing the overall position of the Hungarian 2nd Army on the River Don. The attached text (to the left from the map) is a kind of a textual explanation of the military situation at the time. On the lower half of the image, four dates are given in the form of interactive links containing video clips of contemporary reports from the front. Nevertheless, there is hardly any serious task attached to the map; the only real task for students is to click on the dates and watch the linked videos.

Jány Gusztáv nem volt megelégedve a 2. magyar hadsereg fegyverzetével



Igaz

Hamis

Image 2. Cognitive limitations of the tasks published on the digital platform of the Reftantár interface⁹

Image 2 demonstrates the serious limits of digitalized educational materials. The caption at the top of the photo reads: ‘Gusztáv Jány [*the Commander-in-Chief*] was not satisfied with the armaments of the Hungarian 2nd Army.’ Underneath the source, students find two options: ‘Yes’ and ‘No’. Even though the online version of the textbook allows students an opportunity to interact by choosing from two options, the limits of this educational task are evident from the fact that they do not provide any opportunity for a debate, not to mention any analysis of the grave situation the military were facing at the time. The interactivity of the task is confined purely to the option of clicking ‘Yes’ or ‘No’.

In connection with the topic ‘Hungary during the Second World War’, it would be much more appropriate for students to *connect* written texts to cartographical sources (e.g. linking a diary excerpt to

a locality); or *relate* written sources to phenomena shown on the map, such as *confronting* military and/or intelligence reports (e.g. the location of armies, the size of armies, expected military events on the front, etc.) with the situation depicted on the map. If students were to connect primary written sources with well-thought-out secondary visual sources that are didactically equipped with proper questions and tasks, it would offer a chance for analysis of the cartographical sources at a higher cognitive level, potentially producing a significant improvement of students' part.

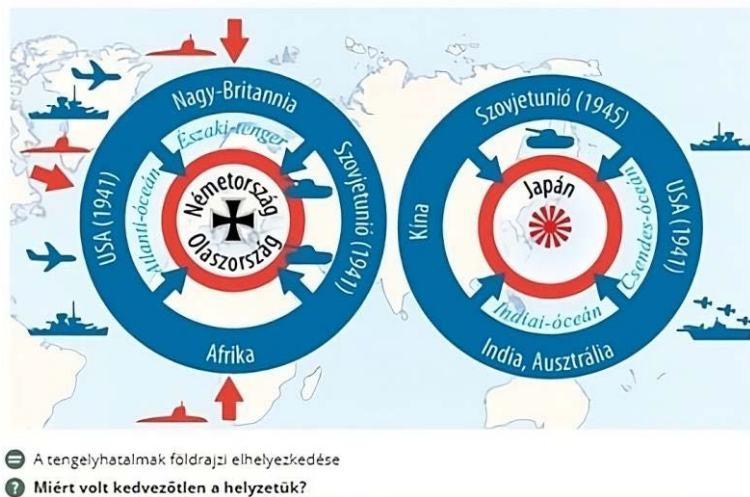


Image 3: A ‘map’ or ‘informative diagram’ for 7th graders which is included on the Reftantár interface and the National Public Education Portal

Out of eight maps accompanied by tasks and questions we found in the digital educational materials of the Reformed Textbook Repository (Reftantár interface) we examined, six consisted of gathering information such as: determination of locality; creating a chronological order based on the map; or deciding whether statements are true or false. Two tasks require a degree of *interpretation* from the 13-14-year-old students. In some cases, it was a real challenge for us as researchers to determine whether the graphic or visual stimulus requiring students to interpret can be called a ‘school history map’ at all. For instance, the ‘map’ entitled ‘The geographical

location of the Axis Powers' (Image 3), i.e. of Germany, Italy and Japan, gives their names so that they can be read in the centre of the two circles. However, the resource has two big problems right away. First, the 'map' gives students a completely ready-made interpretation, since the question associated with the image asks: 'Why was the geographical location of the Axis Powers unfavourable?' The second problem is that the concentric circles on the image make it impossible for students to *see* the historical process the assignment is aiming at, let alone to *interpret* it, since the 'geographical locations of the Axis Powers' are literally obscured by bad graphic arrangements of the online visual item. It is no exaggeration to say that this particular visual solution should be called an 'informative diagram' rather than a carefully designed 'school history map', as can be seen on Image 3.

The school history maps in the digital learning materials of the Mozaik Publishing House are unique in the way they nicely show the topographical conditions of historical locations. As has previously been pointed out by some researchers, topographical conditions and environmental conditions as specific features on cartographical sources are highly suitable for educational purposes, since they have always had an impact on the life and development of human civilization (Katona and Sallai 2002). Depth–height relations, terrain conditions, or the proximity of a wide river, for example, can be instructive even on analogue maps, and they can be especially attractive and easy to interpret by using multi-layered interactive school history maps. Unfortunately, however, in the case of the Hungarian digital learning materials we have examined, showing the topographical conditions of historical locations is redundant, since no questions or tasks whatsoever are associated with this aspect of the online maps. Students are at no point encouraged to consider either topographical or environmental conditions as decisive factors in historical events. The possibility that topographical features, such as river crossings or the proximity of oil fields, are constant major factors when considering and analysing military history events requires substantial amounts of argumentation. That is especially true for the Second World War, indeed, for any war.¹⁰

2.2.2 Positive examples

As promising examples that can contribute to high-quality digital textbooks, we would like to suggest some explicit map questions and tasks for which the use of a map is essential, even indispensable. For example, in one of the digital learning materials of the Mozaik Publishing House, students are assigned the task of assuming the role of a member of one of the Allied Powers' general staff. In this role, they have to plan defensive and offensive operations, and consequently they are supposed to *write a report from the front* (as a group task) based on the news coming in from the front.¹¹ Through these tasks, students are faced with various possible decisions in relation to the events that are projected on to the map, and they are also encouraged to involve more primary sources, in addition to strengthening their cooperation skills and creativity. The skill of *thinking in alternatives* is not only an excellent example of historical thinking, but also a very important and practical aspect of education. Students' thoughts about historical alternatives are undoubtedly important, as they are also an integral part of the historian's working processes.¹² We would also like to note here the same shortcoming that occurs in this particular task, as well as in many other tasks on the Mozaik platform, namely that these types of assignment can only be solved verbally – they cannot be completed on any digital device.

In the digital history textbooks for 7th-grade students on the National Public Education Portal, we found a total of seven digital school history maps included in four lessons. Compared to the previous textbook from the same publishing house from 2012, in the renewed version of the smart textbook there are fewer maps, though their quality shows a significant positive change. As a result of the new developments, all map details can now be set separately, and the different historical layers on the maps can be turned on separately. We found that all the maps in the digital textbooks on the National Public Education Portal have at least one question or task. The Portal's renewed digital maps have become more dynamic from the student's point of view. The number of adjustable historical layers has increased on each digital map and in the visual resources included in the new textbook.

3. Conclusions

Based on our investigations, we can formulate the following results.

Summing up the Hungarian digital textbooks and digital curriculum units we examined, we see that the vast majority of questions and tasks that are related to school history maps require localization and/or information collection, which can be categorized under Bloom's 1st and 2nd skills levels. Specifically, 45 out of 59 map questions and tasks can be matched with the 1st level of Bloom's taxonomy, and 14 out of 59 map questions and tasks can be matched with the 2nd level or higher skill level of that taxonomy. In the Hungarian digital textbooks and digital curriculum units in our survey, questions and tasks that require a more detailed examination of school history maps or their more complex interpretation are rare.

Our continuous investigations indicate (compare Engel and Fekete 2023; Fekete 2023) that in the last decade the cognitive level of digital school history maps related to the Second World War, and the questions and tasks attached to them in Hungarian digital teaching materials, has only changed to a quite limited extent. The good news is that, during our 2023 researches, we only occasionally found questions and tasks that students had to solve without cartographical sources, i.e. based on the schoolbook text or on students' own memory. On the other hand, however, it is regrettable that Bloom's higher-level cognitive goals are hardly evident in relation to cartographical sources from the Second World War. Even today, simple localization tasks and information-gathering dominate digital learning units that contain school historical maps.

Despite all our critical comments regarding the maps related to the Second World War found on the Hungarian digital educational online interfaces we examined, it can be said that the majority of Hungarian digital school history maps fulfill a function which is more than just visual representation. This means that some of the digital maps in our survey serve as illustrations of some historical phenomena, but many of them also have educational aims to enhance specific skills. From a didactic point of view, this can be considered a positive development, since a significant proportion of online cartographical resources, plus the questions and tasks related to them, can engage students. As a result, a slight majority of assignments can enhance higher cognitive educational goals.

This situation seems to be a logical outcome of the strategy set out in the central requirements of the School Leaving Exam (or Final Exam in history; in Hungarian *érettségi vizsga*). Taxonomically low-level questions and tasks related to maps can be correlated with the low level and inefficient requirements set by the *Hungarian National Core Curriculum*, which places the cognitive level for cartographical questions and tasks quite low. Since it is the *Hungarian National Core Curriculum* that serves as the very basis for writing school textbooks and also serves as the basic document for the school leaving exam's requirements, it is fair to predict that, in order to raise the cognitive quality of the school textbooks and the map-related tasks (among others) in them, the *Hungarian National Core Curriculum* needs to be improved. If and when this happens, both teachers and schoolbook publishers should follow the new line of the core curriculum, thus allowing the central requirements of the final exam to be raised. In the follow-up phase, the Bloomian level of the map-related questions and tasks may then rise consequently.

It should also be noted that from 2025 the Hungarian school-leaving exam will require students to demonstrate proficiency in a number of map-related competencies. At the intermediate level, this will entail the ability to collect information about maps, identify historical events on maps, interpret events on maps, and compare different maps. At the advanced level, this may be complemented by the creation of map legends and the identification of geographical locations.¹³

Notes

¹ Our online sources can be found on the following platforms: Mozaik Education Innovatív és digitális megoldások (<https://www.mozaweb.hu/>); Nemzeti Köznevelési Portál (<https://www.nkp.hu/>); (https://www.oktatas.hu/kapcsolat/nemzeti_koznevelési_portal); Learningapps.org – interaktív és multimédiás tanulási modul (<https://learningapps.org/>); Református Tananyagtár (<https://refantant.hu/>);(<https://mozaik.hu/>) (Last downloaded: 7.9.2024) Some remarks need to be added here for a clearer picture of the legal and technical nature of Hungarian publishing houses. In December 2013, the Hungarian parliament passed a law that centralized what had up to that point been free textbook publishing in Hungary. The National Public Educational Portal is a state-supported and financed publishing house which has incorporated former state publishing houses. The Reformed Textbook

Repository's website is also indirectly financed by the state and has been working for a few years (in Hungary, churches are free to publish textbooks too, and these are allowed to be used in state schools as well). Conversely, the Mozaik Publishing House is a private company which originally started publishing digitalized books, workbooks, maps and their 'Mozaweb' products. Nevertheless, after the consolidation, it split its publishing into two spheres. Since 2013, Mozaik has been successfully spreading internationally, while in Hungary its Mozaweb products and Hungarian contents have not been developed since 2013; in Hungary, it concentrates on publishing auxiliary materials for final exams.

² It is essential to stress that, during the time of our research, various factors have either facilitated or hindered teachers in incorporating digital tasks into classroom instruction. During the Covid-19 pandemic, for instance, teachers were introduced to a range of digital platforms (including those analysed in this paper) that enabled them to enhance their proficiency in utilizing these tools. However, recent regulations governing the use of digital devices in Hungary may limit the frequency of the integration of online platforms into history lessons. While this regulation does not explicitly prohibit the pedagogical use of mobile phones or laptops in primary and secondary education, as of September 2024 teachers and school principals are required to log the purpose and duration of such devices' possession and usage in the 'KRÉTA' educational administration system, as well as specify the devices that students are permitted to carry during lessons. See: 245/2024.(VIII. 8.) Government Decree on the scope of prohibited and restricted objects in educational establishments and the detailed rules of procedure for objects (<https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2024-245-20-22>) (Last downloaded: 6.10.2024.)

³ It is instructive to learn the details of Parellada and Carretero's five arguments: 'First, one limitation of printed historical maps is that territorial transformations must all be plotted on the same image with different references or using different images. Printed maps are static images, and therefore, it is difficult for them to provide a dynamic image of territorial transformations [...] digital historical maps can be animated; some digital maps allow the student to visualize how the borders of a territorial unit have been modified [...] Second [...] digital maps allow the user to not just visualize the information that they contain, but to interact with it. On digital maps, the student can define the scale of the map, zoom in and out of the area, or move through the image to observe other areas that are not included in the image shown on the screen. [...] A third difference between historical maps printed in textbooks and digital maps is that the former are often produced in limited colour or with a few spot colours. [...] Fourth, digital environments enable students to geo-reference old maps. Geo-referencing allows different maps to be superimposed on one another based on the identification of certain cartographic points. In this way, the user can observe the superimposition of an old map on a current map based on the corresponding geographical coordinates without necessarily using national boundaries as a

reference. [...] Finally, one of the main advantages of digital environments is that they allow users to access a large number of old maps more quickly and directly. Accessing old paper maps is often difficult, if not impossible, for students; it requires going to a library, which often houses only one copy of the map, if any.’

⁴ Of course, tasks do not need Bloom's taxonomization to be standardized, and other systems can also be taken into account. For instance, Fodor's research in Hungary (Fodor 2022) considers other theories suitable for the analysis and evaluation of tasks and questions, in addition to Bloom's theories and its updated versions, such as Webb 1997 or Maier et al. 2010. However, we were forced to omit these in our present paper, since, as Fodor notes, ‘the explicit purpose of the standardization structure, i.e. the justification of answers, the search for solutions, the application of skills in a real situation’ etc., are impossible to implement in the majority of online tasks.

⁵ Since the 1960s, Bloom's taxonomy has been recreated and reinterpreted several times by renowned authors, including John Dewey (Inquiry Based Learning; see Dimora and Kamarska 2015) and others. In Hungary and Slovakia, one can find detailed evaluations of Bloom's taxonomy by, for example, Kojanitz (2011) and Kratochvíl (2009).

⁶ We understand that, on the one hand, focusing our survey exclusively on Second World War maps may severely limit our findings thematically. On the other hand, we wanted to find a topic that is not only present in all textbooks and digital learning materials we researched, but which is ‘illustrated’ by numerous maps as well. From this point of view, the theme of Second World War suited our aims perfectly.

⁷ In Hungary, a new core curriculum was gradually introduced, commencing in 2020. In the accompanying course description, the number of hours recommended for the topic of Second World War is now only ten, instead of the previous twelve. As a result, we have reason to assume that this change will have an impact on the quantity, and perhaps even on the quality, of the maps and the questions and tasks found the new teaching tool of the National Public Education Portal.

⁸ Source: Református Tananyagtár, Tananyagok: 7. osztályos foglalkozások: Magyarország a világháború idején című foglalkozás: A 2. magyar hadsereg a doni harcokban.

[<https://refantar.e-studygroup.com/esgbca7ef2efe3dffdb134f0bdf92a2ebc>]

⁹ Source: Református Tananyagtár, Tananyagok: 7. osztályos foglalkozások: Magyarország a világháború idején című foglalkozás: A 2. magyar hadsereg a doni harcokban.

[<https://refantar.e-studygroup.com/esgbca7ef2efe3dffdb134f0bdf92a2ebc>]

¹⁰ In connection with the presentation of historical sites, less conspicuous content and aesthetic errors can also be discovered. An example of the errors in content is a map ‘exercise’ on p. 158 of the Mozaik Publishing House textbook for 7th graders, where the authors try and account for the territorial conquests of

the Axis Powers from 1939 to 1941, while on the attached map only four city names and the name 'Norway' are shown, and no other topographical signs. Consequently, it is obvious that students can only solve this task using their own knowledge or using another map.

¹¹ See Bencsik, Péter, Kövér, Lajos, Horváth, Levente Attila, and Pelyach, István (2023): *Történelem 7. A nemzetállamok korától a világháborúig*. Mozaik Kiadó, Szeged. 161, 165, 170. The titles of the lectures are: A villámháborúk időszaka [The period of blitzkrieg]; Fordulat a háború menetében [A turning point in the course of the war]; A semlegességtől a doni katasztrófáig [From neutrality to the disaster at the River Don].

¹² In this regard, the Hungarian historian Balázs Ablonczy draws attention to the fact that for this activity it is essential that undertaking historical investigations requires the collection of as much data as possible; see Ablonczy 2018.

¹³ Detailed requirements for the forthcoming school-leaving exam in history can be accessed at

https://www.oktatas.hu/pub_bin/dload/kozoktatás/erettségi/vizsgakövetelmények2024/tortenelem_2024_e.pdf(30.09.2024).

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 ABSTRACTS
Antoon De Baets**A New Human Rights-Based Theory of Historians' Responsibilities**

Previous theories of historians' responsibilities have been based on organizing principles such as their scope, addressees and performers, and the context of these responsibilities. In contrast, the theory presented here is based on human rights and uses the performative nature of responsibilities as its criterion, distinguishing responsibilities to respect, protect and promote. The theory argues, first of all, that the source of responsibilities is located in human rights: one has responsibilities because one has rights. It also discusses the differences between responsibilities, duties and virtues. It then specifies the basic responsibilities of states toward history and historians and the basic responsibilities of historians toward history and other historians. Finally, it examines the relative strength of the responsibilities to respect, protect and promote, arguing that the first is absolute while the other two are not. The new human-rights based theory of historians' responsibilities presented here provides a foundation on which other responsibilities can be built.

Katinka Dancs and Maja Majkić**Developing History-Related Epistemological Beliefs of Undergraduates in Hungary**

The aim of our study was to develop university students' history-related epistemological beliefs with the combination of two approaches supported by relevant previous research. Participants discussed epistemological questions and the characteristics of historical inquiry, and they also carried out an inquiry-based research task. Epistemological beliefs were assessed at the beginning and end of the course using a questionnaire and self-reflective essays. Epistemological profiles of the participants were defined on the basis of quantitative and qualitative data as well. Both data supported the effectiveness of the intervention course; however, they showed a different picture of the development. Although the questionnaire data reflected slight changes in epistemological positions, the essays indicated major changes. In accordance with the literature, the difference between the two analytical procedures suggests that the combined use of quantitative and qualitative methods can provide a nuanced, more complete picture of epistemological beliefs.

Joris Van Doorselaere, Lise Foket and Eef Rombaut**Perceptions and Use of Digital Heritage Collections in a Classroom Context: An Exploratory Survey on History Teachers in Flanders**

Growing attention is being paid to a disciplinary approach in literature on history education. In this regard, in addition to the textbook, digital heritage collections have increasing potential to find usable sources for historical inquiries and to design student-centred lessons or projects. This study explores if and how history teachers in Flanders rely on digital heritage collections in their

general classroom practice and how they conceive the notion of (digital) heritage. Conducted through an exploratory survey, the results show that history teachers' knowledge about digital heritage collections appears to be limited, leading to their overlooking these resources. This reaffirms the existing challenge of establishing sustainable connections between the field of (bistory) education and cultural institutions. The implications of this study underscore the importance of educators' epistemic beliefs regarding (digital) heritage, showing how these beliefs shape their instructional practices in the classroom.

Áron, Fekete and Barnabás Vajda

Visual Heritage: On the Cognitive Role of Some Digitalized School History Maps

Various sorts of digital learning materials are rapidly appearing in large quantities in public education, a process that also involves history as a school subject. In Hungary, such educational materials for the purposes of teaching history can typically be found on two platforms: digital or digitalized school textbooks, or digital content-sharing portals. Our research was triggered by our own teaching experience and our observations that so-called 'reproductive tasks', which require nothing but memorization from students, are remarkably common in these digital teaching materials. Thus, most of the questions and tasks linked to cartographical sources aim almost exclusively at the simple localization of historical sites. In this study, our main focus is on the cognitive levels that are represented by the questions and tasks related to digital school history maps in terms of the levels and sophistication of the students' thinking, their cognitive operations. The aims of our study are twofold: while focusing on questions and tasks related to school history maps, we examine first, what characteristics can be used to describe Hungarian online digital school history maps, and second, what sophisticated questions and tasks are required from students. It is important to note that, even though our research draws on a very limited range of samples, it still aims to dig deeply into a carefully selected set of examples in an attempt to formulate some relevant conclusions.

József Kaposi, Richárd Fodor and Judit Tóth

Changes in the Content Regulation of History Education in Hungary in Recent Years in the Light of International Developments

This study describes the characteristic processes of history education in Hungary in recent years in the light of international developments, using documents on the state regulation of the content of such teaching. The focus of the paper is on the changes to the curricula and examination requirements. The authors highlight the professional actors, organizations and innovations that showcase the prestige of the profession of history teaching in Hungary. The paper also covers the preparation and introduction of core standards, changes to development goals, and the content canon of the subject, as well as the emphasis on curricular content, the new approaches, source processing methods and tools that have resulted from these changes. It concludes that centrally generated and directed efforts to change attitudes have had a negative impact on institutional professional autonomy in Hungary, as well as on the development of critical thinking and social responsiveness. The contradictions between the intention to change and the lack of appropriate implementation activities have unfortunately failed to promote a shift in pedagogical culture.

Moreover, they have not sufficiently supported the objective of modern history teaching to ensure that future generations possess adequate historical literacy.

Mann Loper

Heritage and Patriotism in History Education in Independent Estonia: The 1990s Compared to the 1930s

The evolution of Estonian history education, as reflected in textbooks, reveals a complex journey towards identity reaffirmation amidst social transformation. This paper delves into the narrower theme of imparting patriotic or national education in history education by analysing a selection of history textbooks and curricula from the 1990s while drawing comparisons with materials from the 1930s. The 1990s, when Estonia was transitioning from Soviet influence to renewed independence, witnessed deliberate efforts to foster national pride and resilience. This era saw a deliberate return to pre-Soviet curricular ideas, echoing sentiments from the 1930s. Textbooks portrayed the enduring characteristics of Estonians. While romanticized views of early history persisted, the focus shifted to preserving political freedom in response to Soviet occupation. Education's centrality in identity formation persisted, with recurring themes across both periods. Negative portrayals of Baltic Germans and Russian rule underscored historical grievances. Acknowledgment of demographic challenges resonated with 1990s textbooks, reflecting sombre tones amidst the challenges.

Mare Oja

External Evaluation as an Influencer of History Teaching: Analysing the Final Exam in Estonia's Basic Schools

Assessment is relevant both in the curriculum development process and in the daily organization of teaching and learning in order to receive feedback on the quality of the learning process and support students' development. Assessment has a very large impact on learning, which is why assessment provokes discussions with both supporters and critics. The aim of this article is to analyse whether the basic school final examination is in line with the requirements of the history syllabus of the national curriculum, meets the learning outcomes and subject emphases, and is accessible to students. The analysis of the examination paper showed that it was prepared based on the principles and learning outcomes of the history syllabus, and the tasks were thematically balanced, diverse, and of varying difficulty. The examination paper was accessible to students, but it also revealed topics and tasks that needed more attention in learning. The introduction of the basic school final examination helped to transform the teaching of history from fact-based to skills-building. The preparation and assessment of examination papers developed and harmonised teachers' understanding of teaching as assessment. It was meaningful for students to receive an evaluation of their level. However, external assessment is not the only form of feedback on learning. When planning an assessment, it is always important to consider what you want to find out and what conclusions can be drawn from this knowledge. The main idea of assessment is to improve learning.

Maria Repoussi and Evangelos Kelesidis**Movies and History Education; Problematizing the Relationship Between Formal and Informal History Education**

Learning history is a complex sociocultural phenomenon depending on a wide public area of history communication. However, there has been little research focused on the ways that children deal with the different versions of history. Based on small-scale qualitative research, we explore the effect on history formal learning through its exposure to the informal history environment. The case of movies as a dynamic informal version of history -especially the cinematographic narrative of Troy versus the school version of Trojan War -is chosen to investigate the relationships in formal and informal History Education.

The findings show (a) that the cinematographic narrative seems more powerful than that of schools, but it is not accepted as a whole, (b) the capacity of the children to combine and finally reformulate the historical accounts produced within and outside their schools and (c) the importance of the dominant historical culture in the process of reframing the given narratives and constructing their own narration.

Monika Tihányiová and Miriam Viršinská**Forming the Historical Awareness of the Students of the First Slovak Secondary Grammar School**

The main function of teaching history is to cultivate the historical consciousness of the pupil as a whole person and to preserve the continuity of historical memory in the sense of transmitting historical experience, whether from a local, regional, national, European or world perspective. The teachers of the first Slovak grammar school, which opened its doors in September 1862, approached the teaching of history with very similar goals. The teaching of history at the secondary school exclusively in the Slovak language was the culmination of several decades of effort by Slovak scholars. Its main goal was to build national awareness also with the help of a thorough knowledge of the history of the Slovaks. The study briefly presents the development of education in the territory of present-day Slovakia with an emphasis on the teaching of history in the Slovak language. Then, with the help of preserved written sources, it examines the form and content of history teaching at the first Slovak grammar school in Revúca, which existed between 1862 and 1874.

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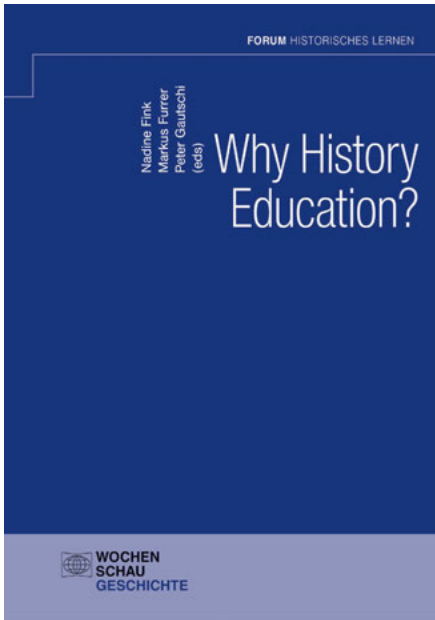
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The anthology addresses the question of why history should be taught in schools and the public sphere from different perspectives. Firstly, the publication contains a series of theoretical reflections and models, for example on the handling of time or the question of identity and history. Secondly, authors from all over the world provide information on how this question is dealt with in everyday teaching practice, be it in curricula, educational media, in everyday teaching, in museums, exhibitions or in social media. Thirdly, new findings from research are presented, for example on teachers' history-specific beliefs. The publication presents a whole series of reasons why history must be taught today and reads as a plea for a competent approach to history in today's society.

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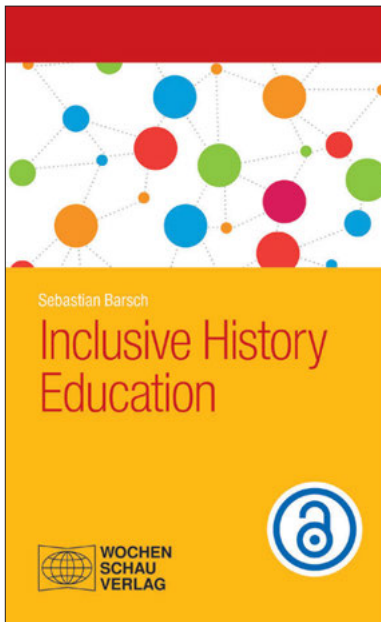
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