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			Published by the Reading Primers Special Interest Group (RP-SIG) of the International Society for Historical and Systematic Research on Schoolbooks		

□ Editorial

Dear readers,

in many countries, primers (*aabitsad, abeces, bukvari, cartilhas, elementorai, Fibeln* ...) are not only important tools for supporting learning processes in the period of beginning reading instruction. They are also regarded as illuminating documents of cultural and educational history. The Reading Primers Special Interest Group, established in September 2009, is an international network of scholars, collectors and other parties who share an analytical interest in this special kind of textbook.

The RP-SIG's first newsletter provides information about our network and its activities, about research on primers (publications, conference papers, ongoing and planned projects), about other developments in the field and about people. We hope that you enjoy reading, and we look forward to your comments on this issue and your proposals for future issues of the newsletter. Please contact us at primers-sig@arcor.de.

December 20, 2009

Vitaly Bezrogov & Wendelin Sroka

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□ President's Message

The International Society for Historical and Systematic Research on Schoolbooks is happy to send the first newsletter of the Reading Primers Special Interest Group out to its members and to the interested public.

I am proud to say that our Society has a strong tradition of considering historical and comparative analyses of reading primers and elementary readers in its conferences and publications. The board of the Society has therefore sincerely welcomed the proposal brought forward last year by our members Vitaly Bezrogov (Moscow) and Wendelin Sroka (Bonn) to establish a Reading Primers Special Interest Group affiliated to our Society. I thank them for taking on this initiative, which includes the publication of this newsletter, and I thank all those who are working towards building a truly international and successful network of experts in reading primers. As a member of the new network myself, I wish us fruitful co-operation across professional, academic and national borders.



As agreed with the initiators, the RP-SIG will hold its general assemblies in conjunction with the Annual Conferences of the International Society for Historical and Systematic Research on Schoolbooks. These conferences provide excellent opportunities especially for new members of the network to meet textbook experts from a great variety of academic backgrounds. For more information about our Society and its activities, please consult our website: www.schulbuch-gesellschaft.de/en. I am looking forward to seeing you at our next conferences.

Prof. Dr. Eva Matthes

President of the International Society for Historical
and Systematic Research on Schoolbooks

□ RP-SIG News

□ Launch of the RP-SIG

The Reading Primers Special Interest Group was founded in September 2009 by members of the International Society for Historical and Systematic Research on Schoolbooks (ISRS). RP-SIG strives to provide a forum for researchers from various disciplines (educational science, linguistics, cultural studies, including studies in visual culture, general and social history, sociology, political science, and book history), librarians, collectors, publishers, authors and others. The network encourages research and facilitates the exchange of information about developments in the field.

RP-SIG functions within the structure of its parent, the ISRS. A Provisional Executive Board governs the activities of RP-SIG during its initial stage (September 2009 to October 2010). The Board is jointly represented by the initiators of the network, Wendelin Sroka (Bonn, Germany) and Vitaly Bezrogov (Moscow, Russia).

Until September 2009, the initiators have developed and agreed a "profile" of the RP-SIG. This document gives an overview of the context, of the objectives and of planned activities of the new organisation during its initial stage. Brief information about the RP-SIG is also contained in a leaflet. Interested readers may order these documents from sig-primers@arcor.de.

The website of the ISRS provides more information about the RP-SIG, including the Membership Form.

RP-SIG subpage: www.schulbuch-gesellschaft.de/en/rp

RP-SIG info in German:

www.schulbuch-gesellschaft.de/content.php?contentid=112

RP-SIG info in Russian: www.schulbuch-gesellschaft.de/ru/rp

□ RP-SIG members

Three months after the launch of the RP-SIG, the network has twelve members from five countries (Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Poland and Russia):

Vitaly **Bezrogov**, Dr. hab., Moscow (Russia) studied history and educational science at the Moscow State Teachers University. Until recently he has worked in history of education and history of childhood. Now he holds a position as a Senior Research Fellow in the Institute of Theory and History of Education, an affiliate of the Russian Academy of Education, Moscow. He has published, amongst others, on the history of school textbooks during the last four centuries. He is co-initiator of the RP-SIG.

E-Mail: v_bezrog@rambler.ru

Juris **Cibuļs**, Riga (Latvia) is a collector of primers. He has also authored primers in the Latgalian language (1992) and in the Latvian language (1996). His collection contains more than 6,500 primers from some 200 countries and in about 750 languages. So far he has initiated around 150 exhibitions of primers in museums, libraries, schools and clubs, mostly in Latvia, but also abroad. His most recent book, published in 2009, is on "Latgalian Primers 1768–2008" (see page 5 of this newsletter).

E-mail: juriscibuls@hotmail.com.

Wolfgang **Fickert**, Dipl.-Phys., Erlangen (Germany) is a collector of primers with a particular focus on minorities and different languages. As of September 2009, his collection comprised 760 reading primers from 120 countries in 275 different languages and dialects, most of them printed since 1960. His research interest is on the primer as a document of languages and culture(s). E-mail: wolfgang-rauni@t-online.de

Carsten **Heinze**, Dr., is a private lecturer (*Privatdozent*) of education at the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, University of Augsburg (Germany). He has published, amongst others, on the history of German primers and readers. He is a member of the board of the International Society for Historical and Systematic Research on Schoolbooks and co-editor of the book series *Beiträge zur historischen und systematischen Schulbuchforschung* (Studies in historical and systematic schoolbook research).

E-mail: carsten.heinze@phil.uni-augsburg.de

Veronika **Kalmus**, Dr., is professor of media studies at the Institute of Journalism and Communication, University of Tartu (Estonia); her PhD-thesis (2003) is titled "School textbooks in the field of socialisation"; she has also published on values and gender roles in Estonian primers and other educational media, and on the methodology of research on primers and other textbooks. Her current research interests focus on socialisation in the information society and on value change in transition cultures.

E-mail: veronika.kalmus@ut.ee

Meri-Liis **Laherand**, MA, works as a lecturer at the Institute of Educational Sciences, University of Tallinn (Estonia); she is an author, amongst others, of studies on Estonian and Finnish primers, and her research interests include reading primers' hidden learning conceptions and value systems as well as causal attributions and their role in learning. E-mail: laherand@tlu.ee

Gabriele **Lieber**, Dr., is a lecturer at the Department of School Pedagogy, Justus Liebig University Gießen (Germany); her research interests include primers and their design, the cooperation of pictures and words in learning processes, aesthetical aspects, imagery, and image literacy. URL: www.glieber.de. E-Mail: Gabriele.Lieber@erziehung.uni-giessen.de

Galina **Makarevich**, M.A., is a chief librarian at the Ushinskij Library and a postgraduate student at the Department of Cultural Studies of the Russian State University for the Humanities in Moscow (Russia). She has published, amongst others, on the history of Russian primers and elementary readers of the 20th century. E-Mail: makar16@mail.ru

Eva **Matthes**, Dr. hab., is professor of education at the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, University of Augsburg (Germany); she has published, amongst others, on the history of German primers and on representations of the family in schoolbooks. She is president of the International Society for Historical and Systematic Research on Schoolbooks and co-editor of the book series *Beiträge zur historischen und systematischen Schulbuchforschung* (Studies in historical and systematic schoolbook research).

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Alla **Salnikova**, Dr. habil., is a professor of history and head of the Department of Historiography and Methods of Historical Writing at the Faculty of History, Kazan State University, Republic of Tatarstan (Russia); she has published, amongst others, on the history of childhood, education and everyday life in Russia and on Tatar primers. E-Mail: alla.salnikova@ksu.ru; URL: <http://www.ksu.ru/eng/departments/f4/4103.en.html>

Wendelin **Sroka**, Dr., works for a project management agency supporting the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Bonn (Germany). He has published, amongst others, on representations of political and family values in Estonian, German and Russian primers, and he is co-initiator of the RP-SIG. E-mail: wendelin.sroka@arcor.de

Joanna **Wojdon**, Dr. hab., is an assistant professor (*adiunkt*) at the Department of Didactics of History, Institute of History, University of Wrocław (Poland); her areas of study include the political propaganda of Polish primary school textbooks in the Cold War era, and at the moment she is preparing a comparative study "Politics in reading primers of the Soviet bloc" (see page 10 of this newsletter). E-mail: asiab@hist.uni.wroc.pl

□ RP-SIG plans

Towards a definition of the reading primer

Worldwide, a great variety of methods are in place in the area of early reading instruction. This is, amongst others, reflected in the material produced to support reading instruction and learning to read, and it is no wonder, therefore, that researchers as well as others who keep themselves busy with this material are faced with the challenge of finding suitable categories for their objects of study. In the RP-SIG context, we will encourage a discussion on the definition of the reading primer in an international perspective. In doing so we trust that this will serve the needs of those who have a systematic interest in this question. Wolfgang Fickert (Erlangen, Germany) is about to develop a paper on this issue, thought as a basis for discussion. This paper will be made available to RP-SIG members by February 2010.

Assisting collections and collectors of primers and readers

The RP-SIG will support the advancement of collections of primers and elementary readers through its "Collectors' page". The page will provide a platform for those who, in their capacity as persons with responsibility for collections in public libraries or as individual (private) collectors, want to take part in the system of inter-library exchange of duplicates. The first version of the RP-SIG collectors' page will be made available online in February 2010.

International bibliography of studies on reading primers and elementary readers

One of the activities of our network will be the compilation of an international bibliography of studies in reading primers and elementary readers, with titles of texts in languages other than English presented also in the English language, placed on the website, with the intention to produce improved and enlarged versions in the future. The editorial board will further develop an already existing structure of the bibliography until end of February 2010 and communicate the result to RP-SIG members.

June 26-27, 2010: RP-SIG Symposium in Essen (North Rhine-Westfalia, Germany)

This symposium, organised by the Provisional Executive Board, will primarily deal with general issues of historical and comparative analyses of primers, thus taking into account the need to discuss theoretical and methodological questions of studies on primers in an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspective. We are glad to announce that some experts have already signalled their willingness to bring in their expertise at this occasion. The meeting will also provide an opportunity to discuss the future work and organization of the RP-SIG. This will include the preparation of the international bibliography and other activities. The symposium will take place at Essen Public Library (Central Library), Hollestraße 3, 45127 Essen. Essen will be – with other cities of the Ruhr Area – one of the European Capitals of Culture 2010.

URL: <http://www.essen-fuer-das-ruhrgebiet.ruhr2010.de/en/home.html>.

September 30 to October 2, 2010: ISRS Annual Conference and RP-SIG General Assembly in Ichenhausen (Bavaria, Germany)

The ISRS Annual Conference 2010 will take place at the Bavarian School Museum, Unteres Schloß, Schloßplatz 3-5, 89335 Ichenhausen. The subject of the conference will be "tasks in textbooks". As part of the conference, a special section on "tasks in reading primers and elementary readers" may be organised, depending on the number of papers to be presented in this subject area. The call for papers will be published by ISRS in early 2010 on its website. The general assembly of the RP-SIG will be held on September 30, 2010, at 6.30 p.m.

URL: <http://www.bayerisches-nationalmuseum.de/Win/g/g09.htm>.

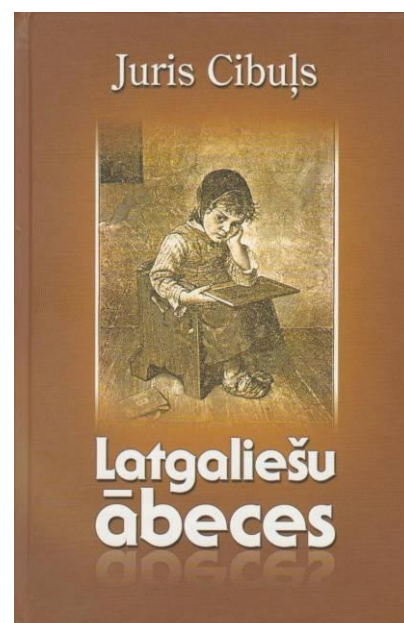
□ Research

□ New books

A history of Latgalian primers

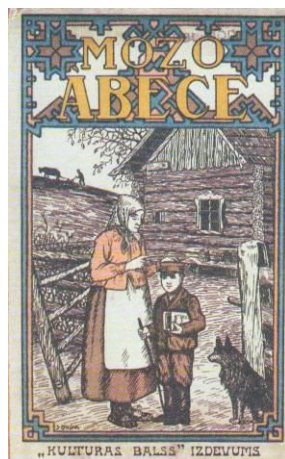
Juris Cibulš: Latgaliešu ābeces 1768 – 2008 [Latgalian primers 1768 - 2008]. Riga: Zinātne 2009, 169 + [3] p. and 16 plates with colour reproductions.

(ws) Latgalian, part of the Baltic group of languages, is spoken today mainly in eastern Latvia (*Latgale*), but also by some Latgalian communities in Siberia, with estimates of the number of speakers ranging from 150,000 to 0.5 million. The Latgalian literary tradition – with its orthography based on the Polish orthography – emerged in the 18th century. While the first Latgalian book known today, published in 1753, had a Latin title (*Evangelia toto anno* = Gospels for the whole year), the title of the first Latgalian primer, published fifteen years later, was in Polish (*Elementarz lotewski z abecadłem, krótkim katechizmem* = Latvian primer with the alphabet, [and a] short catechism). Indeed the history of Latgalian as a literary language is extremely complex, with periods of bans of books published in Latgalian in Latin script, but also with an era when Latgalian (between 1920 and 1934) had the status of an official language and was used in local government and education. Today, the Latgalian literary language is formally protected in Latvia by the State Language Law "as a historical variant of the Latvian language".



The complexity of the language history is very much reflected in the development of Latgalian reading primers. Juris Cibuļs, who is a Latgalian himself and co-author of the most recent Latgalian primer (*Latgališu ābece* [Iementars], Lielvārde 1992), recounts this development in his most recent book. The publication, written in Latvian, with brief summaries in English and Russian, has five parts of considerably varying length. The first two parts give a brief overview of the history of primers in Europe and in Latvia and of methods of reading instruction, including teaching to read as part of home schooling (*mājmācība*).

Latgalian primers are presented, broadly in chronological order, in the third chapter. With more than 100 pages it is the real centre of the book: It describes catechism primers, primers for use in Latvia compiled by famous Lat-



galian authors (Francis Kempis, Francis Trasuns, Eduards Kozlovskis, Ludvigs Mendiks, Nikodems Rancāns), translations and adaptations from Latvian primers (Sīmanis Svenne), primers published in Soviet Russia for Latgalian language communities in Russia, and modern Latgalian primers. The descriptions provide a wealth of information not only about contents and designs, but also about contexts of the textbooks, especially about authors and about the usage of these books. Here, a particularly interesting feature – and, as made clear by Cibuļs, a never ending story – is the challenge to standardise the Latgalian literary language. The book is concluded by a short chapter on Latgalian primers in Cyrillic script, and a bibliography.

It is not only the text which makes this carefully edited book a valuable document. The reader takes much profit also from many reproductions of individual pages taken from the respective primers – black and white reproductions within the chapters, and colour pictures of front covers on plates in the centre of the book. – Readers who have an interest to buy this publication are invited to send an e-mail to juriscibuls@hotmail.com.

A history of Russian primers

Rebenok 18 – 20 stoletij v mire slov: istorija rossijskogo bukvarja, knigi dlja chtenija i uchebnoj khrestomatii. Sbornik bibliograficheskikh materialov k Mezhdunarodnoj nauchnoj koferentsii „Istorija detstva kak predmet issledovanija: nasledije Philippa Arjesa v Evrope i Rossii”, Moscow, RGGU, 1-2 oktjabrja 2009 g. Sost. G.Makarevich. Otv. red. T.Markarova & V.Bezrogov [The child of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries in the world of the words: A history of Russian primers, readers and chrestomathies (literature anthologies for elementary reading instruction). A collection of bibliographical material for the international conference "The history of childhood as a research topic: the legacy of Philippe Ariès in Europe and Russia", Moscow, Russian State University of the Humanities, October 1-2, 2009. Compiled by G. Makarevich. Ed. by T. Markarova and V. Bezrogov]. Moskva-Tver: Nauchnaja Kniga, 2009. 234p.



(vb) This book was prepared by staff of the Ushinski Pedagogical Library (Moscow) and of the Russian National Library (St.-Petersburg). It was published as volume no. 5 of a series of books prepared by members of the post-

graduate seminar and workshop "Cultures of childhood: norms, values, practices". This ongoing seminar has been started at the Russian State University of the Humanities in February 2007. More information about this seminar is available in Russian at <http://childcult.rsuh.ru>.



The publication is made up of three chapters, supplemented by short introductory and concluding sections. The first chapter, written by Larissa Averjanova (Ushinski Library), presents an overview of the history of Russian primers in Russia. She has traced the main phases of this history and their connections with the collections of the Ushinski Library. – The second chapter has been prepared by Galina Makarevich (Ushinski Library). It contains an annotated bibliography of the first part of the Ushinski Library Rare Books Department's collection of primers, following the alphabetical order of book titles from A to N of the Cyrillic alphabet. The annotations to the majority of the items provide information on the structure, contents, ideas and teaching methods used in the primer. This chapter is completed by a chronological index. – The third chapter of the book, compiled by Anna Senkina (Russian National Library), presents a bibliography of Russian elementary readers, i.e. books for reading instruction after the "primer's stage". This list contains all Russian manuals printed in Russia since the end of the 18th century till 1917. In contrast to chapter 2, chapter 3 is a pure bibliography, without annotations and arranged in chronological order, supplemented by an alphabetical index of the authors. – The book also contains numerous black-and-white reproductions of front covers of the school textbooks mentioned in the three main chapters. This makes the book an illustrative documentation even for readers with a limited knowledge of the Russian language.



The price of the book including shipping (within Europe) is 16 Euros. Orders can be made by writing to the organisers of the seminar "Cultures of Childhood", e-mail: kultdetstva2008@mail.ru. The editors are also prepared to send the book as part of a book exchange. Interested persons may write to v_bezrog@rambler.ru.

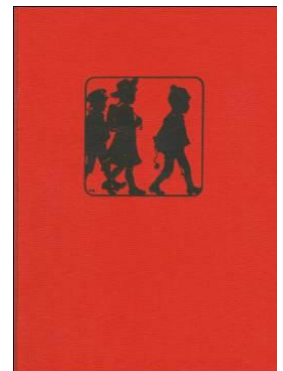
□ PhD thesis

Primers as sources of educational history

Gisela Teistler: *Schulbücher als bildungsgeschichtliche Quellen: Das Beispiel der Fibel* [Schoolbooks as sources of educational history: the example of the primer]. Eckert.Beiträge 2009/6.

www.edumeres.net/publikationen/beitraege/2009/Teistler_Schulbuecher.pdf

(ws) To many in the textbook research community, the author of this PhD thesis is well known not only as the former head of the Library of the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Brunswick (Germany), but also as an organiser of research conferences on primers, author of numerous studies on the history of German primers and, last but not least, creator of the *Fibel-Findbuch*, an exhaustive compilation of bibliographical data on German primers from the beginnings until 1944, with around 12,500 single entries (to the right: front cover of this book). After retirement, Gisela Teistler has continued her studies on primers, and in 2008, her work on primers as sources of educational history was approved as a PhD thesis by the Faculty of Humanities and Educational Science of the Carolo-Wilhelmina Technical University in Brunswick.



Edumeres, the virtual network for international educational media research supported by the Georg Eckert Institute, now makes this work available online. It consists of nine chapters, including a resume, supplemented by an attachment with literature, lists of figures and maps as well as reproductions of front covers of Dr Teistler's earlier publications. In her thesis, Teistler not only sums up her research on the history of German primers and puts the topic in the context of general textbook research. She also examines and discusses a number of genuine challenges for research on primers, e.g. to develop a suitable definition of the primer, or to gain a resource base which allows for representative conclusions. Based on her deep knowledge of the object the author also identifies a broad range of topics for future research, not least in the area of international research, and with special consideration of topics related to data presented in the "*Fibel-Findbuch*". It is this perspective which makes Teistler's most recent publication an inspiring reading.

□ Papers

German primers 1945-1949

Gisela Teistler, Eva Matthes (2008). *Fibelproduktion 1945 bis 1949 – Zwischen Notprogramm und Kontinuität [Production of primers 1945 to 1949. Between emergency programme and continuity]*. // *Zeitschrift für Grundschulforschung. Bildung im Elementar- und Primarbereich*. Vol. 1 (2008), no. 1, pp. 122-136.

Eva Matthes, Gisela Teistler (2008). *Von "Guck in die Welt" zum "Lesen und Lernen" - schulpolitische Entwicklungen in der SBZ am Beispiel der Fibel [From "Guck in die Welt" to "Lesen und Lernen". Developments of educational policy in Germany's Soviet Occupational Zone, using the example of the primer]*. // *Zeitschrift für Grundschulforschung. Bildung im Elementar- und Primarbereich*. Vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 116-132.

(ws) In 1945, two major political challenges in Germany were the denazification of the public service, including the education system, and the promotion of democratic values in society. In the school system, the efforts to reach these aims, supervised by the Occupying Forces, related to personnel, but also to textbooks. Two papers, written by Eva Matthes and Gisela Teistler, published in 2008 in *Zeitschrift für Grundschulforschung* (Journal for Primary Education Research), analyse the production of primers in Germany's occupied zones 1945-1949. The first paper focuses on the development of primers in the Western zones, the second paper deals with primers produced in the Soviet Occupation Zone and in the first years of the German Democratic Republic.

The papers stress the differences between East and West in the area of educational policy in this historic period. And rightly so: Whereas the political authorities in the East started to create a unitary school system which was to cover the entire Soviet Occupation Zone, federal structures were re-established in the West, and in many cases schools in this part of Germany at least in principle had the right to choose from a variety of textbooks produced by private publishers. Between 1945 and 1949, no less than 27 different primers were produced in the West. These primers can be divided in three groups: Eight primers were reprints, first published in the period of the Weimar Republic (1918-1933), with five of them declared as reprints and three without



No health education officers around? Extract from "*Bunte Welt*" [Colourful world], Hamburg: Ellermann 1946, p. 20. The primer was "approved for use in schools by Control Commission for Germany - British Element". The text says: "Smoke, Henry! Come on! Smoke once again!"

such declaration. In three cases, primers first published in the Nazi era were cleaned from their political content and published as revised editions. 18 primers were entirely new publications, with some of them reprinted in revised versions until the 1960s or even the mid 1970s.

The authors not only describe the market of reading primers (in the West) and the contents of the textbooks, which in most cases were remarkably idealistic and far away from the all-day experience of children and adults in post-war Germany. Especially in the second paper, they also highlight the connection between the development of primers and the political trends.

Matthes and Teistler repeatedly emphasise that their papers do not replace in-depth studies of the development of primers – and school textbooks in general – in post-war Germany. Indeed, such studies might focus, with due consideration of regional variations, on the conditions of production and approval, but also on the circumstances of reading instruction and textbook supply in the schools. What kind of material was available for teachers and children? What happened with primers and other schoolbooks published in the Nazi era? Yet another area might be the study of primers and of mother tongue reading instruction in non-German languages, published and used in post-war Germany. This might include the efforts of teachers and policy-makers to re-establish schooling in the Sorbian languages (Upper Sorbian in Saxony, Lower Sorbian in Brandenburg).

□ Conference report:

Portrayals of “friends” and “enemies” in primers

(ch) From October 1–3, 2009, the 13th annual conference of the International Society for Historical and Systematic Research on Schoolbooks took place at the University of Belgrade (Serbia). The conference focused on the question of how “friends” and “enemies” have been portrayed in school textbooks in various times. In the context of a multifaceted conference programme, two members of the RP-SIG, Carsten Heinze and Eva Matthes, presented papers which highlighted the conference theme with reference to reading primers.

Carsten Heinze examined portrayals of friends and enemies in German primers published in the era of National Socialism. As a rule, these primers demonstrate a relatively low level of ideologisation. According to Heinze this is caused, amongst others, by the fact that the National Socialists tried to ideologically transform reformist pedagogy (*Reformpädagogik*), thus aligning the presentation of ideological contents with the children’s stages of development.

In her paper on portrayals of friends and enemies in school textbooks of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), Eva Matthes analysed civics textbooks and primers. She concluded that in GDR primers, pictures of friends are predominant, whereby in more implicit ways references are also made to pictures of the enemy. Quite often this becomes apparent when the social and political context of the presented topics is considered.



Maria Krowicki et al. (1984). *Unsere Fibel [Our primer]*. Berlin: Volk und Wissen Volkseigener Verlag, 11th edition, p. 107. The text says: „Jointly they guard the peace. Jointly with the soldiers of the other socialist countries, the soldiers of our National Peoples' Army guard the peace. They train with the same weapons and they learn from each other. They are comrades in arms.“

□ **Ongoing project:** **Politics in primers of the Soviet block – a comparative study**

(jw) My research on the political propaganda in the Polish primary school textbooks from 1944-1989 indicates that the textbooks in that communist-dominated country did refer to politics. Even six and seven year olds were being involved in the current problems of the state and society. The communist party and state leaders were presented, as well as new factories, power plants, cities. The heroes of the readings were chosen according to the propaganda needs. They were workers and engineers, women teachers and doctors. Their activities helped promote patriotism and internationalism.

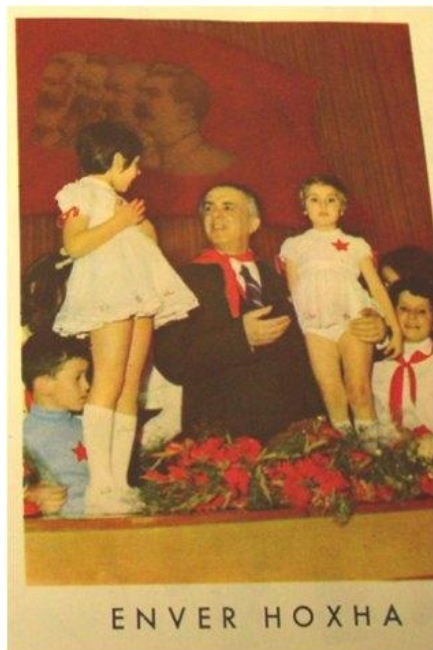
Was the situation similar in other communist countries?

Some Polish publications of the 1960s and 1970s indicate that the textbook publishers of the Soviet bloc met from

time to time to exchange their opinions and experiences. It is also well known that communist parties of those countries received Soviet instructions.

What is politics? What elements of the primers should be regarded as 'political'? I will examine people (among them historical heroes, soldiers and state leaders, but also 'a man in the street', including a child both at home and at school), places (among them 'my country' and 'other countries'), symbols, virtues, ideological theses, holidays and problems of economy. The research in the archives of the Polish ministry of education and censorship office proves that such issues were presented in the school textbooks not on the author's own initiative but at the request of the ministerial and party authorities.

Issues of political nature are the elements of the surrounding world and even the youngest schoolchildren should not be isolated from them. But it is the



scope, the context and the character of those issues that indicates if a primer remains a textbook or becomes a propaganda brochure. I will also study some examples of the reading primers of Western Europe of the post-W.W.II era in order to compare party-controlled textbooks with those of the free world.

Thanks to the research grant from the Georg-Eckert Institute I was able to compile an extensive database of the reading primers from both sides of the 'iron curtain' (as of the Soviet bloc it includes Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, GDR, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Yugoslavia, plus 2 primers from Romania and 1 from Albania). At the moment I am in the process of analyzing the collected data and hope to have a publication in Polish ready by the end of 2010. – Joanna Wojdon (asiab@hist.uni.wroc.pl)

Picture 1: *Wir lernen für morgen* [We learn for tomorrow], Berlin 1967, p. 119. Picture 2: K. Xhumari, Q. Xhixha, *Abetare* [Our primer], Tirana 1987, p. 1.

□ **Planned project:** **Cosmonautics and cosmonauts in Central and East European primers**

(ws) From the 1960s to the 1980s, cosmonauts and cosmonautics used to play a remarkable role in primers developed for early reading instruction in Central and East European countries. In many cases these school-books taught young pupils about Yuri Ga-



garin, the first human to travel into aerospace and "Hero of the Soviet Union" (see picture 1). Other cosmonauts who found their way into primers include Valentina Nikolaeva-Tereshkova, Gherman Titov and Andrian Nikolaev. A closer look into these representations not only reveals considerable differences over time and across countries – including differences across republics of the Soviet Union –, but also different messages for young learners. The functions range from enhancing Soviet and Communist patriotism to raising pupils' interest in science and technology. Neither the end of the space race between East and West nor that of the Cold War could mark the end of cosmonautics and cosmonauts in primers, with Yuri Gagarin's survival as a symbol of Russian achievement until the end of the 1990s in some of these textbooks. Nowadays, new paradigms can be identified in "Piri 1", a German primer: The general edition of this textbook, published in 2008, portrays Neil Armstrong and the (West) German astronaut Thomas Reiter (see picture 2), whereas in the 2009 edition for use in Eastern Germany, the latter has been replaced by – yes, Yuri Gagarin.

These observations are the starting point of a study project initiated by Wendelin Sroka, Bonn (Germany). The project focuses on representations of cosmonauts and cosmonautics in primers published in European republics of the Soviet Union (Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine) and in other communist countries (so far: Bulgaria, German Democratic Republic, Romania) and their succession states from the 1960s to the present. The study aims a) to develop a structured data base with relevant material, in-

cluding texts and illustrations, b) to describe communalities and differences over time and across countries and c) to identify representation patterns and to



analyze the specific functions of these patterns in due consideration of context information. To achieve these aims, the initiator of the project seeks to draw from the expertise of specialists from the countries covered. Activities in phase 1 of the project (spring to autumn 2010) will focus on the development of the database. Persons wishing to get more information about this project may write to wendelin.sroka@arcor.de.

Picture 1: V. G. Goreckij et al. (1984). *Azbuka. Probnij učebnik*. Moskva, izd. 2-e, p. 157. Picture 2: C. Donth-Schäffer et al. (2008). *Piri 1. Silbenfibel. Basisausgabe*. Stuttgart/Leipzig, p. 48.

□ Country Notes

□ Chile:

Full text online versions of primers on “*memoria chilena*”

(ws) *Memoria chilena* (www.memoriachilena.cl) is an impressive online portal offered by *La Dirección de Bibliotecas, Archivos y Museos* (Dibam), a public organization reporting to Chile’s Ministry of Education. The portal presents a wealth of information about Chile’s culture past and present, and this includes full text online versions of reading primers. Currently, *memoria chilena*’s online library holds three reading primers:

Domingo Faustino Sarminento (1857). *Método de lectura gradual* [Method of gradual reading]. Valparaíso: Imprenta y librería del mercurio.

<http://www.memoriachilena.cl/archivos2/pdfs/MC0002274.pdf>

Claudio Matte (n.d., 1884 ?). *Nuevo método (fonético-analítico-sintético), para la enseñanza simultánea de la lectura i escritura compuesto para las escuelas de la República de Chile* [New method (phonetical-analytical-synthetic) for simultaneous instruction of reading and writing, compiled for the schools of the Republic of Chile]. Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus

<http://www.memoriachilena.cl/archivos2/pdfs/MC0018127.pdf>

Adrián Dufflocq Galdames (n.d., copyright 1953). *Silabario hispanico americano. Método fónico-sensorial-objetivo-sintético-deductivo* [Spanish-American primer. Phonic-sensorial-objective-synthetic-deductive method]. Santiago de Chile: Adrián Dufflocq Galdames (autor y editor), 10th edition.

<http://www.memoriachilena.cl/archivos2/pdfs/MC0012791.pdf>

While Sarmiento’s primer is a good example of the method used in the middle of the 19th century for reading instruction in Spanish-speaking South America, the primers authored by Matte and Dufflocq Galdames deserve special attention in an international perspective. Claudio Matte’s primer, produced, as the title indicates, for use in Chile’s schools, was not only printed in Leipzig and edited by F.A. Brockhaus, a German publishing house famous for its encyclopaedia. The method developed by Matte also draws from the experience in early reading instruction which the author had gained over years in Germany, Austria and German-speaking Switzerland. In the introduction to his primer, Matte explicitly makes reference to “the opinion of competent German pedagogues” (“la opinión de pedagogos alemanos competentes”, p. II) – a quotation very rarely found in today’s post-PISA-times.

In the middle of the 20th century, Adrián Dufflocq Galdames was successful in many Central and South American countries with his Spanish-American primer (see picture). In 1948, the primer was approved by the Spanish government, and the book was marketed in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa-Rica, Cuba, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela.



□ Finland:

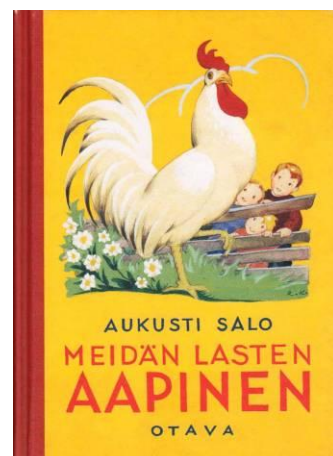
Reprints of 20th century primers

(wf/ws) By tradition, reading literacy is highly valued in Finland’s society. It is not surprising, therefore, that those responsible for the development of primers have since a long time put a lot of efforts in this task. Another effect of this appreciation for reading literacy is that old, “classical” primers which are no longer in use for reading instruction at school are reprinted and successfully sold on the Finnish book market. In 2009, Otava Publishing House, one of Finland’s leading textbook publishers, has edited reprints of two classical primers of the 1930s and late 1950s.

Aukusti Salo: Meidän lasten aapinen. Alakansakoulun kokonaisopetukseen liittyvä lukukirja I [Our children's primer. First reader for comprehensive instruction at primary school]. Kuvittanut Rudolf Koivu. Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Otava 2009, 149p. ISBN-13: 978-951-1-2037-0

Meidän lasten aapinen was first published in 1935, and the present is a reprint of this edition. Both the author and the illustrator of this primer are well-known figures in Finland's cultural history. Aukusti Salo (1887-1951) was an educationalist and educational reformer, emphasizing "all-round education" and comprehensive instruction – as opposed to traditional instruction based on school subjects. Rudolf Koivu (1890-1946) was one of the most prominent illustrators of children's books in his time. It is worth mentioning that some of the illustrations of the present primer were used again after WWII in the Estonian primer *Aabits ja Emakeele-Lugemik* [Primer and Mother Tongue Reader], published in 1955 by the *Rootsi-Eesti Õpperaamatufond* [Swedish-Estonian Textbook Fund] in Stockholm, and printed in Finland.

The front cover of '*Meidän lasten aapinen*' (picture 1) shows the primer-rooster, a motif which is well known in the textbook tradition of Nordic countries. Readers of the primer will encounter the rooster once again on page 39, now in a classical portrayal as a teacher in front of children, with a pointer in his claw. The majority of the illustrations display children in a rural, if not bucolic, environment or in a caring family. The primer also addresses religious themes, with prayers, among them the Lord's Prayer (p. 138, the last page with text) and little Ilmari writing a Christmas letter to the Infant Jesus (p. 63, see picture 2). The world of work is limited to agriculture and little children playing shopkeeper and customers (p. 45).

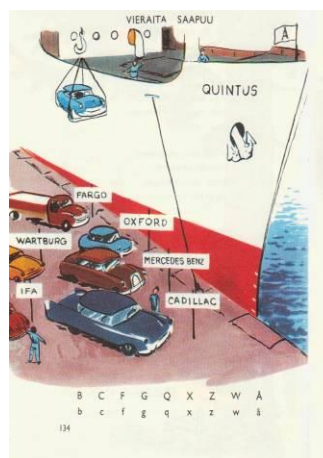
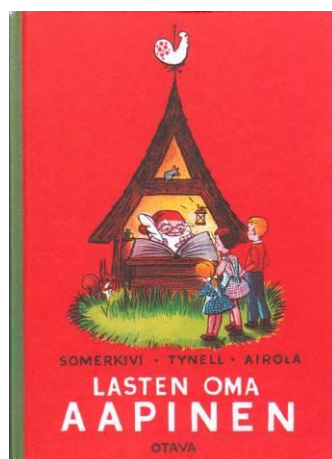


Of particular interest may be the ABC on page 24 (see picture 3). It ends with the letters Ä and Ö, two letters which are also known e.g. in the German alphabet. But lacking in this alphabet – and in the primer as a whole – are the letters B, C, F, Q, W, X, Z and Å, the latter being used in Swedish, the second national language of Finland. These letters, though not used in genuine Finnish words, are in use in loanwords. Therefore many primers published before and after the primer in question teach these letters.

Urho Somerkivi, Hellin Tynell, Inkeri Airola: Lasten oma aapinen [The childrens' own primer]. Kuvittanut Usko Laukkanen. Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Otava 2009, 176p. ISBN-13: 978-951-1-17995-5

The primer compiled by Urho Somerkivi and others was first published in the late 1950s, with a number of new, partially revised, editions in the 1960s. The actual reprint is based on the 10th, revised edition 1967. With its colourful illustrations made by Usko Laukkanen, *Lasten oma aapinen* has some features in common with Salo's primer: children playing in the free nature, children as part of three-generation families, girls wearing an apron at play both

inside and outside the house (p. 3, p. 12, p. 111) as naturally as mothers (p. 6, p. 18, p. 67, p. 112) and grandmothers (p. 7, p. 121, p. 137) do. This primer contains religious motives as well, including a nativity scene (p. 71) and a family on its way to church for the Easter service (p. 119). At the same time, the world of work is more prominent here than in Salo's primer, with workers walking towards a factory gate (p. 29), traffic policemen in the street (pp. 48-49) and the unloading of a cargo ship (p. 134, see picture 2). Also, a number of technical tools are introduced in this primer: the television set (p. 37), the telephone (p. 87), the airplane (p. 109) and, in a story about the adventures of little Mikko, the space rocket (p. 168).



The illustration depicting the unloading of the cargo ship also presents the names of car manufacturers. Following Finnish politics of those times, eastern and western products are balanced. Here, textbook approvers in other countries might insinuate some sort of successful product placement by a national association of car importers. Yet in this case the scene serves to introduce the letters uncommon in genuine Finnish words (with these letters included in the alphabet presented on the next page; see picture 3). The title line may show subtle double meaning. The Finnish word "*vieras*" stands for "stranger" and "guest". Therefore the line may be read either as "strangers arriving" or as "guests arriving" and be applied to the cars as well as to the letters.

□ Mozambique:

Primers in Chuwabu and Makhuwa-Meetto languages

(ws) The African branch of the US-based Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) continues its language development activities in Mozambique. Part of these activities is the production of instructional material in vernacular languages, designed for reading instruction of adults. During a SIL Africa Area workshop conducted in Nampula in January 2009, mother-tongue speakers of the Chuwabu and Makhuwa-Meetto languages compiled sets of reading primers for their language communities. The authors relied on the Bantu Literacy Tool to produce the primers. This tool was developed by SIL to assist Bantu communities to generate primers in their own languages.

Chuwabu and Makhuwa-Meetto are Bantu languages and two of 42 listed vernacular languages spoken in Mozambique. Chuwabu is spoken by close to 1 million people in Mozambique's central coast area between Quelimane and the Mlanje Mountains. About 800,000 people in northern Mozambique (Cabo Delgado and Niassa provinces) and in southern Tanzania speak Makhuwa-Meetto, also known as Meto or Imeetto.

At present, more than half of Mozambique's adult population is illiterate. Portuguese, the country's official language, is used by about 30% of the population, mainly by residents in urban areas. It has so far been the only language of instruction in the school system. The Ministry of Education has recently published plans to introduce mother tongue reading instruction in Grades 1 and 2 in a small number of schools.

<http://www.sil.org/sil/news/2009/mozambique-literacy-primers.htm>

□ USA:

"American Primers and Readers" – an online exhibition

American Primers and Readers. Featuring the Words and Collection of Richard L. Venezky. An online exhibition of the Cubberley Education Library, Stanford University. URL: <http://venezky.stanford.edu/>

(ws) Richard L. Venezky (1938-2005) was a leading American expert in the history of literacy and reading. His extensive collection of American textbooks, published between the late 1700s and the middle of the twentieth century, is now housed in the Department of Special Collections and University Archives of Stanford University. This collection joins several other resources in the Cubberley Education Library and elsewhere on Stanford University's campus, including a pre-existing collection of American textbooks and a substantial assemblage of 19th-century children's books from the Western United States, notable for revealing the portrayal of women and Native Americans in earlier days.

In fall 2008, the Cubberley Education Library displayed an exhibit of primers and readers from the Venezky Collection, paired with quotations from Venezky's work in the history of literacy. Based on this exhibit, the library now presents an online exhibition which is remarkable both in terms of content and in the way this content is presented. The exhibition has two parts: The first part ("eras") follows the development of American primers and readers through five distinct periods as delineated by Venezky: Colonial (1639–1782), Early National (1783–1837), Pre-Civil War (1838–1865), Early Modern (1866–1920), and Modern (1921–present). The second part ("themes") analyses the history of these textbooks from various perspectives; it includes sections on "the textbook as a cultural artifact", "the content of reading instruction", "from oral performance to silent reading", "phonetics", "textbook publishing" and "textbook business: marketing". A bibliography, attached to the online exhibition, lists Venezky's writings on the subject and relevant works from the Stanford University Libraries' Collections.

The exhibition, especially its second part, is a testimony of Venezky's deep understanding of the history of literacy and reading instruction in the US. Moreover, it can be seen as a model of presenting a complex national history of primers and readers in online format.

The editors of RPI wish to thank Robert Calfee, Professor Emeritus, Stanford University, for providing additional information about the Venezky Collection.

Greek primer to preserve Hellenic culture in the US

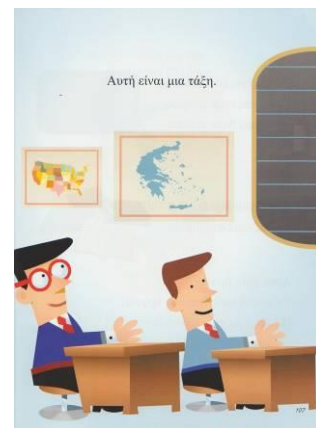
Alfabetario Αλφαβητάριο. First Grade Primer. Level One. Silver Spring, MD: Papaloizos Publications, 2nd edition 2007, 164p.



(ws) In the US, immigrant groups from many parts of Europe have for generations tried to pass on their specific languages and cultures to their children. Proof of this are, amongst others, textbooks, including primers, produced for mother tongue reading instruction. In most cases, attempts of language communities – from Finnish to Rusyn, from German to Swedish – to preserve their traditions through organized instruction in day, afternoon or Sunday schools have more or less been given up in the course of the 20th century. Yet early reading instruction in the Greek language seems to be one of very few exceptions from this rule. *Alfabetario*, a Greek first grade primer authored by Theodore C.

Papaloizos in the 1950s, continues to have a market in North America. Ever new and revised editions are offered by Papaloizos Publications, Silver Spring, MD, an American publisher who specializes in books that teach modern Greek to both adults and children.

This *Alfabetario* is a grade school level one textbook, with textbooks for six more elementary levels to follow. Part A of the primer introduces the alphabet and basic vocabulary, Part B contains short readings. At first sight, the primer is designed as a schoolbook for learning Greek as a second language, with Greek and English vocabulary within lessons and with a Greek/English glossary. Also, references in illustrations to both Greece and the US may be seen as a means to promote some sort of cultural bilingualism. But the picture “this is my class” on page 107, with maps of the two countries in different sizes, also presents a distinct understanding of proportions (see picture 2). Indeed, with themes like “at church” and a multitude of Greek symbols throughout the book, the primer in its own way tries to serve the purpose to “perpetuate our Hellenic language and culture”, as the principal of a Greek Church school is quoted at the back of the manual. In this sense, the textbook also perpetuates the tradition of North American primers in European immigrant languages. To our knowledge, this tradition has so far hardly been the object of historical studies on textbooks.



□ In profile:

Eduard Stolz, collector of primers and organiser of exhibitions

Eduard Stolz was born in 1940 in Odessa (Soviet Ukraine) into a Russian-German family. He spent most of his childhood and youth in a small town in the Southern Urals. On successful completion of secondary school he studied history at Perm State University and earned a diploma as a history teacher. In 1972 he immigrated to West Germany. From 1974 to 2005 he taught history and social science in a grammar school (later: comprehensive school) in Duisburg, North Rhine-Westphalia. For decades, Eduard Stolz has been well known in Germany and beyond as a collector of primers and organiser of primer exhibitions. In October 2009, Heide Stamm, Essen, had the opportunity to interview Eduard Stolz for this issue of “Reading Primers International”.

How did you get round to occupying yourself with primers?

In the course of studying history at university, I got very interested in the history of languages and scripts, with a special focus on languages of the Ancient Near East. In 1974, when I just had started my work as a teacher, a colleague gave me an old Russian primer as a present. I went through this textbook – and my passion for primers was fuelled.

What makes primers an attractive object of study?

Quite often, primers are much more than mere technical aids for reading instruction. Texts and most notably illustrations in primers very frequently inform about specific cultural traditions and characteristics. As a teacher, I could use primers from a variety of countries and epochs as illustrating material in my history classes, especially in the focal topic of “cultures and languages”.

How did your collection of primers grow?

Our grammar school was located next to a primary school. One day, a colleague told me that a former teacher of this school, who had recently passed away, had left a collection of primers there. I found these books in the basement of the school; among them were primers from Austria, Sweden and Switzerland and also an inventory which had been carefully prepared. The whole lot was already disposed to be thrown away, but then these books laid the foundation of my collection. In the course of time, I was able to gra-

dually enlarge my collection. This was always based on the principle never to buy primers. At present, my collection consists of more than 1,000 primers from 138 countries.

Primers are mass media on the one hand; on the other hand they are also sought-after collectables. Today, older editions are sold by antiquarian book-sellers at a high price. How did you manage to build your collection without making any purchases?

For a long time now, I have had a passionate interest in primers, but also in the people who in one way or another are connected with these books. And I let my environment know about my interests. This includes my pupils and colleagues at school, but also nongovernmental organisations, international relief organisations and religious missions. I have thus obtained even very rare primers, e.g. from Papua New Guinea. Lastly, I forge links at the occasion of primer exhibitions. There are visitors of these exhibitions, including those with a migration background, who very much like to make available a primer from their home country for such presentations.

Talking about exhibitions: How did you get around to not only collecting primers and using them as instructional material in history classes, but also organising primer exhibitions?

I organised my first exhibition of primers in 1983, in a primary school. The feedback that this exhibition received from pupils, teachers and parents indicated that this theme addresses a broad scope of the population. Ever since, I have usually prepared two exhibitions per year, mostly in public libraries. In some of the exhibitions, only German primers and elementary readers are presented, whereas other exhibitions present primers from numerous countries. A specific feature of my exhibitions is that they include information about authors and illustrators, but also about textbook research and researchers. I strive to demonstrate the efforts of people who from a variety of perspectives concern themselves with primers.



Picture: Part of the exhibition "Primers from five continents", organised by Eduard Stolz, displayed at Duisburg Buchholz Public Library, August 2008

You started to collect primers nearly forty years ago. Which plans do you have for the future?

First, I will of course continue to collect primers, and I have already made agreements with libraries on exhibitions to be held in 2010. Beyond that I got more and more interested in the history of individual people and in the recollections of childhood and youth by the older generation. This has brought me to also collect written documents of memories of the first schooldays. I have started to ask people to write down what they remember about their schooldays and let me have these texts. In this context, the primer somehow tends to take a back seat. Yet the fate of individuals especially in the war and post war periods is not to a lesser extent worth being remembered.

Mr. Stolz, thank you for this interview!

**We wish all our readers a merry Christmas
and a peaceful and happy year 2010!**



M. Mürsepp, P. Viisimaa (1994). Hubert teeb aabitsat ehk hiirepoegade seiklused laias ilmas [Hubert makes the abc, or the adventures of the little mice in the wide world]. Tallinn: Koolibri, pp. 90-91.

□ About RPI:

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