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			Newsletter, published by the Reading Primers SIG of the International Society for Historical and Systematic Research on Textbooks and Educational Media		

## □ Editorial

Dear readers,

for centuries a strong link existed between religious education and beginning reading instruction in Europe. The 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation in 2017 provides a good occasion to study anew the complex history of concepts and practises of reading instruction that were once either based on or at least strongly connected with religious education. Studies may explore developments both within and across denominational and national traditions, and they can draw, among others, from catechisms and primers as meaningful primary sources. It is in this context that the Reading Primers SIG will organise, as part of the conference "Religion and Educational Media" (6-8 October 2017 in Augsburg/Germany) a panel 'Learning to read with catechetical texts – historical approaches'. More information about this event is available on page 2 of this newsletter.

Please feel encouraged to share with us your interest and expertise in the history of media for beginning reading instruction.

Madrid/Essen/Wrocław, October 2017

*Kira Mahamud Angulo  
Wendelin Sroka  
Joanna Wojdon*

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□ RP-SIG News

**7 October 2017: RP-SIG panel 'Learning to read with catechetical texts – historical approaches' at IGsBi conference in Augsburg/Germany**

The panel is part of the Annual Conference of the International Society for Historical and Systematic Research on Textbooks and Educational Media (IGsBi) and prepared by Margarita Korzo (Moscow/Russia) and Wendelin Sroka (Essen/Germany). It is designed to address mainly two topics: The first focuses on features of textbooks for elementary reading that combine catechetical and secular texts: Which types of such textbooks can historically be identified? How can we best label these types of textbooks today in an interdisciplinary research perspective? Under which conditions were these books compiled? How did denominational and other factors influence both the corpus of catechetical texts and the development of independent courses for beginning reading instruction? A second set of questions is related to practices of elementary reading instruction, including the way how various types of textbooks for such instruction were used. What was the role of catechisms – including Large Catechisms – without elements of a reading course in elementary reading instruction, especially in Catholic and Protestant contexts? How were oral practices of catechesis in schools eventually transformed into text-based practices for young learners? How can the simultaneous marketing of primers with and without a catechism in the 18th century – e.g. in Poland-Lithuania and in the Habsburg Empire – be explained?

The panel will include papers on 'Catherine the Great's challenge to the traditional Russian Orthodox primer' (Max Okenfuss, St. Louis/USA), '*Sprachdidaktische Aspekte der Vermittlung religiöser Werte in den Fibeln der habsburgischen Volksschulen in der Epoche der Spätaufklärung*' (Anna Harbig, Bialystok/Poland), 'Catechisms for children in Finland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' (Tuija Laine, Helsinki), 'Otto Wilhelm Masing and his primers published in 1795 and 1823' (Mare Mürsepp, Tallinn) and '*Katechetische Hauptstücke in Fibeln des 19. Jahrhunderts im Königreich Preußen*' (Wendelin Sroka, Essen). A panel discussion will focus on "Learning to read with catechetical texts – achievements and potentials of historical research'.

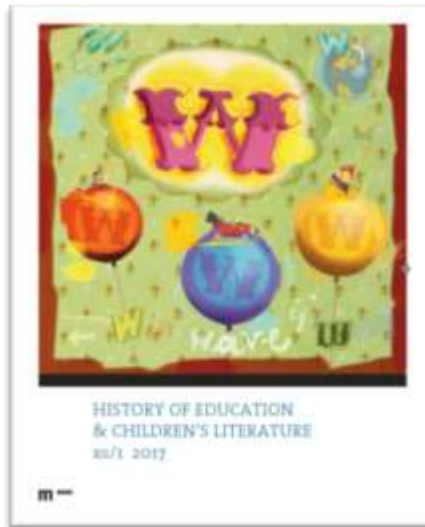


The text of the Lord's prayer with separated syllables: pages [2], [3] and [16] of a German 'Hahnenfibel', Leipzig: Friedrich Christian Dürr, n.d. (around 1740).

Other members of the RP-SIG network with presentations at the conference include Luciana Bellatalla, Ferrara (Italy), Vitaly Bezrogov, Moscow (Russia), Kira Mahamud Angulo, Madrid (Spain), Alla Salnikova, Kazan (Russia) and Evita Wiecki, Munich (Germany).

A get-together of members and friends of the RP-SIG will be organised as a working lunch on Saturday, 7 October 2017 from 12.30 in the conference venue, 'Hotel am alten Park', Frölichstr. 17, 86150 Augsburg, Germany.

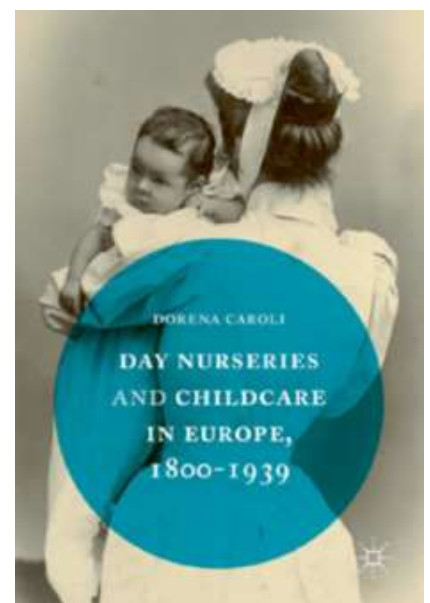
□ Members' news



**Dorena Caroli** and **Elisabetta Patrizi**, Center for Documentation and Research on the History of Schoolbooks and Children's Literature (*Centro di documentazione e ricerca sulla storia del libro scolastico e della letteratura per l'infanzia, CESCO*) of the University of Macerata (Italy), are editors of the monographic part of the new issue of 'History of Education and Children's Literature' (HECL 12/1 2017), devoted to schooling, cultural heritage and building of national identity in Italy from the early post-unification period in the 1860s to the aftermath of the Second World War: <http://www.hecl.it/>. A remarkable number of articles in this issue focus on – or at least consider – school textbooks and other edu-

cativational media. Elisabetta Patrizi, for example, explores the representation of the cultural and natural heritage as a training tool of national consciousness in three primary school textbooks that became classics of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Italian school: *Giannetto*, *Il Bel Paese* and *Cuore*. Fabio Targhetta, in his study on "the landscape as a means to nationalization", addresses the subject matter from three distinct yet intertwined perspectives: the narrated landscape (mainly in reading books); the represented landscape (images accompanying the stories, wall charts, but also educational films) and the perceived landscape (through the practice of school trips). Furthermore, Dorena Caroli analyses the representation of the cultural, artistic and natural heritage in the reading books published for the Italian schools abroad – in particular in Argentina, Brazil and the Italian colonies – in the 1920s and 1930s, and Roberto Sani, editor-in-Chief of HECL, demonstrates the ways how regional almanacs, introduced for the primary course in the aftermath of the Gentile Reform of 1923, made use of concepts of Italy's cultural and natural heritage to enhance the civic and national consciousness of the younger generations. Finally, attention is also paid to primary school textbooks for various subjects (Luigiaurelio Pomante) and to school exercise books (Anna Ascenzi).

Palgrave Macmillan UK have just published Dorena Caroli's study 'Day nurseries and childcare in Europe, 1800-1939', an impressive volume of XXVII and 342 pages. The book traces the birth and evolution of the crèche in France, England, Germany, Russia and Italy from the mid-nineteenth century to the eve of the Second World War, in an attempt to understand from a transnational viewpoint the history of an institution for very young children that was very different from what we know today. Drawing on a wealth of printed sources and in the light of the most recent historical investigations, Dorena Caroli discusses the origins of the first crèche, established in Paris in 1844 by Firmin Marbeau, going on to compare and contrast the reception of the French model of care and assistance for babies and infants in a number of different European countries – England, Germany, Russia and Italy. The book is written to contribute to the history of these institutions and to serve as a manual for students in the field of infant care. The book is available in three formats: Hardcover, eBook and Printed eBook.



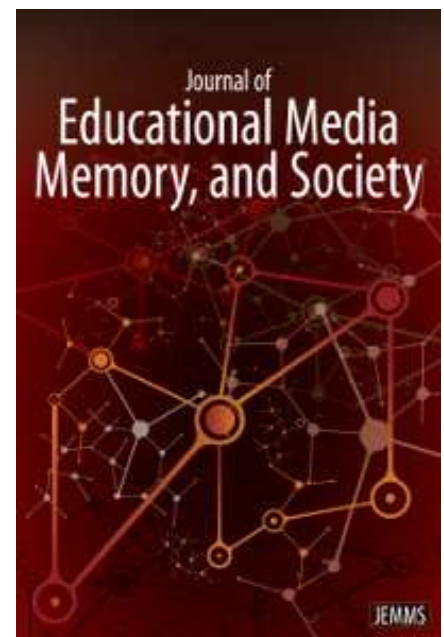
□ **Members' news**  
(continued)



experience upward the alphabet. The book has 210 pages, and it was published by *Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura (SKS)*, the publishing house of the Finnish Literature Society.

[https://skskirjat.pikakirjakauppa.fi/tuote/laine\\_tuija/aapisen\\_ja\\_katekismuksen\\_tavaamisesta\\_itsenaiseen\\_lukemiseen/9789522228628](https://skskirjat.pikakirjakauppa.fi/tuote/laine_tuija/aapisen_ja_katekismuksen_tavaamisesta_itsenaiseen_lukemiseen/9789522228628)

**Kira Mahamud Angulo**, MANES Research Center of the Spanish National University of Distance Education (*Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, UNED*), Madrid (Spain) and **Anna Ascenzi**, Center for Documentation and Research on the History of Schoolbooks and Children's Literature (*Centro di documentazione e ricerca sulla storia del libro scolastico e della letteratura per l'infanzia, CESCO*) of the University of Macerata (Italy) are guest editors of Issue 1/2017 – 'Textbooks in Periods of Political Transition after the Second World War' – of the *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society (JEMMS)*. It deals with the examination of textbooks, among which reading books are included, during different historical periods of time after the Second World War where a political transition towards democracy has taken place. Four diverse national case studies are presented: Albania, Indonesia, Italy and Spain. It is interesting to note the similarities found in textbooks despite the different time periods, national contexts and triggering factors for political change. It comes to light the slowness of incorporating solid knowledge about change and the new socio-political reality; in other words, textbooks' own tempo. Regarding textbook research, scholars' concerns point towards variety of topics from the religious, social, political and economic fields: the representation of Islam, the presence of a military discourses, the road to the inclusion or exclusion of civic education, the teaching of economics and the depiction of migrants. Social Science and history textbooks are the predominant textual genres. Reading books are mentioned in the case of Spain. Neither reconciliation with nor a clear condemnation of the previous political regimes are found in the analysed textbooks from countries undergoing political transition, change, and convulsion. The issue aims to present textbooks and educational resources as documentary political-historiographical sources that contribute to studies in social and political sciences as well as to disseminate, support and promote studies on textbooks and similar educational and political materials on a comparative international level.



□ **Members' news  
(continued)**

**Joanna Wojdon**, Wrocław (Poland) is coordinator of the public history MA program at the University of Wrocław. Its English-language version will be launched in 2018/2019 with classes (among others) on the popularization of history, oral history, but also history education and cultural institutions. Details can be found at <https://international.uni.wroc.pl/en/master/public-history>.

Moreover, Joanna Wojdon's book on 'Textbooks as propaganda. Poland under Communist Rule, 1944-1989', already announced in RPI 13, p. 4, has just been published by Routledge. The book is available in electronic format and in print.

<https://www.amazon.com/Textbooks-Propaganda-Poland-Communist-1944-1989/dp/1412865581>

□ **New members**

**Johari Murray** is a PhD student at the Spanish National University of Distance Education (UNED) in the 'Diversity, Subjectivity and Socialization, Studies in Social Anthropology, History of Psychology and Education' program in Madrid (Spain). She holds her Bachelor's degree in English and psychology from Manhattanville College in New York (USA). Her Master's degree in deaf education and bilingual education (English and Spanish) is from Teachers College Columbia University, New York. Her interests focus on children's books and the language of the narrative self, expressions of identity and the subjectivity of multiculturalism found in children's literature.

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Dr **Satenik Mkrtchyan** is a Researcher at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Armenia. She holds a Doctorate Degree in Anthropology from Tbilisi State University, a Master's degree in Ethnology and Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from Yerevan State University. Areas of research include ethno-national-cultural identities, textbook research, history of education, and school anthropology. Particularly, she looks into the role of general education (starting from the very ABC books) in the construction of identities, group connectedness and belonging in Armenia and Georgia within a general Post-Soviet context focusing on its "national", civic, ethnic, cultural dimensions. Within her research focus are textbook content and production, actual knowledge transfer, as well as iconographies and ceremonies in the schools.

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□ **Note by editors**

**Next issue of RPI**

The next issue of RPI will be published in February 2018. Among others, this issue will include a report about the RP-SIG panel 'Learning to read with catechetical texts – historical approaches' (Augsburg, October 2017), a review of the book *Die Materialität des Schreiben- und Lesenlernens. Zur Geschichte schulischer Unterweisungspraktiken seit der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts* [The materiality of learning to write and read. On the history of instructional practices since the mid-eighteenth century], edited by Sabine Reh and Denise Wilde, and a bibliographical outline of publications 2017 on primers and related thematic fields written by members of the RP-SIG network.

## □ Country notes

### □ Germany

#### GEI library invites to participate in online survey



The research library at the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Braunschweig/Germany (<http://bibliothek.gei.de/en.html>) systematically collects textbooks and curricula for history, geography, politics/social studies and religion/values education from all over the world and makes them available to researchers. The library also holds an impressive collection of reading primers, and the GEI Digital Textbook Library includes a collection of primers published in Germany, ranging from the fifteenth/sixteenth centuries to 1870 (<http://gei-digital.gei.de/viewer/>).

To further develop its services the research library has recently started a short online survey, open until November 30, 2017. The questionnaire is available in English and German, and it addresses all those interested in specialised information on textbooks and other educational media, including, but not limited to those who use the GEI research library's services on-site or online. The data captured through the survey are treated as confidential and will remain anonymous. Please regard yourself as invited to participate in the survey: <http://surveys.gei.de/221378?lang=en>

The team of the GEI library highly appreciates your participation in the survey.

### □ Latvia

#### Latvian Language Agency publishes Latgalian primer

RPI 12 (February 2015) has informed about a set of new teaching aids for beginning reading instruction in the Latgalian language, spoken primarily in the Eastern part of Latvia and considered by Latvian law as a 'historical variety of the Latvian language'. These materials, compiled by RP-SIG member Juris Cibuls, Riga (Latvia) include the primer *Skreineite. Vuicūs laseit* [Little chest. I learn to read], a textbook of 156 pages written in collaboration with Lideja Leikuma, a copybook (*Skreineite. Vuicūs raksteit* [I learn to write], 76 p.) and a teachers' manual (*Uzziņu materiāls par latgaliešu ābeci 'Skreineite'*, 16 p.). They were published in 2014 in electronic format, available, among others, through the Lielvārds Digital Library (<http://ldb.lv/>). It took until April 2017 that the Latvian Language Agency (*Latviešu valodas aģentūra*) published the complete set in print (format 23.0 x 29.7 cm each). The number of copies is 1,000. The materials are intended for use at home, in kindergartens and in primary schools. For more information see <http://www.abc-world.nl/site/news/?locale=en-US>.



□ Article

**Neue Fibel – Nowy Elementarzyk – Naujas Pibelis: investigating traces of a plurilingual family of primers in 19<sup>th</sup> century Prussia<sup>1</sup>**

Wendelin Sroka, Essen (Germany)

Research in book history at times takes on characteristics of a detective story. One such story is an investigation of traces of a family of primers published in and around Königsberg (today: Kaliningrad/Russia) in 19th century Prussia. The history of this family of school textbooks is worth to be unfolded for at least four reasons: First, its publication period covers nearly a century – a longevity that is rarely found in textbook history. Second, at least four publishing houses were involved, located in three places of publication, some of the publishers well-known in book history. Third, the family of primers consists of five branches, with each branch representing an individual language or language combination, and some branches encompassing various generations. And fourth, in contrast to many other 19th century primers, the compilation of the textbook followed an aggregate concept of a series of school textbooks for elementary schools, developed by the author of the primer and adopted by the responsible regional commission for schools. – To my knowledge, the history of this group of textbooks has not yet been explored in a comprehensive manner. Against this background the article has three purposes: a) to tell the – so far open-ended – story of tracing that history, b) to present preliminary results of this investigation and c) to invite colleagues with expertise and in-terest in the subject to join in further exploring the history of the textbooks and their context, preferably as an international project.

**How it all began: an encounter with a Nowy Elementarzyk**

In was in summer 2017 that I had the privilege of working in the Research Library for the History of Education (*Bibliothek für Bildungsgeschichtliche Forschung*; BBF) in Berlin, exploring sources for a project on catechetical texts in



Picture 1: Nowy Elementarzyk ... w Krolewcu: Hartung 1826, title page (Source: Digital copy, Bibliothek für Bildungsgeschichtliche Forschung (BBF), Berlin (Germany)).



Picture 2: Neue Fibel ... Königsberg: in Commission bei Göbbels & Unzer 1802, title page (Source: Katalog der Auktion 76, 22. 11. 2014, Antiquariat Schramm, Kiel, Germany).

<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Silke Güthling (Research Library for the History of Education, Berlin), Anke Hertling, Anette Uphoff (Research Library at the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, Braunschweig) and Daniel Schramm (Buch- und Kunstantiquariat Schramm, Kiel) for generously offering their time and support in the process of data collection for this investigation.

□ **Neue Fibel ...**  
(continued)

19th century reading primers published in Prussia. In was then that I encountered a copy of a Polish primer, printed and published in Königsberg:

**Nowy Elementarzyk czyli Abecadło z Książka do składania i czytania; dla szkół miejskich i wiejskich** [Primer or ABC with a speller and reader, for town and rural schools]. *W Krolewcu: Nakładem i Kōbtem Królewsko-Nadworney Hartungskiey Drukarni 1826, 80 pages.*

The primer was published for use in schools for children with Polish mother tongue in the Province of East Prussia, since 1773 a province of the Kingdom of Prussia, and the printshop is well-known in German book history as *Hartungsche Hofbuchdruckerei* [Hartung printing office for the court]. The textbook includes, on pp. 73-80, a section *Pięć części Katechizmu Lutera* [the five parts of Luther's catechism], and thus falls into the group of textbooks which are relevant for the aforementioned project.

A closer look into the textbook revealed a number of general features: From the title page up to page 40 and from p. 42 to p. 80 all letters are presented in Gothic print; Latin block letters are introduced und used only on one page, i.e. on p. 41. Most of the pages of the booklet are densely packed with text, and only two woodcuts are included as title vignettes. The first of these illustrations is presented on the title page (see picture 1). It depicts a classroom with a teacher in the centre and pupils on both sides: boys standing on the left, girls sitting on the right. The title page does not provide the name of the author, however, and no preface is included in the textbook.

The book consists of two clearly separated parts: The first part covers pp. 1-16, and it is designed as an ABC book. It starts with vowels and consonsants in small letters, numbers and syllables, goes on to individual words, capital letters and short sentences, and it ends with *Oycze nasz* [the Lord's prayer]. The second part is introduced with another full title page without pagination, offering a new title: *Książka szkolna dla pierwszego ćwiczenia się w czytaniu i myśleniu. Pierwsza książka początkow ucząca* [Schoolbook for first exercises in reading and thinking. First book for beginning learners] (see picture 3). Again, an illustration is included here: a beehive with bees diligently entering and leaving; the picture as well as the poem attached present the



Picture 3: *Nowy Elementarzyk ... w Krolewcu: Hartung 1826, p. 17* (Source: Digital copy, BBF, Berlin (Germany)).



Picture 4: *Nowy Elementarzyk ... w Krolewcu: Hartung 1826, p. 73* (Source: Digital copy, BBF, Berlin (Germany)).



▣ **Neue Fibel ...**  
(continued)

bees as a model for childrens' behaviour. The book has consecutive pagination, with the second title page followed by page 18. The use of two full title pages suggests that the publisher wished to market the product in two ways: as a complete edition, with the abc book and the reading passages in one volume, and as two separate items: the abc book of 16 pages, printed on one sheet of paper, and the first reader of 64 pages, printed on four sheets.

Reading passages start with sections, among others, about animals (pp. 19-22), plants (pp. 22-24), the human body (pp. 31-33) and the soul (pp. 33-36). From page 40 onwards nearly all content is of a religious nature: a 'brief instruction about god and about a pious life [*Nauka krotka o Bogu i o życiu pobożném*]' (pp. 42-57), a set of prayers for various situations (pp. 60-63), a 'booklet with verses and judgements from the Bible', including – again! – a brief instruction about god and pious life [*Książeczka z bibliynémi Sentencyami albo wyrokami. Zawierająca krotka naukę o Bogu i pobożném życiu*]' (pp. 64-73), and, finally, the aforementioned five parts of Luther's catechism.

**Tracing other editions in bibliographies**

What can we learn from bibliographies and from previous research about the *Nowy Elementarzyk*? Franciszek Pilarczyk's book about the history of Polish primers from the beginnings until the Second World War includes a bibliography of primary sources (Pilarczyk 2003). This bibliography presents five entries concerning editions of the *Nowy Elementarzyk* published in Królewiec/Königsberg by Hartung (ns. 1759-1763). Three of these entries provide data about Polish (monolingual) primers, published in 1808, 1822 and – the last one without indicating the year of publication – around 1832, whereas two entries report bilingual (Polish-German) editions:

***Nowy Elementarzyk czyli Abecadło z Książka do składania i czytania; dla szkół mieyskich i wieyskich – Neue Fibel oder ABC, Buchstabil und Lesebüchlein. Erstes Elementarbuch für Stadt- und Landschulen.*** Entry 1762: Königsberg: Druck und Verlag der Königlichen Hartungschen Hofbuchdruckerei n.d. (around 1835), 31 p. Entry 1763: Königsberg: Druck und Verlag der Hartungschen Buchdruckerei n.d. (around 1855), 31 p.



Picture 5: *Naujas Pibelis ... Karalauzuje: Mette 1808, title page* (Source: EPAVELDAS)



Picture 6: *Naujas Pibelis ... Königsberg: Hartung o. J. (around 1824 ?), title page* (Source: EPAVELDAS)

□ **Neue Fibel ...**  
(continued)

Both entries about the Polish-German versions state the number of pages as 31, a hint to bilingual editions covering the abc-book part – with 16 + 15 pages – only. All entries in Pilarczyk's bibliography mention 'Weiss, Johann Gottlieb' as the author of the textbook. But the Polish edition published in 1826, with a copy of this edition kept in Berlin, is not listed in Pilarczyk's bibliography – nor is it included in any other Polish bibliography. Moreover, neither does Pilarczyk refer the *Nowy Elementarzyk* in his book's outline of the history of Polish primers, nor did I come across any other corresponding Polish secondary source so far – with the examination of potential Polish sources anything but completed.

Knowing the German title of the bilingual versions reported by Pilarczyk it suggested itself to examine a German bibliography, too: the *Fibel-Findbuch* compiled by Gisela Teistler, a reference work on German language primers from to beginnings to 1944 (Teistler 2003). This bibliography has four entries related to our subject matter (nr. 545-545.3), and again 'Weiss, Johann Gottlieb' is presented as author. While two entries (545.1 and 545.2) in fact refer to the Polish-German editions already mentioned by Pilarczyk, the other two (545 and 545.3) deserve particular attention, as they point to a third – i.e. German – branch of the family of primers:

**Neue Fibel oder ABC, Buchstabir und Lesebüchlein.** Königsberg 1802.

**Neue Fibel oder ABC, Buchstabir und Lesebüchlein. Erstes Elementarbuch für Stadt- und Landschulen.** Königsberg: Hartung, neue verb. Aufl. [new revised edition] 1865, 80 p.

Furthermore, a third German edition, published in 1836, is recorded in the *Gesamtverzeichnis des deutschsprachigen Schrifttums* [inventory of German language literature] 1700-1910 (GV 1700-1910, vol. 38, p. 55). Yet again, examination of German exhibition catalogues as well as research literature has so far not revealed any consideration of the *Neue Fibel*.

Thus the next step undertaken was a consultation of the web, and this resulted in a next surprise: A search of 'Neue Fibel oder ABC' in Worldcat presented entries with yet another bilingual setting, namely Lithuanian-German. One of these entries reads:

Weiss, Johann Gottlieb: **Naujas pibelis arba knygelės iš kurriū gal is-simokintis' skaitytines pažint, jes sudēt ir iš knygū skaityti = Neue Fibel oder ABC-, Buchstabir- und Lesebüchlein. Erstes Elementarbuch für Stadt- und Landschulen.** Königsberg: Druck und Verlag von H. Hartung 1866.

Basically, Lithuanian and Lithuanian-German textbooks were published in 19<sup>th</sup> century Prussia primarily for use in schools in Lithuania Minor, then the northernmost region of the Kingdom of Prussia, with Lithuanians accounting for the majority of the population. At this stage two more publications with bibliographical references came into play: a) the compilation of bibliographical data about Lithuanian primers by Aurelija Rabačiauskaitė, arranged in chronological order (Rabačiauskaitė 2000) and part of an impressive edited volume on the history of Lithuanian primers (Rabačiauskaitė & Korsakaitė 2000), and b) an article by Aušra Navickienė which includes a table with precise data about all in all 13 editions (Navickienė 2007). The table in Navickienė's article covers two branches of our family of primers: Lithuanian and Lithuanian-German. Characteristics of these two branches as introduced in the bibliographical references can be summarized as follows: First, the Lithuanian branch encompasses seven editions, published between 1808 and 1897, whereas the Lithuanian-German branch counts five editions, published between around 1830 and around 1875. (For a bibliographical overview of all editions of the Neue Fibel / Nowy Elementarzyk / Naujas Pibelis family of primers see the appendix). Second, the 1808 edition of *Naujas pibelis* (see picture 5) represents the third oldest Lithuanian primer at all. Third, 'Weiss Johann Gottlieb' is presented again as the author of the primer, referred to by

□ **Neue Fibel ...**  
(continued)

Rabačiauskaitė also in a Lithuanianised form as 'Veisas Johanas Gotlybas' (Rabačiauskaitė 2000, p. 317). Forth, next to Hartung, three more publishers were involved: Mette in Königsberg, Rautenberg in Mohrunen (today: Morąg, a town in northern Poland in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship) and Jankus in Bitėnai (German: Bittehenen; a village located today in the municipality of Pagėgiai in Lithuania). The latter edition (see pictures 9 and 10) deserves particular attention: Not only that it represents the youngest member of our family of primers, it was also published by Martynas Jankus, an important figure of the Lithuanian national movement in Lithuania Minor in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Other than in Poland and Germany, considerable attention has been paid in Lithuania to those sections of the family of primers judged as relevant for Lithuanian national history, i.e. the Lithuanian and the Lithuanian-German branch. Perspectives include those of general book history (Kaunas 1996a; Navickienė 2007), history of primers (Rabačiauskaitė 2000), historical linguistics (Zinkevičius 2000) and even illustrations in primers (Korsakaitė 2000).

One point may suffice here to highlight achievements of Lithuanian research: In her article Aušra Navickienė focuses on the study of a copy of a Lithuanian-German primer kept in the British Library in London (see appendix, LT-DE 3) and compares it with other copies of the *Naujas pibelis* tradition. The original catalogue record of the British Library suggests that the textbook may have been compiled by Johann Friedrich Zöllner, a protestant clergyman in Berlin, and it estimates the year of publication as around 1795. Navickienė proves that the copy in question in fact represents another edition of the *Naujas pibelis* – *Neue Fibel* series, published ante 1850. Yet the misleading record of the British Library has not been changed up to present (see [http://explore.bl.uk/primo\\_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=BLVU1](http://explore.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=BLVU1) for a check of 'Naujas pibiles'), and this record has also been adopted by Google, provider of a digital copy of the British Library item.

**In search of primary sources**

Considering the five branches of the *Neue Fibel* / *Nowy Elementarzyk* / *Naujas Pibelis* family of primers, search results of primary sources are very unequal. Of the Lithuanian branch, encompassing seven identified editions, in



Picture 7: *Naujas Pibelis ... – Neue Fibel...*: Königsberg: Hartung 1866, title page (Source: EPAVELDAS)



Picture 8: *Naujas Pibelis ... – Neue Fibel...*: Königsberg: Hartung 1866, p. 33 (Source: EPAVELDAS)

□ **Neue Fibel ...**  
(continued)

six cases one copy at least is available in a public library, and copies of three editions are digitized and available on the web. In contrast, only one copy of the German branch is recorded, i.e. a copy of the last edition (1865), kept at Johann Christian Senckenberg University Library in Frankfurt/Main, with a photocopy of this item at the Georg Eckert Institute Research Library in Braunschweig. It is particularly regrettable that no inventory evidence is available at present of the first German edition (1802), the oldest edition of the entire family. A copy of this edition, offered in 2014 by a German antiquarian bookseller at an auction, presumably went into private hands; generous support provided recently by the bookseller to help identifying the fate of the booklet did not result in a clue on the whereabouts of this item.

As for the Polish branch, the BBF has in the meantime included a digital copy of the 1826 edition in its *Scripta Paedagogica Online* (SPO) Library – the only Polish edition so far available on the web (see appendix, PL 3). Yet no existing copy of any of the Polish-German (bilingual) editions has been detected so far.

Even limited accessibility to primary sources allows for gaining a number of noteworthy insights. An examination of the Lithuanian-German editions, for example, reveals their very traditional design: with texts of language A (Lithuanian) *verso* and text of language B (German) *recto* throughout the entire booklet, i.e. based on the principles of the 'translation method' in early reading and second language instruction – a method that was common in 18<sup>th</sup> century Prussia for reading instruction of pupils with a mother tongue other than German but proved to be highly inefficient (see Geißler & Sroka 2013).

We can also begin a comparative analysis of various editions over time, with a focus so far on the monolingual branches. An overview of identified editions of these branches according to generations is provided in table 1. Differences between generations are marked, among others, by the design of the first title page, with second generation title pages using a new, modernised title vignette (for a comparison of first and second generation title pages see pictures 5 and 6).

Table 1: Monolingual editions of the *Neue Fibel* / *Nowy Elementarzyk* / *Naujas Pibelis* family of primers according to generations (data as of 24.09.2017)

Note: Estimated years of publication are marked by '?'

	DE	PL	LT
first generation	1802	1808; 1822; 1826	1808
second generation	—	1832 ?	1824 ?; 1839 ?; ante 1850
third generation	1865	—	1897
generation not yet determined	1836	—	1871, 1877

A thorough comparative analysis of content has not yet been accomplished, but the apparent longevity of much of this content is remarkable: Even the 1897 Lithuanian edition, published by Martynas Jankus, with its new title stressing the Lithuanian character of the primer, has the five main parts of the catechism – *Penkios Dalis Katgismo* – included (see picture 10).

Table 2 (page 13) provides an overview of identified editions of the *Neue Fibel* / *Nowy Elementarzyk* / *Naujas Pibelis* family of primers according to branches and years of publication.

□ **Neue Fibel ...**  
(continued)

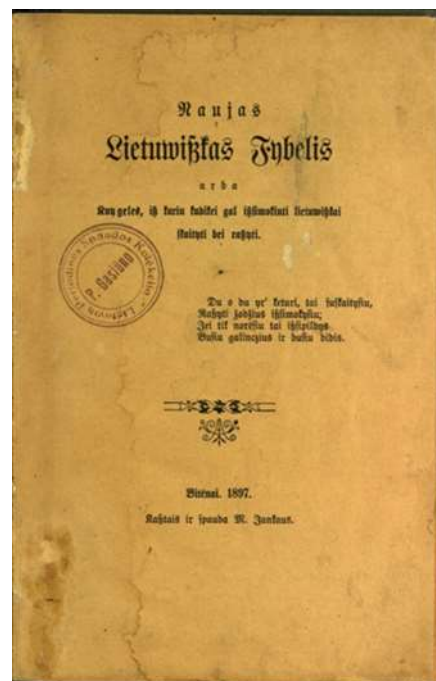
Table 2: Editions of the *Neue Fibel* / *Nowy Elementarzyk* / *Naujas Pibelis* family of primers according to languages or language combinations and years of publication (data as of 24.09.2017)

Note: Estimated years of publication are marked by '?'

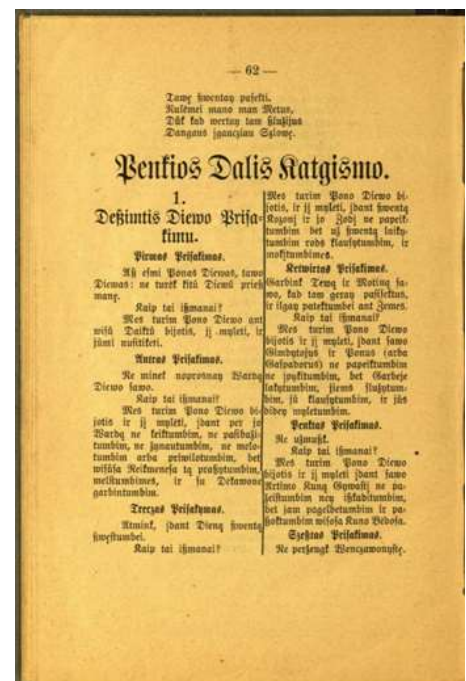
	DE	PL	PL-DE	LT	LT-DE
1801-09	1802	1808	---	1808	---
1810-19	---	---	---	---	---
1820-29	---	1822; 1826	---	1824 ?	---
1830-39	1836	1832 ?	1835 ?	1839 ?	1830; 1839 ?
1840-49	---	---	---	ante 1850	ante 1850
1850-59	---	---	1855 ?	---	---
1860-69	1865	---	1860 ?	---	1865 ?; 1866
1870-79	---	---	---	1871, 1877	1875 ?
1880-89	---	---	---	---	---
1890-99	---	---	---	1897	---

Sources: GV 1700-1910; Navickienė 2007; Pilarczyk 2003; Rabačiauskaitė 2000; Teistler 2003; own research.

The overall picture of identified editions as presented in this table gives cause for a number of questions. One of them is about possible reasons of the differences between branches in terms of number of editions and their distribution over time. And how can remarkable time gaps between individual editions, e.g. in the German branch, be explained? Taking into account the fate of textbooks for young children in general and that of much printed matter in such war-torn regions as East Prussia in particular were are well advised to avoid jumping to premature conclusions. Can the study of contemporary sources be of help in this case?



Picture 9: *Naujas Pibelis ...*; Bitėnai: Jankus 1897, title page (Source: EPAVELDAS)



Picture 10: *Naujas Pibelis ...*; Bitėnai: Jankus 1897, p. 62 (Source: EPAVELDAS)

□ *Neue Fibel ...*  
(continued)

**On the origins of the *Neue Fibel* / *Nowy Elementarzyk* / *Naujas Pibelis* family of primers**

With all its merits Lithuanian research on the primers in question is remarkably short-spoken when it comes to the early history of our family of primers. In the words of Ausra Navickienė (2007, p. 102, translated here from the Lithuanian original):

Already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Lithuanian researchers knew that the primer *Naujas pibelis*, which in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was printed without mentioning its author and often also the year of publication, is the clergyman and superintendent Johann Gottlieb Weiss in Königsberg (1762-1819).

In a similar way Magdalena Karčiauskiene refers to the 'Königsberg-based superintendent, German pedagogue Johannes Gottliebas Weissas [*Karaliaučiaus superintendentas, vokiečių pedagogas Johannas Gottliebas Weissas*]' as the author of the booklet. Yet in Lithuanian literature we do not come across references to editions of the non-Lithuanian branches, nor do we learn about other 19<sup>th</sup> century sources that might shed some light on the early history of the group of textbooks in question.

Admittedly literature about the author is scarce. An entry written by A. H. Lier in *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie*, vol. 41 about Georg Bernhard Weiß, a son of Johann Gottlieb Weiß, provides some biographical data. Born in 1762 in Königswalde, a village in Lower Silesia (today: Dzieciol/Poland), Johann Gottlieb, 'attracted by the fame of Immanuel Kant, ... went to Königsberg to study theology' (Lier 1896, p. 566; quote translated from the German original). After completion of his studies he worked as a country parson in the region and in 1792 was appointed as deacon of *Altstädtische Parochialkirche* [Old Town Parochial Church] in Königsberg. He later became superintendent and, in 1811, founded a private school for girls, eventually transformed into a state school as *Königin-Louise-Schule*. As Lier adds: 'His special merits include the edition of several school textbooks, especially a primer and a booklet for religious instruction.' (Ibid.).

Two documents, both of them included in *Bibliothek der pädagogischen Literatur* [Library of pedagogical literature], a German journal edited in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century by Johann Christoph Friedrich Guts Muths and published in Gotha, capital of the Duchy of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg, provide more details about Johann Gottlieb Weiß and his primer. The first source, from 1802, is a mere listing of new publications in the field of education, 'published or supposed to be published at the St. Michael's Fair in Leipzig', and it includes as one entry '„*Neue Fibel, oder ABC-Buchstabier- und Lesebüchlein etc. (von Weiß.) Königsberg, 1802*' (Uebersicht 1802, p. 10). As the editions of the *Neue Fibel* / *Nowy Elementarzyk* / *Naujas Pibelis* family of primers were published without indicating the name of the author it is more than helpful to have this name provided by the (unknown) compiler of the listing in a document published in 1802. But it does not provide proof yet that the 1802 edition of *Neue Fibel* represents the family's first ancestor.

And here the second document, published in 1803, comes to the aid: Written again by an anonymous editor, it is a cumulative review of three publications by Johann Gottlieb Weiß (Recensionen 1803). The document consistently refers to the author as 'J. G. Weis', thus bringing the number of spellings of his name in various sources to five – after 'Weiss', 'Weissas', 'Veisas' and the original 'Weiß'. The review considers

- a) a public letter to the provincial commission for church and school matters in Königsberg on a plan concerning new school textbooks [*Schreiben an eine Königl. Hochverordnete Special-Kirchen- und Schulen-Commission in Königsberg, betreffend einen Plan zu neuen Schulbüchleins etc. für den gesammten Unterricht in Stadt und Land-Elementarschulen*],
- b) the 1802 edition of the *Neue Fibel*, including a teacher's guide as a supplement [*Ueber die Einrichtung und den Gebrauch des ersten Elementarbüchleins*], and

□ **Neue Fibel ...  
(continued)**

- c) a booklet about fire, or short manual for an appropriate behaviour before, during and after fire hazard [*Feuerbüchlein, oder kurze Anleitung zum rechten Verhalten vor, während und nach Feuersgefahr*].

All in all the review turns out to be a real treasure chest for our inquiry. First, we learn about the early history of *Neue Fibel*: When young Johann Gottlieb Weiß is country parson in East Prussia, the village teacher gets sick and Weiß has to replace the teacher for quite a while. This 'makes him aware ... of the highly deplorable situation of the elementary schools [*empfendet ... die höchsttraurige Lage der niedern Schulen*]', and he does not forget about this experience when he gets appointed as deacon at *Altstädtische Parochialkirche* in Königsberg.

After a trip through Germany, where Weiß visited a number of schools with wide reputation, 'he started his activities against the 'evil at school' [*Schulübel*], in his view associated primarily with the sad quality of school textbooks' (ibid., p. 231). It made him write the aforementioned public letter, offering a plan for a series of school textbooks that were supposed to contain all material for instruction in the province's elementary schools. The commission not only accepted the plan, but also made it available to all protestant clergy in the province, with the majority of the responding clergy in favour of the plan. All in all, Weiß proposed three school textbooks for the hands of the pupils: the first being a primer for children of age 6-7, followed by a reading book for 7 to 10 year old pupils, and finally a larger school textbook for children aged 10 to 13. In addition, the plan proposed to compile a manual for teachers on instructional methods.

The reviewer of the *Bibliothek der pädagogischen Literatur* also states that the *Neue Fibel* published in 1802 represents the first of the series of school textbooks as described in the plan. He regrets that the author could not consider the approaches of early reading instruction elaborated more recently by Louis Henri Ferdinand Olivier and Heinrich Stephani, two pedagogues that were valued in Germany as particularly progressive in primary education in those years, but he acknowledges that the booklet is 'elaborated with knowledge [*mit Kenntnis ausgearbeitet*]' (ibid., p. 232), adding that 2,000 copies of the first edition were sold within three months, whereas the municipal authorities of Königsberg donated 600 copies to schools.

The review lacks any direct hint to versions of the *Neue Fibel* in languages other than German, but the report about the *Feuerbüchlein* may, in the absence of other appropriate sources, at least support a hypothesis. From the review we learn that Bernhard Conrad Ludwig von Gervais, president of the Königsberg government council, engaged Johann Gottlieb Weiß to compile the *Feuerbüchlein*. After completion, Gervais brought the booklet to the attention of the Royal Chamber in Berlin, and finally it was introduced in the entire Kingdom of Prussia. Moreover, 'the booklet was translated into Lithuanian and Polish and disseminated in a way that soon after 10,000 copies were sold' (ibid.).

Have the other branches of our family of primers originated in a similar way? The attitude that von Gervais had especially towards the Lithuanian inhabitants of Prussia would further support this hypothesis. As Ludwig von Baczko states in his book *Reise durch einen Theil Preussens* [Journey through parts of Prussia], published in 1800: 'With the president of the Königsberg government council, privy councillor Gervais, the Lithuanian national character has won a good defender' (von Baczko, quoted in Bauer 2007, p. 25).

Has the translation of *Neue Fibel* into Lithuanian and Polish and the publication and dissemination of respective versions been initiated in the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by influential actors of the regional government in East Prussia, aimed at 'defending' and further supporting what Baczko refers to as the 'national character' of Lithuanians and Poles?

□ **Neue Fibel ...  
(continued)**

**Neue Fibel / Nowy Elementarzyk / Naujas Pibelis: potentials of future research**

As pointed out the history of the *Neue Fibel / Nowy Elementarzyk / Naujas Pibelis* family of primers leaves much room for further exploration, and it is also worth to be explored further. This relates not least to

- a) the investigation of editions published in the various branches, aimed at improving the comprehensive bibliography,
- b) an in-depth-analysis of textbook content and its development over time, and
- c) a solid contextualisation of a textbook history spanning nearly hundred years, disclosing new relevant sources, investigating underestimated areas of German-Polish and German-Lithuanian book relations (see Kaunas 1996b), and considering, among others, a dynamic perspective of cultural transfer.

Overcoming purely national research approaches is a must for such an undertaking. Readers with an interest in the subject matter and preferably with expertise in one of the relevant research areas should feel encouraged to write to [wendelin.sroka\(at\)arcor.de](mailto:wendelin.sroka(at)arcor.de).

**Appendix: Editions of the *Neue Fibel – Nowy Elementarzyk – Naujas Pibelis* family of primers – a preliminary bibliographical overview**

*Data as of September 24, 2017*

This overview presents data about identified editions of the *Neue Fibel – Nowy Elementarzyk – Naujas Pibelis* family of primers, arranged according to language or language combination, and, within each branch, in chronological order. Added to each entry is information either about an available digital copy or about available inventory evidence or, only in cases of such inventory evidence lacking, about a bibliographic source.

**a) *Neue Fibel: German editions***

- DE 1 Neue Fibel, oder ABC-Buchstabier- und Lesebüchlein. Erstes Elementarbuch für Stadt- und Landschulen. Königsberg: In Commission bei Göbbels & Unzer 1802, 72 p.  
No inventory evidence available; sources: Uebersicht 1802, p. 10; Recensionen 1803, pp. 230-233; Teistler 2003, nr. 545.
- DE 2 Id., Königsberg: Hartung 1836.  
No inventory evidence available; source: GV 1700-1910, vol. 38, p. 55.
- DE 3 Id., Königsberg: Druck und Verlag der Hartungschens Buchdruckerei, neue verb. Aufl. 1865, 80 p.  
Copy held by Johann Christian Senckenberg University Library, Frankfurt am Main (Germany); photocopy held by GEI, Braunschweig (Germany).

**b) *Nowy Elementarzyk: Polish editions***

- PL 1 Nowy Elementarzyk czyli Abecadło z Książką do składania i czytania; dla szkół miejskich i wiejskich. W Krolewcu: Nakładem i Kołtem Królewsko-Nadwornej Hartungskiej Drukarni 1808, 80 p.  
Copy held by Biblioteka Gdanska Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Gdansk (Poland).
- PL 2 Id. 1822.  
No inventory evidence available; source: Pilarczyk 2003, nr. 1760.
- PL 3 Id. 1826, 80 p.  
Copy held by BFB, Berlin (Germany). Digital copy: <http://goobiweb.bfb.dipf.de/viewer/image/491293453/1/>
- PL 4 Id. n.d. (around 1832), 80 p.  
Copy held by Biblioteka Gdanska Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Gdansk (Poland).

**c) *Nowy Elementarzyk – Neue Fibel: Polish-German (bilingual) editions***

- PL-DE 1 Nowy Elementarzyk czyli Abecadło z Książką d(!) składania i czytania. Dla szkół miejskich i wiejskich. Neue Fibel oder ABC-Buchstabier- und Lesebüchlein. Königsberg: Druck und Verlag der Königlich Hartungschens Hofbuchdruckerei n. d. (around 1835), 31 p.  
No inventory evidence available; source: Pilarczyk 2003, nr. 1762.



□ **Neue Fibel ...**  
(continued)

PL-DE 2	Id., Königsberg: Druck und Verlag der Hartungschens Buchdruckerei n. d. (around 1855), 31 p. No inventory evidence available; source: Pilarczyk 2003, nr. 1763.
PL-DE 3	Id., n. d. (around 1860?), 159 p. No inventory evidence available; source: catalogue record of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin (Germany), 'Kriegsverlust' [lost during war].

**d) Naujas Pibelis: Lithuanian editions**

LT 1	Naujas Pibelis arba knygelės iš kurriu Kudikiei gal issimokintis Boksztawus pázint, jus sudeti, it isz Knygu skaityti. Karalaučiuje: Mette 1808, 80 p. Digital copy: <a href="http://www.epaveldas.lt/recordDescription/VUB/VUB01-000494532">http://www.epaveldas.lt/recordDescription/VUB/VUB01-000494532</a>
LT 2	Id., Königsberg: Druck und Verlag der Hartungschens Buchdruckerei n.d. (around 1824), 80 p. Digital copy: <a href="http://www.epaveldas.lt/object/recordDescription/KVB/C130000486696">http://www.epaveldas.lt/object/recordDescription/KVB/C130000486696</a>
LT 3	Id., Karalaučius: Karališkosios Hartungo sp. leid. ir spauda n.d. (around 1839), 80 p. No inventory evidence available; source: Navickienė 2007, nr. 4.
LT 4	Id., Königsberg: Hartung n. d. (ante 1850), 80 p. Copy held by Biblioteka Narodowa, Warszawa (Poland).
LT 5	Id., Königsberg: Druck und Verlag von H. Hartung 1871, 80 p. No inventory evidence available; source: Navickienė 2007, nr. 10.
LT 6	Id., Königsberg : Druck und Verlag der Hartungschens Buchdruckerei 1877, 80 p. Copy held by Vilnius University Library, Vilnius (Lithuania).
LT 7	Naujas Lietuwiszkas Fybelis arba knygelės iš kurriu kudikiei gal issimokintis' skaitytines pázint, jes sudēt ir isz knygu skaityti. Bitėnai: Martynas Jankus 1897, 70 p. Digital copy: <a href="http://www.epaveldas.lt/object/recordDescription/LNB/LNB1F3C58F1">http://www.epaveldas.lt/object/recordDescription/LNB/LNB1F3C58F1</a>

**e) Naujas Pibelis – Neue Fibel: Lithuanian-German (bilingual) editions**

LT-DE 1	Naujas pibelis arba knygelės iš kurriu gal issimokintis' skaitytines pázint, jes sudēt ir iš knygu skaityti - Neue Fibel oder ABC-, Buchstabir- und Lesebüchlein: erstes Elementarbuch für Stadt- und Landschulen. Mohrunen: C. Rautenberg n.d. (around 1830), 159 p. No inventory evidence available; source: Navickienė 2007, nr. 3.
LT-DE 2	Id., Königsberg: Druck und Verlag der Königl. Hartungschens Hofbuchdruckerei n.d. (around 1839), 160 p. Copy held by Vilnius University Library, Vilnius (Lithuania).
LT-DE 3	Naujas pibiles (!) arba knygelės iš kurriu kudikiei gal issimokintis' skaitytines pázint, jes sudēt ir iš knygu skaityti - Neue Fibel oder ABC- Buchstabir- und Lesebüchlein. Erstes Elementarbuch für Stadt- und Landschulen. Königsberg: Druck und Verlag der Königl. Hartungschens Hofbuchdruckerei n.d. (ante 1850), 160 p. Copy held by the British Library, London (United Kingdom). Digital copy: <a href="https://books.google.de">https://books.google.de</a>
LT-DE 4	Naujas pibelis arba knygelės iš kurriu gal issimokintis' skaitytines pázint, jes sudēt ir iš knygu skaityti - Neue Fibel oder ABC-, Buchstabir- und Lesebüchlein: erstes Elementarbuch für Stadt- und Landschulen. Mohrunen: C. Rautenberg n.d. (around 1865), 159 p. Copy held by Martynas Mazvydas National Library of Lithuania, Vilnius (Lithuania).
LT-DE 5	Id., Königsberg: H. Hartung 1866, 160 p. Copy held by Kauno apskrities viešoji biblioteka, Kaunas (Lithuania). Digital copy: <a href="http://www.epaveldas.lt/recordDescription/LNB/C1C1R0000120590">http://www.epaveldas.lt/recordDescription/LNB/C1C1R0000120590</a>
LT-DE 6	Id., Karaliaučius: Hartungo leid. ir sp. n.d. (around 1875), 160 p. No inventory evidence available; source: Navickienė 2007, nr. 11.

□ **Neue Fibel ...  
(continued)**

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- Conference report
- Greece

**Conference 'Research in curricula and schoolbooks', organized by the Centre for the Research and Evaluation of Schoolbooks and Curricula, 17-19 March 2017, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**

*Niki Sioki, University of Nicosia (Cyprus)*

The 1st conference of the Centre for the Research and Evaluation of Schoolbooks and Curricula (KEASVEP) took place at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in March 2017. Operating within the Department of Philosophy and Education, KEASVEP constitutes the amalgamation of various research bodies, such as the 'Research Unit for Textbooks' (est. 1992) and the 'Research Centre for textbooks and intercultural studies' (KESBIDE) (est. 1999), which since the beginning of the 1990s focused on schoolbooks' research. Throughout a period of almost thirty years schoolbooks were the primary focus of research activities initiated by the members of the Aristotle University Faculty of Education.

The conference focused on a twofold theme 'Research in curricula and schoolbooks' with the aim to offer a fertile ground where a) the scientific, pedagogic, ideological and political issues surrounding the main theme, b) the presentation of the methodological and research tools applied, and c) the announcement of cutting-edge research and evaluation findings could generate in-depth questioning and thought-provoking discussions.

Participants, coming from different professional and academic areas, included people who research, study, develop and produce schoolbooks and curricula, namely educators, academics, authors, students and researchers<sup>1</sup>. Twenty-six conference panels showcased a large number of research initiatives that take place across Greece dealing with schoolbooks and curricula. The thematic topics, on which panels concentrated, covered the following: a) the education system from pre-school, primary, secondary, and tertiary to life-long education, b) the teaching of specific subjects such as ancient and modern Greek literature, art, religion, physics and mathematics and Greek as a foreign language; a large number of papers focused on history textbooks discussing politics, ideology, national identity, debates surrounding the writing of history as well as the reception of history textbooks by students and teachers, and c) issues such as intercultural education, education for peace, gender representations in schoolbooks, and the role of digital technology as a catalyst in the future of schoolbooks.



Picture 1: Conference poster

<sup>1</sup> In this context, the term 'researchers' refers also to active teachers, mainly in secondary schools, who are involved in research as postgraduate students or pursuing research in class after having completed their PhDs.

□ **Conference report:  
Greece (cont.)**

In his introductory talk, Kyriakos Bonidis, director of KEASVEP, presented the thematic pillars of the conference. He engaged with an overview and evaluation of the research about Greek schoolbooks from its beginning at the end of the 1970s, through its quantitative and qualitative expansion in the 1990s, up to the present time. His talk highlighted the three foundational aspects of schoolbook research in Greece: the methodological (tools, techniques, and analytical approaches that are mostly adopted), the empirical (research about how books are used by teachers and students inside and outside the classroom) and the theoretical (theories about researching Greek school-books).

Here, I would like to focus on two contributions which were more related to my own research interests. Although various presentations touched on the visual language of schoolbooks as well as on their history, there were two panels which extensively explored the above topics. In the panel on 'Research in the typographic and visual design of schoolbooks' presenters addressed the visual appearance of reading primers and other textbooks used in primary schools by applying a range of analytical tools. In the papers entitled 'The semiotic value of visual information in schoolbooks of the primary school' by V. Zagotas, 'Illustrating language textbooks: the introduction of a new model for the use of images' by S. Grosdos, as well as in my own 'Doing research in the typography of Greek schoolbooks' socio-semiotics, typographic design, and thoughts on a new model for the role of images in language textbooks engaged the audience in a constructive dialogue about the visual appearance and the materiality of schoolbooks. As a number of other papers indicated the employment of semiotics in the visual analysis of books is a well-established approach probably due to the reception of Gunther Kress's and Theo van Leeuwen's work in Greece. On the contrary the study of the typography of texts and the design of book pages is almost neglected; as a result the functional relationship between design and pedagogy is absent from the current discourse.

In the panel on 'Historical research of schoolbooks' presentations focused among other topics a) on aspects of the history of reading textbooks produced during the 1918 educational reform by the advocates of educational demoticism<sup>2</sup>, such as, for example, the papers by E. Tympa, 'The primer with the sun, hidden aspects of its history'; Ch. Siorikis & V. Gouni, 'The high mountains by Z. Papantoniou as the official reading textbook of the 20th century'; and Ch. Georgiou, 'The reception of childhood in the reading textbooks published by the Educational Association'; and b) on the values and stereotypes promulgated by textbooks published during the Metaxas dictatorship (1939-1941) such as the paper by S. Safouris. All presentations provided evidence of the richness of meanings embedded on schoolbooks of the past that still wait to be decoded.

An exhibition of schoolbooks was organized during the three days of the conference. Copies from the collections of the Museum of Education (Faculty of

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout the 20th century the question as to which form of modern Greek should youths be taught in schools evolved into a crucial and dominant factor that influenced all debates and policy-making planning in education. It was part of a broader issue known as the 'language question' (*to glossiko zitima*). The language question was a complex issue central to Greek socio-political and educational history for a long period of time. In simple words it referred to the existence of two distinct written forms of modern Greek: *katharevousa*, the 'purified' language, and *demotike* (demotic), the common language. The *katharevousa* aimed to 'purify' the language of the non-Hellenic features which had been acquired over the centuries. The demotic, on the other hand, incorporated changes which occurred in the language throughout its development. Until the end of the 19th century initiatives were focused on the predominance of the demotic on the literary scene. At the same time a number of Greek intellectuals felt that the reform of the language of Greek education, i.e. the replacement of *katharevousa* by *demotic*, could underpin the social and economic progress of Greek society. As a result the language question acquired a whole new dimension and developed into a movement that was called 'educational demoticism'.

□ **Conference report:  
Greece (cont.)**

Philosophy, Pedagogy, and Psychology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens), the Historical Archive of New Hellenic Education (Faculty of Philosophy and Education, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), and KEAS-VEP were brought together and presented a visual panorama of the history of Greek schoolbooks and curricula over the last two centuries. Delegates had the opportunity to browse through both rare and most recent titles; the oldest title included in the exhibition, a grammar book for the students of the *Gymnasium* (secondary school), made an explicit reference to the beginning of the printing of Greek schoolbooks in Vienna, Austria, in the late 18th and early 19th century.

Although contributions on research in schoolbooks and curricula are always part of educational conferences, a conference totally dedicated to their systematic research provides the ideal ground for getting an overview of the state of the field. KEASVEP was really successful in attracting more than 200 delegates who enthusiastically engaged with the main themes of the conference revealing the development of the field as well as the large scale of the activity currently taking place in it. The presentations demonstrated the multifaceted nature of research in Greek schoolbooks and curricula and mapped both current and emerging trends. In addition, participants had the opportunity to share ideas, compare and contrast new and traditional methods and approaches, and discuss possibilities for further collaboration.

The publication of the volume of proceedings is a much awaited project which will document the variety of contributions but also the need to shift the existing boundaries and introduce to schoolbooks and curricula research with other disciplinary perspectives.



Picture 3: Greek primers on display, part of the exhibition of schoolbooks

□ **About RPI**

**Reading Primers International (RPI)** is published by the Reading Primers Special Interest Group (RP-SIG) of the International Society for Historical and Systematic Research on Textbooks and Educational Media. Please send your comments to this issue and submissions of texts for future issues of RPI to the editorial office.

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