



FROM PAST TO PRESENT: THE POSITION OF ANCIENT HISTORY IN PRIMARY SCHOOL HISTORY TEACHING AFTER THE 2019 CROATIAN EDUCATION REFORM

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Abstract

The paper analyzes the position of ancient history in primary school history teaching. Three program documents for history teaching, The Syllabus for Primary Schools from 2006, History Curriculum Proposal from 2016, and History Curriculum for Primary Schools and Gymnasiums from 2019, are compared and analyzed with respect to the prescribed teaching contents related to ancient history. The paper also analyzes history textbooks before and after the 2019 reform, comparing textbook topics and the number of pages dedicated to ancient history, as well as the relationship between the histories of the Ancient East and Egypt, ancient Greece, and ancient Rome.

Keywords

Ancient History, History Teaching, Curriculum, Reform, History Textbooks, Syllabus

1. Introduction

First, there was a lot of talk about the Croatian education reform, after which came a fairly long period of waiting for concrete progress. As far as primary school history teaching is concerned, the Syllabus for Primary Schools (NPP) was adopted in August 2006 as a document that dealt not only with the history teaching, but with the primary school teaching as a whole. Soon after it had been adopted, the critics pointed out that is not in line with the development trends in European countries (Koren & Najbar-Agičić, 2007). When the conclusion was reached that the Croatian education needs a more modern basic document, the drafting of national curricula began, including history curriculum, as a part of the Comprehensive Curricular Reform (CKR). History Curriculum Proposal (PK16) appeared in February 2016. Given that it was unacceptable to a part of the scientific and professional public prone to more traditional views, it underwent several reviews and changes. In March 2019, after several unaccepted versions and still without general consensus, History Curriculum for Primary Schools and Gymnasiums (KNPP) was adopted, although significantly altered compared to the first version. Thus, after the long-awaited reform of education, there were some changes in the position of ancient history in primary schools. Yet, when examining history curricula and history textbooks, ancient history is rarely at the center of research. If one tried to find a reason why, the answer would probably lie in the fact that ancient history topics are not closely related to national history, and therefore are less controversial and less sensitive. And as the topics that can be related to current political issues are always more attractive to the general public, ancient history is (too) often neglected. Yet, ancient history mustn't be neglected, neither in history teaching nor in papers dealing with its position in the educational documents, as ancient history is very important part of European cultural identity. This paper will try to answer the question of what changes in the teaching of ancient history the KNPP brought in comparison to the NPP and the PK16. Although the application of PK16 did not come to life, it was included in the analysis to see the differences between the original reform plan and the one that was eventually adopted. Also, the current history textbooks for the fifth grade of primary school and the position of ancient history in them in comparison with the textbooks of the previous generation will also be analyzed.

2. Structure and content of program documents

Before tackling the analysis of the position of ancient history in primary school history teaching, it is necessary to study the general structure and content of program documents that prescribe history teaching. All three program documents analyzed here (NPP, PK16, and KNPP) have certain similarities in both structure and content. At first glance it is noticeable that the core document has changed its name: now it is called curriculum, not syllabus, so it is necessary to define what is syllabus and what is curriculum. The definition of syllabus is quite simple: it is “a school document prescribing the volume and depth of content studied within a certain subject in a particular type of school” (Bognar & Matijević, 2002). The definition of curriculum is somewhat more complex, but one of the most accepted definitions is that curriculum is “a set of planned and implicit determinants that direct the educational process towards tasks and contents that are consistently derived from the goal and point to organizational forms and ways of teaching and learning, and performance testing procedures depending on many process factors and circumstances” (Previšić, 2007). Cindrić et al. (2010) also add that curriculum should answer the following questions: what is the goal of education; what students need to be capable of; what content needs to be studied in order to achieve educational goals and student capability; how to organize teaching; and how to measure learning outcomes. There are several different views of the relationship between syllabus and curriculum. According to the first view, the syllabus and the curriculum are one and the same, and the only difference is in the name. The second view is that the curriculum is considered superior to the syllabus, i.e. the syllabus is part of the curriculum. There is also the third view which sees syllabi and curricula as two different cultural traditions, with the syllabus linked to Germanic and the curriculum to Anglo-Saxon culture (Jukić, 2010). In Croatian case, the change in the name was probably caused by the fact that curriculum is much more extensive and detailed document than syllabus. It must be said that there are several types of curricula: closed, open and mixed (Pešorda, 2008). The NPP, PK16, and KNPP would be classified as mixed curricula, however, the NPP would be the most closed, the PK16 the most open and the KNPP would be in the middle.

After we had defined the syllabus and the curriculum, the similarities and differences between the NPP, PK16, and KNPP should be examined. All analyzed program documents contain the purpose of teaching history, which in the NPP refers to primary schools, in the PK16 to primary and high schools and in the KNPP to primary schools and grammar schools (gymnasiums).¹ In the NPP, the purpose of teaching history is “to enable students to acquire knowledge and intellectual skills on selected topics that will help them understand the modern world” (NPP, 2006). Therefore, the emphasis is on acquiring knowledge and skills in order to understand the contemporary world better. The purpose of teaching history has changed in the PK16 and it is “to stimulate students’ interest in studying the past, develop students’ curiosity, imagination and analytical thinking, enable understanding of the present and acquire knowledge and skills necessary for informed and active participation of students in society as the citizens of Croatia, Europe and the world” (PK16, 2016). It is still necessary to acquire knowledge and skills, but not only to understand contemporary world, but to become an active citizen of that world. Also, it becomes important to spark students’ interest in history. In the KNPP, the purpose of teaching history is similar to that in the PK16, but students no longer need to be just active citizens, they need to change the world “for the benefit of humanity” (KNPP, 2019.). It is obvious that the purpose of teaching history has become more ambitious in comparison to the former period.

The next component in the structure of program documents is the goal of learning history. The NPP states that the goal of learning history is “to develop an interest in the study of the past and an interest in the present, i.e. to develop historical thinking” (NPP, 2006). It is evident that what was a goal in the NPP became a purpose in both PK16 and KNPP. Thus, the thing because of which something is done became the thing that is necessary to achieve. In the PK16, the goal becomes more comprehensive, it bears the name “educational goal”, and consists of six components that include knowledge and understanding of the periods and societies being studied; perceiving the past through the use of technical concepts (which will be explained in more detail later); using skills that include asking questions about the past, analysis, interpretation and argumentation; shaping one's own argumentative views and interpretations, but also respecting different grounded perspectives; understanding of professional ethical norms and value aspects related to the study of the past; and the use of acquired knowledge and skills to act responsibly at all levels, from local to global (PK16, 2016). The content of the goals in the KNPP is almost the same, only the understanding of the importance of preserving the native, national and world cultural, historical and spiritual heritage has been added (KNPP, 2019). If we look at the goals and purposes stated in the program documents, we could conclude that the purposes and goals are not always clearly defined. Sometimes they overlap and sometimes it is questionable to distinguish what is the purpose and what is the goal of learning and teaching history.

An important difference between the analyzed program documents is what is emphasized in them. The NPP places equal emphasis on both teaching content and educational achievements. The contents include the listed

¹ The NPP applies only to primary schools, the PK16 to primary and all secondary schools, while the KNPP applies only to primary schools and gymnasiums, not to vocational schools.

history topics that need to be covered and the key terms that need to be covered within each of the listed topics. For each topic planned by the NPP, the educational achievements that should be achieved after the planned teaching content is covered are also listed. Educational achievements are in fact learning outcomes that should be met after successful teaching. The PK16 also introduces historical concepts, i.e. technical concepts that historians use in their work. Listed are five concepts on whose understanding the PK16 should be based: time and space, causes and consequences, continuity and change, historical sources and historical inquiry, and interpretations and perspectives (PK16, 2006). Each of these concepts should encompass all three key dimensions of learning and teaching history, namely the acquisition of knowledge about the past, the development of skills related to learning history, and the understanding of the values, attitudes, and interpersonal relations that result from learning history (PK16, 2006). Based on the above concepts, learning outcomes are classified by grades and cycles, but it remains unclear why the fifth grade was placed in the second cycle, unlike other upper grades of primary school that are in the third cycle (PK16, 2006). The outcomes form the basis of PK16 and are elaborated according to the concepts for each grade of primary school into four levels of adoption: satisfactory, good, very good and exceptional (PK16, 2016). As in the NPP, the PK16 lists the teaching topics to be covered, so there is still a certain focus on the content, but the key concepts are no longer listed. Instead, there is a list of key issues for each topic and brief descriptions of what the student should do within each of the topics (PK16, 2006). The KNPP brings changes again because now, instead of technical concepts, domains are taking the lead in the structure. Technical concepts are still cited, but it seems that the purpose of their citation is no longer clear because they are in no way related to the outcomes that form the basis here as well. Also, the stated technical concepts are somewhat different from those listed in PK16 because they include the following: time and space, causes and consequences, continuity and change, historical sources inquiry, historical perspective, and comparison and confrontation (KNPP, 2019). The domains are: society, economy, science and technology, politics, and the philosophical-religious-cultural field (KNPP, 2019). Teaching topics are organized by domains, as well as outcomes for each topic. Although this arrangement was done with the aim to remove the teaching of history from the firm grasp of political and diplomatic history, which was also mentioned as an idea in the NPP (NPP, 2006), it was done rather clumsily. The strict division of history into domains is artificial, unnatural, and unfeasible when it comes to actual teaching in the classroom. Although it is quite legitimate and desirable to deal with different domains of history, from politics to philosophy and technology, the way in which this is planned is improper, because teaching topics cannot be treated in a way that, for example, one topic deals exclusively with politics, other exclusively with society, the third exclusively with economics and so on, because all three are intertwined in such a way that they cannot be separated from each other.

The next thing to pay attention to is how the teaching topics are structured. Both NPP and PK16 are characterized by the chronological structure of teaching, i.e. teaching topics are covered chronologically from the oldest history to the most recent events. The KNPP offers a different approach where there is more freedom in organizing the structure on which the addressing of teaching topics will be based. Since each of the five domains is assigned several teaching topics, domains can be covered thematically (all topics from a particular domain one after the other) or chronologically (topics from different domains are covered), and a mixture of both approaches is possible.

Evaluation should also be mentioned as an essential component of history teaching. While no attention is paid to evaluation in the NPP, both PK16 and KNPP list the elements and approaches to evaluation. The PK16 lists basic historical knowledge, understanding of historical concepts, and historical inquiry as elements of evaluation (PK16, 2016). The essence is the same, with slightly different names, in the KNPP, where factual, conceptual and procedural knowledge are listed as elements of evaluation (KNPP, 2019). Basic historical knowledge actually represents factual knowledge, understanding historical concepts represents conceptual knowledge, and historical inquiry represents procedural knowledge. According to Marinović (2014), simplified, factual knowledge represents basic facts, dates and persons from world and national history, and an understanding of basic historical concepts; conceptual knowledge represents an understanding of the previously mentioned technical concepts used by the historian in his work; while procedural knowledge represents knowledge of data collection and processing methods and knowledge of the ways of their interpretation. Both PK16 and KNPP also list three approaches to evaluation: evaluation for learning, evaluation as learning and evaluation of learning. However, for the purpose of this work, defining them is not very important. More about the mentioned approaches can be found on the website of the School for Life and the project-related education in the Loomen system.

Having seen the basic differences in the concepts, structure and content of the NPP, PK16, and KNPP, below we move on to specific changes concerning the learning and teaching of ancient history. Also, despite the changes in the basic documents for primary history teaching, it should be understood that these changes will not be implemented on their own, but their implementation will depend mostly on history teachers and their ability and willingness to do so (Marsh, 1994).

3. The position of ancient history in program documents

We decided to conduct an analysis of the position of ancient history in program documents for primary history teaching by comparing the prescribed teaching contents in the NPP, PK16, and KNPP.

Ancient history is traditionally covered in the fifth grade of primary school. Throughout all curricula before Comprehensive Curricular Reform, ancient history topics followed after the teaching units related to the introduction to historical science and historiography and prehistory had been covered. The treatment of ancient history consisted of teaching units related to the ancient Near East and Egypt, ancient Greece, and Rome, with most space devoted to Greece and Rome. Have PK16 and KNPP made changes regarding that? As far as teaching content is concerned, the ancient history generally continues to be covered as before, but with certain changes in order, scope and regulation. Throughout all three program documents, the same annual schedule of history teaching in the fifth grade of primary school was maintained and amounts to 70 teaching hours per year, i.e. two teaching hours per week for 35 teaching weeks. Whether this is sufficient to cover an introduction to historical science, prehistory, and 4000 years of history can be debated.

One of the most important components of the program documents for history teaching are the teaching topics planned to be covered in history teaching. In the NPP, there was a division into mandatory and elective topics. All teaching content for the fifth grade of primary school was divided into eleven mandatory and five elective topics. It is important to note that it was not necessary to choose between the proposed elective topics, but the teacher could independently design two to three elective topics in accordance with the interests of students or the heritage and region in which the school is located (NPP, 2006, 284). The minimum and maximum teaching hours for covering a particular topic are not prescribed, but the Guide through the CNES (Croatian National Educational Standard) states that the topic can last even only one lesson (one teaching hour) (Vodič kroz HNOS za osnovnu školu, 2005). The PK16 provides a division of topics and subtopics, which are all mandatory, without the possibility of elective topics. There are five topics, and within these five topics there are sixteen subtopics (PK16, 2016). If we compare the topics in the NPP and the topics in the PK16, we come to the conclusion that they are of a very similar form. The minimum and maximum teaching hours for individual topic are also not specified. The KNPP again introduces the possibility of choosing elective topics. Sixteen mandatory and ten elective topics are offered, of which two should be chosen to be covered, but there is also the possibility that instead of the proposed elective topics, topics that the teacher designed are covered (KNPP, 2019). All mandatory and elective topics are located within one of the five domains: society, economy, science and technology, politics, and philosophical-religious-cultural field. The only possibility of designing a topic that would not belong strictly to one domain, but to more of them, is through the independent design of an elective topic by the teacher. The minimum and maximum number of teaching hours for covering a particular topic is not prescribed here either. If we were to compare the number of prescribed teaching topics, we would come to the conclusion that the number of mandatory teaching topics actually increased, from eleven to sixteen, which is contrary to the proclaimed idea of giving more flexibility to teachers in choosing and processing teaching content. But what about the number of topics related to ancient history and the content included in them?

As mentioned earlier, in all three program documents studied, in the fifth grade of primary school it is planned to cover contents related to the introduction to history, prehistory, and ancient history, so the position of ancient history can be observed in relation to positions of introduction to history and prehistory. Also, the position of ancient history can be observed through the ratios of topics dedicated to the ancient Near East and Egypt, Greece, and Rome.

Of the eleven prescribed mandatory topics in the NPP, nine of them or 81.81% belong to ancient history, while only one topic (9.1%) is dedicated to both to the introduction to history and to prehistory (9.1%). If we look in more detail at the distribution of ancient history topics, we see that of the nine topics, one is dedicated to the ancient Near East and Egypt (Civilizations of the First Letters), three to ancient Greece (Rise of ancient Greece; Athenian democracy; Hellenism) and as many as five to ancient Rome (The beginnings of Rome; Republic and Empire; Croatian territory in ancient times; The emergence of Christianity; the Migration Period). In percentages, this would mean that 11.11% of the content belongs to the ancient Near East and Egypt, 33.33% to ancient Greece, and 55.55% to ancient Rome. Of the five elective topics offered, all five belong to ancient history. Two to ancient Near East and Egypt (Persia; Mesopotamia), one to ancient Greece (Greek mythology), and two to ancient Rome (Roman architecture; Roman army). However, we note that the division of elective topics is not so important for analysis given that there was a possibility for teachers to design their own topics, which can change the ratios.

In the PK16, of the five prescribed topics, three belong to ancient history (Civilizations of the ancient East; Greek world; Roman world), and one each to introduction to history and prehistory. However, it is more interesting to look at the division by subtopics, where the introduction to history includes one subtopic (5.88%), prehistory three subtopics (17.65%), and ancient history 13 subtopics (76.47%). As for the division within ancient history, the ancient Near East and Egypt have two subtopics (Characteristics of the civilizations of the ancient Near East; Egypt

/ Mesopotamia²), ancient Greece four subtopics (Introduction; Greek poleis; Ancient Greek heritage; Alexander the Great and Hellenism), and ancient Rome seven subtopic (Introduction; Who ruled Rome; Roman conquests; Roman society; Heritage of the ancient Romans; Christianity; Twilight of the Empire and the Migration Period). If we look at the percentages within ancient history, we see that 15.38% of the content belongs to the ancient Near East and Egypt, 30.77% to ancient Greece, and 53.85% to ancient Rome.

In the KNPP, due to a different concept of distribution of topics, it is more difficult to make a strict division of topics by areas to which they belong. As mentioned earlier, the topics are not divided in such a way that the introduction to history is covered first, then prehistory, and then the ancient world, i.e. chronologically, but the division is by domains. Therefore, we will first analyze the affiliation of these topics to domains. It should be noted that, although it is not explicitly written anywhere, in the graphic representation within the KNPP it is evident that each of the five domains should be represented with 20% of the content, except for the domain Philosophical-religious-cultural area which should be represented with 40% of the content in the fifth grade of primary school (KNPP, 2019). What, then, is the representation of topics by domain? Regarding mandatory topics, the domain Society (consisting of four mandatory topics) includes one topic related to prehistory and three topics related to ancient history, of which one related to the ancient Near East and Egypt (Society and everyday life of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia), one to ancient Greece (Social development in Greek cities in the Mediterranean and Adriatic), and one to ancient Rome (Roman society and everyday life).

Two elective topics cannot be placed in only one area because one partly belongs to prehistory and ancient Greece and Rome (Prehistoric and ancient heritage on Croatian territory), and the other to ancient Greece and Rome (The role of women in ancient society). However, as with the NPP, elective topics are less important for analysis as teachers have the opportunity to design their own topics, which then changes the ratios. In the domain of Economics, there are three mandatory topics that are again difficult to strictly divide into areas, so one partly belongs to prehistory and the ancient Near East and Egypt (From food gatherers and hunters to farmers, ranchers, craftsmen and merchants), the other entirely to the ancient Near East and Egypt (Ancient Near East: the city becomes the economic center of the state), and the third partly to the ancient Near East and Egypt and ancient Greece (Phoenicians and Greeks - sailors, merchants and colonizers in the Mediterranean and Adriatic). Of the two elective topics, one is divided between the ancient Near East and Egypt, ancient Greece, and ancient Rome (Pirates and slave traders), while the other belongs entirely to ancient Rome (Money in ancient Rome). The domain Science and technology has three mandatory topics, one of which belongs to prehistory and the other two to ancient history, one of which is entirely dedicated to the ancient Near East and Egypt (Development of writing and science in the ancient Near East), while the other is divided between the ancient Near East and Egypt, ancient Greece, and ancient Rome (Architectural achievements, communications, and roads in the ancient world). Elective topics are, as with each of the domains, two, with one divided between the ancient Near East and Egypt, ancient Greece, and ancient Rome (Inventions in the service of war), while the other belongs entirely to ancient Greece (Alexandria: the center of Hellenistic science). The fourth domain, Politics, consists of three mandatory topics. All three belong to ancient history, two to ancient Greece (Greek city-states: Sparta and Athens; Wars of ancient Greece), and one to ancient Rome (Development of Rome, its territorial expansion, and the process of decay). Two elective topics are divided between the ancient Near East and Egypt (Female rulers of Egypt) and ancient Rome (Being a Roman emperor). In the last, fifth domain, called the Philosophical-religious-cultural area, there are three mandatory topics, one of which belongs to the introduction to history, the other to prehistory, and the third is divided between the ancient Near East and Egypt, ancient Greece, and ancient Rome (Ancient world – writing, art, religion, philosophy). Of the two elective topics, one is dedicated to the ancient Near East and Egypt (Egyptians and the beliefs in afterlife), and the other to ancient Greece and ancient Rome (Greek and Roman storytellers - myths and legends, theater and games). If we were to look at all the mandatory topics regardless of which domain they belong to, the introduction to history would include one topic, prehistory three and a half topics, the ancient Near East and Egypt 4.67 topics, ancient Greece 4.16 topics, and ancient Rome 2.67 topics. This would mean that 11.5 topics are dedicated to ancient history. In percentages, this would mean that 6.25% of the content is dedicated to the introduction to history, 21.87% to prehistory, and 71.74% to ancient history. As for the ratio of content within ancient history, the ancient Near East and Egypt would amount to 40.60%, ancient Greece to 36.18%, and ancient Rome to 23.22% of the prescribed content. Elective topics are not included in this calculation for the reasons already mentioned.

By analyzing all three program documents, we can conclude that there have been some changes within the position of ancient history in primary school, more specifically in the fifth grade of primary school in which ancient history is taught. First, it can be seen that the number of mandatory topics has increased. Although one of the reasons of education reform was that the old teaching was too content-oriented, the content was actually increased. In the NPP, only nine topics related to ancient history were prescribed, and in PK16 their number jumped to thirteen (because we see sub-topics that are more similar to the layout in the NPP), and in the KNPP that number, 11.5, although still higher, approached the figure from the NPP. If we look at the percentage of total content dedicated to ancient history, we can notice a certain change. While in the NPP the percentage of content dedicated

² The teacher chooses whether to cover Egypt or Mesopotamia in more detail.

to ancient history was 81.81%, in the PK16 that percentage dropped to 76.47%, and in the KNPP it dropped further to 71.74%, which shows that the scope of ancient history for the fifth grade of primary school has decreased by slightly more than 10%, which is not negligible. This difference was in favor of prehistory, the percentage of which increased from 9.1% in the NPP to 17.65% in the PK16 and to 21.87% in the KNPP. The scope of the introduction to history has remained roughly the same. As for the relationship between the areas of ancient history that we divided into three units: the ancient Near East and Egypt, ancient Greece, and ancient Rome, in the NPP among the mandatory topics the ancient Near East and Egypt were represented with 11.11% of the content, in the PK16 this percentage was increased to 15.38%, and in the KNPP the percentage was increased to as much as 40.60%. As the content related to the ancient Near East and Egypt increased, it is obvious that less attention was paid to other units. In the NPP 33.33% of the content was dedicated to ancient Greece, in the PK16 that percentage dropped slightly to 30.77%, and in the KNPP it rose again to 36.18%, which would mean that the percentage of content related to ancient Greece has not changed significantly. The loser in terms of content is most certainly ancient Rome. While in the NPP it was the most important area with a representation of as much as 55.55% of the content, which did not change much in the PK16 where that percentage fell only slightly, to 53.85%, in the KNPP this decline is huge and ancient Rome now occupies only 23.22% of the obligatory ancient history content. Given that Roman civilization had an enormous impact on the development of European civilization, we believe that such a significant reduction in the scope of learning and teaching the history of ancient Rome is not appropriate. Furthermore, as already mentioned, the division into domains in the KNPP seems very impractical because in reality different historical domains are closely related and it is difficult to distinguish one from the others as they are complementary.

Although the results of the analysis show that the position of ancient history in the KNPP has changed in relation to the NPP, the analysis of the prescribed contents does not give a clear answer to the actual representation of certain contents in teaching. The reason for this primarily lies in the fact that the number of teaching hours for coverage of certain topics is not prescribed. In theory, it is possible to dedicate significantly larger number of teaching hours to certain topics, so, for example, although ancient Rome topics occupy only 23.22% of the prescribed content, they can be taught and learned more than all other content, depending on how the teacher decides to cover the content. If, for example, one teaching hour is dedicated to topics related to the Ancient East and Egypt, and five teaching hours are dedicated to each topic related to ancient Rome, then the Ancient East would be covered with approximately ten teaching hours and ancient Rome with fifteen teaching hours. Of course, it is difficult to expect such extremes, but they are possible because of the freedom the teacher has. However, in order to try to get a clearer picture of the representation of ancient history content in primary school teaching after the education reform of 2019, we decided to analyze the content of new history textbooks compared to those before the reform. Some researches show that the use of textbooks as the main teaching aid is particularly prevalent in primary school (Matijević et al., 2013). Of course, textbooks do not have to give a completely clear picture either, but since they are the most used teaching tool and are used by most teachers as a source of knowledge, they can be a good indicator of what changes have taken place.

4. The position of ancient history in history textbooks

After the enactment of the KNPP, new history textbooks for the fifth grade of primary school were printed. We analyze and compare the mentioned textbooks with the textbooks of the previous generation. Of the old textbooks, we used the following three textbooks: *Povijest 5*, published by Alfa, and authored by Stjepan Bekavac (Bekavac, 2014); *Vremeplov 5*, published by Profil, and authored by Duša Šarunić and Darko Benčić (Šarunić & Benčić, 2014); and *Tragom prošlosti 5*, published by Školska knjiga, and authored by Sonja Bančić, Sanja Cerovski and Štefica Paladino (Bančić et al., 2013). Of the new textbooks, we used the following: *Povijest 5*, published by Alfa, and authored by Ante Birin, Abelina Finek, Darko Finek, Eva Katarina Glazer and Tomislav Šarlija (Birin et al., 2019); *Vremeplov 5*, published by Profil, and authored by Manuela Kujundžić, Šime Labor, Neven Budak and Miljenko Hajdarović (Kujundžić et al., 2019); *Klio 5*, published by Školska knjiga and authored by Sonja Bančić and Tina Matanić (Bančić & Matanić, 2019); and finally *Povijest 5*, published by Meridijani, authored by Mladen Tomorad, Ivana Malus Tomorad, Hrvoje Gračanin, Vjera Brković and Rona Bušljeta (Tomorad et al., 2019).

We first analyzed what all the textbooks contain and what their scope is. All old textbooks are divided into chapters and subchapters, i.e. teaching topics / units and teaching lessons. The teaching topic and the teaching unit are mainly used as synonyms, with the proviso that we will consider as teaching units introduction to history, prehistory, the ancient Near East and Egypt, ancient Greece, and ancient Rome, or mainly the titles of the chapters. The teaching lesson usually means a part of the teaching content that is covered during one teaching hour (Matijević & Radovanović, 2011), but we will mostly use this name for subchapters, which does not necessarily mean that each subchapter should be covered in one teaching hour, but it is possible for it to be covered through several teaching hours. The division of content in the textbooks is done chronologically, so the textbooks begin with an introduction to historical science and prehistory, after which ancient history is covered, starting from the ancient Near East to the collapse of the Western Roman Empire. As far as additional contents are concerned, all old textbooks have a glossary, and some have contents such as instructions for use, comparative timelines, indexes and

bibliography. The new textbooks kept the division of content from the old textbooks, i.e. chronological division. All textbooks begin with an introduction to history and prehistory, after which ancient history is covered. Interestingly, while the old textbooks follow the NPP, the new textbooks are not, like the KNPP, organized by domains, but by teaching units, which is more similar to the NPP. Additional contents include instructions for use, glossary, literature, additional literature, extended contents with learning outcomes, although none of the textbooks contains all of the above. It must be noted that all new textbooks also have digital content, but we will leave that for another analysis. As for the number of pages of individual textbooks, we can compare these numbers since all textbooks are of the same format. Among old textbooks, *Povijest 5* has the smallest number of pages, 164 (Bekavac, 2014), while *Vremeplov 5* has the most pages, 207 (Šarunić & Benčić, 2014), which is a difference of 26.21%. The average number of pages in old textbooks is 187.66. Regarding new textbooks, *Klio 5* has the largest number of pages, as many as 232 (Bančić & Matanić, 2019), whereas *Povijest 5* has only 155 pages (Tomorad et al., 2019), which is a difference of as much as 49.67%. The average number of pages in new textbooks is 194.75. It is noticeable that different textbooks have approached historical topics in different ways, i.e. some are more and some are less extensive, and the differences can be very large. Comparing the average number of pages between old and new textbooks, we can conclude that new textbooks have increased somewhat in their scope, although not significantly, but this is contrary to the tendency to reduce teaching content, which was originally one of the CKR (Comprehensive Curricular Reform) mantras.

After the general presentation of the textbook content layout, we focus in more detail on the topics that are covered in the textbooks. As mentioned earlier, the topics in the old textbooks follow the NPP, and it would be expected that the new textbooks follow the KNPP, however, that is not the case. Instead of dividing the topics by domains, the textbooks are still divided into units, similar to the division in the NPP, i.e. they are divided into introduction to history, prehistory, the ancient Near East and Egypt, ancient Greece, and ancient Rome. Topic names, although in accordance with the KNPP, do not bear the names of topics from the KNPP. According to the names of the topics and their arrangement, the difference in relation to the textbooks from the time of the NPP is not big, at least not as much as could be concluded if only the program documents were compared. If we were to compare the number of topics belonging to ancient history in old and new textbooks, we would see certain changes. As the teaching topics are divided into parts, we will conditionally call each of the listed parts a teaching lesson. We decided to omit elective topics from the analysis, given that there is freedom of choice, i.e. a teacher can choose topics that are not in the textbooks. In old textbooks, the number of teaching lessons related to ancient history varied between 28 (Šarunić & Benčić, 2014) and 35 (Bekavac, 2014), but in order to see the share of ancient history in the total teaching content in the fifth grade of primary school, it is more useful to turn to percentages. They tell us that 82.36% (Šarunić & Benčić, 2014), 89.48% (Bančić et al., 2014) and 89.75% (Bekavac, 2014) of teaching lessons were related to ancient history. The average representation of ancient history teaching lessons in old textbooks would be 87.19%, while the rest would be divided between introduction to history (4.57%) and prehistory (8.24%). In the new textbooks, the overall number of teaching lessons has been reduced, thus reducing the number of teaching lessons related to ancient history, which varies between 14 (Bančić & Matanić, 2019) and 29 (Birin et al., 2019). Again, it is more useful to look at this in percentages which are 73.68% (Bančić & Matanić, 2019), 76.00% (Tomorad et al., 2019), 82.86% (Birin et al., 2019) and 83.33% (Kujundžić et al., 2019). The average percentage of teaching lessons dedicated to ancient history is 78.97%, while the rest is divided into introduction to history (5.58%) and prehistory (15.45%). If we compare the percentages of teaching lessons dedicated to ancient history in old and new textbooks, we see that this percentage dropped from 82.36% to 78.97%, which is a loss of 3.39%. Given the percentages related to the introduction to history and prehistory, it can be concluded that the volume of teaching content related to prehistory has increased at the expense of ancient history, although the amount of content lost is not large.

The next thing we analyze are the relations between the ancient history units, again using the division into the ancient Near East and Egypt, ancient Greece, and ancient Rome. In old textbooks, most teaching lessons dedicated to ancient history were dedicated to ancient Rome, in percentages from 48.21% (Šarunić & Benčić, 2014) to 58.57% (Bekavac, 2014), with the average commitment of ancient history lessons dedicated to ancient Rome of 52.26%. In second place in terms of the percentage of dedicated teaching lessons was ancient Greece with percentages from 26.79% (Šarunić & Benčić, 2014) to 29.41% (Bančić et al., 2013), while the average percentage was 27.78%. Finally, in third place were the ancient Near East and Egypt with an average percentage of 19.96%, the smallest being 14.29% (Bekavac, 2014) and the largest being 25.00% (Šarunić & Benčić, 2014). This shows the strong dominance of ancient Rome, and then the period of classical antiquity as a whole (in terms of the history of ancient Greece and Rome), while the ancient Near East and Egypt were less represented, which is understandable given the influence of classical antiquity on European culture and civilization. In the new textbooks, ancient Rome retained its primacy with an average of 40.05% representation in teaching lessons dealing with ancient history, but is no longer dominant in two textbooks (Bančić & Matanić, 2019; Kujundžić et al., 2019) where ancient Greece plays a dominant role. Content related to ancient Rome ranges between only 28.57% (Bančić & Matanić, 2019) and 48.27% (Birin et al., 2019). According to the above, in the second place in the new textbooks is ancient Greece with an average representation of 37.23%, the smallest being 31.58% (Tomorad et al., 2019), and the largest being

42.86% (Bančić & Matanić, 2019). The least represented, again, are the ancient Near East and Egypt with an average representation of 22.72%, the smallest being only 17.24% (Birin et al., 2019), and the largest 28.57% (Bančić & Matanić, 2019). It is evident that the differences between three units of ancient history are no longer that big. Although the same order of importance was maintained by the percentage of dedication of teaching lessons to each unit, the difference between these percentages was reduced. Ancient Rome fell from 52.86% of the content in old textbooks to 40.05% in new textbooks. Of the reduction in the percentage of teaching lessons dedicated to ancient Rome, ancient Greece benefited the most. Its percentage of representation in teaching lessons increased from 27.78% to 37.23%, while the percentage of teaching lessons dedicated to the ancient Near East and Egypt increased from 19.96% to 22.72%, which is still significantly lower growth compared to ancient Greece. In conclusion, regarding the percentage of dedication of ancient history lessons to different units of ancient history, it is evident that the importance of the history of ancient Greece in relation to the history of ancient Rome increased in the new textbooks, although ancient Rome still retained its primacy, while the history of the ancient Near East and Egypt remained third on the scale of importance of units of ancient history.

In order to further expand the analysis, in addition to the representation of individual topics in textbooks, we decided to analyze the number of pages dedicated to these topics. In old textbooks, the number of pages dedicated to ancient history varied between 133 (Bekavac, 2014) and 150 (Šarunić & Benčić, 2014), while the average number of pages was 143. If we compare this with the new textbooks, we see that the number of pages ranges between 111 (Tomorad et al., 2019) and 170 (Bančić & Matanić, 2019), while the average number of pages dedicated to ancient history is 141.25. Thus, the average number of pages when comparing old and new textbooks has remained almost unchanged. Nevertheless, in order to arrive at a better understanding, it is necessary to look at the proportions of representation of ancient history in relation to the introduction to history and prehistory. In old textbooks, between 78.95% (Šarunić & Benčić, 2014) and 86.93% (Bekavac, 2014) of page content is dedicated to ancient history, while the average is 83.59%. 6.14% of the content of the pages is dedicated to introduction to history, and 10.27% to prehistory. Regarding new textbooks, an average of 80.16% of page content is dedicated to ancient history, ranging from 78.75% (Kujundžić et al., 2019) to 81.44% (Birin et al., 2019). 6.03% of the textbook content is dedicated to introduction to history, and 13.81% to prehistory. Thus, the percentage of content of textbooks dedicated to ancient history in the new textbooks compared to the old fell from 83.59% to 80.16%, and the difference obtained roughly corresponds to an increase in the percentage of content related to prehistory, while the percentage of content related to introduction to history remained practically the same.

Again, we also analyze the division of ancient history into the aforementioned units (the ancient Near East and Egypt, ancient Greece, and ancient Rome) depending on the percentage of the number of pages dedicated to each unit. Old textbooks show the dominance of ancient Rome, which is represented by an average of 47.90% of content, ranging from 43.15% (Bančić et al., 2013), to 51.88% (Bekavac, 2014). After ancient Rome in terms of representation comes ancient Greece, which is represented by an average of 29.31% of content dedicated to ancient history, ranging from 27.07% (Bekavac, 2014), to 32.19% (Bančić et al., 2013). In last place are the ancient Near East and Egypt with a representation of an average of 22.79% of the content, ranging from 21.05% (Bekavac, 2014), to 24.66% (Bančić et al., 2013). If we look at the new textbooks, the order of content representation remains the same, but the percentages are slightly different. Ancient Rome still dominates, although ancient Greece is more represented in two textbooks (Kujundžić et al., 2019; Bančić & Matanić, 2019). Ancient Rome has from 35.29% (Bančić & Matanić, 2019) to 49.55% (Tomorad et al., 2019) of the content of ancient history, an average of 42.52%, which is a decrease compared to old textbooks. In second place is ancient Greece with a representation ranging from 30.63% to 38.09%, or an average of 34.37%, which is an increase compared to old textbooks. In last place are again the ancient Near East and Egypt with a representation between 18.99% (Birin et al., 2019) and 28.24% (Kujundžić et al., 2019), the average being 23.11%, which is similar to the percentage in old textbooks. It can be seen that the relationship of ancient history content has changed somewhat in that the percentage of content belonging to ancient Rome has been somewhat reduced in favor of content related to ancient Greece, while the percentage of content related to Ancient East and Egypt has remained virtually unchanged.

5. Conclusion

To the research question of what changes the education reform has brought to primary history teaching related to ancient history, the short answer would be: not big ones. If, on the other hand, we raised the question whether there were any changes, the answer would be yes. First of all, what has not changed are the timetable and the grade in which ancient history is covered in primary school. It is still covered in the fifth grade, and the seventy-hour teaching schedule has been retained. What has changed in the program documents is that learning outcomes were put at the heart of the KNPP. Also, teaching topics are now divided by domains, which is a novelty that is difficult to evaluate as positive. Domains are actually areas of human life, and they are interconnected in teaching practice so it is impossible to strictly separate them from each other. The intention was obviously to represent all domains equally in the process of studying history, but this was done clumsily, hastily and without consensus. The problem with the technical concepts on which the PK16 was based is similar, and in the KNPP they were left without a clear

reason for their existence. Compared to the period before the reform, thematic learning and teaching of ancient history without the need for chronological treatment is made possible, i.e. topics no longer have to be covered in the order in which history unfolded, but it is possible to first cover the social history of the ancient Near East and Egypt, as well as of ancient Greece, and of ancient Rome, and then return to the economic history of ancient Near East and Egypt. However, in practice, we believe that the teaching contents are very likely to be covered chronologically by a large majority, which is corroborated by textbooks in which the teaching contents are also arranged chronologically. Although one of the settings of the education reform was the reduction of mandatory teaching contents and greater freedom in the covering of teaching contents by teachers, it turned out that the KNPP actually has more mandatory topics than the NPP, and they were even more logically organized in the NPP, which could be characterized as a downside in the KNPP. The ratio of ancient history to other teaching contents on the basis of mandatory teaching topics in the fifth grade of primary school has changed for worse for ancient history, i.e. it has fallen from 81.81% to 71.74%, i.e. more attention has been paid to teaching contents from the domain of prehistory. Regarding the division of teaching topics within ancient history, there is a significant decline in the percentage of topics related to ancient Rome, and an increase in topics related to the ancient Near East and Egypt, while the number of topics related to ancient Greece remained similar. Regarding the comparison of old and new history textbooks in which ancient history is represented, there is also a visible decline in the percentage of the parts of textbooks dealing with ancient history, both in terms of the number of topics and the number of pages. As for the number of ancient history topics, their percentage dropped from 87.19% to 78.97%, and the number of pages dropped from 83.59% to 80.16%. Thus, if we compare the position of ancient history before and after the reform, based on the representation of topics in program documents and textbooks, it is evident that the role of ancient history is somewhat reduced. Unlike the program documents where the ancient Near East and Egypt became much more represented than ancient Rome, the textbooks retained the dominance of ancient Rome in the percentage of teaching content, although smaller, while ancient Greece retained second place, and the ancient Near East and Egypt remained in last place both before and after the reform. If one looks at the position of ancient history in primary school history teaching, it could be said that after the reform its position became somewhat worse, but not dramatically. Its representation has reduced somewhat and the ratios between its parts have changed, but the compulsory teaching contents have not undergone major changes. The reform did not bring what was expected of it, namely greater flexibility, freedom and a focus on developing competencies. The whole reform, at least as far as primary school history teaching and the treatment of ancient history are concerned, can be characterized by the expression: "Much ado about nothing."

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