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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,

This issue of RPI, originally scheduled for 2014, is published with considerable delay. This delay is certainly not caused by the lack of appropriate subject matter. Rather, as this issue demonstrates, international co-operation in the field of research on reading primers has more recently gained momentum. As proof of this take, e.g., issue IX/2 (2014) of the journal 'History of Education and Children's Literature' (HECL), devoted to the history of primers in Russia, Italy and Germany (see p. 7), or the forthcoming workshop on primers published and used in 1945 in European countries, organised by the RP-SIG in collaboration with two prominent research institutes (see p. 2).

Our thanks go to our colleagues who have contributed to this issue of RPI, and we trust that at least one more issue will be published in 2015.

Madrid/Essen/Wroclaw, February 2015

*Kira Mahamud Angulo
Wendelin Sroka
Joanna Wojdon*

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November 13-14, 2015: workshop on primers 1945 in Europe

Reading primers are among the educational media that are of particular significance in times of emphatic political change. As demonstrated by a Slovenian case described on pp. 19-25 of this newsletter this was certainly true for 1945, in many countries considered as year 1 of the post-war period. 70 years after the end of World War II the development, design, content and use of reading primers in European countries in 1945 will be addressed, from a comparative perspective, in a workshop scheduled for November 13-14, 2015 in Braunschweig (Germany). The workshop ***After the War – A New Beginning? A Comparative Examination of Reading Primers Published and Used in 1945 in Europe*** is jointly organised by the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (GEI), Braunschweig, the Research Library for the History of Education (BBF) at the German Institute for International Educational Research, Berlin, and the RP-SIG. The team responsible for the preparation and realisation of the workshop includes Simona Szakács (GEI), Joachim Scholz (BBF) and Wendelin Sroka (RP-SIG). The organisers wish to draw together scholarship from various countries to represent a truly European range of approaches and findings in an underdeveloped field of inquiry.



The battle of Stalingrad is referred to by picture and text on the last page of this Ukrainian primer, published in 1945 in Moscow and Kiev: L.P. Depolovič: Bukvar. Kijv-Moskva: 'Radjans'ka škola' 1945, p. 96.

issues of researching the history of primers in a comparative perspective. Deadline for the submission of abstracts, to be sent to Simona Szakács (Szakacs@gei.de), is April 26, 2015. Authors of successful proposals will be notified by May 24, 2015, and RP-SIG members will receive further notice as soon as the preliminary programme has been arranged.

<http://www.gei.de/veranstaltungen/termindetails/news/detail/News/after-the-war-a-new-beginning-a-comparative-examination-of-reading-primers-published-and-used-in.html>

Submissions – in English or German – may address one or more of the following aspects:

- actors: authors, illustrators, publishers, political authorities, teachers and learners, including specific target groups such as linguistic minorities or pupils with special needs
- content: examples might be the repercussions of war, reconstruction after war, politics, childhood, gender roles, ideas of national belonging, etc.
- pedagogic aspects: for instance, approaches to teaching and learning; approaches to tasks and evaluation, etc.
- materiality and design: for example possible restrictions related to the supply of paper; "old" and "new" designs
- processes: from development, production and dissemination to the use of primers, including economic, social and political conditions surrounding these issues.

In addition to sessions with paper presentations a special session will give room for a panel discussion that will address both comparative aspects of the workshop theme and general

▣ **Members' news**

From September 4 until November 16, 2014, an exhibition of primers from the collection of **Juris Cibujš**, Riga (Latvia), was on display at the *Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka* [Latvian National Library] in Riga. In 2014 Juris Cibujš has – in collaboration with Lideja Leikuma – compiled a new Latgalian primer, available in electronic format from his website <http://www.abc-world.nl>. In 2014 he has also published two books worth being mentioned here: One is *Tautu brīnumainās pasaules* [The Wondrous Worlds of Peoples], a book about the culture of 60 language communities, with special reference to primers published in the respective languages. The second publication is *Purlovas Grāmata* [The book of Purlova], dedicated to his home village in Latgale, Latvia's easternmost region. For this book he was awarded the annual Latgalian Culture Prize *Boņuks 2014* in the category "Literature: The Best Publication/Book" on February 22, 2015 in Rezekne, Latgale's capital. The picture above shows Juris Cibujš in a traditional Latgalian dress, i.e. in the Abrene national costume, during the award ceremony. For a brief presentation of the primer and the two books see p. 13 of this newsletter.



Kira Mahamud, UNED, Madrid (Spain) attended the XI. Ibero-American Congress of History of Latino-American Education *Sujetos, poder y disputas por la Educación* [Subjects, Power and Disputes over Education], organized by *La Sociedad Mexicana de Historia de la Educación A.C.* and *El Colegio Mexiquense A.C.* It took place in Toluca, México, from the 6th to 9th of May 2014. The title of the paper, presented in collaboration with Ana Badelli (UNED), was *El libro de lectura escolar en la escuela del tardofranquismo (1955-1975) como instrumento para la socialización política: entre la continuidad y la ruptura de esquemas socio-emocionales* [The reading book in the school of the late Francoism (1955-1975) as an instrument for political socialization: between continuity and rupture of socio-emotional schemes]. Abstract: Bearing in mind the fact that the reading book was one of the favourite school textual genres of Spanish society during the 1940s and 1950s, as well as a privileged vehicle for the transmission of knowledge, values and emotions, in an apparent innocent and entertaining manner, the authors examine the evolution of the reading book during the *tardofranquismo*, its contents and aesthetical features. The paper was presented within the framework of a panel entitled 'The construction of emotions through school textbooks: case studies from a variety of Latin-American countries'. The panel focused in textbooks from Spain, Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Chile and the objective was to analyse their language and emotional content.

Joanna Wojdon, University of Wrocław (Poland) has spent the first half of 2014 as Fulbright scholar at Loyola University Chicago (USA). In this context she gave, among others, a lecture on 'Images of women from reading primers of the Soviet Bloc', held at Loyola University on March 27. She will start a new job in the regional branch of the *Instytut Pamięci Narodowej* [Institute of National Remembrance] in Wrocław in March 2015. She hopes to use this new position of the head of the Public Education Office to promote the research on reading primers of the post-WW II period, among other areas.

□ New Members

We are pleased to welcome as RP-SIG's fourth institutional member the **Centro di Documentazione e Ricerca sulla Storia delle Istituzioni Scolastiche, del Libro Scolastico e della Letteratura per l'Infanzia (Ce.S.I.S.)** [Centre of Documentation and Research of the History of School Institutions, of Schoolbooks and of Children's Literature], located in Campobasso (Italy). Ce.S.I.S., founded in 2006 by Professor Alberto Barausse, is part of the *Università degli Studi del Molise* [University of Molise]. The purpose of the Centre is to promote research, conservation and scientific use of documents related to educational history in general and school and textbook history in particular. The Centre includes an archive and a specialized library, with a rich collection of school records from private archives and historical collections, with particular reference to the Italian and European history of education in the 19th and 20th centuries.

http://oldweb.unimol.it/unimolise/unimol/00050321_Ce.S.I.S..html



Museo della scuola e dell' educazione popolare, Campobasso (detail)

Attached to the Centre is the **Museo della scuola e dell' educazione popolare** [Museum of School and People's Education], founded in 2013 and located in a modern building in Via Gazzani, Campobasso. The Museum promotes the knowledge and valorisation of the school cultural heritage, the school material culture and the history of schooling in Italy, in close connection with the local area and institutions such as schools and municipalities. The Museum is divided into 5 sections: three of them outline school history from the Unification of Italy to today; the other two sections are dedicated to school material culture and to school protagonists.

Professor **Alberto Barausse**, director of the Centre, represents Ce.S.I.S. also in RP-SIG contexts. The general field of Barausse's studies is the history of education in Italy in the 19th and 20th centuries. Barausse has studied pedagogy at the University of Rome. In 1998 he successfully defended his PhD at the *Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano*, with a dissertation on *L'Unione magistrale nazionale dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale* [The National Teachers' Union from its beginnings to WW 2]. Since 2001 he teaches as professor for the history of education at the University of Molise. One of his main research fields is connected to the study of Italian textbooks and primers and school exercise books produced in the 19th and 20th centuries. On this subject he



published a monograph and several articles. Preliminary findings on primers and school exercise books have recently been published in issue IX/2 2014 of "History of Education and Children's Literature" in the article "Learning to read and write in Italy in the second half of the nineteenth century. Primers and reading exercise booklets: publications, ministerial control and teaching (1861-1898)" (see p. 7 of this newsletter). E-Mail: barause(at)unimol.it

Dr. **Simona Szakács** studied Communication, Public Relations, Media, Sociology and Social Anthropology. A post-graduate alumna of Central European University (Budapest), she gained her PhD in Sociology at the University of Essex (UK) in 2013. She has been a visiting doctoral student of the City University of Hong Kong, a lecturer on the 'Sociology of New Europe' at the University of Essex and a research assistant in an ESRC-funded Europe-Asia comparative project on changing notions of 'good citizenship' in curricula and textbooks. Her research is focused on the interplay between Europeanization, global cultural change, and post-socialist transformation from a transnational perspective. Her interest in school textbooks revolves around issues of content as much as of their everyday use and the micro-dynamics of classroom interaction. In 2014 she was awarded the Georg-Eckert Research Price for her exceptional work in the area of international school textbook research. Since September 2014 she works as a post-doctoral fellow at the Georg-Eckert-Institute in Braunschweig (Germany). She is currently examining depictions of 'East' and 'West' structured by discourses of the Cold War before and after 1989 in Romanian history education. She is also in charge as the institute's representative in the organising team of the workshop 'Primers 1945 in Europe', scheduled for November 13/14, 2015 in Braunschweig (see page 2 of this newsletter). E-Mail: szakacs(at)gei.de



□ Research

□ German primers, 1933-45

'Modern time school practices of learning to read and write'

Report on a conference held by the Research Library for the History of Education (BBF) at the German Institute for International Educational Research in Berlin

Denise Wilde, Berlin (Germany)

On November 15, 2013, Professor Dr. Sabine Reh (Director of the BBF, Berlin) and Denise Wilde (Berlin) hosted a conference on *Praktiken des Lesen- und Schreibens in der Schule der Moderne* [Modern time school practices of learning to read and write]. Experts came from different disciplines, e.g. research on the history of education, general educational science, cultural anthropology and history of art.

The conference marked the closure of the exhibition *Von der Fibel zum Smartboard. Praktiken des Schreiben- und Lesenlernens* [From primer to smartboard – Practices of

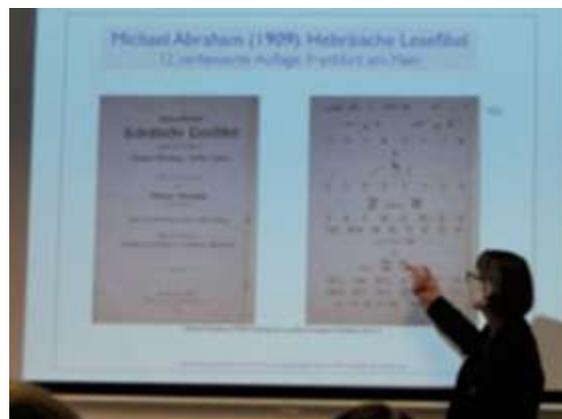




Sabine Reh (director of the BBF) and Alfred Messerli (University of Zurich) during the keynote; © CC BY-ND 3.0 DE DIPF/BBF 2014

learning to read and write at modern times school], held at the BBF from May 31st until November 15th, 2013. Participants reflected on the diversity of practices and media applied in school learning and teaching to read and write, and discussed the materiality of such processes and their slow process of historical change. By their stock-taking, participants were able to gain a broader perspective on the history of modern-time schooling, thus the conference rendered a contribution to historical research on "what happens in the classroom".

In her welcome speech, Professor Dr. Sabine Reh reflected on the relevance of historical research on practices of teaching. She emphasised that learning to read and write at school involve the aspects of cultivation and aestheticisation, but as acts of appropriation of the world and production of knowledge, subjectification processes are triggered in their particular historical ways. Professor Dr. Alfred Messerli (University of Zurich) gave a keynote on how literacy became the triumphant norm in central Europe between 1700 and 1900, and its deviances. Taking concrete practices of learning to read and write into perspective, Professor Dr. Marcelo Caruso (Humboldt-University, Berlin) focused on imitation in learning to write in the Spanish-speaking world in the late period of Enlightenment, by means of silent, artistic or formal-regulative transmission. In her contribution, Dr. Bettina Reimers (BBF, Berlin) highlighted the font developed by Ludwig Sütterlin and its pedagogical testing at German schools in the early 20th century. Dr. Wendelin Sroka (Essen) and Professor Dr. Gert Geißler (BBF, Berlin) presented an international comparison of practices of learning to read and write, focusing on the example of reading primers from the 19th century for children with Ruthenian/Ukrainian heritage language in Austrian Galicia and for Polish-speaking children in Prussia. Finally, two contributions returned to the material aspect of learning to write: Dr. Beate Klostermann-Reimers (Berlin) presented a talk on the visual design and content of a Hebrew primer from 1929 and Denise Wilde (Berlin) illustrated the usage of fountain pens in post-war schools.



Beate Klostermann-Reimers (Berlin), commenting on a Hebrew primer by Michael Abraham, published in 1909 in Frankfurt am Main; © CC BY-ND 3.0 DE DIPF/BBF 2014

The conference concluded with a discussion on the scientific and theoretical relevance of continuous and changing practices in reading and writing at school, and their social and cultural historical significance, as well as the necessary of further scientific exploration of the topic.

The hosts are working on a publication, to be published later this year; this volume will comprise further contributions on the subject, besides documentation of the exhibition and proceedings from the conference.

□ Research (cont.)

Primers, culture(s) of childhood and educational models in Europe (XVI-XXth centuries). History of Education & Children's Literature (HECL), issue IX/2 2014. Edited by guest editors Dorena Caroli and Alla Salnikova under the aegis of the *Centro di documentazione e ricerca sulla storia del libro scolastico e della letteratura per l'infanzia*, directed by Anna Ascenzi, and published by EUM - Università degli Studi di Macerata, Italy. <http://www.hecl.it/en/>

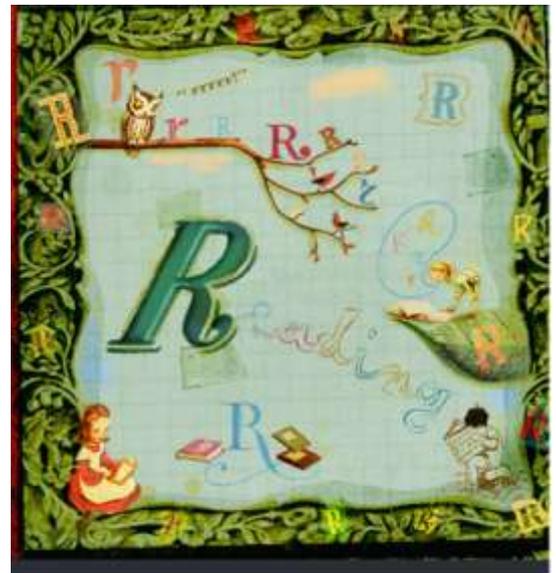
The editors of RPI have the extraordinary pleasure to inform about the publication of this issue of HECL, and this pleasure is based on a number of reasons: First, the monographic section of this issue focuses on the history of primers and literacy instruction in selected European countries. Second, the issue has been prepared by RP-SIG members Dorena Caroli (University of Macerata, Italy) and Alla Salnikova (University of Kazan, Russia). Third, no less than eight RP-SIG members have contributed to the monographic section. And fourth, this publication demonstrates the potentials of studies on primers in a wider research context. With kind permission of prof. Roberto Sani, editor-in-chief of HECL, and upon agreement with the authors we present a slightly modified version of the introduction of this publication, written by Dorena Caroli and Alla Salnikova.

«This collection of articles is devoted to the history of primers, literacy and education in some European countries during XVI-XX centuries. Most of them were presented during the international Conference "The source of child's learning...': the role of primers and basal readers through time and cultures", organized by the Russian State University for the Humanities, the Russian Academy of Education, the State Ushinsky Scientific Pedagogical Library, the State Library of Russia and the State Public Historical Library and held at the State Ushinsky Scientific Pedagogical Library in Moscow from 8th to 12th October 2014. A considerable part is devoted to spellers printed in Russia in the 16th and 17th centuries and addresses the education of the tsar, the nobility and the clergy; the others present new researches on the history of primers

in different European countries from different points of view (from multilingual and school to education and totalitarian ideologies) in order to show how, through the changes of the modern era, they can be considered not only a literacy tool but also a tool for propaganda, promoting new values in the mass schooling of the 20th century [...].

The present special issue presents eleven articles concerning the history of primers in Europe and in particular Russia and the Soviet Union gathered into two different sections. The first section is devoted to Russia and Karelia; the second concerns Italy, Germany, and Soviet Union in different historical periods, but the reader will do doubt notice a number of common threads running through the adopted methodologies.

The first section deals with Russia beginning from the first Russian primers. To mark the 450th anniversary of the publication of the first primer by Ivan



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Fedorov, Dorena Caroli presents the main trends in the investigations of the first two Russian primers by Ivan Fedorov (1574 and 1578) in the context of the introduction of printing under Ivan the Terrible, while Maria Cristina Bragone deals with Simeon Polotskii's Primer (1679) which was the textbook for the Young Tsar. Dzhamilya Ramazanova analyses the history of trilingual elementary education in Russia through the Slavonic-Greek-Latin primer by Fedor Polikarpov (1701), composed under Tsar Aleksei's and Patriarch Nikon's supervision, and Gary Marker – the pioneer in the study of the Russian primers – the primers of Platon (Levshin) and the ascent of secular Russian in the Late Eighteenth Century.

These case-studies offer very representative examples of Russian primers between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries and show a deep change in the dissemination of printed primers after the Nikonian reforms due to the need for literacy by churchmen both to recite the liturgy correctly and to defend their clerical position, but also to a definitive distancing of the Russian Church from the Roman Catholic tradition. The conquest and spread of the Russian alphabet probably meant the supremacy of Orthodoxy in Russia and the beginning of the achievement of the Muscovite "Third Rome" political theory marked by the supremacy of spiritual power over the temporal. Furthermore Olga Ilyukha and Yuri Shikalov demonstrate how the controversy between the Orthodox and the Lutheran Church in the border region influenced the choice of the character set for the Karelian language alphabet.

The essays presented in the second section investigate primers from the point of view of educational policy, addressed to the shaping of a nation and ideology from the 18th to the 20th centuries. Alberto Barausse deals with the problem of literacy in Italy after Unification (between 1861-1898), showing the features of spellers from the points of view of authors and publishers, their circulation at national level and the pedagogical debates concerning spellers as the first "educational media". Alla Salnikova and Dilyara Galiullina study the question of the use of other languages and alphabets in Tatarstan (Russia) and show how the changes due to the spread of the progressivist ideology of Jadidism produced a school reform and the use of new primers based on a more advanced phonetic method of teaching, which taught Tatar instead of Arabic or Turkish.

Carsten Heinze and Kristin Heinze discuss the educational conceptualisation of the "ethnic community" (*Volksgemeinschaft*) in national socialist primers, which could be considered "educational media" in the same way as school books. Finally, Vitalij Bezrogov – well known for his definition of "primer studies" (*bukvaristika*) – analyses the topic of children and "warfare" in Soviet and post-soviet Reading primers (1945-2008), arguing that the idea of war was included in the subculture of Soviet and post-Soviet childhood as constructed by the authorities and society. Furthermore Maia Kozlova describes, from a sociological point of view, patterns translated by primary school textbooks and their transformation in the post-Soviet period, focusing on morality and showing that the function of moral socialization is performed by more personalized subjects – a small group, the family. [...] Concluding this special issue is an essay by Wendelin Sroka. In his paper he argues that research on educational media for literacy instruction can profit enormously from research which is truly international and interdisciplinary, and he demonstrates potentials of such cross-border research.

In all these cases, spellers and primers produced and printed in different societies constitute a valuable source for the analysis of literacy, but most of all provide an image of childhood and educational systems with different faiths, nationalities, identities and ideologies.» [Dorena Caroli, Alla Salnikova]

Articles contained in the monographic section of issue IX/2 of HECL:

D. CAROLI, Ivan Fedorov's 1574 and 1578 Primers: a pedagogical perspective; M.C. BRAGONE, A Manual for the Young Tsar: Simeon Polotskii's Primer;

□ Research (cont.)

D. RAMAZANOVA, Slavonic-Greek-Latin Primer by Fedor Polikarpov (1701): history and sources of trilingual elementary education in Russia; G. MARKER, Between Enlightenment and Orthodoxy: The Primers of Platon (Levshin) and the Ascent of Secular Russian in the Late Eighteenth Century; O. ILYUKHA, Y. SHIKALOV, The primer at the cultural crossroads: an early stage in the history of school books in Karelia (late 19th – early 20th centuries); A. BARAUSSE, Learning to read and write in Italy in the second half of the nineteenth century. Primers and reading exercise booklets: publications, ministerial control and teaching (1861-1898); V. BEZROGOV, Consolidating Childhood: Children and Warpage in Soviet and Post-Soviet Reading Primers 1945-2008; M: KOZLOVA, Morality for Kids in Cultural and Historical Measurements: Patterns, Translated by Primary School Text-books and Their Transformation in the Post-Soviet Period; K. HEINZE, C. HEINZE, The Educational Conceptualisation of the „Ethnic Community (*Volksgemeinschaft*)” in National Socialist Primers by the Example of Presentations of Adolf Hitler – Methodical Prospects; A. SALNIKOVA, D. GALIULLINA, From an «ABC book with prayers» to the primer of a new type: Tatar primers of the late 19th – early 20th century; W. SROKA, Research on the history of reading primers: a call for enhanced cross-border cooperation.

□ Country Notes

□ Finland

New Finnish primers and their values

Katri Karasma, Turku (Finland)

In Finland children enter school when they have completed their seventh year. Before they start school they have usually visited preschool – this applies for 98% of the age group, and after 2016 it will be obligatory. Because the Finnish language is a very phonetic language phonetic methods of reading instruction are common. One letter – one sound and a full correspondence between them makes reading easier than in many other languages.

The first Finnish primer called *Abckirja* [lit.: Abcbook] was written by Mikael Agricola in 1543. It was a religious book, and it contained many elements of Christianity. The letters were enumerated: They were grouped in vowels, consonants and in foreign letters. The foreign letters were strange in Latin, not in Finnish (ä, ö, y). The reading method applied in this book was the letter method. Also syllables were mentioned. It is a method that is described in Aleksis Kivi's famous novel 'Seven brothers'. Today the parents often know it, but the teachers prefer to use the sound method, because it is not that struggling and slow.

The first Finnish primer using the sound method in the tradition of Valentin Ickelsamer was Jaako Länkelä's *Ensimmäinen Luku=Kirja eli Aapinen* [The first Reading=Book or Primer], published in 1866. On the book cover there was a rooster - it had become a popular motive in Finnish primers already in the 18th century).

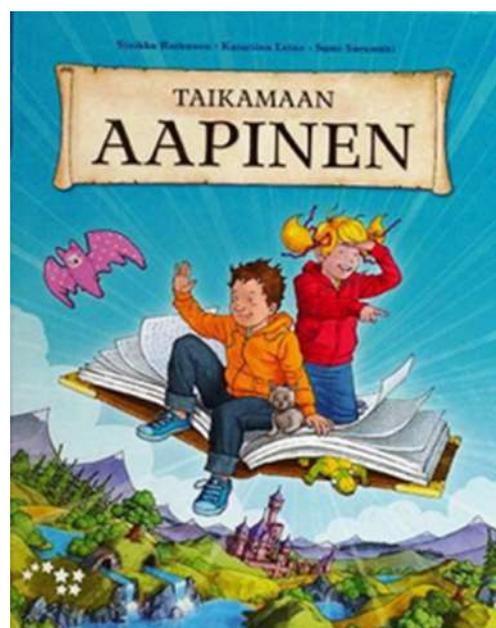


Picture 1: "Welcome, children!" – A teaching rooster as motive of the first picture in a Finnish primer of the 1930s. From: E.N. Setälä: *Veikon ja siskon aapiskirja. 1. Aakkoset. Helsingissä: Kustannusosa-keyhtio Otava 1930, p. 3*

At that time it was seen important that the child could write the letters and produce writing in the reading. Nowadays in Finnish teachers' guides and during teacher training the teachers learn several reading methods. They are 1) the letter method, 2) the sound method, 3) syllable sliding, 4) reading on the ground of speech and 5) the lssw-method (letter, sound, syllable, word, in Finnish: 'käts-method'). The teacher can choose the method he or she wants to apply, and usually it is a compound method. Because the Finnish language is a synthetic language it means that the distinctive marks (plural, comparison, cases, modus, tempus, and passive voice) are expressed with adding elements. Also in reading synthetic methods have been more used and preferred instead of analytic methods.

Glenn Doman's book 'Teach your baby to read' (1970), published in Finnish in 1991, became quite influential in pre-school education in Finland. Therefore children normally become acquainted in kindergarten with reading games, and it is not unusual that children can already read when they start school. In the report 'Mikael learned to read at home' (Sarmavuori 1995) I have followed my son's literacy learning by Doman's method. Nowadays it is seen that every third child can read when she or he starts school. On the other hand, the differences of the linguistic and literacy skills of seven-year old children in Finland are very big. It is for this reason that the Finnish primers published nowadays are very differentiating and individualising. As a rule, there are texts and exercises a) for pupils who already can read fluently, b) for those who know all letters but have to learn to decode and to read syllables and c) for those who do not know letters yet and are in the first phase of reading. The words are syllabicated during the first school term, so a phonic reading is also always possible. Own stories written for the primer, about its persons and environments and their own adventures dominate the new books. Some rhymes can be from folk tales, but usually the authors of primers have made songs of their own.

It is noteworthy that the values in Finnish primers have changed considerably over time. Riikka Mönkkönen (2008) has made a research on it following the primers from different decades of the 20th century, starting with primers published in the 1920s and 1930s. Religious content frequently found in these primers was not visible any more in textbooks published in the 1980s and 1990s. Family, home and fatherland were important features in the primers until the 1960s. From then on the values of fatherland and religion star-



Pictures 2 and 3: Raikunen, Sinikka & Leino, Katariina: *Taikamaan aapinen*. Illustrations by Sami Saramäki. Helsinki: Otava 2013, left: front cover; right: sample page

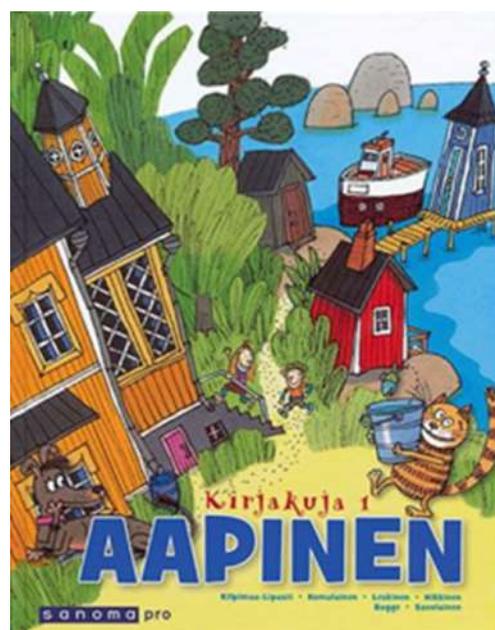
□ **Country notes
(continued)**

ted to disappear in the primers. In the old days the family was depicted as an entity on its own, often with several generations including grandparents. But especially since the 1980s the family model has changed. Furthermore, in the 1970s the rural district, favoured so far in the textbooks, changed into a more urbanized milieu. The traditional farm house animals changed to dogs and cats living in city houses, and later to fantasy animals that learned surprising tricks. Only some features remain permanent in Finnish primers of all decades. They are associated with lifestyle, health and nature. Healthy customs and manners, appreciation of the pure nature are values that can be found in Finnish primers of all decades and centuries (Mönkkönen 2008). In her PhD dissertation, Liisa Kotkaheimo (1989) has investigated basic features of Finnish primers from the 15th to the 20th century, considering a total of 265 primers. She distinguishes three periods: the first task was to serve religious training (1500-1700), the second period was to enlighten (1700-1800) and the third to promote literacy and motoric skills (1900).

Traditionally, Finnish primers consist of two parts, with the first part introducing the letters (= 'primer part') and the other part providing texts, in the sense of a first reader. In the old days the texts were religious, and they contained the catechism. Today, in preschool there are also own text books. We could say that the primer part is the content of the preschool book. School primers, on the other hand, include both the primer part and the text part with varying contents, mainly stories and rhymes. Some preschool primers have shorter, some have longer sentences.

Three Finnish primers were published in Finland in 2013, and I shall take these for a closer look. My interest is in the texts. How are the persons, families and stories like? How are attitudes to immigrants presented? Different reading methods can be used with all books. So there are no differences in the primer part, but something in the texts. In two cases all texts are written especially for this didactic purpose by the authors of the primers, whereas the third book includes also older texts from different fairy tale writers. Because the stories normally are written for the primer, the adventures can be very exciting.

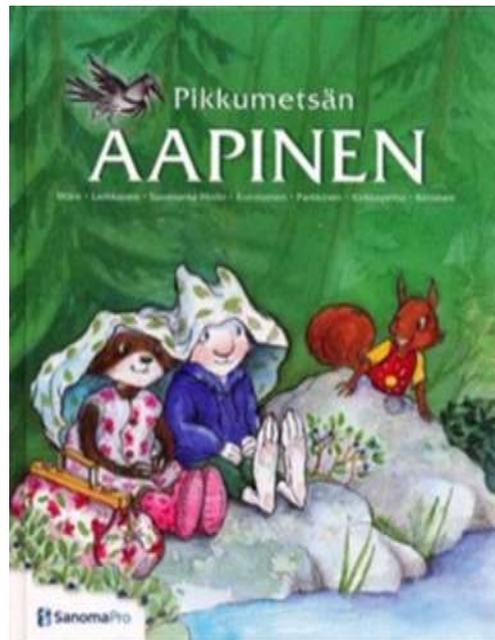
In ***Taikamaan aapinen*** [Magic country primer] – see pictures 2 and 3 – the children Assi, Eino, Inkeri and Severi live in a city called Raikula. Assi and Eino live in the same street, they are neighbours. Assi has in her family father, mother, an older sister and a brother. In contrast to Assi, Eino has a single pa-



Pictures 4 and 5: Kilpimaa-Lipasti, Nina; Komulainen, Milena; Leskinen, Perttu; Nik-kinen, Irja; Bagge, Tapani & Savolainen, Salla: *Kirjakuja 1 aapinen*. Illustrations by Salla Savolainen. Helsinki: Sanoma Pro Oy 2013; left: front cover; right: p. 121

rent, his family model is new, because he lives alone with his father and has no mother. But his grandmother and grandfather live in the same building in a different apartment. On the attic of Assi the children find grandmother's things with which they can move into a fancied world. Many stories are adventures in the imagination with magicians, trolls, fairies and other imaginative beings. For immigrants this primer gives pictures where they can mention words and so increase their vocabulary. This is the most differentiating primer. It is the first phantasy primer in Finland and can be used also electronically.

Main characters found in the **Kirjakuja 1 aapinen** [Book path 1 primer] – see pictures 4 and 5 – are the pupils Liisa and Matti with their mother. Several stories tell about a dog Bella and a cat Tahvo. They have conflicts with insects and other animals. The pupils are asked to tell stories using several pictures about the events. There are also several poems and fairy tales from other writers in this book. On page 106, the father comes home, and he brings presents. He is a master mechanic on a ship, so he has to travel much. In Matti's and Liisa's class there is also Deborah, a girl from Kongo. She speaks Lingala. Matti can say good-day in Lingala, and the teacher asks the whole class to do the same. In many open spaces there are three tasks after the text and the pupils are asked to tell stories and/or to draw and to write.



Picture 6: Wäre, Lerkkanen, Suonranta-Hollo, Korolainen, Parkkinen, Kirkkopelto & Ketonen: *Pikkumetsän aapinen*. Illustrations Katri Kirkkopelto. Helsinki: Sanoma Pro Oy 2013, front cover

Finally, **Pikkumetsän aapinen** [Little forest primer] – see picture 6 – presents animals, a squirrel, a fox and a raccoon. A crow tells several poems and stories. The pupils are expected to answer questions and to tell a story or draw. The first real child depicted in this primer comes so late as on page 38. In this primer there is nothing about immigrant people, only one animal has an immigrant background. There is no family model, for almost all happens in a forest. The animals have their own places in the forest and they live alone. The squirrel Ansa lives with the hare Ossi. A town is near the forest, with a post office, a restaurant, a library etc. The animals make some visits in the town. But there is nothing religious in this primer, not even a church on the map. On Sundays people do not go to church but they read the newspaper. Conservation of nature is important. A signboard says 'The forest is the home of animals.'

In another picture an adult man holds a signboard 'Forest tranquillizes. Protect the forest!'

In sum, in Finnish primers the teaching methods for reading have basically stayed the same over time, with new possibilities to use computer and electronic devices for reading, writing and drawing. The biggest changes in primers have occurred in the area of values promoted through pictures and texts. Religious, family and gender roles have changed, and attitudes to immigrants and their possibilities to learn, if they are illiterate, are new phenomena in Finnish primers. But the attitudes to nature and to a healthy and good life style have practically remained unchanged.

□ **Country notes
(continued)**

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Raikunen, Sinikka & Leino, Katariina (2013). *Taikamaan aapinen* [Magic country primer]. Illustrations Sami Saramäki. Helsinki: Otava. 168 p. (first print 2011)

Wäre, Lerkkanen, Suonranta-Hollo, Korolainen, Parkkinen, Kirkkopelto & Ketonen (2013). *Pikkumetsän aapinen* [Little forest primer]. Illustrations Katri Kirkkopelto. Helsinki: Sanoma Pro Oy. 169 p. (first print 2006).

□ **Latvia**

Primers in Latgalian and in other lesser used languages

Publications completed by RP-SIG member Juris Cibujš in 2014 include a number of works devoted either entirely or at least partially to primers in lesser used languages. The first publication is *Skreineite. Vuicūs laseit* [Little chest. I learn to read], 156 p., a textbook compiled in collaboration with Lideja Leikuma in Latgalian, Cibujš heritage language. The primer with illustrations by Anita Ozoliņa is part of a series of teaching aids that also includes a copybook (*Skreineite. Vuicūs raksteit*, 76 p.) and a teachers' manual (*Uzziņņu materiāls par Latgaliēšu ābeci 'Skreineite'*, 16 p.). All texts are published in electronic format, available through the Lielvārds Digital Library.

Primer: http://ldb.lv/skreineite_vl

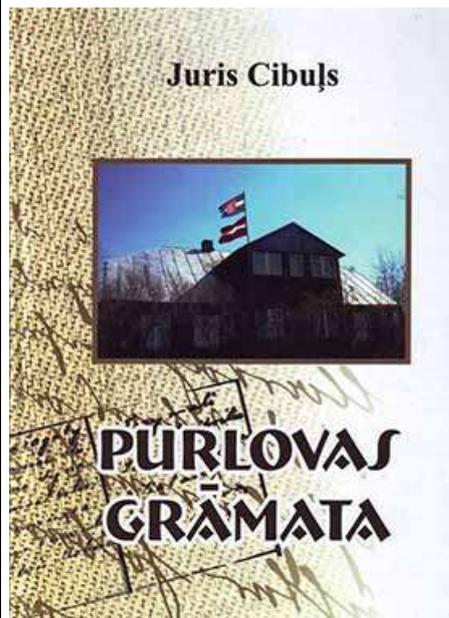
Copybook: http://ldb.lv/skreineite_vr/

Manual: http://ldb.lv/skreineite_um/

This new series for beginning readers replaces *Latgališu Ābece (Iementars)*, an experimental textbook written by the same authors and published 1992 by Lielvārds Publishing, Lielvārde.

A second book, *Purlovas grāmata* [The book of Purlova], published in 2014 by Raudava, Riga, is written in Latvian. It is dedicated to Cibujš' native village, located in the Balvu region of Latgale. Edited as a large book (20,5 X 29,0 cm) and comprising not less than 429 pages, it consists of two major chapters and an appendix. The first chapter (pp. 9-108) provides a general outline of phonetics and grammar of the Purlovas subdialect of the Latgalian language. The section on phonetics describes the peculiarities of orthography





and pronunciation, and the main differences in comparison with the Latgalian and Latvian standard languages are explained. The second chapter (pp. 109-289) focuses on the provenance of Purlova, on its inhabitants and their occupations, and it presents a wealth of documents, including photos, from archival sources. The supplement has two parts as well: The first part (pp. 290-393) presents 'Words of the Purlovas Subdialect of the Latgalian Language in the Data Base Intercontinental Dictionary Series (IDS)', the second part (pp. 394-424) contains an abc-book in the Purlovas subdialect, based on the sound method.

Finally *Tautu brīnumainās pasaules* [The Wondrous Worlds of Peoples], also a book in Latvian published by Raudava, provides information on 60 nations or peoples and their traditions, customs and beliefs, with most of these societies representing communities with lesser used heritage languages: from Ainu, Aleuts, Buryats and Moken to Nanais, Negidals, Ulchis, Veps and Votes. The publication has 196 pages, and it includes numerous colour illustrations, many of them taken from primers. To compile this book the author could make use of his impressive collection of textbooks for beginning readers which in 2014 encompassed items in 1,059 languages.

Spain

Exhibition *Cómo aprendimos a leer*, Madrid, 10/2014 - 01/2015

Kira Mahamud, Madrid (Spain)

On Thursday, October 9, 2014, the exhibition *Cómo aprendimos a leer* [How we learned to read] was inaugurated in the *Casa del Lector* of Madrid, a cultural centre of the Germán Sánchez-Ruipérez Foundation. Professor Agustín Escolano, commissioner of the exhibition, brought together Verónica Sierra



La Presidente de la Fundación Germán Sánchez Ruipérez,
y el Director de Casa del Lector,

se complacen en invitarle
a la inauguración
de la exposición

Cómo aprendimos a leer

Esta exposición muestra, en perspectiva histórica, cómo hemos aprendido a leer,
y cómo nos hemos convertido en sujetos lectores.

La exposición está organizada en cinco plantas. El primer es una invitación a
vivir en el territorio temático de la Isla del Alfabeto. El segundo ofrece una visión
del aprendizaje de leer en los siglos modernos, desde la implantación de la imprenta
a la Enciclopedia. El tercer y el cuarto muestran el desarrollo del libro de la
alfabetización universal, desde la era de las revoluciones hasta el final del último
siglo. El quinto plantea y muestra los cambios en pleno siglo XXI.

Cada una de estas espacios ofrece materiales que permiten comprender el proceso
que han seguido las personas y las sociedades en la iniciación y difusión de la lectura
como competencia cultural.

jueves 9 octubre

Casa del Lector, Puertas - 19:00 h.



Madrone Madrid
Paseo de la Chopera 10
T 91 700 624
www.lalectura.es



□ **Country notes
(continued)**

Gómez and Antonio Castillo, from the University of Alcalá, and Miguel Somoza and Kira Mahamud, from UNED, to conceive and design an exhibition where the main objective was to reflect upon the process of learning to read throughout history. Adapting the intellectual work to the characteristics of the space, composed of the five bridges which overlook the ground floor of one of the wings of the



Matadero (old slaughterhouse of Madrid), five thematic blocks were planned: (1) an introduction and invitation to join the thematic area of learning to read, "The Entrance into the Island of the Alphabet"; (2) "Reading in the Modern Centuries," from the waning of the late Middle Ages to the eighteenth century; (3) "Reading in the Age of Revolutions", from American Independence to World War II; (4) "The Myth of Universal Literacy", displaying national and international actions carried out after the Second World War and during the last half century in the fight against illiteracy, and (5) "New literacies" in the digital age.

Another aim of the exhibition was to show the process of creating the reading subject, from his early and fragile configuration during the Modern Age, largely conditioned by the close link between literacy and Christian formation, at least in Europe, to the expansion of reading to the people and the shift from instrumental reading to comprehensive, critical and reading in new media. We are fortunate to be able to read in several languages and ensure that our children read and study in several languages simultaneously. But there is another painful reality: there are still about 800 million illiterate people in the world. – The exhibition was an intellectual and aesthetic challenge to narrate historical facts and convey complex concepts in a simple and beautiful manner through the difficult task of selecting micro-texts, digitized images and original primary sources. Primers, reading books, official proclamations, posters and reading toys have been sent from libraries, archives, research centres and personal collections such as lecturers Veronica Sierra and Antonio Castillo, the *Museo della Scuola «Paolo e Ornella Ricca»* from the University of Macerata (Italy), the *Centro Internacional de la Cultura Escolar* (CEINCE) (Spain), the Spanish National Library in Madrid, and the MANES Research Centre (UNED) (Madrid), to mention just a few. Teamwork has been extraordinary and enriching thanks to the many partners and collaborators, experts and institutions with which we have had the pleasure to work, both nationally and internationally. – The exhibition that run until January 11, 2015 had a total of 42.638 visitors. We believe that we have contributed to the dissemination of knowledge, culture and education with an exhibition that was intended for all audiences, from the youngest to the most experienced in the adventure of reading.

New issue of Historia y Memoria de la Educación

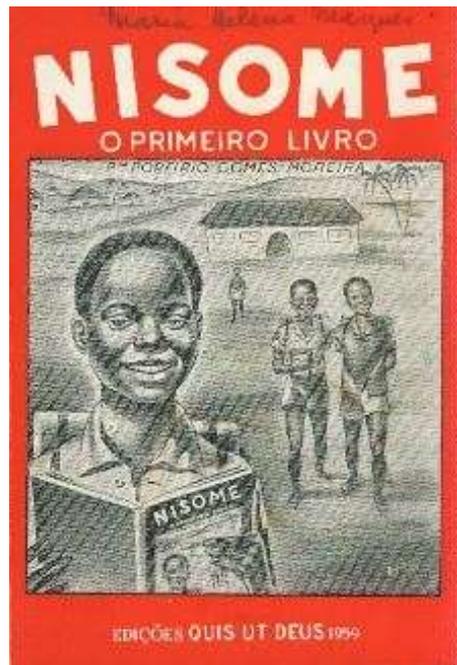
The second issue of *Historia y Memoria de la Educación (HME)* [History and Memory of Education], the new journal of the Spanish Society of History of Education (SEDHE), will be published in June 2015. Designed as a monographic issue, it will be devoted to *La transmisión de emociones y sentimientos. Subjetividad y socialización* [The transmission of emotions and sentiments. Subjectivity and Socialization]. Five of the articles will deal with school textbooks coming from the panel presented in the *XI Congreso Iboamericano de Historia de la Educación Latinoamericana (CIELA)* held in Mexico in 2014.

□ Finds

From colonial status to independence: Reading primers from Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique

Wolfgang Fickert, Erlangen (Germany)

Angola, the Cape Verde Islands, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique broke away from Portuguese colonial rule in an exceptionally violent and painful process. They finally gained independence when Portuguese colonial policy changed radically in the mid-1970s, triggered by the decline of the dictatorship of Salazar and his successors. The four reading primers presented here reflect educational standards in these countries before and after independence. This outline follows an article devoted to *O livro da primeira classe*, a Portuguese primer of the Salazar era for use in Portugal, published in issue 10 of RPI.



Moreira: *Nisome* ... 1969, front cover

This way, the children were to learn the accompanying initial letters on pages 4 to 9. The picture of a table (Portuguese: *mesa*) thus teaches the letter "S" (p. 39). The next step, showing how letters add up to syllables and words, is



Moreira: *Nisome* ... 1969, p. 39

P. Porfírio Gomes Moreira: *Nisome / O primeiro livro*. [Cucujães]: Quis ut Deus, 5th edition 1969, 56 p. [1st edition: 1959]

This primer was issued in Mozambique at times when it had the status of an 'Overseas Department' of Portugal. As in other colonies it was taken for granted by those in power that alphabetization had to occur in Portuguese. So it may be seen as a concession that the title *Nisome* [We read] was taken from Macua (*Makhuwa*), an African language. Furthermore, the teaching method requires bilingual competencies – i.e. competencies in the heritage language as well as in Portuguese – from teacher and pupils. The foreword (addressing the teacher) refers to the "young disciples", who will spontaneously pronounce in Macua language the names of persons, things or animals shown by the illustrations.

based on Portuguese pronunciation and word-stock (pages 10 to 13). From then on, the lessons introduce words and increasingly longer sentences, describing the daily life of African children. Compared with reading primers used in the Portuguese motherland the whole booklet has only few religious and political content. We read "Maria is the Mother of God" (p. 31), but also a Muslim (*muçulmano*, p. 20) is mentioned. "Portugal is great" (p. 34) and "We speak, read and write the Portuguese language. The President of the Republic resides in Lisbon" (p.39). One can conclude that the missionaries did not care much about official politics when creating their own low-budget reading primer, tailor made for the needs of Mozambique.

□ **Finds (continued)**

n.a.: Vamos aprender a ler / Iniciação da leitura / 1ª classe / 1º caderno [and] 2º caderno. Angola: Lello, 1971.- 69 p. + adhesive coupons; [and] 48 p. (2 volumes)]

This reading primer in two volumes, both volumes to be used in grade 1 of elementary school, was "officially approved by [Angolan] ministerial decree of September 2nd, 1968". The whole presentation follows the official Portuguese doctrine of that era, but is constructed according to Angolan needs. The illustrations are strictly balanced when showing black and white children and families.

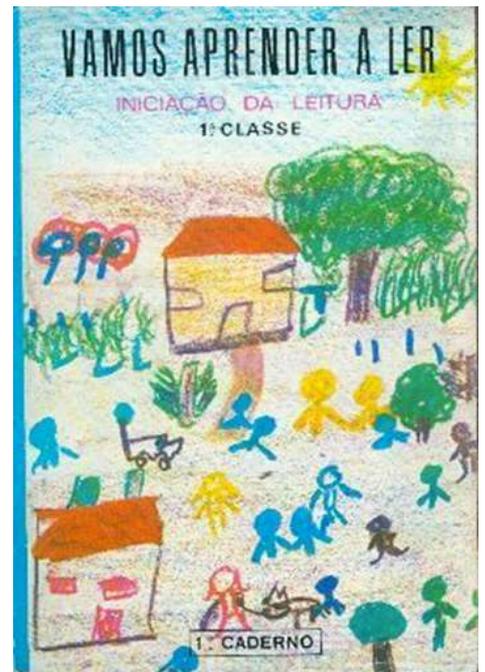
The authors took into account that the pupils' knowledge of the Portuguese language might be limited. Therefore instruction starts with pictures of the human body and clothes, giving the names for the different parts. This leads without transition to reading instruction with whole words. The illustrations are taken from life in Angola (animals, plants, fruit, money, buildings, clothes for a hot climate, fairy tales) and avoid any allusion that life standard might be lower than in the motherland.

The existence of independence movements is ignored completely. Christian belief is expressed in many situations: „God is the creator of everything.“ (part 2, p. 40) Several illustrations show the cross in the classroom, on Sundays people go to church etc. Patriotism is directed at Portugal as a whole. Therefore, when the teacher writes the name of the fatherland on the blackboard it is Portugal (part 1, p.53). Luanda is mentioned several times, but never as the capital of Angola. The primer ends with an enthusiastic appraisal of Portugal with flag and code of arms: „I am still very little, but already capable and faithful. I want to become a soldier too and defend Portugal. Angola, Gods country, such beauty is unique! Your sons, feeling for you, are also from Portugal. Portugal, the land of Holy Mary“(part 2, p. 45).

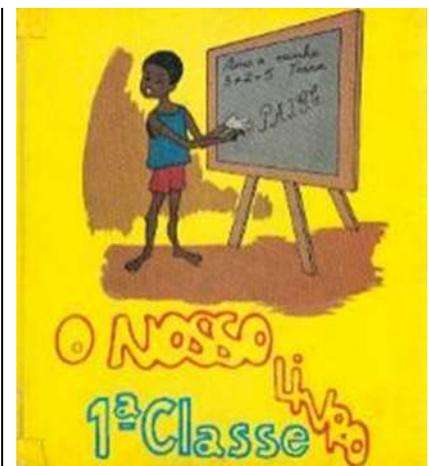
n.a.: O nosso Livro 1a Classe. Bissau: PAIGC [= Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde]; 1970, 101 + 2 p. [Printer:] Uppsala: Wretmans

In 1973 the movement PAIGC (*Partido Africano da Independência de Guiné e Cabo Verde*) declared political independence of Guinea Bissau, which was recognized by Portugal after it changed radically in 1974. Guerrilla war was still ongoing when the independence movement opened its own schools and issued the present reading primer. It was – interestingly enough – printed in Sweden.

The primer starts by introducing letters, syllables and single words. The few interspersed sentences are mostly used to teach the children the revolutionary ideology. "The cinema belongs to the militia" (p. 19), "P.A.I.G.C. is the leader of our people" (p. 41), the group of Gregorio is carrying gre-



Vamos aprender a ler ... 1971, 1º caderno, front cover



O nosso Livro 1a Classe ... 1970, front cover

nades" (p. 48). Reference is made to the independence movements in other Portuguese colonies: "Flavio is a fighter for the M.P.L.A." (*Movimiento Popular de Liberação de Angola*), p. 49), "Frelimo is the front in Mozambique" (p. 43).

From page 59 onwards, illustrated longer texts instruct the pupils in more detail. Page 59 shows an improvised school, topped by the flag of PAIGC. The teacher is armed and wears a uniform (p. 78). The importance of schooling and schools is emphasized (pp. 84/85): "The boarding schools of the party. We are in the school of Boé. The teacher enters the classroom and says to his pupils: I have good news for you. (...) We know, my children, our party got already three boarding schools: the Pilot School, the Boarding School Aerolino Cruz and the Northern Boarding School. All children who study and love our party and our fight can enter the boarding schools. In the boarding schools the most progressive pupils study in the secondary school and are prepared for continuing their studies in our brother countries" (p. 98/99).

Page 64 shows how easy it is to fight the enemy: "The fight. Fire! Fire! The enemy is firing. What an easy fight! The fighters return to their base in line. All comrades are content." And the children react: "Teacher! I want to be a pioneer". "Yes, Lai, all pupils want to be pioneers. When you are ten years old, you will get your scarf and sing: We are pioneers, we are studying cheerfully and are failing schools not a single day. We are pioneers, always the first" (p. 80). – Without doubt this reading primer was used as a means to prepare children for active participation in a guerrilla war. But did *Wretmans Boktryckeri, AB* in Upsala/Sweden notice what they printed?

Centro de Investigação Pedagógica: Leituras / Ensino de Base - 1a Classe: Luanda: Ministério da Educação, 1985, 127 p.

Supported by Cuba and the USSR, the *Movimiento Popular de Liberação de Angola* (MPLA) fought for independence, which was proclaimed in 1975. António Agostinho Neto (1922 – 1979), one of the first members of MPLA, became the first president in a one-party regime. Under these preconditions it is not surprising that the present primer, which had its first edition before 1980, focusses on Neto and MPLA (and its sub-organisations OPA for the young "pioneers" and OMA for the mothers). Up to page 21 the primer shows different scenes without texts. We see children playing and on their way to school, rural and urban life, workers in a factory, landscapes etc. António Neto is shown as a young guerrilla fighter (p. 17), and his portray is hanging on the wall in the classroom (p. 20).

Reading instruction starts with single words, interspersed with simple sentences. Among these we find: "The school belongs to the people" (p. 71), "The pioneer goes to school" (p. 23), "The fountain pen is the pioneer's weapon" (p. 32), "They sing the hymn of OPA" (p. 71), "The uncle went through fighting. He fought against colonialism" (p. 60), "Pedro shows the guerrillero the way" (p. 108). Page 114 reports about a pupil, who was killed by colonial troops, when he did not reveal the guerrilleros' camp when he was examined. Photographs document demonstrations (p. 26/27, 102), troops (p. 103), heavy fighting (p. 100), and the parade of victorious soldiers (p. 101). Whole pages are dedicated to the history of MPLA (p.116), independent Angola (p.117) and the fight for independence (p. 118), others show the national anthem (p. 126) and the flag (p. 127). The necessity of alphabetisation is underlined: "The workers have books. During the first lesson the teacher tells of the necessity that the whole people must learn in order to produce better and to study better. Angola is a free country: long live the victorious fight of the Angolan people" (p. 105).

The description of the situation in Angola after gaining independence in this primer requires some completion. Glad to end the colonial wars in Africa, which lasted since 1960 and cost the lives of many soldiers, the leftist government in Portugal after the "Carnation Revolution" handed over power in Angola to the Marxist MPLA. They gained the upper hand against two rivalling independence movements in the following civil war, which cost a million of lives and ruined the country.

□ In profile

Vinko Möderndorfer (1894-1958) – Slovenian teacher, ethnographer, political activist and author of primers¹

Wendelin Sroka, Essen (Germany) & Branko Šuštar, Ljubljana (Slovenia)

As other textbooks, primers are compiled and printed to be brought into the hands of teachers and learners. Yet history demonstrates that this process can be arduous at times, and in some cases even printed texts made for use at school do not reach their intended destination. Right after the end of World War II this happened to a Slovenian primer, published in 1945 by Slovenia's Ministry of Education.

Vinko Modrinjavesčan: Slovenska začetnica. Upodobili akad. slikarji: Maksim Sedej, Slavko Pengov, Marij Pegelj, Evgen Sajovic. Črke napisal stud. arch. Stane Kovič. V Ljubljani: Ministrstvo za prosveto, komisija za izdajo učnih knjig 1945 [Slovenian Primer. Illustrated by academic painters Maksim Sedej, Slavko Pengov, Marij Pegelj, Evgen Sajovic. The letters wrote stud. arch. Stane Kovič. Ljubljana: Ministry of Education, Commission for School Textbook Publication, 1945]. 6 x 10 = 60 p., ill., 16 x 24 cm.



Picture 1: Modrinjavesčan 1945, title page

As Bogumil Gerlanc, himself a well-known educationalist and author of primers in post-war Slovenia, remembers the case: "The primer was so awful that we addressed the Ministry of Education and personally Boris Kidrič (at that time prime minister of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, W.S./B.S.), and we were able to convince him. And then this brave man really did something – very exceptionally in those years. He not only banned the primer but also gave it to demolition." (Gerlanc, private letter to Marjan Marinšek, quoted in Marinšek 2000, p. 89) – Who was Vinko Möderndorfer (Modrinjavesčan), the author of this primer? And what made some of his contemporaries in 1945 think that the book, though published by the Ministry of Education, was "so awful" that they approached the prime minister to see it banned?

Vinko Möderndorfer was born in 1894 in Dellach [Slovene: Dole], a small village in the Gail Valley [*Ziljska dolina*], at that time in Slovenian-speaking southern Carinthia in the Austrian Empire, nowadays in Austria. "Our" Vinko Möderndorfer – not to be mistaken for his grandson, the Slovenian writer and film director bearing the same name, born in 1956 – was raised as an orphan, but was able to attend the teacher college in Maribor. Since 1914 he worked in the teaching profession, first in north-east Slovenia and, from 1921, in Mežica [before 1918 also Mießdorf], a mining settlement in Slovenian Carinthia [*Slovenska Koroška*], an area that after World War I was allocated to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and thus to Slovenia.

As a young teacher Möderndorfer became a critical observer of society, and he joined the Social Democratic Party. He also was an influential member of the teachers' society of the Mežica valley, and he wrote a number of articles for *Učiteljski tovariš* [Teachers' comrade], the main teachers' magazine of Slovenia at that time. In 1926 he published the booklet *Boj za napredek mežiških rudarjev* [The fight for the development of the miners of Mežica], a

¹ Parts of this article are based on our paper "Vinko Möderndorfer and his Slovenska začetnica (1945)", presented at the symposium *Vinko Möderndorfer – učitel, revolucionar, narodopisec and angažirani znastvenik* [Vinko Möderndorfer – teacher, revolutionary, ethnologist and committed scholar], held on 9./10. December 2014 in Ljubljana. http://www.zrc-sazu.si/sites/default/files/knjizica_povzetkov_0.pdf Quotes from Slovenian sources are presented in this text in English. The translations are ours.

detailed description of the social conditions of the workers in the Mežica valley. Moreover he was a devoted ethnographer. His research of different ethnological topics was very broad and ambitious, but only some of his works were published during his lifetime. One of his major works, *Ljudska medicina pri Slovencih* [Folk medicine with the Slovenians] was released only in 1964, six years after his death.



Picture 2: Vinko Möderndorfer: *Slovenska začetnica I. del*. Celje: Družba sv. Mohorja 1939, front cover

As a teacher, Möderndorfer was ambitious to develop the quality of teaching young children in rural schools and to connect school lessons with children's real life. An important source of his motivation was the bad experience he had made as a pupil in primary school, where children with Slovenian home-language were taught in German, described in detail in *Sodobna šola* [Contemporary School], a teacher's manual he published in 1938. He made enormous efforts to write primary school textbooks, and in his lifetime he compiled three manuscripts of reading primers, all of them entitled *Slovenska začetnica* (lit.: Slovenian beginners' book). In the 1930s Möderndorfer had been appointed as head teacher and principal of the primary school in Sveti Jurij pod Kumom (today Podkum), a settlement in central Slovenia, located in the Posavje hills. It was there where he finished his first primer (*Slovenska začetnica*. I. del / Slovenian primer, part 1).

The book, with illustrations by academic painter Franjo Stiplovšek was published in 1939 in Celje by *Družba sv. Mohorja* [Society of St. Hermagoras], the oldest Slovenian publishing house, established in 1851. Möderndorfer's first primer is based on the "global method" of reading instruction. In contrast to other primers produced in those years it only introduces capital letters – omitting both small letters and cursive. The primer was designed as the first part of a series of readers encompassing three parts. It was approved for use in the first and second school year by the Ministry of Education in Yugoslavia, and it came out with the manual *Sodobna šola* already mentioned above, a self-published work.

However, the textbook apparently did not become a market success. In Marinšek's account of the history of Slovenian primers, Möderndorfer's book is mentioned in a chapter *Prva berila, ki se niso mogla uveljaviti* [Primers which never have established themselves] (Marinšek 2000, p. 79). Indeed in the 1930s a number of new primers were brought to the market in Slovenia, but they could not diminish the popularity of *Naša prva knjiga* [Our first book], a primer compiled by Pavel Flerè, an important pedagogue, and "decorated with pictures" by the well-known painter Maksim Gaspari (see Žerjav 1970, pp. 439-440).

During WW II, when in April 1941 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was occupied by Germany, Italy and Hungary, Möderndorfer was arrested, but after the retreat of the Italians he was able to join the Slovene Partisans. He went to White Carniola [*Bela krajina*], a region in Southeastern Slovenia, next to Croatia, and there in 1944 as a member of the partisan education team he wrote a new version of his *Slovenska začetnica*. Yet this textbook – as a number of

□ **In profile (continued)**

other Slovenian primers written by partisan educators – remained a typescript because the partisan authorities did not approved it (SSM archives collection, 241, 1944/45; Pavlič & Smolej 1981, p. 109).

In the meantime Möderndorfer had decided to get rid of his “German” last name (lit.: “a person who comes from Möderndorf”), in favour of a Slavonic name, and he renamed himself as Modrinjavesčan, with reference to Modrinja Ves, a village near his birthplace. This name is also given on the title page of his third primer. Edited by the Slovenian Ministry of Education, Commission for School Textbook Publication, it was published in September/October 1945 in Ljubljana as a booklet

of 60 pages, most of them illustrated with colour pictures. According to Gerlanc’s report, soon after the textbook had been published Slovenia’s prime minister ordered not only the ban of the book from classroom use but also the destruction of the total print run. As a consequence, teachers were allowed to temporarily use a primer from the pre-war era, *Preljubo veselje, o kje si doma* [Beloved joy, oh where are you at home], written by Ferdo Bobič. But already in October 17, 1945 the Ministry of Education approved another Slovenian primer: *Začetnica* (1945), a modest saddle-stitch brochure of 37 pages with black-and-white illustrations made by Maksim Sedej, one of the illustrators of Möderndorfer’s textbook. This primer was published by *Državna založba Slovenije*, Slovenia’s new textbook publishing house.

Marjan Marinšek’s judgement about Möderndorfer’s *začetnica* (1945) is straightforward: He describes it as “a blatant black-and-white presentation of the horrors of war, and therefore absolutely inappropriate for the tender hearts of children who were supposed to peacefully attend grade 1 of school” (Marinšek 2000, p. 89). What then is “absolutely inappropriate”? Marinšek’s answer is simply “vse!” [everything], and he adds that the illustrators “certainly did not enjoy this work” (ibid., p. 90).

Is this a fair, research-based and context-sensitive overall judgement about the book and its author? We have no reason to disagree with the conclusion that the book as a whole is inappropriate for use in classroom instruction. At the same time the question remains: What brought Vinko Möderndorfer – in collaboration with a group of illustrators and, at least for a short period of time, with the consent of authorities in the Ministry of Education – to create such a textbook for beginning readers in 1945?

Fortunately not all of Möderndorfer’s *Slovenske Začetnice* were destroyed in 1945, and the survival of around ten copies in public libraries allows us to study the textbook anew today. This short article is not the place to present an in-depth study on this book and its fate, but rather an interim report in the context of continued efforts to study primers published during and immediately after WW 2 in Yugoslavia. Furthermore, the evidence we could gain so far on what we call ‘the Modrinjavesčan textbook affair’ is limited, and this applies especially to the concrete circumstances of the measures taken against the book, as reported by Gerlanc. For the time being the consideration of three aspects may be helpful to shed some more light on this textbook: a) materiality and design; b) overall content and c) the “horrors of war” as content in primers published in and around 1945.



Picture 3: *Modrinjavesčan* 1945, p. 3. The text on the crossbeam reads: “Tito’s Yugoslavia – the collective home of freedom-loving nations”



Picture 4: Another way to arrange a table of contents: *Modrinjavesčan* 1945, p. 60

Ad a) Materiality and design: In this respect the book deserves to be characterised as exceptional, especially as compared with other primers published in Eastern and South East Europe in 1945. First, the book is not paperback, but hardbound, made of good quality paper. Second, the format of the textbook is extraordinary in that it is not upright but landscape, with 23,5 cm width and 15,6 cm height – quite unusual for a school textbook.

Third, illustrations both on the cover and in the book, many of them full-page, are printed in colour. Fourth, page-numbering is innovative, with page numbers six times presented from 1-10, each series in a different colour. (For practical reasons in our references to individual pages of this book the respective pages are counted in traditional pagination, i.e. from 1 to 60.) – All in all both materiality and design of this primer are supposed to mark the beginning of a new and bright era in Slovenia's history. This is also one of the reasons why two exhaustive reviews of the book, published in Slovenian newspapers in autumn 1945, were full of praise for the new publication. In his review in *Slovenski poročevalec* [The Slovenian Reporter], Tone Seliškar, a teacher and writer, describes the primer as "a unique picture book with vivid colours", and he recommends it as "a book not only for schools, but also for every household" (Seliškar 1945, p. 6).

b) Overall content of the primer: The only feature of the textbook mentioned by Marinšek is the depiction of 'horrors of war'. However, illustrations and texts present two more major topics: the reconstruction of Slovenia and the new, Socialist Yugoslavia, led by Josip Broz Tito. "Our Tito" is mentioned by text and/or illustration in not less than eight pages. Both topics are highly political, and in this sense the book is a political book. It is for this reason that Drago Šega, in his review published in October 1945 in *Ljudska pravica*, praises the primer as "the most complete textbook" because its content represents "real life from the most glorious period of Slovenian national history", including "the life of the Slovenian nation from the invasion of fascist conquerors ... to the victorious march of our tanks to Trieste." (Šega 1945, p. 3). Similarly, Tone Seliškar, in his article mentioned above refers to the book's "didactic relationship with our true history" (Seliškar 1945, p. 6).



Picture 5: "Everything for peasants and workers"; *Modrinjavesčan* 1945, p. 17

Such politics in primers, with references both to the past and to the new era, were quite common in partisan primers and, after WW 2, in primers in Communist countries. And thus, from the perspective of the Communist authorities in power in Slovenia since May 1945, Vinko Möderndorfer seemed a good choice to compile the first Slovenian primer after the war: not only was he an experienced educator and author of school textbooks, but

□ **In profile (continued)**

also he had been an active collaborator in the partisan movement.

At the same time, taking into account the amount of colour pictures, in many cases full-page, the book is a picture book – but rather not a picture book for children. Not only that the world of politics as depicted in the primer is entirely a world of adults. The textbook has hardly any references to the world of children as we know them from modern age primers across countries and political systems, e.g. children in the intimacy of the family or children at play.

Ad c) The “horrors of war” as content in primers published in and around 1945: Indeed, of the 60 pages, more than half include texts and particularly pictures which refer to war, from soldiers in uniforms and weapons (pistols, guns, hand grenades, tanks, bombs) to military violence against civilians and lethal violence. The term “mama”, for example, is introduced on page 10 in a way very distinct from the one known in primers in many countries and across various ideologies: In this case it is not the portrayal of a woman in an intimate relationship with her child or children, but mothers arrested and led away from home with other civilians by a group of soldiers in uniforms of the Italian army, with children yelling “MAMA! MAMA!” after them (see picture 6). And various illustrations show killings. One is the execution of a young man held hostage by a firing squad (p. 54); the next page presents – in handwriting – the letter that he, a Slovenian peasant called Simon Kos, wrote to his parents on the eve of his execution, thanking them, among others, “that you have taught me to love the Slovenian language and the Slovene country” (p. 55). And the last full-page illustration in the primer depicts victorious Slovenian partisans and dead enemies on the battlefield (see picture 7).

Again Drago Šega in his review praises the textbook for familiarizing pupils with “various horrors that the Italian Fascists, Germans, Slovenian Home Guard and the Chetniks have committed” (Šega 1945, p. 3). Such direct references to war, including references to “various horrors”, were not uncommon during the war in Yugoslav partisan primers, and this was also the case in primers published after the war in Yugoslavia and in other Communist countries (for a new study on representations of WW II in Soviet and post-Soviet Russian primers 1945-2008 see Bezrogov 2014).

A Croatian partisan primer published in 1944, for example, introduces the letter “B” by making use of the term *borba* [the fight], and the corresponding picture shows soldiers on the battlefield (see picture 8). For the depiction of the battle of Stalingrad in a Ukrainian primer, published in 1945 in Kiev and Moscow (Depolovič 1945), see the illustration on p. 2 of this newsletter. And a last example brings us back to post-war Slovenia: The *začetnica* that

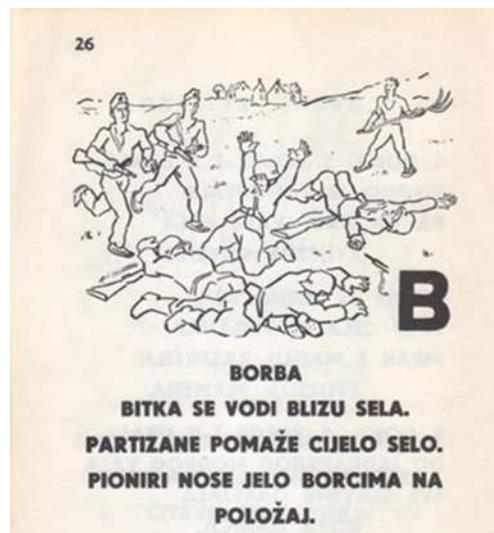


Picture 6: Introduction of the letter “M”; *Modrinjavesčan* 1945, p. 10



Picture 7: “Victory culture”; *Modrinjavesčan* 1945, p. 10

was to replace Möderndorfer's primer, printed late in 1945, includes a black-and-white illustration quite similar to the picture on p. 10 of Möderndorfer's book: now a man and a woman are led away by soldiers, with children crying *ata* [father] and *mama* after them (see picture 9).



Picture 8 (left): "The fight" – Cutout from a Croatian partisan primer (1944), introducing the letter "B". The text below the picture reads "A battle is fought close to the village. The partisans assist the whole village. The pioneers carry food for the fighters to the position." Source: *Početnica*. N.p.: Prosvetni Odjel ZAVNOHA 1944, p. 26. Picture 9 (right): Introduction of the letter "A" in a post-war Slovenian primer (*ata* = father). Source: *Začetnica*. Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije 1945, p. 3

Our first explorative comparison of presentations of war in primers published in and around 1945 lets us conclude that in the case of Möderndorfer's *začetnica* the emotional power of war-related scenes, supported by the high level of depicted violence, by the quantity of violence-related topics and by the use of striking colour pictures, may have caused the ban of the textbook.

But apparently this ban did not impair Möderndorfer's professional career: In November 1945 he was appointed as secretary of the St. Hermagoras Printing Company in Celje. Nevertheless he became more and more critical about the developments in Tito's Yugoslavia (Gabrič 2014). And in April 1948, following the Tito-Stalin split, he once again became a victim of political repression: Accused of being pro-Soviet he was arrested and incarcerated for three and a half years in the prison and labour camp on Goli Otok island in the Northern part of the Adriatic Sea, not far away from Rijeka. He returned to Celje in 1952 exhausted and ill. Disappointed by the political developments he resumed his old name Möderndorfer, and he never again got engaged in political debates. He died in Celje in 1958.



Picture 10: Stamp issued in September 2014 by the Slovenian Post to commemorate Vinko Möderndorfer

Möderndorfer's legacy has started to be rediscovered only recently. On September 10, 2014 the Slovenian Post issued a stamp to commemorate the 120th anniversary of his birth (see picture 10). And in December 2014 a conference was held in Ljubljana devoted to Möderndorfer's work in the areas of ethnology, education and politics. But as regards the *Modrinjavesčan* textbook affair, further studies will be needed to shed more light on its concrete circumstances and its wider context.

□ **In profile (continued)**

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□ **Publications**

Publications 2014 and texts accepted for publication in 2015 on primers and related thematic fields by members of the RP-SIG network

This section of the newsletter provides bibliographical data about publications by RP-SIG members published either in 2014 or accepted for publication in 2015. In addition to works about primers, this overview may also include a) publications on other types of textbooks, b) publications on literacy instruction and – finally – c) primers and other educational media compiled by members of our network.

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□ **About RPI**

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