# A GLOBAL DIMENSION VIA THE TEACHING OF THE 'ANCIENT WORLD': Theoretical concepts and an empirical approach from Greek primary textbooks

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**Abstract** – *The present study aims to investigate the extent to which a global dimension is communicated to students via the teaching of 'Ancient World' in the different subjects of the Greek primary textbooks, namely language, social studies, science and religion. In this paper, the 'Ancient World' refers to both the traditional Graeco/Roman civilisation and to the non-Graeco/Roman one. A content analysis of Greek primary textbooks shows that the presentation of the 'Ancient World' serves to promote an ethnocentric/nationalistic orientation. The absence of references to other ancient civilisations is therefore in contrast to current emphases on the development of global and multicultural curricula.*

## Introduction

$\mathcal{T}$he principle guiding this study is that the promotion of international understanding and the development of a supranational identity are of utmost importance in the contemporary world, particularly in the context of an integrating Europe (Featherstone 1990; Featherstone, Lash & Robertson 1995; Bekemans 1994; Bell 1995; Massialas, Flouris, Hourdakis & Calogiannakis 1996; Kazamias, Flouris, Hourdakis, Calogiannakis, Massialas & Xanthopoulos 1995).[1] Such a principle, once accepted, has implications for all the subjects taught at school, including the knowledge and attitudes about ancient civilisations that are communicated across the curriculum, in Greece as well as in other countries. (Yurko 1994; Adler & Lindhart 1981; Proceedings of the Conference of the National Council for History Education 1993; Downey & Levstik 1991; Gifford 1988; Slater 1996; Rogers 1993; Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki 1995).

A consideration of the Ancient World from a global rather than from an ethno- or Euro-centric perspective represents an important departure in modern education. There is no longer a division between 'Western' civilisation on one hand, and 'non-Western' on the other. Rather, the past of all humanity is treated equitably (Stavrianos 1975). The study of the Ancient World therefore encompasses several dimensions. It includes the regional, but goes beyond that to consider inter-regional, global and planetary issues. In the study of history, for instance, there is a choice between focusing on humankind's past as a whole or

focusing on the component parts of that past. In the case of global ancient history the intentional choice is to focus on the whole past. Naturally this approach is very difficult and challenging, but the effort to promote a global perspective is essential, given the inter-related nature of the modern world. An emphasis on the global dimension need not play down or denigrate the importance of local and national history, nor need it discourage the study of history through a focus of its component parts. The point is that the modern citizen must go beyond that to consider the world he or she lives in more organically, and in global terms (Engle 1971:438-439).

This paper attempts to investigate the degree to which the study of the 'Ancient World', as presented in Greek primary school textbooks, promotes an understanding of ancient global – as against purely national – history and culture. Furthermore, it will explore how other ancient civilisations and peoples are presented in comparison with the classical Greek world.

The study will therefore first consider how the Ancient World is conceptualised; it will then examine how a global dimension can be promoted through the study of the 'Ancient World' via a focus on the Graeco/Roman and non-Graeco/Roman civilisations. It will finally consider the representations of the 'Ancient World' in Greek primary textbooks, concluding with a discussion of the implications of all this for the educational enterprise in Greece.

## The conceptualisation of the 'Ancient World'

According to several sources (*inter alia* Stavrianos 1975; Starr 1974; Unesco 1963; Cambridge Ancient History 1923-1939; Grousset & Leonard 1956) the term 'Ancient World' includes the following:

- Ancient civilisations of Eurasia: (Mesopotamia, Egypt, Crete, Indus, Shang)
- Classical civilisations of Eurasia: (Graeco/Roman civilisation, Indian civilisation, Chinese civilisation)
- Non-Eurasian world and civilisations: (Africa, Americas, Australia)

A global and universal approach to ancient civilisation considers Humankind as a whole, and as the worthwhile unit of historical study. Ancient global history is concerned with the study of the origin of the cosmos, including all people; with ecology or people's occupations and utilisation of nature; with culture or the development of diverse ways of life; with the study of religious, social and political institutions which people the world over have developed to provide for their needs; and ultimately, it is concerned with the study of the development, change, or collapse of civilisations (Engle 1971:439).

During the long millennia before the European discoveries, the various branches of the human race interacted one with the other. As a result, our world, in relation to our developing communication and technological facilities, has become 'spaceship earth', a 'global village' (Stavrianos 1975:4). During certain historical periods and in particular geographical areas, ancient civilisations influenced one another, interacting with each other so that the terms 'global' and 'globality' became increasingly meaningful. Indeed, one could claim that the key to human 'progress' has been accessibility, so that those with the most opportunity to interact with other people have been the most likely to forge ahead. By contrast, those who were isolated received neither stimulus nor threat of assimilation or elimination; they could therefore remain relatively unchanged through the millennia. Such, then, was the understandable diversity of human cultures from the ancient civilisations of Eurasia to the empires as well as food-gathering peoples in Africa, Americas and Australia (Stavrianos 1975:5-7).

Since the European Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, the unit of anlaysis in several disciplines has been the 'nation-state' rather than 'humankind' as a whole. In recent years however, the interest in global/universal history and culture has been growing largely in response to the global dimensions of contemporary events. It is recognised that a wider angle of vision is needed since new technologies and communications connect the entire planet, and rapid socio-economic expansion and mass-media envelop the entire globe. Global history and culture are essential for the understanding of a world that, despite the striking inequalities between 'North' and 'South', has nevertheless become 'one', both in everyday life and in human thought (Stavrianos 1975:3). As Barraclough (1955:18) has argued, *universal history is more than the sum of its parts; it cannot be divided and subdivided without being denaturalised, much as water, separated into its chemical components, ceases to be water and becomes hydrogen and oxygen*.

But the panorama of the 'Ancient World' also contributes another essential element to promotion of the idea of globality: global ancient history is perhaps one of the best ways to understand and accept the inevitable differences that can distinguish the one from the other, as well as to contribute to their mutual understanding, facilitating communication and solidarity (Grousset & Leonard 1956:xxi). Such an approach to 'globality' via studies of ancient civilisations raises a number of important themes, such as continuous interaction and subsidiarity, cross-fertilisation, cultural accessibility and dissemination, the understanding of diversity, human communication, intellectual richness, human progress and motivation. It highlights the pluriformity, multiplicity and hybridity of cultures. It also raises issues linked to predominance, assimilation or elimination, similarities and dissimilarities, stimulation and contradiction,

complexity and tradition, isolation and centralisation, cultural compatibility, regional and inter-regional interaction, harmony and conflict (Bekemans 1994). The methodological approach of globality through the study of the 'Ancient World' therefore feeds into and links up with current developments in such areas as multicultural, cultural/cross-cultural, and post-colonial studies.

## A global dimension in education through the study of the 'Ancient World'

According to the conceptualisation outlined above, the study of the 'Ancient World' constitutes a good foundation for the development of a global dimension in education. In the context of the present study, ancient civilisation is considered from two perspectives, the Graeco/Roman one and the non-Graeco/Roman. It is to the first that we now turn.

### Globality via the Graeco/Roman world

A focus on Graeco/Roman civilisation leads us to consider ancient Greek and Roman *paideia* as a foundation of humanism *(Homo Graeco-Romanus)*. That civilisation has in fact been a source of inspiration for innumerable philosophers and scholars throughout history. In antiquity, the idea of *humanitas* was based on literary, philosophical and aesthetic education; as such, it was related to the Greek *paideia*, so that knowledge and education were considered to be connected with philanthropic, friendly social relations. In ancient Rome, *humanitas* was related to stoic teaching on the cosmos and to stoic ethics. The Graeco/Roman element constituted the intellectual medium through which Christianity evolved. It also determined the dialectical rhythm of Christianity, a historical rhythm that, according to Jaeger (1962:85) accounts for the inexhaustible interest in the subject. Two important factors determined the linkage between the new religious movement with the ancient World: first, it was the association of Christianity with Neoplatonism; secondly, it was the adoption by Christians of the scale of social values defined in Graeco/Roman *paideia* (Weltin 1987; Laistner 1978; Chadwick 1985). The influence of the Graeco/Roman world was so strong that it is nowadays considered to be a fundamental source of Western culture, and its study illuminates values of utmost importance which contemporary societies try to promote via education, curriculum and textbooks (Ornstein & Levine 1993: 82ff). These values are rooted in particular concepts of justice, equality, freedom, democracy, human rights, mutual understanding, solidarity, peace, and so on. They could be said to promote 'globality', constituting a basis on which people

can construct worthwhile lives, and providing the kind of education that can help to shape good citizens. Such values, it could also be claimed, serve humankind's search for truth (Butts 1988; Sullivan 1988). The qualities of an educated and cultured person were derived mainly from an emphasis on life practice, i.e. *theoria-praxis-chresis* (theory-practice-use).

The Graeco/Roman tradition thus focuses on moral, intellectual and socio-political behaviour, on the ideal of moral freedom, on the elements of natural right, the requirements of a good *vita contemplativa* and *vita activa*, on the creation of the whole of humanity, on 'kataskevi tou viou' (the construction of life). In other words, Graeco/Roman humanism, which in this study is considered to be one important aspect of globality, develops human faculties and prepares the human being to become 'really human'. *Homo Graeco-Romanus* becomes *Homo universalis*. This formal universality (globality) is quoted by Cicero in his *De Officiis* when he wrote: *"Homo sum; humani nil a me alienum puto"*, meaning *"I am a man, and nothing that is proper to man* [sic] *is foreign to me"* (Capkova 1992:85ff). The approach to learning that characterises this humanistic *paideia* promises a cultural coherence that individuals need and seek but cannot find on their own. The traditional humanistic understanding of learning focuses on a concern for the whole person in relation to others, to institutions, to cultural understandings, to the past and the future. The conception of life as a whole is very strong and it is the business of the humanities based on the Graeco/ Roman model to provide the resources and the intellectual abilities to form such an encompassing conception. From this point of view, Graeco/Roman civilisation sweeps through historical periods and geographical borders, crystallising the 'Ancient World' for most Western societies. In other words, Graeco/Roman civilisation represents 'globality' to the extent that many countries and cultures have adopted its ideas and values, accepting their universality and globality (Jaeger 1968-1974; Silverman 1973; Vourveris 1973; Highet 1988; Georgoulis 1989:484b-489a; Grumet 1989:490b; Markantonis 1989:482b-484a).

The belief in the 'global' and 'universal' nature of the Graeco/Roman tradition has endured up to recent times. In Australian schools for instance, classical studies had a high prestige and exerted a significant influence from about 1830 to about 1950. In the early 19th century the classical curriculum included Latin, Greek and some mathematics, and had a high profile in several countries. New approaches in the teaching of the classics developed in England in the 1880s, and these were widely adopted, encouraging a humanist emphasis in Latin and Greek curricula. By the beginning of the 20th century the main socio-educational functions for the study of Latin could be said to have been the transmission of a humanistic culture. The prime benefit seen in the study of Latin and Greek shifted from the mental

discipline acquired through grammar to the values and culture deriving from classical literature and ancient history (Barcan 1992).

In Poland, the classical grammar school appeared at the end of the eighteenth century. The learning of Greek and Latin was obligatory and most of the curriculum content was devoted to Roman and Greek classics. Of course, in the beginning of the twentieth century, in Poland as in Western Europe, classical studies, including ancient history, increasingly became a remnant and reminder of the past (Chmielowski 1992; Majorek 1992).

The classical studies promoting Graeco/Roman humanism in Hungarian schools transmitted different values and attitudes in the different periods of Hungarian history, so that between the 18th and the 20th century, there was a shift from a concern with language to one mainly interested in *'kulturgeschichte'*. The rebirth of Latin culture in Hungary in the last decade of our century is not an element of a conservative mass movement but it reflects the emergence of market competition and pluralism in schooling (Nagy 1992). In Victorian and Edwardian England, Latin and Greek dominated the curriculum of public schools, generally taking more than half of the available classroom time. The Greek model served as a platform on which England's own progress could be shaped, so that one could say that in this counry, Athens, Sparta and Homeric Greece enjoyed a Golden Age between the years 1840 and 1918 (Tozer 1992).

More recently, projects in several different countries attempted to define humanism on the basis of the classical tradition. In the United States for instance, Oehler's (1973) study of secondary schools humanities programmes showed how students were able to clarify their personal values, develop their creative potential and to adopt global values and beliefs through the study of the cultural identity of Western civilisation (Grumet 1989:491a). An even more recent example of the use of the Graeco/Roman tradition is the integrated topic approach used in a project in a special school in England, where the story of Theseus and the Minotaur was adopoted to develop the creative writing skills of 12 and 13-year-old children with health-and stress related disorders (Morrison 1992:68-70).

Another example of the impact of the classical tradition on modern educational programmes is that of the curriculum guide sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities in Washington, which was designed to provide teachers of English, social studies, and Latin with the necessary background and investigative methods for teaching Roman culture through Roman literature. In this area, educational material was developed in order to revitalise the teaching of Roman history, which was itself to serve as a model for teaching about ancient history in general. Furthermore, the curriculum guide put out by the New York City Board of Education included teaching strategies for 12 sub-themes, inviting students to focus on such units as: 'The influence of Ancient Greece on Western Civilisation'

and 'The dissemination of classical culture throughout the Roman Empire' (*Global History: A Curriculum Guide*. Second Semester. Theme III: *The Emergence of the Modern World*. Student Worksheets 1981).

On the same line of thinking one can find the curriculum resources produced by the Office of Curriculum and Instruction in Philadelphia, with the intention of helping students to become more aware of the significance of Latin, Greek and other subjects for America's classical heritage, and to enrich the regular curriculum in classical languages in elementary and secondary schools. Background information, suggestions and instructional activities are also provided in this pack so that the teacher can more effectively interrelate Latin and Greek with history, law, literature, art, architecture and other disciplines. The resource material thus deals with themes such as the classical heritage in the discovery of America; the classical influence in colonial education; the relationship that notable figures in American history (such as Benjamin Franklin, James Logan, Benjamin Rush, and Thomas Jefferson) had with the classics; revolutionary patriots in the Roman and American republics; the influence of the classics of the Graeco/Roman world on American government; the Greek and Roman heritage in the American legal system, on 20th century American literature, and on American art and architecture (*The Classical Heritage in America: A Curriculum Resource* 1976).

Finally, one could mention the "ROM Kit" developed by the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) which provides teachers with materials that can be used to revitalise the teaching of Roman history and ancient history in general (Shore 1982: 26-30; Lloyd 1990).

## *Globality via the non-Graeco/Roman world*

A focus on the non-Graeco/Roman world includes an all-embracing, truly global sweep of ancient history over and above the 'classical' heritage that is officially celebrated in the 'West'. This global vision of ancient civilisation considers the entire globe rather than a particular country or a geographical area, and is open to all ancient cultures which have influenced humanity's past and present (Stavrianos 1975). The non-Graeco/Roman model is perceived as a source of Western and Eastern, Southern and North cultures and it is considered to promote humanistic values which are rooted in such concepts as justice, equality, freedom, democracy, peace, and so on.

This *ecumenical humanism* (Markantonis 1989:483b-484a) represents a worthy model for people to imitate and a kind of education that can help to shape good world citizens as well. The non Graeco/Roman model, illustrating the whole human past, is more attuned to the criteria of global relevance and cultural

pluralism (McNeill 1988:129sqq.; Slater 1996:46) providing as it does for the study of all ancient cultures. According to these criteria emphasis is given not only to the Greek city-states and the Roman Empire but also to the study of, for instance, the Maurya Dynasty (15th century BC) in India, and of the Olmec Civilisation that has influenced Zarotec and Mayan Civilisation. Students can be invited to compare the mythology of Sumerians, Egyptians, Babylonians and Greeks with the mythology of the people of China. Such an approach to the ancient world brings us closer to multicultural studies, international relations and the very concept of 'globality' (Gifford 1988:82-89; Slater 1996:46; Antonouris 1996:253; Hourdakis 1996:8). The writing of history within this approach would mean that researchers transcend geographical, political, religious and ethnic boundaries to consider their project more globally (Slater 1996:107sqq; Rogers 1993:113-124). Students would be familiar not only with ancient Europe, but with Asia, Africa, Australia and Americas as well. The alternative to this global approach is not only ignorance, but also prejudice and myth. We are disadvantaged if we do not know anything or almost anything of the ancient history and culture of the rest of the world (Slater 1996:47; *The National Curriculum* 1995:14 sqq.; Alston 1988:3).

A global approach to world civilisation helps students understand better the cultural and national identities and roots of the present. It encourages an *ecumenical* understanding, leading to deeper and more critically perceptive awareness of one's own cultural location, since this is contrasted with the different traditions and beliefs of other cultures. Within this model for considering the 'Ancient World', educators need to develop curricular material that facilitate multicultural perspectives and attitudes among students. In this regard, the work of the Council of Europe should be noted, since it falls very much within the scope of a non-Graeco/Roman and global approach to civilisation (Slater 1996:29). The Council of Europe has in fact organised seminars and workshops to promote this approach, and has come up with recommendations regarding the development of textbooks, the eradication of bias and prejudice, and the re-evaluation of history and social studies writing.

There are a number of examples that could be referred to in this context, and which promote what is here being referred to as a non-Graeco/Roman and global approach to ancient civilisation. The Manitoba (Canada) curriculum guide for social studies, for instance, suggests teaching strategies and learning activities for students in four units: prehistoric and early prehistoric times, ancient civilisations, life in early modern Europe and life in the modern world. The first two units include the Nile and Mesopotamia River Valleys, ancient Greece and Rome, the Mayan, Incan and Aztec civilisations, and ancient African, Indian and Chinese civilisations (*Social Studies: Grade 8* 1986).

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Similarly, the guide for classroom use adopted with sixth graders in California, entitled *Global history and Geography: Ancient Civilisations: Course Models for the History-Social Science Framework*, includes units which focus on early humankind and the development of human societies, the beginnings of civilisation in the Near East and Africa-Mesopotamia, Egypt and Kush, the foundations of Western ideas, and the early civilisations of India and China (Hanson & Brooks 1993).

*African Americans: Multicultural Studies for grades 3 and 4* (Maher & Selwyn 1991) is another good illustration of a global approach to the study of civilisation, focusing as it does on African American History and Culture (e.g. African geography, origins of the human race, African mythology, the glory of the two ancient African civilisations of Egypt and Mali, the slave trade and slavery, the civil rights movements, African American personalities-historical and contemporary figures). In the same area, J. O'Neil (1991:24-27) seeks to underline the contributions of African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, American Indians, Pacific Islanders and European Americans to world cultures.

The secondary level anthropology textbook on *The Emergence of Civilisation and Case Studies in the Emergence of Civilisation* emphasises the comparison of the patterns of culture change that resulted in complex societies in different areas around the world, such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, China, and Middle America. A handbook, prepared through the Anthropology Curriculum Study Project in Chicago, Illinois, is designed to accompany the above textbook on the Emergence of Civilisation, written in 1964 (Ellison 1964; D.O'Neil 1964).

The study of F.J. Yurco (1994:32-37) describes ways in which educators can gain additional knowledge for teaching ancient history without distorting or misinterpreting the cultural aspects of the events. It also discusses the use of ancient history, particularly Asian and African history, as a means of teaching democracy and social justice. This work is related to the context of multicultural education through a focus on non-Western civilisation.

Another project in this area concerns the curriculum guide on 'cultures of the non-Western World', that presents nine units for the study of world cultures in the ninth grade. The project promotes the idea that culture is a human universal phenomenon and that it is in a constant state of flux, since cultural interaction leads to cultural advancement. The nine units cover an orientation to world cultures, ancient Egypt, the Moslem world, Africa, India, South-East Asia, China and Japan *(Cultures of the Non-Western World: Grade 9. Instructional Guide* 1979).

A number of researchers have promoted a global approach to the study of the ancient world by focusing on international relations, communication and global education. In this context, one can mention S.J.Trachtenberg's (1994) recent book on *Speaking his Mind. Five Years of Commentaries on Higher Education*, and

L.C.Wolken's (1983) *Japan: the Modernisation of an Ancient Culture and Resource Materials on the Middle East* (1991) for use in elementary and middle schools. A project that deserves to be noted, despite the fact that it has been strongly criticised, is that of Bernal (1987, 1991) who tried to view Graeco/Roman history from an Africanocentric perspective, referring to 'Black Athena', 'Black Aristotle', 'Black Socrates', and so on.

It would be useful at this stage to summarise the main points that characterise the two contrasting approaches to 'globality':

- Graeco/Roman globality connects with a conventional and formal aspect of humanism; on the contrary, the non-Graeco/Roman model is informed by what can be referred to as a modern and informal aspect of humanistic education.

- The Graeco/Roman approach is inspired by a type of humanism which prevails in 'Western' societies, and history is written from the point of view of Western civilisation. In contrast, the non-Graeco/Roman approach is inspired by an ecumenical humanism, one which includes the West and the East, the North and the South in its account of the 'Ancient World'.

- The Graeco-Roman model has a rather restricted reach, in terms of both the sources it draws from, and in terms of the geographical and cultural boundaries that circumscribe it. The non-Graeco/Roman model transcends Europe, is open to all ancient cultures, and is not constrained by geographical or cultural boundaries and prejudices.

- The non-Graeco/Roman approach to civilisation encourages individuals to think beyond particular cases, cultures, institutions and civilisations, and to focus instead on the general, common and global characteristics of all societies.

- In the Graeco/Roman model, the teaching of Greek and Roman history serves as a model for teaching about ancient history in general and as a means for teaching and learning universal values such as democracy, justice, freedom, and so on. In the non-Graeco/Roman model, the teaching of universal values is still present, but it is informed by an approach that is less ethno- or Euro-centric. The West therefore meets the East, South, and the North, and students are encouraged to compare a wide variety of ways of life of the past and present not only from Europe, but from Africa, Asia, Australia and Americas as well.

- Finally, the non-Graeco/Roman approach to globality seems to be more in tune with the contemporary paradigms and scientific discourses that mark the field of writing, teaching and learning of history and social studies.

It would be true to say that currently, the non-Graeco/Roman model in the

promotion of a global dimension in education is increasingly gaining in currency. This is as much due to a shift in theoretical paradigms as to the activities undertaken by influential educational organisations. The Council of Europe's activities on history in schools is a case in point. There have been numerous conferences as well as bilateral meetings and workshops organised on the subject, with the first dating back to 1953 at Calw in the Black Forest – which focused on 'The European Idea in History Teaching' – and the most recent being held in 1994 at Graz ('The Reform of History Teaching in Schools in European Countries in Democratic Transition') and at Paris ('The Learning of History in Europe'). The Council of Europe has adopted a framework which considers history as a necessary basis for all the humanities, and since 1953 has highlighted the centrality of history in the school curriculum, and raised questions regarding not only the subject's status, but also its aims and function, the problem of bias and prejudice in the representation of events, and the need to maintain a balance between local, national, European and global history.[2] The Council of Europe's Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) has also organised a series of seminars for teachers in order to develop knowledge on how different parts of the world – particularly Africa, Asia, Canada, Brazil, China, Japan, Latin America, United States – were presented in European classrooms (Bahree 1986; Gunner 1984; DECS/EGT [85]15; DECS/EGT [85]75; Slater 1996:46-48; Goodwin 1996:157).

It would also be relevant to refer to the work of the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, which has promoted the study of the content in European history and social studies textbooks of different countries, providing recommendations on how to remove misunderstandings and misleading emphases (Slater 1996:27-28, 47; Fritzsche 1992:174-181). Analogous work has been carried out by the Unit for Textbook Research in Thessaloniki[3] where one of the key aims is the development of a less ethnocentric approach in history and in other subjects. A similar inspiration underlies the activities of key educational associations. In 1995 for instance, the 39th Annual Meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) focused on 'Education and Globalisation'. In 1996, the American Educational Research Association (AERA) organised a focus group entitled 'Research for Education in a Democratic Society', and several scholars presented papers on issues that have been raised in this article, looking particularly at the role of history and social studies textbooks in developing global citizenship.

Over and above the large scale efforts of educational organisations and associations, one could also refer to the emergent paradigm in the writing and teaching of history and social studies curricula and textbooks, as this is reflected in the work of an increasing number of scholars and educationists.[4]

# The 'Ancient World' in Greek primary school textbooks

*Contextualisation*

Within this framework, and given the different projects referred to above, the present author thought it appropriate to consider the way the Ancient World is portrayed in primary textbooks in Greece. Before the results of that study are presented schematically below, it is useful to provide some background information relevant to the focus of this article.

It is important to point out, for instance, that Greek textbooks are controlled by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, and the same textbook for each subject is distributed by the Ministry all over Greece. Textbooks are written by experts under the supervision of the national Pedagogical Institute, and in each case they follow the curricular prescriptions of the Ministry of Education. The publication of textbooks is supervised by the Textbook Publishing Company, a self-governing organisation which is responsible for the production and free dissemination of educational material.

It is also important to point out some of the more central dimensions of curriculum production in Greece. Thus, as is the case in several other countries, one of the declared main goals of the Greek primary curriculum is to help students appreciate the Greek cultural heritage, become familiar with national, religious, cultural and aesthetic values, and fulfil their duties as citizens towards their own country and the whole planet (Unesco 1986; International Bureau of Education 1986; Unesco 1988; Eurydice 1994; Flouris 1992:206-236). In this curriculum goal, the concept of national identity and its contribution to the European and world identity are emphasised. Indeed, in the syllabi for the various subjects one finds both national and international elements with an emphasis being placed on the first dimension. In the case of history, for instance, the goals for the national Greek curriculum are set out as follows: *"Students have to: become acquainted with the historical life of the Greek nation and their particular country..., understand the historical continuity of the nation and its contribution to the development of civilisation..., develop the sentiments of love towards their motherland and of democratic values..., obtain a general view of the most important facts from global history, those connected with the Greek or which played a decisive role for the destiny of the world, appreciate the creative actions as well as the mistakes of their ancestors, so that they become capable of participating in the greater community of nations"*, (History for Grade 4, Teacher's Guide 1994:181sqq).

## Research methodology

There is a dearth of information about the extent to which the Greek curriculum actually promotes an understanding of and respect for people who belong to other nations, religions, social and cultural groups. In this regard, therefore, Greece is lagging behind some of the other countries referred to earlier, where more research has been done on the global dimension in education. In this study, the focus is on the extent to which the portrayal of the 'Ancient World' in Greek textbooks contributes to the idea of globalisation, and encourages the transcendence of national boundaries. The key questions asked are the following:

- How is the 'Ancient World' presented in Greek primary textbooks and which are the main themes?
- Is the focus on the 'Ancient World' related to a multicultural/cross-cultural or global approach? Which aspect of globality predominates, the Graeco/Roman or the non- Graeco/Roman one?
- How is the world cultural heritage presented and how many citations referring to global concerns and issues are there in these books?
- How does the teaching of the 'Ancient World' seek to develop national identity and prepare students for European and world citizenship?
- What kind of knowledge, attitudes, values and behaviours are proposed via the teaching of the 'Ancient World' in the Greek primary textbooks?

In addressing these questions, the author undertook a content analysis of all the textbooks used to teach all the relevant subjects at all levels of the primary school sector in Greece, as follows:

- *Language* (3 textbooks from the 1st grade, 4 from the 2nd grade, 5 from the 3rd grade, 4 from the 4th grade, 5 from the 5th grade, 4 from the 6th grade)
- *Social Studies* (1 textbook from the 1st grade, 2 from the 2nd grade, 4 from the 3rd grade, 4 from the 4th grade, 3 from the 5th grade, 3 from the 6th grade)
- *Sciences* (2 textbooks from the 1st grade, 2 from the 2nd grade, 2 from the 3rd grade, 2 from the 4th grade, 5 from the 5th grade, 5 from the 6th grade)
- *Religion* (2 textbooks from the 3rd grade, 1 from the 4th grade, 1 from the 5th grade, 2 from the 6th grade).[5]

In all, 66 textbooks were analysed, and the data constitutes the corpus for the present investigation. The steps followed in the study included the choice of a working hypothesis, the identification of appropriate and relevant texts (in this case, all primary level textbooks) and the identification of the relevant pages in

TABLE 1: 'Ancient World' (Graeco/Roman) in Greek Primary Textbooks (%)

| grd | A | - | B | C | - | D | E | - | F | T o t a l | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| tg.st | p.tb | p.aw | % | p.tb | p.aw | % | p.tb | p.aw | % | p.tb | p.aw | % |
| L. | 971 | 5 | 0.5 | 1174 | 129 | 10.9 | 1429 | 110 | 7.6 | 3574 | 244 | 6.8 |
| S.S. | 429 | 17 | 3.9 | 1090 | 481 | 44.1 | 985 | 79 | 8.0 | 2504 | 577 | 23.0 |
| Sc. | 638 | 0 | 0 | 541 | 1 | 0.18 | 1307 | 16 | 1.2 | 2486 | 17 | 0.6 |
| R. | - | - | - | 293 | 0 | 0 | 513 | 2 | 0,3 | 806 | 2 | 0.2 |
| Tot. | 2038 | 22 | 1.07 | 3098 | 611 | 19.7 | 4234 | 207 | 4.88 | 9370 | 840 | 8.9 |

TABLE 2: Other Ancient Civilizations in Greek Primary Textbooks (%)

| grd | A | - | B | C | - | D | E | - | F | T o t a l | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| tg.st | p.tb | p.aw | % | p.tb | p.aw | % | p.tb | p.aw | % | p.tb | p.aw | % |
| L. | 971 | 0 | 0 | 1174 | 11 | 0.9 | 1429 | 23 | 1.6 | 3574 | 34 | 0.9 |
| S.S. | 429 | 2 | 0.4 | 1090 | 62 | 5.6 | 985 | 3 | 0.3 | 2504 | 67 | 2.6 |
| Sc. | 638 | 0 | 0 | 541 | 0 | 0 | 1307 | 0 | 0 | 2486 | 0 | 0 |
| R. | - | - | - | 293 | 0 | 0 | 513 | 0 | 0 | 806 | 0 | 0 |
| Tot. | 2038 | 2 | 0.09 | 3098 | 73 | 2.3 | 4234 | 69 | 1.6 | 9370 | 101 | 1.07 |

## Abreviations of the Table

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| tg.st: | teaching subjects | L: | Language |
| grd: | grades | SS: | Social Sciences |
| p: | page(s) | Sc: | Sciences |
| tb: | textbook(s) | R: | Religion |
| aw: | 'Ancient World' | | |

TABLE 3: *Graeco/Roman World and other Ancient Civilizations in Greek Social Studies Textbook (%)*

| grds | p./% | Histor. | Geogr. | Civics | Envir. | Total |
|------|------|---------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| a-b  | tb.  | -       | -      | -      | 429    | 429   |
|      | g-r. | -       | -      | -      | 17     | 17    |
|      | %    | -       | -      | -      | 3.96   | 3.96  |
|      | o.cv | -       | -      | -      | 2      | 2     |
|      | %    | -       | -      | -      | 0.46   | 0.46  |
| c-d  | tb.  | 498     | -      | -      | 592    | 1090  |
|      | g-r. | 431     | -      | -      | 50     | 481   |
|      | %    | 86.5    | -      | -      | 8.4    | 44.1  |
|      | o.cv | 59      | -      | -      | 3      | 62    |
|      | %    | 11 .8   | -      | -      | 0.5    | 5,6   |
| e-f  | tb.  | 574     | 186    | 225    | -*     | 985   |
|      | g-r. | 65      | 6      | 8      | -*     | 79    |
|      | %    | 11 .3   | 3.2    | 3.5    | -*     | 8.0   |
|      | o.cv | 0       | 3      | 0      | -*     | 3     |
|      | %    | 0       | 1 .6   | 0      | -*     | 0.3   |
| tot. | tb.  | 1072    | 186    | 225    | 1021   | 2504  |
|      | g-r. | 496     | 6      | 8      | 67     | 577   |
|      | %    | 46.2    | 3.2    | 3.5    | 6.56   | 23.0  |
|      | o.cv | 59      | 3      | 0      | 5      | 67    |
|      | %    | 5.5     | 1 .6   | 0      | 0.48   | 2 .6  |

**\* for the grades e-f, some environmental issues are included in the textbooks of Physics**

*Abreviations of the Table*

**grds:** grades
**p:** page(s)
**tb:** textbook(s)
**g-r:** Graeco-Roman
**o.cv:** other ancient civilizations

these texts, according to the focus of the study and the two categories (Graeco/ Roman and non-Graeco/Roman civilisation) through which the presentation of the 'Ancient World' was made. Each category was considered in terms of the following principles: homogeneity, completion, exhaustiveness, and objectivity. The textbooks provided other orgnanising categories, based on the heading of units, as follows: economic (commerce, travels, colonies, etc.), social (everyday life), political (city-state, wars, constitutions, political personalities, etc.), religious (ancient myths, heroes, gods, symbols, festivals, ceremonies), and cultural life (civilisations, ancestors, monuments, arts, personalities, archaeological sites, education, language, athleticism, etc.) (Massialas & Zevin 1969). A percentage measurement device was then adopted and applied to the textbooks in order to establish the frequency of occurrence of particular elements (Berelson 1952, d' Unrug 1974, Bardin 1977, Beringer 1978:221sqq). Conclusions were inferred from the resulting measurement, and the tabulation of the results – which included the number and the percentage of the identified pages of the examined textbooks per grade and discipline – was calculated (cf. Tables 1,2, and 3).

*Results*

The investigation revealed that in Greek elementary school textbooks, the portrayal of the 'Ancient World' is mainly limited to Minoan and Mycenaean civilisation and to classical Greece (5th-4th centuries). Reference to the rest of the ancient civilisations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, Africa, Americas, Australia was almost totally absent. The presentation of the 'Ancient World' therefore has a strong nationalistic/ethnocentric orientation, and unlike curricular developments in several other countries, fails to develop a global dimension. In other words, the 'Ancient World' in Greek elementary textbooks is limited to the Graeco/Roman civilisation, continuing the predominance of traditional classical studies which can be traced back to the 15th century.[6]

Greek primary school textbooks emphasise the *Homo Graeco-Romanus*, focusing on various aspects of his life in the following order: cultural life, religious life, political life, economic life, and finally his social life. The 66 textbooks analysed dedicate 840 pages to the 'Ancient World'. This represents 8.9% of the 9370 pages that make up the total number of pages of the different textbooks. In contrast, only 101 pages (or 1.07%) refer to non-Graeco/Roman civilisations (cf. Table 1 and 2).

The Graeco/Roman model of the 'Ancient World' is mainly presented in the third and fourth grade of the Social Studies Greek primary school textbooks (44.1%; cf. Table 1) and is especially present in History textbooks (86.5%;

cf. Table 3). There is a focus on the prehistoric age, Creto-Mycenaean civilisation, and classical Greece. On the contrary, the portrayal of the other ancient civilisations in the third and fourth grades is very limited: 5.6% in Social Studies textbooks, and 11.8% in History textbooks (cf. Tables 2 and 3). The predominance of the Graeco/Roman civilisation is also evident in language textbooks. This is true for the third and fourth grade (10.9%) and for the fifth and sixth grade (7.6%) as can be seen clearly in Table 1. References to the other ancient civilisations are also very limited: 0.9% for third and fourth grade, and 1.6% for the fifth and sixth grade 1.6% (cf. Table 2).

The environmental studies textbook, on the contrary, does promote the understanding and respect of people who belong to other nations, religions, social and cultural groups. It highlights the degree of interdependence among human beings, but nevertheless represents the Graeco/Roman model as dominant (6.56%) in the first, second, third and fourth grades, while other ancient civilisations are almost excluded (0.48%) as Table 3 shows.

The traditional values reflected in the Greek primary school stem mainly from the classical Graeco/Roman concept of the 'Ancient World' and the Orthodox Christian tradition. The analysis of the primary school textbooks shows that the ancient Hellenic tradition predominates, particularly in Social Studies textbooks. Reflecting the declared goals of the Ministry of Education, textbooks promote an admiration towards the Hellenic civilisation. Other ancient civilisations and cultures are either excluded from consideration, or are relegated to a position of secondary importance (Kazamias & Massialas 1965; Massialas & Flouris 1994).

To sum up, therefore, Greek primary textbooks generally promote a Graeco/ Roman dimension in the teaching of the 'Ancient World', to the extent that it is presented:

- as a general exemplar for teaching ancient history,
- as a cultural factor which influenced all Western Civilisation and was disseminated throughout Roman Empire and Christianity,
- as the only or main way of preparing students to participate in the changing world through the study of ancient Greece and Rome,
- as an element of utmost importance worthy to be perceived in regard the non-Graeco-Roman model
- as a vehicle to teach moral, social, political and universal values,
- as the most representative and consequently the most accepted model of humanism and of *studia humanitatis*,
- as a medium which promotes ethnocentric and Eurocentric orientations.

The general position of the paper is that the 'Ancient World' should be seen as a whole, and should include a non-Graeco/Roman dimension besides the traditional focus on the ancient civilisation of Greece and Rome. A global and inclusive perspective on human history and culture helps us perceive the degree of interaction amongst all peoples at all times. If we accept the fact that a common 'Ancient World' history can be shared by all humankind, then this raises a set of pedagogical challenges. In the first place, one has to see how such a broad conception of the 'Ancient World', one encompassing all civilisations, could be encapsulated in a curriculum for classroom use. A second challenge refers to the issue of whether children have the ability to grasp such a broad perspective, despite the proof that we have that they are capable of understanding historical time concepts and spatiotemporal relations (Downey & Levstik 1991:401).

Such challenges are important, but they are not insurmountable, given what is at stake. The traditional division of the globe into continents may be perhaps useful for geography, but has little meaning for human history. The study of ancient history and civilisations can provide a global dimension which promotes human understanding, solidarity and co-operation among people. Ancient history, as a part of global history, is perhaps one of the best ways to conceive and understand the concept of the 'otherness' and its differentiation. The 'Ancient World', with its global sweep, shows the formation of the different world situations and underlines the continuity of human societies and the dynamic interaction between the similar and the different, the particular and the global, the national and the international.

Global ancient history and consequently the introduction of a non-Graeco/ Roman dimension is distinguishable from local, national and Eurocentric history by the broader scope of its inquiry and by its efforts to draw generalisations. In the case of global ancient history the intentional choice is to centre on the whole system. The effort to acquire a global conception is considered both essential and worthwhile if there is to be any hope of learning from history. Such learning depends on the existence of generalisations which serve as the necessary connections between the past, the present and the future (Engle 1971:438-439).

Even in its emphasis on the Graeco/Roman dimension, the 'Ancient World' portrayed in Greek textbooks does not promote international understanding and world communication; its purpose seems to be overwhelmingly that of providing knowledge about the historical and cultural life of the Greek race and about the excellence of Greek civilisation. In other words, Graeco/Roman civilisation serves as a model for the teaching and learning of all history. As a result, the dimensions of cultural interaction, cross-cultural orientation, and cultural

diversity are practically ignored in the context of Greek primary level textbooks, to the detriment of the goals of education for global citizenship and multiculturalism. One could therefore say that the fact that Greece is a member of the European Union has not had a strong impact on the primary education curriculum, since we find little reference to the diversity of ancient civilisations and cultures, topics and issues that should feature in the Greek classroom. This goes against the official declarations of the European Union, which proposes that the unification and communication of the European people should be based on the recognition of Europe's broad cultural heritage. More specifically, the *Green Paper on the European Dimension in Education* (1993) emphasises the importance of every national identity, as well as of the cultural and national differences of the member-states, and warns against the dangers of chauvinism and xenophobia in the process of developing a common European educational process.

Similarly, the Socrates Programme of the European Union emphasises the value of the cultural heritage of the member states, and argues for the strengthening of a European over and above a national identity in students. It is in transcending purely nationalistic concerns that students develop a sense of their European and world identity, so that schools can help prepare them to take part in the economic and social development of the Union, making them aware of the advantages and challenges which the it represents, improving their knowledge of the Union and the member-states and becoming aware of the significance of the co-operation of the member states with other countries of Europe and the world (*Official Journal of the European Communities*, NoC 244/51, 31-8-1994; *Socrates* (94/C,244/05) article 10).

The concerns of global ancient history and non-Graeco/Roman civilisation encourage the search for viable alternatives outside the role of the nation-state paradigm and they pay attention to those phenomena which function outside the strict boundaries of national political systems. Such phenomena include the cross-national regulation of influence, the common cultural and religious heritage, and the world-wide interchange in different fields. Unfortunately however, history is still taught in very fragmented and compartmentalised parcels and with a decidedly Western bias. Nevertheless, we have recently seen the development of area studies, which have started to break down the barriers separating nationalistic accounts of history. As a result, school textbooks in some countries are including more materials on non-Western civilisations and some global history courses include also units on global social problems such as war and peace, economic and social development, population and environmental control (Engle 1971:449-450; Goodwin 1996:157; Slater 1996:46-48).

This study has made a case for such developments to have an impact on the Greek primary curriculum and Greek primary school textbooks, and reflects research carried out by Flouris (1992) among others, showing the extent to which Greece has failed to develop a sufficiently multicultural and global dimension. Such an ethnocentric orientation in curricula and textbooks is not unique to Greece, and is indeed present in several European countries (Schleicher & Kazma 1992) but this simply shows the urgency with which one must address the challenges posed by the concept of globality in the preparation of educational material for tomorrow's citizens.

## Notes

[1] Cf. concurrently the theme of the 17th Comparative Education Society in Europe (CESE) Conference, Athens, October 13-14, 1996: *'Education and the Structuring of the European Space: Centre-Periphery, North-South, Identity-Otherness'*.

[2] The Council of Europe has also organised exhibitions on European culture (the first being held in Brussels in 1955, the most recent in Vienna in 1996) which, while not directly linked to history teaching, have important implications for it. (EXP/CULT [53]33; CC-ED HIST [95]3, Charriere 1991(CC-ED/HIST [93]1); Harkness 1994 (CC-ED/HIST [94]28); Low-Beer 1994 (CC-ED/HIST [95]2); Harkness 1993 (CC-ED/HIST [94]); Aldebert, Bender, Grusa et al. 1992; Slater 1996:25sqq., 49; Goodwin 1996:155sqq).

[3] Cf. for example, its collective volume on the *'Textbooks of Balkan Countries'*, 1995.

[4] Among these scholars one can mention Hofman (1972) Strain & Berninger (1977) Frezza (1982) Li-Wen (1987) Alston (1988) Gifford (1988) McNeill (1988) Ravitch (1988) Sullivan (1988) Wiley (1988) Lemmon (1990) Aldebert *et al* (1992) Slater (1996).

[5] The majority of the textbooks for each teaching subject per grade have more than one volume. Religion is taught from the 3rd grade.

[6] Some examples from history textbooks are indicative:

– *"Greeks created an admirable and glorious civilisation which influenced the whole of humanity..."*, from the History textbook of the fourth grade entitled *In Ancient Times* (1994:265).

– *"Romans studied Greek philosophers, translated into Latin the Greek writers and put up Greek tragedies and comedies in their theatres... Romans were very much influenced by the Greek style of life and imitated Greeks; they adopted their religious, political and social ideas"*, from the History textbook of the fifth grade entitled *In the Byzantine Era* (1994:16).

– *"People used to communicate with each other... Greeks with Egyptians and Mesopotamians..."*, from the History textbook of the third grade entitled *In the Very Early Years* (1994:32).

– *"Every day life in other ancient people: Egypt and Mesopotamia"*, from the History textbook of the third grade (1994:83-85).

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