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MA Program in International Relations

Master Thesis Title:

Recent Debates on Greek History Textbooks:
The Case of *Contemporary History Textbook for 6th Grades* by
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**Recent Debates on Greek History Textbooks:
The Case of *Contemporary History Textbook for 6th Grades***

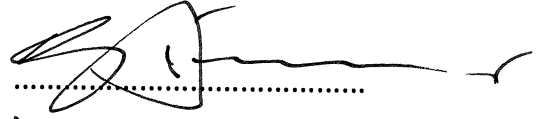
by Maria Repousi

Yunan Tarih Kitapları Hakkında Son Dönemdeki Tartışmalar:
Maria Repousi'nin 6. *Sınıflar için Modern Dönem Tarih Kitabı*

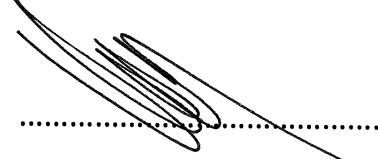
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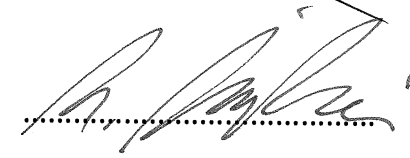
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ABSTRACT

The thesis aims to analyze one of the recent debates on history textbook writing in Greece. The debate the thesis will deal with was generated by the publication of a history textbook written by a group of historians led by another historian Maria Repousi. Being a sensitive issue among the public and politicians alike, common history of Greeks and Turks that lasted for centuries has always been a matter of lively debate. With a new perspective to a number of issues, *Contemporary History Textbook for 6th Grades* brought about a debate, which engulfed the entire Greek society. The debate surrounding the book displayed major political cleavages in the Greek society and highlighted the way leading political parties and other groupings perceived major historical issues that pertain to the common past of the two nations. After defining major characteristics of the book, the thesis focuses on the special topics that the book dealt with and eventually caused the debate, and finally takes up and discusses major arguments that the outstanding parties to the debate put forward.

ÖZET

Tez, son dönemde Yunanistan'daki tarih kitabı yazımıyla ilgili yaşanan tartışmaları analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Tezin ele alacağı tartışma, kendisi de bir tarihçi olan Maria Repousi'nin önderliğindeki bir grup tarihçi tarafından yazılan tarih kitabı yüzünden meydana geldi. Türkler ve Yunanlıların yüzyıllar boyu paylaştıkları ortak tarih, vatandaş ve politikacı gözetmeksizin herkesin gözünde hassas bir konu olagelmış ve tartışmaların sürekli canlı kalmasına sebebiyet vermiştir. *6. Sınıflar için Modern Dönem Tarih Kitabı*, yeni bakış açısının yanı sıra tartışmaları da beraberinde getirdi ve Yunan toplumunun tamamını bunun içine çekti. Kitabın etrafını kuşatan tartışma, Yunan toplumunda bir çok siyasi kırılmayı açığa çıkardı ve iktidar sahibi siyasi partiler ile birtakım grupların iki ülkenin ortak tarihindeki önemli hususları nasıl algıladığı konusuna dikkatleri çekti. Tez, kitabın başlıca niteliklerini tanımladıktan sonra içerisinde değinilen ve sonunda tartışmalara sebebiyet veren bazı özel başlıklara da odaklanıyor ve son olarak tartışmada öne sürülmüş göze çarpan önemli argümanları da gözden geçirip bunları ele alıyor.

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Introduction

The debates over the history textbooks do not obstruct the necessity of historiography. This dilemma may be a vicious circle, but it reflects the truth. Human beings' wondering about their past does not end. There have been several researches about national histories of the countries, albeit there are already written papers. In my thesis, I tried to focus on Greek historiography and its problematic issues. Since Greece has a huge and deep history, it is a very exhausting job to re-write or revise its history. Particularly, the history narrating since the 1930s generated an inflexible perception in minds of Greek people, especially after the Civil War and military dictatorship period. Whenever someone argues new things about Greek history, it causes a national debate. In Repousi's case, the book was exposed to countless attacks in different topics such as downplaying the role of the Greek Church during Greek Revolution, the compromising manner to the Cyprus question, the lack of Secret School issue, *etc.*

In only 138 pages history textbook affected the conversation topics of the daily life. As Maria Repousi's book was introduced to the children at schools, it became the major topic in Greece. At the beginning, there was not a debate atmosphere, but everybody could smell the potential bad reactions from the nationalist bloc of the country.

The present study deals with one of the recent debates in Greek historiography. In order to comprehend the significance of this debate, it is essential to deal with the book in every sense, such as its content, its author team, its supporters, its opponents, *etc.* First of all, why was Repousi's book so important to be discussed in every platform? Why did everyone need to opine over the situation? It was tried to be limited the aforementioned case with its own actors such as its writing team, political parties, media and academicians. When we consider the Greek

historiography, especially since 1974, limiting the case to its decade was so difficult. Therefore I regarded the recent past of debates as one of the factors of Repousi's case. That is why; I gave concise history of the Greek history narrating since the period of military dictatorship in the first chapter of my thesis. In this manner, the readers of my dissertation are going to be able to compare or associate the different cases. Likewise, the previous textbook bans also have significance when we consider that most of them have more or less the same reasons to be withdrawn from publication. As we looked at the banned precedents of history textbooks since 1974, it is possible to mention that the extreme nationalist perspective took the advantage of the situation in every case. In order to convince the governments for the withdrawal of the book, it was always important to damage the reputation of the book. In this debate, also the writers of the book were on the target.

The second chapter of my work focuses on Repousi's book in every sense. Most of the readers of my study may not be able to read the textbook since it was not translated from Greek to any language. This is why; it is essential to provide a broad introduction to the readers of my thesis in order for them to follow the debate phase with basic information. During the controversies of this book, not only the event-based content of the book was a subject of discussion, but also the distribution of contents and visuals was regarded as troublesome. In this respect, some of the prominent visuals, sentences and tables were observed individually. Thus, the readers may have a chance to discuss the debatable issues by following the book through this dissertation.

The third chapter dealt with every perspective along this recent debate. Who started the first criticisms? Who rekindled the debate? Who became the torchbearer from among the opponents of the book? These initial points are the remarkable ones to be answered in order to

conceive the whole debate. Furthermore, the most contentious issues are going to be discussed in this chapter. It is also possible to observe how the usage of some words in the book may mobilize the nationalist reflexes. The main question the debate arose was whether the parties used this textbook as a political instrument or not. Interestingly, the political parties, who have completely different ideologies gathered and stood against the book. This is why; it is strongly discussable whether only the extreme-nationalist bloc of the country used this debate as a political instrument for the upcoming general elections. Who tried to take an advantage of textbook controversies? Which parties gained votes? Which parties lost?

The fourth and final chapter of my thesis is the sequel of “The Debate” part. In this case, we can divide the controversy process into two parts as “the period until correction” and “the period until withdrawal”. The word “stalemate” defines exactly the correction process because there were too many attempts to break the deadlock from both sides of the debate and no one could manage to satisfy the other side. This impasse led the actors to take a breathe for awhile. Therefore the Ministry of Education decided to apply some corrections over the textbook in order to gratify the opponent bloc of the case. Was the correction necessary over the book or was it applied just for muting the radical noises against the book? After all of these questions, it is very difficult to skip one. What kind of correction could hinder the demands for the withdrawal of the book? Was there really any chance to meet the requests of nationalist side?

My dissertation covers a very specific case. That is why; my aim is to go straight to the point without exhausting the readers. There are some graphics and pictures to lighten the readers in a visual sense. It is also possible to find some prominent visuals from the textbook. Therefore, the book will become more deductive to discuss over it.

CHAPTER I – THE PAST OF THE GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY

1.1 - Greek Historiography Until Today

The history narrating has been an everlasting debate issue for decades. As Greeks have a long history, the writing of it is something, which should be done meticulously. The conjuncture of the Greek political life always had an impact over historiography. We will take a look at the remarkable periods of Greek history writing in order to comprehend the change of perceptions over the last few decades.

Before the classification of the Greek Historiography, it is better to take a quick look at the period before the 70s. In contemporary Greek history narrating, we can highlight two periods, (The Ottoman domination period and the independence of Greek State). Until the first chair in Modern History at the University of Athens in 1937, Greek history was considered as the sequel of Byzantine periods and did not focus the cases beyond the Greek Revolution period (1821-1828)¹. World War II led many literary writers to work on historical studies. The Civil War years also became one of the main reasons to focus on history making in the 40s. Dimaras, one of the most important pioneers, rose the term “Greek Enlightenment” in 1945. This might be the initial point of *history wars* in Greece. Antonis Liakos describes the reasons of confrontations caused by history narrating referring to the Enlightenment...

¹ Antonis Liakos, *Modern Greek Historiography (1974-2000). The Era of Tradition from Dictatorship to Democracy*, in Ulf Brunbauer (Re)Writing History. Historiography in Southeast Europe after Socialism, Münster, LIT, Verlag (2004), p. 351-378
<http://antonisliakos.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/historiography-1975-20002.pdf> [accessed on 29 September 2012]

The concept of the Enlightenment also confronted the warring ideological frameworks of the Right and Left. It resisted the ethnocentric and romantic view of the National Revival, supported by the Right, but also, the idea that the national revolution remained incomplete as a result of the defeat of bourgeois and popular social forces, maintained by the Left.²

The sensitivity of the history narrating emerged with the ideological dichotomies between the Left and Right.

The 2nd military junta changed many things in Greece, as well as the Greek historiography. In 1976, the Greek Government started to make a series of reforms in education. The government, on the basis of constitution of 1975, announced the nine years compulsory and free education for everyone. This situation led the education authorities to produce new textbooks.

In 1981, the general elections resulted in parliamentary power going to the socialist party PASOK. They launched a big scale of reforms between the years 1982 and 1985. The Greek education system aimed to provide the social justice with these reforms in 1980s since there was a necessity of a new perception after 1974 due to the Greek society's transformation. Particularly, the Civil War years (1946-1949) affected the history writing, transforming it into a nationalist view. That is why; the new system tried to eliminate the conservative and extreme nationalist expressions from the textbooks by the 80s. As a result of this, a group of historians

² Antonis Liakos, *Modern Greek Historiography (1974-2000). The Era of Tradition from Dictatorship to Democracy*, in Ulf Brunbauer (Re)Writing History. Historiography in Southeast Europe after Socialism, Münster, LIT, Verlag (2004), p. 351-378
<http://antonisliakos.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/historiography-1975-20002.pdf> [accessed on 29 September 2012]

who have Marxist views started to write the history textbooks.³ New Greek historiography followed the way of the ‘French’ Annales School⁴.

As a beginning, the history textbooks for 2nd and 3rd grades were published. Another important thing we can observe from textbook publication during the 80s is that some of those textbooks are still in circulation.

1.2 - Basic Rules & Regulations Concerning the Curricula

Earlier, the commission was writing the book and Pedagogical Institute was deciding which book would be used in curriculum. The Ministry of Education authorized the Pedagogical Institute to decide upon the selection of the textbooks to be used in schools.

Now in Greece, academicians at the universities are writing the history textbooks. There are compulsory, unique textbooks for each grade. The regulations do not allow the teachers to use some teaching aids or additional books to help their teaching method. Whereas some academicians argue that schoolbooks should be competitive; the others claim that schoolbooks cannot be the issue of competition. In the following parts, we are going to examine the different procedures, which were applied by the Ministry for the 6th grades textbook.

³ Bahar Şahin *et al.*, *Improvement of Balkan History Textbooks Project Reports*, (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1st edition, 2002), p. 96

⁴ This is a French School, which established by Marxist historians during 20th century. They focused on social scientific methods to describe the history rather than political and diplomatic themes.

In the context of textbook content, there are also some regulations. The distribution of contents is supposed to be assigned according to the curriculum. We can see the whole distribution in the “table number 1”.

CLASSES	CONTENT
Third class of primary school (8-9 years old)	[Greek] mythology
Forth class (9-10 years old)	[Greek] Ancient History
Fifth class (10-11 years old)	Medieval-Byzantine History
Sixth class (11-12 years old)	Modern & Contemporary [Greek] History
First class of junior high school (12-13 years old)	Ancient Greek & Roman History
Second class (13-14 years old)	Medieval [Greek] –Byzantine- History

Table 1 - Distribution of Content⁵

1.3 – Banned Precedents and Major Themes

In Greek Historiography, there have been many debates over the history textbooks. These debates end with different scenarios. The opponents suggest the recall of the textbook in the first place, but sometimes the correction over the books may be a solution. In this section, we will comprehend the reasons of necessities in changing the textbooks.

⁵ Maria Repousi, *Politics questions history education – Debates on Greek History Textbooks*, in Popp S. (ed.), *Yearbook of International Society for History Didactics, 2006/2007*, p. 99-110. http://users.auth.gr/marrep/PS_REPOUSI/ENG/PUBLICATIONS/Politics%20questions%20history%20education%20English.pdf [accessed on 12 September 2012]

Since Greece does not have “Historical Association”, the Pedagogical Institute of Greece gathers the members of its community every 5-6 years in order to revise the History Curricula. The institution questions whether the textbook damages the public sensitivities or not. In order to take into consideration the replacement, correction or withdrawal decisions, the institution contemplates the public opinion. That is why the Pedagogical Institute collects all the criticized materials. This is the procedure over the textbook publishing, but there is another factor, which is the political conjuncture, may trigger the textbook debates. A recurrent example might be telling that in Turkish and Greek history textbooks, we can observe too many nationalist expressions. The elimination of these is due to the bilateral political progressions between Greece and Turkey. Whenever there blows winds of rapprochement, both sides are getting closer to sign bilateral agreements in order to improve the history textbooks by purifying the hostile images.

Greece implemented the main innovations and evolutions in education in 1976 just after the fall of the military dictatorship. Since 1974, the innovations sometimes caused criticism in Greece. The history narration is an extremely sensitive case, so the people can react very aggressively when they are not venerated by the history.

So far, 4 books were banned in Greece after 1974. (1986, 1988, 1998 and 2007) Two of these books were for the 10th grades. (1st grade of Lyceum) One of them was for the 12th grade, (3rd grade of Lyceum).

- ***History of Human Kind, 10th grade (1990)***

The worldwide known historian, Leften Stavrianos⁶, wrote the book and it was published in 1984. He added the evolution theory of Darwin to his book and this was perceived as an attack to the Greek Orthodox Church.⁷ The book remained in circulation with some corrections until the end of the 80s, but it was finally withdrawn in 1990. The previous textbook, “History of Ancient Greece” replaced it.⁸

- ***Introduction to Historical Studies, 12th grade (1990)***

The debate emerged with the chapter “History and its Methods”. The book and the author of it were criticized for a considerable time. That book adopted the methodological perspective provided by *Annales School* and so it was blamed that the book was downplaying the role of personality in history.

This book was banned also in the same year. The new right-wing government did not replace the book with another.

- ***The Contribution of Hellenic Civilization, 10th grade (1998)***

This book was also on the target of the nationalist groups because it gave a considerable place to the European and world history. This was perceived as the downplaying of the values of the Greek history and banned from circulation.

⁶ Leften Stavrianos passed away in 2005.

⁷ Maria Repousi, *History Textbooks Controversies in Greece, 1985-2008. Considerations on the text and the context*, Canadian Diversity / Diversité canadienne, vol. 7, no 1, (2009): 25-30.

⁸ Bahar Şahin et al., *Improvement of Balkan History Textbooks Project Reports*, (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1st edition, 2002), p. 98

1.4 - The Writing Process of Repousi's Book

The textbook is co-authored by Hara Andreadou, Aristidis Poutahidis, Armodios Tsivas and Maria Repousi, but it is known to be Repousi's book. Repousi was the author who led the team.

According to the rules and regulations of the Pedagogical Institute, the writers should take into consideration four essential points during the writing process: The pedagogical aims and objectives, the contents, methodological instructions evaluation. However, the author team does not have any kind of restriction such as religion, ideological, political tendencies, *etc.*

The writing team of the books is chosen from among the academicians and schoolteachers. They work independently, but they have to follow the instructions, which are assigned by the Pedagogical Institute.

In 2003, the Greek State made some innovations for Greek historiography and decided to change all the textbooks. The candidates for the textbook writing sent the drafts with their approximate budgets. Repousi and her team made an application only for the 6th grades textbook with 32.000-euro fund. This was the biggest amount in history textbook writing as far as its budget is concerned.⁹

It was decided that Repousi and her team took the authority to write the textbook. They did not have a time limitation and they started to work in 2003 and completed the book for publication in 2 years.

⁹ Οι νεοί φάκελοι, «Το βιβλίο» [*The Book*], The Greek TV documentary serial, ΣΚΑΙ 2007 <http://folders.skai.gr/main/theme?id=17&locale=el> [accessed on 26 September 2012]

Maria Repousi, the head of the team, who was a history professor in Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Her first experience in textbook writing was the one for 6th grades and the book became a matter of debate in Greece. Now she is a deputy of Democratic Left¹⁰ Party from Athens.



Figure 1 - Maria Repousi

Hara Andreadou is teaching in primary education since 1990 and she is also involved in training the teachers for teaching the history in primary schools.

Aristidis Poutahidis is teaching in primary education since 1988 and participates in training programs for primary school history education.

Armodios Tsivas is a teacher for more than 20 years. He was also doctoral student in the Department of Education during the writing process of the book.

¹⁰ Δημοκρατική Αριστερά – ΔΗΜ.ΑΡ.

CHAPTER II: THE TEXTBOOK

2.1 - General Remarks

2.1.1 – Physical Qualities

2.1.1.1 - Size: Maria Repousi's first history textbook¹¹ for 6th grades includes 138 pages, which makes the book different from the previous ones that were strikingly more voluminous. The length of the book became a matter of debate because the book was far shorter than had been expected. Therefore, whenever Repousi was interviewed, one of the points she made was that her textbook was concise and met the requirements set by the European Union on the size of the textbooks. In one of the interviews she gave...

The textbook has no size limitations; it has a disproportionately large amount of material. How big should a book be for a child of 11 or 12 years old who has history lessons twice a week? Other European states use shorter textbooks with fewer pages, or a larger book that is for the first three years of primary school. The problem is the vast amount of material the book must cover. It's not the choice of writing team. It complied with the demands of the syllabus. This is something that must change to our books, our teachers and above all, our children can breathe.¹²

The first two pages of the textbook include the guidelines on how to use it under the title "How to follow the chapters? Where to find the sources?"

The paragraphs are short and readable so that pupils can easily comprehend the text.

¹¹ There is also the second edition of the book.

¹² "Educational pretext for ideological attack", *International Herald Tribune*, 4 April 2007

2.1.1.2 - Printing Features: Maria Repousi's textbook is printed on A4 format plain paper. Some titles and pictures are colored. However, when the printing features and quality of the textbook are compared with previous ones, it does not seem to be different in a significant way.

Εισαγωγή στην Ενότητα

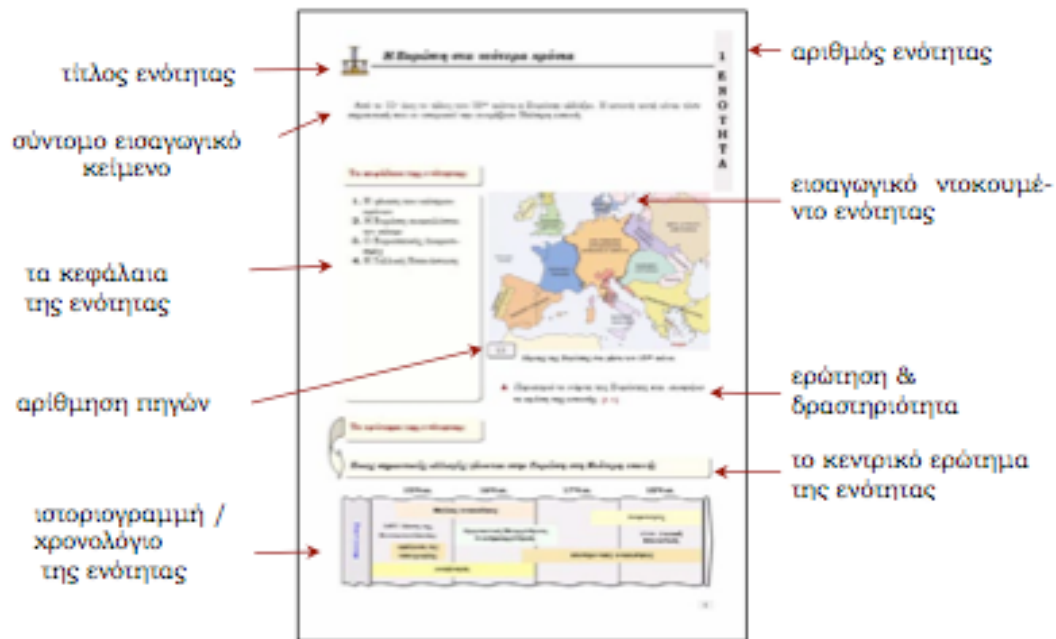


Figure 2 – Guideline on how best to use the book

2.1.2 – Visuals

The textbook appears to be strikingly different as far as the quantity and quality of visuals it contains. The pages are illustrated with 321 visuals. In this respect, the textbook is far more illustrated than the others published before. The visuals come in different forms: photographs, maps, paintings, graphics, tables/timelines, portraits and thumbnails.

In comparison to the previous ones, the textbook seems to be illustrated with less dramatic pictures. As it will be discussed below, the pictures chosen by the author represent less violent aspects of the Greek history and shed more light on peaceful, historic scenes. This marks a clear departure from the mainstream Greek historiography that tends to use images glorifying Greek history.



Figure 3 - Example from the alternative book of Smirniotakis

The alternative book¹³, which was offered by some opposing parties¹⁴, did not contain many visuals.

2.1.2.1 - Photographs: There are 66 photographs in the textbook. It is interesting that most of the photographs display the everyday life of ordinary Greeks living in different cities, including those in Turkey. No less interesting is the fact that the photographs do not feature violent scenes.



Figure 4 - "Greeks and Turks in Prince Island", p. 102

¹³ Γιάννης Σμυρνιωτάκης – Ιστορία ΣΤ' Δημοτικού Στα Νεότερα και Σύγχρονα Χρόνια (Giannis Smirniotakis – History at Primary School – During Modern and Contemporary Years)

¹⁴ Especially the website www.antibaro.gr challenged the Repousi's textbook and suggested Giannis Smirniotakis's textbook instead.

So one can argue that the impression that the photographs give is in conformity with the general narrative of the textbook that highlights the peaceful aspects of the Greek history.

2.1.2.2 – Maps: Maps may be the most effective way of history telling. The maps mostly affect people when they follow a history textbook because maps may be hypnotizing.

There are 33 maps in the textbook. Given that the textbook is 138 pages, the amount dedicated to maps within the textbook is quite large. It is possible to find graphics, timelines or tables next to almost every map within the book. These information boxes support the efficiency of the maps.

2.1.2.3 – Paintings: The book contains 107 paintings¹⁵. Paintings in the textbook are the most used form in the context of visuals. In Greek historiography, paintings have an important place when it comes to the mythological and national figures. It is possible to observe only one mythological figure¹⁶ at the beginning of the book. Most of the paintings were placed in the first three chapters. This means every page has almost two paintings until the 4th chapter. The *European History* chapter especially, is illustrated by the well-known paintings such as Leonardo Da Vinci's The Vitruvian Man and xxx's French Revolution *etc.* From my point of view, the minimum that writers aim to pass is the basic information and visual memory from the European history.

¹⁵ 107 paintings include few engravings and caricatures as well.

¹⁶ Botticelli's famous painting "The Birth of Venus" on the 2nd page.



Figure 5 - The topic "Seperation of Powers" includes several paintings, p. 12

2.1.2.4 – Graphics: There are 27 graphics within the book. More than half of these give information about the population distribution from time to time. This time period corresponds to the last three chapters of the book.

2.1.2.5 - Tables / Timelines: There are 43 tables and timelines in Repousi's book. Generally tables are placed at the bottom of pages. Their image is like a measuring rod and gives very basic dates and information about the historical events, with colorful and chronologic orders. The dates, which are used in these timelines, also refer to the main article about the topic. Thus students are able to memorize the crucial dates from their own history.

βενετοτουρκικοί πόλεμοι: 1463-1479			1499-1503		1537-41		1684-1699		1714-1718
οθωμανικές κατακτήσεις:	1462 Λέσβος	1470 Εύβοια	1500 Μεθώνη Κορώνη	1522 Ρόδος	1566 Χίος	1571 Κύπρος	1579 Κυκλάδες	1669 Κρήτη	1718 ανάκτηση Πελοποννήσου

Figure 6 - Example of timeline, p. 16

2.1.2.6 – Portraits: There are only nine wide-sized portraits within this book. The previous and alternative history textbooks had many more portraits when we compare. The reason for the

decrease in portrait numbers is to minimize the presence of national heroes. We can observe the inclusion of only well-known actors, such as Aleksandros Mavrocordatos, Theodoros Kolokotronis, Charilaos Trikoupis and Elefterios Venizelos.

2.1.2.7 – Small icons: There are 36 small icons. Actually I planned to distribute them to the portraits, but these pictures are very tiny and mostly placed below the page, attached to the timelines. Apart from the national figures, there are also some pictures from the daily life of the late 19th century. Most of them seem pointless due to their size.

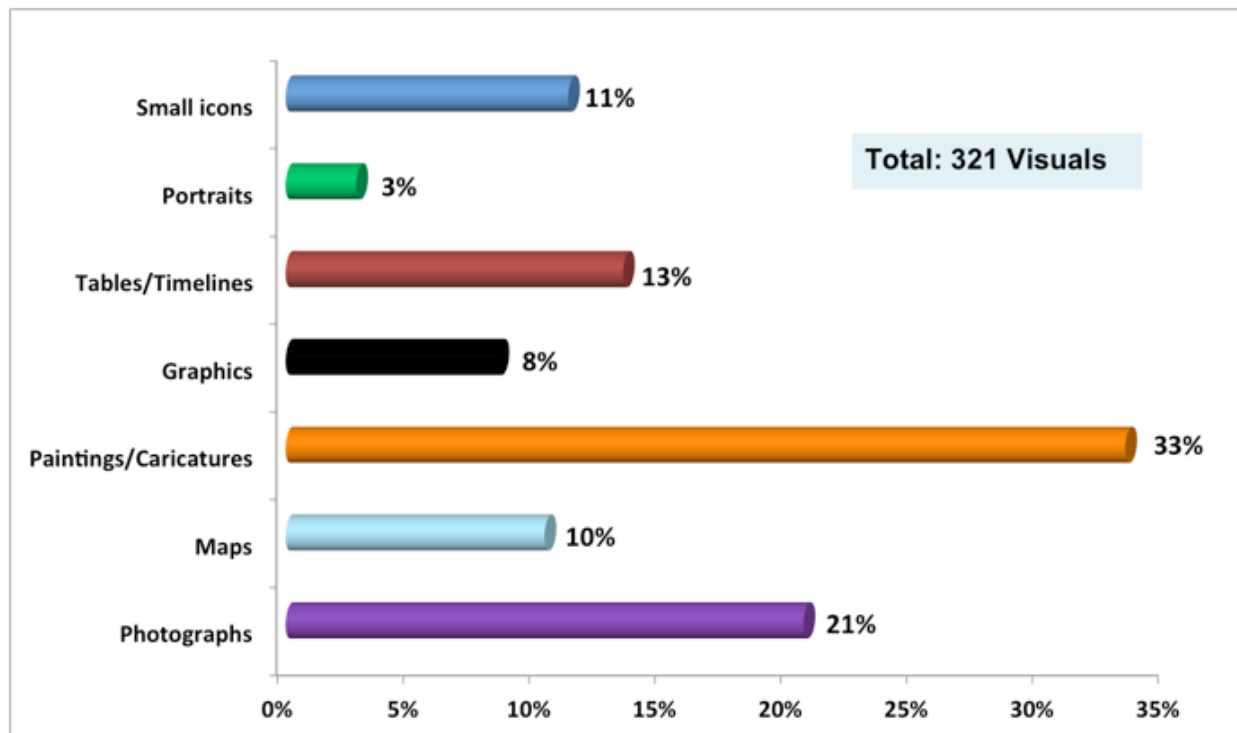


Table 2– Distribution of visuals

2.2 – Organization of the Book

2.2.1 - Visual Gravity

In this section, I am going to focus on the gravity of the visuals in terms of their percentage in pages. As I mentioned before, almost every page contains at least one visual. On the other hand, most of the pages have more than two visuals, meaning that they cover large space in the textbook. For instance, pictures like the one seen in Figure 6 almost wholly cover 13 pages. In addition to this, the largest individual visual in the book covers more than half of the page¹⁷. Generally speaking the visuals cover almost 30-35% of the book. Greek media



Figure 7 - Visuals cover the whole page, p. 45

questioned whether this much gravity of the visuals was useful for the pupils or not. At first sight, it seems helpful to the children due to the manner that visuals stimulate their interest and curiosity. However, visuals of this kind seem to create some problems and debates. Without going into the details of the debate invoked by excessive use of visuals in textbooks, it is possible to argue that the visuals may undermine the children's ability to learn history by reading. In other words, visuals somehow encourage learning through looking rather than reading which, some fear, can lead to laziness. More of this issue will be taken up in the chapter titled "The Debate".

¹⁷ Political claims 1843-1862, movement of 3rd September 1843, p. 69

2.2.2 - Periodization

First of all, the name of the book is “History at Primary School – During Modern and Contemporary Years (*Ιστορία ΣΤ’ Δημοτικού – Στα νεότερα και σύγχρονα χρόνια*)”. According to the curricula, the chapters should be started from the *Age of Enlightenment* and be followed by

1st Chapter Europe during modern years	14 pages
2nd Chapter Greeks under foreign sovereignty	22 pages
3rd Chapter The Greek Revolution of 1821	29 pages
4th Chapter Greece becomes an independent country	22 pages
5th Chapter Greece during 20th century	45 pages

Table 3 - Periodization focus of the textbook

the *French Revolution*. For the final chapter of the book, there is no timeline limit to conclude the topics. That is why we can easily observe that Repousi expands the book until the Olympic games of 2004 in Athens.

Greek Curricula advises the writers to have five chapters and suggests titles for each chapter. Having complied with the curriculum, Maria Repousi’s book does have five chapters. However, interestingly enough, the textbook does not follow the suggestion of the curriculum for

the title of the 2nd chapter, which is “Hellenism after the Fall of Constantinople¹⁸”. The title used in the textbook is remarkably different and reflects the general tendency of the narrative adopted by the authors: “Greeks under Foreign Sovereignty.”

The first chapter of the book gives a contemporary European history in 15 pages. Then the second chapter contains general information about the Greeks under the foreign dominance for almost 20 pages. The 3rd chapter of the book is the part most worthy of attention for the Greek nationalist bloc because they always demand the writers to glorify the Greek Revolution. In this respect, this issue became the initial point of the debates over the book. In this chapter, the writers gave place to the Greek War of Independence in 1821. Although this chapter contains almost 30 pages, this amount did not satisfy the nationalist side of the country.

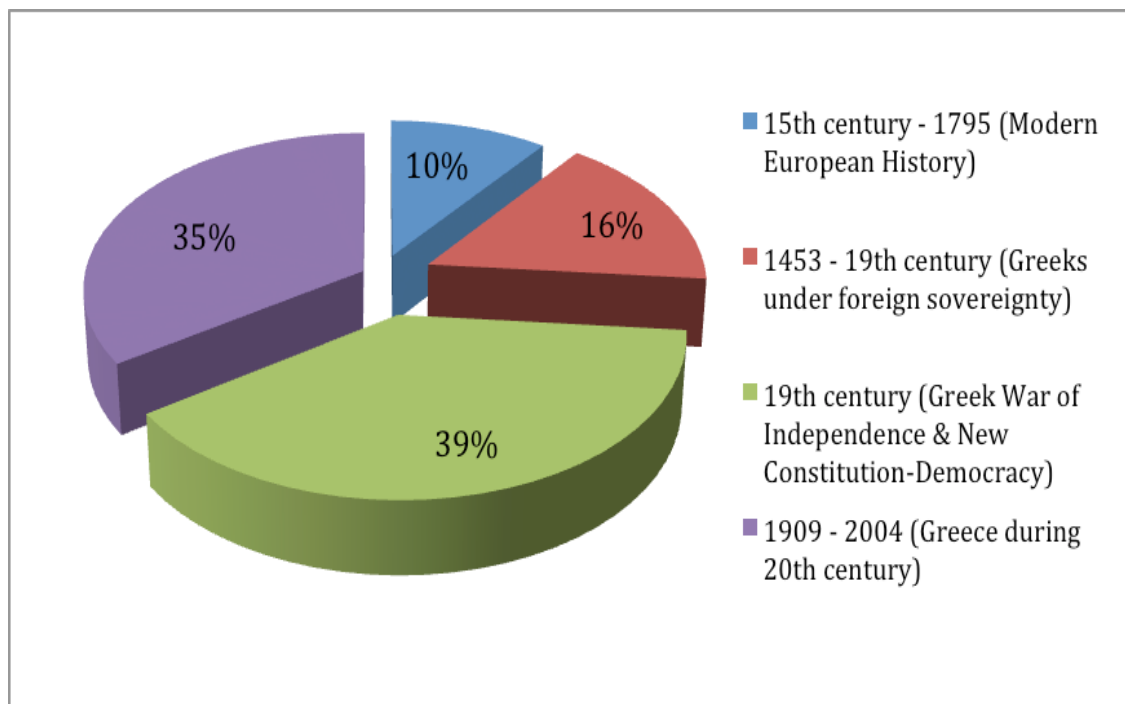


Table 4 - Distribution of eras

¹⁸ Διαθεματικό Ενιαίο Πλαίσιο Προγράμματος Σπουδών, p. 185-186

The time range that the book covers is about 250 years. It starts from the 18th century and ends in the 2000s. If we exclude the European history period, we can observe that only 39% of the book is about Greece's Independence and Liberation War. The rest of it (35% + 16%) involves bad periods of time of the Greek people. In previous books, the gravity of the Heroism was focused on more than in this book.

2.2.3 – Study Aids

Ioannis Papagrigoriou, who is the writer of the previous book, supervised the Repousi's book for the 6th grades. He claims that Repousi's book introduces a new way of critical thinking with new technologies. In addition to all, he stresses that this book was written based on an “analytical programme” which was prepared by the Pedagogical Institute with detailed guidelines¹⁹. This was the requirement of the new law. Alongside the book the writing team also prepared a DVD as a teaching aid, which covers many things in the book, such as the Catastrophe of Asia Minor. However, the bureaucratic process of the Greek Government obstructed the delivery of these aids to a single school. As a result, no one could get these aids.

When you randomly open a page of the book, you immediately realize that every page has at least one picture. There are also linguistic parts that make up almost every page. These linguistic parts are a kind of glossary for the pupils. Therefore, they can learn the unknown terminology, used or referred to in the paragraphs. In addition to these glossaries, some

¹⁹ George Gilson, *Battle Royal Over History Book*, Athens News, 12th April 2007
http://www.athensnews.gr/old_issue/13227/15899 [accessed on 29 September 2012]

prominent words, terms and names are accessible in the pages. Their explanations are given in bold characters.

2.2.4 – Main *Foci*

The main focus of the book is to challenge the tenets of the traditional/Orthodox Greek Historiography that is based on the idealization of what it should mean to be Greek and the victimization of Hellenism. This involves other challenges that the book put forward in different periods and different contexts. Some of the challenges concern the narratives dealing with the relations with Turks or the period under Ottoman sovereignty.

Maria Repousi aimed to encourage 11-12 year old children to think and question about their own history with her 6th grade history textbook. In order to help with this, the writing team of the book gave importance to the narrative side of it. Many bibliographies were used within the book. Maria Repousi especially tried to avoid stereotypes such as the reproduction of national and historical myths. She also put aside the idealization of what it means to be Greek and the victimization of Hellenism. She emphatically expresses that ‘history battles’²⁰ do not take place in her book. That is why; this determination does not limit the text with only an event-based content. This brings us to the initial discussion over the book. Usage of classical heroes in Greek history was reduced in this book compared to the previous books. Another very important aim of the book was to increase the presence of women in history.

²⁰ She uses the word *l’histoire bataille*.

Many people considered this word -Συνοστισμός – *synostismos*-²¹, which was used within the book, as the main aim of the book. Co-authors of the book deemed suitable the definition of Asia Minor Catastrophe by describing it as a *waterfront throng*²². This problematic and new way of describing this case drew a widespread reaction from everyone. The aim of using this word was to create a new symbol for *softening* the dramatic common history between Turkey and Greece by writing with a *light narrative* and more flexible and compliant language.²³

2.2.5 – Keywords of the Greek Curricula

The Greek Curriculum provides some guidelines for the textbook writers. The most important part of these guidelines is the given keywords. In the following table, it is noticeable that the keywords are distributed into every chapter. In addition to the keywords, every chapter has one sentence explanation, which emphasizes the aims of the study.

²¹ It means *waterfront throng* in Greek.

²² Especially this word rekindled the following debates over the book.

²³ Antonis Liakos, *History Wars: Testing tolerance*, p. 17

The Keywords of Greek Curricula for 6th Grades	
1st Chapter	Civilization, evolution, deployment, discovering, Renaissance, Reform, alternation, enlightenment, revolution
to comprehend the basic historical concepts connected with particular historical period.	
2nd Chapter	Field-time, slavery, Ottoman sovereignty, colony, self-government, rebellion, peace, freedom (liberty), humanly, right, civilization
to introduce the most important events which happened in Greek field between 1821 and the Fall of Constantinople.	
3rd Chapter	Field-time, conflict, revolution, Sacred Band, Holy Alliance, siege, exodos, national assembly, philhellenism treaty, constitution
to introduce the most important events (social, military, economic, politic, diplomatic, etc..) from the 1821 Revolution until the murder of Kapodistrias.	
4th Chapter	Field-time, change (Enlightenment), conflict, annexation, autonomy, independence, neutral manner, movement, reconstruction (regrouping), national gathering
to approach the concept of natural gathering.	
5th Chapter	Field-time, struggling, wars, under sovereignty, World War, interwar, fascism, Nazism, socialism, communism, national resistance, occupation, Civil War, dictatorship, European Union
to introduce the progressions and the most important events which happened in Greek land and rest of the world during 20th century.	

Table 5 - The keyword distribution for 6th grade textbook²⁴

²⁴ Διαθεματικό Ενιαίο Πλαίσιο Προγραμμάτων Σπουδών, p. 185-186

CHAPTER III – THE DEBATE

3.1 - Emergence of the Debate

3.1.1 - The Beginning of the Debate

Maria Repousi's history textbook was introduced to the 6th grades in September 2006 and controversy over the book became public in the wake of its first presentation to the media. Her textbook was presented as an innovative history book, which was written by professional historians. Although the book was co-authored by Hara Andreadou, Aristidis Poutahidis, Armodios Tsivas and Maria Repousi, and supervised by Ioannis Papagrigoriou, it was known to be as Maria Repousi's. Its first publication came out in March 2006. Initial reactions to the book were by and large positive, and the opposite statements remained under control in 2006.

During the fall of 2006, as Minister of Education, Marietta Giannakou introduced the textbook and she faced initial critics. The critics focused on several points that the textbook raised that the Greeks had not been exposed to as much pressure from the Ottomans as the previous Greek historiography claimed to be. Likewise, the textbook had downplayed the role of the Orthodox Church during War of Independence.²⁵ Another important accusation against the

²⁵ "Greek-history textbook stirs flame", *Turkish Daily News*, 18 February 2008
<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=greek-history-textbook-stirs-flame-2007-03-26> [accessed on 2 August 2012]

book was that it had been geared to beautify the historical background of Turkish-Greek relations²⁶.

It is observed that the debate kept its resilience, as those who stood behind the textbook did at least in the eyes of the public, not refute the arguments against the textbook. No matter what the supporters of the book did to suspend its withdrawal, those who strove to ban the book did not step down in their efforts. Therefore, it is possible to claim that should there be such a debate again; the same circles will most probably put forward a severe resistance of a similar kind.

3.1.2 - Who Started it?

The Orthodox Church took the lead and became the torchbearer of the circles who opposed the textbook. The bishops became and remained the mouthpiece of the opposition, invoking the authorities to take action against the text. The Church claimed that the textbook



Figure 7 – Archbishop Christodoulos gives a speech at the University of Athens

aimed to belittle the extent of atrocities and brutalities that the Greeks had to suffer under the *Turkokratia*. The controversy was confined to the historians and academicians until Archbishop Christodoulos²⁷, who dealt with the issue in a speech given at the University of Athens in June 2006, galvanized

it.

²⁶ “The dispute over a Greek history book”, *euro-topics (Neue Zürcher Zeitung)*, Amalia Van Gent, 12 April 2007, Switzerland

http://www.eurotopics.net/en/home/autorenindex/autor_van_gent_amalia/ [accessed on 9 August 2012]

²⁷ Archbishop Christodoulos passed away on 28 January 2008

How can you show the children an impure history? Some European Authorities must not renounce what we are. Why should not we, the Greeks, honor the richness of our history?’ ‘We have history and tradition and it is a crime of extreme betrayal trying to abolish these things for which our fathers fought. (...) The national consciousness is inflicted and those responsible for it are seriously endangering the national characteristics. We are about to sacrifice everything [what] the progressive forces tell us to do.²⁸

We have got our objections. A special committee of the Church examines the voids and weaknesses and very soon we will address the Ministry.²⁹

The new general elections were on the horizon and Archbishop Christodoulos got wide support from the nationalist bloc of the country.

The first reaction to Christodoulos’s statements came from the New Democracy Minister of Education, Marietta Giannakou. She was emphasizing...



Figure 8 - The Minister of Education, Marietta Giannakou replies the criticism

²⁸ «Τι φταίνει τα παιδιά να μάθουν μια νοθευμένη ιστορία; Καμία ευρωπαϊκή εξουσία δεν μας υποχρεώνει να απαρνηθούμε αυτό που είμαστε. Γιατί εμείς οι Έλληνες να μην τιμούμε τον θησαυρό της ιστορίας μας; Έχουμε ιστορία και παράδοση και αποτελεί έγκλημα εσχάτης προδοσίας να είμαστε έτοιμοι να προσπαθήσουμε να απεμπολήσουμε αυτά για τα οποία οι πατέρες μας αγωνίστηκαν (...) Η εθνική συνείδηση πλήττεται και όποιος τολμά να μιλά κινδυνεύει να χαρακτηριστεί φονταμενταλιστής ή εθνικιστής. Είμαστε έτοιμοι να τα θυσιάσουμε όλα αρκεί να μας πουν προοδευτικούς.»

‘Θυσίες στο βωμό της ελληνοτουρκικής φιλίας’ [Sacrifices on the altar of Greek-Turkish friendship], *In.gr News*, 23 January 2007

<http://news.in.gr/greece/article/?aid=772560> [accessed on 13 September 2012]

²⁹ «Έχουμε τις ενστάσεις μας. Ειδική επιτροπή της Εκκλησίας εξετάζει τα κενά και τις αδυναμίες [των βιβλίων] και θα απευθυνθεί σύντομα στο υπουργείο»

“Ενστάσεις για τα νέα σχολικά βιβλία έχει η Εκκλησία” [The church has objections against the new schoolbooks], *In.gr News*, 12 September 2006

<http://www.in.gr/news/article.asp?lngEntityID=737870> [accessed on 12 September 2012]

The books are not going to be changed because one or another wants that to happen.³⁰

As the Archbishop Christodoulos was leaving the University, he made his stance public in front of the TV cameras, urging the authorities to expel the book from the curriculum.



Figure 8 - Christodoulos urging the authorities

We all wait from Mr. Prime Minister, with his sensitivities as Greek and Macedonian, to give a message for the change which should be done on the book before it is too late.³¹

In the following days, the striking statement of Christodoulos started to show its impact all over Greece. The range of the debate was widened and every single person had an opinion

³⁰ «Τα βιβλία δεν θα αλλάξουν, επειδή το θέλει ο ένας και ο άλλος».

“Ενστάσεις μπορεί να υπάρχουν, τα βιβλία δεν αλλάζουν, δήλωσε η υπουργός Παιδείας” [There may be objections, the books do not change, said the Minister of Education], *In.gr News*, 14 September 2006,

<http://www.in.gr/news/article.asp?lngEntityID=738628> [accessed on 12 September 2012]

³¹ «Όλοι περιμένουμε από τον κύριο πρωθυπουργό με τις ευαισθήσεις τις οποίες έχει ως Έλληνας και ως Μακεδόνας πραγματικά να δώσει το μήνυμα για την αλλαγή που πρέπει να γίνει σε αυτό το βιβλίο πριν να είναι αργά.”

“Το Βιβλίο (The book)”, *ΣΚΑΪ TV, Οι νέοι Φάκελοι*,

<http://folders.skai.gr/main/theme?id=17&locale=el> [accessed on 5 August 2012]

about it. From the guy in the *taverna* to the Prime Minister, all chose their sides to argue over the debate.

6th Pontus Hellenes' Global Conference made the first huge attempt to withdraw the book.³² Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis also attended this conference and put his reservations in a speech. After his speech, the members of the conference took a decision to condemn the book unanimously.³³

The statements, which came consecutively, whipped up the reactions against the book. All the public sectors started to compete to be against the book. This sprawling perception led to a decrease of the demonstrations, broadcasts and web-based organizations³⁴ by the people because they feared the government's reaction.

3.1.3 - Rekindling of the Debate

The debate engulfed large segments of the society and in a short span of time became a national issue. People from all walks of life opined on the book. The Greek Communist Party claimed that publication of the book was made possible by foreign sponsorship.

³² 6^ο Παγκόσμια Συνέδριο Ποντιακού Ελληνισμού

³³ "Το Βιβλίο (The book)", *ΣΚΑΪ TV*, *Οι νέοι Φάκελοι*, <http://folders.skai.gr/main/theme?id=17&locale=el> [accessed on 5 August 2012]

³⁴ Maria Repousi, *New History Textbooks in Greece - The chronicle of an ideological war on the national past*, 2007
http://users.auth.gr/marrep/PS_REPOUSI/ENG/PUBLICATIONS/New%20History%20Books%20in%20Greece.pdf [accessed on 3 August 2012]

Likewise, the radical nationalist, Golden Dawn burned the book in *Sintagma Square*³⁵ of Athens during the national holiday of 25th of March, the anniversary of the 1821 revolution against the Ottoman Empire.

Coinciding with the National Day, a Greek-Turkish Football match exacerbated the debate on 24 March 2007. One day before the condemnation of the textbook, there was a European Football Championship Qualification match between Turkey and Greece in Karaiskakis Stadium of Athens. The result of the game was 4-1 with Turkey emerging as the winner, and meanwhile the Greeks were celebrating the anniversary of the independence from Turkish sovereignty. During the game it was possible to observe a large number of Greek supporters who got dressed in traditional Greek costumes from the 19th century. Afterwards, approximately 30 Greek Neo-Nazis burned several copies of this history textbook as they were protesting. Thus the celebration of the Independence Day ended with copies torn and thrown on the roads of Athens³⁶.

Archbishop Christodoulos also formed his views about the 25th of March and mentioned that the new textbook aims to **enslave the youth**.

They challenge even March 25 (the date chosen as the symbolic start of the revolution, to coincide with the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary), the banner of the revolution raised by (Bishop) Paleon Patron Germanos, and the heroes Kolokotronis, Makrygiannis, and all those heroes who in their struggle said first 'for the faith' and then 'for the fatherland'.

We sacrifice the historic truth on the altar of Greek-Turkish friendship.³⁷

³⁵ *Constitution Square* the official place to celebrate the national holidays.

³⁶ "Greek-history textbook stirs flame", *Turkish Daily News*, 18 February 2008

³⁷ "Battle royal over history book", *Athens News*, George Gilson, 23 March 2007

http://www.athensnews.gr/old_issue/13227/15899 [accessed on 12 September 2012]

The strictures intensified in the end of 2006 and became an avalanche until the Greek general elections on 16 September 2007. The head of the writers, Repousi mentions that authors were expecting some reactions against the book, but intentional, damaging ones replaced harmless reactions, which aimed to hurt the writers' reputation³⁸.

She also sums up the seven main reasons of the debate during the conference at the University of Tallinn in September 2006. In her opinion, her textbook is accused to be

- 1- Downplaying the role of the Church³⁹ in national awakening and the Greek Revolution.
- 2- Concealing the historical truth by painting a rosy picture of the coexistence of Greek-speaking and Turkish-speaking populations under the Ottoman Empire.
- 3- Belittling military and political events in which the self-sacrifice and heroism of the fighters of 1821 is conspicuous.
- 4- Overrating the role of women and underrating the role of national heroes.
- 5- Deliberately emphasizing the dark side of history such as civil wars and internecine conflicts.
- 6- Serving foreign interests.
- 7- Seeking to impose de-Hellenization, Ottoman-style servility and subordination to the political conjuncture dictated by Greek-Turkish détente.⁴⁰

³⁸ "Το Βιβλίο (The book)", *ΣΚΑΪ TV, Οι νέοι Φάκελοι*, <http://folders.skai.gr/main/theme?id=17&locale=el> [accessed on 5 August 2012]

³⁹ She means "Greek Church".

3.2 – Contentious Issues in the Textbook

There were several debatable issues over the textbook during the controversies. The leading actors of the debate featured some of these issues on purpose. They considered the sensitivities of the Greek people while they were picking the troublesome aspects. All along the Greek historiography, the textbooks tried to show the barbarism of Turks. On the other side, Turkish textbooks aimed to show victories for the same incidents. Before we go into the details of the contentious issues, it is better to observe the perception difference between two countries...

Greeks and Turks have been educated to become antagonists and opponents. For generations they have been fed with aggressive ideologies, with prejudices against the other side, with one-sided information and with historical distortions and exaggerations, as if they were armies already marshaled, being exhorted before the last deadly charge.⁴¹

3.2.1 - Secret Schools (*Krypho scholio*)

One of the issues, which the debate brought to the public, was whether clandestine schools ever existed during the Ottoman rule⁴².

⁴⁰ Maria Repousi, *Politics questions history education – Debates on Greek History Textbooks*, in Popp S. (ed.), *Yearbook of International Society for History Didactics, 2006/2007*, p. 99-110. http://users.auth.gr/marrep/PS_REPOUSI/ENG/PUBLICATIONS/Politics%20questions%20history%20education%20English.pdf [accessed on 12 September 2012]

⁴¹ Hercules Millas, *History textbooks in Greece and Turkey*, in *History Workshop Journal*, 31 January 1991, p. 23

⁴² "Learning about the past: Where history isn't bunk", *Economist*, 15 March 2007 <http://www.economist.com/node/8857329> [Accessed on 8 August 2012]

*Krypho scholio*⁴³ issue was taught to the children with its myths in a nationalist view over the years. Not surprisingly, it was one of the points that the Repousi's textbook raised and challenged as a nationalist myth. In this respect, its challenge for *Krypho scholio* stood out as a stark contrast to nationalist narratives of the previous textbooks, which attached great significance to the *Krypho scholio*. Likewise, while all the textbooks previously published used the famous painting by Nicolaos Gyzis, the Repousi's book did not use this picture. Before we go into the details of the dispute over this subject, we should look into the issue of *Krypho scholio*.

Krypho scholio term refers to the belief of illegal Greek schools' presence during Ottoman sovereignty between the 15th and 19th centuries. The strong belief of this myth became widespread during the War of Independence in 1821.⁴⁴ Many Greek people still believe in their existence, which was never proved by any academic



Figure 9 – “The secret school” painting of Nicolaos Gyzis (1885-1886)

research. In this historical illustration, Gyzis's painting created enormous impact on the generations to come and it became a very famous and popular painting in Greece.

⁴³ Means “Secret school” in Greek

⁴⁴ Vangelis Kechriotis, *History as a public claim and the role of the historian: Two recent debates regarding the Ottoman past in Greece and Bulgaria*, Forthcoming article in 2012 or 2013

Although there are many paintings about this issue in Greek art history, the powerful image of this one distinguishes its painter from the others. Greek art historian Antonis Danos depicts the picture...

It depicts a bare, dark room in which five children sit around an old priest and are totally absorbed by the old man's words. His raised finger carries both religious and philosophical connotations, and his gentle, softly lit face exudes an aura of holiness. Behind the children sits a young man, who listens to the priest with similar attention; a rifle rests between his legs, indicating that the depicted activity is dangerous—he is there to protect the children in the case of discovery by the Turks. His youthful but virile figure alludes to the impending struggle of the Greeks for freedom and for the resurrection of their glorious past, as suggested by the large fragment of an ancient column against which two of the children rest.⁴⁵

That is why the ignoring of it by Maria Repousi and her co-authors was unacceptable for many people. The opposite manner of Repousi's book over the topic was perceived as a scandal⁴⁶ with nationalist parties. Afterwards, the television channels and all the broadcasting organs started to stand against the book, similar to what happened after the Christodoulos's interview. Maria Repousi describes the situation as an unequal game.

But secret schools could not be proved with any scientific research. German journalist Amalia Van Gent describes the issue ...

⁴⁵ Antonis Danos, *Nikolaos Gyzis's 'The Secret School' and an Ongoing National Discourse*, Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide and Antonis Danos (2002-2003)
<http://www.arts.yorku.ca/hist/tgallant/courses/documents/danosgizassecretsschoolsarticle.pdf>
[Accessed on 10 August 2012]

⁴⁶ Maria Repousi, *Battles over the national past of Greeks – The Greek History Textbook Controversy 2006-2007*, *Geschichte für heute. Zeitschrift für historisch-politische Bildung* 2 (2009), 56-63
http://users.auth.gr/marrep/PS_REPOUSI/ENG/PUBLICATIONS/final%20battles%20for%20the%20national%20past.pdf [Accessed on 8 August 2012]

Maria Repousi and her group decided to ignore the legend of the ‘secret school’ in the new book, for example. According to the legend, which originated in the 19th century, the Greek language and culture only survived thanks to the efforts of Orthodox priest who resisted a ban imposed by the Ottoman Empire and secretly taught children in churches and monasteries. The picture by the famous painter Nicolaos Gyzis, showing a white-bearded Pope reading to a group of girls and boys by candlelight, has influenced generations of Greeks, but it has little to do with historical reality. The fact is Greek schools were not forbidden under the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁷

3.2.2 – Waterfront Throng “Συνωστισμός»

This issue may be the most remarkable one during the times of conflict. Only one word, which was used by writers, revived the *history war* of Greece. When we take a look at the national history of Greece, we see that *Asia Minor Catastrophe* is the most sensitive and tragic issue. In the book, the topic is “Asia Minor: Expedition and Catastrophe⁴⁸”.

Authors of the textbook gave half of one page to the evolution and results of the Asia Minor tragedy. The rest of the page includes one map of the Greek Army’s moves, chronology and glossary. The narration of the case was quite reasonable for the nationalist side, but the last sentence of the paragraph changed the whole atmosphere...

⁴⁷ “The dispute over a Greek history book”, *euro-topics (Neue Zürcher Zeitung)*, Amalia Van Gent, 12 April 2007, *Switzerland*

http://www.eurotopics.net/en/home/autorenindex/autor_van_gent_amalia/ [accessed on 9 August 2012]

⁴⁸ “Μικρασία: εκστρατεία και καταστροφή», p. 100 (2006 edition of the book)

On 27 August 1922, the Turkish army enters Smyrna. Thousands of Greeks jostle (crowd) at the port and try to leave for Greece.⁴⁹

This sentence led even some supporters of the textbook to have suspicions and questions about the innovative narrative of the book. The sensitivity of the case had a huge impact on people's viewpoints. "*Synostismos*" means congestion, huddling, jostling, throng, *etc.* The word was used as a verb here and sounded apart from its purpose. As the majority of the Greeks had relatives in Asia Minor and lived through this tragedy, the attempt to embellish the story was intolerable for Greek people.

Most of the press started to blame the book by claiming that the authors misguided the people with wrong information. The journalist George Gilson draws attention to the public opinion through his words...

That the 1922 burning of Smyrna by Kemal Ataturk's forces and the widespread killing and expulsion of the Greek and Armenian population are downplayed in the textbook has stirred an outcry in the public debate.⁵⁰

This wording dragged the spotlights over Maria Repousi. She gave many interviews about the debate. In her every speech, she was defending that her textbook did not contain any deliberate errors. On the other hand, she welcomed the misguided opinions on the "Asia Minor" topic. That was the only fallacy she admitted during the debate. She also pledged that that *unfortunate wording* would be changed in the first revision.

⁴⁹ "Στις 27 Αυγούστου 1922 ο τουρκικός στρατός μπαίνει στη Σμύρνη. Χιλιάδες Έλληνες συνωστίζονται στο λιμάνι προσπαθώντας να μπουν στα πλοία και να φύγουν για την Ελλάδα.", p. 100 (2006 edition of the book)

⁵⁰ "Battle royal over history book", *Athens News*, George Gilson, 23 March 2007
http://www.athensnews.gr/old_issue/13227/15899 [accessed on 6 September 2012]

We said that this was an unfortunate wording that will be changed in the first correction of the book. It introduces a new method of history teaching and learning, which depends largely on using images as well.

I feel pushed in a corner. It's not easy being at the center of public attention, with name-calling.⁵¹

3.2.4 – Child Levy

There were too many issues in the textbook, which were discussed in hot-tempered television debates. It is difficult to feature every single issue about the textbook. Another issue is to be dealt with the seizing of the Greek boys from their families during Ottoman sovereignty in order for them to be in the service of the Janissary corps.

The history textbooks in Balkan countries, including the Greek ones, define this case as “Child Levy”. This term is referring to the way of levying of the Ottoman Empire from the non-Muslim minorities. This happening is pronounced in Repousi’s textbook⁵² as “recruitment” instead of “kidnapping”.⁵³

Another debatable part of this issue was that the textbook did not give enough place as nationalist bloc of Greece demanded. It was considered as the ignorance of Turkish barbarism in the eyes of the opponents of the book.

⁵¹ “Battle royal over history book”, *Athens News*, George Gilson, 23 March 2007
http://www.athensnews.gr/old_issue/13227/15899 [accessed on 7 September 2012]

⁵² Maria Repousi, *et al. Ιστορία Στ΄ Δημοτικού - Στα νεώτερα και σύγχρονα χρόνια* [History for the 6th grade- On the Modern and Contemporary era], Οργανισμός Εκδόσεων Διδακτικών Βιβλίων [Institute for the Publication of Educational Books], Athens, 2006, p.18

⁵³ “Battle royal over history book”, *Athens News*, George Gilson, 23 March 2007
http://www.athensnews.gr/old_issue/13227/15899 [accessed on 12 September 2012]

3.3 - The Evolution of the Debate

3.2.1 - Major Parties of the Debate

The Greek Orthodox Church became and remained the leading opposition party to the debate. Even the political parties of different tendencies such as KKE and Gold Dawn, came together and stood against the book together. The new parliament after the general elections in 2007 also changed the balance of power in New Democracy. Newcomers among the deputies were the proponents of the withdrawal of the textbook. On the other hand, the Socialist Party and Coalition of Radical Left (SYRIZA) were against its withdrawal.

On the other hand, Popular Orthodox Rally (ΛΑ.Ο.Σ) started to become an actor in this debate. Since they gained ten deputy seats after the elections in September 2007, this situation especially led them to appear more in the media. Their deputy, Adonis Georgiadis joined a television broadcast in ΤΗΛΕΑΣΤΥ⁵⁴ (Teleasty) a few days before the elections and mentioned...

Don't vote for New Democracy (ND) again because they account for this textbook and this book underestimates/reduces our national image. Maria Repousi has the academic freedom in Greece, but why does my child have to read this book especially?

⁵⁴ ΤΗΛΕΑΣΤΥ is a TV channel which owned by ΛΑ.Ο.Σ

3.2.2 - Antibaro's Impact and Their Activities

The website called “Αντιβάρo⁵⁵” has been one of the most efficient aggressive blocs of this debate. Andreas Stalidis established this site in May of 2001.⁵⁶ He was living in a small town of England. The first huge campaign of this webpage occurred before the referendum of Annan Plan in 2004. Afterwards the debate about the 6th grades’ textbook gave an opportunity to *Αντιβάρo*⁵⁷ to become popular.



Figure 10 - Andreas Stalidis, the founder of *Αντιβάρo*

In 2006, Dimitris Natsios, who is a teacher, took the copy of Repousi’s textbook after its first presentation and took it home. In his interview on [ΣΚΑΪ](#) TV, he gave...

If I need to use the phrase of Commander Makrigiannis, ‘While I was reading, my eyes were burning’. I could not believe what I saw. The book was entirely deconstruction of our history...⁵⁸

After he read the whole book, he wrote an article with an opposite expression and he decided to send this article to the websites who may concern and mobilize the society against the

⁵⁵ Αντιβάρo (Antivaro) means “balance weight” in Greek.

⁵⁶ <http://www.antibaro.gr/about>

⁵⁷ See www.antibaro.gr

⁵⁸ “Για να χρησιμοποιήσω μια φράση του στρατηγού Μακρυγιάννη «διάβαζα και κάπνιζαν τα μάτια μου». Δεν πίστευα σε αυτά που έβλεπα. Το βιβλίο είχε ολική αποδόμηση της ιστορίας μας...”

“Το Βιβλίο (The book)”, *ΣΚΑΪ* TV, *Οι νέοι Φάκελοι*, <http://folders.skai.gr/main/theme?id=17&locale=el>

book. Therefore the *Αντιβάρσο* became aware of this textbook. The founder of the website Andreas Stalidis gave a speech about his first impression over this book...

I was in England and I said to myself ‘I have to do something about that’.
And the next day I gathered 10-12 people who are against the book in
order to run a campaign cooperatively...⁵⁹

They launched a big scale of signatures for the recall of the book. This list reached 4.000 signatures⁶⁰ in a very short time. The founder of this website emphatically mentions that signatures against the book reached its peak by the end of 2006 with 11,000 and he also adds that this list includes too many academicians and historians also from Germany, New York, England, Luxemburg and Greece.

On the contrary, 500 academicians gathered to sign a letter that warned the authorities to keep the book in schools.⁶¹

3.2.3 - Conflict on the Rampage

The textbook was introduced to the public as pro-Turkish by most of the parties. As an addition, this majority claimed that Europeans, Americans and Turkish, especially referring to the meetings of Greek and Turkish Ministers of Education about the bilateral changes/corrections over the textbooks, financed this textbook. The opponents of the textbook blamed the book as the

⁵⁹ “Το Βιβλίο (The book)”, *ΣΚΑΪ TV, Οι νέοι Φάκελοι*,
<http://folders.skai.gr/main/theme?id=17&locale=el>

⁶⁰ “History book divides opinion”, *e-kathimerini*, 6 March 2007

⁶¹ “History book divides opinion”, *e-kathimerini*, 6 March 2007

product of **New World Order**. During days of election fever, Psomiades, the prefect of Thessaloniki, appeared in a television debate...

-In the New (World) Order of the things, I don't like to be partner. If we don't react, we will be accomplice in it. I, personally, don't want to be an accomplice in the crime called genocide of memory.

-Do you think that the change in the way history is narrated is a mandate from outside? Is it a need of others?

-I talked about a New Order of things. I said that this book has been written for others not for Greek children.

-For whom, do you mean?

-Those who want to participate in the New Order. Personally, I don't want to participate in any Order. I belong to Greece. Ok? And I would say that all the nations belong to Greece. We are the ones who taught history, civilization, democracy, freedom and these are things we should not forget. I don't want to be in the thrall of anybody. I want to live, to close my eyes, to teach my children the things that I learnt. And I consider that I have learnt the factual history.⁶²

The controversy over the book reached its peak during the pre-election period. Former New Democracy and PASOK member Stelios Papathemelis announced his new extreme right wing political party⁶³ just few months before the general elections in September 2007. He was aiming to take advantage of the nationalist atmosphere in the country in order to gain the votes of the nationalist bloc. Before the elections he was showing up in front of the cameras and furiously blaming the government by criticizing the book. But he could not make his plans work and could

⁶² He was interviewed on Tsimas's television programme, Research, April 2007
Maria Repousi, *History Textbooks Controversies in Greece, 1985-2008. Considerations on the text and the context*, Canadian Diversity / Diversité canadienne, vol. 7, no 1, (2009): 25-30.

⁶³ He is now considered as a left-wing nationalist and "traditional centrist patriot".
Makis Voridis, *Η ιδέα της Πατρίδας πέρα από την Δεξιά και την Αριστερά*, e.grammes.gr, 5 April 2006

<http://www.e-grammes.gr/article.php?id=2058> [accessed on 12 August 2012]

not manage to get elected in Greek legislative elections of 2007 by taking 0.8%⁶⁴ with his new party “Democratic Revival⁶⁵”.

The elections of 2007 brought glory and failure to the different blocks of nationalist view in Greece. On one hand, Papathemelis’s “Democratic Revival” failed to get seats in the parliament, on the other hand Georgios Karatzaferis’s “Popular Orthodox Rally⁶⁶” managed to get 10 deputies with 3.8%.

On the other hand, the election period also showed its scary face to the writing team of the book. Before the elections the opponents of the book could not manage to convince the government for its recall, but this did not hinder their goal. Thus the private lives of the writing team started to appear in the media. Maria Repousi depicts this “uncomfortable” period...

The tabloids violated the private lives of the writers. Photographs in swimsuits, taken without permission with long-range cameras on beaches, in country houses, details of dress or personal lives, especially for the female members of the team -needless to say, with many inaccuracies- adorned the political debate with generous amounts of sexism. In order to defeat the case of the book, it was necessary to damage the reputation of the writing team. The battle was again unequal and carried out under conditions which academic community could not follow.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ <http://ekloges-prev.singularlogic.eu/v2007/pages/index.html>

⁶⁵ Δημοκρατική Αναγέννηση
<http://www.danagennisi.gr/> [accessed on 14 August 2012]

⁶⁶ Λαϊκός Ορθόδοξος Συναγερμός
<http://www.neolaialaos.gr/> [accessed on 14 August 2012]

⁶⁷ Maria Repousi, *Battles over the national past of Greeks – The Greek History Textbook Controversy 2006-2007, Geschichte für heute. Zeitschrift für historisch-politische Bildung* 2 (2009), 56-63
http://users.auth.gr/marrep/PS_REPOUSI/ENG/PUBLICATIONS/final%20battles%20for%20the%20national%20past.pdf [Accessed on 8 August 2012]

This portrait gives us many hints about the atmosphere of the history wars. The extreme-nationalist side of the controversy does not avoid anything which would detract from any single positive detail mentioned in the textbook. In this sense, I can mention that nationalist reaction did the same whenever someone tried to change the structure of history education in Greece. This clearly means that some parties do not want major changes in existed educational systems.

CHAPTER IV – THE STALEMATE

4.1 - Need for Revision

After some parties rekindled the debate, not only there were big reactions against the textbook, but also the Parliamentary composition has changed with the general elections in 2007. The Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs, Marietta Giannakou backed the book for a considerable time, but new structure of the government replaced her seat by Evripidis Styliniadis. This revision over the book became the first determined step for the recall of the book and the cabinet revision, which was brought by elections, clinched the controversies over the book.

The troublesome side of the book was not only about the common history between Turkey and Greece, but also the lack of the information about World War II and European history became one of the main topics during the debate. In the opinion of the nationalist bloc, the most bothersome and indefensible part of the book was about the topic over Catastrophe of Asia Minor. Just the one word, which was used by the authors, whipped up the disputes. That way of history narrating brought the bitter memories of the people to surface and that situation led them to stand against the textbook. The theologian George Mustakis describes the condition with these words...

The book tries to eliminate the words, which challenge and brings in front of us the bitter memories.

It's a good thing, but we are not mature (enough) to accept such a book.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ "Greek Church attacks history book", *BBC News*, 27 April 2007
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6525899.stm> [accessed on 17 September 2012]

During the debate, one of the issues that came to the fore was the language used in the textbooks. Those who supported the book claimed that use of softer language in the history textbook writing is a crucial matter. But the opponents did everything to obstruct the introduction of different perspectives in historiography. The steadily increasing tension led Minister Marietta Giannakou to give a statement over the demands for withdrawal...

You cannot write all the truths on 150 pages. The book has imperfections and we are going to do what is necessary, but I am not going to withdraw another book like it happened in the past with schoolbooks, which contained obvious inaccuracies.⁶⁹

Marietta Giannakou did not cease to support the textbook although there were still heavy criticisms over it. In a *stalemate* position, she mentioned that it would be corrected if it were necessary. But she emphasized that only the **didactical problems** of the book would be improved.

After the statements of the Minister, Maria Repousi leaned towards the idea of correction over the book, but she was underlying...

The editorial team will not accept a correction from the so-called 'nationalist lobby'.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ «Δεν μπορείτε να γράψετε όλες τις αλήθειες στις 150 σελίδες του. Το βιβλίο έχει ελαττώματα και εμείς θα κάνουμε αυτό που πρέπει, αλλά εγώ δεν θα αποσύρω άλλο ένα βιβλίο Ιστορίας όπως έγινε στο παρελθόν με σχολικά εγχειρίδια που περιείχαν κραυγαλέες ανακρίβειες.»

“Απάντηση Γιαννάκου στις ενστάσεις της Εκκλησίας για την Ιστορία της Στ' Δημοτικού” [Answer Giannakou on objections of the Church on the history book], *In.gr News*, 26 January 2007

⁷⁰ ‘Greek-history textbook stirs flame’, *Turkish Daily News*, 26 March 2007

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=greek-history-textbook-stirs-flame-2007-03-26> [accessed on 18 September 2012]

4.1.1 - Demands for Correction

At the very first phase of the debate the textbook was introduced to the public as pro-Turkish. Moreover, the Greek Church called the book as an offering presented to the **altar** for the Turkish-Greek friendship. As an addition, the opponent camp of the debate professed foreigners, especially Americans and Turks, referring to the meetings of Greek and Turkish Ministers of Education about the bilateral innovations over the history textbooks, financed the textbook. Especially, the period which is known as ‘earthquake diplomacy’ after 1999 gathered Greece and Turkey. Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Ismail Cem and his counterpart Georgios Papandreou did not choose confrontational style in policy making. Their meetings led to organize a committee in order to revise the history and geography textbooks of both countries bilaterally. Their aim was to extract the ultra-nationalist, hostile and unkind expressions from the books. The ‘Turkish-friend textbook’ claim was supported by nationalist bloc referring to this context during the debate. Moreover, the leader of the nationalist party LAOS, Georgios Karatzafereis mentioned over the issues...

The Karamanlis government is hostage to the Papandreou-Cem agreements and poisons the spirit of the Greek youth. The obsessive protection of Ms. Repoussi and the rest of the leftists who cooperated in the publication of this historic monstrosity will have consequences that will reach the ballot box.

The claims that writing team acted under the influence of agreements made by Papandreou and Cem were denied by both Maria Repousi and the Pedagogical Institute.⁷¹

⁷¹ Jurgen Broeders, *The Greeks Fought Heroically: A History of Greek History Textbooks*, Radboud University Nijmegen, 2008

Ioannis Papagrigoriou, the writer of the previous book and the supervisor of Repousi's textbook, claims that the history textbooks should venerate patriotism, but he complains about the critics which assert the Repousi's book does not have it...

Is it nationalist to love your country and traditions? The aim is to instill love of country and a national conscience.⁷²

Afterwards, the Ministry released a questionnaire to the teachers as well as students in order to learn their opinions about the book so that the book could be revised according to the feedbacks.

At the same time, there was a dispute in academic world. Many representatives of five scientific journals gathered and submitted an appeal to the highest court "in order to categorize" the textbook as **unconstitutional**. But on the other side, 500 academicians petitioned the education authorities in order to keep the book in curriculum.⁷³ In support of the Repousi's book, they also organized a press conference on 5 March 2007.⁷⁴ Ministry also decided to ask the standpoint of the **Academy of Athens**. The writing team of the book did not like the idea of taking the opinion of Academy of Athens because of the conservative structure of the institution.

http://www.euroclio.eu/new/index.php/resources-publications-a-websites/country-reports-mainmenu-403/doc_download/61-2008-the-greeks-fought-heroically-qa-history-of-greek-history-textbooksq [accessed on 28 September 2012]

⁷² "Battle royal over history book", *Athens News*, George Gilson, 23 March 2007

http://www.athensnews.gr/old_issue/13227/15899 [accessed on 17 September 2012]

⁷³ 'Greek-history textbook stirs flame', *Turkish Daily News*, 26 March 2007

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=greek-history-textbook-stirs-flame-2007-03-26> [accessed on 18 September 2012]

⁷⁴ Maria Repousi, *Battles over the national past of Greeks – The Greek History Textbook Controversy 2006-2007*, *Geschichte für heute. Zeitschrift für historisch-politische Bildung* 2 (2009), 56-63

http://users.auth.gr/marrep/PS_REPOUSI/ENG/PUBLICATIONS/final%20battles%20for%20the%20national%20past.pdf [Accessed on 20 September 2012]

Moreover, Maria Repousi denounced that Academy of Athens has dark pages in its own history because of its affirmative stance towards the dictatorial regime in Greece between 1967 and 1974.⁷⁵

During this process, draft report was leaked to the public and weekly newspaper *Paron* published it. In this draft report, Academy was drawing attention to 70 points within the textbook. The report was emphasizing that this textbook did not serve the national benefits and spirit in the context of Greek national memory.

A school history book must be well edited, follow rules of historiography, attract students and earn their trust and that of their families, teachers and other possible readers. The book in question is faulty on all these counts.

⁷⁶

When the Academy of Athens released the official report of correction on 22 March 2007, the grumblings over the book raised again in public. The opposite camp of the debate did not find the correction points sufficient. Moreover, the opponents of the book requested the withdrawal of the book again. The Communist Party of Greece (KKE⁷⁷) was one of them who claimed that the book was written according to the European integration and honoring the European Union and free market.⁷⁸ At this juncture, the Cypriots attended the case since the

⁷⁵ Maria Repousi, *New History Textbooks in Greece - The chronicle of an ideological war on the national past*, 2007
http://users.auth.gr/marrep/PS_REPOUSI/ENG/PUBLICATIONS/New%20History%20Books%20in%20Greece.pdf [accessed on 25 September 2012]

⁷⁶ 'Καταπελτής η Ακαδημία', *Paron*, 18 March 2007
<http://www.paron.gr/v3/new.php?id=13019&colid=37&catid=33&dt=2007-03-18%200:0:0>
[accessed on 18 September 2012]

⁷⁷ Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδας

⁷⁸ Antonis Liakos, *History Wars: testing tolerance*, it was published in the volume on 'Tolerance and Discriminations in History, by CLIOHRESnet (published by University of Pisa, 2008), p. 77-92

same book was taught also in Greek Cypriot schools. One of the contentious issues which debate arose was the “Cyprus Question” in the book. The presentation of the ongoing problem did not satisfy the Greek Cypriots. Their demand from the writing team was to ignore map, which shows the partition of the island. Addition to the map, the book was hoping to maintain the referendum spirit in order to solve the Cyprus issue. But these sensitivities of the Greek Cypriots did not take place in Greek part of the debate as the Cypriots hoped.

The writing team intended to focus on the mistakes in order to exhibit an accurate work. However, Maria Repousi emphasized that the textbook was going to retain its structure in its 2nd edition as well.



Figure 11 – The Cyprus map in the textbook, p. 121

While she was interviewed before the book was corrected, she also mentioned...

It is too early to say exactly. We are at the stage of studying the comments. The writers have to be prudent because the idea is to move forward, not backward to where the scaremongering and undemocratic tactics want to take us.⁷⁹

<http://antonisliakos.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/history-wars.pdf> [accessed on 25 September 2012]

⁷⁹ “Educational pretext for ideological attack”, *International Herald Tribune*, 4 April 2007
http://users.auth.gr/marrep/PS_REPOUSI/ENG/PUBLICATIONS/HERALD%20TRIBUNE.pdf
[accessed on 14 September 2012]

The opponent bloc of the debate was still asking for dramatic changes within the textbook. During the same interview, Maria Repousi gave some hints about the corrections, which they would apply...

At this stage the changes mainly concern the introductions to the texts, because the attention and comments have focused on them.

The structure of the book, the overall methodological and scientific basis, will not change, for instance. We are open to such changes, but they will emerge from an assessment of the “teach ability” of the book. If teachers have difficulty managing the new method, we will take it seriously into account and work with the Pedagogical Institute on finding ways to rectify it. That will not be in the coming school year but the one after.⁸⁰

Contrarily, the writing team was advancing with a compromising manner this time. Furthermore, Maria Repousi was pointing out the Pedagogical Institute for cooperation in a possible case of necessity. On one hand, the authors of the book were enthusiastic about the 2nd edition of it; on the other hand they were suspicious about the echoes of what was being said in schools before...

We should expect an even better book. That is our goal and we hope teachers will help us with that and refuse to see the book through the eyes of the critics. They must stick to their own opinion and not get caught up in partisan pettiness.

In my view, the biggest problem for the book is not what is being said in public and on television but the echoes of that shouting in schools.

The book will be taught from the start of the school year in all Greek-Cypriot schools, and it is an incredible act of political irresponsibility to run down a book that the state and the competent authorities have deemed suitable for schools. Besides, this book is already in all schoolbags. Has anyone who makes their career being taught this book? How much their

⁸⁰ “Educational pretext for ideological attack”, *International Herald Tribune*, 4 April 2007 http://users.auth.gr/marrep/PS_REPOUSI/ENG/PUBLICATIONS/HERALD%20TRIBUNE.pdf [accessed on 14 September 2012]

relation to history, knowledge, school and the state has been destabilized?
81

4.1.2 - Releasing of the 2nd Edition

Ministry of Education gave the authorization to the Academy of Athens over the evaluation of the mistakes within the book. This decision bothered the writing team because the conservative retired professors staffed the institution.

Before the release of 2nd edition, the minister had a meeting with Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis over the issue. After the meeting she declared...

It has the right to add pages and then we are not going to have any problem.⁸²

During the summer, writing team worked on these mistakes and prepared its 2nd edition for publication. The changes within the book were applied by the agreements of writing team, Marietta Giannakou and the Pedagogical Institute. The authors of the book were already welcoming that there had to be some improvements in the book. Before its publication, Marietta Giannakou gave a statement about the correction process...

⁸¹ "Educational pretext for ideological attack", *International Herald Tribune*, 4 April 2007
http://users.auth.gr/marrep/PS_REPOUSI/ENG/PUBLICATIONS/HERALD%20TRIBUNE.pdf
[accessed on 17 September 2012]

⁸² «Έχει δικαίωμα να προσθέσει και σελίδες και, επομένως, δεν θα έχουμε πρόβλημα»
Dionysis Nasopoulos,

‘Βήμα βήμα υποχωρούν στη Δεξιά του Κυρίου’ [Step by step receding to the right], *TA NEA Online* (5 April 2007) <http://www.tanea.gr/default.asp?pid=2&ct=1&artid=16698> [accessed on 25 September 2012]

The case of the textbook is on the right way. In the following days, I will make very specific announcements.⁸³

In 2007 August, the print circulation of the book was quite big. When we consider the previous books, 175,000 copies were a huge amount for history textbook publishing.

But the television shows, the press, countless bloggers, forums, *etc.*, generated a big scale of virtual contention. With its 2nd edition, the controversy over the book became the most popular subject in a daily life of Greek streets. As the upcoming elections were on the horizon, every politician was talking about this fresh issue in order to take the support of the people. On the other hand, the foremost historians of the country were trying to keep the book at schools by organizing press conferences.

4.1.3 – Major Corrections

The writing team gathered and worked on some corrections over the book. It was difficult to meet the expectations of the extreme nationalists. Apart from the expectations, only 6 pages were corrected. It is hard to mention that these corrections were dramatic ones because only some words or sentences were perfected. To give an example...

- Vasilis Kalaitzoglou narrates.... (Page 105 – 2006 edition of the textbook)
A refugee, Vasilis Kalaitzoglou narrates... (2007 edition of the textbook)

⁸³ «Η υπόθεση του βιβλίου είναι σε πολύ καλό δρόμο και θα κάνω τις επόμενες ημέρες ανακοινώσεις πολύ συγκεκριμένες»

‘Σε οριακό σημείο για να είναι έτοιμο το βιβλίο της Ιστορίας’ [Minor point before the history book is ready], *TA NEA Online* (26 July 07)
<http://www.tanea.gr/ellada/article/?aid=31876> [accessed on 27 September 2012]

- Exodus: The leaving of Greeks from Asia Minor (Page 103 – 2006 edition)
Exodus: Here, the **dramatic** leaving of Greeks from Asia Minor (2007 edition)

- The following picture is missing in the second edition of the book. This picture is symbolizing the entrance of Greek army to the Asia Minor. In order to be shown as the victims of the case, this picture had to be withdrawn.



- Kemal Ataturk: The leader of **Independence** struggle of Turks and the President of Republic of Turkey afterwards. (Page 100 – 2006 edition of the book)

Kemal Ataturk: The leader of **national** struggle of Turks and the President of Republic of Turkey afterwards. (2007 edition of the book)

- On 27 August 1922, the Turkish army enters Smyrna. Thousands of Greeks **jostle (crowd)** at the port and try to leave for Greece. (Page 100 – 2006 edition of the book)

Hundred thousands of Greeks were driven in **dramatic circumstances** to leave their houses and to search desperately a way to leave for Greece. (2007 edition of the book)

In this respect, there was no methodological or ideological change in the 2nd edition of the book. The writing team focused on consummating the existing words or sentences. The possibility to satisfy both sides with these corrections was quite low. The releasing of the 2nd edition did not stop the opponents of the book. Moreover, they started to campaign for its withdrawal with a more aggressive spirit.

4.2 - Withdrawal of the Book

Two extreme right wing parties agreed to challenge with the book for its withdrawal. Minister of Education Marietta Giannakou did not withdraw the book, but in order to isolate the controversies she suggested retaining the mistakes within the book and changing them with the correct information as soon as possible.

Extreme right wing groups carried out a very offensive approach towards the book. The word spread quickly and these groups found a very big support from everyone including the Left and communist groups. These groups focused on a narrating of the cases between Turks and Greeks within the book. That is why this book was introduced as a pre-ordered thing by the exogenous forces.

4.2.1 - First Impact of Corrections

Before the elections, no matter what the extreme groups had done, they could not manage to persuade the Government for the withdrawal. In order to defeat the case of the book, it was necessary to damage the reputation of the writing team. The tabloids violated the private lives of the writing team. Their photos in swimsuits, which were taken without permission, covered the press. This caused to transform the debate into a different perspective.

During the election period, the political parties could not involve with the issue of correction. But Papatthemelis blamed the book in a debate on television...

The book is neither teachable nor corrigible. Consequently, the recall of the book is mandatory.⁸⁴

4.2.2 - The Withdrawal Process

The installations of the new government after the general elections in 2007 ended the everlasting debate. New form of the government also brought new Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs. New Minister Evripidis Styliniades heeded the demands of the opponent bloc and announced the recall of the book from



Figure 12 - Press conference for the announcement of withdrawal

the curriculum on 25 September 2007 with a press conference...

Due to the significant concerns about the appropriate content of the history book of the last class of elementary school, it was decided to withdraw the book and temporary replace it with the book of the previous years.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ «το βιβλίο αυτό δεν είναι διδάξιμο ούτε διορθώσιμο, επομένως η απόσυρσή του είναι επιτακτική»

‘Σε οριακό σημείο για να είναι έτοιμο το βιβλίο της Ιστορίας’ [Minor point before the history book is ready], *TA NEA Online* (26 July 07)

<http://www.tanea.gr/ellada/article/?aid=31876> [accessed on 27 September 2012]

⁸⁵ “Με αφορμή τις σημαντικές επιφυλάξεις για την καταλληλότητα του περιεχομένου του βιβλίου Ιστορίας της έκτης Δημοτικού, αποφασίστηκε η απόσυρση του βιβλίου και η προσωρινή αντικατάστασή του από το βιβλίο Ιστορίας που διδασκόταν τα προηγούμενα χρόνια.»

In addition to the withdrawal of Repousi's book, he announced the return of the previous textbook, which was written by the commission in 1980s.

4.3 - Withering of the Debate

The Withdrawal of the book was on the first pages of the newspapers. This caused the variety of reactions from every walk of socio-political life. Protesters in historical quarters, negative comments from the new minister and congratulations from politicians and journalists became the last effective reactions before the withering process.

4.3.1 - Why did it Wither?

As a result, book remained in the history. The attacks of Greek Church, the coalition of nationalist parties against the book before the elections constructed the convenient ground for the withdrawal. After the replacement of the textbook, the tension of the controversy quickly reduced. Actually, the debate remained virtual all along 2006 and 2007 because the opponents did not allow the experts of history writing to discuss the book. The historians could not take an effective role during the controversies. Instead, they generated an opponent bloc and drew the attention of public to the sensitive cases within the book. The bitter memories and nationalist rhetorics were highlighted in public and therefore no one could find a chance to talk about the quality of the book. There was only one aim to reach when the debate has started. That was to bury the book alive. That's why the recall of the book became the end of virtual controversy.

4.3.2 - Who Wither it?

The very first reaction came from the Archbishop after the withdrawal of the book. Christodoulos was so delighted with the situation and he did not last maintain his previous sayings. On the other hand New Government did not intend to wither the discussion over the book all of a sudden because there was a lot to take advantage of. The New Minister, Styliniadis announced that the Government tended to seek writers for the preparation of a completely new history textbook.⁸⁶ But PASOK held responsible Karamanlis that he abused the textbook case for his political benefits without considering the innovations in Greek historiography. Also SYRIZA emphasized that this withdrawal reflected the nationalist side of New Democracy. This was perceived as implicit New Democracy and LAOS coalition in the parliament. KKE was one of the parties who asking the recall of the book during the debate, but the withdrawal and the process afterwards did not satisfy the party members.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Marny Papamataiou, 'Το θρίλερ της Ιστορίας' [The history thriller], *To Vima Online* (30 September 2007)
<http://www.tovima.gr/relatedarticles/article/?aid=183837&wordsinarticle=το%3bθρίλερ%3bτη%3bιστορίας> [accessed on 27 September 2012]

⁸⁷ 'Βολές από την αντιπολίτευση, ικανοποίηση από την Εκκλησία για το τέλος του βιβλίου' [Shots from the opposition, satisfaction by the Church for the end of the book], *In.gr News* (25 September 2007)
<http://www.in.gr/news/article.asp?lngEntityID=834707> [accessed on 27 September 2012]

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSIONS

The Civil War and the period after military dictatorship in Greece made a big impact on shaping the Greek historiography. Particularly, the Leftist view became stronger and affected also the history narrating. We can still observe efficient nationalist reflexes albeit the Left is strong enough in Greece. Absolutely, it is hard to claim that the Left is not nationalist by default. During this debate, we see that the Communist Party supports the claims of the nationalist bloc. It is seen that the case has started with good expectations, but it slowly went on rampage.

When Maria Repousi's textbook was introduced to the media in September 2006, everybody was thinking that this textbook had an idealist perspective and made big innovations in historiography. In fact, the previous book for 6th grade was written in 1988. In 18 years, so many things had changed in the world and Greece as well. There was a necessity of a new textbook. As the debate was rekindled, most of the people were in suspicion if this book met the expectations or not. The Orthodox Church took the lead and became the torchbearer of the circles who opposed the textbook.

First of all, I can argue that this book brought innovations in terms of its methodology such as the increasing of the visual gravity and the decreasing of the long paragraphs to be memorized. These innovations were perceived in different ways. The history professors in Greece did support the new methodology, which the book applied even though its content and event narrating did not satisfy some of these academicians. There was consensus among most of the historians in Greece that the so-called old-fashioned historiography should have been changed. The opposition side of the book was emphasizing that the national values and heroes are much more important than the methodology of the textbook. They preferred to focus on the

content of the book. This content had to include the national heroes of the Greek Revolution and the tragedies of the Greek people during Ottoman sovereignty.

In the second chapter, I tried to generate broad information about Repousi's textbook. My observations sum up in distribution of the materials. Since all the writers are educational specialist, especially in teaching training, they concentrated on the methodology of the book rather than its content. They took the European history textbooks as a pattern during their work. Therefore, they created a less voluminous book than it was expected to be. The length of the book also became one of the topics of the debate. This clearly means that some parties do not want major changes in existed educational systems.

The intense of the visuals in the book is the most remarkable point from my point of view because the writers peculiarly focused on the usage of visuals. Their projection was to lead the pupils learning the history in a visual context. They preferred to use small paragraphs attached to several visuals. Covering the whole page with pictures did not become a matter of hesitation for them to be criticized because of the methodology. In addition to the visual distribution, the elimination of some national figures was striking during the debate. We cannot actually utter that there is no national figure in the book at all. I can argue that their visual selection was made meticulously. The aim was to highlight the well-known important figures and paintings on the one hand and to avoid the stimulating ones on the other. Besides these, there are some pictures in the book, which aim to soften the strained relations with the neighbors, especially Turkey. They chose using softer language in narrating the common history without waiting the bilateral agreements between Turkey and Greece. The second, third and fourth chapters of my paper dealt with the most sensitive case of this debate, so-mentioned "*Waterfront throng*" in the book. Instead of displaying the barbarism of Turks, Repousi's textbook aimed to share the common

bitter memories. The Turkish textbooks display this case as a victory. Therefore, Repousi's book was blamed as it served to Turkish benefits. But there is no expression in the book, which displays the Turkish victory. The only picture which symbolizes the entrance of Greek army to Smyrna, was the only picture removed from the book. Nevertheless the writing team took it as their fault and revised their narrating and the picture selection in the second edition of the book. But this *hush money* was not enough for the nationalist side of the debate.

The easiest thing has been the exploitation of the sensitivities of the Greek people all along the years such as the *Waterfront throng* issue. In Repousi's case, the book was exposed to countless attacks in different topics such as downplaying the role of the Greek Church during Greek Revolution, the compromising manner to the Cyprus question, the lack of Secret School issue, *etc.* All of these topics were used by nationalist bloc of the debate as a political instrument against the Government just before the general elections. If this book would not be published, they would search for another material to exploit the nationalist tendencies. All of the nationalist parties, especially LAOS, pledged the Greek people to withdraw this textbook if they could come to the power. As a result of these promises, we observed that the conservative perspective gained a lot of votes in 2007 elections, but they could not come to the power.

Also New Democracy was on the center of the debate. The book gained permission to be published under their governance. But few months before the elections, the polls were displaying a considerable decrease in their votes. All of a sudden, the recalling of the book became one of the election promises of New Democracy. When they came to the power again, the withdrawal of the book became their first operation to be done.

Nevertheless, the withdrawal of the book did not damage the Turkish-Greek relations, but it interrupted the process of changing the textbooks bilaterally. As a result, this textbook was banned only from the Greek Curriculum. It is still accessible in the bookstores. No obstructions to its publication after the elections show us how the book was used as a political instrument. The book might have some imperfections, mistakes or misleading contents, but it had to be supported to improve it in every sense. The actual intentions of the authors, which were to soften the history narrating, were misguided and this textbook remained in history.

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