

Modern Education

Правильная ссылка на статью:

Aleksandrova O. Reflecting on the Images of the Macedon Kings Philip and Alexander in Current History Textbooks // Современное образование. 2024. № 1. С. 70-78. DOI: 10.7256/2454-0676.2023.4.68848 EDN: KWTFXT URL: https://nbpublish.com/library_read_article.php?id=70598

Reflecting on the Images of the Macedon Kings Philip and Alexander in Current History Textbooks / Отражение образов македонских царей Филиппа и Александра в актуальных школьных учебниках по всеобщей истории

Александрова Ольга Игоревна

кандидат исторических наук

доцент, кафедра Всеобщей истории, Российский Государственный Педагогический Университет им. А. И. Герцена; научный сотрудник, Российский государственный гуманитарный университет

191186, Россия, г. Санкт-Петербург, наб. Реки Мойки, 48

✉ olgaalex@lenta.ru



[Статья из рубрики "В потоке книг"](#)

DOI:

10.7256/2454-0676.2023.4.68848

EDN:

KWTFXT

Дата направления статьи в редакцию:

13-11-2023

Аннотация: Предметом рассмотрения являются образы знаменитых деятелей эпохи античности – царя Македонии Филиппа II и его сына Александра, и их отражение на страницах учебников по всеобщей истории для 5 класса школы. Особое внимание уделяется соответствию информации, содержащейся в школьных учебниках данным исторических источников и материалам исторических исследований, посвященных данным правителям. Анализируется полнота отражения образов двух самых знаменитых македонских царей, а также система заданий и вопросов, позволяющих углубить знания как непосредственно о выдающихся исторических личностях, так и о поворотном периоде древней истории в целом. Авторы приходят к выводу, что личность и деятельность Филиппа практически полностью затмевается ярким образом Александра, что соответствует общим историографическим тенденциям. О преобразованиях Филиппа, изменивших ход не только греческой, но и мировой истории, говорится кратко и

вскользь или же рассматривается лишь одна из сторон его деятельности (военная реформа). Это не позволяет в полной мере оценить значимость этого деятеля для Древней истории, проанализировать его вклад в трансформацию греческого мира. В это же время Александр представлен в учебных пособиях не просто как талантливый полководец, но, фактически, как величайший герой античности. Все отрицательные стороны его личности сглажены, о них практически не упоминается, в конечном итоге остается блестящий полководец и талантливый правитель. Как представляется, это может привести не только к искаженному восприятию деятельности конкретных исторических личностей, но к формированию порочного по своей сути убеждения в том, что соевременные реформы и преобразования имеют несравненно меньшую ценность, чем военные походы и завоевания.

Ключевые слова:

Древняя История, Филипп II, Александр Македонский, Рецепция античности, Учебник, История в школе, Образование, История Древней Греции, Македония, История

Previously published in Russian in the journal *Pedagogy and Education*

This article was prepared with the support of a grant from the Russian Scientific Foundation "The Discourse of State Power in Ancient Societies and the Reception of its Elements in World and Russian Socio-political Practices" (project No. 19-18-00549), implemented at the Russian State University for the Humanities.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Professor F.F. Zelinsky rightly defined the importance of studying ancient history as an "organic element of the education of European society" [1, p. 2]. Teaching classical languages was an integral component of education in Imperial Russia. According to the charter of 1804, some subjects at universities had to be taught in Latin [2, p. 49], and in 1817, the study of Greek was also introduced in gymnasiums (secondary school) [2, p. 64]. Multiple ancient reminiscences in the works of poets and writers of the early nineteenth and twentieth centuries also confirm the weighty importance of ancient history in the education of that period.

The Soviet Union also understood the need to maintain an interest in ancient history. G.E. Zhurakovsky noted that the mass publication of publications by ancient authors and the appearance of scientific works devoted to this topic was in the '40s [3, p. 4]. This circumstance is explained by the high appreciation of ancient culture by the Marxist-Leninist classics. It is important to note that in Soviet schools, two years were allocated to the study of ancient history: in the fifth grade, the Ancient Near East and Ancient Greece were studied; in the sixth, Ancient Rome and the Early Middle Ages; at the same time, an average of nine and a half hours per week were allocated for lessons in this discipline [4, pp. 74–76].

The study of ancient history still remains relevant. The federal state educational standard specifies that students must understand Russian history as part of world history [i]. However, in modern schools, only one academic year is allocated for lessons in this era—the fifth grade. In this regard, part of the history educational material is taught in an abbreviated form compared to the gymnasium and Soviet programs.

Speaking about the normative documents regulating the content of the course of universal

history, we also note that, at the moment, there is no single approved historical and cultural standard for universal history that would clearly define the list of semantic units required for study. The historical and cultural standard on national history prescribes the parallel study of universal history and the history of Russia, starting from the sixth grade, i.e., the history of the Ancient World is, in fact, the only section of world history that is taught throughout the school year and without reference to Russian history. This gives the authors of textbooks and teaching aids the opportunity to dwell in more detail on some particularly important subjects of ancient history.

Naturally, their attention falls on this era's most striking historical characters, among whom, undoubtedly, the Macedonian Tsar Alexander the Great stands out. At the same time, the figure of King Philip, the conqueror's father, thanks to whose activities Ancient Macedonia subjugated the rest of Greece, remains, as it seems, in the shadow of the famous son. According to surveys of school graduates, even among first-year students studying "History" or "Historical Education," more than half hardly remember—if they know at all—that Alexander the Great's father also left a mark in history. It seems that this can be partly explained by the specifics of the material contained in school textbooks. It is enough to look at the list of the central semantic units in the draft historical and cultural standard on universal history: *"The Rise of Macedonia. Philip II and his politics. Alexander the Great. The conquest of Greece. The campaign of the Greek-Macedonian army to the East. The battle of the Granik River. The conquest of Syria, Phoenicia, and Egypt. Alexander's victory at Gavgamela. The fall of Persia. The conquest of Iran, Central Asia. A trip to India. The creation of Alexander's world empire. Its meaning."* Thus, Alexander's life and work are obviously given much more attention.

It is difficult to deny that vivid images, such as the examples of historical events that are revealed, greatly influence the formation of interest in the study of history, as well as the personal qualities of schoolchildren. It is all the more interesting to trace exactly what images appear to fifth graders on the pages of textbooks. The federal list of textbooks for the 2023–2024 academic year [ii] includes three lines of textbooks on Universal History. For the fifth grade in secondary school, this is a textbook by A.A. Vigasin, G.I. Godera, I.S. Svetsitskaya, ed. Iskenderova A.A. [5], a textbook by Nikishin V.O., Strelkova O.V., Tomashevich O.V., Mikhailovsky F.A. ed. Karpova S.P. [6], as well as a textbook by E.V. Saplina, A.A. Nemirovsky, E.I. Solomatina, S.V. Tyrin, ed. Medinsky V.R. [7]. We will turn to these textbooks in the course of our research.

Let's talk about the figure of Philip of Macedon. We should immediately point out that the chapters devoted to the situation in Macedonia and the description of the reforms carried out by the tsar, on average, occupy no more than two pages, a significant part of which is occupied by visual material: an image of a Macedonian warrior, phalanxes, a portrait of the famous Athenian orator Demosthenes, who opposed Philip. At the same time, students are rarely offered historical information about the state of the country by the middle of the fourth century BCE, without which it is difficult to assess the ruler's merits. The most successful in this regard is V.O. Nikishin's textbook, edited by S. P. Karpov, which provides additional information about the Macedonian kingdom, which, nevertheless, is very concise [6, p. 203]. In the manual by E.V. Saplina, edited by V. R. Medinsky, there is a comment that Macedonia was a backward country until the middle of the fourth century BCE, but this is not explained in any way [7, p. 171]. Also, according to the authors, the state arose during the period when *"the Greek polis was at war with each other, a Macedonian state arose in the north of the Balkan Peninsula,"* which does not fully correspond to historical reality [8, p.

[1131](#). Vigasin's textbook, edited by Iskenderov, gives a brief indication that it was a small mountainous country in the north of the Balkan Peninsula [\[5, p. 196\]](#). Thus, students are given the impression that Macedonia, which had not previously been found in the pages of textbooks, appeared literally "out of nothing."

Unfortunately, in every textbook, no map clearly shows the location of the Macedonian kingdom relative to the Greek polis. Vigasin's textbook indicates the enormous influence of Hellenic culture in Macedonia and talks about the spread of Greek education and language among the aristocracy [\[5, p. 196\]](#). All of the above points, thus, form students' idea of Macedonia not only as an initially backward but also as a state alien to Hellas in principle. Meanwhile, there are enough reasons to consider the Macedonians as a Greek people who speak Greek but in a local dialect that is more difficult to understand (see, for example, Hdt. I, 56; V, 22, Plut. Alex., 47) [\[9, pp. 25-26\]](#).

If we talk directly about the image of Philip II, then his almost complete depersonalization catches the eye. None of the textbooks mention the politician's origin, early years, or the circumstances under which he took the Macedonian throne. Meanwhile, Philip's stay as an honorary hostage in Thebes is a vivid and memorable episode that directly influenced his formation as a politician and military figure [\[9, pp. 38-39\]](#). The topic of Macedonian hegemony is proposed to be studied immediately from the description of the reforms carried out by Philip. At the same time, Vigasin's textbook, for example, focuses exclusively on military reform, which is undoubtedly important and allowed Macedonia to subdue Greek cities (Diod. XVI. 2. 6). Interestingly, even though the introduction of a long spear—sarissa—is considered to be almost the tsar's main achievement in the military sphere, the historical name of the weapon is not mentioned in textbooks, and its outstanding length is discussed only in the textbook edited by V.O. Nikishin: the authors call the figure 5.5 m [\[6, p. 204; 9, p.51\]](#). The authors mention other reforms in passing: "... *strengthened the royal power, began to mint a gold coin called 'philippics'; founded new cities; established close trade relations with neighbors*" [\[7, p. 172\]](#). Note that this manual does not mention that the angry speeches by the speaker Demosthenes, directed against the tsar, were also called "philippics." This concept is much more common than the specific name of the coins. This is probably dictated by the unwillingness of the authors to confuse the two concepts in the minds of schoolchildren.

After reviewing the reforms carried out by the tsar, the authors of school textbooks briefly describe the events that took place in the period 338–336 BCE. Predictably, the emphasis gradually shifts to Alexander's military prowess, who proved himself in battle. However, after analyzing the factors that influenced the victory of the Macedonian army in the Battle of Chaeronea, the authors explain the campaign's success through the transformations previously carried out by Philip [\[7, p. 173\]](#). Then, it briefly talks about the appointment of the king as the hegemon of Greece at the congress in Corinth and about the preparations for the war against Persia. However, this event is not mentioned in Vigasin's textbook.

The textbook description of Philip's unexpected death is limited to one sentence: "He was suddenly killed during a feast." Only Vigasin's textbook offers a brief account of the events that took place in the Aegs in 336 BCE [\[6, p. 199\]](#).

As for the characteristics of the tsar's personality, the manuals mention that Philip was "a decisive and energetic tsar, a talented military commander and organizer" [\[6, p. 203\]](#), "a far-sighted politician, a skilled diplomat, and a talented commander" [\[7, p. 170\]](#), "an intelligent

and energetic ruler" [5, Cp. 196]. At the same time, with a clear negative connotation, all textbooks talk about bribery in Philip's politics to achieve his goals: all the authors of the manuals included a quote from Plutarch's work attributed to the Macedonian king that a donkey loaded with gold would take any fortress and also that the king did anything to achieve his goal [5, p. 198; 8, p. 205; 9, p. 170]. Interestingly, none of the manuals under consideration contain information about Philip's injury, as a result of which he lost his right eye (Just. 7. 6. pp. 14–16; Diod. 16. 34. pp. 4–5)—such a bright detail, as a rule, is well remembered by schoolchildren and is perceived as evidence of the personal courage of the ruler.

Thus, the tsar appears as a character in many formulaic and impersonal ways. The consequence of this is a low probability of memorizing the topic dedicated to the rise of Macedonia under Philip.

It is worth noting, however, that the problem associated with insufficient attention to the history of Philip's reign may be directly related to the field of scientific research. Despite the high importance of the tsar's reforms, thanks to which Macedonia became the hegemon of Greece, Philip's personality is poorly covered in historiography; only a few monographs devoted to this political figure can be distinguished. This circumstance is explained by the few extant sources discussing his life. Nevertheless, J. Worthington rightly notes that from the available few testimonies of ancient authors, it is clear that Philip II deserves to occupy the same place in history as his son [9, pp.14–15]. R. Gabriel believes that it was Philip who created the first national-territorial state in Europe, having developed the resources of Macedonia to unprecedented levels in Greece and the West as a whole [10, P.243]. Thus, Diodorus Siculus points out that in a short time, the king became one of the greatest in Europe and that his throne could be compared with the gods (Diod. 16. 95. pp.1–2). Even Demosthenes, who opposed Philip in Athens, admitted that the Macedonian tyrant "*from the small and insignificant that he was originally, became great*" (Dem. Or. 9. 21). However, despite the confirmation in recent studies of the importance of Philip's personality in the history of Macedonia, many of his achievements still remain sufficiently unrecognized [11, p. 2]. This problem is thus directly reflected in school textbooks.

The textbooks pay much more attention to Alexander the Great, Philip's son. Naturally, all the authors concentrate on Alexander's military campaigns, presenting him to students as a great conqueror [6, p. 318]. In general, the presentation of the Eastern Campaign in all textbooks is a very detailed story for fifth-grade students about the main battles: the Battle of Granik, the Battle of Issus, the Siege of Tyre, and the Battle of Gavgamela. All the authors agree that the Macedonian king won brilliant victories in these battles and proved himself an outstanding commander. In his textbook, Vigasin draws attention to the last paragraph, which reads, "*Alexander's goal is to conquer the whole world,*" which then talks about the tsar's next "*brilliant victory*" in India [5, p. 205]. Other textbooks mention more restrained the stubborn resistance of the population in Central Asia and heavy fighting during the Indian campaign [6, p. 207; 7, p. 177], which is much more consistent with historical reality [12, p. 167; 13, pp. 76–79].

In contrast to Alexander, his main opponent, the Persian king Darius III, is mentioned in one of the manuals as a "*loser king*." In another, the authors write that Darius, after Gavgamel, "*fled shamefully again,*" and in the third, "*Darius abandoned courage*" [5, p. 204; 6, p. 208; 7, p. 176]. Thus, Alexander appears in textbooks as a great commander and warrior,

and this is especially clearly seen in comparison with his opponent's image.

Much less attention is paid to the structure of the power created by Alexander. All the authors mention the tsar's urban planning policy and the large number of Alexandrias founded by him. One textbook mentions that "he appointed both Macedonians and noble Persians to manage the conquered regions" [\[5, p. 203; 6, p. 209\]](#), and in another, that the king "took measures to rally the population and, for example, arranged the wedding of his friends and soldiers with local girls" [\[7, p. 178\]](#).

As for the peculiarities of Alexander's personality, in Nikishin's textbook, the authors note that Alexander, as a teenager, "*dreamed of glorious exploits similar to the deeds of the heroes of the Iliad*," received a good education, but often showed himself to be a "*harsh, merciless ruler*" [\[6, p. 206\]](#). Another manual mentions that the tsar "*showed royal greatness from his youth, kept on equal terms with friends, could be merciful and grant freedom to the defeated, and was brave and courageous in battle*" [\[7, p. 175\]](#). As illustrations in two textbooks, the legend of the Gordian knot is given; in one, there is also a legend about the meeting of Alexander with Diogenes [\[5, p. 202; 6, p. 207\]](#).

At the same time, the authors speak—although, as a rule, very briefly—about the negative sides of the tsar's personality. So, Vigasin writes that military successes "*turned his head*," and Alexander, at some point, "*began to demand that the generals honor him as a god*." The murder of Clete is also briefly mentioned, but they do not draw any conclusions and do not condemn such behavior [\[5, p. 204\]](#). The same episode is mentioned in the textbook by E.V. Saplina, A.A. Nemirovsky, etc., but here, the authors casually note that "*the tsar's temper sometimes turned into trouble. Angered by the words of one of his confidants, Alexander pierced him with a spear*" [\[7, p. 176\]](#) and then immediately spoke of the tsar's personal courage and bravery.

In Nikishin's manual, one can find a passage that Alexander "*sought to look like a real tsar in the eyes of his subjects, began to demand honors, as if to an eastern tsar, mercilessly executed many close friends, suspecting them of conspiracy*" [\[6, p. 206; 12, p. 149; 13, p. 74; 14, p. 326, 340-344; 15, pp. 341-343, 365\]](#). One of the most striking episodes of the eastern campaign, the death of Persepolis at the hands of Alexander's army, is mentioned in only one manual; in another, the authors only note that the city was captured by the tsar's troops [\[6, p. 209\]](#).

Thus, the image of Alexander in current school textbooks seems to be rather one-sided: for the authors, there is no doubt that we are talking about a great, perhaps the greatest, commander and conqueror of the ancient world, distinguished by personal bravery, courage and other qualities necessary for a ruler. At the same time, the negative aspects of his personality are mentioned briefly and virtually without any moral assessments—military failures are bypassed, and the management of the state and the structure of the empire are practically not mentioned.

Thus, it seems that current school textbooks only partially fulfill the task of forming an objective view of specific historical characters, their activities, and their role in world history. In the eyes of students, the figure of Alexander overshadows all of his father's achievements—bringing Macedonia to a new level of development and preparing the whole ground for further conquests. Despite all the inconsistencies in Alexander's personality, the mythologized and largely idealized image of the great conqueror is fixed as the image of

the greatest hero of the ancient world. All the negative aspects of his personality have been smoothed out; they are practically not mentioned, and in the end, a brilliant commander and a talented ruler remain.

This could lead not only to a distorted perception of the activities of specific historical figures but also to the formation of an inherently vicious belief that timely reforms and transformations are of incomparably less value than military campaigns and conquests.

1.

[i] Order on Approval of the Federal State Educational Standard of Basic General Education dated December 17, 2010, No. 1897. (accessed: 10/30/2023)

[ii] Order of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation of 21.09.2022 N 858 (ed. of 21.07.2023) "On approval of the Federal list of textbooks approved for use in the implementation of state-accredited educational programs of primary general, basic general, secondary general education by organizations engaged in educational activities and the establishment of the deadline for the use of excluded textbooks" (Registered with the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation 01.11.2022 N 70799)

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Результаты процедуры рецензирования статьи

В связи с политикой двойного слепого рецензирования личность рецензента не раскрывается.

Со списком рецензентов издательства можно ознакомиться [здесь](#).

История античности и сегодня привлекает внимание не только профессиональных

ученых, но и всех, кто увлекается историей и культурой. И действительно, среди тех достижений античной цивилизации, которые не потеряли актуальность и сегодня можно назвать театр, музеи, философию, Олимпийские игры, демократию. Древнегреческая и древнеримская культуры в настоящее время по-прежнему служат предметом внимания не только искусствоведов. В то же время историческая память вокруг событий далекого прошлого формируется, в первую очередь, на школьных уроках истории. В этой связи представляется важным обратиться к анализу актуальных школьных учебников по всеобщей истории в части античной цивилизации.

Указанные обстоятельства определяют актуальность представленной на рецензирование статьи, предметом которой являются образы македонских царей Филиппа и Александра в актуальных школьных учебниках по всеобщей истории. Автор ставит своими задачами показать важность изучения античной истории, проанализировать отражение образов македонских царей Филиппа и Александра в актуальных школьных учебниках по всеобщей истории.

Работа основана на принципах анализа и синтеза, достоверности, объективности, методологической базой исследования выступает системный подход, в основе которого находится рассмотрение объекта как целостного комплекса взаимосвязанных элементов. В работе также используется сравнительный метод.

Научная новизна статьи заключается в самой постановке темы: автор стремится охарактеризовать образы македонских правителей в российских учебниках истории, выявив слабые и сильные стороны подачи информации.

Рассматривая библиографический список статьи как позитивный момент следует отметить его разносторонность: всего в список литературы входят свыше 15 различных источников и исследований. Из привлекаемых автором источников укажем, прежде всего, на школьные учебники по истории: 1) А.А. Вигасина, Г.И. Годера, И.С. Свенцицкой, 2) В.О. Никишина, О.В. Стрелковой, О.В. Томашевича, Ф.А. Михайловского, 3) Е.В. Саплина, А.А. Немировского, Е.И. Соломатиной, С.В. Тырина. Заметим, что библиография статьи обладает важностью как с научной, так и с просветительской точки зрения: после прочтения текста статьи читатели могут обратиться к другим материалам по ее теме. В целом, на наш взгляд, комплексное использование различных источников и исследований в известной мере способствовало решению стоящих перед автором задач.

Стиль написания статьи можно отнести к научному, вместе с тем доступному для понимания не только специалистам, но и широкой читательской аудитории, всем, кто интересуется как античной цивилизацией, в целом, так и изучением античности в российских школах, в частности. Аппеляция к оппонентам представлена на уровне собранной информации, полученной автором в ходе работы над темой статьи.

Структура работы отличается определенной логичностью и последовательностью, в ней можно выделить введение, основную часть, заключение. В начале автор определяет актуальность темы, показывает, что «история Древнего мира, фактически, единственный раздел всеобщей истории, который преподается в течение всего учебного года и без привязки к истории России». Автор обращает внимание на то, что фигура Александра Македонского «затмевает в глазах обучающихся все достижения его отца (Филиппа Македонского), выведшего Македонию на новый уровень развития и подготовившего всю почву для дальнейших завоеваний». Фактически, как пишет автор, в российских учебниках по истории «отрицательные стороны его личности упоминаются очень кратко и фактически без каких-либо моральных оценок, военные неудачи обходятся стороной, а об управлении государством и об устройстве империи практически вовсе не упоминается». Более того, личность Филиппа II полностью обезличена.

Главным выводом статьи является то, что тиражирование в школьных учебниках

показанных образов Филиппа и Александра может «привести не только к искаженному восприятию деятельности конкретных исторических личностей, но к формированию порочного по своей сути убеждения в том, что своевременные реформы и преобразования имеют несравненно меньшую ценность, чем военные походы и завоевания».

Представленная на рецензирование статья посвящена актуальной теме, вызовет читательский интерес, а ее материалы могут быть использованы в рамках работы над школьными учебниками по истории древнего мира.

В целом, на наш взгляд, статья может быть рекомендована для публикации в журнале «Педагогика и просвещение».