

# DANIJELA TRŠKAN



## ARAB WORLD IN THE SUBJECTS OF HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND SLOVENE LANGUAGE IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SLOVENIA

Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO



*Contribution to Euro-Arab Dialogue in the 21st Century*

# ARAB WORLD IN THE SUBJECTS OF HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND SLOVENE LANGUAGE IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SLOVENIA

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Ljubljana 2013**



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## INTRODUCTION

The publication is dedicated to Euro-Arab dialogue in the 21st century, since it contains an analysis and evaluation of the role of History, Geography and Slovene Language subjects in the Republic of Slovenia, with emphasis on the incorporation of the history, geography and literature of today's Arab countries in the elementary and secondary school curricula and textbooks for History, Geography and Slovene Language in Slovenia.

In the case of the above-mentioned subjects the aim was to determine whether history includes the history of today's Arab countries, whether geography includes the natural and social geographical descriptions of today's Arab countries, whether under literature the subject of Slovene language includes Arabic literature or authors of literary works in the area of today's Arab countries, and which content relates to the history, geography or literature of today's Arab countries.

Today's Arab countries are: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Yemen, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine (the Palestinian Autonomous Area), Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates<sup>1</sup> (also Western Sahara, which is today occupied by Morocco under international law).

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1 The Arab States region is taken from the specific UNESCO definition, which does not forcibly reflect geography. It refers to the execution of regional activities of the Organization: *UNESCO regions – Arab states*: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/worldwide/arab-states/> (12th October 2013).

Table 1: Surface Area and Number of Inhabitants of Arab Countries<sup>2</sup>

Country	Surface area in km <sup>2</sup>	Number of inhabitants (2010)
Algeria	2 381 741	34 483 825
Bahrain	695	734 781
Djibouti	23 200	523 362
Egypt	997 739	84 098 255
Iraq	438 317	29 487 076
Yemen	527 968	24 435 257
Jordan	88 946	6 449 774
Qatar	11 437	839 246
Kuwait	17 818	2 762 352
Lebanon	10 452	4 050 324
Libya	1 757 000	6 412 480
Mauritania	1 030 700	3 185 457
Morocco	458 730	35 243 829
Oman	212 457	3 498 066
Palestine (the Palestinian Autonomous Area)	5 860	2 568 555
Saudi Arabia	2 240 000	29 082 116
Somalia	637 657	10 038 653
Syria	185 180	20 498 776
Sudan	2 503 890	41 743 069
Tunisia	154 530	10 562 921
United Arab Emirates	77 700	4 930 440
Western Sahara	252 120	413 756

Chapter 1 presents the education system of the Republic of Slovenia and Chapter 2 the role of history, geography and Slovene language in elementary and secondary schools. In order to make the publication interesting for today's Arab countries, the main focus lies on a demonstration of the teaching of history, geography and literature of today's Arab countries. For this purpose all elementary and secondary school curricula were analysed (Chapter 3), as well as the textbooks for history, geography and Slovene language. The results are presented in Chapter 4.

Three publications that show the incorporation of the history of Arab countries in contemporary history textbooks and curricula for

2 Data are taken from: Senegačnik, Jurij (2012). *Svet: geografija za 2. letnik gimnazij*. [World: Geography for the 2nd Year of General Secondary School]. Ljubljana: Modrijan. Data for the Palestinian Autonomous Area are taken from *Jewish Virtual Library*: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Peace/ciawb.html> (6th October 2013).

elementary and secondary schools have been published recently. The first one was published in the Slovene language in 2011 under the title *Pregled zgodovine današnjih arabskih držav v slovenskih učbenikih za zgodovino* [Overview of the History of Today's Arab Countries in Slovene History Textbooks]. The second publication was published in the English language with the title *Overview of the History of Today's Arab Countries in Slovene History Textbooks: Report for the Project Euro-Arab Dialogue: Comparative Study of School Textbooks* in 2011. The third one was published in 2012 also in the English language with the title *History of Today's Arab Countries in Slovenia*. The second and third publications were published by the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO. All publications can be accessed at: <http://wff1.ff.uni-lj.si/oddelki/zgodovin/DANIJELA/DIDAKTIKAZGODOVINE/UNESCO.htm>.

In its conclusion the publication gives suggestions for translating different publications into Slovene to encourage Euro-Arab cooperation in the field of education in the Republic of Slovenia.

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Ljubljana, October 2013

Danijela Trškan, Ph.D.

## CHAPTER 1

### ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SLOVENIA

The fundamental values of education in the Republic of Slovenia are derived from the common European heritage of political, cultural and moral values, which are all based on human rights and the corresponding duties and principles of plural democracy, tolerance, solidarity and the rule of law.<sup>3</sup>

The Minister for Education, Science and Sport, Jernej Pikalo, Ph.D., has stated that studies “were never merely about being educated for a profession, but something more; they are what shapes us and marks us for our entire lives.”<sup>4</sup>

Therefore elementary and secondary school is of great importance for the further education of young people for obtaining a profession and for becoming acquainted with and respecting other nations and cultures in the 21st century.

In Slovenia the education system consists of:

1. “Pre-primary education (ages 1–5) provided by autonomous public pre-school institutions, organisational units of pre-school units at basic schools or private pre-school institutions;
2. Basic education; a single structure of primary and lower secondary education (ages 6–14) provided by basic schools;
3. Upper secondary education (ages 15–18) consisting of:
  - short vocational education (120 ECTS) provided by upper secondary vocational schools (*poklicne šole*),

3 *Bela knjiga o vzgoji in izobraževanju v Republiki Sloveniji 2011* [The White Book on Education in the Republic of Slovenia]. (2011). (eds. Janez Krek and Mira Metljak). Ljubljana: Zavod RS za šolstvo, p. 13: [http://www.belaknjiga2011.si/pdf/bela\\_knjiga\\_2011.pdf](http://www.belaknjiga2011.si/pdf/bela_knjiga_2011.pdf) (5th October 2013).

4 *The official letter of Minister Jernej Pikalo, Ph.D., at the beginning of the 2013/14 school year*: [http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/medijsko\\_sredisce/novica/article/55/8301/aa1c22f145fcbfd-7dac86f4c040ce8c8/](http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/medijsko_sredisce/novica/article/55/8301/aa1c22f145fcbfd-7dac86f4c040ce8c8/) (4th October 2013).

- vocational education provided by upper secondary vocational and technical schools (*poklicne šole* and *srednje strokovne in tehniške šole*),
  - technical education provided by upper secondary technical schools (*srednje strokovne in tehniške šole*),
  - vocational and technical education provided by upper secondary vocational and technical schools (*poklicne šole* and *srednje strokovne in tehniške šole*),
  - general education (four years) provided by general upper secondary schools (*gimnazije*);
4. Short tertiary (higher vocational) education (120 ECTS) provided by higher vocational colleges;
  5. Higher education provided by public and private universities, faculties, art academies and professional colleges. It consists of three cycles:
    - First-cycle professional or academic (180–240 ECTS),
    - Second-cycle masters studies (60–120 ECTS),
    - Third-cycle doctoral studies (180 ECTS).<sup>5</sup>

Specific parts of the system are: music and dance education, adult education and special needs education.

Slovenia is a Central European country with a population of 2 058 457, of which 1 019 193 are men and 1 039 264 are women (on 1st April 2013).<sup>6</sup>

5 *Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe. Slovenia, 2009/10 Edition*, pp. 7–8: [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/structures/041\\_SI\\_EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/structures/041_SI_EN.pdf) (2nd August 2012).

6 *Population, Slovenia, 1st April 2013 – final data*: [http://www.stat.si/novica\\_prikazi.aspx?id=5637](http://www.stat.si/novica_prikazi.aspx?id=5637) (4th October 2013).

Table 2: Population in Slovenia aged 15 or more by educational attainment<sup>7</sup>

	1st January 2011		
	Total	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
No education	0.3	0.2	0.4
Incomplete basic	4.1	3.2	4.9
Basic	24.7	21.2	28.2
Short-term vocational upper secondary	1.4	1.5	1.3
Vocational upper secondary	21.7	28.5	15.1
Technical, general upper secondary	30.2	30.0	30.4
Short-term higher (former), higher vocational	4.8	4.3	5.3
1st cycle of higher, professional higher (former) etc.	3.3	2.5	4.1
2nd cycle of higher, professional higher (former) etc.	8.1	7.1	9.1
“Magisterij” (master’s) of science (former) etc.	0.8	0.9	0.8
Doctorate of science	0.4	0.6	0.3

In 2011, 24.7% of the adult population (aged 15 or more) have attained elementary education qualification or less, 53.3% have attained secondary education qualification, and almost 17.4% of the adult population have attained higher education qualification.<sup>8</sup>

**Elementary education** is compulsory and free of charge. Pupils aged 6 enter the nine-year elementary school.<sup>9</sup> Elementary education is also for adults and is organised at elementary schools for children and at adult education centres. There are also international schools for foreign citizens.

Elementary education is carried out according to the nine-year elementary school programme. It is divided into three cycles: the first cycle from grades 1 to 3 (ages 6–8), the second cycle from grades 4 to 6 (ages 9–11) and the third cycle from grades 7 to 9 (ages 12–14).

“Compulsory school subjects are:

- in the first cycle of education: the mother tongue (Slovene, Hungarian and Italian in areas with these nationalities), mathematics, art, music, environmental studies and physical education;

<sup>7</sup> *Educational attainment, Slovenia, 1st January 2011 – final data*: [http://www.stat.si/eng/novica\\_prikazi.aspx?id=4412](http://www.stat.si/eng/novica_prikazi.aspx?id=4412) (4th October 2013).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> In the Republic of Slovenia upbringing and education begin with pre-school education, which is not compulsory and is carried out in public and private kindergartens.

- in the second cycle of education: the mother tongue (Slovene, Hungarian and Italian in areas with these nationalities), mathematics, foreign language, art education, music education, society, geography, history, natural sciences, natural science and technics, technics and technology, home economics, physical education and class community;
- in the third cycle of education: the mother tongue (Slovene, Hungarian and Italian in areas with these nationalities), mathematics, foreign language, art education, music education, geography, history, civic education and ethics, physics, chemistry, biology, technics and technology, physical education, elective subjects and class community.

The compulsory part of the programme also includes extramural activity days: culture, science, technical and sports days.

The extended programme offers children a choice of various extra-curricular activities (sports activities, sports competitions, school newspaper, chorus, etc.). Schools provide special lessons for very talented children, as well as for those with learning difficulties. Special help is also provided for children with deficits in specific learning domains, and children with disabilities (deaf, blind and visually impaired, children with long-term illness or physical disability).

In addition schools organise morning care (before classes start) and after-school care classes, the content of which is determined in the concept of work in after-school classes.<sup>10</sup>

At the beginning of the 2012/13 school year 161 051 pupils were enrolled in elementary schools with a regular curriculum, 1 724 pupils were enrolled in elementary schools with an adapted curriculum and 1 528 pupils were enrolled in elementary schools with a special curriculum. Compulsory elementary education was carried out by 785 schools and their branches and by 57 schools and institutions for pupils with special educational needs in Slovenia.<sup>11</sup>

10 *Slovene Education System Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*. (2007). Ljubljana: Ministry of Education and Sport, p. 78.

11 *Basic education for youth and adults in Slovenia at the end of the 2011/12 school year and at the beginning of the 2012/13 school year*: [http://www.stat.si/eng/novica\\_prikazi.aspx?id=5427](http://www.stat.si/eng/novica_prikazi.aspx?id=5427) (4th October 2013).

Table 3: Teaching staff at the end of the 2011/12 school year<sup>12</sup>

	Total	Men	Women	Number of pupils per teacher in FTE (Teachers in daily extension are not included in the pupils/teacher ratio.)
Total	16,458	2,003	14,455	11.9
Basic schools:	15,585	1,855	13,730	12.3
Teachers in the first and second educational cycles	6,186	165	6,021	16.3
Teachers in the third educational cycle	7,068	1,464	5,604	8.2
Teachers in daily extension	2,331	226	2,105	... (data not available)
Basic schools and institutions with a special curriculum:	536	73	463	3.8
Teachers in the first and second educational cycles	223	7	216	4.5
Teachers in the third educational cycle	221	52	169	3.0
Teachers in daily extension	92	14	78	...
Basic schools for adults	337	75	262	3.5

At the end of the 2011/12 school year there were 16 458 teachers at elementary schools.<sup>13</sup>

**Secondary education** is free of charge and not compulsory.

There are different types of secondary education:

- General secondary education 15–18 years of age (4 years),
- Secondary technical education 15–18 years of age (4 years),
- Secondary vocational–technical education 15–19 years of age (3 + 2 years),
- Secondary vocational education 15–17 years of age (3 years),
- Short-term vocational education 15–16 years of age (2 years),
- Matura course (one year),
- Vocational courses (one year).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> *Slovene Education System Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*. (2007). Ljubljana: Ministry of Education and Sport, p. 79.



Table 4: Students enrolled in secondary education at the end of the 2011/12 school year<sup>15</sup>

Type of programmes	Enrolled		
	total	men	women
Total	77,741	39,613	38,128
Short-term vocational	780	780	221
Vocational	11,273	11,273	3,477
Technical:	34,006	34,006	15,640
Technical (4-year programmes)	29,833	29,833	14,265
Vocational technical programmes	3,938	3,938	1,228
Vocational courses	235	235	147
General:	31,682	31,682	18,790
General and professional secondary school	31,084	31,084	18,415
Matura course	598	598	375

At the end of the 2011/12 school year there were 77 741 students and 15 963 adults enrolled in secondary education programmes.<sup>16</sup>

General secondary education is carried out by general secondary schools, which are of three types: general, classical (with Latin and Greek), and professional. Professional schools have three specialisations, namely: technical, art, and economics. Compulsory four-year subjects are: Slovene language, mathematics, first and second foreign language, history and physical education. Compulsory subjects are also: geography, biology, chemistry, physics, music and art education, psychology, sociology, philosophy and information science.

All general secondary schools finish with a leaving examination (*matura*), which is a general condition for admission to the higher education. *Matura* consists of five subjects. Three are compulsory subjects: the mother tongue, the foreign language (English or German), and mathematics. In addition, two elective subjects are required. History and Geography are elective subjects.

<sup>15</sup> *Upper secondary education for youth and adults, Slovenia, end of the 2011/12 school year and beginning of the 2012/13 school year – final data:* [http://www.stat.si/novica\\_prikazi.aspx?ID=5449](http://www.stat.si/novica_prikazi.aspx?ID=5449) (4th October 2013).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

Secondary vocational and technical education offers: short-term vocational education (lasting two and a half years), secondary vocational education (three years), secondary technical education (four years, or two years after completing a three-year programme – vocational technical programme, or a one-year vocational course after completing general secondary education) or post-secondary vocational education (two years).<sup>17</sup> Compulsory four-year subjects in secondary technical schools are Slovene language, mathematics, foreign language and physical education. Compulsory subjects are also geography, history, art, chemistry, biology, physics, information science and psychology.

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17 *Slovene Education System Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*. (2007). Ljubljana: Ministry of Education and Sport, p. 69.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE ROLE OF HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND SLOVENE LANGUAGE IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

In elementary school Slovene Language is the most important subject and is included in all the grades. The official language of instruction is Slovene. In the Hungarian-speaking area, bilingual instruction in Hungarian and Slovene is compulsory. In the Italian-speaking area there are Italian schools, where Slovene language is a compulsory subject, and Slovene schools, where Italian is a compulsory subject.<sup>18</sup> History and Geography are independent and compulsory subjects in elementary schools in the final four years. But historical and geographical contents are also included in Social Sciences in the fifth grade.

Table 5: Weekly Timetable of the 9–Year Elementary School<sup>19</sup>

Subjects / Number of lessons per week	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	5th year	6th year	7th year	8th year	9th year	Total number of lessons per subject
Slovene Language	6	7	7	5	5	5	4	3.5	4.5	1631.5
Mathematics	4	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	1318
Foreign Language	–	–	–	2	3	4	4	3	3	656
Visual Arts	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	487
Music	2	2	2	1.5	1.5	1	1	1	1	452
Social Sciences	–	–	–	2	3	–	–	–	–	175
Geography	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	1.5	2	221.5
History	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	2	2	239
Civic and Patriotic Education and Ethics	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	–	70
Environmental Education	3	3	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	315
Physics	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	134

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>19</sup> Organisation of the education system in Slovenia. 2008/09, p. 69: [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase\\_full\\_reports/SI\\_EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/SI_EN.pdf) (2nd August 2012). Also in: Trškan, Danijela (2012). *History of Today's Arab Countries in Slovenia*. Ljubljana: Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO, p. 10.

Subjects / Number of lessons per week	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	5th year	6th year	7th year	8th year	9th year	Total number of lessons per subject
Chemistry	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	134
Biology	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1.5	2	116.5
Natural Sciences	–	–	–	–	–	2	3	–	–	175
Natural Sciences and Techniques	–	–	–	3	3	–	–	–	–	210
Techniques and Technologies	–	–	–	–	–	2	1	1	–	140
Home Economics	–	–	–	–	1	1.5	–	–	–	87.5
Sports Education	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	834
Elective subjects	–	–	–	–	–	–	2/3	2/3	2/3	204/306

The table below shows the total number of lessons (one lesson equals 45 minutes): 1,631.5 lessons per year for the subject of Slovene language, 239 lessons for History and 221.5 lessons per year for Geography.

Table 6: Annual Number of History, Geography and Slovene Language Lessons with Regard to the Age of Pupils in Elementary Schools

Age of elementary school pupils	Number of lessons of History	Number of lessons of Geography	Number of lessons of Slovene Language
6–7	–	–	210
7–8	–	–	245
8–9	–	–	245
9–10	–	–	175
10–11	–	–	175
11–12	35	35	175
12–13	70	70	140
13–14	70	52.5	122.5
14–15	64	64	144
Total number of history lessons	239	221.5	1631.5

History and Slovene Language are compulsory subjects in all four years of general secondary schools, while Geography is compulsory in three years.

Table 7: Weekly Timetable of the 4-Year General Secondary Schools<sup>20</sup>

Subjects /Number of lessons per week	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	Total number of lessons per subject
Slovene Language	4	4	4	4	560
Mathematics	4	4	4	4	560
First Foreign Language	3	3	3	3	420
Second Foreign Language	3	3	3	3	420
History	2	2	2	2	280
Physical Education	3	3	3	3	420
Music	1.5	–	–	–	52+18*
Arts	1.5	–	–	–	52+18*
Geography	2	2	2	–	210
Biology	2	2	2	–	210
Chemistry	2	2	2	–	210
Physics	2	2	2	–	210
Psychology	–	–	2	–	70
Sociology	–	2	–	–	70
Philosophy	–	–	–	2	70
Information Science	2	–	–	–	70
Core elective subjects	–	1–3	1–5	8–12	490–630
Compulsory elective contents	90	90	90	30	300

The table below shows that the number of annual lessons (one lesson equals 45 minutes) varies among different types of general secondary schools.

Table 8: Annual Number of History, Geography and Slovene Language Lessons in General Secondary Schools

Types of general secondary schools / Total number of lessons	General schools	Classical schools	Professional schools
Total number of history lessons	280	350	210
Total number of geography lessons	210	210	105–140
Total number of Slovene language lessons	560	560	560

<sup>20</sup> \*Lessons are included in the compulsory elective contents.

Table 7 is from: *Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe. Slovenia. 2009/10 Edition*, p. 25: [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/structures/041\\_SI\\_EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/structures/041_SI_EN.pdf) (2nd August 2012). Also in: Trškan, Danijela (2012). *History of Today's Arab Countries in Slovenia*. Ljubljana: Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO, pp. 11–12.

Slovene Language is a basic compulsory subject in secondary technical schools (476 lessons),<sup>21</sup> in secondary vocational schools (213 lessons)<sup>22</sup> and in secondary vocational-technical schools (276 lessons).<sup>23</sup>

History is a compulsory subject only in secondary technical schools, where students have 103 history lessons in the first year.<sup>24</sup> The same applies to Geography, where students have 68 lessons.<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, secondary vocational schools incorporate historical and geographical contents into other subjects. Short-term vocational schools offer the subject Social and Natural Sciences, comprising 248 lessons, of which social science and humanistic contents are allocated 155 lessons and natural science contents 93 lessons.<sup>26</sup> Secondary vocational schools offer the subject Social Sciences, comprising 132 lessons; 66 lessons in the first year and 66 lessons in the second year, with one-third of the lessons intended for historical contents and one-third intended also for geographical contents connected with the Slovene territory.<sup>27</sup>

21 *Secondary Technical Education. Knowledge Catalogue. Slovene Language.* (2007): [http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2009/programi/drugi\\_del/Ssi/KZ-IK/kz\\_slo\\_ssi\\_476.doc](http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2009/programi/drugi_del/Ssi/KZ-IK/kz_slo_ssi_476.doc) (5th October 2013).

22 *Secondary Vocational Education. Knowledge Catalogue. Slovene Language (213 lessons).* (2007): [http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2013/programi/SPI/KZ-IK/spi\\_kz\\_slo.doc](http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2013/programi/SPI/KZ-IK/spi_kz_slo.doc) (5th October 2013).

23 *Secondary Vocational-Technical Education. Knowledge Catalogue. Slovene Language (276 lessons).* (2007): [http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2012/programi/Ssi/KZ-IK/kz\\_pti\\_slo\\_276.doc](http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2012/programi/Ssi/KZ-IK/kz_pti_slo_276.doc) (5th October 2013).

24 *Secondary Technical Education. Vocational-Technical Education. Knowledge Catalogue. History.* (2007): [http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2012/programi/Ssi/KZ-IK/kz\\_zgodovina\\_ssi\\_in\\_pti\\_103\\_126.doc](http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2012/programi/Ssi/KZ-IK/kz_zgodovina_ssi_in_pti_103_126.doc) (5th October 2013).

25 *Secondary Technical Education. Vocational-Technical Education. Knowledge Catalogue. Geography.* (2007): [http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2012/programi/Ssi/KZ-IK/kz\\_geo\\_ssi\\_pti\\_68.doc](http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2012/programi/Ssi/KZ-IK/kz_geo_ssi_pti_68.doc) (5th October 2013).

26 *Short-Term Vocational Education. Knowledge Catalogue. Social and Natural Sciences.* (2007): [http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2013/programi/NPI/KZ-IK/NPI\\_KZ\\_drub\\_in\\_nar.doc](http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2013/programi/NPI/KZ-IK/NPI_KZ_drub_in_nar.doc) (5th October 2013).

27 *Secondary Vocational Education. Knowledge Catalogue. Social Sciences.* (2007): [http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2013/programi/SPI/KZ-IK/spi\\_kz\\_dru\\_132.doc](http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2013/programi/SPI/KZ-IK/spi_kz_dru_132.doc) (5th October 2013).

## CHAPTER 3

# ARAB WORLD IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULA FOR HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND SLOVENE LANGUAGE

### 3.1 ARAB WORLD IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULA FOR HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND SLOVENE LANGUAGE

The subject of history acquaints students with the most important historical events, phenomena and processes from local, regional, Slovene, European and world history.<sup>28</sup> It is important that the subject of history develops “their ability to understand and respect different cultures, religions, races and communities; /.../ tolerance in contacts and relationships with one another, respect of difference and diversity, mutual cooperation, respect of human rights and democratic citizenship.”<sup>29</sup> The history curriculum also foresees a connection with the learning objectives and contents of the subject of geography, especially under those historical topics that require good spatial orientation (e.g. lands of the Ancient East, great geographical discoveries, both World Wars, decolonisation, globalisation etc.). Likewise, it foresees a connection with the subject of Slovene language, since literary passages with a historical background, which shed light on historical topics, are also read during history lessons.<sup>30</sup>

Below is a presentation of the contents from the 6th to 9th grades of elementary school, with emphasis on the contents that refer to the history of today’s Arab countries.

In the 6th grade pupils learn about history, historical time, the first records, the construction of human dwellings through historical periods, inventions through the periods, the family through the centuries, the life

28 *Curriculum: Programme of Elementary School Education. History.* (2011). Ljubljana: Ministry of Education and Sport: The National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, p. 4: [http://www.mss.gov.si/fileadmin/mss.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/os/prenovljeni\\_UN/UN\\_zgodovina.pdf](http://www.mss.gov.si/fileadmin/mss.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/os/prenovljeni_UN/UN_zgodovina.pdf) (5th October 2013).

29 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 42.

and diet of people in the countryside and in towns, about cultural heritage and about the customs and habits of people. Under two elective topics (Origins of Science, Art and Beliefs; Cultural Heritage of the Ancient Civilisations of Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Near East), pupils learn about mummification, the origins of medicine, mathematics, astronomy and art, and about the beliefs in ancient Egypt. Furthermore, they become acquainted with pyramids, temples and hieroglyphs in ancient Egypt and compare the beliefs, architecture and writings of the civilisations of the ancient East.

In the 7th grade pupils learn about the way of life and beliefs in prehistory and about the archaeological sites in Slovenia; become acquainted with the characteristics of the ancient civilisations of America, India and China; the development of ancient Greece and the Roman state; the characteristics of ancient culture and economy; when discussing the Middle Ages they learn about the migration of peoples and the creation of European states and about mediaeval life; outside of Europe, they become acquainted with India, China and the Mongol Empire in the Middle Ages. Under the compulsory topic of Ancient Egypt and the Civilisations of the Ancient East they revise the knowledge they assimilated in the 6th grade, with emphasis on the characteristics of the social order, architectural achievements and science. Under the elective topic The Mediterranean – A Space of Cooperation and Conflicts between Cultures they become acquainted with Arabs or the creation of the Arab state for the first time.

In the 8th grade pupils learn about geographical discoveries, about Humanism and the Renaissance, about the Reformation and Protestantism in Europe and in Slovenia, about the exploration of Africa, the spreading of the Ottoman Empire, peasant revolts in Europe and in Slovenia, the Enlightenment and the political development of France and England, about the Hapsburg Monarchy during Mary Theresa and Joseph II, about the formation of the USA, the revolution in France, the Napoleonic Wars, the characteristics of the Baroque, about industrialisation, about Europe and the Slovenes in the 19th century, about Japan and the USA in the 19th century, about art, the labour movement, the status of children and women in the 19th century etc. Under the elective topic Travels into the Mysterious Sites of Asia and Africa, they are taught about the exploration of inland Africa.



In the 9th grade pupils become acquainted with World War I and II, the inter-war period, the Cold War, decolonisation, industrialisation and economic development in the 20th century and with globalisation in the 21st century, the development of science, with everyday life and with Slovenes in the 20th and 21st centuries. Under the compulsory topic Political Characteristics of the 20th Century they learn about decolonisation, which is the only issue that relates to the history of today's Arab countries. Under the elective topic Wars in the 20th and 21st Centuries they also become familiar with the phenomenon of modern terrorism.

In elementary school **geography** helps pupils to “gain the knowledge, abilities and skills with which they can orient themselves and understand the narrower and broader living environment. /.../ By getting to know and understand various cultures, social groups, their representatives and social relations, pupils develop positive attitudes towards cultural diversity and develop intercultural relations.”<sup>31</sup> In addition, they learn how to “place local, national and international events in a geographical frame and understand the basic spatial relationships.”<sup>32</sup>

Geography is integrated with the subject of Slovene language with written essays, oral reports, descriptions of landscapes and travelogues, folklore, proverbs about the weather, the use of expert literature or with literary works and writers that describe landscapes. It is integrated with the subject of history mainly when discussing the creation of ancient civilisations, the migration of peoples, the formation and disintegration of states, the creation of international connections, colonisation and colonies, the exploring and populating of continents, development of the economy etc.<sup>33</sup>

In the 6th grade pupils are acquainted with the subject of geography and the main characteristics of planet Earth; in the 7th grade, in addition to Europe, they also become familiar with Asia (North, East, South, Southeast and Southwest Asia); in the 8th grade, in addition to America, Australia, the polar regions and Oceania, they also become familiar with Africa (North, Tropical and South Africa); in the 9th grade they learn about Slovenia.

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31 *Curriculum: Programme of Elementary School Education. Geography.* (2011). Ljubljana: Ministry of Education and Sport: The National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, p. 4: [http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/os/prenovljeni\\_UN\\_UN\\_geografija.pdf](http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/os/prenovljeni_UN_UN_geografija.pdf) (5th October 2013).

32 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 36.

Thus in the 7th grade pupils become acquainted with the natural geographical characteristics of Europe and Asia (surface, climate, vegetation), can define the border between Europe, Asia and Africa, and become acquainted with the linguistic and religious diversity of the population. Arab countries are classified under Southwest Asia; pupils learn to name the most important countries on the map, the importance of oil for this region and the rest of the world, and to deduce the causes for the emergence of crisis areas in Southwest Asia. Pupils are taught to form viewpoints and values, such as respect for other nations and cultures, international cooperation etc.<sup>34</sup>

In the 8th grade pupils learn about the location and surface of Africa, its climate and vegetation, and become acquainted with the causes and consequences of the different population densities. Arab countries are classified under North Africa; pupils learn to name the countries of North Africa and show them on the map, describe the importance of the Nile River for the life of the people in the past and today, the characteristics of the colonisation and population of North Africa, and deduce the living conditions in North Africa.<sup>35</sup>

In elementary school, **Slovene language** is the native language/first language for the majority of pupils and the second language/language of the environment for members of minorities. Pupils become qualified to “effectively communicate in the Slovene language, orally and in writing; develop an awareness of the importance of one’s mother tongue and of the Slovene language, of the Slovene language as the national and official language, of its status in the European Union and its expressive development in all areas of public and private life.”<sup>36</sup>

In the field of literature pupils experience and evaluate poetic, prose and dramatic texts: “They view artistic/literary works by Slovene and other authors contemplatively and critically. /.../ Reading provides them with the opportunity to shape their personal and national identities, to broaden their horizons and become acquainted with their own culture

34 Ibid., pp. 10–13.

35 Ibid., p. 14.

36 *Curriculum: Programme of Elementary School Education. Slovene Language.* (2011). Ljubljana: Ministry of Education and Sport: The National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, p. 4: [http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/os/prenovljeni\\_UN/UN\\_slovenscina\\_OS.pdf](http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/os/prenovljeni_UN/UN_slovenscina_OS.pdf) (5th October 2013).

and the culture of others in the European cultural space and broader. By becoming acquainted with another culture and the common cultural values, they are building a tolerant attitude towards others and towards those who are different. They thus develop their social, cultural and intercultural ability.<sup>37</sup>

However, among the literary texts suggested for discussion in the curriculum only one text, namely, *A Thousand and One Nights*, is intended for the 6th grade of elementary school.<sup>38</sup>

## 3.2 ARAB WORLD IN SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULA FOR HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND SLOVENE LANGUAGE

### 3.2.1 History, Geography and Slovene Language in General Secondary School Curricula

The purpose of **history** in general secondary schools is to “encourage curiosity about the life of people in the past and present and develop the abilities of better understanding the characteristics of various historical periods, phenomena, processes, changes and problems in the past and present at home and abroad. /.../ The selected historical examples and learning material also contribute to the understanding and respect of tolerance, human rights, democratic values and cultural diversity.”<sup>39</sup> Students likewise develop the ability of understanding and respecting the diverse and different religions, cultures and communities, and develop a positive attitude towards diversity, multiculturalism and different social models. History promotes intercultural dialogue.<sup>40</sup>

The subject of history can be integrated with various subjects, such as Slovene language, art history, geography, sociology, philosophy, knowledge of library information science and informatics, especially during project work, field trips, team teaching etc.<sup>41</sup>

37 Ibid., p. 6.

38 Ibid., p. 45.

39 *Curriculum. History. General Secondary Education. General Secondary School.* (2008), p. 9 and p. 12: [http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2013/programi/media/pdf/un\\_gimnazija/un\\_zgodovina\\_280\\_ur\\_gimn.pdf](http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2013/programi/media/pdf/un_gimnazija/un_zgodovina_280_ur_gimn.pdf) (5th October 2013).

40 Ibid., p. 7.

41 Ibid., p. 56.

Below is a presentation of the contents of the subject of history from the 1st to 4th years of general secondary schools, with emphasis on the contents that refer to the history of today's Arab countries.

In the first year, students learn about what history studies, about the origin of the human race, the first civilisations, the Greeks and Romans, and about present-day Slovenia in prehistory and antiquity. The elective topics provide them with knowledge about India, China and America in the Middle Ages and about the everyday life of the first civilisations, the Greeks and Romans. They are also taught the characteristics of science, religion and art from prehistory to the Middle Ages (with emphasis on Greek and Roman culture and Christianity).

The history of today's Arab countries is included in some of the compulsory topics, where students learn about the first civilisations along the major rivers. Under the elective contents they learn about the status and role of men and women, and about writing, science and art in the first civilisations (Egypt and Mesopotamia). They are also acquainted with the creation of Islam, its spreading and influence.

In the 2nd year students learn about the formation of European countries after the fall of the Roman Empire (the Frankish monarchy, Italian city-states, Papal States, the Netherlands and England), about mediaeval colonisation and economic development in the Middle Ages and the modern period, about geographical discoveries, Humanism, the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment. They are taught the history of Slovenes separately: the settlement of Slavs in the Eastern Alps, the Slovene territory in the Middle Ages, Turkish raids, peasant revolts and the Reformation in Slovenia.

The history of today's Arab countries is included only in the elective contents, within which students are familiarised with the non-European area in the Middle Ages and are acquainted with the Arabs or the formation of the Arab State. The students are also taught about the Crusades, which took place in the territory of today's Arab countries. When discussing the formation of the Arab State they learn about the characteristics of the economic, social, political and cultural development or of Arab culture, and "develop a positive attitude towards respecting the differences and

diversity of religions and cultures or come to know the importance of multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue and tolerance.”<sup>42</sup>

In the 3rd year students learn about the following events: the equality ideas of the Enlightenment, the American Revolution, the French Revolution, Napoleon’s dictatorship, the liberal movements and bourgeois revolutions of the 19th century, national movements of the 19th century, the development of Slovene national consciousness from the end of the 18th century onwards, the economic development and formation of political parties in the 19th century etc. Compulsory topics also teach them about imperialism and colonial policy and the consequences of colonialism that relate to the history of today’s Arab countries, namely under the compulsory topic *Troubled Waters: From National Movements to World War I* (competition among countries and exploration of the undiscovered world, foundations of imperialism and colonial policy, division of the world and the consequences of colonialism).

The elective contents refer only to the economic and social development of 19th century Slovenia and Europe; in the case of the non-European area, they refer to the political and socioeconomic development of North and Latin America and of the Far East in the 19th century.

In the 4th year the students are thoroughly familiarised with the development of democracy in the 20th century, with Slovene history in the 20th and 21st centuries, with World War I and II, with the Cold War, and with various economic and political integrations in Europe and the world in the 20th century.

Also connected with the history of today’s Arab countries are the compulsory contents about the conflicts in the 20th century and about the various changes and integrations in Africa and Asia and about the terrorist movements and their impact on the world. Under the elective contents, students can learn about the migration of Asians, the political and economic migrations in the world in the 20th century, about multicultural societies, about science and technology in the 20th century, and about global interdependence and human rights in the modern world.

Under **geography** in general secondary schools students learn about the living conditions that are connected with the natural and social

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42 Ibid., p. 25.

living space of humans, which contributes to the understanding between nations and the respect of difference.<sup>43</sup>

The subject of geography is integrated the most with the subject of history, namely with the topic Troubled Waters: From National Movements to World War I. Thus the curriculum emphasises the following objectives when discussing the colonial image of the world in the 19th and 20th centuries, where geography and history are integrated the most. Students:

- “– list the main colonial countries of the 19th and 20th centuries;
- locate the territories of the colonies of some of these countries;
- explain the reasons for the changes to colonial empires;
- explain the attitude of the mother countries towards the colonies and the reasons for the colonies attaining independence;
- analyse a map and demonstrate the disintegration of colonial empires;
- explain the aims of the new integration among third world countries;
- explain the ways the developed north has influenced the less developed south.”<sup>44</sup>

Below is a presentation of the contents of the subject of geography from the 1st to 3rd years of general secondary schools, with emphasis on the contents that refer to the geography of today’s Arab countries. Since the curriculum for general secondary school also includes contents of the geography matura examination, these contents are also given.

In the 1st year students have general geography and come to know the creation and structure of the Earth, the Earth’s surface, the weather and climate, the soil, the flora and fauna, the waters, the population, the settlements, agriculture, industry and the energy industry, traffic, the telecommunication network, tourism and sustainable development in the world.

In the 2nd year they are acquainted with the geography of the world, namely with individual world continents: Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, Australia, Oceania and the polar regions. Since Arab

43 *Curriculum. Geography. General Secondary Education. General Secondary School.* (2008), p. 8: [http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2013/programi/media/pdf/un\\_gimnazija/2013/SSL\\_UN\\_GEOGRAFIJA\\_gimn.pdf](http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2013/programi/media/pdf/un_gimnazija/2013/SSL_UN_GEOGRAFIJA_gimn.pdf) (5th October 2013).

44 *Ibid.*, p. 65.

countries belong under Africa and Asia, all the objectives from the curriculum relating to these two continents are given below.

When discussing Asia students:

- “ – differentiate the main relief units of Asia;
- determine the main natural geographical characteristics of Asia;
- list the main factors that influence the climate in Asia and are able to identify the climate types and deduce the climate conditions from the climate graphs;
- know the main vegetation zones in Asia and can explain their connection with the climate types;
- evaluate the importance of Asian waters for the life of the local population and know the characteristics of the biggest rivers;
- compare the level of the economic development of Asian countries and explain the reasons for differences among them in present times;
- seek information on agriculture in Asia;
- describe the characteristics of various forms of agriculture and evaluate the effects of the green revolution;
- state the basic characteristics of the population;
- are familiar with Asian religions and their importance in everyday life;
- establish and analyse select environmental/spatial problems and suggest possible solutions;
- connect social events with the processes of attaining independence from under colonial supremacy and with examples of regional integration;
- briefly (in a summary) present the basic geographical characteristics of Asia using a method of choice (poster, report, digital transparencies, dramatisation etc.);
- present an Asian country of choice.”<sup>45</sup>

Activities recommended for students in the case of Asia are the following:

- “ – review records of the weather hazards in Asia in the textbook, books and literature;
- on a selected example of a major river write a concise paper on the importance of the river for the population;

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

- present the problems of agriculture, creed and overpopulation to their classmates and indicate solutions;
- compare the life of people in towns and in the countryside on a selected example of a country or region in Europe and Asia;
- make a poster or report on the economic ascent of the selected country;
- research the importance of oil for the development of the economies of countries and/or alternative options of new energy sources where oil is not present.”<sup>46</sup>

In the case of Africa the students:

- “– differentiate the main relief units of Africa;
- list the main factors that affect the climate and explain their impact on it;
- explain the connection between climate zones and vegetation zones;
- come to know the cultural and linguistic diversity;
- are aware that a long and rich history had existed even before Europeans came to the African continent;
- evaluate the importance of African watercourses for the life of the African population;
- evaluate the causes and consequences of modern demographic movements;
- list the typical diseases in Africa and tie them to the geographical characteristics;
- know and explain the main socioeconomic and political problems in Africa;
- know the past and present consequences of (neo)colonialism in Africa and the influence of the Great Powers on certain conflicts;
- explain the dependence of African countries on the export of ores and energy sources and the consequences of this dependence;
- understand that the occurrence of hunger and poverty in individual regions of Africa is not merely a consequence of natural disasters and developmental helplessness, but also a result of the unfair world agricultural policy towards the produce of the African market;
- determine the developmental possibilities of the continent and the positive examples of economic growth;

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46 Ibid.



- differentiate between the characteristics of the market and self-supply forms of agriculture;
- write an essay on the comparison between Asia and Africa (from the natural geographic and social geographic aspects);
- present an African country of choice.<sup>47</sup>

Activities recommended for students in the case of Africa are the following:

- “– make a map or poster of the natural geographical units of Africa and compare them;
- look for typical African plants that have an important role in the life of the local population, either online or in literature;
- study an example of man’s intervention into the ecosystem (tropical rainforest and sahel) and evaluate the consequences,
- suggest a plan of measures for reducing hunger and preventing the spreading of infectious diseases in Africa (the pro and con role-playing method);
- by using the Internet, research cases of contagious diseases in individual regions of tropical Africa;
- seminar paper: write their thoughts on the possibilities for the development of Africa and the obstacles it faces.”<sup>48</sup>

During geography lessons in the 3rd year students learn only about Europe and Slovenia.

The curriculum also includes contents for the geography matura examination, which do contain additional elective contents for Asia and Africa, yet they are not connected with today’s Arab countries.

The curriculum for **Slovene language** in general secondary schools states that the subject of Slovene language integrates the most with foreign languages, history, art history, philosophy and sociology classes etc.<sup>49</sup>

Half of the lessons are intended for language classes, while the other half is intended for literature classes. Thus in literature classes students

47 Ibid., p. 29.

48 Ibid.

49 *Curriculum. Slovene Language. General Secondary Education. General Secondary School.* (2008), p. 39: [http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2013/programi/media/pdf/un\\_gimnazija/un\\_slovenscina\\_gimn.pdf](http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2013/programi/media/pdf/un_gimnazija/un_slovenscina_gimn.pdf) (5th October 2013).

“are familiarised with the development of Slovene literature and with contemporary movements, with the authors and works of European or world literature and develop an intercultural ability through textual/contextual comparisons, judgements and integrations between subjects.”<sup>50</sup>

When discussing literary texts of Slovene, European and world literature, students “come to know and independently sum up the characteristics of literary historical periods, movements, the poetics of authors and the qualities of the works they have read; compare the essential characteristics of the development of Slovene literature and culture with the characteristics of the development of other literatures and cultures; use the gained knowledge of literary history and theory to evaluate and modernise individual and general literary phenomena.”<sup>51</sup>

Thus under the literature of the ancient Orient the curriculum lists the following texts among the compulsory texts: Akhenaten – “The Great Hymn to the Aten”, “Epic of Gilgamesh”, “The Story of Sinuhe”, *A Thousand and One Nights* – “The Hunchback’s Tale”.<sup>52</sup>

The curriculum also adds optional literary texts, which include those that originate from today’s Arab countries or those that describe today’s Arab countries. The suggested texts that relate to the ancient Orient are: *Qur’an*; *Waltari: Sinuhe the Egyptian* (Finnish author); Svetina: *Šeherezada* (Scheherazade) (Slovene author).<sup>53</sup> The suggested texts from the second half of the 20th century are: Djébar – *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* (Algerian author); Križnar: *Nuba* (Slovene author).<sup>54</sup>

### 3.2.2 History, Geography and Slovene Language in Secondary Technical School Curricula

In secondary technical schools **the subject of history** includes knowledge from Slovene and general history from the 19th to the end of the 20th century and contents that demonstrate to the students how their profession developed in the past. They are taught about the crisis areas after World War II, the disintegration of colonial empires, changes in

50 Ibid., p. 7.

51 Ibid., p. 17.

52 Ibid., pp. 18–19.

53 Ibid., p. 48.

54 Ibid., p. 53.

Africa and Asia, and about terrorism in the 21st century. Under the elective contents they are also taught about the formation and development of the first high civilisations.<sup>55</sup>

During **geography lessons** students learn about Slovenia, Europe and the world, thus gaining the knowledge and skills with which they can orient themselves in contemporary space and time and are able to properly evaluate and respect the narrower or broader environment. Thus under the topic Modern World and the Geographical Processes within It they “develop the ability of a positive attitude towards the diversity of the population as regards race, nationality, religion, culture and education.”<sup>56</sup> They learn about the economic development, the growth and characteristics of the population, the exploitation of energy sources, the environmental problems of the modern world, the planetarisation or globalisation process etc.<sup>57</sup>

During **Slovene language lessons** students “become qualified to effectively communicate in the Slovene language, orally and in writing, and develop an awareness of the importance of the Slovene language as the national language, of its equality in the European Union and its expressive development in all areas of social and private life, which make it equal to the major world languages.”<sup>58</sup>

During literature classes they learn about the development of Slovene literature and the contemporary fundamental works and authors of European or world literature. “While reading and interpreting, students place the literary texts in time and space, become familiar with their authors and with the fundamental cultural and historical circumstances of their creation and of the way they were received by readers.”<sup>59</sup> Under the topic Different and Labelled, Loners and Freaks, the text *A Thousand and One Nights* is suggested, more precisely “The Hunchback’s Tale”.<sup>60</sup>

55 *Secondary Technical Education. Vocational–Technical Education. Knowledge Catalogue. History.* (2007): [http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2012/programi/Ssi/KZ-IK/kz\\_zgodovina\\_ssi\\_in\\_pti\\_103\\_126.doc](http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2012/programi/Ssi/KZ-IK/kz_zgodovina_ssi_in_pti_103_126.doc) (5th October 2013).

56 *Secondary Technical Education. Vocational–Technical Education. Knowledge Catalogue. Geography.* (2007): [http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2012/programi/Ssi/KZ-IK/kz\\_geo\\_ssi\\_pti\\_68.doc](http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2012/programi/Ssi/KZ-IK/kz_geo_ssi_pti_68.doc) (5th October 2013).

57 *Ibid.*

58 *Secondary Technical Education. Knowledge Catalogue. Slovene Language.* (2007), p. 1: [http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2009/programi/drugi\\_del/Ssi/KZ-IK/kz\\_slo\\_ssi\\_476.doc](http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2009/programi/drugi_del/Ssi/KZ-IK/kz_slo_ssi_476.doc) (5th October 2013).

59 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

## CHAPTER 4

### ARAB WORLD IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS FOR HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND SLOVENE LANGUAGE

Several elementary and secondary school textbooks for history, geography and Slovene language have been reviewed. The list of analysed textbooks can be found at the end of the book, under Bibliography. Below are the findings regarding the incorporation of history, of natural geographical and social geographical characteristics and of literature into the discussion of today's Arab countries in elementary and secondary school textbooks for history, geography and Slovene language.

#### 4.1 ARAB WORLD IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS FOR HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND SLOVENE LANGUAGE

##### 4.1.1 History in Elementary School

In textbooks for the 6th grade of elementary school pupils learn about the writing, the role of calculation and geometry in construction, the beginnings of medicine and pharmaceuticals, and about the embalming or mummification procedures of ancient Egyptians. They become acquainted with Phoenicia in the territory of today's Syria and with the Phoenician alphabetic script. Pupils learn that the first cities were created along the rivers Euphrates and Tigris in Mesopotamia (in today's Iraq etc.) and along the Nile River in Egypt. Pupils also learn about family in ancient Egypt: *"In ancient Egypt it consisted of a husband, who could have several wives or mistresses, and many children. The sons of wealthy families attended the schools in the temples, which were run by priests. The sons of poorer families helped their fathers with their craft or with farming from very early on. Girls were raised to be good mothers and housewives. In ancient Egypt women were quite equal to men, as they too could become rulers."*<sup>61</sup>

61 Otič, Marta (2006). *Zgodovina 6: svet skozi čas. Učbenik za zgodovino v šestem razredu osnovne šole* [History 6: The World through Time. Textbook for History in the 6th Grade of Elementary School]. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, p. 44.

“When discussing the counting of years, it is mentioned that the Muslims count the years from Muhammad’s departure from Mecca to Medina in 622. Pupils become acquainted with the characteristics of Islam, first encounter the name Muhammad and come to know two cities: Mecca and Medina. When discussing paper, pupils learn that the processes of making paper were brought to Europe by the Arabs and thus first encounter the name Arabs in plural form. When discussing oil, they become acquainted with some of today’s oil deposits, among which the countries of Kuwait, Iraq and Saudi Arabia are mentioned. Pupils learn that the numerals in use today are called Arabic numerals.”<sup>62</sup>

**In the textbooks for the 7th grade** of elementary school pupils learn about the achievements of ancient Egypt (irrigation farming, everyday life and Egyptian sciences), of Phoenician city-states (Tyre, Sidon and Byblos are mentioned in the territory of present-day Lebanon) and of Mesopotamia (irrigation farming, cuneiform script on clay tablets and the Code of Hammurabi). From the maps they can identify the Greek colonies that the ancient Greeks founded in North Africa; the size of the state of Alexander the Great, which also reached into Egypt (the rich library of Alexandria); the size of the Roman Empire, which reached into North Africa and into the Near East; and the size of the Ottoman Empire, which encompassed many of today’s Arab countries.

When discussing the formation of the Arab State, pupils learn about a new religion: *“A learned and worldly merchant Muhammad lived in Mecca. He proclaimed the new faith in the one God, Allah, and devotion to God’s will, Islam. In 622 he fled from those opposing his teachings to the town of Medina, where he united his loyal followers. His flight is called Hijrah. The Muslim counting of the years begins with this event. Muhammad’s teaching quickly spread throughout all of Arabia and united the Arab people. One of the holy duties of Muslim believers was to spread the Islamic religion by any means, including weapons. The religious war for the spreading of Islam is called jihad. Islamic religious teaching is written down in a holy book called the Qur’an. It proclaims the faith in Allah and the afterlife. Islamic believers have resigned themselves to God’s will. The duty of the believers is to accept the religion, pray regularly, honour the commanded fasting, give*

62 Trškan, Danijela (2011). *Overview of the history of today’s Arab countries in Slovene history textbooks: report for the project Euro-Arab dialogue: comparative study of school textbooks*. Ljubljana: Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO, p. 16.

*alms and once in their lives go on a pilgrimage to Mecca. In addition to faith the teaching also dictates the manner of worshipping God, the organisation of the state, social life, the economy, married life, and hygiene and diet. Believers must not eat pork or drink alcohol.*<sup>63</sup>

Afterwards, they become acquainted with the Arab conquests and the size of the Arab State: *“After Muhammad’s death the Islamic religion was spread by his successors, the caliphs. They expanded the state: they conquered North Africa and Spain. Their influence spread from India to the Atlantic. Their advance towards the West came to a halt in a clash with the Frankish army in the Battle of Poitiers in France in 732. In the Iberian Peninsula the Arab world came into contact with the mediaeval Christian one.”*<sup>64</sup>

Greatest emphasis is placed on the characteristics and achievements of Arab culture in the 7th century to approximately the 10th century. *“In the Middle Ages Arabs had a highly developed culture. They constructed magnificent buildings. They translated scientific works by Greek and Persian writers and preserved them in their libraries. Numerous literary pieces from antiquity were preserved due to the intervention of the Arabs. Universities were established next to Arabian mosques. Arabs were experts in astronomy, medicine and mathematics. From them Europe received ‘Arabic’ numerals. Arabian craft flourished as well. Arabian products made of fabric, leather, steel, and clay were well known. These were traded all the way to China, from where the Arabs brought rice to Europe.”*<sup>65</sup>

The questions inquire about the knowledge of pupils, e.g. *“When did the Arab State start to be formed?; What connected the nomadic Arab tribes together?; List the characteristics of Islam; Describe the importance of Muhammad for the Arabs; What do the Islamic and Catholic religions have in common?; Substantiate with examples why Arab science was more advanced than the European one of the time; Read an Arabian fairy tale and think about which characteristics of Arab life it narrates.”*<sup>66</sup>

63 History textbook: Janša-Zorn, Olga; Mihelič, Darja (2005). *Koraki v času. Od prazgodovine skozi stari in srednji vek. Učbenik za 7. razred devetletke*. [Steps through Time. From Prehistory through Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Textbook for the 7th Grade of Nine-Year Elementary School]. Ljubljana: DZS, pp. 85.

64 Ibid. p. 85.

65 Ibid.

66 Simonič Mervic, Karmen (2003). *Stari svet: zgodovina za 7. razred devetletne osnovne šole* [The Old World: History for the 7th Grade of Nine-Year Elementary School]. Ljubljana: Modrijan, p. 114.

“Pupils learn that the Frankish ruler Charles Martel stopped the invasion of the Arabs into Europe in the first half of the 8th century, and that the southern part of Spain was occupied by the Arabs and was once again conquered by the Spanish with the Reconquista in 1492. They learn that the raids of the Arabs from North Africa (Saracens) were common in the Middle Ages, particularly into the southern part of Italy and Sicily. When discussing the Crusades, pupils encounter Jerusalem (and Palestine), which the Crusaders wished to liberate from the hands of the Muslims with military campaigns ... The consequences are emphasised: that Europe encountered Arab culture and science (new agricultural crops, Arab techniques in fabric making and ore production, Arabic numerals, paper).”<sup>67</sup>

**In textbooks for the 8th grade** pupils learn that Europeans gained much of their knowledge of geography, shipbuilding and of the Holy Land through Arabs. E.g. the traveller Ibn Battuta (14th century), a native of Tangier (Morocco), travelled across Africa and Asia.

“Pupils learn that European countries (Great Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Germany and Italy) divided Africa among themselves and founded colonies, subjugating their inhabitants. Great Britain in particular was said to have started reaching for the territories of Africa in the north, south and east after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Pupils become aware of the fact that all of Africa, with the exception of Ethiopia and Liberia, was subordinated to imperialist European countries.”<sup>68</sup>

The pupils become acquainted with the Turkish rulers who also conquered Arab countries. Selim the Grim was *“a cruel, yet capable ruler and an exceptional military commander. He defeated the Persians (1514) and invaded North Africa through Syria and Palestine. He conquered the Muslim holy cities, Mecca and Medina, and Cairo, which was the centre of Islamic science and art.”*<sup>69</sup>

67 Trškan, Danijela (2011). *Overview of the history of today's Arab countries in Slovene history textbooks: report for the project Euro-Arab dialogue: comparative study of school textbooks*. Ljubljana: Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO, p. 18.

68 *Ibid.* pp. 18–19.

69 Mirjanič, Anita; Razpotnik, Jelka; Snoj, Damjan; Verdev, Helena; Zuljan, Anka (2006). *Raziskujem preteklost 8. Učbenik za zgodovino za 8. razred osnovne šole* [Exploring the Past 8. History Textbook for the 8th Grade of Elementary School]. Ljubljana: Rokus, p. 13.

Pupils are taught about the formation of the first states founded by Arabs in North Africa. *“After Muhammad’s death, Arabs settled in North Africa in the 7th century. They subjugated the native population, which mostly voluntarily converted to the Islamic religion. Among them were the Berbers, the founders of two powerful states, which had united the lands of North Africa. In mid-11th century the Almoravids conquered the present-day coastal areas in Mauritania, Western Sahara and Morocco. They also spread to West Africa and to the south of Spain (where they were called Moors). The Almohads grew strong in mid-12th century and established themselves in Morocco. They declared Marrakesh as their capital. At the end of the 12th century, their state covered the territory between Marrakesh, Tunis and Tripoli in Africa and a large part of southern Spain. The Berbers controlled the lively trade between the territories north and south of the Sahara.”*<sup>70</sup>

**In textbooks for the 9th grade** of elementary school pupils learn about the reasons behind the conflict between Arabs and Jews, and about the rise of the Zionist movement for the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. *“After the Turks were defeated in 1918, Palestine was given to the protection of the British, whereas Syria and Lebanon were given to the French. In Palestine the British allowed the immigration of Jews. The Zionist movement (movement for an independent Jewish state in Palestine; after the Zion hill in Jerusalem, where Solomon’s temple stood) endeavoured to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. This triggered protests from Arabs, who demanded political autonomy. They began to fight one another. Because Zionists were not willing to cooperate with the Arabs, the British temporarily prohibited the settlement of Jews in 1930. Other Arab countries also fought for political independence. They mostly fought against the British or French colonisers with strikes, demonstrations and political propaganda; national liberation wars also occurred in some places and all of them ended in defeat.”*<sup>71</sup>

When discussing World War II pupils learn about the course of the war in North Africa, particularly in Egypt: *“The war spread to Africa as well, which was still divided among the colonists. Italy wished to expand its influ-*

70 Ibid. p. 15.

71 Dolenc, Ervin; Gabrič, Aleš; Rode, Marjan (2002). *Koraki v času. 20. stoletje: zgodovina za 8. razred osemletke in 9. razred devetletke* [Steps through Time. The 20th Century: History for the 8th Grade of Eight-Year Elementary School and the 9th Grade of Nine-Year Elementary School]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 45.



*ence here more than others. The fiercest battles raged in North Africa. Due to the special conditions, the combat in this territory is called the Desert War. In September 1940 Italy began attacking Egypt, a British colony, from Libya. Its objective was the Suez Canal, which would grant it access to the oil fields in the Near East.*<sup>72</sup>

“Pupils become acquainted with the crisis areas and wars in the territory of today’s Arab countries after World War II, i.e. due to the establishment of the Jewish State of Israel, which triggered several Israeli-Arab Wars (1948, 1956, 1967, 1973 etc.), in which the present-day Arab countries of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan became involved.”<sup>73</sup>

When discussing these wars, pupils learn about the fate of the Palestinians: *“Many Palestinians emigrated to the neighbouring countries as refugees. These wars prevented an agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians; the latter, in the desire to be independent, began to increasingly support the PLO – Palestine Liberation Organisation. Members of this organisation supported a violent fight against the Israelis in the 1970s and 1980s, which led to violent countermeasures from the Israelis (bombings). At the same time, the Palestinians focused the attention of the world public on their situation. Pressured by the Great Powers, both sides signed a peace treaty in Oslo in 1993, which foresaw the establishment of an autonomous Palestinian unit in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The situation of the Palestinians still remains to be solved.”*<sup>74</sup>

“Under decolonisation, pupils become acquainted with the attaining of independence of African states, particularly after World War II (the example of Algeria is given), and with the concept of neocolonialism, in the scope of which the former colonial Great Powers exploited the political unreadiness of the independent states to economically, politically and militarily interfere with these states.”<sup>75</sup>

72 Razpotnik, Jelka; Snoj, Damjan (2008). *Raziskujem preteklost 9. Učbenik za zgodovino za 9. razred osnovne šole* [Exploring the Past 9: History Textbook for the 9th Grade of Elementary School]. 2nd edition. Ljubljana: Rokus Klett, p. 68.

73 Trškan, Danijela (2011). *Overview of the history of today’s Arab countries in Slovene history textbooks: report for the project Euro-Arab dialogue: comparative study of school textbooks*. Ljubljana: Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO, pp. 19–20.

74 Razpotnik, Jelka; Snoj, Damjan (2008). *Raziskujem preteklost 9. Učbenik za zgodovino za 9. razred osnovne šole* [Exploring the Past 9: History Textbook for the 9th Grade of Elementary School]. 2nd edition. Ljubljana: Rokus Klett, p. 113.

75 Trškan, Danijela (2011). *Overview of the history of today’s Arab countries in Slovene history textbooks: report for the project Euro-Arab dialogue: comparative study of school textbooks*. Ljubljana: Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO, p. 20.

### 4.1.2 Geography in Elementary School

Even though the geography curricula indicate that pupils only learn about Asia and Africa in the 7th and 8th grades, the textbooks for the 6th and 9th grades were also analysed. It has been ascertained that numerous maps in those textbooks show the world, including Asia and Africa, thus enabling the pupils to identify many of today's Arab countries and discern the characteristics that apply to them.

Thus, using maps of the world, pupils **in the 6th grade** learn about: the continents, the shaping of the Earth's surface, the time zones, and the distribution of temperatures and precipitation in thermal zones. One of the maps portrays the climate-vegetation zones of Africa, with climate graphs given for Algiers and In Salah in Algeria.<sup>76</sup>

**In the 7th grade** pupils learn about the geography of Europe and Asia. The textbook classifies Arab countries (Bahrain, Djibouti, Iraq, Yemen, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sudan, United Arab Emirates and the Palestinian Autonomous Area) under Southwest Asia.<sup>77</sup>

From the maps and descriptions of the area of Southwest Asia pupils learn about the types of the surface (lowlands, plateaus, medium-high mountain ranges and mountains); on photographs they can see the irrigation fields along the Euphrates River in Syria, the desert in Oman and the Dead Sea; they can see Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and the marked Syrian-Palestinian trench on a map.

A special description is given for the Arabian Peninsula: *“South of Mesopotamia lies the Arabian Peninsula. It is surrounded in the west by the Red Sea, in the south by the Gulf of Aden, in the southeast by the Arabian Sea, and in the east by the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf. Due to the arid climate the surface is a desert/rocky one; in some places it is covered with sand (similarly as in the Sahara). The oases around the springs of groundwater and the areas around oil fields and natural gas deposits are important for settlement. The coasts where oil refineries and*

76 Kolnik, Karmen et al. (2004). *Geografija za 6. razred*. [Geography for the 6th Grade]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 54.

77 Miklavc Pintarič, Simona et al. (2005). *Geografija 7. Učbenik za pouk geografije v sedmem razredu devetletne osnovne šole*. [Geography 7. Textbook for the 7th Grade of Nine-Year Elementary School]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 7.

*harbours have been set up are more densely populated. A narrow and long tectonic depression runs from the Red Sea towards the north: the Syrian-Palestinian Trench or the Jordan Trench. In its central part lies the Dead Sea, which is highly salty and lifeless, but of great importance for tourism. The water level in the Dead Sea is 400 metres lower than the mean sea level on Earth. From the north, from the Golan Plateau, the Jordan River flows into the Dead Sea.*<sup>78</sup>

A special description is given for the Near East, which, on the one hand, emphasises the wealth obtained with oil, and, on the other hand, the conflicts and wars (e.g. the Lebanon War, the war between Iraq and Iran in the 1980s, the Iraqi conquest of Kuwait in 1990 and the US intervention in Iraq in 2002). It points out the Kurds, who wish to establish their own state and who are today living in the area of north Syria and Iraq, west Iran, south Armenia and east Turkey.<sup>79</sup> The textbook allocates the most space to the history of Israel from the establishment of the state in 1948 to 2004, also showing this development on maps. *“On 14th May 1948 the independent State of Israel was declared in the territory between Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea. /.../ The establishment of this new state was greatly opposed by the neighbouring Arab countries. Several grave conflicts occurred between them and Israel. In the wars of 1967 and 1973 Israeli forces occupied the territories of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Plateau and East Jerusalem, which are not acknowledged by the United Nations as territories of the State of Israel.”*<sup>80</sup>

**In the 8th grade** pupils learn about Africa, America, Australia, Oceania and the polar regions. On the map of Africa the following countries and cities are written: Morocco (Rabat), Algeria (Algiers) and Egypt (Cairo). The description of Africa is divided into a general description of the continent (the surface, the climate and vegetation zones, the distribution of precipitation, the flora and fauna, the number of inhabitants and the importance of the Nile River in the past and present) and into North Africa, Tropical Africa and South Africa.

Under North Africa the following description of the natural geographical characteristics can be found: *“North Africa is divided into the higher*

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78 Ibid., p. 64.

79 Ibid., p. 66.

80 Ibid., p. 67.

western part and the low eastern part. In the western part of North Africa three natural zones extend from the Mediterranean Sea towards the Sahara in the south. In the centre rises the young fold mountain range of Atlas. /.../ The Atlas mountains, with intermediate river valleys, dry steppes and oases, pass into the Sahara Desert towards the south. The countries of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia are situated in the area of the Atlas mountains, which are hence together called the Atlas countries. They are often referred to by the Arab name of Maghreb, which means west. /.../ Northeast Africa is the lowest part of the continent and is much drier in comparison with West Africa. Individual regions differ greatly, depending on the proximity of the sources of water. Thus its eastern part, particularly the area along the Nile River, is much more populated than the western part in the territory of Libya, where the Sahara comes directly up to the Mediterranean Sea and in some places almost sinks into it. The desert regions are very scarcely populated, with the exception of the oases and the Mediterranean coast. The territories of Libya, Egypt and, above all, Sudan border on the regions of Tropical Africa in the south.”<sup>81</sup>

The following social geographical descriptions of North Africa are given:

“Prior to the arrival of Arabs to North Africa, the Berbers were the majority population. They were divided into numerous tribes, which lived from the Canary Islands in the west to Egypt in the east. When the Arabs settled in this territory in the 7th century, the power and influence of the Berbers began to fade. They were often forced to abandon their language and at the same time convert to the Muslim religion. To this day, the highest number of natives has been preserved in Algeria and Morocco, where they represent an important share of the entire population. Remote life in oases and fortified villages of the Atlas mountain range has enabled these farmers to preserve their culture and language. The nomadic Tuareg, who live in the Sahara, have even managed to preserve their writing, which resembles old Phoenician script. The status of women in society is much more equal, since they do not have to hide their faces behind veils, as is the custom of the Arab Muslim women. The majority population of Egypt are descendants of the ancient Egyptians, whose origin is similar to that of the Berbers. They have adopted the Islamic religion, culture, language and the customs of the

81 Novak, Franci et al. (2001). *Geografija za 8. razred*. [Geography for the 8th Grade]. Ljubljana: DZS, pp. 22–23.

*Arabs. Living together in the same country, but not coexisting, is characteristic of Arabs from North Africa and the tribes of the black race from Tropical Africa, who are living in the central and southern part of Sudan. The Nuba belong to them as well. This people is struggling to resist the Islamisation that is being imposed by the ruling Arabs from north Sudan.*

*In the past, the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea have always attracted peoples skilled in trade and in navigating the sea. The mercantile tradition of the old peoples was continued by the Arabs. The principal economic activity of the majority of the countries in this area is still agriculture; however, it is at different stages of development in individual regions. Traditional farming, connected with nomadic pasture, is still characteristic of the mountainous regions of the Atlas countries and of Libya; consequently the production barely covers their own needs. Plantations of olive trees, citruses and vines are characteristic of contemporary agriculture. More market-oriented farming has developed primarily in the delta and valley of the Nile River, where the building of the Aswan Dam has enabled the introduction of contemporary irrigation methods. In addition to cotton, they also began growing sugar cane, maize, rice, millet and early season vegetables for the European market. /.../ Important exporters of oil and gas in North Africa are Libya, Algeria and Egypt. For countries with a mainly desert surface oil is the most important export goods due to the lack of water. The oil flows through numerous oil pipelines to the North African harbours, from where tankers transport it to the European refineries. Gas from Algeria comes all the way to Slovenia via a gas line. The petrochemical (oil) and chemical industries (phosphates) have developed primarily in the coastal harbour towns. The old traditional crafts of leather making and weaving carpets have become the foundation for the development of the leather and textile industry. /.../*

*Tourists are very welcome in the west, especially in Morocco and Tunisia, as the old cultural landscape and the vicinity of long sandy beaches satisfy even the most demanding needs of wealthy guests. The historical town of Sousse in Tunisia, which was created in the time of Phoenicians, is now a genuine magnet for Slovenes, since it has been twinned with Ljubljana for many years now. Despite the numerous historical treasures and the purest Mediterranean beaches, Libya and Algeria are strangers to mass tourism. The unsettled political circumstances, the aversion towards Western culture*

and above all the small number of hotels do not provide a carefree vacation to lovers of Africa.”<sup>82</sup>

**In the 9th grade** pupils learn about the geography of Slovenia, so there are no maps of the world.<sup>83</sup>

### 4.1.3 Slovene Language in Elementary School

The textbooks for literature in elementary school mostly contain Slovene and world literature, which is divided into the literature of the 19th century (modern), the literature of the 20th century (contemporary, after World War II) and older literature. The most common topics are: family, society, home, homeland, the world, love, dreams etc. Below is a presentation of texts from the 6th to the 9th grade that originate from today's Arab countries.

**In the 6th grade** pupils are acquainted with the collection *Tales from a Thousand and One Nights*, which combines Oriental tales, fairy tales, anecdotes and other stories. In one of the textbooks the pupils learn about Scheherazade, who is talking with her father (the first minister of the sultan) and decides to marry the sultan. In this excerpt pupils learn the following new words: Orient (lands east of the Mediterranean Sea), sultan, sultanate, grand vizier (the chief adviser to the sultan) and tyrant.<sup>84</sup> Pupils are given interesting assignments, e.g.: “Do you know the actual locations from the 1001 Nights? Divide the following assignments amongst yourselves and based on information from the World Wide Web, travel guidebooks etc. prepare a class presentation about life in the East: dwellings (Sultan's palace), clothing (Scheherazade's fashion show), food (Sultan's chef advises), customs (1001 ways to fill the time), holidays (Flying through the seasons on a magic carpet) etc.”<sup>85</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., pp. 24–26.

<sup>83</sup> Novak, Franci et al. (2003). *Geografija Slovenije za 9. (8.) razred*. Učbenik za 9. razred devetletne in 8. razred osemletne osnovne šole. [Geography for the 9th (8th) Grade. Textbook for the 9th Grade of Nine-Year Elementary School and the 8th Grade of Eight-Year Elementary School]. Ljubljana: DZS.

<sup>84</sup> Blažič, Milena (2007). *Svet iz besed 6: berilo za 6. razred devetletne osnovne šole*. [World from Words 6: Textbook for the 6th Grade of Nine-Year Elementary School]. Ljubljana: Rokus Klett, pp. 72–74.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

In another textbook pupils read the Arabian fairy tale “Dreams” from the book *A Thousand and One Nights*, where they meet a merchant from Baghdad, who heads to Cairo because of his dreams and spends the night at a mosque, after which he ends up in prison; in the end he returns home and discovers that the wealth he had dreamed of was buried in his garden. The pupils thus learn about two Arab towns, the Nile River, the mosque and Allah.<sup>86</sup> The pupils are also given a few creative assignments: “*See, your dreams are worth believing in. What do you dream of? Tell a tale; The now wealthy merchant invites a magistrate to his home for a visit. Write down their conversation.*”<sup>87</sup>

**The textbooks for the 7th and 8th grades** do not contain any literary texts that would originate from today’s Arab countries, except for one textbook for the 8th grade, which addresses the pupils in the introduction to Slovene literature of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century (Miško Kranjec: *Children, Whose Are You?*) with the words of an Arab author: “*Read the thought of the painter and philosopher Gibran Khalil Gibran (1883–1931), one of the most translated Arab authors of the 20th century: ‘Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of Life’s longing for itself. They come through you but not from you, And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.’ How do you understand this thought? Do you agree with it?*

*Gibran continues his thoughts thus: ‘You may give them your love but not your thoughts, For they have their own thoughts.’ What kind of parent would you like to be? State an example of when you felt that your parents respect you. Why is it important that parents love their children?*”<sup>88</sup>

In the textbook for the 9th grade pupils can read the ancient Egyptian poem “Song of the Corn Reapers”: “*We carry the sheaves and white corn day by day. The granaries are too full, all the ships are full. The grains are flowing over the deck. Yet we are still driven on. Hungry and bent we tread. Our shoulders are bronze; our hearts are bronze as we carry so day*

86 Cirman, Majda et al. (2008). *Branje za sanje: berilo 6. Učbenik za slovenščino-knjževnost v 6. razredu*. [Reading for Dreams 6. Textbook for the Slovene Language – Literature in the 6th Grade]. Ljubljana: DZS, pp. 28–31.

87 *Ibid.*, DZS, p. 31.

88 Blažič, Milena (2012). *Novi svet iz besed 8: berilo za 8. razred osnovne šole*. [New World from Words 8: Textbook for the 8th Grade of Elementary School]. Ljubljana: Rokus Klett, p. 122. Gibran Khalil Gibran was born in today’s Libanon.



by day.”<sup>89</sup> In order to research the poem, the pupils answer the following questions: “*Who is singing the song? While doing what work? What does white corn mean? Where were they taking the wheat? Was there a lot of wheat? Bearing in mind everything that they filled with it, specify the location of the event. Who is driving the reapers to work? If the harvest is good, are the workers at least full? Think about this: could we again start from the beginning at the end of the poem? Why? Imagine the poem to be accompanied by pounding. Using history textbooks, handbooks and other books, find out when and where this poem is taking place. Add another stanza to the poem.*”<sup>90</sup>

## 4.2 ARAB WORLD IN SECONDARY SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS FOR HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND SLOVENE LANGUAGE

### 4.2.1 History in Secondary School

In the textbook for the 1st year of general secondary school students learn the most about the first civilisations, namely about Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt, similarly as in elementary school, only that in general secondary schools the contents are more in-depth. Emphasis is placed on religion, culture and everyday life. Just as in elementary school, general secondary school students come to know the history of today’s Arab countries when reviewing the history of the ancient Greeks (Greek colonisation in the Mediterranean), the conquests of Alexander the Great, the size of the Roman Empire, the State of Israel, the Hittites, Persians, Phoenicians etc.

The topic of Islam is connected the most with the history of today’s Arab countries, “in which students first come to know Muhammad (his life, work, the spreading of his teachings, his move from Mecca to Medina), followed by the five main duties of Muslims (creed, prayer five times a day, almsgiving, fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca), the creation of the Muslim sacred book, the *Qur’an* (Muhammad’s work in Mecca and

89 Honzak, Mojca et al. (2010). *Skrivno življenje besed: berilo 9 za deveti razred osnovne šole*. [The Secret Life of Words: Textbook for the 9th Grade of Elementary School]. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, p. 10.

90 *Ibid.*, p. 11.



Medina).<sup>91</sup> The downside is that this topic belongs to the elective topics in general secondary schools.

*“When Muhammad was still alive, his followers wrote down his teachings, yet these were not collected and organised. According to Islamic tradition, after Muhammad’s death the first Caliph instructed the Prophet’s secretary to collect and organise these teachings. Some twenty years after Muhammad’s death, the final version of his teachings was compiled and the remaining versions destroyed. Thus the Muslim holy book, the Qur’an, was created. In Arabic Qur’an means to recite (the verses are recited when read). It consists of the first chapter, which functions as a whole, and 114 chapters or suras. These are divided into lines or ayat and are organised neither chronologically nor by content. Nevertheless, the Qur’an can be divided into two parts. The first part describes Muhammad’s work in Mecca, while the second one describes his work in Medina. The text shows the change in Muhammad’s role from prophet and preacher to military leader. Muhammad adopted monotheism and some of the prophets from the religious notions of Jews and Christians. He adopted the first five books of the Old Testament, though not in their entirety, and acknowledged Moses as a prophet. He acknowledged Jesus as a prophet, whom he said had not been crucified nor had been the Saviour; he also included his mother, Mary. The Qur’an also has traces of the elements of ancient Arab beliefs: some of the legal/moral regulations, clan solidarity, polygamy and the Kaaba shrine. Muhammad created an original religion, a product of the Arab religious experience.”<sup>92</sup>*

“Pupils are taught that after the death of Muhammad, the Muslim community fell apart into Sunnites and Shiites; at the time of his successors, the caliphs, Islam spread to Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Persia, Egypt, North Africa, Spain and to other parts of Asia.”<sup>93</sup>

91 Brodnik, Vilma; Jernejčič, Robert; Zgaga Srečko (2009). *Zgodovina 1. Učbenik za 1. letnik gimnazije* [History 1. Textbook for the 1st Year of General Secondary School]. Ljubljana: DZS, pp. 312–315 In: Trškan, Danijela (2011). *Overview of the history of today’s Arab countries in Slovene history textbooks: report for the project Euro-Arab dialogue: comparative study of school textbooks*. Ljubljana: Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO, p. 23.

92 Brodnik, Vilma; Jernejčič, Robert; Zgaga Srečko (2009). *Zgodovina 1. Učbenik za 1. letnik gimnazije* [History 1. Textbook for the 1st Year of General Secondary School]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 313.

93 Brodnik, Vilma; Jernejčič, Robert; Zgaga Srečko (2009). *Zgodovina 1. Učbenik za 1. letnik gimnazije* [History 1. Textbook for the 1st Year of General Secondary School]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 314 In: Trškan, Danijela (2011). *Overview of the history of today’s Arab countries in Slovene history textbooks: report for the project Euro-Arab dialogue: comparative study of school textbooks*. Ljubljana: Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO, p. 23.

**In the textbook for the 2nd year of general secondary school** students once again learn about Islam under the topic of Arabs or the Arab State, which likewise belongs to the elective topics in general secondary schools. They thus revise the characteristics of the Islamic religion, the role of Muhammad and of the *Qur'an*.

The students are acquainted with the characteristics of the fast spreading of Islam after the death of Muhammad: *“The spreading of Islam among the Byzantine subjects outside of Arabia was not particularly difficult: in the eastern lands these subjects often belonged to religious movements that were oppressed in Constantinople or if not, they liked the attitude of the Arabs towards their religion, and above all the significantly lower taxes that the Arab conquerors demanded from them. It was this very respect of the traditional values of other peoples that enabled the Arabs to expand their dominion across the entire south and east of the Mediterranean world in an incredibly short period of time and from there penetrate into Europe, the Iberian Peninsula, Sicily and other big islands in the western part of the Mediterranean Sea.”*<sup>94</sup>

The city of Baghdad is emphasised as the leading economic and cultural centre of the world:

*“With the first conquests the centre of the Islamic world was moved first to Damascus and in mid-8th century to Baghdad. This move was connected with better opportunities for economic development in Mesopotamia and with control over the main trade routes between the Eurasian East and West (Silk Road). An enormous royal/religious complex was built in the city, the Caliph’s Palace, enclosed with circular walls with a diameter of over two kilometres. A city began to form around the palace, which amounted to one million inhabitants during its greatest splendour under the rule of Caliph Harun al-Rashid (786–809). The city became one of the leading economic and cultural centres of the world.”*<sup>95</sup>

Students learn about the importance of Arab culture to the Europeans: *“Christian Europeans, especially those in the Iberian Peninsula and in the south of the Apennine Peninsula, adopted many scientific achievements, goods and cultural habits from the Arabs. Europeans soon began to make*

94 Mlacović, Dušan; Urankar, Nataša (2010). *Zgodovina 2. Učbenik za 2. letnik gimnazije* [History 2. Textbook for the 2nd Year of General Secondary School]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 191.

95 *Ibid.*, p. 192.

*use of the medical knowledge from the non-European world /.../, the knowledge of arithmetic, geometry and astronomy. They also followed their work in philosophy, especially the Arab studies of Greek philosophers, and their maritime/geographical knowledge. The supremacy of Arab nautical knowledge in the mediaeval Eurasian West is apparent from the numerous Arabic words in the maritime and astrological vocabulary of West European peoples /.../. Through the Arabs the Europeans were introduced to effective irrigation systems and the cultivation of cultures that require a great deal of sun and water, and to a cuisine based on the use of various foodstuffs and spices. Despite the fact that the Papal Court prohibited trade with the Islamic world (in fear of a Christian slave trade), the prohibitions were unsuccessful: the trading success of the Italian naval forces and of Byzantium was to a large extent connected with the mediation of Arabs in the trade between the Far East and Christian Europe.”<sup>96</sup>*

The textbook contains very few questions relating to Arab history: e.g. “What is the economic and scientific contribution of Arabs to the world treasury of knowledge?; /.../ How is religion connected with Arab conquests?; In which countries has Islam been preserved to this day?”<sup>97</sup>

“When discussing the history of Spain, there is mention of the year 711 and the victory of the Arabs over the Visigoths, and the conquering of nearly the entire Iberian Peninsula; also pointed out is the Reconquista or the battle for the reconquest of the lost territories of the Spanish states until the 15th century, which ended with the conquest of Granada and the expulsion of Muslim population from the city.”<sup>98</sup>

**In the textbook for the 3rd year of general secondary school** students become acquainted with “the imperialist policy of European countries, in particular of France, Great Britain, Germany and Italy. There is mention of Spain, which competed with France for control over the western part of the Sahara in Morocco; the Moroccan crisis of 1911 between France and Germany. There is greater emphasis on the division of Africa in the 19th

96 Ibid., p. 193.

97 Ibid., p. 189 and p. 193.

98 Mlacovič, Dušan; Urankar, Nataša (2010). *Zgodovina 2. Učbenik za 2. letnik gimnazije* [History 2. Textbook for the 2nd Year of General Secondary School]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 44–45 In: Trškan, Danijela (2011). *Overview of the history of today's Arab countries in Slovene history textbooks: report for the project Euro-Arab dialogue: comparative study of school textbooks*. Ljubljana: Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO, p. 24.

century or before World War I. Great Britain obtained majority ownership of the Suez Canal and occupied Egypt. France occupied Algeria and spread its land to part of Tunisia and the greater part of Morocco. Italy established itself in Libya until the onset of World War I.”<sup>99</sup>

They are also acquainted with the immigration of Jews to the territory of Palestine and their attitude towards Arabs. *“Numerous critical observers were reporting that the Jewish immigrants were behaving cruelly and hostilely towards the Arabs, yet greater conflicts did not occur between them. When in 1917 the so-called Balfour Declaration officially recognised Palestine as the homeland of the Jews without asking the natives for their consent, the subsequent immigration caused the tension between the Arab population and the Jews to intensify.”*<sup>100</sup>

**In the textbooks for the 4th year of general secondary school** students already learn about Arabs during World War I, because the British fought with the Turks in Palestine and won the Arabs over to their side, who then organised the first rebellions against the Turks.

The case of Saudi Arabia is given as an example of the successful fight of Arab countries for independence in the inter-war period: *“In the scarcely populated desert areas of the Arabian Peninsula outside these territories, Ibn Saud gradually united the territory under its control by 1926, by waging wars with other dynasties and with support from the British, and in 1932 declared the autonomous Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The taxation of pilgrims to Mecca was not enough to sustain the kingdom, so Ibn Saud awarded American companies concessions for searching for oil.”*<sup>101</sup> There is mention of the Arabian American Oil Company that started pumping oil in Saudi Arabia in 1938 and made the country wealthy after World War II.

When discussing the inter-war period in the 20th century students learn that control over Arab countries was granted to France (Syria and

99 Cvirn, Janez; Studen, Andrej (2010). *Zgodovina 3. Učbenik za 3. letnik gimnazije* [History 3. Textbook for the 3rd Year of General Secondary School]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 93–94 In: Trškan, Danijela (2011). *Overview of the history of today's Arab countries in Slovene history textbooks: report for the project Euro-Arab dialogue: comparative study of school textbooks*. Ljubljana: Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO, p. 25.

100 Cvirn, Janez; Studen, Andrej (2010). *Zgodovina 3. Učbenik za 3. letnik gimnazije* [History 3. Textbook for the 3rd Year of General Secondary School]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 115.

101 Dolenc, Ervin; Gabrič, Aleš (2002). *Zgodovina 4: učbenik za 4. letnik gimnazije* [History 4. Textbook for the 4th Year of General Secondary School]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 65.

Lebanon) and Great Britain (Iraq, Palestine and Jordan). When discussing the period of World War II they learn about the African battlefield, namely the conflicts in North Africa or Egypt (Benghazi, Tobruk, the battle of El Alamein of 1942, the landing of ally soldiers on the coasts of Morocco and Algeria, and the surrender of German and Italian forces in Tunisia in 1943).

After World War II students learn about the larger crisis areas, particularly about the wars between Israel and Arab countries after the independent State of Israel was declared in 1948. *“The Near East became a permanent crisis area with recurring wars in 1956, 1967, 1973 and 1982. Israel, which was supported by the USA, was usually more successful in these wars and conquered a great deal of the territory of the neighbouring countries. Yet as demanded by the Great Powers and the UN, the hostilities were quickly put to an end each time and UN peacekeeping forces were placed between the hostile armies. Greater diplomatic campaigns for solving the Near East crisis occurred as late as in the 1970s, when Arab countries were already greatly exploiting their most powerful ‘weapon’ – oil. The embargo on the supply of oil to countries that supported Israel, and the four times higher price of ‘black gold’ within one year after the October War of 1973 convinced the protector of Israel and the world’s wealthiest country, the USA, to put pressure on Israel and convince it that the time has come to reach an agreement with its Arab neighbours.”*<sup>102</sup>

They likewise become familiar with the solving of the Palestinian issue: *“The State of Israel deliberately populated Jews in territories it had conquered during the war. Palestinians were scattered across the entire Arab world; most of them settled in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. There they scraped by in camps and were occasionally the target of internal confrontations in Arab countries, primarily in Lebanon and Jordan. In 1964 the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was founded. After 1967 it organised a military and political activity for liberating Palestine and two years later launched bigger guerrilla campaigns. In 1974 PLO was indirectly acknowledged by the UN as a representative of Palestinians; its leader Yasser Arafat was even allowed to appear in the General Assembly in 1975. Arafat, who passed away in 2004, was succeeded by a new Palestinian*

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 175. Also in: Gabrič, Aleš; Režek Mateja (2011). *Zgodovina 4. Učbenik za četrti letnik gimnazije*. [History 4. Textbook for the 4th Year of General Secondary School]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 100–102.

*leader, Mahmoud Abbas. /.../ In 1993 Israel and the PLO began to directly negotiate the solution to the Palestinian issue under the aegis of the USA and reached an agreement on Palestinian autonomy in Israel.*<sup>103</sup>

Thus students become acquainted with the years in which many of today's Arab countries attained independence: 1910–19 (Saudi Arabia), 1920–29 (Egypt), 1930–39 (Iraq), 1940–49 (Israel, Jordan and Syria), 1950–59 (Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia), 1960–69 (Algeria, Mauritania, Somalia, Kuwait and South Yemen), 1970–79 (Djibouti, Bahrain, Qatar and United Arab Emirates).<sup>104</sup>

They are also familiarised with the crisis in Lebanon after World War II: *“Internal tension in Lebanon was great throughout the post-war period, as it was divided into several Christian and Muslim creeds, while other Arab countries, particularly Syria, meddled in its internal affairs. At first it was economically wealthy; its banks mostly accumulated oil capital. In 1958 civil war broke out and the USA intervened at the request of the government, but soon withdrew. The civil war continued over the next two decades; Lebanon was divided into various enclaves, above all into the Christian and Muslim parts, which were controlled by various militias. Its towns were demolished several times; assassins, kidnappings, street fighting, planted bombs, religious and ethnic conflicts were a part of the everyday life of the local population for years.”*<sup>105</sup>

## 4.2.2 Geography in Secondary School

**Textbooks for the 1st year of general secondary school** by various publishing houses contain maps of the world with different natural or social geographical characteristics, from which the students can also discern the characteristics of today's Arab countries.

103 Repe, Božo (2005). *Sodobna zgodovina: zgodovina za 4. letnik gimnazij. Prenovljena in dopolnjena izdaja* [Contemporary History: History for the 4th Year of General Secondary Schools. Revised and Supplemented Edition]. Ljubljana: Modrijan, pp. 215–216. Also in: Gabrič, Aleš; Režek Mateja (2011). *Zgodovina 4. Učbenik za četrti letnik gimnazije*. [History 4. Textbook for the 4th Year of General Secondary School]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 103–104.

104 Repe, Božo (2005). *Sodobna zgodovina: zgodovina za 4. letnik gimnazij. Prenovljena in dopolnjena izdaja* [Contemporary History: History for the 4th Year of General Secondary Schools. Revised and Supplemented Edition]. Ljubljana: Modrijan, p. 222. Also in: Gabrič, Aleš; Režek Mateja (2011). *Zgodovina 4. Učbenik za četrti letnik gimnazije*. [History 4. Textbook for the 4th Year of General Secondary School]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 97.

105 Ibid., p. 216.

E.g. in the textbook by the Modrijan publishing house students come to know the structure of the Earth and its surface, the climate, the soil and vegetation, the waters, the population and settlements, and the economic activities, which are shown on the maps of the world. Thus the maps of the world show e.g.: young fold mountains, shields and plates (Arabian Plate, African Shield), seismic zones, the greatest scope of Pleistocene glaciation, the deserts and semi-deserts in the world, the main paths of cyclones around the world, climate types, climates of the tropical or hot belt, distribution of soil around the world, vegetation groups on Earth (Mediterranean vegetation, desert vegetation etc.), mean annual temperature of the surface layer of the world sea, mean salinity of the surface layer of the world sea, the density of the population by world countries, the densely and sparsely populated regions of the world, the fertility rate around the world (in 2000), the mortality rate around the world (in 2000), the share of the population between 15 and 45 infected with the HIV virus (in 2000), natural growth around the world (in 2000), refugees around the world, life expectancy around the world, the religious structure of the world, the share of literate population around the world (in 2000), the share of urban population around the world (in 2000), the share of those employed in agriculture by world countries (in 1996), oil producers and the main oil trade routes around the world, the share of electricity generated from nuclear power plants within individual countries, the share of those employed in industry by world countries, and the main areas of industry around the world.<sup>106</sup>

**In textbooks for the 2nd year of general secondary school** students come to know individual continents in detail: Asia, Africa, Latin America (Central and South America), North America, Australia and the polar regions.

Thus when discussing Asia students come to know the climate and vegetation, Asian rivers and their importance, economic development, the types of Asian agriculture and the problems of the population (number and density of the population and the religious structure).<sup>107</sup> Under religious structure, Islam is presented on the example of Iraq. *“Almost two-*

106 Senegačnik, Jurij, Drobňjak, Borut (2002). *Obča geografija za 1. letnik gimnazij*. [General Geography for the 1st Year of General Secondary School]. Ljubljana: Modrijan.

107 Senegačnik, Jurij (2012). *Svet: geografija za 2. letnik gimnazij*. [World: Geography for the 2nd Year of General Secondary School]. Ljubljana: Modrijan, pp. 9–35.



*thirds of the population are Shiites (in the southern and eastern part of the country). Less than one-third is Sunnites, who mainly consist of the Kurd minority in the north of the country. Sunnite Arabs live in the so-called Sunni triangle. They are a minority in Iraq, yet had a privileged status during the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein.*<sup>108</sup>

When discussing the rivers in Southwest Asia, the Near East is also presented with the following words: *“As early as 1985 the Egyptian Foreign Minister of the time said: ‘The next war in the Near East will be started because of water and not because of politics.’ In fact the water supply problem in this arid region is increasing year by year. The population growth is among the highest in the world, while its agriculture depends solely on irrigation. The example of Israel and the conquered Arab territories is informative. The State of Israel was founded in 1948 so that the Jews, who were horribly persecuted during World War II, would have their own state. Despite the fact that Jews used to live in that territory, when Israel was founded Palestinian Arabs were predominant there; the Jews mostly exiled them to the neighbouring Arab countries. In a series of Arab-Israeli wars the more military successful Israel occupied vast territories and has maintained control over three areas: the first is the Golan Heights in the north, otherwise a part of Syria; the other two areas are the Gaza Strip (a narrow strip along the Mediterranean Sea) and the west bank of the Jordan River. The most important segment of the exiled Palestinians is living in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The international community is endeavouring to form a common Palestinian state in these two territories. Israel is fighting this with all its might, because it sees it as a great threat to its existence. It likewise refuses to return the sparsely populated Golan Heights to Syria. The cause behind this is not merely politics or a potential military threat to Israel, but also water supply, which is becoming increasingly more critical in Israel (and in the neighbouring countries). Namely, Golan Heights is a part of the catchment area for the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee, which is the largest water reservoir in the country. The water distribution system from the lake supplies the population core of the country. The Israelis receive from 25 to 40% of their water from the occupied West Bank, where a number of Jewish settlements were established among the predominant Palestinian ones.*<sup>109</sup>

108 Ibid., p. 34.

109 Ibid., pp. 19–20.



When discussing Africa, students learn about the natural geographical characteristics (the surface, climate, vegetation and waters), selected problems of the African social development (colonialism, neocolonialism, the economy, diseases, the population explosion, droughts and famine) and about the economy (agriculture and mining).<sup>110</sup>

The topic of waters emphasises the consequences of the building of the Aswan Dam for Egypt: *“In 1970 the Egyptians, with help from the Soviet Union, finished the construction of an enormous dam in Lower Egypt, behind which the 500km long Lake Nasser was created. The construction of a power plant provided the generation of a great deal of electricity and the exploitation of the water from the artificial lake expanded the irrigation surface areas by nearly one million hectares. At the same time, it stopped the annual washing up of fertile silt from the dam onwards. Since the fertile fields are no longer being washed out by annual floods, the soil is becoming more and more saline. The catch of fish in the river has been reduced substantially and due to the smaller inflow of water from the river, the sea is eroding the Nile Delta. Furthermore, the number of people suffering from dangerous bilharzia, which is spread by parasites living in the water, has increased significantly.”*<sup>111</sup>

The topic of the selected problems of African social development presents the development of Africa from its discovery to the abolition of colonialism. It presents the first contacts of Europeans with the northern part of Africa at the time of the Roman Empire and later, after the 15th century, when the Portuguese tried to find a new route to India along the African coast and Europeans began setting up posts along the coast of West Africa. The colonial division of Africa reached its peak in the second half of the 19th century, when Great Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal, Italy, Germany and Spain divided the territory of the entire Africa. After World War II African countries did attain independence, yet contacts with their former masters were preserved (neocolonialism).<sup>112</sup>

Students learn the following about Sudan: *“The civil war between members of the Christian south and the Arab Islamic government, which began in 1983, is still going on. Due to famine and war, over 1.5 million people*

110 Ibid., pp. 37–59.

111 Ibid., p. 43.

112 Ibid., pp. 45–46.

*have died. Several million people are refugees.*<sup>113</sup> They learn the following about the colonial past of Africa: “Africa is a continent which has been exploited the longest by European colonial rulers as an inexhaustible source of cheap labour and raw materials. The old European imperialist powers, i.e. Portugal, Spain, Great Britain and France, which had been the first to usurp Africa, were joined by Belgium, Germany and Italy due to the development of the industry and of the mass consumption of tea, coffee, cocoa and tropical fruits in Europe. The colonisation by the European Great Powers decisively altered the former tribal organisation of the majority of African countries. The colonial rulers subordinated the entire development of the continent to their own needs. They persecuted, expropriated and scorned the native population /.../ They claimed vast territories and mineral resources; they allocated modern technology, money and experts solely to profitable activities. They directly allocated little or no money to the development of individual lands, their school system, health care, infrastructure, local industry and other activities. /.../ For most of these countries attaining independence did not bring about a peaceful life and fast economic development. Many of the new countries were forced by poverty and economic/political problems to become dependent on the former colonisers or multinationals in various ways.”<sup>114</sup>

### 4.2.3 Slovene Language in Secondary School

The textbooks in secondary schools include Slovene, European and world literature, which is divided into the following literary periods: Oriental literature, ancient literature, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Baroque, Classicism, the Enlightenment, Romanticism, realism, modernism of the second half of the 19th century and folk literature. 20th century literature is divided into the literature of the first half of the 20th century, World War II literature and post-World War II literature (contemporary literature).

The textbooks for the 1st year of general secondary school include the following Oriental literature, which was written in antiquity and the

113 Kürbus, Terezija et al. (2004). *Geografske značilnosti sveta za 2. letnik gimnazijskega in srednjega tehniškega oz. strokovnega izobraževanja*. [Geographical characteristics of the World for the 2nd Year of General and Technical Secondary Schools]. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, p. 45. Asia is presented on 30 pages, Africa on 24 pages.

114 Ibid., p. 44.

Middle Ages in the Near East, in South and Central Asia, in the Far East and in North Africa: Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Arabic, Persian, ancient Jewish, Indian, Chinese and Japanese literature.

Students learn that Oriental literature developed all the main literary genres and forms: lyric poetry, heroic epic, narrative prose and drama-turgy. *“Despite their differences, Oriental lands belong to a common cultural space, which is shown by their interconnectedness. Thus the Egyptian and Mesopotamian cultures influenced ancient Hebrew literature. The introduction of Arab culture and Islam stimulated the renewed flowering of Persian literature; both Arabic and Persian literatures later on influenced the creation of Turkish literature.”*<sup>115</sup> In all three types of literature, religions and religious rituals held an important role, as did the holy books, which, in addition to instructive essays, contain many poetic texts.<sup>116</sup>

Table 9: Characteristics of Oriental Literature<sup>117</sup>

Oriental Literature	Time of Creation	Typical Genres	Literary Texts in the Textbook	Religious System and Texts
Mesopotamian	C. 3000 B. C.	Religious Poetry Heroic Epic Instructive Short Prose	“Epic of Gilgamesh”	Polytheism: Ritual Texts Hymns Prayers
Egyptian	C. 3000 B. C.	Hymns Love and Work Poems Short Narrative Prose	“The Great Hymn to the Aten” “Song of the Corn Reapers” “The Story of Sinuhe” <i>Beginning of the Words of the Great Delighter of the Heart</i>	Polytheism Elements of monotheism (Akhenaten): <i>Book of the Dead</i> Hymns Prayers
Arabian	6th century A.D.	Thematically and Formally Diverse Lyrical Poems Epic	<i>A Thousand and One Nights</i> Ibn al-Farid Abu Nuwas Imru’ al-Qais	Islam: <i>Qur’an</i>

115 Lah, Klemen et al. (2009). *Umetnost besede: berilo 1: učbenik za slovenščino – književnost v 1. letniku gimnazij in štiriletnih strokovnih šol*. [The Art of Words 1: Textbook for the 1st Year of General and Four-Year Technical Secondary Schools]. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, p. 65.

116 Ibid., p. 66.

117 Ibid., p. 65, p. 67, pp. 72–73. Imru’ al-Qais (6th century) is taken from: Kos, Janko et al. (2000). *Svet književnosti 1*. [World of Literature 1]. Maribor: Obzorja, p. 113.

The section on Babylonian-Assyrian literature contains an excerpt from the “Epic of Gilgamesh”, where the students learn the following: *“The ‘Epic of Gilgamesh’ is the oldest heroic epic in world literature and the most important work of Babylonian-Assyrian literature. It was created between 2000 and 1600 B. C. Based on old Sumerian epic poems. In the 7th century B. C. the Assyrian ruler Ashurbanipal ordered it transcribed. /.../ The character of Gilgamesh is based on the historical figure of Gilgamesh, who was the ruler of the Sumerian city-state of Uruk around 2600 B. C. We follow the hero from his miraculous birth to his final disappointment in life.”*<sup>118</sup> The textbook contains two excerpts: in the first one Gilgamesh mourns his friend’s passing, while the second one describes his voyage and his conversation with a barmaid, who advises him to return to Uruk and enjoy his life.

Students come to know Egyptian literature, which developed in the Old Kingdom of Egypt from approximately 3000 B. C. to 332 B. C., when it became a part of the Greek Hellenistic culture with the invasion of Alexander the Great. Along with numerous religious hymns, love and work poems (“Song of the Corn Reapers”) have also been preserved. Students can read one of the most famous Egyptian poems, Akhenaten’s “The Great Hymn to the Aten”, which was written by Pharaoh Amenhotep IV, who declared himself Aten, the one god, around 1350 B. C. and advocated monotheism.<sup>119</sup> The work entitled *Beginning of the Words of the Great Delighter of the Heart* contains a collection of seven love poems created during the 20th dynasty of Pharaohs (1200–1085 B. C.).<sup>120</sup>

The students can read the interesting “Story of Sinuhe”. *“The story is an autobiographical record of Sinuhe, a high official. The first-person narrative gives a subjective, lyrical tone to the story, which is an adventure/vagabond tale. On a military campaign Sinuhe learns that Pharaoh Amenemhet I was murdered. Afterwards Egypt is overcome by uncertainty and anxiety, which is why Sinuhe instinctively flees his homeland and reaches Palestine and Syria through Sinai. He starts a family, becomes the chieftain of a tribe and is successful in many battles. The gracious summons of Sesostris I enables him to return home, where the Pharaoh welcomes him with*

118 Ambrož, Darinka et al. (2012). *Branja 1: berilo in učbenik za 1. letnik gimnazij in štiriletnih strokovnih šol*. [Reading 1: Textbook for the 1st Year of General and Four-Year Technical Secondary Schools]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 18.

119 Ibid., p. 12.

120 Ibid., p. 14.

*honour, which Sinuhe reports with great self-satisfaction. The excerpt depicts the pinnacle of the hero's fame and power – Sinuhe's victorious duel with a much stronger opponent.*<sup>121</sup>

The textbook suggests the following assignments for the students regarding the “Story of Sinuhe”:

*“With help from your history teacher, find the sources and research the characteristics of the period during the reign of Pharaohs Amenemhet I and Sesostris I.*

*Within the scope of project work, research the path traversed by Sinuhe and study the political, economic and cultural life in these regions today.*

*In the library, find a few works by contemporary authors from the discussed regions. Read the one that you deem is thematically the most appealing as your elective reading. At the end prepare a discussion, in which you will exchange your findings and viewpoints.*

*Look up books on ancient Egypt, comb through your knowledge of the history and literature of ancient Egypt and write an essay entitled: I lived at the court of the Pharaoh. Choose your social role by yourselves – you can be a Pharaoh, a scribe, soldier, slave etc.*<sup>122</sup>

When discussing Arabic literature, students become familiar with the Qur'an: *“The Qur'an is the most famous work of Arabic literature (in Arabic, literature is called adab, which would be literally translated as upbringing). Its influence on literature (and on the entire Arabic culture and art) is exceptional. It has had a powerful influence especially on Arabic writers of Islamic faith: the perfection of its contents and form has inspired them.*<sup>123</sup> *“The Qur'an consists of 114 suras (chapters). Each begins with the same words: 'God has spoken.' /.../ The Qur'an is a precise anthology of the entire Islamic civilisation and the foundation of Islamic philosophy, practical law and customs.*<sup>124</sup>

121 Ibid., p. 16.

122 Ibid., p. 17.

123 Lah, Klemen et al. (2009). *Umetnost besede: berilo 1: učbenik za slovenščino – književnost v 1. letniku gimnazij in štiriletnih strokovnih šol.* [The Art of Words 1: Textbook for the 1st Year of General and Four-Year Technical Secondary Schools]. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, p. 71.

124 Ambrož, Darinka et al. (2012). *Branja 1: berilo in učbenik za 1. letnik gimnazij in štiriletnih strokovnih šol.* [Reading 1: Textbook for the 1st Year of General and Four-Year Technical Secondary Schools]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 28.

The textbooks contain several excerpts. For instance, the first shorter excerpt is taken from Sura 26, which also speaks about poets: “*The poets criticised in the excerpt from the sura are said to have belonged to Bedouin poetry, which is considered the first, pre-Islamic period of Arabic literature. The negative evaluation of everything fictitious is most likely derived from the belief that the Qur’an is a real and God’s work, which cannot be surpassed by any literary work of fiction and is untranslatable. The popularity of Bedouin poetry of that time is said to have rivalled the readings of the Qur’an.*”<sup>125</sup> The second excerpt is taken from Sura 81: “*The first part of Sura 81 warns believers of the signs that will foretell the end of the world – at that time all will be judged for their earthly lives. In its second part it warns all who doubt that the Qur’an is the word of God and that Muhammad is a true prophet.*”<sup>126</sup>

Students learn about Bedouin poetry, which began developing in the 6th century (before the *Qur’an* was created); at that time it was still closely connected with Bedouin life and mostly oral. The best poems of that period have been collected in the *Mu’allaqat* and *Mufaddaliyat* anthologies. The textbook also presents the classic poetry (6th–9th century) and points out the poet Abu Nuwas (c. 760–c. 810); in the period of post-classic poetry (10th–13th century) it points out the poet Ibn al-Farid (1182–1235), who is considered an important love poet.<sup>127</sup>

The section on Arabic storytelling contains an excerpt from the collection of tales *A Thousand and One Nights*, namely “The Hunchback’s Tale”, which tells of the troubles faced by all who had dealings with him. The tale is structured as a cycle, for it continues with the narratives of the persons who appear in it (a Christian, a kitchen controller, a Jewish doctor and a tailor).<sup>128</sup> Students become familiar with new words: bazaar (a market in Oriental regions), turban (in the Muslim world it is a man’s headdress made of a long linen scarf, which is wound around the head)

125 Lah, Klemen et al. (2009). *Umetnost besede: berilo 1: učbenik za slovenščino – književnost v 1. letniku gimnazij in štiriletnih strokovnih šol*. [The Art of Words 1: Textbook for the 1st Year of General and Four-Year Technical Secondary Schools]. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, p. 71.

126 Ibid., p. 72 and in: Ambrož, Darinka et al. (2012). *Branja 1: berilo in učbenik za 1. letnik gimnazij in štiriletnih strokovnih šol*. [Reading 1: Textbook for the 1st Year of General and Four-Year Technical Secondary Schools]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 28.

127 Lah, Klemen et al. (2009). *Umetnost besede: berilo 1: učbenik za slovenščino – književnost v 1. letniku gimnazij in štiriletnih strokovnih šol*. [The Art of Words 1: Textbook for the 1st Year of General and Four-Year Technical Secondary Schools]. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, pp. 72–73.

128 Kos, Janko et al. (2000). *Svet književnosti 1*. [World of Literature 1]. Maribor: Obzorja, p. 112.

and chamberlain (a high-ranking official at the royal court, who is in charge primarily of economic or financial issues).<sup>129</sup>

Students learn the following about the collection *A Thousand and One Nights*: “The collection *A Thousand and One Nights* is a work of classic Arabic literature. Its creation lasted several centuries; it was given its final form in the 16th century. The collection of fairy tales, animal stories, fables, allegories, anecdotes and tales combines old traditional stories from ancient Egypt to India with the picturesqueness of Arabian court life, refined sentiment and vivid fantasy. The story line of *A Thousand and One Nights* is related by Scheherazade, who is prolonging her life by telling these tales. /.../ The vizier’s daughter prolongs her life by telling tales to Shahryar every night and interrupting the narrative at the most suspenseful moment as morning draws near; hence the Sultan grants her life for one more night each time. After a thousand and one nights, Shahryar can no longer be without her ...”<sup>130</sup>

Students also learn the following about *A Thousand and One Nights*: “The origin of the collection probably lies in the book *A Thousand Tales*, which appeared in Persia in the 8th century; it comprised Indian and Persian tales. It was translated into Arabic in Baghdad around 800 and supplemented with stories about Harun al-Rashid. This piece appeared in Egypt around 1200, where it was added tales of thievery and vagabondism. The collection was given its final form in Egypt and Syria by the 17th century. It already became known in Europe during the Middle Ages; individual tales influenced Renaissance and Baroque short-story writing. The first European translation of the entire piece was published by Antoine Galland between 1704 and 1717. At that time these stories began to influence Enlightenment fairy-tale storytelling and later on the Romantic one.”<sup>131</sup> The collection has been illustrated by numerous painters; the most famous illustrations are those done by Marc Chagall in 1948.<sup>132</sup> Slovenes received the narrative of the entire collection between 1880 and 1886, when it was adapted by Lipe Haderlap.<sup>133</sup>

129 Ambrož, Darinka et al. (2012). *Branja 1: berilo in učbenik za 1. letnik gimnazij in štiriletnih strokovnih šol*. [Reading 1: Textbook for the 1st Year of General and Four-Year Technical Secondary Schools]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 22.

130 Ibid. p. 22.

131 Kos, Janko et al. (2000). *Svet književnosti 1*. [World of Literature 1]. Maribor: Obzorja, p. 108.

132 Ibid., p. 110.

133 Ambrož, Darinka et al. (2012). *Branja 1: berilo in učbenik za 1. letnik gimnazij in štiriletnih strokovnih šol*. [Reading 1: Textbook for the 1st Year of General and Four-Year Technical Secondary Schools]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 22.



Students come to know the extremely important role of Arabic literature for the development of European literature. On the one hand it influenced mediaeval love and troubadour poetry through Moorish Spain, while on the other hand it was an intermediary between the East and West and between the European Renaissance and antiquity, since many ancient literary works have been preserved in the Arabic translation.<sup>134</sup>

Various assignments are also connected with Arabic literature and are presented below:

*“Prepare a short biography of Muhammad and state what happened in 622 that is considered the start of the Islamic counting of years, and why Mecca and Medina are considered holy Muslim cities? /.../ Arabic literature, poetry in particular, spread to the European area mostly with military conquests. Which European territories did the Arab army conquer? Where in Europe did Arabs stay the longest and influence the development of literature and culture the most?*

*Today the Arabic language is the official language of eighteen Arab countries. Which countries are they?*

*The European geographical names Gibraltar and Trafalgar are of Arabic origin. Research the historical influence of Arabs on these two locations that resulted in their Arabic names. /.../*

*Find contemporary translations of Arabic literature.*

*Which language group does the Arabic language belong to? Which other languages belong to this group?*

*According to the number of speakers, the Arabic language is the six most spoken language. Look up how many speakers it has today.*

*Look up the meanings of the following loanwords of Arabic origin in relevant dictionaries: admiral, Allah, alchemy, alcohol, algebra, algorithm, arsenic, artichokes, Bedouin, jihad, camel, elixir, fakir, Gibraltar, gazelle, giraffe, guitar, harem, hazard, hashish, influenza, lemon, magazine,*

134 Lah, Klemen et al. (2009). *Umetnost besede: berilo 1: učbenik za slovenščino – književnost v 1. letniku gimnazij in štiriletnih strokovnih šol*. [The Art of Words 1: Textbook for the 1st Year of General and Four-Year Technical Secondary Schools]. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, p. 73.



marzipan, minaret, mufti, muezzin, safari, syrup, sultan, sheik, sheriff, spinach, talisman, typhoon, Trafalgar, zenith and sofa.<sup>135</sup>

*“In an atlas or on a map find the countries that are located in the territory of the former Orient today. Prepare a presentation of the first literatures in the form of an oral report or poster.*

*Do you know any stories from the collection A Thousand and One Nights? Tell one to your classmates or watch an animated cartoon made after it (e.g. about Aladdin and the magic lamp, about Ali Baba and the forty thieves etc.).<sup>136</sup>*

**The textbooks for the 3rd year of general secondary school** include the Egyptian writer Naguib Mahfouz among world literature of the 20th century, with excerpts from his book *Palace Walk*.

*“The novel Palace Walk (1956) is the first part of the Cairo Trilogy, which continues with Palace of Desire and Sugar Street. This trilogy follows the life of three generations of an Egyptian family in the first half of the 20th century. The saga, which comprises over 1500 pages, portrays a motley image of the Arab world, a multitude of psychologically convincing characters, the picturesque streets of Cairo, the customs and sentiments, the socio-political events in the inter-war period and its many shocks, and above all the changing of the traditional social, family and moral values. In Egyptian society the status of women underwent the greatest changes in that period. In the novel Palace Walk the stable and traditional family of Ahmad Abd al-Jawad, a merchant from the middle class of Egyptian society, comes to life before the reader’s eyes. At home the father is an unrelenting patriarch, but in company Ahmad is completely different: he is a kind and amusing lover of wine, music and fun with easy women. He demands utter obedience from his family members. He does not allow his wife or two daughters to leave the house, in fear that another man might notice them; he also keeps close watch over the lives of his sons. The only way the women can get to know the outside world is by peeking through the mashrabiyyas, i.e. screened wooden balconies. When one day the master of the house leaves*

135 Ibid. p. 74.

136 Slemenjak, Tanja et al. (2009). *Književnost skozi čas 1: od orientalskih književnosti do razsvetljenstva: učbenik z berilom za obravnavo književnosti po literarnozgodovinskih sklopih v 4-letnem srednjem strokovnem izobraževanju*. [Literature through Time 1: From Oriental Literature to Enlightenment: Textbook for the Literature in Four-Year Secondary Technical Schools]. Maribor: Obzorja, p. 42.

*on a sales trip, everyone in the house becomes full of expectation that they will be able to take a break from their confined, rigid, constantly supervised lives. The children convince their mother to leave the house and see a part of the district in which she has been living all her life, but has never seen. The deeply pious Amina is tempted only by the possibility of seeing Hussein's mosque, as that would be the fulfilment of her greatest longing.*"<sup>137</sup>

The excerpt teaches the students a few Arabic words: *jalabiya* (Muslim outer garment), *Al-Fatiha* (the first sura of the *Qur'an*, in which the believer asks Allah to guide him to the straight path and protect him from evil) and *rahat lokum* (Oriental sweet made of rice flour, sugar and scented oil).<sup>138</sup>

The students are given interesting assignments: *"During history lessons prepare a report on the situation in Egypt from the building of the Suez Canal in 1869 to the Suez Crisis of 1956, with help from the teacher.*

*The literary works of Naguib Mahfouz significantly contributed to the development of Egyptian film. Based on online and other sources prepare a presentation of the characteristics of Egyptian cinematography.*"<sup>139</sup>

In the textbook by the Mladinska knjiga publishing house students can read another excerpt, which speaks of Amina, whose only view of the outside world is from the roof terrace, from where she can see Cairo, thus allowing her to travel far away with her gaze.<sup>140</sup> The students are given the following assignments: *"What is the spiritual development of Ahmad's sons like?; During history lessons inquire about the politics of President Sadat, whom Mahfouz supported. What were his accomplishments?; Discuss the freedom of the printed word in certain Islamic countries; /.../ Write an essay entitled The Status of Women in the Islamic World; bear in mind the diverse practices of various countries.*"<sup>141</sup>

137 Ambrož, Darinka et al. (2010). *Branja 3: berilo in učbenik za 3. letnik gimnazij in štiriletnih strokovnih šol*. [Reading 3: Textbook for the 3rd Year of General and Four-Year Technical Secondary Schools]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 232.

138 Ibid., p. 234.

139 Ibid., p. 235.

140 Pavlič, Darja et al. (2009). *Umetnost besede: berilo 3: učbenik za slovenščino – književnost v 3. letniku gimnazij in štiriletnih strokovnih šol*. [The Art of Words 3: Textbook for the 3rd Year of General and Four-Year Technical Secondary Schools]. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, p. 296.

141 Ibid.

Students are also presented the author's biography: *“Naguib Mahfouz (1911–2006) is the pioneer of the modern Egyptian novel and its best writer. He was born in Cairo; the ancient districts of his hometown became the scene of several of his important novels. He studied philosophy and became a civil servant. He was a highly prolific writer and films were made after many of his pieces. He began his career with historical novels; the pinnacle of his second, realistic period is the Cairo Trilogy; his subsequent, more modern period was introduced by the novel Children of Our Alley, which was labelled blasphemous. The novel was published in book form in Beirut, but is banned in Egypt. In 1994 a young Islamist stabbed Naguib Mahfouz because of the issue of the death penalty, the so-called fatwa. After this attack the writer became an even more determined advocate of the freedom of thought and expression, which is clearly reflected in his novels, full of picturesque characters and rich nuances. These not only demonstrated the Arab world, but also the universal human nature. In 1988 he was the first Arabic writer to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature.”*<sup>142</sup>

**Textbooks for the 2nd and 4th years of general secondary school did not contain any literary texts originating from today's Arab countries.**

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142 Ambrož, Darinka et al. (2010). *Branja 3: berilo in učbenik za 3. letnik gimnazij in štiriletnih strokovnih šol*. [Reading 3: Textbook for the 3rd Year of General and Four-Year Technical Secondary Schools]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 235.

## CONCLUSION

**“We shall never understand one another until we reduce the language to seven words.” (Khalil Gibran)<sup>143</sup>**

“Deriving from the premise of knowing and respecting one’s own culture, history, ethnic features etc., the fact remains that education in Slovenia is becoming incorporated into frameworks of increasingly greater global connectedness and interdependence, which is why elements of global education must be incorporated into the school system on all levels of education. /.../ Global education promotes national and international interaction, intercultural dialogue and learning from one another. It creates a process that helps to understand and respect various cultures and opens up possibilities that promote mutual enrichment and development of a global society.”<sup>144</sup>

Slovenia is also a country open to the immigration of people from other cultural environments; it is therefore important that young people are educated to respect one another. In order to achieve that they must be familiar with the culture and way of life of other nations and must be educated about human rights, intercultural understanding and intercultural dialogue. The best way to achieve this is by schools cooperating, by organising international exchanges of students and teachers and by including young people in international projects, where they become acquainted with various countries.

It has been ascertained that today the subjects in elementary and secondary schools in the Republic of Slovenia are already familiarising students with the history, geography and literature from the area of today’s Arab countries. Slovene language (the literature section), geography and history are very important subjects in elementary and secondary school.

143 Lah, Klemen et al. (2009). *Umetnost besede: berilo 1: učbenik za slovenščino – književnost v 1. letniku gimnazij in štiriletnih strokovnih šol*. [The Art of Words 1: Textbook for the 1st Year of General and Four-Year Technical Secondary Schools]. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, p. 73.

144 *Bela knjiga o vzgoji in izobraževanju v Republiki Sloveniji 2011* [The White Book on Education in the Republic of Slovenia]. (2011). (eds. Janez Krek and Mira Metljak). Ljubljana: Zavod RS za šolstvo, p. 44: [http://www.belaknjiga2011.si/pdf/bela\\_knjiga\\_2011.pdf](http://www.belaknjiga2011.si/pdf/bela_knjiga_2011.pdf) (5th October 2013).

The learning contents most often refer to the following present-day Arab countries: Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Sudan and Palestine. What follows are the main findings regarding the incorporation of today's Arab countries into the subjects of History, Geography and Slovene Language.

It has been established that **in the history curricula and textbooks** students become acquainted with four topics above all. Under the first topic, which concerns the oldest civilisations of Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Near East, students learn about the social, cultural and religious characteristics of these civilisations. The greatest emphasis is placed on ancient Egypt. The second topic is connected with the formation of the Arab State and of Islam, with the greatest emphasis placed on the creation of the new religion, on Muhammad's biography, on the importance of the *Qur'an*, on the duties of the Muslims, the spreading of Islam and of the Arab State during Muhammad's successors, and on the influence of Arab culture on European development in the Middle Ages. The only downside is that this topic is not included among the compulsory topics in elementary and secondary school. The third topic is the imperialist policy of European countries and the division of African countries in the 19th century and the attaining of independence of African and Asian countries or decolonisation in the 20th century, where students learn about the consequences of colonisation and neocolonialism.

The fourth topic concerns the Near East Crisis after World War II, where students learn about the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, about a few of the Israeli-Arab Wars and above all about the formation and aim of the Palestine Liberation Organisation led by Yasser Arafat.

**In the geography curricula and textbooks** students learn about the geographical characteristics of all Arab countries using maps of the world, which show various natural or social geographical characteristics. They learn the most about these characteristics under topics that discuss Asia or Africa. It must be pointed out that in the area of Southwest Asia they gain even more thorough knowledge of the Arabian Peninsula, the history of the Near East and the Israeli-Arab Wars. When discussing Africa, they learn about the role of the Nile River and come to know the Atlas mountain range and the history of the settlement of Arabs in North Africa. In North Africa the economies of Libya, Algeria and Egypt

are emphasised above all, and the colonial division of Africa and the decolonisation process after World War II.

**In the Slovene Language curricula and textbooks**, which include literature, students learn the most about Oriental literature. When discussing Egyptian literature they become acquainted with some of the texts: “The Great Hymn to the Aten”, “Song of the Corn Reapers”, *Beginning of the Words of the Great Delighter of the Heart* and “The Story of Sinuhe”. When discussing Mesopotamian literature, they read excerpts from the “Epic of Gilgamesh”. When discussing Arabic literature, they read excerpts from the collection *A Thousand and One Nights* (“Dreams”, “The Hunchback’s Tale” etc.), excerpts from the *Qur’an* and poems by the poets Ibn al-Farid and Abu Nuwas. When discussing 20th century literature, the Egyptian writer Naguib Mahfouz is pointed out, with excerpts from his book *Palace Walk*. The Egyptian novelist is also the most translated contemporary Arab writer in Slovenia; his *Cairo Trilogy* and other novels have been translated into Slovene.

In elementary and secondary schools students learn about the important role of Arab history, geographical location and literature for European development. Nevertheless, it is recommended that all history, geography and Slovene language curricula increase the scope of the learning contents devoted to getting to know the Arab nation, Arab culture, customs and religion, so that Slovene textbooks for history, geography and Slovene language (the literature section) would include more examples of the history, geographical descriptions or literary works from the area of today’s Arab countries.

One method would be to translate several books that refer to the history, geography or literature of today’s Arab countries. In Slovenia only a few books are available in the Slovene language in which students can obtain information on the history and geography of today’s Arab countries. Slovene translations of books on Islamic religion and literature are more common.

## Below is a list of the books which could be used in elementary and secondary schools.

### List of sources in the Slovene language:

- Al Joundi, Sami (1972). *Židje in Arabci*. Ljubljana: Borec.
- Ali, Tariq (2002). *The Clash of Fundamentalisms, Crusades, Jihads and Modernity – Spopad fundamentalizmov: križarstvo, džihad in modernost*. Ljubljana: Znanstveno in publicistično središče (Ljubljana: "Jože Moškrič").
- Anne-Marie Delcambre (1994). *Mohammed Allah's Prophet – Mohamed Alahov prerok*. Zbirka Mejniki. Ljubljana: DZS.
- Arabske zgodbe: antologija sodobne arabske kratke proze*. (2005). Ljubljana: Sodobnost international.
- Du Ry, Carel J. (1971). *Islamski svet*. Zbirka Umetnost v slikah. Ljubljana: DZS.
- Enciklopedija verstev sveta*. (1999). Ljubljana: Slovenska knjiga.
- Geografski atlas Afrike*. (2010). Zbirka atlasov za šole in dom. Ljubljana: DZS.
- Geografski atlas Azije*. (2010). Zbirka atlasov za šole in dom. Ljubljana: DZS.
- Kerševan, Marko; Svetlič, Nina (2003). *Koran: O Koranu, Bogu, islamu*. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba.
- Ki-Zerbo, Joseph (1977). *Zgodovina črne Afrike*. Ljubljana: Borec (Kranj: Gorenjski tisk).
- Koran*. (2003). Radenci: Atilova knjiga. Prevod: Klemen pl. Jelinčič.
- Koran*. (2005). Tržič: Učila International. Prevod: Erik Majaron.
- Mahfouz, Najib (2005). *Kairska trilogija: 1. del. Pot med palačama*. Ljubljana: Založba.
- Mahfouz, Najib. (1986). *Zgodbe iz Egipta: izbor sodobne egiptovske novele in črtice*. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba.
- Mahfouz, Najib. (2006). *Kairska trilogija: 2. del. Palača poželenja*. Ljubljana: Založba.
- Mahfouz, Najib. (2007). *Kairska trilogija: 3. del. Cukrarska ulica*. Ljubljana: Založba.
- Mahfouz, Najib. (2009). *Ogledala*. Ljubljana: Center za slovensko književnost.
- Mahfouz, Najib. (2011). *Pravi čudež*. Novo mesto: Goga.
- Moderna arabska poezija: izbor*. (2005). Ljubljana: Center za slovensko književnost.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein (2007). *Islam: Religija, zgodovina, civilizacija*. Maribor: Litera.
- Natek, Karel; Natek, Marjeta (2006). *Države sveta: narava, prebivalstvo, državna ureditev, zgodovina, gospodarstvo, znamenitosti*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga.
- Pannikar, Kavalam Madhava (1967). *Azija in zahodno gospostvo: pregled dobe Vasca da Game v azijski zgodovini 1498-1945*. Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije.
- Pašič, Ahmed (2005). *Islam in muslimani v Sloveniji*. Tržič: Učila International.
- Potočnik, Dragan (2006). *Azija med preteklostjo in sedanostjo*. Maribor: Založba Pivec.
- Požeznik, Melita (2010). *Drobtinice iz preteklosti. Arabci in islam*. Celje: samozal.
- Tisoč in ena noč*. (2010). Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga.
- Tisoč in ena noč: arabske pripovedke*. (1999). Ljubljana: Karantanija.
- V prvih stoletjih islama. 600–1258 n. š.: Od Mohameda do padca Bagdada*. (1990). Zbirka Kako so živeli. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga.
- Velika verstva sveta*. (1991). Koper: Ognjišče.

## List of sources in the English language, available in Slovene libraries:

Atiyah, Edward (1958). *The Arabs: [the origins, present conditions, and prospects of the Arab world]*. Harmondsworth [etc.]: Penguin.

Choueiri, Youssef M. (2003). *Modern Arab historiography: historical discourse and the nation-state*. London, New York: RoutledgeCurzon.

Choueiri, Youssef M. (2000). *Arab nationalism: a history: nation and state in the Arab world*. Oxford, Malden (Mass.): Blackwell.

Cooper, Frederick (2002). *Africa since 1940: the past of the present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fage, John D. (1995). *A history of Africa*. London, New York: Routledge.

Gelvin, James L. (2008). *The modern Middle East: a history*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gelvin, James L. (2007). *The Israel-Palestine conflict: one hundred years of war*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Held, Colbert C.; Held, Mildred M. (2006). *Middle East patterns: places, peoples, and politics*. Boulder (Colo.): Westview Press, cop.

Hitti, Philip K. (2002). *History of the Arabs: from the earliest times to the present*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hourani, Albert (2005). *A history of the Arab peoples*. London: Faber and Faber.

Krämer, Gudrun (2011). *A history of Palestine: from the Ottoman conquest to the founding of the state of Israel*. N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Lewis, Bernard (1995). *The Middle East: 2000 years of history from the rise of Christianity to the present day*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, cop.

Lewis, Bernard (2001). *Islam in history: ideas, people, and events in the Middle East*. Chicago: Open Court.

Maalouf, Amin (2006). *The Crusades through Arab eyes*. London: Saqi Essentials.

Moosa, Matti (1994). *The early novels of Naguib Mahfouz: images of modern Egypt*. Gainesville [etc.]: University Press of Florida.

Pratt, Nicola C. (2007). *Democracy and authoritarianism in the Arab world*. London: L. Rienner.

Rogan, Eugene L. (2009). *The Arabs: a history*. London: Allen Lane.

Suleiman, Yasir (2003). *The Arabic language and national identity: a study in ideology*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

*The Routledge encyclopaedia of Arabic literature*. (2010). (Edited by Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey). London, New York: Routledge.

The knowledge of other countries, cultures and their ways of life helps one to understand the numerous aspects of one's own history and culture. Thus let us conclude with the words of the Egyptian writer Naguib Mahfouz: "I am the son of two civilisations that at a certain age in history have formed a happy marriage. The first of these, seven thousand years old, is the Pharaonic civilisation; the second, one thousand four hundred years old, is the Islamic civilisation."<sup>145</sup>

145 Ambrož, Darinka et al. (2010). *Branja 3: berilo in učbenik za 3. letnik gimnazij in štiriletnih strokovnih šol*. [Reading 3: Textbook for the 3rd Year of General and Four-Year Technical Secondary Schools]. Ljubljana: DZS, p. 235.



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