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## **Learning Myths in the Soviet School: From Nikolsky to Korovkin**

Antiquity is often called the cradle of Western civilisation. It seems that this metaphor was understood literally in the history of the Soviet school. From 1934, when the chronological sequence was chosen as the organising principle of historical education, the history of Ancient Greece and Rome (together with that of Mesopotamia and Egypt, India and China) was studied in the fifth grade of secondary school, thus it was taught to eleven- or twelve-year-old pupils. At this point they learned also the concept of history itself. Part of this learning was Greek mythology. The problem is that in their further school education, Soviet pupils never returned to ancient history or ancient mythology. It remained only part of their childhood. Post-Soviet countries, Belarus and Russia included, have inherited this style of education, and so ancient history, in a way, still belongs to one’s “mythical childhood.”

In this paper I would like to examine textbooks on ancient history produced in the USSR for Russian-language schools, paying special attention to the representation of classical mythology and analysing what concepts were communicated during this study. In this way, we have an opportunity to look at knowledge transferred to all pupils across the USSR, as textbooks in other languages of the country were translated from Russian. We may assume that often this was the only systematic knowledge of classical mythology readily available to children.



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