



Guidebook for History Textbooks Authors

On a Common Path

New Approaches to Writing History Textbooks
in Europe and the Arab and Islamic Worlds:
The Case of the Mediterranean

Contents

Foreword	5
Introduction	9
 Section 1 : Identity and diversity: the challenges facing history textbook authors	13
• The role of history education	13
• Guiding students' exploration of history	14
• The challenges of writing school history textbooks	15
• Respecting the history of the other	17
• Omissions and distortions	19
• Religious and cultural sensitivities	21
 Section 2: Learning about positive encounters with the other	25
• Science and philosophy in the middle ages	25
• Medieval and early modern trade	30
• Andalusia: a case study of religious coexistence and cultural tolerance	32
• Art and architecture	33
 Section 3: Learning about emotive and controversial issues and suggesting alternatives	41
• The spread of Islam	42
• The Crusades	44
• Europe and the Ottoman Empire	47
• European colonialism	49
• Europe and the Arab-Israeli conflict	52
 Conclusion	55
Bibliography	57

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Foreword

Building a culture of peace founded on a new humanism is a foremost task for the international community in order to develop and deepen mutual understanding, reconciliation and dialogue among nations and peoples. The protection and promotion of cultural diversity and its indispensable corollary, intercultural dialogue, is therefore one of the most pressing contemporary challenges, at the local as well as at the regional and international levels. Dialogue among cultures and civilizations is the only valid answer we may put forth to manifestations of intolerance, and is more necessary than ever in a world marked by fault lines, tensions and polarizations, especially between Europe and the Arab and Muslim worlds, including the Mediterranean area.

Recent events have made this challenge all the more acute. Stereotyping focused on cultural, traditional and religious differences have skewed perceptions of the Arab and Muslim worlds. Europe has been subject to the same processes in other regions. Intolerance, prejudice and discrimination cannot be justified by any universal standard. This is why, in our different capacities, we are seeking to vigorously cooperate and coordinate with the regional and international counterparts who share a common vision and determination to confront the undercurrents of prejudice, division and hatred with the power of knowledge, information and education.

It is a fact that misinformation, misperception and most of all ignorance constitute the main elements that lead to hatred, confrontation and instability. We all have important and vital roles to play on the individual, communal and international levels to defeat the negative forces leading to discrimination and religious intolerance with all their implications. Our responsibility is to promote a vision that would lead to a better world where tolerance, justice, cultural diversity, mutual respect and peaceful relations prevail.



Education must reinforce and foster tolerance, mutual understanding and respect, and reject spreading negative stereotypes of any kind. Therefore dialogue among cultures, civilizations and religions should be integrated in curricula at all levels, in order to help younger generations to understand and respect cultural and religious differences.

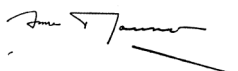
The parties that contributed to this guidebook have played a leading role in this connection. UNESCO, the League of Arab States, ISESCO, the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures and the Swedish Institute Alexandria, in cooperation with the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research and the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education and Research, have joined forces to address the presentation of the “Other” in textbooks in Europe and the Arab and Muslim worlds. Since 2004, our work has focused on improving the portrayal of the “Other” in school curricula, starting with a common evaluation of history textbooks in Europe and the Arab and Muslim worlds. This cooperation gives priority to the search for better inter-cultural communications. It is based on the premise that the risks of segregation, conflict and the feeling of the superiority of one's civilization over the others all arise from the instrumentalization of cultural and religious issues. As such, our collaboration is a very positive step towards the promotion of a culture of justice, peace and cultural diversity and the building of an alliance of civilizations.

This guidebook for History textbooks authors is the first major achievement of our close cooperation. We are trying through this guidebook to reach out to both educators and the authors of History textbooks and relevant curricula, who we feel have a far-reaching impact on shaping the perceptions of young students. In a spirit of openness and respect for freedom of thought and expression, we encourage all parties involved in History textbooks to review the recommendations and analysis of this resourceful document that has been developed by an international panel of experts from Europe and the Arab and Muslim worlds. Their combined academic, pedagogic and educational expertise coupled with a rigorous scientific process has produced a valuable document that should be regarded as a key resource for developing history curricula materials that promote a more balanced and nuanced understanding of trends, issues and events.

Based on best practices from countries on both sides of the Mediterranean, it stresses the need for multiple perspectives that give students a fair understanding of the history, culture and religion of the “Other”, and paves the way for a renewed approach promoting a culture of peace and understanding, firmly rooting the dialogue between civilizations in the pedagogical process. To that end, it explores alternative ways to present controversial issues and insists on strategies to stress the importance of positive encounters and reciprocal interactions and influences between the peoples of the north and south of the Mediterranean basin.

We wish to thank the authors for their efforts in highlighting the role that culture and education can play to enhance understanding, deepen respect for cultural diversity, the plurality of civilizations and coexistence among peoples in order to ensure a better future for all.

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Introduction

Recent decades have seen a dramatic intensification of the ways in which Europeans, on one hand and Arabs and Muslims, on the other, encounter each other. Globalization has made encounters between people of different backgrounds a more natural part of everyday life. Moreover, migration patterns in the postcolonial period have caused important changes in the demographic structures of formerly more homogeneous nation states in Europe and elsewhere. Increasingly, politics, economics and culture transcend national boundaries. We live at a time in which the pluralism of our societies has become more apparent than ever before. Sadly, it is also a time in which relations between Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds are threatened by currents of polarization and hostility.

Our children are born in the midst of already established identities and grow up in communities in which particular stories of the past are already dominant. Children and young people do not always have the opportunity to view their own communal belonging from a distance, or to reflect critically on what they hear about people belonging to other societies. At the same time, since children and young people are often more susceptible to social changes, they may often feel the effects of globalization more directly than their parents or teachers. In this situation, the importance of studying history at school from a multi-perspective and critical approach becomes paramount.

Textbooks can play a vital role in helping students to develop a deep understanding of history. History textbooks can help young people to ask and answer questions about the present by engaging with the past. They have the potential to spark curiosity and to engage students with the dilemmas, choices and beliefs of people in the past. History textbooks can also help young people develop their awareness of their own identities through an understanding of their own and other cultures. As students develop their understanding of the nature of historical study, textbooks can encourage them to ask important questions about the past, to analyze evidence and to evaluate different interpretations of history.



There are many scholarly studies which deal with the image of the Other in textbooks. Some of these focus on the stereotypes, misunderstandings and misinterpretations that can still sometimes be found in European and Arab-Islamic textbooks. Such studies aim to correct the many history textbooks in Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds that fail to give an accurate image of the Other. *This aim of this guidebook is not primarily to provide a critique of past and current textbooks, but rather to offer suggestions as to how textbook authors can approach the study of history in order to give students a more complex understanding of the Other.* The guidebook aims to stimulate and encourage textbook authors by providing some ideas for tackling a range of historical topics and issues. It draws on *positive* examples of history textbooks from Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds in order to help authors develop a wider range of strategies for writing rigorous and engaging history textbooks that promote a deeper understanding of ourselves and the Other. Three main assumptions underpin the guidebook:

1. History textbooks should reflect the diversity of Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds

The societies of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa have always been culturally, linguistically and religiously plural and diverse. This was the case before the rise of the three big monotheistic religions - Judaism, Christianity and Islam - and it is still the case today. History textbooks should help students to know about the history of societies and discern their characteristic features, but they should also encourage students to examine the cultural ethnic and religious diversity within such societies.

2. History textbooks should acknowledge the positive aspects of intercultural encounters.

The history of our societies is rich and multi-faceted. Throughout history, when people have met, their knowledge and experiences have cross-fertilized each other. It is through cultural interaction that our societies flourish and grow. The epoch of the Abbasids and the period when the Arab Islamic heritage and the Greek one were transmitted to Europe, are clear examples of this. This guidebook seeks to promote a balanced view of historical encounters between Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds. It does not advocate ignoring negative encounters, but it emphasizes the need to broaden students' knowledge and understanding by also focusing on the positive aspects of cross-cultural pollination throughout the history of the human civilization.



3. History textbooks should help students to develop a multi-perspective approach to the study of the past

Multi-perspectivity is a process by which we take into account several points of view besides our own, and are aware that our opinion may reflect prejudice and bias. It assumes a capacity and a will to consider a given situation from different angles, to put oneself in the position of the Other and to look at the world through the Other's eyes. Through multi-perspectivity, students are enabled to analyze and interpret different and contrasting opinions, to recognize conflicts of opinion and to respect other traditions even when disagreeing with them. Multi-perspectivity thus allows for the teaching of sensitive and controversial issues by helping students to appreciate the complexity of the issues under study. History textbooks may play a vital role in supporting a multi-perspective approach. Without disregarding the students' own identities and cultural specificities, textbooks should provide students with a range of competing interpretations, allowing young people's exposure to other cultures.

The guidebook consists of three main sections. The first of these discusses the challenges of diversity and pluralism, the importance of history education for young people and the challenges of writing history textbooks, paying particular attention to religious and cultural sensitivities. Section 2 explores a range of strategies for helping students to focus on some of the many positive encounters between people from the Europe and Arab and Islamic worlds. Sadly, the relationship between Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds has sometimes been characterized by mistrust, conflict and violence. These negative aspects should not be ignored; rather, the history classroom should provide a 'safe' and intellectually robust place for our young people to study what are often emotive and controversial histories. The focus in third section is therefore on how textbook authors can help students to study emotive and controversial histories in ways that do not fuel intolerance and animosity. The guidebook provides five case studies of historical issues that continue to resonate in the Arab and Islamic worlds and in Europe. In each case, some of the sensitivities that surround the event or period are discussed and particular pedagogical approaches that textbook authors may find useful are suggested.

There are many examples of excellent history textbooks in Europe and the Arab Islamic world. Numerous authors have endeavored to portray sensitive historical events in accordance with the principles of diversity and multi-perspectivity presented in this guidebook. The guidebook draws on such work and attempts to disseminate the underlying principles to a wider audience. Needless to say, this short

guidebook has limitations. The suggested strategies certainly do not constitute a complete list of possible approaches. Rather it is a collection of suggestions, based on effective practice, that history textbook authors may find useful.



Section 1

Identity and diversity:

the challenges facing history textbook authors

Our identities are neither singular nor fixed. Categorizing a person predominantly as a member of ‘the Western world’ or ‘the Islamic world’, simply because he or she was born into a particular culture, reduces people to one dimension. We all need an understanding of the rich diversity within cultures and the plurality of our identities, as well as an appreciation of the complex interactions within and between cultures. Young people in the Arab and Islamic worlds and in Europe need to realize that identities are constructed, fluid, changing and overlapping. They need to see that people they think of as ‘different’ have a valuable heritage that almost certainly overlaps with their own.

Highlighting links, commonalities and cultural bonds, however, does not necessarily mean disregarding differences. Difference exists between groups and individuals in matters of lifestyles, moral views, political ideologies and religious orientations. Such diversity has always been an important characteristic of Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds. Christians, Muslims and others, have lived side by side for almost one and a half millennia. However, in times of hardship and insecurity, frictions may arise. As a result of this, the desire for structure and singular identity may increase too. Friction caused by cultural diversity in everyday life is not solved by romantic dreams about communal harmony or complete ideological consensus. However, we can perhaps agree that the right to self-definition is paramount. Respect for one self and for one’s own history is a prerequisite for respecting others. Appreciation of other cultures, religions and lifestyles can only develop if a person has been socially confirmed and appreciated for his or her own position and personality.

● The role of history education

A knowledge and understanding of history is crucial for both self-esteem and respect for others to develop. History enriches pupils by providing a window into the dilemmas, choices and beliefs of people in the past. It helps them to develop their own identities through an understanding of their own and other societies.

Crucially, it helps them to ask and answer questions of the present by engaging with the past. Through their study of history young people develop skills that prepare them for adult life. They learn to ask and answer important questions, evaluate evidence, analyze different interpretations and substantiate any arguments and judgments they make. At a time of rapid and bewildering change, a study of history empowers young people to take a considered and informed view on matters of fundamental human concern. A carefully-constructed history curriculum enables pupils to challenge stereotypes, to avoid the superficial and to develop a deep understanding of controversial histories.

History teachers and textbook authors play a vital role in helping young people to develop their own identities and an understanding of pluralism and diversity within different societies. They can help to create curious, critical, independent and open-minded young people in Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds . They can open students' minds and provide the intellectual tools that allow students to approach topics from different perspectives. Approaches that teach students about the history and interpretations of their own culture and community and, at the same time, teach them about the history and interpretations of the Other, can help students to deal with cultural diversity and civilizational pluralism, accept differences and live peacefully in a plural world.

● Guiding students' exploration of history

Studying history means journeying into time and discovering unknown and unfamiliar places and cultures. History lessons can help students explore a remote world by understanding the experiences and values of people in the past. Teachers and textbook authors can help pupils to select facts, evaluate sources and explain events and situations. They can involve students in the process of historical enquiry and can help them construct their own views of people, situations and events in the past. The teaching of history should help students to develop their own opinions based on a respect for evidence, with no prejudice or stereotypes.

Within this quest for knowledge, engaging with the conflicts of the past is an unavoidable experience. Students should to be exposed to the controversial and sensitive issues in history: stories of collective violence, Islamic expeditions, wars, the Crusades and colonization. But how should these controversial issues be taught? Teachers and textbook authors need to address such issues directly, but there is a danger that in doing so demarcation lines between 'us' and the 'Others' can be set too



rigidly. In order to avoid such risks, methodological precautions need be taken. The opposition between ‘us’ and ‘the Other’ needs to be contextualized. The Other should not be presented as a threat to particular identities but as the condition of their dynamism.

Perhaps the most important point to remember is that history is problematic and that history teaching and textbooks should not promote absolute truths and final certainties. History is a discipline that involves critical discourse and in which conflicting and competing views interplay. Engaging pupils with historical debate and helping them to study a range of subsequent interpretations of history is an essential element in developing their understanding of the discipline. It is important for textbooks to explain to pupils that emotive and controversial issues in history are open to various and sometimes competing interpretations. By introducing pupils to different interpretations of history, textbook authors can help them to move beyond a simplistic and one-sided understanding of past events and situations.

● The challenges of writing school history textbooks

School history is sometimes required to obey political demands and must respond to the pressures of the socio-cultural context in which it is taught. In some contemporary societies it is demanded that the memories of particular groups or communities are taken account of in the history curriculum. However, if one is to make room for memories and traditions within historical discourse at school level, one has to be careful not to confuse history and memory. It is a difficult challenge for teachers and textbook authors to help students move beyond the ill-informed and one-sided views they may have. Only by providing reliable texts and sources that help students to see the perspective of the Other can we hope to move students from an adherence to a mythologized past to a meaningful historical understanding.

A history textbook is written within the context of a particular history curriculum. In some countries it may therefore be important to revise the framework of history teaching in order to provide a proper context for textbooks that encourage a more complex understanding of the Other. Both European countries and countries in the Arab and Islamic worlds need a history curriculum that focuses not only on historical knowledge, but also on the concepts and processes that underpin the discipline of history. In particular, the history curriculum should support a multi-perspective approach and should emphasize the need to study different interpretations of history. Without such a strong foundation to the history curriculum it is impossible to see how authors can write textbooks that encourage students to take a multi-perspective approach.

A further contextual challenge facing history textbook authors is that school history lessons are not the only source through which students develop their knowledge and understanding of the past. Other agents such as family and community, the media, museums, the internet play an increasingly important role in forming young people's knowledge and understanding of history. Textbook authors are therefore required to think creatively about the ways in which the resources they produce can relate to these other media.

There is an enormous variation in the purpose and nature of school history textbooks across Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds. In some countries, history textbooks are written by university historians; textbooks are subject to strict government approval and are frequently the only learning resource in history lessons. In other countries, textbooks are written by school teachers and educationalists, and a wide range of textbooks as well as many other learning resources are available. These differences in practice make it difficult to generalize about the challenges that face authors of school history textbooks. However, whatever their background, and in whatever context they work, authors need to ask themselves three important questions:

1. How can students be provided with a meaningful learning experience?

A quality history textbook teaches pupils to think. It achieves this partly through the careful selection of historical content and core themes which deepen pupils' historical understanding. Rather than placing undue emphasis on military history and battles, the selection of content should pay due attention to economic, political, social and cultural history. It should develop overviews of significant features, events and changes. It should also cover a wide range of attitudes and beliefs, paying heed to the experiences of both men and women and the diversity and pluralism of societies throughout human history. Quality textbooks avoid superficial coverage of history. Instead, they seek to build layers of knowledge by blending outline and in-depth history and by developing students' understanding of the concepts and processes that underpin the discipline of history: characteristic features of periods, change and continuity, cause and consequence, the use of evidence and construction of interpretations. Academic rigor in history textbooks is not achieved by scampering quickly over vast tracts of the past, but by skillfully blending outline and in-depth historical knowledge, and by developing an understanding of the discipline of history.

2. How can students be provided with a motivating context for learning?

Textbooks that engage students with particular historical issues, and that provide motivating learning activities, help to make learning history an enjoyable



experience. The framing of chapters in history textbooks around substantial enquiry questions such as “*What mattered to people in medieval Cordoba?*” or “*What made Abbasid Bagdad so special?*” is one way to provide a motivating context for learning. It is important for authors to think about interesting ways in which students can answer such questions. History teachers and authors can create a range of motivating outcomes for students’ work: articles, debates, presentations, fictional stories, conferences, exhibitions and plans for TV series and so on. History textbooks can motivate young people by providing a range of these tangible outcomes for their learning.

3. *How can textbooks be made accessible to all young people?*

For many young people history is a difficult and challenging subject. History textbooks need to be written and designed in ways that help avoid the simplistic understanding of history and past events together with their causes and contexts, but that make the subject accessible in a detached manner to a range of learners. Readers need to be helped with clear structured stages in their learning. Chapters that open with an arresting source – a fascinating picture or an intriguing story – prepare the reader for an interesting historical journey. Young readers can then be carried forward by a strong narrative which illuminates the past through the experiences of individual people. History textbooks should present the past not as a series of difficult and abstract concepts, but as a discipline with human beings at its core. Many pupils find history difficult because of the sheer unfamiliarity of the material and by the need to hold onto several ideas at once. Good history textbooks can help with this by providing sequenced activities which help students to select, link, classify and synthesize information. Help can also be provided within the text itself through the use of clear and active prose and by the visual reinforcement of diagrams and illustrations.

● Respecting the history of the Other

Children and young people often encounter history through the distorting lenses of communal myth-making and media. The stories from the past that they hear often reflect contemporary concerns and issues. There is a natural tendency when speaking about the history of our own community to remember the events of which we are proud rather than those of which we are ashamed. Unfortunately, the contrary seems to often be true when stories are told of the Other. That which is negative is often overemphasized at the cost of that which is positive.

For many people in the Arab and Islamic worlds, the history of Europe is often associated with some of its most controversial epochs. The Crusades and the violent expansion of European colonial empires are often highlighted as representative of the European history. Although it is certainly of utmost importance to study these events it is also important to note that most Europeans would think of them as constitutive for what it means to be European today. On the contrary, most people would agree that these epochs are highly controversial or even shameful. For many Europeans, then, other developments are felt to be equally integral to European identity. The heritage of ancient Greek civilization; the enlightenment and the ideas of humanism, secularism and human rights; the technological development from the industrial revolution onwards; and the emancipation and empowerment of women in the twentieth century would be examples of historical achievements that many Europeans would be proud of and see as important developments in Europe's history.

For many Europeans, Arab-Islamic history is often defined through some of its most controversial aspects. The early spread of Islam at the expense of Christian rule may serve as one such example, as could the threat that the Ottoman Empire posed for Europe. It is equally important to note that a majority of Arabs and Muslims would agree that the history of the Arab-Islamic culture is mainly characterized by other and positive historical experiences as showcased by its positive interaction with the heritage of the ancient cultures of Greece, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Persia; the tolerance of religious pluralism in the Islamic states; the enlightenment of the Arab-Islamic culture in science, mathematics and philosophy in the middle ages together with its contribution to the human civilization throughout history; or the strategic importance of the Middle East in the modern period.

It is important that textbook authors recognize the positive 'identity-shapers' of the Other. Textbook authors play an important role in addressing aspects of the own history that are controversial and aspects of the history of the Other that are positive and of which people are proud. Textbooks that ignore the inter-relationship between Europe and Arab and Islamic worlds, that place too much emphasis on the conflict between the cultures, or that explore the relationship from only one perspective, run the risk of inadvertently reinforcing singular identities. They also fail to be as fair as to recognize to the rich outcome of the history of the material and intellectual encounters between Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds.



● Omissions and distortions

Studies of European and Arab textbooks show that there are sometimes omissions and distortions that prevent students from developing a deeper and more objective understanding of the Other. It is important to stress that such distortions and omissions do not usually represent a conscious attempt to present a narrow and one-sided view of history on the part of textbook authors; rather, they are the product of the wider political and cultural context in which history textbooks are written. Analyses of textbooks from European and Arab-Islamic countries have revealed some common distortions and omissions.

In European textbooks, Europe is often depicted as the axis around which historical events in the rest of the world revolve. European students learn about Roman and Greek culture as the source of their own culture, but European textbooks sometimes neglect the important role of Arab-Islamic culture as a key agent in the development of Europe. For many centuries, translations of Muslim scientists and philosophers were used in Europe as the basic resource for the establishment of modern European science and philosophy. The translations laid the foundations of most of the modern sciences like mathematics, physics, chemistry and medicine, and they also made a major contribution in the field of philosophy. Many Arabic terms in European languages still make this cultural impact on Europe evident. European explorers would not have made their great discoveries without the geographical studies and scientific inventions made by the Arabs and Muslims, especially their invention of cartography and the astrolabe, and their geographical explorations. Some European textbooks unfortunately fail to give Arab and Muslim scholars due credit for their great contribution to the European Renaissance and to the human civilization.

In European textbooks there is sometimes too little focus on the fact that the Arab and Islamic worlds and Europe share a common inheritance in Greek culture. In addition, the concept of the Islamic Umma and the long history of tolerance to other religions can sometimes be disregarded. Some textbooks do not concede enough space for highlighting the Islamic presence and the intercultural and interreligious encounters in Europe (in Spain, Sicily, and Bosnia) while the Arab renaissance (*al-nahda*), at the end of the 19th century, is often neglected. Finally, an important neglected area in European textbooks is the subject of the consequences which Zionism and the Israeli occupation of Arab lands had, and still has, for the Palestinians and the whole Arab and Islamic worlds.

Distortions and omissions can also sometimes be found in textbooks from the Arab and Islamic worlds. The central developments and historical events in Europe, which constitute the identity of many Europeans, are sometimes neglected in Arab-Islamic textbooks. Textbooks tend to give little attention to the church as an institution. When Christianity is discussed, it is often considered from an Islamic point of view and not from a Christian perspective. The struggle between state and church in Renaissance Europe, the reformation of the church and the religious wars of the early modern period are mentioned in Arab-Islamic textbooks, given the significant impact these historical developments clearly had on the European identity. However, some Arab-Islamic textbooks present the age of the enlightenment, and the reasons for the various forms of secularism in European states, with little heed of the European context in which they had emerged.

While contribution of Arabs and Muslims to European culture is often neglected or omitted in European textbooks, a similar neglect or omission in relation to the contribution of Europe to Arab-Islamic culture is a feature of some Arab-Islamic textbooks. The scientific and industrial revolutions in Europe created a wide range of transformations. In the nineteenth century, European developments in medicine, education, and communication had a significant impact on the Arab and Islamic worlds. Despite military clashes, there have been cases of cross-cultural pollination and exchange of goods and ideas since the beginning of the colonial era. Arab-Islamic textbooks sometimes cover these subjects, but they are rarely portrayed as a positive cultural exchange between Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds.

A distortion common to history textbooks in both Europe and the Arab and Islamic Worlds is the emphasis that textbooks from both cultures give to military conflict. European textbooks sometimes depict early Islamic history as a continuous war against the Byzantine Empire. They provide detailed descriptions of the different expeditions (*al-ghazawât*) and of the various campaigns against the Byzantines, while paying no heed to the role Muslim traders played in the spread of Islam in many parts of the world. Meanwhile, Arab-Islamic history textbooks sometimes present the Crusades as a religious war between Muslims and European Christians and make a direct link between the Crusades and the era of European colonialism. They imply that what the Crusaders were not able to achieve by military means in the middle ages, they later attempted through the “*salîbiyû al-‘asr al-hadîth*”, the “crusaders of the modern epoch”. Both approaches are harmful, for the first portrays Islam as religion that was spread by the sword and Muslims as “enemies”, while the second depicts Europeans simply as “crusaders” “colonialists” and “enemies”.



The tendency to focus too heavily on military encounters when considering past encounters between Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds is also sometimes a feature of history textbooks in Europe. The Crusades are often given a great deal of prominence, and the history of clashes continues with a focus on the military expansion of the Ottoman Empire and the sieges of Vienna in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A focus on these events, particularly in the context of the acts of terrorism which marked the turn of the 21st Century or as part of the ill-intentioned attempts of some parties to distort facts about Islam and Muslims and stir up Islamophobic sentiments, can too readily convey a picture of Islam as a continuous threat and a danger to Europe. A European narrative of constant clashes is as unsustainable as the concept of the Arab and Islamic worlds constantly under attack from Europe.

● Religious and cultural sensitivities

Nowadays, classrooms in some European countries contain a high proportion of Muslim students. The authors of history textbooks for use in European schools should respect this Muslim presence by producing balanced textbooks that give sufficient space to the history of the Muslim world. It is particularly important that they should write in an informed respectful way about the religious and cultural sensibilities that these young Muslims may hold.

A particular concern, highlighted in several studies of textbooks, is their lack of precision in the use of different terms. This can lead, for example, to a negative view of “Sharî’a”, the Islamic religious law. Sharî’a in a European context is almost always only connected with the extreme penalty laws and their extreme interpretation in a few Islamic states. Sharî’a in European eyes often simply means lashing, stoning and mutilation. The authors of European textbooks should place Sharî’a in its proper context, explaining that it is predominantly not an extreme penalty law, but a comprehensive code of behaviour that embraces both private and public activities and consists of central elements of Muslim belief, worship and teachings. Sharî’a deals a) with *`ibâda*, the ritual worship (ritual purification, prayers, fasts, charities and pilgrimage), b) with *mu’âmalât*, the human transactions and contracts (financial transactions, endowments, laws of inheritance, marriage, divorce and child care, foods and drinks, punitive measures, warfare and peace, juridical matters), c) with *akhlâq (adab)*, the morals and manners, d) with *`ibâdât*, the beliefs and only in e) with *`uqûbât*, the punishments, in which the *hudûd*, the laws, which put penalty on extreme violations of values with extreme measures.



Similar concerns also relate to the concept of “*jihad*” which is often translated in European history textbooks as “*holy war*” and not by the philological meaning which is “*general struggle over evil*”. In Islamic tradition *Jihād* is primarily a spiritual struggle by Muslim individuals to perform their roles in the development of their society. Actually, Muslims were victims of the “holy war” whose emergence as a concept is associated with the Crusades. Only secondly can “jihad” be an armed struggle in which case it basically falls within the realm of legitimate self-defense. The “*small jihād*” is considered a military act, while the “*big jihād*” is the more important non-violent spiritual struggle.

Women’s status in Islam has received much attention in European books on Islam where it is often associated with polygamy or inheritance rights. Accordingly, European pupils have never had the chance to know that polygamy, as presented in the Qur’ân, is so strictly regulated that it is hard and almost impossible to practise. Likewise, they ignore that just as males are offered the equal of two females’ share, a woman’s inheritance share may in many other cases be larger than the one attributed to a male heir.

Another area of particular sensitivity is the development of human rights. It is an oversimplification to state that human rights are directly an outcome of European Christian values. It should not be forgotten that the acceptance of human rights is a relatively recent development in the history of the West. Many Muslims, like a number of Western scholars, believe that human rights are not an outcome of European modernity but that their roots run deep in Islamic history. In this respect, Arab-Islamic textbooks always refer to the Pact of Medina elaborated by the Prophet Muhammad after consultations with the Jewish and the Christian communities living in this town at the seventh century, in which the Jews and the Christians were guaranteed the same rights and obligations as the Muslim inhabitants of Medina, keeping their own traditions, laws, rites, and places of worship, and enjoying the protection of the Muslims’ army.

Religious and cultural sensitivities can also sometimes be offended by authors of textbooks in Arab and Islamic countries. It is particularly important that Arab-Islamic textbooks point out the fact that Oriental Christians have been an integral part of Islamic societies since the dawn of Islam. Muslim students still learn and live together with Oriental Christians in some schools of the Middle East. There is clearly a need for authors of history textbooks in the Arab and Islamic worlds to show further respect for the Christian presence in Arab and Muslim schools. When writing textbooks, it is important to take into consideration the cultural specificities of Christian pupils and to pay attention to the contribution of Oriental Christians in all epochs of history. More



emphasis should be given to Oriental Christian architecture, monasteries and churches, patriarchates, schools and hospitals and to the important role that Oriental Christians played in the struggle against European colonialism.

Just as authors of history textbooks in Arab and Islamic countries need to pay careful attention to their presentation of European and Judeo-Christian culture and concepts, to recognize that European countries have adopted the principle of separation between church and state, and that they have become more or less secular, relegating religions to the private sphere, they should equally recognize the diversity that exists within Europe, together with the fact that in European countries the church still has an impact on politics, society and the values of the state. In Germany, for example, the state collects the taxes for the churches. Many church institutions like kindergartens, schools and social services are subsidized by the state. In England, the Queen is still the head of the Anglican Church.

When we analyze the image of Europeans, Christians and Jews, in Arab-Islamic textbooks, we note that these religions are sometimes presented from the point of view of the Qur'ân's prescriptions and Islamic ethics and values. It would be appreciated if authors of history books in the Arab and Islamic worlds depicted Christian and Jewish conceptions not simply from Islamic perspectives, but also from Christian and Jewish points of view. Such approaches already exist in the Islamic modern thought. For example, authors like `Abbâs Mahmmûd El-`Aqqâd, Prince Al-Hassan Ibn Talâl and other Muslim writers published books, which give reliable information on the Christian creed, the Christian church and the main Christian denominations and concepts on the base of the New Testament and Christian tradition. This positive approach should be introduced in history school textbooks as well.

In order to guarantee accurate information in the production of history textbooks in both Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds, it is good practice to involve representatives from other religions during the course of textbook production. In Germany, it has become common practice that chapters which deal with other religions are counter-checked by representatives from these religions. In Syria a new project has started in which chapters on Christian religion in the subject of Islamic education are written by Christian scholars, while the chapters on Islam in the subject of Christian education are written by Muslim authors. Such approaches help to prevent unconscious insults and represent a positive way forward in the production of history textbooks in Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds.

Section 2

Learning about positive encounters with the Other

A focus on history-based conflict sometimes dominates history textbooks in Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds. In their coverage of early Islamic history, European textbooks can sometimes dwell too heavily on the spread of Islam and on the Crusades, while Arabic-Islamic textbooks can sometimes place too much emphasis on the negative impact of European imperialism. An over-emphasis on conflict is a distorting lens through which to view the past. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, when attitudes are hardening among many young people, there is a danger that an over-emphasis on the Other as an aggressor will fuel prejudice. More than ever, there is a need for history textbooks to pay attention to the many examples of positive encounters with the Other, and to those long periods of history when co-existence between people of different religions and cultures was the norm. This section of the Guidebook considers four areas of historical study that could help students to develop a richer and deeper understanding of the relationship between the Arab and Islamic worlds and Europe in the past. These four areas are science and philosophy in the middle ages, medieval and early modern trade, Andalusia and art and architecture.

● Science and philosophy in the middle ages

The intellectual advances of the Arab and Islamic worlds in the ninth and tenth centuries are one of the most exciting and significant developments in world history. Every young person in Europe and in the Arab and Islamic worlds should be made aware of this important epoch, and of the way in which it still impacts their lives today. It is important that textbook authors deal with this development in accordance with modern scholarship which emphasizes the interaction of civilizations and the cultural fusion which was achieved during the Abbasid era. In order to understand the role Arab and Muslim scholars in the fields of science and philosophy it is important to provide a wide cultural context that extends to Persia, India, China, and Africa.

When explaining the influence of the Arab-Islamic culture in medieval Europe, textbook authors should emphasize the central role of Islam in the dissemination of knowledge, the promotion of thought and the use of reason. At the same time, they



should also alert students to the importance of economic factors, such as long-distance trade, in the development of human knowledge and understanding. History textbooks should also set the translation movement in its proper temporal context. The true translation renaissance occurred in the ninth century, especially during the era of the Muslim Khalifa al-Ma'mûn. The many scientific and cultural accomplishments of the human civilization in the Abbasid era emanated from Beït al-Hikma (House of Wisdom) in Baghdad, and were led by Christian, Jewish and Muslim translators, Arab and non-Arab alike. Translation gained in momentum during the era of al-Ma'mûn. It continued to develop under his successors and extended to Andalusia under the Muslim Khalifa Abdul Rahmân al-Nâssir and his son al-Hakam al-Mustanssir.



Yakoub Ibn Ishâq Al-Kindî



Al-Farâbî

● Philosophy

Islamic philosophy was the outcome of an exceptional intellectual activity in which Muslims, including Persians, Arabs, Turks, Berbers and others, played an active role. However, the contribution of Muslim Arabs was so prominent that we can refer to it as Arab philosophy. At the beginning of the ninth century a distinctive Arab-Islamic philosophy emerged. Great philosophers appeared including Al-Kindî “the philosopher of Arabs”, Al-Farâbî “the second Master”, Ibn Sîna (Avicenna) “The President Sheikh” and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) “The grandson”. In writing about Arab philosophy, textbook authors should make students aware of two points, in particular:

The relationship between science and religion.

Islamic philosophy was characterized by specific features which included the analysis of the idea of deity through a comprehensive and complete analysis based on abstraction and a reliance on reason. With their emphasis on the rational, Muslim philosophers used reason and logic in the interpretation of religious

texts. Beginning with Al-Kindi and ending with Ibn Rushd, Muslim scholars worked to reconcile the various philosophical schools and tried to find compromises between philosophy and religion. For example, Jâbir Ibn Hayyân, the chemist, worked with experience and observations while al-Kindî tried to demonstrate and prove the existence of God through mathematics.





Ibn Rushd (Averroes)



Al-Ghazali



Thomas Aquinas

The study and enrichment of Greek philosophy by Arab Muslim philosophers influenced the development of philosophical doctrines in Europe.

During the middle ages, European scholars translated many Arab-Islamic texts. These included *Kitâb al-Shifâ'* (The book of healing) by Ibn Sîna and *Tahâfut al-Tahâfut* (Incoherence of the Incoherence) by Ibn Rushd.

Arab-Islamic philosophical thinking contributed in confirming scientific concepts such as thorough examination (scrutiny and exploration), deduction and formulating hypotheses. There are many examples of Arab cultural influence on Europe in the field of philosophy; for instance, Thomas Aquinas, benefited from the approach of thinking of Muslim imams and Islamic philosophers such as Al-Kindî and Al-Ghazâlî.

Another example of dissemination was the proliferation of the “Averroes method” which was based on rational observation and which was taught at French universities by order of King Louis XI. A third example is provided by the philosophical practice of strengthening scientific criteria in judging the validity of cognitive production before accepting or rejecting it. This practice was at the heart of Averroes’ philosophy.

● Science

It is important for students to understand that the contribution of Arab-Islamic culture to scientific knowledge was not limited to translation. Arab-Islamic scholars were not only translators. They produced ideas commented on texts and developed

scientific ideas by performing practical experiments in order to verify the authenticity of ideas. Arab-Islamic creativity between the ninth and eleventh centuries, especially in astronomy, mathematics and medicine, enabled the Arabs to make enriching contributions to the scientific understanding of humanity.



Al-Khawarizmî



Descartes



Jabir Ibn Hayân

Arabs played a significant role in the study of different aspects of **mathematics** including calculus, algebra, engineering, triangles and the refinement of the two series of Indian and Arabic numbers including the use of zero. They also laid the foundations of algebra, invented symbols, worked on equations to the fourth degree and transferred the decimal system to Europe. Al-Khawârizmî is considered as one of the world's greatest contributors to the development of human mathematical thought. One of the Arab-Islamic influences in Europe in the field of mathematics worth mentioning is the introduction of Arabic numerals. Overall, perhaps the four greatest Arab contributions to the development of mathematics were: (1) The numbering system; (2) The division of calculus into two ways: the theoretical and practical way; (3) The innovation of multiplying by network logarithms, and (4) Third-degree equations.

In **chemistry** Jâber Ibn Hayân introduced the theory of mercury and sulphur in the composition of minerals, and Al-Râzî added a salty material to it. Following their work, the amendment of the theory of minerals formed of salt, sulphur, and mercury was the dominant theory in Europe until the end of the 18th century. The discoveries and achievements of many Arab chemists were decisive in the history of science and civilization. Among the most important of these discoveries were acid minerals, alcohol, and the use of explosive powder.





Ibn Al-Haytham

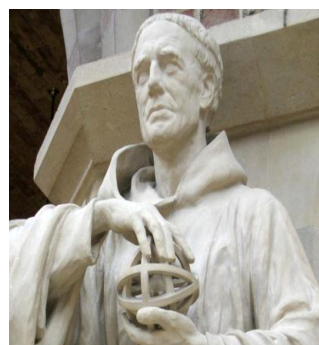
In the field of **physics** Ibn al-Haytham was distinguished. His book, “The Book of Scenes”, dealt with optics and was translated into Latin. The book had a great impact on Roger Bacon, Leonardo Da Vinci and Johannes Kepler. The Arabs were the first to establish the spherical aspect of the Earth, the gravity force and the centrifugal force on which Newton’s work was based.



Leonardo da Vinci



Johannes Kepler



Roger Bacon

In **medicine and pharmacy** Arabs were distinguished by their assimilation of Greek, Hindi, and Chinese clinical experiments. Arab medical studies were defined by two stages: the first stage was theoretical and the second stage was practical,



Abu Bakr Al-Râzî

consisting of training in how to medicate and treat. The Europeans obtained their knowledge of medicine and pharmacology from Arab scientists such as Al-Râzî, Ibn Sîna, Ibn Zahr and Ibn Rushd, author of “Generalities on Medicine”. The first big hospitals and first the practical and theoretical education of physicians were introduced during the golden age of Islam. European medical schools and institutes used Arabic medical books translated into Latin for teaching medicine as well as for developing new medical techniques.



Ibn Sîna (Avicenna)

Arab-Islamic authors of history textbooks are unanimous in praising this period from their past. In Europe, some textbooks also place a strong emphasis on the scientific and cultural developments of tenth century Baghdad and their significance for the development of European thought and scientific understanding. However, European history textbooks could give much more emphasis to this positive encounter between Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds.

● Medieval and early modern trade

Trade has always provided an important link between the Arab and Islamic worlds and Europe. A focus on trade links during the medieval and early modern periods offers a positive counterbalance to the conflicts which took place during these periods. Which aspect of trade links could spark the curiosity of students? What dimensions of trade could make interesting case-studies in history textbooks? A range of specific narratives offer possibilities:

Medieval trade and the significance of the Mediterranean. By the end of the middle ages Europe had important trading ports such as Genoa, Venice, Pisa, Amalfi, Marseille and Barcelona. In the Orient and the Maghreb there were prosperous ports such as Alexandria, Acre, Beirut, Antakya, Tunis, and Tripoli. These port towns served as the centre of trade transit between Europe and the Orient and a final destination for the caravan traders coming from Africa and Asia. The nature of medieval trade, the significance of the Mediterranean and the importance of different ports in the medieval period could be a worthwhile area of study for students.

The changing patterns of trade from the sixteenth century. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Genoese and Venetian monopoly on the exchange networks was broken. The Portuguese succeeded in bypassing the Arabian Peninsula and the Strait of Ormuz and established direct links with Persia and India. The English and the Dutch succeeded in taking a share of the Levant market. The French used their alliance with the Ottomans to strengthen their trade positions in both the Maghreb and the Levant regions. These changing patterns of trade could make interesting case studies in textbooks.



The impact of trade and exchange on migration and mobility. An interesting consequence of trade was its impact on human mobility. One of the most important consequences of trade between Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds was the development of diverse communities in ports and trading centres. Communities of European traders coming from Marseille, Livorno, Pisa, Genoa or Venice settled in different ports of the Arab and Islamic worlds such as Alexandria, Acre, Antakya, Istanbul or Tunis. The experiences of traders living in or having direct relations with the communities of the Other could make a fascinating study and could contribute to redressing many of the stereotypes held about that “Other”.

The nature of trading privileges. At different points in time, Muslim rulers gave privileges to European traders. The Mamluks, followed by the Hafsid sultans, Persian and Ottoman rulers all developed diplomatic relations with certain European states and signed peace and trade treaties with different Italian republics. Some of these treaties included terms that allowed the Christian merchants to establish their trade in Arab-Islamic countries. They were allowed to stay in special buildings called *Funduk* which served for both accommodation and storage. Some treaties guaranteed total security for traders and their goods. The experiences of European traders and the motivation of Arab-Islamic rulers in granting them trading privileges would be worthwhile areas of study.

The impact of trade on everyday life in Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds. Medieval and early modern trade had a powerful impact on the lives of people in Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds. It led to important material changes in everyday life. The new ways of building, dressing, eating and behaving that resulted from trade could make a fascinating focus of study for students. It has also resulted in important exchanges of knowledge that have impacted on everyday life. Trade has been a powerful way of transferring technical, artistic, and scientific knowledge such as medicine, science, mathematics or philosophy. The direct contact between Europeans and Arab Muslims has, for example, led to new systems accounting and finance as well as improvements in navigation. A focus on the ways in which trade with the Other has had an impact on people’s lives would enable students to understand an important aspect of inter-cultural exchange.

● Andalusia: a case study of religious co-existence and cultural tolerance

More than ever, there is a need for history textbooks to pay attention to those long periods of history when co-existence between people of different religions was the norm. Several regions and epochs could be chosen for this purpose. Fruitful Islamic-European encounters happened in Sicily in the middle ages, in Mughal India during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and Bosnia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, it is perhaps in medieval Andalusia that we find the richest context for arousing students' curiosity about the diversity, tolerance and co-existence in the history of Islamic-European relations.

The long history of Andalusia, from Abd al-Rahmân's arrival in Cordoba in the mid-eighth century to the final expulsion of the Nasrids in 1492, is a complex narrative. It is a story of violence and animosity, as well as one of peace and tolerance. From the beginning of the eleventh century, Christian aggression and Muslim factionalism divided Andalusia. Yet, the Muslim rulers of Andalusia created a remarkable culture in which Muslims, Jews and Christians lived together in relative peace and prosperity.



The Grand Mosque of Cordoba

During the ninth and tenth centuries Muslim Spain, with its fusion of power, trade and learning became one of the most vibrant places in the world. This was a time and place in history when people of the three religions lived side by side and, despite their enduring differences and occasional hostilities, created a prosperous and complex culture based on multiple identities and tolerance. The first rulers of Muslim Spain based their rule on an enlightened interpretation of the *ahl al-dhimma* concept (the Islamic religious law that mandates protection for Christians and Jews). People of the three different religions shared a rich culture which rejected religious and political correctness in favour of intellectual and aesthetic development.

The first challenge of textbook authors in writing the history of Andalusia for students is to find a particular focus for students' learning. A number of different enquiry questions could create opportunity for a study of Andalusia: *Why can't historians agree about Andalusia? What does the story of Cordoba's mosque reveal? What mattered to different people in tenth-century Andalusia? What made tenth-century Cordoba so special? How did the people of tenth-century Cordoba see their world? What can be learned from the buildings of Andalusia? What ended peace and toleration in Andalusia? When did Cordoba change most quickly? What should be remembered from tenth-century Cordoba?*

The enquiry question “*What does the story of Cordoba's mosque reveal?*” allows a chronological approach to the study of Andalusia and enables students to understand the changes and continuities that shaped Muslim Spain. Students see that in Andalusia periods of restriction and even persecution alternated, and sometimes co-existed, with a flowering of cross-cultural collaboration in trade, the arts and learning. The narrative can cover the main phases in enlarging and beautifying the mosque concluding with the shocking decision, in the early sixteenth century, to build a cathedral in the middle of the mosque. Students can be asked to consider what the story of Cordoba's mosque reveals about: (1) The Muslims' love of art and beauty; (2) The relationship between Muslims, Christians and Jews, (3) Connections between Cordoba and the wider Muslim world.

One of the most important aspects of studying the past for young people is analyzing and representing diversity. For many students, suspending their twenty-first century preconceptions and engaging with beliefs and attitudes that are very different from their own is intellectually demanding. Analyzing the beliefs and attitudes of people in tenth-century Andalusia through a focus on the enquiry question ‘*What mattered to different people in tenth-century Andalusia?*’ can provide a worthwhile focus for students' learning. Students can be provided with a narrative account of Andalusia



during the ninth and tenth centuries and can be asked to consider what different groups of Muslims, Christians and Jews thought about ways to make a living, religion, art and beauty, justice and fairness, the past and future of Andalusia.

● Art and architecture

Over the centuries, the Arab and Islamic worlds and Europe have produced some of the most remarkable art and architecture in the world. Discovering the artistic and architectural achievements of our own culture and encountering the art and



The Alhambra in Granada

architecture of the Other is one of the joys of life. A fundamental purpose of education should be to create a sense of wonder about people's capacity for creativity. School history can play an important role in creating curiosity about the buildings and art of different cultures. There is a danger, however, that if history curricula and textbooks are dominated by politics, economics and conflict, young



people may not encounter the artistic heritage of their own culture, and that of others, in their history lessons.

Textbook authors and history teachers can help pupils to develop an aesthetic appreciation of the beauty of buildings and of art. They can give pupils time and space to enjoy the beauty of the Great Mosque of Damascus, the Dome of the Rock Mosques in Jerusalem, Sultan Ahmed Mosque and Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, or the mosques and Islamic Schools in Fès, or the Rheims Cathedral in Paris. They can encourage pupils to engage with the artistic genius of Pieter Breughel and to appreciate the beauty of Arab calligraphy and Islamic decorative arts. Developing



Rheims Cathedral

an appreciation of the architecture and arts which marked the history of the Arab, Muslim and European societies is an important part of learning history, but history provides pupils with more than this. By focusing on the historical context in which art and architecture are created, history can help pupils to learn important lessons about the relationship between art, architecture and society in the past. Textbooks

often include photographs and illustrations of buildings and art in order to illustrate different periods or aspects of history. However, by making the themes of



Hagia Sophia in Istanbul

belief, political power and everyday life the central focus of pupils' learning, textbook authors can create a deeper understanding of the relationship between art, architecture and society in the past.

Over many centuries, people in the Arab and Islamic worlds and in Europe have created art and architecture as a direct expression of their faith. From the earliest



times religious buildings have been an expression of belief. Since the 7th century, Islam has had a profound influence on the art and architecture of many parts of the world. This expression of belief can still be seen in a beautiful copy of the Qu'ran, in the interior or exterior of a mosque or in the design of a religious artefact. The cathedrals, churches, monasteries and religious art of Europe are testimony to the close relationship between building, art and Christianity in the middle ages. Studying buildings and art, in their religious and social context, can help pupils understand the fundamental attitudes and beliefs of people in past societies.



Ibn Khaldun

The Arab Muslim historian Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) emphasized that cities and other monuments reflect the dynasties that created them. An important function of art and architecture in both Europe and the Arab-Islamic worlds has been to enhance the authority of rulers and elites. The relationship between power and art can make a fascinating study for pupils. Singling out a particular city, building or work of art can be a useful approach: Abbasid Baghdad, the palace of Abd al-Rahman III, the Alhambra in Granada, Versailles, a castle or country

house, a portrait of a particular ruler can all make a fascinating focus of study. By relating a building or work of art to the people who commissioned it, textbook authors and teachers can helpfully develop pupils' knowledge and understanding.



Mehmet II

A good example of the use of an individual painting to address wider issues of power and patronage is provided by a work of art from the Ottoman court. In 1479, following a peace treaty between the Ottoman Empire and Venice, the Venetian artist Gentile Bellini was sent by his rulers to work at the court of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II. While at the Ottoman court, Bellini painted the celebrated portrait of Sultan Mehmet II that now hangs in London's National Gallery. This remarkable portrait is full of fascination for young people. Pupils can be asked: What does the

portrait suggest about the personality and power of Mehmet II? What does it reveal about the skill of Bellini? What political, diplomatic, material and cultural



Gentile Bellini

influences lie behind the portrait? Bellini captured his subject at a moment in time. We see the essence of a Muslim ruler glimpsed through a Renaissance frame. Bellini acted as a bridge between Europe and the Ottoman world. In Istanbul he learned from Islamic art, while Muslim artists absorbed the graphic techniques of the Italians.

The focus on an individual artist at a particular point in time is a useful way to help pupils in Europe and in the Arab and Islamic worlds understand the powerful cultural influences that have flowed in both directions. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries provide a particularly rich context for a study of the existed links between Europe and the Arab Muslim World. In recent years historians have re-written the nineteenth-century version of the European Renaissance in which the flowering of art and architecture took place in a Europe sealed off from other influences. They now recognise the crucial importance of trade and cultural exchange with Constantinople, Baghdad and Beijing. In painters such as Giotto, Ucello and Fra Angelico, we see Arabic inscriptions (often from the Qur'ân) on the garments of saints and Madonnas. Such details can remind students that the European Renaissance was the outcome of exchanges between different faiths and cultures.

Finally, studies of houses, gardens, hospitals, schools, madrasas, caravansarais, shops, factories, pottery, furniture and other buildings and artefacts, can help pupils to understand the structures of everyday life in the past. A detailed analysis of the houses and furniture of peasants in a medieval French village, an examination of a merchant's house in Damascus or a comparison of the built environment in fifteenth-century Cairo and London, can open up the diversity and pluralism in the history of societies in Europe and in the Arab and Islamic worlds.

Two-way cultural exchanges between Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds have occurred throughout history. They should find a more prominent place in history textbooks. Textbook authors and teachers can usefully engage pupils in studies of the impact of Islamic architecture on medieval Europe, in the mixed architectural



Al-Qarawyyine Mosque in Fes, Morocco

heritage of Palermo, Cordoba, Jerusalem and Cairo. A greater focus on the artistic and architectural achievements of people in Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds, and on the long history of positive interaction between the two cultures would provide a richer learning experience for all pupils.

Section 3

Learning about emotive and controversial issues and suggesting alternatives

Despite the many positive encounters between the Arab and Islamic worlds and Europe in the past, there have also been times of confrontation and conflict. The history classroom can provide a ‘safe’ place for students to study these controversial aspects of history. History textbooks play a crucial role in helping students to study controversial events from a range of perspectives and in ways that do not reinforce stereotypical views held about the Other. Best practice emerges when history is presented both as a body of knowledge and as a form of knowledge. It is not enough to simply give students the facts about an emotive and controversial event. Factual knowledge needs to be integrated into a process of study which includes such features as the examination of original source material and a range of contemporary opinions. By focusing on the process of historical enquiry, textbook authors can help students to understand the complexity of controversial events and to move beyond a black and white view of the past.

An exploration of multiple narratives and of the ways in which events can be seen from different perspectives is another feature of good practice. A focus on the ways in which people in later times have reconstructed and presented controversial events, on the purpose of different historical interpretations and on the relationship between the interpretation and the available contemporary evidence is vitally important. The teaching of emotive and controversial history is seriously compromised if students do not see that history is a subject that is open to debate and argument.

This section focuses on five emotive and controversial areas of historical study in the relationship between Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds: the spread of Islam, the Crusades, Europe and the Ottoman Empire, European colonialism and Europe and the Arab-Israeli conflict. It considers particular historical and pedagogical issues relating to these events, and suggests some useful ways forward.

● The spread of Islam

In the first century after the death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Islam spread into the Sasanian Empire - lands that are now Iraq and Iran. Muslim armies marched north and west into the Byzantine Empire, extending Muslim rule to Syria and Egypt. By 705 Islam had reached what is now Afghanistan. By 711 it had spread to northern India and central Asia. Islam also spread west. By 700 Muslims controlled the whole of the north African coast. In 711 Muslim armies entered Spain. Only in France, at the Battle of Poitiers in 732 did they finally stop. The spread of Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries was one of the most significant developments in world history.

The spread of Islam is a subject that has regularly appeared in European textbooks. A 1995 comparative study, on the image of the Other in the history textbooks of seven Mediterranean countries (France, Spain, Greece, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia), found that the presentation of Islam in European textbooks frequently began with a narrative about the “Expansion of Islam.” Ten years later, a second study noted that the same emphasis on the “Expansion of Islam” prevailed. Many European textbooks presented the spread of Islam simply as a military conquest. Rather than beginning with an explanation of the concepts and principles of Islam, some European textbook described Muslim armies as conquering people by force, humiliating them and looting their wealth and property. In some textbooks, Muslim “conquerors” were presented in a stereotyped way as invincible invaders and raiders who inspired terror and posed a permanent and severe threat to their neighbors.

In recent years writers of history textbooks in Europe have encouraged students to develop a deeper understanding of the spread of Islam. The question of why Islam spread is a fascinating causation problem for students. Students can be introduced to a wide range of cause types – military, economic, religious and social. This is, after all, a genuine historical problem: historians have disagreed about the relative importance of all these factors, about the way they interrelate and about the best way of explaining Islam’s success. Students can be encouraged to construct their own causal argument.

Textbook authors can support students’ causal thinking about the spread of Islam in a number of ways. For example, they can provide students with a wide range of ‘cause ideas’ that students can then organize in different ways to produce a convincing causal explanation. The following ‘cause ideas’ could help students to construct a convincing causal argument about the spread of Islam:



1. Worn out from fighting each other, the two big empires (Byzantine and Sasanian) had no strength left to fight the Muslims.
2. The Muslims strong faith made them brave in battle. Islam proscribes aggression-motivated fighting and allows fighting as part of self-defense. Therefore, distinction should be made between certain historical events and Islam's principles and commandments.
3. Many people hated their old rulers so the Muslims were seen as liberators.
4. Christians and Jews paid less tax to the new Muslim rulers than to the old Byzantine rulers.
5. Muslim rulers were often more tolerant towards Christians and Jews than Byzantine Christians.
6. There was a chance for Arab tribes to get rich if they fought in Muslim wars.
7. The Arabs were skilful soldiers – tough, fast-moving and capable of surprise.
8. Muslim forces had impressive weapons like giant slings that could throw huge stones.
9. The Arabs built up their power at sea.
10. Muslims did not force Jews to convert to Islam.
11. Muslim merchants and traders helped to spread Islam.
12. Islam had united the Arabs. This made them stronger. Arab armies were strong enough to crush revolts and rebellions in the new lands which came under Muslim rule.
13. Muslim teachers and missionaries helped to convert people to Islam, especially in Africa and Asia.
14. North African Berbers joined the Muslim forces and made them even stronger.

Introducing students to a wide range of causal factors, and asking them to construct their own causal explanations, are good strategies to help students move beyond simplistic explanations that represent the Other only as an aggressor.

● The Crusades

The Crusades, which took place between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries constituted a major turning point in relations between Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds. In the Arab and Islamic worlds, the Crusades have become one of the most controversial chapters in the history of relations with Europe. A simplistic presentation of the Crusades in history textbooks from both Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds can lead students to a limited understanding the Crusades.

European textbooks sometimes continue to present the Crusades from a Eurocentric perspective. According to some European textbooks, the fundamental objective of the Crusaders was to liberate the holy places of Jerusalem from the hands of the “Infidels”. The “Infidels” were the Muslims who, the Crusaders claimed, had occupied the holy city and maltreated both the Eastern Christians and the European pilgrims to the Christian sanctuaries in Jerusalem. Some Arab-Islamic books strive to present the Crusaders as uncivilized people, dominated by violence and cupidity. They emphasize that the Crusaders did not recognize the inviolability of sacred places or of civilians. Moreover, some authors of Arab-Islamic textbooks resort too readily to literary style in order to highlight the glory of Muslim victories against the Crusaders.

There has never been a more important time to study the Crusades. A tendency is gaining ground that gives a religious explanation to certain contemporary conflicts, which in reality are opposing people with no understanding of the celestial religions’ teachings to others who are instrumentalizing them for their own plans and ends. Indeed, religiously justified violence is on the increase across the globe. Every day, students are bombarded with media images and stories of murders committed in the name of religion which ironically proscribes them. Many people engaged in religious conflict use the language of holy war and of crusading to provide a moral justification for violence. Often they make direct links between the Crusades and current conflicts. Such links are, of course, based on perception rather than on historical reality. An understanding of the history of the Crusades and of the emotive responses that have resulted from a partial knowledge of these religious conflicts make the Crusades a rich and meaningful area of study

In recent years, the Crusades have been the focus of considerable scholarly attention. The lines of enquiry, debates and contested histories that have resulted from recent research should inform the work of school textbook authors. Three aspects of crusading historiography have dominated recent research: debates about



what the Crusades actually were; analysis and argument about the motives of the crusaders; changing perspectives on the nature of crusader society.

What were the Crusades? The problem of defining the Crusades has led to considerable debate among historians. Six different approaches can be identified: **Generalists**, who place the First Crusade within the long development of Christian holy war, and who argue therefore that there was nothing particularly special or distinctive about the First Crusade; **Traditionalists**, who insist on the centrality of Jerusalem and the Holy Land to crusading; **Pluralists**, who focus on papal authorization as the defining characteristic of crusading and who therefore extend their research geographically (to cover the Iberian peninsula, the Baltic region and other parts of Europe) and chronologically (as far as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries); **Popularists**, who suggest that crusading emerged as an expression of popular piety. This approach represents historians of an earlier generation, but may experience a revival as we learn more about the motivation of lay participants. The fifth approach is that of **Chroniclers** who affirm that the Crusades were part of the violent religiously sanctioned European expansion. It was the outcome of Europe's political, social, economic, and cultural mutations following the collapse of the Roman Empire, combined with the interaction between the Church and Feudalism. The feudal forces, the emerging bourgeois class, the clergy, the Knights and peasants embraced the crusading ideology, each according to their own interpretation that would serve their class interests, deliver them from their internal troubles and achieve their worldly gains which were beyond their reach in eleventh-century Europe, with its critical economic conditions and low living standards. The sixth approach is that of **Marxists**, who consider the Crusades as colonialist plans to enslave peoples under the banner of the Cross. In support of their thesis, they cite the atrocities crusaders inflicted on the Balkans during the People's Crusade and First Crusade, arguing also that the Byzantine Empire's collapse was a result of the Fourth Crusade in the early thirteenth century.

The motivation of crusaders. The reasons why people took the cross and what they expected to result from their action has been a productive area of historical research and has led to continuing controversy among historians. Earlier materialistic explanations are no longer accepted. Recent research suggests that very few surviving crusaders of the First Crusade settled in the newly conquered territories and that the inducement of new lands in the east was not a powerful motivation. Other studies suggest that the Crusades had economic and political motivations but concealed under the cover of religion. According to those studies, thus Crusades were the first precursors of European colonialism.



The nature of crusader society. Several contemporary scholars focus on the nature of the society that emerged in the crusader states during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and, in particular, the extent of assimilation has been the focus of much recent research. This is an interesting focus for students as it introduces them to the ways in which archaeology, historical geography and art can contribute to historical understanding. The suggestion of nineteenth-century French historians was that a ‘Franco-Syrian society’ emerged in the crusader states with western settlers merging with the indigenous population to produce something culturally unique. This view was attacked in the 1950s and 1960s by Joshua Prawer and Otto R.C. Smail. In the views of these historians the western settlers should be seen as a ruling class separated from the local population by language and religion, with force as their ultimate sanction. In recent years, a work by Ronnie Ellenblum on rural settlement patterns and, more recently, on crusader castles, suggests a more complex picture. Jaroslav Folda’s research on crusader art also suggests a cultural synthesis.

It is important that textbook authors base their work on recent scholarship and attempt to engage students with on-going academic debates about Crusades. In particular, it is crucial that students move beyond a singular view of the Crusades and explore the perceptions of the Other. Valuable scholarly works for European authors for this purpose are, for example, Amin Malouf’s *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes* and Carole Hillenbrand’s *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*. Hillenbrand’s detailed survey and analysis of Muslim perceptions provides a wealth of useful source material, including references to popular literature, buildings, images and Arab memoirs which help students to see the Muslim perception of the Franks at the time of the Crusades. Such sources offer examples of just the sort of cultural encounter that young people need to understand. They provide pupils with the opportunity to explore the attitudes, values, assumptions, and everyday activities of Christians (indigenous and European), Muslims and Jews as they lived side by side during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Textbook authors can also usefully engage students with the ways in which the Crusades have been interpreted in different ways, both in the Europe and in the Arab and Islamic worlds. A focus on how the Crusades have been represented in pictures, plays, films, reconstructions, museum displays, fiction and non-fiction helps students to become questioning and critical individuals. They see that interpretations reflect the circumstances in which they were made and the intentions of those who made them.



● Europe and the Ottoman Empire

The year 1453 was a pivotal date in world history. The Ottomans' entry into Constantinople led to the creation of a large and long-lasting empire. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries all the Arab countries, with the exception of parts of Arabia, Sudan and Morocco, were included in the Ottoman Empire. In the early modern period much of the Ottoman Empire's resources and energy were devoted to the expansion of its territory into eastern and central Europe. 1453 may not be a date known to many pupils in European countries, but in the collective memory of Europeans the Ottomans loom large. Battles and sieges such as Mohacs (1526), Vienna (1529 and 1683) and Lepanto (1571) are important landmarks in the relationship between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Nowhere is this relationship more sensitive than in the Balkans, where the military conflicts of the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth century have resonated down to our own time with significant consequences. Past conflicts between Europe and the Ottoman Empire should not be ignored by textbook authors and teachers, but they require sensitive handling if we are to avoid reinforcing a stereotypical view of the Other as simply 'the enemy' and as a constant threat.

If authors are to help pupils develop a more academically rigorous and richer understanding of the relationship between Europe and the Ottoman Empire, it is important that a focus on conflict does not dominate textbooks. Contacts between European states and the Ottoman Empire were not based entirely on enmity. A study of other types of contact can lead pupils into a more complex understanding of the past. Artistic exchange was an important dimension of the contact between European states and the Ottoman Empire. So, too, was trade. In the earlier Ottoman centuries trade was dominated by Venetian and Genoese merchants, and in the eighteenth century by the French and British. From the sixteenth century onwards, European states were keen to cement these trading links by establishing permanent embassies and consulates in Istanbul. Moreover, European kings frequently entered alliances with the Ottoman sultan against a common enemy.

An interesting development in European historical scholarship has been the study of the narratives of "ordinary" Europeans who visited the Ottoman Empire in the early modern period. Some of this research has now begun to impact on school textbooks. An English textbook, for example, focuses on the narrative of Thomas Dallam, the inventor of a clockwork organ, who, in 1599, travelled from England to Istanbul. Queen Elizabeth I thought the clockwork organ would make an excellent present for

the new Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, Mehmet III. She ordered Dallum to deliver the organ to the Sultan in the hope that the gift would persuade the Sultan to extend the trading rights to the English Levant Company. The textbook authors ask pupils to read the story of Thomas Dallum's journey and to think about what it tells us both about Dallum's attitudes towards the Muslim world and about the relationship between England and the Ottoman Empire at that time. This is a good example of the way in which, by focusing on the complexity of individual encounters between Europeans and Muslims, textbook authors can help pupils to move beyond a stereotypical view of past societies.

Another strategy that European textbook authors can use to move European pupils beyond a perception of the Ottomans only as "the enemy" is to focus on the nature of the Ottoman Empire itself. A greater emphasis in European textbooks on individual Ottoman Sultans, Istanbul, the Topkapi Palace, Ottoman government,



Sultan Suleiman

the Ottomans and Islamic tradition, Ottoman art and architecture, or Ottoman attitudes towards Christians and Jews would help pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the Ottoman Empire. In order to develop pupils' thinking it is often helpful to focus a textbook chapter around an enquiry question. Authors should use questions that are historically rigorous and that will capture the interest of pupils. The following questions could create rich opportunities for learning about the nature of the Ottoman Empire: *What was so 'magnificent' about Suleiman? What mattered to the Ottoman Sultans? How did the Ottoman*

Sultans show their power? What made the Topkapi Palace so special? What can different sources tell about the Ottomans? Why should the Ottomans be remembered? How different were Paris and Istanbul in the sixteenth century? When was the Ottoman Empire most powerful? Why did the Ottoman Empire decline? Why can't historians agree about the Ottomans?

A particularly sensitive aspect of European-Ottoman history is the involvement of European states in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the European Mandates which changed the balance of power in the region. It is worth mentioning that the grievances attributed to the Ottoman State were not aimed only at Europeans. They affected the Arabs of the Orient too, and as they lacked an



Islamic religious ground, a portion of the Arabs of the Orient entered into alliance with the European powers against the Ottomans during World War I.

It is crucial that young people in Europe and in the Arab and Islamic worlds develop a clear understanding of the significance of the end of the Ottoman Empire, the ways in which its demise is connected to their own lives, and the reasons why people may interpret these events in such different ways. There is a need for authors to think carefully about exactly what historical facts to select. There is also a need to think of an appropriate focus for pupils' learning.

In writing about the end of the Ottoman Empire, textbook authors are entering an interpretational minefield. Different people, for different reasons, view the events of 1917-21 from different perspectives. Historians' accounts disagree, for example, over the extent to which Arab players were pawns or active participants in the events. Some media interpretations may emphasize the betrayal of the Western powers without exploring the particular historical context in which politicians operated. Films such as David Lean's 1962 classic *Lawrence of Arabia*, help to create a mythical view of these events in the popular imagination.

A useful pedagogical approach is to make a particular interpretation the focus of pupils' study. Textbook authors have a range of possible interpretations from which to select: academic (e.g. extracts from books and articles by historians), fictional (e.g. extracts and plays), educational (e.g. textbooks, museums and sites, TV documentaries), popular (e.g. popular perceptions, monuments, media items). Pupils can be asked to reflect on: the purpose and intended audience of the interpretation; the relationship between the interpretation and the available evidence; the way in which the interpretation has been affected by the context in which it was created (ideology, values, nationality, personality). An explicit focus in textbooks on the ways in which past events have been interpreted can open pupils' minds to different viewpoints and can provide a useful strategy for dealing with emotive and controversial history in the classroom.

● European colonialism

The nineteenth century was the period when European powers dominated the world. A growth of factory production and changes in methods of communication led to an expansion of European trade. These developments were accompanied by an increase in the armed power of European states and by the conquest of some parts of the Arab

and Islamic worlds by European powers. The first major conquest of an Arab-Islamic state was that of Algeria by France (1830-47). In due course Egypt and Tunisia fell under European control, followed by Morocco, Libya and the rest of Arab countries which were under European colonial rule. The colonial era is relatively close to our current time and it is therefore a particularly painful period for many countries both in the Arab and Islamic worlds and in Europe. The teaching of colonialism poses particular problems of methodology. What approaches best answers the requirements of historical scholarship as well as educational needs of young people?

European colonialism is presented in some textbooks in the Arab and Islamic worlds as an act of pure aggression on the part of the colonizers. Some textbooks suggest that nineteenth-century colonialism was a return to the Crusades. Moreover, Christianity is sometimes accused of being the initiator of this nineteenth-century illicit expansion, with the purpose of destabilizing the Arab and Islamic worlds and shaking its cultural and moral cohesion. In this respect, imperialism is associated with the actions of missionaries whose objective was to evangelize the dominated peoples. Some textbooks also emphasize the violent aspects of European colonial expansion and present the colonizers as barbaric and brutal invaders. Just as colonialism and its associated practices are unjustifiable, they simply need to be denounced and dissociated from their alleged religious motivations.

For a long time, European textbooks tended to emphasize, the ‘civilizing mission’ behind colonialism. According to some textbooks, European colonialism had only ‘civilizing’ objectives: to educate, to provide health care and to build roads and seaports. Nowadays, European history textbooks tend take a much less Eurocentric approach to colonialism. Some history textbooks follow an enquiry-based approach. They seek to engage students with a range of issues relating to different aspects of colonialism and encourage students to develop their own views and opinions by presenting them with a range of historical sources and interpretations. However, it remains the case that historical perspectives and sources relating to the experiences and attitudes of colonized people in the Arab and Islamic worlds are still under-represented in European history textbooks.

In order to help students develop a more complex understanding of European colonialism it would be helpful if textbook authors in Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds could support students’ knowledge and understanding of five characteristic features of colonialism:



1. European colonialism was one of the most important developments in world history. It led to European seizure of huge territories outside Europe and mobilized treasuries, armies, business and the church on a huge scale.
2. Colonialism was imposed upon invaded countries by force of arms. Violence preceded colonialism and continued after the conquest of extra-European territories.
3. Economic exploitation constituted a main driving force of colonial expansion. The desire for profit led to the construction of new infrastructures in colonized countries.
4. Social relationships between colonizers and colonized people became very unbalanced. The colonized were not regarded as citizens. The colonists often adopted paternalistic attitudes at the beginning, then repressive ones whenever there were signs of political or economic protest.
5. The colonists sought to impose their languages and culture on the colonized people

It is important that students develop an understanding of these characteristic features of European colonialism. However, at the same time, teachers and textbook authors should encourage students to develop an awareness of the diverse experiences and attitudes of people in colonial societies. Individual European countries had very different colonial policies. The people involved in European colonization came from a variety of backgrounds and were the products of the particular cultural contexts into which they were born. Individual Europeans related to people in the Arab and Islamic worlds in a myriad of ways that require careful study. Some people in European countries held anti-colonial views. Textbook authors should strive to make students aware of the diversity of people's experiences in the period of European colonialism, drawing their attention to the fact that some European countries did not jump into the wagon of the European colonialist expansion and that many European peoples have denounced such colonialist policies.



● Europe and the Arab-Israeli conflict

One of the most sensitive issues covered by history textbooks in Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds is the Arab-Israeli conflict. The causes of this conflict are very deep-rooted, but it is beyond doubt that Europe played an important role in the conflict, particularly through the Balfour Declaration, the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the vote in favour of partition leading to the creation of the state of Israel at the United Nations in 1947. Young people in Europe and in Arab world should be made aware of the historical events that contributed to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including also the role played by external Powers.



Dome of the Rock Mosque in Jerusalem, with the Church of Mary Magdalene in the background

The envisaged textbooks in Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds are required to reconsider certain aspects of distortion and to introducing pupils to the various existing narratives.

Textbooks authors will have to present the major historical events in an objective and coherent way, thus providing pupils with different points of view and resources in such a way as to help them understand such events using a multi-perspective approach. This is the only way to adequately teach the Arab-Israeli conflict. In fact, some European textbooks tend to oversimplify the origin of the conflict and to refer only to the Sykes-Picot Agreement and tend to disregard the implications of the Balfour Declaration on the future of Middle-East relations. Some textbooks tend also to eclipse the name of Palestine on maps and fail in this way to enlighten pupils on the conflict and the legitimate international resolutions.

Meanwhile, history textbooks in the Arab and Islamic worlds have to highlight some of the positive European stances in this regard. Pupils should be made aware that European Union supports a two-state solution on the basis of international legality instruments, and opposes the settlement policies of Israel. It has also described the closure of Gaza by Israel as ‘unacceptable and politically counterproductive’. The EU considers that peace in the Middle East requires a comprehensive, regional solutions responding to the legitimate rights of the Palestinians as well as addressing Israel’s security needs. All these are important stances which need to be mentioned in history textbooks in the Arab and Islamic worlds.



Conclusion

This guidebook is the outcome of a collective reflection involving experts from Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds. It aims to promote a deeper understanding of the complexity of intercultural encounters as they are or could be reflected in history textbooks. Teachers, educators, textbook writers and publishers willing to develop cross-cultural understanding and coexistence of peoples will find in the guidebook a range of ideas for the ways in which history teaching could enrich students' knowledge of other cultures and could develop their critical thinking. The guidebook suggests some ways forward in constructing motivating contexts for learning, recommends a wider range of documentary sources and provides some helpful pedagogical approaches in helping young people to study controversial and sensitive issues in history. Users of this guidebook are encouraged to integrate multi-perspective approaches in their work and to adopt new pedagogical positions in order to provide students with a richer view of intercultural exchange and to promote peaceful coexistence between people in Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds

Today, and throughout history, we find common ground in the fundamental existential experience of being human. We all go through more or less the same joys and sorrows. We all share the experience of childhood, of growing up, of family and experience of struggling with close relations. We can meet as fellow human beings in our unique but similar experiences of caring for dear ones, in the joy at the birth of child or in the sadness of losing a friend. We are alike in our struggle for self-confidence, dignity and happiness and most of us have gone through the inner turmoil that may strike in moments of personal adversity. We share care and anxiety for the world in which we all live and we unite in a longing for safety, meaningful life and



joy for all mankind. This is the common ground that we can take as our point of departure in our endeavor to convey a constructive view of pluralism to children and young people. We, Arabs, Muslims and Europeans alike, are on a common path.



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