

THE HISTORY OF CIVILIZATIONS OF PRE-COLUMBIAN AMERICA: ASSESSMENT OF 7-8 GRADE WORLD HISTORY TEXTBOOKS FOR UKRAINIAN STUDENTS

A HISTÓRIA DAS CIVILIZAÇÕES DA AMÉRICA PRÉ-COLUMBIANA: AVALIAÇÃO DE LIVROS DE HISTÓRIA MUNDIAL DE 7ª A 8ª SÉRIE PARA ESTUDANTES UCRANIANOS

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ABSTRACT

The study of the civilisations of pre-Columbian America opens up a diverse world of ancient cultures, their achievements and heritage to the modern student. The purpose of the study is to analyse the state of coverage of the history of medieval and early modern South American indigenous peoples in Ukrainian school history textbooks. For the content analysis, 6 textbooks on the world history of Ukraine were selected. We also selected 2 textbooks for the integrated course, which will be used by 7th grade students. The textbooks were selected based on the indicator of teacher choice – the minimum number of 18 thousand copies per country. The introduction to the study begins with the fact that Pre-Columbian history is a terra incognita in the worldview of Ukrainian schoolchildren. However, as it turned out, some modern textbooks describe in detail the history of Pre-Columbian civilisations, their way of life, culture, social system, and even military art. Taking into account the specifics of these textbooks, they are generally written in clear and accessible language for children of grades 7 and 8. It has been established that in some textbooks this topic is not sufficiently visualised in an integrative way. An important drawback is that most 2021 textbooks make little or no mention of other peoples and civilisations of Pre-Columbian America. The exception is the integrated textbook for 2024, in which the social, economic, cultural and political development of the Pre-Columbian civilisations is presented in more depth.

Keywords: Civilisations of pre-Columbian America. History textbooks. Ukraine.

RESUMO

O estudo das civilizações da América pré-colombiana abre ao estudante moderno um mundo diversificado de culturas antigas, das suas realizações e do seu património. O objetivo do estudo é analisar o estado da cobertura da história dos povos indígenas sul-americanos medievais e do início da era moderna nos manuais escolares de história da Ucrânia. Para a análise de conteúdo, foram seleccionados 6 manuais escolares sobre a história mundial da Ucrânia. Seleccionámos também 2 manuais para o curso integrado, que será utilizado pelos alunos do 7º ano. Os manuais foram seleccionados com base no indicador de escolha do professor - o número mínimo de 18 mil exemplares por país. A introdução ao estudo começa com o facto de a história pré-colombiana ser uma terra incógnita na visão do mundo dos alunos ucranianos. No entanto, alguns manuais escolares modernos descrevem em pormenor a história das civilizações pré-colombianas, o seu modo de vida, cultura, sistema social e até arte militar. Tendo em conta as especificidades destes manuais, são geralmente escritos numa linguagem clara e acessível para crianças do 7º e 8º anos. Verificou-se que, nalguns manuais, este tema não é suficientemente visualizado de forma integradora. Um inconveniente importante é o facto de a maior parte dos manuais escolares de 2021 fazerem pouca ou nenhuma referência a outros povos e civilizações da América pré-colombiana. A exceção é o manual integrado para 2024, no qual o desenvolvimento social, económico, cultural e político das civilizações pré-colombianas é apresentado de forma mais aprofundada.

Palavras-chave: Civilizações da América Pré-colombiana. Livros de história. Ucrânia.

1. INTRODUCTION

Pre-Columbian history is a *terra incognita* in the worldview of Ukrainian schoolchildren. In the global world of the twenty-first century, this practice is wrong, as it limits the cognitive activity of students and shapes an incorrect perception of the past. The Ukrainian scientific field is dominated by Eurocentrism, which has its positive and negative consequences. Undoubtedly, the great attention paid to the development of ancient and medieval Europe is due to Ukraine's belonging to European civilisation. For this reason, it is quite correct and reasonable to consider the Ukrainian past through the prism of the development of pan-European trends – it is important to take into account the specifics of the emergence and functioning of the fully European 'inventions' of the Middle Ages. For example, Magdeburg law, 'feudalism', elements of the military structure, church life, universities, social development, etc. were borrowed from Ukraine-Rus (the name for medieval Ukraine coined by the prominent Ukrainian historian Mykhailo Hrushevsky in the early twentieth century (Hrushevs'kyi, 1997)) with certain peculiarities. However, the similarity of these and many other elements to Western and Eastern European ones is undeniable. Therefore, without knowing their foundations, students will not be able to understand the peculiarities of their functioning in Ukraine-Rus. An important part of the study is the paragraphs on the history of the Byzantine Empire. The contacts of Kyivan princes with Constantinople (modern Istanbul), the adoption of Eastern rite Christianity, the influence on the formation of writing and culture in general, and the dynastic policy that was the basis of medieval diplomacy were all important for Ukraine-Rus.

At the same time, the frontier location of Ukrainian lands on the border with the Eurasian Great Steppe had its own distinctive impact. Avars, Ugrians, Pechenegs, and other medieval peoples migrated through the Black Sea area, fighting or interacting with the local Slavic population that was gathering to the north. From the twelfth century onwards, the Polovtsians had a significant influence on the Rus' princes, and from the mid-thirteenth century onwards, the Mongols, whose empire stretched to the Carpathians from the Pacific and Indian coasts. The history of these peoples, however, has received much less attention, as well as the problems of Rus interaction with the Islamic world. Even at the scientific level, the presence of Muslims in the cities of medieval Ukraine requires a more detailed discussion (Parshyn; Mereniuk, 2022). The paragraphs on the history of India, China, and Japan, the great Eastern countries that today shape the face of the Asian continent, are presented in an overview. Meso- and South American territories have long been on the margins of history textbooks.

There are not many special studies of Ukrainian textbooks in modern historiography. It is worth highlighting the paper of Mereniuk and Parshyn (2024), which highlights the quality of textbooks on the Middle Ages. The authors also identified certain aspects of teaching the Middle Ages in Ukrainian schools.

Zamkowska (2024) proved that in the era of modern challenges, in particular the Russian-Ukrainian war, education plays an important role as an important tool of hybrid confrontation. Thus, in view of the current challenges caused by the war, the transformation of the educational system plays an important role. Modern Ukrainian education is witnessing the emergence of new approaches and methods that are actively used by teachers. Parshyn's (2024) study found that gamification is an important approach to teaching the Middle Ages, which helps to create greater motivation for children to learn history. In addition, the works of Prylypko (2023) and Storozhyk (2024) also identify that innovative tools, methods and approaches play an important role in the training of specialists. At the same time, the theoretical basis for the study is the work of authors who have specifically studied the history of the peoples of Pre-Columbian America. In particular, Armstrong-Fumero (2011) described a poststructuralist understanding of cultural practices and everyday life of Mayan multiculturalism in Yucatán. The author describes how language and material objects shape and reflect cultural identities and social dynamics in the chosen region. Fedick and Santiago (2021) analysed how climate change has affected the agriculture and food security of the Mayan civilisation. At the same time, the study by Marx, Haunschild and Bornmann (2017) also raised the issue of climate impact on the history of pre-Columbian peoples. In particular, the author identified how climate change could have affected the demise of the Mayan civilisation. Pérez-Miguel (2021) identified the impact and consequences of the Spanish conquest on the Inca civilisation and their worldview.

The paper of Lalone and Malpass focused on everyday life in the Inca Empire, examining selected social, economic, and cultural aspects. Meggers (2005) investigated the origins of the Olmec civilisation, one of the oldest known civilisations in Mesoamerica. The author analysed archaeological data and theories about the origin and development of the Olmec culture. Neff (2011) also explored the evolution of the Mesoamerican 'mother culture', in particular the Olmecs, and their influence on subsequent civilisations in the region. In a previous study by the same author, Neff (2006) identified the role of the Olmecs in the emergence and development of Mesoamerican civilisation. The author focused on the cultural achievements of the Olmecs and their influence on other civilisations in the region. Osuna (2015) described the social practices of the Maya, Aztecs, and Incas. Solórzano (2021) described currency transactions among the peoples of Pre-Columbian America, and the author determined that these peoples possessed a number of cultural achievements unknown to medieval Europeans.

Geographically, the region of South America and Mesoamerica is remote from Ukraine. At first glance, the lack of information about it can be explained by this factor. For Ukrainian history textbooks and curricula (and, accordingly, students), this continent 'comes to life' mainly in the period of modern

history, during the formation of modern South American countries in the nineteenth century, with certain additions about the migration of Ukrainians to Brazil, Argentina, and other countries (Tavarez, 2005; Schwaller, 2021). For a modern Ukrainian school, this amount of information is frankly insufficient, as the implementation of Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration projects will be incomplete without a more thorough knowledge of the history and societies of the Atlantic basin, including the pre-Columbian period.

For this reason, it is important to assess the current state of this research problem. Researchers have not dealt with the coverage of South American history in Ukrainian textbooks on medieval history and the early modern period. Therefore, this article aims to describe the state of coverage of the history of medieval and early modern South American indigenous peoples in Ukrainian school history textbooks. This study is based on a critical analysis of modern world history textbooks for grades 7 and 8. This will allow not only to realise the purpose of the article, but also to open up new promising directions for the study of this problem.

2. METHODOLOGY

The primary task was to study the state of coverage of events in the history of Pre-Columbian America in Ukrainian textbooks for grades 7 and 8. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to analyse the effectiveness and completeness of the representation of the history of Pre-Columbian America in modern Ukrainian world history textbooks for grades 7 and 8.

2.1. DATA COLLECTION

For the analysis, we selected world history textbooks used in Ukrainian schools for students in grades 7-8. The selected textbooks should meet the following inclusion criteria:

1. Textbooks used in the educational process at the time of the study (or partially used through the implementation of pilot programmes).
2. Textbooks recommended by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.
3. Inclusion of textbooks by different authors and publishers.

The selection of history textbooks is focused on the relevance and up-to-dateness of the data, with a special emphasis on 2021 and 2024 editions. The textbooks were selected based on the indicator of teacher choice – the minimum number of 15 thousand copies per country. The selected textbooks are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Textbooks selected for study

Nº	Textbook authors	Place of publication	Year of publication
1	Hisem, O.; Hisem, O.; Martyniuk, O.	Kharkiv	2021
2	Hisem, O. and Martyniuk, O.	Kharkiv	2021
3	Ladychenko, T.; Lukach, I.; Podaliak	Kyiv	2021
4	Shchupak, I.; Burlaka, O.; Vlasova, N.; Piskarova, I.; Sekyrynskyi, D.	Kyiv	2021
5	Shchupak, I.; Sekyrynskyi, D.; Vlasova, N.; Kronhauz, V.	Kyiv	2024
6	Sorochynska, N.	Ternopil	2021
7	Vasylkiv, I.; Ostrovskyi, V.; Basiuk, O.; Parshyn, I.; Kostikova, M.	Ternopil	2021
8	Vasylkiv, I.; Parshyn, I.; Dymii, I.	Ternopil	2024

Fonte: Author’s development

2.2. DATA ANALYSIS

For analysis, 8 textbooks on world history were selected, which are focused on both general and in-depth study of history. The study used a comprehensive content analysis that included several stages.

The first stage included the selection of textual fragments, in particular, the selection of chapters, paragraphs, illustrations, maps and diagrams relating to the history of Pre-Columbian America and the civilisations that inhabited this continent.

The second stage involved coding text fragments. At this stage, the main themes and trends in the history of pre-Columbian civilisations were identified.

The analysis of textbooks was based on the following indicators:

1. *Quantitative analysis of the presence of themes*
2. *Qualitative analysis of the content of the textbook itself:* the depth of coverage of events in Pre-Columbian America
3. *Accuracy and scholarship:* the relevance of the textbook’s material to modern scientific concepts
4. *Accessibility and comprehensibility:* User-friendliness of the presented educational material for students of grades 7-8.
5. *Visualisation:* the presence of maps, illustrations, diagrams and drawings in the text of the textbook
6. *Interactivity:* availability of interactive means of presenting the material

7. *Comprehensiveness*: completeness of coverage of the topic, including various important factors: political, social and cultural.

Based on these criteria, a critical analysis of the selected textbooks is carried out, describing the extent to which the history of individual peoples of Medieval America is covered.

3. RESULTS

The indigenous civilisations of pre-Columbian America represent an important stage in the development of humanity. Understanding the diversity of human communities, their achievements and their impact on the modern world is possible through the study of these cultures. The Maya, in particular, are one of the most important Mesoamerican cultures. They lived in what is now Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador. In science, architecture, art and social organisation, the Maya reached a high level of development. They created a complex calendrical system, including the longcount system, allowing them to calculate dates many thousands of years ahead (Halvadwala, 2020). This culture had a hieroglyphic writing system, which was used to record historical events, religious texts and scientific knowledge. They built Tikal, Palenque and Chichen Itza, among other majestic pyramids, temples and palaces. The Aztecs, which created a powerful empire in central Mexico, are known for their military skills, economic accomplishments and architectural wonders like Tenochtitlan, the capital of their empire. They created a large and powerful empire by uniting many city-states under their rule. Simultaneously, they were able to build complex cities with aqueducts, canals and temples (Schwaller, 2021). With a well developed water supply system, Tenochtitlan was a model of engineering excellence. The Aztecs used floating gardens called chinampas to grow crops, according to modernn historiography (Tavarez, 2005). The Incas, on the other hand, built the largest empire in pre-Columbian South America. It stretched across what is now Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile, Argentina and Colombia. They are best remembered for their organisational skills, infrastructure and administrative innovations. In particular, they were able to effectively manage a large empire by building one of the most advanced road systems in the thos world (Tavarez, 2005; Wilkinson, 2023). Examples of Inca architecture include the famous Machu Picchu and Sacsahuaman. Given their social structure, it is worth noting that they had a centralised empire headed by an emperor (Sapa Inca). Other important civilisations of pre-Columbian America are the Olmec, Toltec and Moche. The Olmec, in particular, is one of the oldest known civilisations in the Mesoamerican region (Neff, 2006). At the same time, the Toltecs influenced the development of other Mesoamerican civilisations, especially the Aztecs. They contributed greatly to the religious and cultural traditions of the region, and

built impressive architectural structures. The Moche civilisation, which existed in the north of present-day Peru, also made significant achievements in irrigation and art.

In this way, the study of the civilisations of the pre-Columbian Americas opens up to the modern student the diverse world of ancient cultures, their achievements and their heritage. This contributes to a better understanding of the unique ways of human development and the formation of a global outlook. We believe that for Ukrainian students in grades 7-8, this topic can be not only a source of new knowledge, but also a means of development of critical thinking.

The study of the history of Pre-Columbian America is included in the current curriculum for grade 7. However, the topic of Pre-Columbian civilisations has long been included in textbooks for the 8th grade of general secondary education. Відтак, аналіз всершу буде звернений на підручники 8 класу.

In the school textbook by Vasylkiv et al. (2021), the topic of Pre-Columbian America is included after the section on the Great Discoveries and their significance for human history. At the beginning, new terms used in the article are defined: 'meeting of civilisations', colonial empire, Conquista. The first part of the paragraph describes the peculiarities of the social, economic, cultural and political development of the Maya, Aztec and Inca peoples before the arrival of Europeans. The second part describes the beginnings of the European conquest of Central and South America. The third part describes the policy of extermination and exploitation of the local population by Europeans, the establishment of the first colonial empires, the beginning of the importation of slaves from Africa, etc.

The relevant paragraph covers 7 pages of text, supplemented by tasks of varying levels of difficulty. The paragraph has only two illustrations, which show the Mayan number system and a plan of the majestic city of Tenochtitlan, the capital of the Aztecs. At the same time, an excerpt from the source translated into Ukrainian is provided for students to work on (a description of the Aztec market from Bernal Diaz's book, which was written in 1576). The text of the paragraph is diluted with diagrams showing the participation of conquistadors in the conquest of overseas territories and the directions of colonisation of the first European empires. Importantly, the textbook's flyleaf contains a large map of the Great Discoveries, showing the territories occupied by the Maya, Incas, and Aztecs (Vasylkiv et al., 2021). The material is complemented by an interactive game located on the LearningApps.org platform, which allows you to identify the main concepts presented in the textbook with the civilisations of the Pre-Columbian world. Interactivity is also provided by 2 QR codes that redirect students to the publisher's website with additional information, in particular, about the origin of chocolate and Mayan scientific discoveries, respectively (see Table 2).

Table 2 – Evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative presence of the Pre-Columbian civilizations in the textbook by Vasylkiv et al. (2021)

Indicator	Evaluation	Explanation
Quantitative analysis of the presence of topics	+	The topic of civilisations of pre-Columbian America is part of the section on the Great Discoveries and their significance for human history. It has 7 pages in total
Qualitative analysis of the textbook's content	+/-	The textbook lacks at least a brief description of other civilisations of Pre-Columbian America, except for the most famous ones
Accuracy and scholarship	+/-	There is a problem with taking into account the geographical criteria for the spread of civilisations
Accessibility and comprehensibility	+	The textbook is fully accessible and understandable for students
Visualisation	+/-	The textbook lacks illustrations, which does not allow to demonstrate the artefacts of the surviving civilisations
Interactivity	+	Fully interactive, there are various QR codes with additional educational information, multi-level online games
Comprehensiveness	+/-	The textbook offers a comprehensive analysis and, given the limited number of pages, forms a generalised knowledge of the most famous civilisations of the Pre-Columbian world

Fonte: Author's development

Another textbook by Sorochynska (2021) also includes an overview of the history of the civilisation of Pre-Columbian America in the section on the Great Discoveries. In total, the relevant paragraph has 6 pages, which describe the Mayan, Aztec and Inca civilisations, and the conquest of overseas lands by Europeans (the Conquest). The text of the paragraph allows students to form an idea of the general development of these peoples, determine the course of the Conquest and the consequences of the European conquest for Meso- and South America. The text is accompanied by high-quality illustrations and tasks of different levels of difficulty. The work also uses an extract from a historical source (History of the Indies by Bartolomeu de las Casas) with a corresponding link to a QR code for further work (Table 3).

Table 3 – Evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative presence of the Pre-Columbian civilizations in the textbook by Sorochnyńska (2021)

Indicator	Evaluation	Explanation
Quantitative analysis of the presence of topics	+	The topic of the civilisations of pre-Columbian America is the chapter on the Great Discoveries and their significance for human history. Its volume is 6 pages
Qualitative analysis of the textbook's content	+/-	The textbook does not mention other civilisations of Pre-Columbian America
Accuracy and scholarship	+/-	The textbook does not take into account certain geographical aspects of civilisations
Accessibility and comprehensibility	+	The textbook is accessible and understandable
Visualisation	+/-	The textbook has no diagrams, and there is also no general map that would demonstrate the area of pre-Columbian civilisations
Interactivity	-	Only one QR code providing access to the text of the source and its tasks
Comprehensiveness	+	The textbook offers a comprehensive analysis and generally introduces students to the life and fate of the most famous civilisations of Pre-Columbian America

Fonte: Author's development

Ladychenko et al. (2021) include information about the Pre-Columbian civilisations in the section "Great geographical discoveries and the formation of capitalist relations". Information about the Maya, Aztecs, and Incas is placed in one of the subsections of the paragraph (2 pages). A separate subparagraph of the next paragraph refers to the European conquest and enslavement of ancient American peoples (another 3 pages). The description of the history of the Pre-Columbian civilisations is limited to a brief description of culture and life, without a serious analysis of social relations, religion, and economic activities, which can only partially acquaint students with the heritage of these peoples. Something more is mentioned in the next paragraph about the Conquista: some details of political development, consideration of artistic products, cruelty and treachery of Europeans, etc. The material in the textbook has a good visual component, including large maps showing the boundaries of the pre-Columbian civilisations. At the same time, several available QR codes contain information about European travellers, while they do not refer

to the ancient peoples of the Americas. "Traditionally", the textbook does not contain information about other, more ancient peoples who inhabited Mesoamerica and South America (See Table 4).

Table 4 – Evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative presence of the Pre-Columbian civilizations in the textbook by Ladychenko et al. (2021)

Indicator	Evaluation	Explanation
Quantitative analysis of the presence of topics	+	The material is distributed among several paragraphs. The total volume is 5 pages
Qualitative analysis of the textbook's content	-	Apart from the fact that the textbook does not mention other civilisations of Pre-Columbian America, the information about the civilisations themselves and their development is quite concise
Accuracy and scholarship	-	Given the generality of the material, the text could have been more detailed
Accessibility and comprehensibility	+	The textbook is accessible and understandable
Visualisation	+	There are various pictures and diagrams. The topic is well visualised
Interactivity	-	The QR codes available in the textbook do not mention the Mayan, Incan, and Aztec civilisations
Comprehensiveness	+/-	The textbook offers a rather limited analysis of the history of the Pre-Columbian world, which needs to be improved, taking into account the real cultural, scientific and social achievements of the most famous civilisations of Pre-Columbian America

Fonte: Author's development

In the textbook by Shchupak et al. (2021), the topic of the Pre-Columbian Civilisations of the Americas is included in the general section "Conquest and Development of the New World by Europeans". The authors determined that the territory of Mayan settlement is modern Mexico and Guatemala. However, the authors did not pay attention to the fact that this civilisation actually inhabited vast areas, including parts of El Salvador and Honduras in the territories of modern Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, and some places in El Salvador. The main emphasis is placed on the culture and art of this civilisation: the achievements

of the culture in astronomy, writing and the creation of its own innovative calendar at that time are highlighted.

The main beliefs of this people are also described. According to the authors, the Incas created a 'powerful and advanced civilisation', however, the authors only emphasised the development of cities and a developed written language (Shchupak et al., 2021). An important note is the mention of a developed army and a high level of military art. The textbook contains all the information about the Aztecs in four lines: their economic and cultural life is not analysed. The advantage of the textbook is the presence of several QR codes with detailed additional information and video reconstructions of Mayan and Aztec cities. The textbook also contains an online knowledge test: by pointing a smartphone at a QR code, a page with 6 tasks related to the capitals of civilisations, their way of life, and certain events and personalities of the Conquista opens (See Table 5).

Table 5 – Evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative presence of the Pre-Columbian civilizations in the textbook by Shchupak et al. (2021).

Indicator	Evaluation	Explanation
Quantitative analysis of the presence of topics	+/-	The topic is included in the general section "Conquest and development of the New World by Europeans". The Maya, Incas and Aztecs are analysed. There are 3 pages in total (the last one is devoted to the coverage of the events of the Conquest).
Qualitative analysis of the textbook's content	-	The textbook lacks at least a brief mention of other peoples of the Pre-Columbian world. Most of the chapter is devoted to Conquista, but there is not much information about the social, cultural, economic and political system. If there is such information, it is brief and general. All information about the Aztecs is contained in four lines: their economic and cultural life is not analysed.
Accuracy and scholarship	-	Not all the territories of the settlements of the peoples of Pre-Columbian America are indicated accurately. The information is general and not saturated with historical facts.
Accessibility and comprehensibility	+	The textbook is available for students in grades 7-8. The material is concise and clear.

Visualisation	+/-	The textbook contains images of Machu Picchu and the illustration 'Night of Sorrow' by contemporary artist Angus McBride. There are no diagrams or maps related to the topic. Only the textbook has a map of the Great Departures on the front cover.
Interactivity	+	Availability of QR codes with additional material. Video reconstructions of Mayan and Aztec settlements. Online exercises.
Comprehensiveness	+/-	Although the material is presented in a way that is accessible and understandable for children, some aspects need to be clarified and covered more widely. The political, social and cultural system is covered very concisely.

Fonte: Author's development

Thus, the textbook by Shchupak et al. (2021) provides a brief summary of events in the history of civilisations in Pre-Columbian America. However, the social, military, and cultural system is covered in general terms.

In the textbook by Hisem and Martyniuk (2021), the topic of the civilisations of Pre-Columbian America is included in paragraph 5 of Chapter 1 'Great Geographical Discoveries and the Formation of Capitalist Relations' and paragraph 1 of Chapter 2 'Colonisation of the New World. Consequences and significance of the great geographical discoveries. Although the textbook devotes only a few pages to this topic, the authors have enriched them with facts about the conquest of civilisations. First, the authors describe in detail the main discoveries of Europeans: Bartolomea Dias, Vasco de Gama, Christopher Columbus and Fernand Magellan. After that, the authors smoothly moved on to analyse the people who lived in the open territories. The authors began this paragraph with the sentence "In 1995, when the whole world celebrated the 500th anniversary of the first expedition of Columbus, instead of the usual words "discovery of America", this event was first called "the meeting of two civilisations"" (Hisem and Martyniuk, 2021). This text is an apt introduction to the analysis of the peoples who lived in pre-Columbian America. The authors also cite evidence from sources about the meeting of travellers with Indians who brought cotton yarn, parrots, and darts. The authors aptly emphasised the words of Columbus: "I was very attentive to them and persistently inquired whether they had gold" (Hisem and Martyniuk, 2021). Nevertheless, the authors approached the analysis of Mayan civilisations very concisely: in 2 sentences they describe

their cultural and economic life. The authors emphasised that the Aztec civilisations lived in the Mexican highlands, and the Incas in the Andes and Bolivian highlands. It can be difficult for students to navigate such geographical concepts in class, so it would be helpful to provide a map showing the areas where these peoples lived (See Table 6).

Table 6 – Evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative presence of the Pre-Columbian civilizations in the textbook by Hisem and Martyniuk (2021)

Indicator	Evaluation	Explanation
Quantitative analysis of the presence of topics	-	The topic of the civilisations of Pre-Columbian America is covered in paragraph 5 of Chapter 1, "The Great Geographical Discoveries and the Formation of Capitalist Relations", and paragraph 1 of Chapter 2, "Colonisation of the New World". The Indians, Mayans, Aztecs and Incas are analysed. Number of pages: only 3
Qualitative analysis of the textbook's content	+/-	The textbook lacks at least laconic references to other peoples of the Pre-Columbian world.
Accuracy and scholarship	+	The textbook corresponds to modern scientific concepts.
Accessibility and comprehensibility	+/-	The material is clear, concise and understandable. The textbook identifies that the Aztec civilisation lived in the Mexican highlands, and the Inca in the Andes and Bolivian highlands. Students may find it difficult to navigate these geographical concepts in class.
Visualisation	+/-	The textbook contains images of Machu Picchu, the Pyramid of the Sun (the largest building in the city of Teotihuacan). There is a diagram of the consequences of the Great Geographical Discoveries. There are no maps of settlements of the civilisations of Pre-Columbian America

Interactivity	+/-	Availability of QR codes with additional material: mostly quotes from sources about travelling to new lands. However, the materials contained in the QR codes are in black and white. There are no images. There are no interactive tasks in the QR codes to repeat the material.
Comprehensiveness	+/-	Although the material is presented comprehensively, some aspects need to be clarified and covered more widely. The political, social, and cultural structure of the Pre-Columbian civilisations is presented very concisely.

Fonte: Author's development

The Hisem et al. (2021) textbook is designed for in-depth study of world history at school. In fact, the scope and content of the material on Pre-Columbian civilisations in it does not go beyond the already analysed textbook by Hisem and Martyniuk (2021). Despite the detailed textual content and high-quality illustrations, the textbook does not contain an interactive component. The text includes source material for practical tasks in class and individual work at home (See Table 7).

Table 7 – Evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative presence of the Pre-Columbian civilizations in the textbook by Hisem et al. (2021)

Indicator	Evaluation	Explanation
Quantitative analysis of the presence of topics	+	The topic of the civilisations of Pre-Columbian America is covered in paragraph 5 of Chapter 1, “The Great Geographical Discoveries and the Formation of Capitalist Relations”; and paragraph 1 of Chapter 2, “Colonisation of the New World”. The Indians, Mayans, Aztecs and Incas are analysed. Number of pages:5
Qualitative analysis of the textbook’s content	+/-	The textbook lacks at least laconic references to other peoples of the Pre-Columbian world.
Accuracy and scholarship	+	The textbook corresponds to modern scientific concepts.
Accessibility and comprehensibility	+/-	The material is clear, concise and understandable. The textbook identifies that the Aztec civilisation lived in the Mexican highlands, and the Inca in the Andes and Bolivian highlands. Students may find it difficult to navigate these geographical concepts in class.
Visualisation	+/-	There are different images and diagrams. There are no maps of settlements of the civilisations of Pre-Columbian America
Interactivity	-	There are no intrinsic tools: no QR codes, no online exercises
Comprehensiveness	+/-	Although the material is presented comprehensively, some aspects need to be clarified and covered more widely. The political, social, and cultural structure of the Pre-Columbian civilisations is presented very concisely.

Fonte: Author’s development

With the introduction of the New Ukrainian School concept, significant adjustments were made to the curriculum, which resulted in changes to the history of overseas peoples and civilisations. As a result of the transformations, key competencies were introduced, among which the cultural competency can be distinguished. It is the ability to understand works of art, to form one’s own artistic tastes, to express

one's own position independently, and to be guided by one's own experience and feelings through art (Parshyn, 2024). This competence implies a deep understanding of one's own national identity as a basis for an open attitude and respect for the diversity of cultural expression of others. Therefore, learning about other cultures, their history and traditions becomes an important element of learning. Together with the use of the proposed pedagogy of partnership, this opens up opportunities for the application of new methods of joint work of students, parents and teachers on the problems of revealing the cultural diversity of the world.

The principles of the New Ukrainian School were taken into account when writing textbooks for the integrated course "Exploring History and Society". In particular, textbooks for grade 6, based on the relevant updated curricula, already contain brief references to the existence of the Mayan and Inca civilisations and the achievements of their cultures (in particular, information about writing and chronology). It is also important to note one of the Ukrainian accents of the 'Mesoamerican theme': in the 1950s, an important discovery was the decoding of the Mayan script, one of the most powerful civilisations of Pre-Columbian America, made by Yuriy Knorozov, a native of the modern Kharkiv region.

The new ideas were presented in 7th grade textbooks for the integrated course 'Ukraine and the World'. These textbooks will be delivered to schools in September 2024, but the materials published for the competition allow us to summarise the material. In particular, the issue of Pre-Columbian America is included in a separate chapter 'The Middle Ages Outside Europe' (Vasylykiv et al., 2024). The short essay is presented in one paragraph (7 pages), which deals exclusively with the civilisations of Pre-Columbian America, without mentioning the European conquest. It consisted of an overview of the history of the city-states of the Mayan civilisation, the Aztec state and the Inca state. The main focus was on the social system, beliefs, and peculiarities of the economic life of these peoples. The emphasis on social history was apparently intended to demonstrate the peculiarities of the life of the Mesoamerican and South American population of the Middle Ages, so that students could see common and distinctive features with the development of European society of that time, using the method of comparative studies.

Undoubtedly, the material is an overview, with many aspects shortened and others omitted. The existence of the Olmec people, who constituted the first known civilisation of the Pre-Columbian world, is not mentioned. Attention could also be paid to other developed cultures of the Mesoamerican region: Hohokam, Zapotec, Chibcha, etc. The text is supplemented by illustrations. They demonstrate characteristic architectural forms, the planning structure of cities, and individual miniatures. Also, the area of settlement of peoples is outlined on maps, which gives students the opportunity to determine which geographical regions are being discussed. The material contains an interactive game hosted on the

LearningApps.org platform and dedicated to the civilisations of the Pre-Columbian world (Maya, Aztecs and Incas). Another QR code contains information about the stages of human settlement in North and South America (See Table 8).

Table 8 – Evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative presence of the Pre-Columbian civilizations in the textbook by Vasylkiv et al. (2024)

Indicator	Evaluation	Explanation
Quantitative analysis of the presence of topics	+	The topic of the history of civilisations of Pre-Columbian America is part of the section 'The Middle Ages outside Europe'. Volume - 7 pages
Qualitative analysis of the textbook's content	+	Although the textbook does not contain additional references to other civilisations of Pre-Columbian America, the text and its structure differ from other examples by providing a more detailed description of historical events
Accuracy and scholarship	+	The textbook corresponds to modern scientific concepts.
Accessibility and comprehensibility	+	The textbook is available for students in grades 7-8. The material is concise and clear.
Visualisation	+/-	High-level text visualisation. Perhaps some diagrams would simplify and supplement the textbook material
Interactivity	+	Fully interactive, there are various QR codes with additional educational information, multi-level online games.
Comprehensiveness	+/-	The new approach differs qualitatively from the usual scheme of presenting material in 8th grade history textbooks. Students' attention is really focused on the past of the ancient peoples of Meso- and South America, their social system, economic life, beliefs and worldview.

Fonte: Author's development

As shown in Table 8, the new approach is qualitatively different from the usual scheme of presentation of the material in history textbooks for the 8th grade. The past of the ancient peoples of Mesoamerica and South America, their social system, their economic life, their beliefs and their world-view are really the focus of the students' attention.

Another textbook of the integrated course "Ukraine and the World" for grade 7 uses a different curriculum, according to which the past of the civilisations of pre-Columbian America is not covered. This approach somewhat simplifies the understanding of world history, although this textbook describes the history of the 'European world' in the Ancient and Middle Ages, emphasises the development of the lands that are now part of Ukraine, and demonstrates the main stages of the history of Rus.

Thus, as can be seen from the previous analysis, all textbooks are written in a language accessible to children. They differ in the total number of pages – from 3 to 7. In some cases, where the text is short, the topic of the history of Pre-Columbian civilisations is presented very superficially. On the other hand, when the number of pages increases, the authors describe in more detail the social, religious, economic and cultural system of the peoples of Pre-Columbian America. Table 9 provides a summary matrix of the selected indicators.

Table 9 – Summary matrix

Indicator	Vasylykiv et al. (2021)	Sorochynska (2021)	Ladychenko et al. (2021)	Shchupak et al. (2021)	Hisem; Martyniuk (2021)	Gisem et al (2021)	Vasylykiv et al., 2024	Shchupak et al. (2024)
Quantitative analysis	+	+	+	+/-	-	+	+	0
Qualitative analysis	+/-	+/-	-	-	+/-	+/-	+	n/d
Accuracy and scholarship	+/-	+/-	-	-	+	+	+	n/d
Accessibility	+	+	+	+	+/-	+/-	+	n/d
Visualisation	+/-	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	n/d
Interactivity	+	-	-	+	+/-	-	+	n/d
Comprehensiveness	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0

Fonte: Author's development

In general, all textbooks contain various illustrative material: images, maps and diagrams. Almost all authors mentioned the significant scientific and cultural achievements of the Aztecs, Mayans, and Incas. In particular, almost all textbooks mention the Mayan calendar as one of the most famous inventions of South American civilisations. However, none of the textbooks contains a picture of this calendar. In addition, the authors have different approaches to identifying the geographical area of settlements of the ancient peoples of Meso- and South America. Mostly, they mentioned only some of the places and territories of their settlements, ignoring others.

CONCLUSIONS

Consequently, the study of the history of the peoples of Pre-Columbian America is presented in some Ukrainian textbooks. The authors mainly focus on three civilisations: the Maya, Aztecs, and Incas. All textbooks describe cultural and artistic achievements, religion, and social system. Some textbooks emphasise the military art of these civilisations. It is important to include sources that show the details of the conquest of these lands by the conquistadors. Meanwhile, all textbooks do not mention Olmec, which is one of the oldest known civilisations in the Mesoamerican region. Mentions of other civilisations are also fragmentary. Given the specifics of the presentation of the material for students in grades 7 and 8, the material is generally not burdened with scientific facts, is easy to read and understandable for students.

The further development of globalisation processes requires that students become familiar with the historical processes that have taken place around the world. It is obvious that the level of perception of 7-8 grade students requires a different presentation of information than for university students. Therefore, emphasis on the main points, a well-thought-out illustrative component, interactivity, and detailed explanations are crucial combinations for an optimal history textbook. Current school textbooks in Ukraine only partially address the civilisations of pre-Columbian America. This issue will need to be further addressed by increasing attention to the history of Meso- and South America in the medieval period, since, despite Ukraine's clear affiliation with European civilisation, studying the history of other nations and states significantly broadens students' knowledge, helps to develop the necessary competencies, and engages and develops creativity. To increase the quality of textbook content on the peoples of the Pre-Columbian period, it is suggested that the textbooks continue to adhere to an easy and understandable style of writing, highlighting the history of American civilisations in one or more paragraphs.

Among the illustrative material, it is important to show geographical maps and individual artefacts that survived the European destruction of overseas cities. This will allow students to learn about the area of settlement of peoples, combine their knowledge with the geography of the world, and understand the differences between American and European medieval art. It is important to point out that the Pre-Columbian civilisations are not just the Maya, Incas and Aztecs. The history of the population of North and South America is quite ancient, so demonstrating the past of other peoples (even in a rather schematic form) would be useful for students.

The development of modern digital technologies requires further development of interactivity and combining the textbook text with additional materials, games, sources, etc. Implementation of such a strategy would involve providing paragraphs with QR-codes for additional information, which would open up opportunities for a deeper demonstration of the achievements and accomplishments of ancient civilisations and significantly expand the possibilities of learning about their history.

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