

SCIENCE VERSUS RELIGION: What elementary school history textbooks teach about science and religion in Finland

Miikka Niiranen

Full Professor at Apologialinja - Kansähetysopisto - Finland

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ABSTRACT

Two years ago, Areopagi blamed high school history textbooks for the issues in our magazine. Today, the scrutiny will continue, when you can put elementary school history textbooks under the magnifying glass. The result of the random test was surprising, as the works revealed many old myths about science and religion.

Keywords: history, the relationship between natural science and religion, history of science

INTRODUCTION

The so-called conflict myth (or war myth) of the history of science and religion can be stated roughly like this:

"Science took its first steps in ancient Greece when philosophers studying nature decided to reject supernatural explanations and preferred to rely on the conclusions and evidence of their reason. This well-started development was halted when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Now, in addition to other religions, science and other cultures considered pagan were banned, even destroyed. The dark ages of a thousand years began when the corrupt church with its pompous popes and bishops ruled the lives of Europeans with an iron hand. The



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Church suppressed the development of science, amassed wealth during the Crusades, and burned witches, heretics, and scientists at the stake.

During the Renaissance, Europe's science and art awoke from its Rose sleep, when the ancient Civilization revived by the Islamic world reached the continent again. The expeditions were a prelude to the scientific revolution and the loosening of church control when the edge of the flat world it taught was not even found. Brave scientists inspired by antiquity, such as Galileo Galilei, challenged the authority of the church and realized that the earth revolved around the sun, contrary to what the Bible and the pope demanded. Galilei was defeated, but other new-age scientists, such as Giordano Bruno, had a hard time.

The revolutions of the Enlightenment ended the battle in which science defeated faith and reason overshadowed regression. Since then, faith has been forced step by step to retreat from its former social positions of power and to admit its defeat, little by little. Darwin and evolution sealed the supremacy of modern science and dealt the death blow to evidence-based natural theology. Today, religious beliefs can only be as 'true' as poetry, although even the most stubborn will not admit what has come to be true."

The conflict myth not only has a long history, but it is also doing well today and parts of it appear regularly, for example, in the media. As with many compelling stories, the war myth is bound to the truth. But the narrative crucially misrepresents the story.



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Many of these myths can also be found in Finnish elementary school history textbooks. In this article, I will address the issue of the books in detail and try to correct the errors as soon as possible.

Not only the writings that present Areopag's research, especially in the field of history of science but also two historical works of myth destruction available in Finnish were used as sources for myth correction: Galileo tyrmäsa edited by Ronald Numbers and translated from Areopag (Kirjapaja, 2015) and the work Pimea aika written by Jaakko Tahkokallio (Gaudeamus, 2019). These are easy books to read and are available to most people in their local libraries.

About the books under analysis

The article does not systematically review all history textbooks on the market but focuses especially on the books of the large Finnish publishers Sanoma Pro and Otava. The focus is especially on the elementary school history textbooks, where, for the first time in teaching, the epochs with the most myths in science and religion, i.e. the Middle Ages and the beginning of the new era, are discussed.

There are a few reasons for this emphasis. The first is that I came to look through my first child's history book and realized that relevant periods and topics that appear frequently in our journal are covered this year. So for her and my younger children's studies, now is a good time to close the books.

Secondly, the first and therefore very significant images of historical events, timelines, and people are imprinted in the mind precisely as a result of fifth and



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sixth-grade teaching. This is especially the case if the child did not enjoy reading historical books before the subject began. If the research in the area we popularize is to make a corrective impact on Finnish society, it is important to check the textbooks at that stage.

Although for these reasons the focus is on elementary school textbooks, it is clear that sometimes reviews are also done on high school textbooks. Roughly divide the essay into periods with subheadings, allowing you to jump to the topics in the period that interest you. At this point, I already stated that, due to size limitations, I have to ignore a lot of excellent material in the textbooks in question. My field of research - and thus this article - only focuses on one area about which there is an extraordinary amount of misinformation in circulation. Therefore, a narrow impression may arise that the red pen is the sharpest and most unique writing instrument in my case.

Furthermore, it is appropriate to point out that, although I study the history of science (and philosophy of science) by profession, I am of course not an expert on all the periods covered in the textbooks. However, I try to rely on researched information provided by other experts at all points.

From Ancient Greece to the Fall of Western Rome: The "Inventions of Physics" and the Decline of Science

The most abundant ingredients of the conflict myth are located in later antiquity, but in the historical sense, an important foundation for the topic will be created when dealing with the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome. The philosophers of antiquity



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are also referred to when dealing with later times, which is why a correct understanding of the relationship between science and religion in this time is important.

Sanoma Pron Ritari 5 (1st edition, 2015) treats the period from the point of view of an elementary school student in an interesting way, and there are not many points to make. But even brief mentions are important, especially in the case we are dealing with. The first thing in the body of the book's section "Ancient Philosophers and Scientists" states that

"Although the Greeks believed in gods and prophecy, they also sought rational and natural explanations for things." (p. 102)

The style of textbooks is usually compact, and this is especially the case with the Knight series. This is an ambitious and at the same time challenging choice. First, as a reviewer, I must be careful not to read too much meaning into concise expressions. On the other hand, the weight of a responsive text is increased precisely by the sparseness of expression, making the evaluation of word choices even more important.

Therefore, it must be stated that the quote in question creates a typical mythological conflict between belief in "gods and prophecies" and rational, natural explanations. The words "although" and "also" convey the idea that belief in gods and prophecies is not reasonable when seeking explanations for "things" (note, not just, for example, "natural phenomena").



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So what specifically is wrong with this? The fact is that in ancient times there was no separation between science and religion as there is today. The whole separation is the result of a long history, which only ended at the end of the 19th century. Ancient natural philosophy was religious in nature and served the ends of the good life, which many people today would clearly describe as religious (or theological).

The confrontation between religiosity and reason is repeated later in the Knight series, and with more force. Even from this section, however, a false impression is created in relation to science that it would always be something exceptional and strange to believe in "gods and prophecies" while at the same time seeking reasonable and natural explanations, which are seen as opposed to the supernatural. Of course, even the irrational religiosity of the stressed must always have existed, but its presence does not justify a categorical generalization about all religiosity.

Nor does the impression created by Knight 5's text do justice to the thoughts of the ancient philosophers themselves. Although there were criticisms of Greek polytheistic religion, in the end, Greek philosophy cannot be properly separated from what we call religion today. Although a brief presentation of the connection between Aristotle's and Plato's conceptions of God and their philosophies would dispel the false opposition.

The introduction would also explain the positive attitude of their medieval ecclesiastical fans towards these non-Christian philosophers. Also worth mentioning is the relatively low value of the study of nature in antiquity compared to what was



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called theology in antiquity. More information can be found, for example, in Peter Harrison's production.

In addition, the section presents a misleading picture of the birth of the precursor of modern physics. Democritus is said to have proposed a precursor of atomic theory (p. 102) and it is mentioned that Archimedes made many "physical inventions". These are, of course, interesting and important considerations for the history of science, but they ignore, for example, the errors of Aristotle's physics, which later scholars simply had to refute. If the idea is to give an overview of ancient nature study, for example, the harmful aspects of Aristotle's influence should not be overlooked.

While philosophy, mathematics, and medicine are given a more accurate picture, one gets the impression that experimental natural science was already in its infancy in Greece. It wasn't. As we know from later historical research, Greek philosophy had many obstacles to the birth of such a science.

My professional opinion is that mere interest in nature and various technical inventions do not yet create "physics" in the sense we use the word. If the intellectual resource of mankind was only ancient Greek philosophy and we invested endless money in the study of nature based on it, physics, as it is today, would probably never be born.

On page 144 we summarize what we have learned so far about antiquity. In this context, it is already mentioned in the subtitle that "The foundation of science was



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created in antiquity". Despite all my criticisms, I think this is quite generalized. Although the issue is different for experimental natural science, it can be considered a detail that does not need to be raised when reviewing the so-called big picture. Science is more than just physics and chemistry.

What about the other textbooks? In Ottawa's Forum 5 textbook (2014), the first thing that catches the eye is the text "attempts were made to explain things with reason, although myths were still believed" in the three-point notebook on the side of page 104. On the other hand, in the bread text, it is stated in bold type that "At the height of Ancient Greece, alongside the fables based on beliefs came to reason, which served to try to discover the true causes of things."

Sure, all modern people consider the mythologies of the ancient gods to be myths, but the Forum will also simply associate all other "beliefs" with myths and place them in opposition to reason. However, no later than in high school philosophy, students encounter the concept of the constructive relationship between beliefs and knowledge, such as the classic definition "knowledge is a well-founded true belief."

Ideally, school teaching should be consistent so that what was learned earlier does not need to be rejected later. The simplification of the forum puts the wheels on the wheels of the ideal, much to the future chagrin of philosophy, history, and religion teachers. This also foreshadows the conflict myth promotion notions of the later eras of the Forum series.



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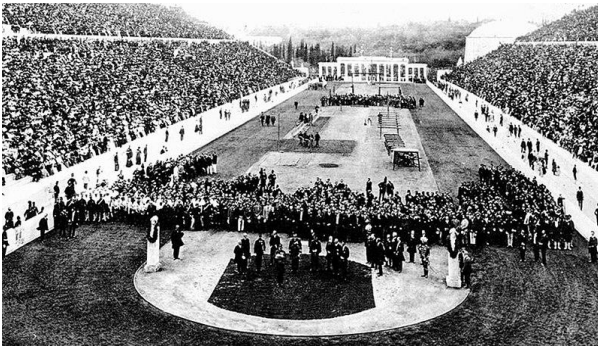
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Along with the conflict myth, there is often a parallel perception of the rise of Christianity in late antiquity, where Christianity, which eventually became the official religion of the Roman Empire, is presented as detrimental to the culture. In Forum 5, the issue is presented as follows:

"Eventually, Christianity became the only official religion. The ancient Roman gods were made pagan and their worship was forbidden. Philosophical schools and many celebrations also began to be considered dangerous to Christianity, for example, the Olympics held in honor of Zeus were banned." (p. 145)



The opening ceremony of the 1896 Olympics.

There are many errors here. First, the Olympics were not banned, they disappeared on their own. The myth of prohibition is old (and also appears in Knight 5, p. 99), but there is no evidence of prohibition. The prevalence of the myth is explained by the fact that it was celebrated by the founder of the modern Olympics, Pierre De Coubertin.

Second, the description of the "dangerousness" of philosophy and parties is incorrect in its generalization. Ancient philosophy and schools of philosophy were not viewed unilaterally as "dangerous" in the early church. The case of the most significant



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theologian of late antiquity and the great figure of all Western theology, namely, the father of the church Augustine, is a great counterexample.

He was a trained orator and knew the philosophy of his time like the back of his hand. Augustine's attitude was anything but antiphilosophical, although of course, as a true philosopher, he did not fail to criticize other philosophers when he deemed it appropriate. However, there is nothing here that differs from the general culture of antiquity, because every educated philosopher and speaker—even a Christian—was taught to argue with others.

Even voices more critical than Augustine (like Tertullian, whose texts are often overinterpreted in this context) lived in the same tradition as the philosophers. They used the methods of Greek philosophy against the ideas of the philosophers they criticized (sometimes from the position of a persecuted minority).



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A page from Wenzel's Bible from the 14th century.

Moreover, if the student later hears that one of the important tasks of early medieval Christian monasteries was to preserve ancient texts, the more astute will recognize a contradiction in the teaching: why did Christian monks preserve and meticulously copy the texts, if some of them they were the products of despised and dangerous philosophers?

Publiva Oy (ex-Lasten Keskus ja Kirjapaja Oy) Edukonhosen Mennyt I-III (2017) is in the same vein as Forum 5 and Ritari 5 on the basis of a quick summary. For a change, I will draw attention to the section dealing with the Renaissance, outside of the antiquity period itself, where, however, an image of antiquity is still created:



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"The writings of the ancient philosophers became known again, and the achievements of the ancient scientists were used in the production of new scientific knowledge." (p. 206)

Without mentioning the theological developments that preceded the Renaissance, the work of the monasteries, or, for example, the Carolingian Renaissance, the quotation from the Book of the Dead supports the myth that the Christian hegemony of the Middle Ages interrupted the scientific development started well into antiquity until the Renaissance rediscovered antiquity. Ancient writings were known even in the Middle Ages, but now they are just beginning to be better known.

A shorter, more correct, and more boring explanation for the decline of ancient culture in Western Rome is simply the fall of the empire and the migrations and upheavals that followed. The seeds of destruction were sown long before the emergence of Christianity as a permitted and eventually state-favored religion. The church and its monasteries generally kept what they could of the literature.

For those who want more information, the first myth destroyer in Galileo tyrmässa's book "The decline of ancient natural science was due to the spread of Christianity" deals with the issues of late antiquity and corrects many common misconceptions.

However, we have started to slip to the medieval side in our topics, so let's move on to that next.



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"Ancient culture was not appreciated in the Middle Ages either"



Illustration of Adelardo of Bath's Latin version of Euclid's *Alki* from the 14th century.

Like the provisional title, it is written in bold in the book *Ottawa Forum 6* (2nd edition, 2012) on the first page of the section dealing with the Middle Ages (p. 12). The following sentence repeats the mentioned Olympic myth. The argument about the



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lack of appreciation of ancient culture generalizes the mental landscape of the Middle Ages in a completely wrong direction, frankly baffling because the argument is so broad.

In fact, with the reduced resources left in the ancient regions of Western Rome, ancient culture was appreciated as much as possible. A good example of this is the zeal of monasteries to preserve ancient literature. This copying of "ancient writings" is indeed mentioned (p. 17), but without specifying what the writings were (not just the Bible, for example), in which case the erroneous image does not disappear.

Of course, among Christians, features of the ancient culture that were considered harmful were rejected or disappeared without forceful orders. This kind of cultural selection happens everywhere and always, and the Middle Ages in Europe were no notable exception. Fortunately, the next page on Byzantium says that the Christian Church (or Byzantium in general) valued the Greek philosophers.

The foundation of the conflict myth is reached on page 25, where, in describing the influential position of the church in the Middle Ages, it is stated that "the church emphasized the immutability of things, which prevented the development of science." This is simply wrong. In fact, the church supported astronomy, for example, more than any other body and probably more than all the others put together. Another myth hunter in the book Galileo in the dark refutes this notion.

Forum 6 continues on the same page right after that "in the Middle Ages it was believed that all existing knowledge was already known". This is either wrong, an



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oversimplification, or both. If the book had so far admitted that in the Middle Ages, one wished to preserve the culture of antiquity and that at that time there was no hope of surpassing the scientific achievements of that golden age, the statement would perhaps be an acceptable oversimplification. However, this is not the case, and the student only has to guess what information is believed to be known. In light of the later account of the Galileo affair, one can see that the Bible was considered the central source of all knowledge.

Interpreted broadly, I think the idea of the book is probably to describe part of the so-called deductive ideal of science. In it, certain knowledge obtained by deriving it from certain philosophical first principles is counted as ideal knowledge. This concept, on the other hand, is inherited from ancient Greece, for example from Aristotle, and is therefore not a special feature of Christian thought.

Deductive reasoning is, of course, truth-preserving by nature, but it hardly follows from this that previously unknown conclusions could not be counted among the new information. In any case, Aristotle was already criticized in the Middle Ages, which, together with many other developments, laid the foundation for the emergence of experimental natural science. You can read about these issues in Areopag's learning materials for middle and high school.

To make the picture of the Middle Ages come across as a time that also brought scientific, technical, and philosophical development, it is good for the teacher to have some examples up his or her sleeve. Such are, for example, the beginning of the investigation of the trajectory of throwing motion, which corrects Aristotle's flawed



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physics, the mathematical advances of Nicole Oresme (as the precursor of the coordinate system), or many technical devices adopted, improved, or invented from elsewhere. These things that became commonplace in Europe are, for example, a mechanical clock, a horseshoe, rigid strings, and a cannon.

The legend describes an earth-centered worldview as "church doctrine," which is actually a mistake. Of course, the church supported an earth-centered cosmology, and many passages in the Bible were written on the basis that the heavenly bodies appear to revolve around the earth when viewed from the earth. Consequently, it was easy for the church to also adopt the old earth-centered Ptolemaic model as the best of its time, just as the model was adopted in, say, the Islamic world.

But the fact that it was "doctrine" would require a bit more bang for the buck, e.g. mentions in creeds or decisions of church councils regarding the doctrine. I submit to possible corrections here, but I think that even in Galileo's time, let alone in the Middle Ages, no doctrinal collection, decree, or catechism of any church contains an article on geocentric cosmology.

In the note at the end of the episode, it is further stated that "the task of science was to confirm the doctrine of the church." This gives a distorted picture of the position of natural science in medieval universities. Philosophical proofs of God are, of course, a separate issue, but the real golden age of natural theology ("Age of Evidence," to use the expression of theologian John Henry Newman) did not come until the time of Newton and his partners in the 17th century and lasted until the 19th century,



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especially in England. It was particularly typical at this time that knowledge about nature was used to prove the existence of God.

Some researchers have joked that, ironically, it was only in the 17th century, due to the efforts to prove God's existence, that his existence began to be called into question. Of course, the matter is not so simple, but Kasku still describes well that in the Middle Ages, the existence of God was considered among the self-evident facts. This is why "confirming the doctrine" of the church with science would probably have been a strange idea for contemporaries: you have to confirm what is certain.

The Forum 6 section conveys a picture of the myth that the medieval church somehow suppressed the development of science. In reality, in the Middle Ages, many kinds of teaching gifts and modern university institutions were born within the church, which speaks to the basic positive attitude of the church and the Christian faith - not repression - toward our natural and healthy thirst for knowledge.

The impression of the suffocating influence of the church is also created on pages 30-31 of Forum 6 when describing the content of church doctrine and people's belief in it. The title "To Paradise or Perdition?" Below we focus on hell and monsters in church art. The power of the church is great and punishes those who have sinned and broken the law. The Inquisition is said to have tortured and sentenced heretics to death.

As readers of Areopagus know, this notion of the Inquisition is wrong. Our image of the Inquisition comes more from British war propaganda than from actual historical



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sources. Sure, there is no reason to regard the Inquisition as an innocent Sunday school institution, but the reality was more like the famous Monty Python skit than a popular image, as Olli-Pekka Vainio explains.

Also, while hell is certainly a scary thing, I think that even in the Middle Ages, in some corners of the continent, some attention was sometimes paid to the joy of heaven and the hope of the future, especially where Christianity was new (as in Finland). The book does not reflect on the difference between ancient European paganism and Christianity, which would clarify the reasons for the voluntary adoption of Christianity in many places. In paganism, then and now, there is a general fear of ancestral spirits and unpredictable gods, not to mention the horror that the occasional human sacrifice can inspire.

In Pimea aika (pp. 37-62), Tahkokallio convincingly describes that, contrary to common perception, the power of the church in the Middle Ages was very limited and fragmented in much of Europe. This is the situation especially in the early Middle Ages when most people could not read and proper administration was not developed.

In general, the harsh punishments are specifically related to the fact that the deterrent or shame effect they created were few direct means for rulers and communities to intervene in crimes. From home, we have a good example of this, for example from Mirikka Lappalainen's excellent work, *The Lion of Pohjola*, according to which, even at the beginning of the new era, King Gustav II Adolf of Sweden was



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allowed to threaten his stubborn subjects with hoarseness in his letters, because there was nothing else he could do.

The state apparatus and civil servants only began to appear during his time. Tax collection was minimal and uncertain compared to modern times. In fact, the influence of the modern Finnish welfare state on people's lives from childhood to adulthood would certainly be spread and attempted from the perspective of a medieval bishop and king, not the other way around.

Of course, the Church of the West was not a nest of saints even in the Middle Ages, but it would be nice if school books did not repeat medieval stereotypes that belong mainly to the entertainment industry, such as the (in itself entertaining) Ridley Scott's film Kingdom of Heaven is used as an illustration for many books.

What about the image of the Middle Ages in other books? Let's start with praise. Sanoma Pron Ritari 6 (2020) remembers to mention the Carolingian Renaissance and Charlemagne's view of the coexistence of science and religion: "Charles invited to his court learned men who thought about how the research of ancient scientists could be combined with the teachings of Christianity." (p. 12)

A good mention, because Kaarle clearly had no knowledge of the conflict narrative. Incidentally, in describing the European Middle Ages, the lines are generally adequate, although there are some platitudes, such as the fact that people believed that with their donations they would reach heaven (p. 17). It is not yet clear whether



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we are looking for a reference to aneshop, but if we are, shortening the time spent in purgatory is different from getting into heaven with donations.

Chapter 4 of the book deals with the heyday of Islamic culture. Page 21 states that "Science developed in the Islamic Empire" and lists the achievements. Of course, it is good to mention this in these times, when immigration is a politically sensitive issue and many slanderous notions about the Islamic cultural circle are easily spread. On the other hand, painful questions must also be addressed, such as why the golden age ended and what role the stricter application of Islamic teachings played.

The flowering period is simply named as also the flowering of "Islamic culture." Of course, this is true in the sense that, over time, Islam became the dominant religion of the culture of the regions it conquered. However, based on the book, the student knows that there were representatives of other religions in the kingdom because they were allowed to keep their faith against the tax. Although many people converted to Islam, among the scholars there were mainly Jews, Zoroastrians, and Christians with whom the Muslim scholars influenced. Something about the number of Christians indicates that the Christian Church in the central area of the ancient civilization, that is, Persia, was so vibrant that it carried out extensive missionary work as far as China.

It would be good to mention religious diversity because intellectual culture flourishes precisely when different ideas and viewpoints can influence science without hindrance. As a side note, I would like to mention that Land of Two Streams



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(Kirjapaja, 2020) by Emil Antonin, Areopag's former assistant, is an excellent work in mapping the history of Middle Eastern churches unknown to us.

In the section "Science is flourishing in the Arab kingdom" Mennyt I-III of Eduskösenösen states about the religious policy of the Muslims that "however, they did not force the people of the areas they conquered to convert to Islam." (p. 185) It could have been mentioned here that there was still pressure as the tax burden on non-Muslims was higher. It is also stated that "the tolerant attitude of the Arabs towards other cultures created the conditions for the development of science."

So it is correct to say that after the conquests, the attitude of the empire was tolerant in many places, especially in a big city like Baghdad. But the question that remains is whether the war of conquest that engulfed almost the entire Mediterranean area and the Persian Empire is basically an indication of the tolerance of other cultures. Also, one might ask, what part of the flourishing of science is the amount of tolerance and the fact that the kingdom had exceptionally large resources? When the enormous scale of the Islamic empires is remembered, it is no wonder that "the Arabs invested more in the development of various disciplines than the Europeans."

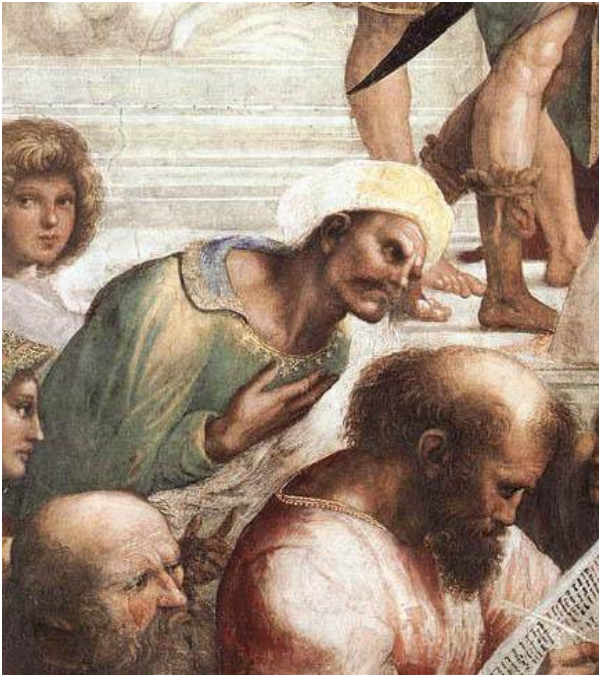


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Averroës close-up of Raphael's painting The School of Athens.

My intention with this is not to belittle the scientific achievements of medieval Muslim culture. Avicenna, Averroës, Algalzelus, and many other Muslim scholars were genuinely great men. The problem is that the criteria are not open and fair in relation to Europe, which was chosen as a point of comparison. The Christian or partially Christian cultures located in the areas conquered by the Arabs (e.g. Egypt, Persia, Spain) are left only as a separate phrase, and by combining and developing their fragmented resources, the science of any empire would make strides forward. To improve the comparison, besides the contribution of the conquered peoples, one should mention, for example, the Carolingian renaissance.

On the other hand, the fact that intolerance is not only the property of the crusaders is also mentioned as the reason for the cessation of the flowering of science in the Islamic cultural circle: "interpretations about what is the right kind of Islam became



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sharper. This caused intolerance toward representatives of other religions." Furthermore, the disadvantages for science brought by the Mongol conquerors and the loss of control over the Silk Road are highlighted, which again emphasizes the importance of a functional and large civilization for the success of science.

Relations between Islam and Christian Europe include the Crusades. What do the textbooks have to say about them? Knight 6 states that

"Knights hoped to obtain a castle and land in the conquered areas. Merchants, on the other hand, were interested in the possibility of bringing eastern goods to Western Europe."

Furthermore, according to the book, "many Christians and Muslims died during the Crusades as a result of the closer relations between these religions."

Forum 6, on the other hand, states that

"The goal of the Crusades was to spread Christianity but also to acquire territories for the sons of noble families that they could control and tax. At the same time, the knights had the opportunity to fight."

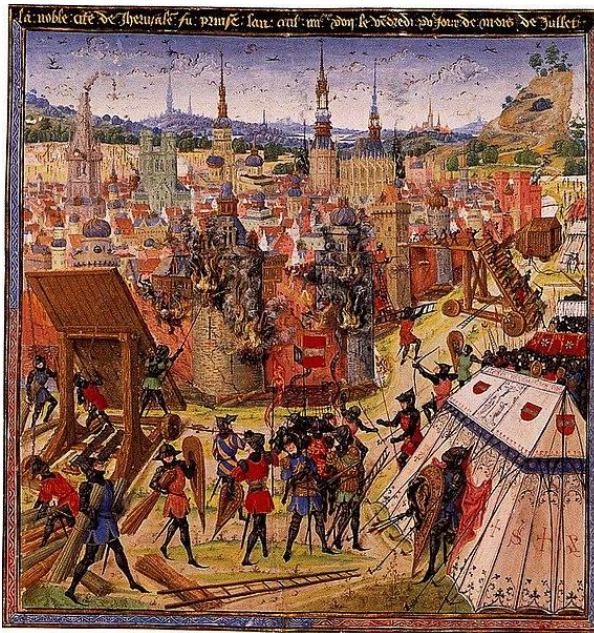


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Conquest of Jerusalem in the First Crusade.

Contrary to book claims, the motives of the crusades were generally not financial, as you can read in the writings of Samu Niskanen of Areopag. On the contrary, according to the surviving sources, making a journey was a great financial sacrifice, and the loss of property and even of life could be expected. Also, for example, the spiritual reasons colored by the warrior ethos, which seem strange to us, were important to our contemporaries. Moreover, some features of the Crusades even reached the internationally common definition of a just war. This would be more understandable if textbooks mentioned that the huge areas conquered by Muslims were largely inhabited by Christians in the Middle East and Spain.

Moreover, even if Ritari's phrase "between these religions grew closer" is undoubtedly true as a single statement, there is a danger that, in the student's mind, the spiritual roots of modern conflicts go back to the Crusades. According to Niskanen, however, it was not until the Arab nationalism of the 19th century that the



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Crusades were brought back into the collective consciousness of the region's Muslims. Before that, the Crusades were already forgotten.

None of the points mentioned, of course, do eliminate the fact that the Crusaders did many horrible things, which need not be enumerated.

Conclusion

The Middle Ages being precisely the time of the hegemony of the Western Church in Europe (which is rightly evidenced in the books), it is necessary for this context to bring up one more wish for future textbook authors. It is that in the future the birth of the connection between state and church would be dealt with in more depth. This is the most significant turning point in the legacy left by the Roman Empire, whose importance can hardly be exaggerated.

It is a fact that even in Finland, the last bonds of the union of state and church that were millennials are crumbling before our eyes. When today's students are in their thirties, according to the Church Research Center's prediction, they will be living in a country where a minority of citizens are members of any Christian church. As far as the share of Christians is concerned, the situation will therefore increasingly resemble in the future the Roman Empire before Emperor Constantine.

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