Preface

This publication opens a series of annual collections of scientific articles on the history of ancient pedagogical culture. Each issue of the Hypothēkai collection will include scientific articles, original texts, and translations of foreign scientific works on the topic. This will enable us to present the reader to a wide range of opinions belonging to representatives of various scientific schools and research areas, and to initiate an interdisciplinary field for scientific discussions. The conception of each issue is organised around the received texts and is obligatorily discussed with potential authors.

The theme of the first issue is Mark Tullius Cicero’s concept of education through culture. Numerous sources reflecting Cicero’s life and career allow us to conclude that the general view of the Roman pedagogy formed in posterity is largely due to Cicero. Cicero’s vision of the educational ideal and the ways to achieve it were associated with the aspiration to «cultivate the soul» («cultura animi») and formed the basis for the Western pedagogical tradition of «educating through culture», thus defining the phrase «humane pedagogy» for many centuries ahead. Cicero understood education through culture not only as a kind of educational achievement, but also as a set of thinking and behavioral strategies developed by the mentor in the pupil, which will allow the latter to carry out educational design of himself in the future.

Despite the considerable amount of general and special works devoted to various aspects of Cicero’s heritage, the question of whom he wrote them for and what he wanted to achieve by resorting to the form of presentation with a special arrangement of semantic emphasis is still open. Regardless of whom he was directly addressing (a friend, a companion, a representative of a particular philosophical school, the senate, the court or Roman people), Cicero often clothed his arguments in the form of precepts. He outlined ways and means not to lose, but to find oneself through education relevant to human nature, his humanitas. In all subsequent epochs, this kind of pedagogical reflection has been historically specific, but it has not lost its connection with the meaning found in Cicero’s writings. Identifying the heuristic and methodological potential of Cicero’s heritage requires an interdisciplinary evaluation of
that peculiar kind of dialogue which Cicero initiated with the ancient Greek tradition of intellectual and political education. The authors of this issue invite the reader not only to follow the logic of the formation, development and practical embodiment of Cicero’s educational ideal and its further manifestation in other epochs and cultures, but also to rethink some fundamental educational ideas in the history of pedagogical culture.

The title of this collection is Hypothēkai — a polysemantic word («instructions», «advice», «precepts»), which should not mislead the reader: they will not be taught by the ancient texts or tired by some clever advice. This title was suggested by Brett M. Rogers, a specialist in ancient pedagogy and lecturer at the University of Puget Sound, whose knowledge of ancient texts is leagues ahead of mine. I would like to express my deep gratitude to him for this idea as well as for our scientific discussions, during one of which he pointed to the fragments of the precepts of the centaur Kheiron «Hypothēkai of Kheiron» («Precepts of Kheiron») often ascribed to Hesiod. According to the legend, that lost poem of collected wisdom was passed to humans by the centaur Kheiron, the famous mentor of Achilles. The collection title just alludes to that lost work, inviting to a deep study of ancient texts. I wish to express a heartfelt gratitude to my colleague, Professor Vitaliy G. Bezrogov for his support and his inspirational insistence on the highest academic standards. In conclusion, I would like to thank the authors and translators as well as the executive editor of this issue Yana A. Volkova.

To submit materials and check the theme of the next issues, as well as to make remarks, suggestions and comments, please contact the Editor-in-Chief at the following e-mail address: Pichugina_V@mail.ru — Victoria Pichugina.