

## THE EDUCATION OF HUNGARIAN GIRLS AND THE “MARIANUM” CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN CLUJ/KOLOZSVÁR. A CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

MÁRTA BODÓ<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract.** This paper explores the controversial issue of girls’ education, with a special focus on the instruction of Hungarian girls, proposing a cultural and historical approach. After some preliminary considerations on the questions raised in literature regarding the opportunity and limits of women’s instruction, I turn to the Hungarian initiatives promoting the education of girls. The final part of the article discusses a particular case, the Marianum Catholic high school for girls from Kolozsvár (Cluj) and its efforts to include culture, notably theatre in the pedagogical process.

**Keywords:** education of women, curriculum, “Marianum” Catholic high school for girls, theatre, performance

### Preliminary considerations on the education of girls

The education of girls, its opportunity and goal was at all times an issue marked by prejudice. As women were considered inferior to men, the education of girls was either disregarded or limited to the acquisition of household skills. Girls were trained to be good housewives, able to provide for their family. Even when they received a formal education, they usually followed a different curriculum compared to that of men, as they were not meant (nor allowed) to assume public roles. These views emerge regularly in works that acknowledge the need for girls’ education, from the Renaissance onward. Even authors who acknowledged the need for girls’ formal education voiced biased views concerning women’s mental abilities and set a limited scope for girls’ instruction.

The Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540) addresses the issue of women’s education in his handbook *De institutione feminae christianae* (1523), dedicated to Catherine of Aragon, the wife of Henry VIII, meant for the instruction of her daughter, Mary.<sup>2</sup> Addressing the nature and education of

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<sup>1</sup> Editor-in-chief of *Keresztény Szó* Catholic Cultural Journal; Verbum Catholic Association. email: bodo.marta@yahoo.com.

<sup>2</sup> Juan Luis VIVES, *De Institutione Feminae Christianae*, vol. 1, transl. Charles FANTAZZI (Charles Fantazzi, C. Matheussen [eds.], *Selected Works of Juan Luis Vives*), Leiden: Brill, 1996; *The Education of a Christian Woman. A Sixteenth-Century Manual* (ed., tr. Charles FANTAZZI), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. The writing is regarded the most important treatise of the Renaissance addressing the topic of

women, Vives largely relied on the writings of Jerome, whom he quotes repeatedly, but also on Aristotle's thought, as mediated by Thomas Aquinas, on Pseudo-Aristotelian economic literature, and a number of contemporary writings.<sup>3</sup> Girls should be taught from early on the skills needed for household tasks and should be prevented from remaining idle.<sup>4</sup> This should be true even for a queen or princess, who should not be unoccupied, as women's thoughts are "swift and generally unsettled, roving without direction, and I know not where her instability would lead her."<sup>5</sup> Vives does not share the common view that learning has detrimental influences on women. Conversely, evil is associated with ignorance; conversely, one cannot find a truly learned woman (*docta*) that is unchaste.<sup>6</sup>

He shares the traditional views concerning the roles of women. Based on 1 Cor 14,34-35 and 1 Tim 2,11-12 he argues that women are not to teach, as they are weak and of uncertain judgment, and easily deceived.<sup>7</sup> The main aim of women's education is to secure their chastity: "A woman's only care is chastity; therefore when this has been thoroughly elucidated, she may be considered to have received sufficient instruction."<sup>8</sup> A parent wants his daughter a virgin, not a scholar, therefore the most important concern of any parent should be to protect a girl from any sinful influence.<sup>9</sup> A virtuous girl, in Vives' view, is a follower of the Virgin Mary, and the spouse of Christ.<sup>10</sup> To achieve this ideal, educators and parents have to be careful and suspicious guardians of girls' morals and behavior. Girls are not to be raised in the

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women's education, cited and followed by subsequent authors who wrote on the topic, which in spite of Vives' traditional position on gender roles and the status of women, also voices some humanistic ideas, acknowledges women's moral probity and their capacity for learning.

<sup>3</sup> On the sources of the treatise, FANTAZZI, 2000, 23–30.

<sup>4</sup> VIVES, *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* 1.3. §13, 15 ; 4. §15-17 (FANTAZZI I, 1996, 19, 21–25; *Education*, FANTAZZI, 2000, 58–62).

<sup>5</sup> VIVES, *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* 1.3. §15 (FANTAZZI I, 1996, 19, 21).

<sup>6</sup> VIVES, *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* 4.§21-22 (FANTAZZI I, 1996, 31–32; *Education*, FANTAZZI, 2000, 64–65). The benefits of learning are further extolled in 4. §26-27, *Education*, FANTAZZI, 2000, 70–71.

<sup>7</sup> VIVES, *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* 1.4. §29 (*Education*, FANTAZZI, 2000, 47).

<sup>8</sup> VIVES, *De Institutione Feminae Christianae*, Preface §3 (*Education*, FANTAZZI, 2000, 47).

<sup>9</sup> PUKÁNSZKY Béla, *A nőnevelés története*, Budapest: Gondolat, 2013, 48–52. Ch. 6 of book 1 is dedicated to the praise of virginity.

<sup>10</sup> VIVES, *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* 1.9. §80-81 (*Education*, FANTAZZI, 2000, 113–114).

company of men.<sup>11</sup> A woman is not supposed to aspire to equal social standing with men. A woman is expected to keep silent, therefore it is unbecoming for her to be in charge with a school, have dealings with or speak to men.<sup>12</sup>

In his *De l'éducation des filles* (1687), the French Catholic priest and pedagogue François Fénelon makes a strong case for girls' education, a task unduly neglected due to the view that knowledgeable women become vain and conceited. As a consequence they were supposed to learn only enough to be able to manage the household and obey their husband without second thoughts (“sans raisonner”). In spite of examples to the point, Fénelon argues, girls do require education, and should not be abandoned to ignorant and indiscreet mothers.<sup>13</sup> Women belong indeed to the weaker gender, their physical and mental aptitudes are very different from those of men, their role and vocation is therefore also very different. The mind of women is weaker and more inquisitive than that of men. They should not engage therefore in studies in which they would persist with obstinacy (“des études dont elles pourraient s'entêter”). They are not supposed to rule a country, nor lead a war, they do not enter the sacred ministry, and therefore they can dispense with extensive knowledge pertaining to politics, military tactics, jurisprudence, philosophy and theology. Most branches of engineering (“arts mécaniques”) are not for them either, as women are created for moderate exercise. Their body and mind is less strong and robust than that of men. In exchange nature provided them with industry, tidiness and thrift, to keep them quietly preoccupied in their home.<sup>14</sup> It has to be admitted though that Fénelon recognizes the importance of women in managing the household, which is the fundament of human existence. The argument is introduced however with a repeated emphasis on women's natural weakness: the weaker they are, the more they need to be strengthened by education. The plea for the education of women leads the reader to recognize that women are responsible in many ways for the earthly well-being and eternal salvation of humans.

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<sup>11</sup> VIVES, *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* 1.2. §10 (FANTAZZI I, 1996, 15; *Education*, FANTAZZI, 2000, 55).

<sup>12</sup> VIVES, *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* 1.4. §29; *Education*, FANTAZZI, 2000, 72.

<sup>13</sup> François DE SALIGNAC DE LA MOTHE FÉNELON, *De l'éducation des filles*, Paris, 1800, 1-3; Engl. François Fenelon's *Treatise on the Education of Daughters. Translated from the French, and Adapted to English Readers* (transl. Thomas F. Dibdin), London, 1805, 1-3.

<sup>14</sup> FÉNELON, *De l'éducation des filles*, 3-4; *Treatise on the Education of Daughters*, 4-5.

The first female professional author to write a book on women's virtues and education is Christine de Pisan (1364–1429).<sup>15</sup> She confronts the well-established prejudices concerning women (voiced by “men, clerics and other”), their alleged proclivity to vices, and the biases regarding their mental capacities and their instruction.<sup>16</sup> Her book has numerous references to classical authors, allusions to ancient Greek and Latin narratives, mythical characters and themes, doubled by the evocation of powerful female biblical characters, saints and martyrs.<sup>17</sup> Her vision of the three personified Virtues—Lady Reason, Rectitude and Justice—that lead her to the foundation of the allegorical city of erudite and virtuous ladies construes in fact a developed argument for women's wisdom, intelligence and virtue. She argues through the voice of Lady Reason that the intellectual capacities of women, received as a gift of God, equal those of men.<sup>18</sup> Pisan evokes her eagerness to learn from childhood on. Through the voice of Lady Rectitude we learn that Christine's father (Tommaso di Benvenuto da Pizzano) had no problem with women learning, but took great pleasure in her study. It was her mother instead who opposed her education, expecting her to commit to female occupations.<sup>19</sup> Pisan was convinced that women are able to acquire any knowledge and they have the right to do so. If women were educated, they could achieve anything, just like men.<sup>20</sup> Christine de Pisan only advocated women's right to study, whereas she accepted the division of public and private avocations and traditional gender roles.<sup>21</sup>

The founders of female Catholic religious orders were often pioneers of women's education, aiming to teach girls in order to empower them. Angela Merici founded her religious order in Brescia in 1535 and offered shelter and comfort to girls and women, to help them escape poverty. Mary Ward founded

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<sup>15</sup> Maureen CHENEY CURNOW, *The Livre de la Cité des Dames of Christine de Pisan. A Critical edition* (PhD dissertation), Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, 1975; Sulamit SHAHAR, *Fourth Estate: A History of Women in the Middle Ages*, London: Routledge, 1983, revised edition 2003, 155.

<sup>16</sup> *Livre de la Cité des Dames* 1a; 1c (the woman created by God presented as a receptacle of all evils and an abominable monster, ultimately an approach that envisages God's creative act as a failure); 21, 22 (CHENEY CURNOW, 618, 620, 645–646), *passim*.

<sup>17</sup> She largely relies on Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris* (CHENEY CURNOW, 22). But her erudition is uncontroversial.

<sup>18</sup> *Livre de la Cité des Dames* 82, 102a, 110, 115 (CHENEY CURNOW, 720–723, 747, 757, 761–762). The argument is underscored with examples of erudite women.

<sup>19</sup> *Livre de la Cité des Dames* 186 (CHENEY CURNOW, 875).

<sup>20</sup> See Jean DELUMEAU, *La Civilisation de la Renaissance*, Paris: Éditions Civilisations, 1967, 435.

<sup>21</sup> SHAHAR, *Fourth Estate*, 155.

a female order for the same reason and with similar purposes. The rule of the community was drafted in 1615, the teaching methodology to be used in the schools of the community was elaborated in 1628, but the order received pontifical recognition only in 1703.<sup>22</sup> This delay points to the difficulties faced by those who worked for the emancipation of women by means of education.

Education was intimately linked with women’s social emancipation. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797), in the first proclamation on the rights of women, rejected Rousseau’s views (as voiced in *Sophie*) and argued that women were unprivileged, subordinated to the autocratic rule of men by means of a social system that deprived them of formal education. She questioned the difference between genders, and called for an educational reform. Equal chances in education would have allowed women to prove their abilities outside the domestic sphere as well.<sup>23</sup>

### **The education of girls in Hungarian contexts**

One of the first Hungarian writings on the education of girls is a treatise by Péter Pázmány, archbishop of Esztergom.<sup>24</sup> In his *Education of a Christian Girl*<sup>25</sup> Pázmány relies on a number of early Christian writers (Tertullian, Cyprian, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzen, Basil, Chrysostom, Jerome, Ambrose, Fulgentius), but also evokes Greek authors like Xenophon, Plato and Aristotle. He follows Aristotle in arguing that girls need to be educated for construing a virtuous society, as women are half of the population and they are responsible for the upbringing of men. In another sermon entitled *About the religious education of the sons* Pázmány emphasizes parents’ duty to educate their children. Women have an important role in this respect, and their reward will come from God, as a woman is saved by bearing sons, if she preserves her

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<sup>22</sup> See Walter NIGG, *Mary Ward – Eine Frau gibt nicht auf*, Zürich: Römerhof Verlag, 2009.

<sup>23</sup> On the *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792): Gisela BOCK, *Frauen in der europäischen Geschichte. Vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, München: C.H. Beck, 2000, 92–111.

<sup>24</sup> Originally a Protestant, Péter Pázmány (1570–1637) studied at the Jesuit College in Koložsvár/Cluj, where he decided to convert to Catholicism. He later joined the Jesuit order. He taught briefly at the University of Graz. He became archbishop of Esztergom and primate of Hungary in 1616. MÉSZÁROS István, *A katolikus iskola ezeréves története Magyarországon (A Thousand Years of Catholic School in Hungary)*. Budapest, 2000, 17.

<sup>25</sup> *Mint kell a keresztyén leányt nevelni*, in PÁZMÁNY Péter *Művei* (ed. Márton TARNÓC), Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1983; *Prédikációk (Sermons)*, 1021–1042, here: 1023.

faith, her soberness and educates her children religiously (a reference to 1 Tim 2,15).<sup>26</sup>

Concern for women's education in a more institutional form was first shown from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The curriculum was obviously influenced by the common views on gender roles. In the 1820's women's education became the topic of media debates.<sup>27</sup> János Szép was one of the few to argue that men and women should receive the same education, as women are not inferior to men.<sup>28</sup> Teréz Brunszvik, a militant of the cause<sup>29</sup> argued that a family with a high social status needed both partners to be equally instructed; a woman had to be involved in all the actions and thoughts of the husband, to prove to be his equal and worthy partner. This reciprocity is evoked with a telling image: in a family where the woman knits socks for her husband, the man should make shoes for his wife. Paraphrasing Gen 2,22-24, Mk 10,9, and Matt 19,6, Brunszvik argued that "one should not separate what nature made one."<sup>30</sup> She envisaged a future when the other – and more important – half of humanity would receive the same education.<sup>31</sup> Teréz Brunszvik also drafted a curriculum for the purpose. It was another Theresa, Teréz Karacs who founded a school for girls in Miskolc in September 1846. Karacs also defended the equal capacities and rights of men and women.<sup>32</sup> In the same period the niece of Teréz Brunszvik, a noblewoman from Transylvania, Blanka Teleki founded a school for the daughters of Hungarian aristocrats.

In 1806 the second *Ratio Educationis*<sup>33</sup> stipulated the establishment of public schools for girls. The task was fulfilled by Catholic religious orders. The

<sup>26</sup> *A fiaknak istenes neveléséről*, in PÁZMÁNY Művei, *Prédikációk*, 650–651, 653–654.

<sup>27</sup> Katalin FEHÉR, "Vélemények, viták a nevelésről két reformkori folyóiratunkban" (Opinions and Arguments About Education in Two 19<sup>th</sup> Century Newspapers), in Alice DOMBI, János OLÁH (eds.), *A XIX. századi magyar pedagógusok a polgárosodásért*, Gyula: APC-Stúdió, 2003, 212.

<sup>28</sup> János SZÉP, "Elmélkedés az aszszonyi nem taníttatásáról" (Arguments for Women's Education), in *Tudományos gyűjtemény*, 1821. IV. 22–60, 23.

<sup>29</sup> Teréz BRUNSZVIK, "Nőképzés és nőnevelés" (Women's Education), in OROSZ Lajos (ed.), *A magyar nőnevelés úttörői (The Pioneers of Women's Education)*, Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1962, 233.

<sup>30</sup> BRUNSZVIK, *Nőképzés*, 233.

<sup>31</sup> BRUNSZVIK, *Nőképzés*, 234.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted by OROSZ, *A magyar nőnevelés úttörői*, 95.

<sup>33</sup> The first *Ratio Educationis* (1777), a decree issued by Maria Theresa, was a comprehensive regulation of the system of public instruction in Hungary (*Ratio Educationis totiusque Rei Literariae per Regnum Hungariae et Provincias eidem adnexas*. Tomus I, Vindobonae, Typis Joan. Thom. Nob. de Trattnern, MDCCLXXVII).

goal of girls' education was to prepare future housewives. Some courses instructed women for factory work, providing girls from a poor background with job opportunities.

The 1845-decree on public instruction established that boys and girls had to receive an education that suited their gender and social status. Peasant girls were to learn elementary skills (reading, writing, counting, singing and sewing), religion and basic notions of economy. Beyond these, commoners' daughters and gentry girls learnt spelling, composition, and literature. Upper-class girls also learned foreign languages (German, French), geography, natural science, history, basic physics, drawing, music and dance.<sup>34</sup>

Women's initiatives contributed to the development and organization of the education system for girls in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of the major figures was Hermin Beniczky, married Pálné Veres (1815–1895), a teacher and promoter of women's rights.<sup>35</sup> In 1868 she established the national organization for women's education (Országos Nőképző Egyesület, ONKE), and gathered the signature of 9000 women asking the founding of a school for secondary education for girls. The first school for secondary education was founded in the Hungarian capital, Budapest, in 1875. In order to prepare educators for these institutions, high school training started for schoolmistresses in Buda (1869), in Kolozsvár (now Cluj) (1870), in Pozsony (now Bratislava), Szabadka (now Subotica) (1871), and in Győr (1875).

This institution did not allow girls to graduate and follow a university career. The first solution was that girls were allowed to have their exams in private at any of the high schools for boys (1895). The first class of girls could officially graduate in their own institution only in 1900. The curriculum was similar to that of boy schools, with a slight difference in accordance with the “female specifics”. Girls did not study Greek and started Latin later, and as specific female activities they learned drawing, music (mostly singing) and needlework.<sup>36</sup>

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It was replaced by the second *Ratio Educationis* issued by Franz I in 1806 (*Ratio publicae totiusque rei literariae per Regnum Hungariae et provincias eidam adnexas, Budaë, Typis et sumtibus regiae Universitas Hungaricae*, 1806). The latter was in force until 1848.

<sup>34</sup> *Magyarország elemi tanodáinak szabályzata (Regulations for Hungary's public schools)*, in Béla PUKÁNSZKY, *A nőnevelés története*, Budapest: Gondolat, 2013, 119–121.

<sup>35</sup> She is known under the latter name, literally as wife of Pál Veres. The social conventions on naming married women as wives of a man (used up to this day in Hungarian), without reference to their first name shows the degree to which women lost their identity in marriage.

<sup>36</sup> PUKÁNSZKY, *A nőnevelés története*, 168–182.

Till 1912 there were only three high schools for girls in the Hungarian-speaking territories. According to statistical data, in 1912/13 1070 female pupils were registered and another 771 girls attended private courses in high schools for boys. Almost 5200 girls studied to become teachers and schoolmistresses.<sup>37</sup>

### **A secondary school for girls in Kolozsvár/Cluj in the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the public instruction of girls started to focus on providing knowledge that allowed women to undertake a job and start an existence outside the home. Graduating was originally a privilege for girls. Hungarian women were allowed to study at a university only since 1895 (initially humanities, medicine and pharmacy).<sup>38</sup> The first secondary school for Hungarian girls opened in Budapest on October 2, 1896. The curriculum was the same as that of the secondary schools for boys with a few differences.

In 1880 the city of Kolozsvár (Cluj/Klausenburg, in Transylvania<sup>39</sup>) invited a young woman, Antonina De Gerando, to be director of the newly established school for girls, where girls between the ages of 12–18 were taught.<sup>40</sup> The school was owned by the city. Its goal was to educate girls and prepare them for graduation, to offer them a diploma allowing them to become educators themselves. In 1893 the school had over 300 students. Under De Gerando a new building was built in 1901. Originally the curriculum focused on preparing the girls for their future role of wives and mothers, although De Gerando also emphasized that women had to be good and well trained citizens as well. It is interesting to note that Antonina De Gerando was the granddaughter of Teréz Brunszvik and niece of Blanka Teleki, both important

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<sup>37</sup> Péter Tibor NAGY, “A középfokú nőoktatás huszadik századi történetéhez” (About Women’s Education in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century), *Iskolakultúra*, 3 (2003), 3–13 (5).

<sup>38</sup> See Béla PUKÁNSZKY, András NÉMETH, *Neveléstörténet*, Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, 1996; Béla PUKÁNSZKY, *A nőnevelés évezredei*, Budapest: Gondolat, 2006; Béla PUKÁNSZKY, *A nőnevelés története*, Budapest: Gondolat, 2013.

<sup>39</sup> The Eastern region of Hungary was part of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy until the Treaty of Trianon (1920), when it became part of Romania.

<sup>40</sup> Hajnalka MÁRTON, “A történet kezdete. De Gerando Antonina életútjának töredékei” (The Beginning of the Story. Bits from the Life of Antonina De Gerando), *Magiszter 2* (2013) 113–120 <<http://rmpsz.ro/uploaded/tiny/files/magiszter/2013/nyar/11.pdf>> (2016.08.11.)



predecessors in the endeavor to promote Hungarian women’s education.<sup>41</sup> Antonina De Gerando was director of the public school for girls in Kolozsvár for 25 years.

At the very beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the rector of Saint Michael’s Catholic parish, József Hirschler (1874–1936) argued that local authorities should open a school for girls in Kolozsvár/Cluj. As the school lead by De Gerando was not concerned with religious education, Hirschler decided to establish a school for girls himself. He rebuilt the small “Augusteum” that hosted an elementary school and entrusted the education of girls to the School Sisters from Temesvár. They founded a kindergarten, an elementary school and an orphanage for girls.<sup>42</sup> In 1908 Hirschler bought a downtown plot where the sisters started a public school for girls. The parish priest entrusted the architect Jenő Hübner to draft the project of a modern school that was built in 1910–1911. The Marianum was the best school building of its time, the first reinforced concrete building in Kolozsvár, with 120 rooms, including bathrooms, dorms, a sports’ hall, laboratories, and a tennis court (which functioned as skating ring in winter).<sup>43</sup> The building was inaugurated on December 10, 1911, in the presence of many the local authorities and the representatives of the government. The Transylvanian Catholic Bishop Gusztáv Károly Majláth consecrated the establishment.<sup>44</sup>

The first director of the school was József Hirschler himself. Girls from all over Transylvania and Hungary attended the Marianum,<sup>45</sup> which followed the idea of the founder of the order of the School Sisters, Mary Ward, that all girls should have access to education.<sup>46</sup> In 1914 a complex of dormitories was

<sup>41</sup> Katalin KÉRI, “A modern nevelés útjain – De Gerando Antonina” (On the Path of Modern Education – Antonina De Gerando), *Embernevelés* 2 (1996) 11–18. <<http://kerikata.hu/publikaciok/text/gerando.htm>> (2016.08.11.)

<sup>42</sup> *Emléklapok a Marianum történetéből (Marianum Memoir)*, Cluj–Kolozsvár 1927, 14.

<sup>43</sup> Éva VEIDINGER, “Iskolatörténeti vázlat a kolozsvári Marianum intézetről” (School History of the Marianum in Cluj), in *Marianum. Az erdélyi iskolanővérek nyomában* (Marianum: In the Footsteps of the School Sisters of Transylvania), edited by the Hungarian Province of the Religious Order of the School Sisters (Miasszonyunkról nevezett Szegény Iskolanővérek Magyar Tartománya), Debrecen 2008, 43.

<sup>44</sup> Krisztofer Levente OROSZ, “A kolozsvári Marianum története az első világháború végéig” (2) (The History of the Marianum Till the End of World War I, part 2.), *Keresztény Szó* 12 (2007), <<http://www.keresztenyszó.katolikhos.ro/archivum/old/index.html>> (2013. 09.21.)

<sup>45</sup> VEIDINGER, “Iskolatörténeti vázlat”, *Marianum*, 40, 44.

<sup>46</sup> Krisztina Petra TORNAY, “Az iskolanővérek lelkesége” (The Spirituality of the School Sisters), *Marianum*, 32.

added, and apartments for teachers were built behind the school in 1924. The basement hosted a printing house, the Providentia.

26701 girls studied in the Marianum between 1911 and 1948, 4404 of them in a boarding school system. Cultural and extracurricular activities were strongly encouraged and supported. The Marianum had a reputed choir. Students presented several plays, attended theatre and even movies. Common activities were also important. The school had a literary circle, published a school chronicle, as well as a periodical for girls, the *Erdélyi Magyar Lányok* (*Transylvanian Hungarian Girls*) that appeared between 1924 and 1931.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 1944, at the end of World War II the building was damaged by the bombs of the Allied Forces. In 1948 the communist state expropriated the buildings of the school. The Marianum hosts today the Faculty of Letters of the state university.

### ***Educating girls through art and theatre in the Marianum***

The recollections of former students frequently evoke the fervent cultural life of the school. One of alumnae highlights the concern of both the sisters and the lay teachers to encourage girls' logical thinking and their efforts directed to educating accomplished young women. The Marianum was a school for life. Following the curriculum the teachers cultivated the intellectual capacities of their students, encouraging them to analyze attentively all possibilities, to discover the opportunities and make the best choices, preparing them for life.<sup>47</sup>

The intensive cultural life of the Marianum is constantly evoked, from singing and dancing to theatre and exhibitions. Personal recollections are completed by the records of the yearbooks. Among these musical performances and theatre plays are frequently mentioned. The 1912–13 yearbook lists on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February the plays performed by the students<sup>48</sup> and the names of the participants.

Students regularly attended theatre plays. The girls from the Marianum joined the male students from the Piarist High School. The Hungarian Theatre of Kolozsvár/Cluj organized special events for the students: plays were selected to complete the courses of literature and each play was introduced and explained by one of their teachers or a university professor. These carefully selected plays completed the knowledge provided by the subjects studied at school. Soon the theatre was not large enough to welcome the interested students of both schools; therefore the girls attended the plays apart from the

<sup>47</sup> Recollection of Ida Macsek, *Marianum*, 65.

<sup>48</sup> *Az egyetlen kabát* (*The Only Coat*, a comedy in one act), *Fiam lakodalma* (*My son's wedding*, a monologue), *A tudakozó intézet okozta a tévedést* (*The misunderstanding was caused by the information service*, comedy in two acts).

boys of the Piarist School, together with students from smaller institutions lead by the School Sisters, such as the orphanage and the schools for deaf and blind students. Records mention that in 1912–1913 the students of the Marianum watched plays of consecrated or popular Hungarian 19<sup>th</sup> century playwrights: *Bánk bán* (*Captain Bánk*), by József Katona, *Csongor és Tünde* (*The Lovers: Csongor and Tünde*), by Mihály Vörösmarty, *A tolonc* (*The Undesirable*), by Endre Tóth, but also international pieces like *The Tales of Hoffman*. Students also watched several movies (*The Balkan War*, *Quo vadis*) in the newly built, modern movie theatre Urania. One of the teachers, Jenő Cholnoky presented pictures taken during his North American journey.

In 1913–14 the yearbook mentions musical performances organized at the school. The students also attended several plays at the theatre: *Az új földesúr* (*The New Landlord*), by Mór Jókai, *A leányom* (*My Daughter*), by Imre Földes, *Pajkos diákok* (*Playful Students*), by Bertalan Kun, but also the *The Cardinal* by the 17<sup>th</sup>-century playwright James Shirley and *The Young Eagle* by Edmond Rostand.

In the 1914–15 academic year the girls of Marianum performed two comedies on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February, *The charmed guestroom*,<sup>49</sup> and *Piroska modern lány lesz* (*Little Red Riding Hood Goes Modern*), by Ede Sas. Girls also enacted scenes presenting Hungarian folk traditions accompanied by folk music performed by the students. The detailed record of the participants shows the importance assigned to the performance. The April performance was dedicated to the national celebration and envisaged themes of the Hungarian history, accompanied by folk music. A remarkable, Latin performance took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May, with the *Captivi* by Plautus, and the *Vita Sexti* with scenes taken from Sextus's life. Students also recited Hungarian poets' (Kisfaludy, Petőfi) verses translated into Latin.

The girls also organized charity performances during the war. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of May they presented the musical *Jancsi és Juliska* (the Hungarian version of *Hänsel and Gretel*) by Jenő Sztojanovics and an allegory on *Life and School*. The charity performances went on the following year as well. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 1916 girls belonging to the Congregation of Mary organized an event where the students of the Marianum presented musicals and comedies (Hackl's *King of the Frogs*, Bokor Malvin's *Dream*). The income of the event was donated to the army. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of March students performed an oratory (Heidelberg's *Celebration*).

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<sup>49</sup> A play adapted from German by Fausztin, possibly after August Strindberg's *Das verzauberte Zimmer*.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of May the students of Marianum organized a charity event for the girls who had lost their fathers in the war. They performed the *Mucius Scaelova* after Livy in Latin, and the *Schola*, a play from the Latin textbook *Liber Sexti* (published in Budapest, in 1912).

To conclude, the Marianum was a modern school, not only in terms of infrastructure, but also with respect to the educational approaches. Education was aiming to prepare the graduates for life and to develop their personality. These aims were pursued with determination under the most difficult circumstances (the war, and the political changes that followed the war). In spite of the unfavorable circumstances, the Marianum encouraged the girls to participate in numerous extracurricular activities in the field of arts, performances, music, and theatre. School theatre was used as an instrument of education, to broaden students' culture and develop their skills in speech and public performance. Girls were thereby prepared not only to become good housewives, but also to respond to challenges, including the performance of public roles.

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