

The World of Female Educational Institutions

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Abstract:

Introduction: Philanthropism, as it evolved at the end of the 18th century in Germany, wanted to break completely with the contemporary methods persisting in education, with the hegemony of classical languages, and with the study of antique authors' works; instead, it laid emphasis on practical and useful knowledge, on teaching modern languages, on acquiring knowledge based on demonstration, and on an intimate connection to nature. The impact of philanthropism on contemporary Hungarian public education, especially in the first half of the 19th century, can be clearly detected, which can be accredited to study trips to Germany and the Hungarian translations of German works. Salzmann's institution, founded in 1784 was visited by 366 Hungarian educators, among others by Teréz Brunszvik, who also gave an account of her impressions in her memoirs. Yet, we also need to mention Samuel Tessedik, who made good use of his experience gained during his journey to Germany in his school in Szarvas.

Purpose: In this study, four 19th century female educational institutions were selected and the presence of philanthropist ideas in the training offered there was investigated. Three of these were established for the education of the middle-class, while one was founded specifically for aristocrats. We investigated whether the presence of philanthropism can be detected in the education offered by these four schools.

Methods: In the presented study, we applied source analysis as a traditional research method in history of education.

Conclusions: All the institutions under scrutiny have it in common that the founding and contributing educators and teachers were provably well-acquainted with the pedagogy of the philanthropists, and they incorporated several of its elements into their programmes. The preparation for the housewife role, conveying knowledge utilizable in practice, practical approach to teaching content, and the application of the method of illustration were all emphasized. These features show that several philanthropist characteristics can be identified in the educational principles and curricula of these institutions. Nevertheless, on closer inspection, it cannot be stated that they would have taken on an institutional character exclusively reminiscent of the "philanthropinums".

Key words: history of education, education, philanthropy, female education.

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1 Introduction

In these institutions instruction and the syllabi were determined by practicality, new methodological developments and proximity to real life. The tradition of making students learn by rote was rejected; illustration, playfulness and first-hand experience were made priorities in teaching. The children were often taken on excursions and into the countryside. In philanthropinums, a central role was given to intensive physical education (such as swimming, fencing, rowing, target practice and horse-riding) along with being out in the open and the avoidance of spoiling children. Philanthropists broke with arts education; they neglected the arts and taught their students specific practical skills. Latin was taught only children who intended to pursue university studies, whereas Greek was not taught at all. Children gained knowledge that could be used in everyday life, for instance, they learned to read and write in their mother tongue, and studied mathematics, hygiene, geography, history, and science. Boys had the possibility of entering a career in the trades, commerce, or the military, while girls were trained to be house-wives. Physical work was seen as important for both genders (Tenorth, 2010). Philanthropists laid their trust above all in the power of institutional education, through which children can acquire those virtues that are also useful and important for the society, such as a sense of duty, precision, and the love of work done for the good of the community. The acquisition of these virtues was facilitated by both rewards and punishment (Pukánszky & Németh, 1996). Philanthropists advocated co-education up to the end of primary education. Beyond that, in the case of both genders, training for their social role was in the foreground.

Philanthropism also exerted its influence in Hungary. Pedagogical works by authors of the German enlightenment and the ideals of German philanthropism were popular. This can be explained both by Hungarian students' studies in Germany and by study tours and journeys. However, the presence of philanthropism in Hungarian public education was mostly felt from the beginning of the 19th century. Though the pedagogical ideas of philanthropism were connected primarily to the names of Samuel Tessedik, Gergely Berzeviczy, and Teréz Brunszvik in the relevant literature (Fehér, 1999; Mihalkovicsné, 2006), the contemporary translations of Salzmann's and Campe's works suggest that the impact of philanthropism was more wide-spread.

Although there were no female philanthropinums in Hungary like the ones in Germany, several renowned female educational institutions were in operation in the country – the institutions of Matthias Sennovitz, Gustav Steinacker, Károly Seltenreich, or Blanka Teleki – where the ideals of philanthropism were also probably active. In the paper “Néhány lap a magyarhoni nőnevelés kezdetéről” (A few pages on the beginnings of Hungarian female education) Ödön Szelényi¹, beside an overview of female education in the first decades of the 19th century, ranked the most outstanding female educational institutions of the era (Szelényi, 1916). Szelényi remarks regretfully that despite the relatively broad spectrum only a few private educational institutions were truly outstanding. In his study, he highlights three institutions, namely the girls' schools of Matthias Sennovitz, Gustav Steinacker, and Károly Seltenreich. We have supplemented this list of three with Blanka Teleki's female educational institution, and we investigated

¹ Ödön Szelényi (Késmárk, 12 July 1877 – Budapest, 18 September 1931) – teacher, author in pedagogy and philosophy.

whether the presence of philanthropism can be detected in the education offered by these four selected schools.

2 Female education

Among the philanthropists, it was Johann Heinrich Campe (1746-1818) who most explicitly formulated the principles of educating women in his handbook from 1789 "Fatherly Advice for my Daughter" (Campe, 1988). In its time, the book was considered to be a great success, besides the German editions, it was also translated into numerous languages (Pukánszky, 2011). Campe meant his book for the education of middle-class girls. He was familiar with the position and opportunities for women in the society of his time, which he did not intend to change fundamentally. The righteous path he assigned to women was to accept their social role, and to prepare for this role as diligently and thoroughly as possible². In Germany, there were also private boarding schools founded for women, girls' philanthropiums, such as the institution *Erziehungsinstitut für junge Demoiselles* of Karoline Rudolphi (1754-1811). In her institute, girls learned first to read and write, then they practiced needlework, and as an indispensable part of female education, they learned French. Their curriculum contained English, drawing, playing the piano, and ballroom dancing, however these were taught to them for extra tuition fees. In addition to these, we can also find science classes (geography, natural history, astronomy and mathematics) and religion in the timetable (Pukánszky, 2011).

The pedagogical ideas of philanthropism were also known in Hungary. Teréz Brunszvik³, the founder of the first Hungarian kindergarten, was an ardent follower of philanthropist pedagogy. She visited Salzmann's institution in Schnepfenthal, and in her memoirs, she described her impressions and the experiences she gained there (Czeke, 1938). Gergely Berzeviczy, an excellent author of works on national economics, went to the Philanthropium in Dessau, and he reported on the institution and its work in a highly appreciative tone.

2.1 Eperjes (Prešov)

Matthias Sennovitz⁴ and his wife founded an institution in 1794 in Eperjes, which functioned uninterrupted up until 1868. It started out with ten students instead of the planned twelve. From reports given to the parents, we can outline Sennovitz's educational principles, which are similar to those of philanthropism. The aim of the founder was to develop the intellectual capabilities of the girls in a principled way, and to prepare them through practice for their future tasks as house-wives and mothers. He rejected the educational approach that was restricted to teaching good manners and preached the primacy of dancing, drawing, embroidery and playing the piano. Instead, the training he offered focused on useful knowledge and developing character. Regarding physical education, he emphasized cleanliness, a graceful gait and

² This conformity to social convention can also be attested in the case of Basedow, since though his daughter was considered to be an extremely smart and intelligent child, she was predestined to prepare for the house-wife role.

³ Terézia von Brunszvik (Bratislava, 27 July 1775 – Martonvásár, 17 September 1861) – a pioneer of Hungarian kindergarten education, an advocate of female education.

⁴ Matthias Sennovitz (Késmárk, 11 February 1763 – Eperjes (Prešov, Slovakia), 11 August 1823) – teacher, head of the Lutheran girls' school in Eperjes.

articulation, and warned strongly against gluttony and sluggishness. The aim of moral education was to correct flaws and reinforce good traits. He considered strict discipline to be a precondition for this, this is why he only granted admission into his institution to girls between eight and ten; he was convinced that children beyond that age can hardly be shaped any further. The educational methods applied in the girls' boarding school were tailored to individual students, punishment was not used, and the moral education of children was founded on their honesty and self-respect (Szelényi, 1916).

The house rules determined both the daily routine and the system of classes. Lessons took place between seven and ten in the morning, from twelve to four in the afternoon, and from six to eight in the evening. Three times a week, students took part in dancing lessons, or participated in other forms of "ordinary" amusement. They managed their school-related tasks after lunch and supper; the day ended at ten in the evening with prayers. Among the subjects taught, we can find the following: Hungarian, German, ethics, religion, the reading of useful books, ethnography, geography, history, natural history, science, arithmetic, calligraphy, orthography, writing, music, embroidery, and drawing. The number of the students grew year by year. After Sennovitz's death, András Schmidt took over the direction of the institution. Sennovitz's educational institution was criticized by many; for instance, they found that national thought was not emphasized enough. Among other things they also found fault with his selection of subjects, which relied exclusively on the principle of usefulness, and with his lack of consideration of the characteristics of the female psyche. In fact, he intended to substitute and complement private tuition primarily with practical education (Kornis, 1927).

It can be stated that physical and moral education, conveying practical knowledge, and an active use of rewards as a motivational strategy are all elements of philanthropism.

2.2 *Debrecen Reformed Girls' Secondary School*

According to the Reformed church of Debrecen, the girls' secondary school was supposed to ensure education above the primary level for girls of Reformed denomination. The aim of the institution was determined in 1830 by the committee set up as follows:

Beyond common female tasks, whose knowledge is required by the demands, the taste and the necessities of our time, maids who have been educated in lower schools should also learn music, drawing, dancing, and other skills, that are suited to their gender and necessary for social life. Above all, they are to be educated in the duties of their righteous vocation as faithful and pleasant spouses, good mothers, and industrious house-wives (Fogarassy, 2013, p. 25).

Baroness Miklós Vay⁵ recommended Gustav Steinacker⁶, a Lutheran educator, to the city's attention. Steinacker aimed to establish a modern institution for the education of

⁵ Johanna Adelsheim (1776-1862) – wife of Baron Miklós Vay (1756-1824), imperial and royal chamberlain and brigadier-general.

⁶ Gustav Steinacker (Vienna, 1 March 1809 – Buttstädt, Germany 7 June 1877): Lutheran pastor, theologian, author and translator. He was the founder of the first German-speaking girls' educational institution in Debrecen, and the author of several Hungarian and German works on

girls, the plans for which he had already prepared. However, he only had the chance to realize these within the frame of the reformed girls' school in Debrecen between 1838 and 1842 (Aranyi, 1989). He emphasized that girls' home tuition should be followed by institutional education. Like Sennovitz, he also disapproved of the fashionable, superficial cultural elements of his age, such as French and English conversation, playing pieces of music, fashion, dancing, or embroidery. Instead of all these, he placed the focus of the training on cultural content adjusted to the specific tasks of women. He was of the conviction that the central focus in girls' schools should not be the teacher, but the education of the student; and that instruction should be determined by the autonomous development of natural talent. For the first public examination, he also published his pedagogical ideas in print (Fogarassy, 2013).

He planned his institution for girls between eight and fifteen, whom he intended to divide into three classes. He meant the first class – which was actually equivalent to primary education – for eight-to-ten-year-olds. Here he supplemented the subjects taught at the level of primary education with Hungarian, German and French. In the second class, designed for those between eleven and thirteen, cultural education followed the lines started earlier, but it was complemented with the natural, earth, and human sciences, as well as with universal history. The third class was attended by girls above thirteen. The syllabus included religion, geometry, Hungarian history, French, German and Hungarian grammar, French, Hungarian and German literature, needlework, house-keeping, singing, music, drawing, and dancing.

Though we can find embroidery, house-keeping, and science in the curriculum, the content of these subjects was broadened concentrically, and beyond the first level, we cannot talk about the subjects only belonging to general knowledge any more. During the training, the contents are supplemented with elements that prepare for feminine social roles, such as house-keeping, embroidery, dancing, and singing⁷.

Classes took place between nine and twelve in the morning; the girls were embroidering from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.; then they studied extracurricular subjects for an hour. Teaching was conducted by Steinacker and his wife, Aurélia Westher, as well as by a governess (Fogarassy, 2013).

In 1842, Steinacker was elected a pastor by the Lutheran congregation in Gölnic, thus he left Debrecen with his family. After the Hungarian Revolution of 1848-1849, he lost his position as a pastor and left Hungary. For a while, he lived in Hannover, before settling down in Weimar, where he entered the circles of Franz Liszt and enjoyed the support of the composer. For the rest of his life he was active as a pastor near Weimar (Szinnyei, 1891).

Besides being the founder of the first German-speaking educational institution for girls in Debrecen, Steinacker is also known as a man of letters and a translator. Many of his works on the theory of education and ecclesiastical polity appeared in Hungarian and German, furthermore, he translated several important literary works of his time into German. He translated Campe's "Väterlicher Rath an meine Tochter" into Hungarian (Fehér, 1999), thus, he was well-acquainted with the pedagogical ideas of the philanthropists.

education theory and ecclesiastical polity. Till 1838, he worked as the private tutor of Baron Bánffy's daughters.

⁷ For more details on educational institutions for women, see Virág (2013a).

Gustav Steinacker reflects on the aim of the secondary education of girls in several of his writings (Steinacker, 1837; 1840; 1841). In his paper “Házi leánynevelésünk állapotjáról, s annak a közleányneveléshez viszonyáról” (On the state of our home tuition for girls, and its relation to public female education) he posits the following as the primary objective of education regardless where it takes place:

The objective of education as such, thus also of female education, is generally nothing else but the natural development of the physical, mental and moral abilities lying dormant in children, so that they become most perfectly capable of meeting the requirements of their ordinary and extraordinary callings (Steinacker, 1840, p. 52).

Later on, he provides detailed definitions for the fields of education, and discusses the relationship between the child and both its mother and educator.

In his study “Nőnevelés és nőnevelő intézetek” (Female education and female educational institutions), Steinacker (1841) saw it necessary to establish a two-year female educational institution, which was to complement home tuition. In the homely climate of the institution, the students could acquire, along with subjects based on sciences, the elements of female education.

In his papers, the author outlined the problems of his time and was actively looking for available solutions (Virág, 2013a).

Though Hungary can only be considered a temporary home for Gustav Steinacker, thanks to his educational and literary achievements, he became the most significant figure of his time in the country. He played important roles in advancing the cause of female education, and, through his translations, in introducing numerous literary works⁸.

2.3 Pest

As a young man, Károly Seltenreich⁹ arrived in Balassagyarmat at the female educational institution of Rozália Beregh – whom he also married shortly after. After they had moved their institution to Pest in 1846, it soon established a high reputation. The German-speaking institution survived the turmoil of the Revolution of 1848-1849, and after Seltenreich’s decease in 1855, it was led by his wife alone. The programme of the freshly started institution was published by Seltenreich in No. 5 of the journal *Nevelési Emléklapok* in 1848 (Papers in Education). The educational institution started with three classes; its curriculum consisted of “subjects of general and specialized training”. The “subjects of general training” – which were taught by Seltenreich himself – involved the following: Hungarian language, German language, reading, calligraphy, orthography, writing and composition, recitation, religion and ethics, female activities and house-keeping, science and natural history, general geography (especially the geography of Hungary), history of Hungary, universal history, knowledge of the human body, hygiene, mythology, mental exercise, mental arithmetic and arithmetic with numbers, female domestic science and French conversation. The so called “subjects of specialized training” involved foreign languages, drawing, music, singing and dancing.

⁸ For more details on Steinacker, see Virág (2013b).

⁹ Károly Seltenreich (Gölnicbánya (Gelnica), 15 June 1813 – Pest, 8 September 1855) – teacher. He founded a female educational institution in Balassagyarmat with his wife (which in 1846 was moved to Pest). He worked laboriously on generalizing female education.

These were taught by visiting instructors. The language of instruction was partly German, and partly Hungarian. Practice-oriented education was aided by a natural science collection, an art collection, a library and a collection of physical apparatus. Parents paid additional tuition fees for their children's drawing, piano, dancing and French lessons (Szelényi, 1916).

From the 1860s, the institution offered education to girls from the primary level up to the age of 16 – 18, at that point already organised in six classes, and employed 8 – 10 teachers. In the 1870s, the number of students increased significantly; during its existence (until 1884) the institution educated and trained 4.000 students within its walls. Due to its high reputation, even the most distinguished families placed their confidence in the female educational institution of Seltenreich (Kornis, 1927).

During its almost forty years of existence, with its practice-oriented training, its natural science and art collections, and its various school equipment, Seltenreich's educational institution most definitely represented the new pedagogical direction set by the philanthropists.

2.4 The educational institution of the aristocracy

In her writings, Blanka Teleki¹⁰ drew attention to the educational deficiencies of aristocratic ladies who, raised in a foreign spirit, did not or only barely spoke Hungarian (Teleki, 1845; Teleki, 1846). In her works, she contrasted the potentially distinguished role of female education with its current defects, emphasized the necessity of national education¹¹ and proposed to establish a national female educational institution herself.

In her educational programme, she laid down the fundamental principles of training in this institution. The training was aimed at girls aged from 8 to 12, to whom the following subjects were taught by a governess and several teachers: universal history, Hungarian history, general and Hungarian geography, nature study, science, calculation on the board and in words, mythology, calligraphy, Hungarian grammar, orthography, French and German grammar and conversation, writing and composition in these three languages, literature, religion, drawing, dancing, and needlework. On the wish of the parents, learning the piano, singing, and Italian language were also available at the institution for additional tuition fees. The language of instruction was Hungarian, but foreign languages were also part of the curriculum. Furthermore, the countess emphasized the importance of physical education and providing a natural environment. She rejected ceremonial and theatrical public examinations; instead, she proposed more frequent, but still public exams in her programme. As for clothes and furniture, she considered simplicity and practicability to be the governing principles (Teleki, 1846).

The school started on the 1st December 1846 with two students. Besides a paying student, the other girl was Erzszi Erdélyi, a girl of humble birth, whom Teréz Bruszvik wanted to train as a Hungarian governess. Blanka Teleki engaged Pál Fejér¹² (later Vasvári) as a teacher for a year. In the contract, he determined the subjects to be taught and the language of instruction:

¹⁰ Countess Blanka Teleki (Hosszúfalva, 5 July 1806. – Paris, 23 October 1862) – one of the most prominent representatives of Hungarian female education; niece of Teréz Bruszvik.

¹¹ For the importance of family education, see Oberuč and Zapletal (2017).

¹² Pál Fejér was a 20 years old university student at the time. He descended from a family of lesser nobility with modest financial circumstances. His father was a Greek Catholic priest.

I, Pál Fejér, take it upon myself to teach the young ladies with whose education Lady Blanka Teleki has been trusted. I commit myself to teach universal history, Hungarian history, general and Hungarian geography, nature study and description of nature, Hungarian grammar and orthography in the most effective way and so that they are easy to comprehend for the students [...] in 14 lessons every week [...] all in Hungarian (Hornyák, 2001, p. 27).

In December 1846, Blanka Teleki applied for an operating license from the palatine, and the council of governor-general, but her application did not reach the addressees in the end, thus, the institution operated without a license.

In 1847, after the arrival of the new students, the teaching staff was complemented with a natural scientist, a musician, a French language teacher, and a teacher of arithmetic (Hornyák, 2001). Countess Teleki also devoted herself to the students; she read out loud to them and accompanied them on excursions. The institution, which never had more than eleven active students at the same time, was dissolved at the end of December 1848¹³.

The institution of Blanka Teleki differed from those discussed so far in several regards. It was the only institution established specifically for aristocrats, which inevitably left a mark on its operation. Teleki's aim was to re-Hungarianize the non-Hungarian-speaking aristocrats, and provide them with education in Hungary, so that they would not leave to study in foreign female educational institutions. Consequently, the national spirit permeated the institution as a defining principle. The influence of philanthropism can also be detected here in the institute's intimate relation to nature, in its simplicity, in the elements of primary education, and in the optional piano and dancing lessons felt suitable to the female role. The influence can be established, since Teleki's aunt, Teréz Brunzsvik, who played a decisive role in shaping the pedagogical ideas of the countess, also visited Salzman's philanthropinum.

3 Conclusion

In Germany, philanthropism laid new foundations for the development of curricula and educational methodology by taking into consideration the needs of the middle-class, which was gaining strength at the time. The rise of the middle-class in Hungary was relatively delayed, but the presence of philanthropic ideas in pedagogical thinking and writing can be clearly perceived; they were generally available for Hungarian readers.

The present study selected four 19th century female educational institutions and investigated the presence of philanthropist ideas in the training offered there. Three of these were established for the education of the middle-class, while one was founded specifically for aristocrats. In Sennovitz's institution, physical and moral education, conveying of practical knowledge, and an intensive use of rewards as motivation are the elements which are also markedly present in the concepts of philanthropism. In Steinacker's school skills and knowledge, pertaining to housekeeping and needlework are features characteristic of philanthropism. At the same time, the content of the subjects taught is expanded concentrically, and the training goes beyond the level of practical knowledge. Seltenreich's practice-oriented education, natural science and art collections, as well as various teaching aids and equipment also point in the direction of

¹³ On the education of aristocrats, see Virág (2013a).

philanthropist education. During its short life, Blanka Teleki's institution did not incorporate characteristics that are unequivocally inspired by philanthropism, however, through her aunt's mediation, she must have been familiar with them.

All the institutions under scrutiny have in common that the founding and contributing educators and teachers were provably well-acquainted with the pedagogy of the philanthropists, and they incorporated several of its elements into their programmes. Preparation for the housewife role, conveying knowledge utilizable in practice, practical approach to teaching content, and the application of the method of illustration are all emphasized. These features show that several philanthropist characteristics can be identified in the educational principles and curricula of these institutions. Nevertheless, on closer inspection, it cannot be stated that they would have taken on an institutional character exclusively reminiscent of the philanthropinums.

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