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ARTÍCULOS

The Education of Female *élites* in Nineteenth-Century Papal Rome. Innovative Contributions of the Society of the Sacred Heart of Madeleine-Sophie Barat

La educación de las élites femeninas en la Roma papal del siglo XIX. Aportaciones innovadoras de la Sociedad del Sagrado Corazón de Madeleine-Sophie Barat

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Abstract: After a brief description of the evolution of educational institutions in the first half of the nineteenth century Papal Rome, the Author explores the role played –on this side– of the new female religious institutions arose after the French Revolution. The article, on the basis on a rich archival and printed documentation, analyzes the innovative work of the teaching and religious Congregation of the Sacred Heart, founded in Paris in 1800 by Madeleine-Sophie Barat, whose “colleges for young ladies” of bourgeois and aristocracy offered to the young women of upper classes of papal capital a cultural and religious education, that was much more rich and elaborate than that provided by female traditional boarding schools.

Keywords: women’s education; religious education; city of Rome; nineteenth century.

Resumen: Tras describir brevemente la evolución de las instituciones educativas en la Roma papal durante la primera mitad del siglo XIX, el autor estudia el papel desempeñado en este ámbito por las nuevas instituciones religiosas femeninas, surgidas tras la Revolución Francesa. Se apoya para ello en una amplia documentación, tanto impresa como de archivo, y analiza la innovadora labor de la Congregación religiosa docente de las Hermanas del Sagrado Corazón, fundada en París en 1800 por Madeleine-Sophie Barat, cuyos “colegios para señoritas” de la aristocracia y la burguesía ofrecían a las jóvenes de los grupos privilegiados de la ciudad papal una formación cultural y religiosa mucho más rica y estructurada que la propia de los tradicionales internados privados femeninos.

Palabras clave: educación femenina; educación religiosa; ciudad de Roma; siglo XIX.

By far the most significant aspect of educational policy implemented following the Restoration of Roman ecclesiastical authority concerned the urgent invitation to open houses and establish schools, boarding schools and colleges in the capital for the numerous female religious congregations that had emerged in France, Belgium and other peninsula states between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, or that were restored after the suppressions of the the absolutist and revolutionary periods, and which were intended primarily for the education and instruction of young people (Sani, 1994 and 1996).

A total of 17 religious educational institutions were established in Rome between 1815 and 1870 at the request of popes or under authorization granted by the Vicariate in response to specific requests by individuals and charities.

Some of these religious orders operating in Rome are of greater interest to us than others, as they were entrusted with the difficult task of managing the education and instruction of the young women of the civilian aristocracy and, in particular, with promoting the fundamental renewal of the institutions and their curricula targeted at the girls and young women of the nobility.

We are referring to very articulated educational proposals, which present several new elements as compared with traditional models of household and cloistered women's education, whose analysis allows to highlight the main elements of change that affected the educational institutions promoted by the new female teaching orders, primarily in France and Italy, and then throughout Europe. In this direction, the post-Napoleonic Papal Rome offers a particularly rich and paradigmatic field of investigation.

Thus, in 1828 Pope Leo XII instructed the nuncio in France, Monsignor Luigi Lambruschini to make arrangements with the Mother Superior of the Society of the Sacred Heart, Madeleine-Sophie Barat (Lambruschini, 1934, p. 63) for some of the institution's nuns to be sent to Rome¹. The Society of the Sacred Heart had been founded in Paris in November 1800 and was primarily dedicated to the education

1 Madeleine-Sophie Barat (Joigny 1779-Paris 1865) founded the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Paris, in 1800. The purpose of this female religious congregation was the propagation of the devotion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus through the education of girls, especially those belonging to upper social classes. The congregation had a rapid expansion and, during the 23 years of generalship of Barat, founded 105 colleges around the world. The first school opened in Amiens, the schools followed of Grenoble and Poitiers, the missions in the United States of America, in Savoy, and then in Rome. This was decisive for the consolidation of Barat's Congregation. Although in recent years several works on Barat and Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus have appeared, the studies of Jeanne De Charry (De Charry, 1979 and De Charry, 1981) are still unsurpassed, as well as the *Positio super virtutibus* (Sacra Rituum Congregatione, 1900).

of young women of the civilian aristocracy (De Charry, 1979). Arriving in the capital in June that year, the Ladies of the Sacred Heart occupied the former convent of Trinità de' Monti, which belonged to the Order of Minims of St. Francis of Paola (Anonymous A, 19th century). There, in the following months, they opened a fee-paying girls' school with an attached free primary school for girls of the lower social classes (Anonymous B, 19th century).

In 1832, Pope Gregory XVI also granted them the convent of Saints Rufina and Seconda in Trastevere. Here, in addition to the Society's Novitiate, which was later (January 24, 1842) transferred to the nearby Villa Lante (Gregory XVI, 1833), a second fee-paying school and a nursery school for the "poor girls" of the densely populated neighbourhood were opened (Anonymous B, 19th century).

The call to Rome to the religious educational institutions intensified greatly during the pontificate of Pope Cappellari. In 1834, in order to promote the educational work in the capital of the Company of Mary Our Lady, founded in Bordeaux in 1607 by Jeanne de Lestonnac (De Azcarate Ristori, 1963; Sorbet, 1914), Cardinal Vicar Zurla decided to entrust the convent of S. Dionisio at Quattro Fontane, with its boarding school and day school, to this religious order (Anonymous, 1834; Anonymous C, 19th century).

A few years later, in 1839, Gregory XVI asked the Sisters of St. Joseph, established in 1649 in Le Puy by the Jesuit Jean-Pierre Medaille (Bois, 1950, pp. 238-239; Langlois, 1984, pp. 441-447), to come to Rome. The order opened a fee-paying boarding school with attached primary school for girls of the poorer social classes at St. Lorenzo in Miranda in the Monti district (Morichini, 1870, pp. 628-629).

To fully evaluate the meaning and scope of the innovations introduced by these French religious orders in the education and instruction of the young women of the nobility, it should first be noted that after 1815 boarding schools established in convents, mostly dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, had resumed their work in Rome after a near total halt following the suppression of the religious orders decreed in 1810 by the Napoleonic government (Naselli, 1986).

Here we are referring in particular to those run by the Ursulines in the convent of Via Vittoria, the Oblates of St. Frances of Rome at Tor de' Specchi, the Augustinians in St. Caterina de' Funari and, finally, the Servants of Mary or the *Mantellate* at the convent of Our Lady of Sorrows in Lungara, which belonged to the Salesian Sisters. Information on the educational provision of these convents in the period following the Restoration can be found in the *Relazione* of Cardinal Vicar Costantino Patrizi (19th century).

In the area of educational guidance and teaching programmes, these institutions maintained substantial continuity with the past. The instruction they delivered

during the nineteenth century, in fact, essentially reproduced the typical education of the female boarding schools of the *ancien régime*. The curriculum for the “young ladies” boarding in the convent of the Ursulines, for example, stated that “above all” they must be taught “how to lead a civil and virtuous life, in order to make them true Christians and good mothers”. They should therefore be taught to “read in the vernacular, and Latin, and to write and spell correctly, arithmetic, and the sacred history of Rome”. The girls were also taught singing and “all the needlework appropriate to their sex” (Anonymous, after 1815). Religious education itself was provided in addition to catechism classes, also through and there were frequent spiritual rituals and exercise of the most common devotional practices (Annaert, 1982, pp. 124-125).

Overall, the educational perspective which was the basis for the teaching delivered in these cloister-type boarding schools reflected a decidedly traditional conception of the role and tasks of the women of the aristocracy. The model of femininity promoted after the Restoration was essentially the same that had characterized the educational work of these institutions during the two previous centuries: the pious and wise wife and mother; constant in the practice of piety and Christian virtues; diligence in the domestic sphere and completely able to fulfil the obligations resulting from the social status of females (Constant, 1986; McMullen, 1977).

As mentioned, from the late 1820s the traditional convent boarding schools were joined by colleges of education set up by certain religious orders from France devoted primarily to the education of young girls of the civilian aristocracy: the society of the Sacred Heart of Madeleine-Sophie Barat, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Father Jeanne-Pierre Medaille and the Society of Mary Our Lady of Jean de Lestonnac (Mayeur, 1979).

Coming from outside the educational tradition of monastic origin and with an unmistakably Jesuitical spiritual inspiration (which, in the case of the Institute founded by Father Medaille, was further enriched by the motifs and nuances of the spiritual strand of the *French School* of St. Francis of Sales), these orders showed a keener sensitivity to the changing demands of modern life and to the role that women of the nobility were called to play in the society of the time.

This sensitivity had developed primarily due to the impact of the profound socio-cultural changes and secularization of customs that had taken place in Revolutionary and Napoleonic France. The nuns had encountered the spiritual and material effects of these transformations in their activities as educators of the young girls of the new nobility created by Napoleon and of the rich and vibrant French middle classes in the colleges and boarding schools of Paris, Lyon, Bordeaux, Amiens and Grenoble (Crubellier, 1979, pp. 282-285).

In the case of the Society of the Sacred Heart, for example, the dramatic revolutionary themselves events had highlighted awareness that “the literary education delivered by the sisters in the past was no longer sufficient and suitable (...) to the changing situation of the times” and that it was necessary, therefore, to develop an education for girls that was more responsive to the needs of the new age (Anonymous, 1900, pp. 151-152).

In essence, this meant providing the young ladies of the upper classes with a deeper awareness not only of their family duties, but also their more specifically social duties and, above all, their particular responsibility for “spreading the faith, upholding the honour of their religion and re-establishing true and solid piety in the world” (Société du Sacre Coeur, 1852a, pp. 170-174). At the same time, they needed to be provided with a far richer and more complete civil and religious education than was delivered in the convents. Above all, they needed robust spiritual training to protect them from the harmful influences of the environment and the philosophy of the day, to enable them to operate with full Christian integrity in society. “Storms are gathering over our girls”, wrote Madeleine-Sophie Barat in a letter sent to the nuns of her Institute in November 1831. “It is vital that their faith be built on rock” (Barat, 1960, pp. 35).

These aims were widely adopted by the girls’ colleges established in Rome by the new religious orders. In fact they gave civil education or the specifically cultural, that is preparation of the girls far greater space and prominence than was the norm in cloister-type boarding schools. Also, with regard to spiritual and religious education, the innovations introduced by these institutions were not trivial.

The curriculum of the traditional women’s colleges, focusing primarily on the daily exercise of the most popular devotions and on basic catechetical instruction, was replaced in the boarding schools maintained by the new religious congregations by a curriculum modelled on the Ignatian path of the *spiritual exercises* and its pedagogical progression, in which “special care” was dedicated to laying deep “foundations in the faith” (through the study of the catechism and sacred history), to sacramental preparation and liturgical life, and on the spread of devotional practices and spiritual lessons intended to inculcate in the boarders a solid and internalized piety and a fervent apostolic spirit (Compañía de María, 1996, pp. 164-185 and 257-287; De Charry, 1981; Bois, 1950, pp. 93-97).

It is not possible here to go further into an analysis of the arrangements and curricula of the various education establishments for girls that arose in Rome after the Restoration (Vicariate of Rome, 1850). In order to clarify the significance of the changes that took place in this area, however, we shall examine, albeit in general terms, the *Regolamento e Piano di studii* (*Regulations and Curriculum*) of the two

boarding schools established by the Society of the Sacred Heart at Trinità de' Monti and at St. Rufina in Trastevere. In our opinion these are the most well-structured and complete expressions of the new pathways charted by the French religious orders for the education of girls of aristocratic status in the papal capital.

In this regard, it should be stated that this *Regolamento*, whose basic structure and inspiration have many points in common with the colleges for boys of the Society of Jesus, was configured as a genuine *Ratio Studiorum* for females. In addition to provisions for the distribution of subjects across various courses and related programmes and textbooks, it included comprehensive, detailed information about the method of instruction, discipline, timetables, rules for examinations and transitions between classes, the function and tasks of the *maestra generale* (senior teacher) (whose role was equivalent in many respects to that of the “prefect of studies”, in Jesuit colleges) and of the teachers of the different classes (Società del Sacro Cuore, 1861; Société du Sacre Coeur, 1852b).

The educational process established for Sacred Heart boarders included a two-year *preliminary course*, also called *piccolo educandato* (boarders' pre-school), where girls aged between five and nine years received primary education and their first Christian instruction (Società del Sacro Cuore, 1861, pp. 23-24 and 33-40); this was followed by the *regular course*, for “boarders who already knew how to read and write”. This course, which lasted seven years in total, was divided into five classes, in which the following subjects were taught: religious instruction, handwriting, Italian and French grammar and literature, rhetoric, arithmetic, history (dates), sacred and profane history, mythology, geography, natural history (with elements of physics, chemistry and astronomy), home economics and manual labour.

It was also expected that the girls would “study Foreign Languages, Fine Arts, Drawing and Music”, which were generally taught by external staff, with salaries paid directly by the families. This *Regolamento* (Società del Sacro Cuore, 1861, pp. 40-65) provides specific instructions on the programmes for the various subjects to be taught in the classes, the relevant manuals and text books to be used, and the texts from which the teachers were to prepare their lessons. It also contains (Società del Sacro Cuore, pp. 6-23 and 72-92) summary, but rigorous, comments about the objectives pursued in the teaching of the individual subjects and the didactic methods to be used.

At the end of the *regular course*, the boarders were allowed to attend the so-called “higher class”, an additional one or two year course intended to “improve” the education received earlier. In this class, in addition to deeper study of the above-mentioned subjects, the boarders studied philosophy, based on a programme divided into three parts: “Logic (...), Metaphysics and Ethics or Morals” (Società del Sacro Cuore, 1861, pp. 65-70).

It should be noted that the ordinance also provided for the establishment of a *remedial class* for “young girls who cannot keep up with other students of the same age, due to slowness of mind, weakness of memory, neglect of them in their early years, or lack of knowledge of language even though they are instructed in other subjects”. The curriculum of this class was not defined in detail; it was left to the teachers to carry out the task of establishing the “purposes of the instruction (...) according to the ability of the pupil”. “Sometimes –it is stated– some absolutely essential elements must be restricted: Catechism, Spelling, the Fundamental Operations of Arithmetic, Sacred History, some knowledge of Geography, and some rules of epistolary style” (Società del Sacro Cuore, 1861, pp. 70-71).

Illustrations of the content and purposes of the different subjects repeatedly emphasise the need to train culturally whole women who are “well-grounded in the knowledge of all the truths of (...) Religion”. In linguistic and literary education, for example, the *Regulations and Curriculum* underline that it was not enough to teach the girls to express themselves “properly (in) their own language”: it was necessary to ensure that they could speak and write “elegantly, such as to make greater impression on the minds” of their interlocutors (Società del Sacro Cuore, 1861, pp. 25 and 14).

Once they “knew and spoke good Italian”, the boarders would have to start to study foreign languages, which were considered “something that must not be overlooked in the education” of the young people of the nobility. In particular, it was believed that they needed to acquire a perfect command of French, “which has become like the language of Europe”. By reading the works of “the best authors who have written in that language”, they would mature in their acquisition of “an elegant style” and a “true knowledge of the beauty and delicacy of the language” (Società del Sacro Cuore, 1861, p. 13).

The girls also needed to be provided with adequate knowledge of the “literature of the mother country”, by “covering all the periods of Italian literature with emphasis on the outstanding authors in each genre”. French literature, should therefore be studied “in parallel with Italian literature”, by “comparing the periods of each”, so as to enable pupils to make connections, highlight differences and “train their tastes” (Società del Sacro Cuore, 1861, pp. 15-16).

As part of the teaching in the Sacred Heart colleges, particular importance was attributed to the study of history and geography. The first, in particular, was considered “of great use” as it intended “not only to adorn the mind of the young girls, but also to train their souls”. In this regard the curriculum for the *regular course* specified that in addition to sacred history and the history of ancient civilizations, the boarders were to study the modern history, both “ecclesiastical” and civilian, of the various nation states.

In the instructions for teaching methods, there was particular insistence on the importance of deepening “the interconnection of the major facts, by placing them always in relation to one other”, and the need for the students to trace back in a unified framework the histories of the different countries and different eras, putting them “all in chronological correspondence with one other”, so as to “imprint the received notions more firmly in the memory” (Società del Sacro Cuore, 1861, pp. 19-20).

With regard to geography, it must be said that it was considered of great importance for the enlargement of the mental horizons of the boarders and the enrichment of their cultural heritage. The subject was taught based on an active method, intended to stimulate the interest and direct involvement of the class. The explanations in the various parts of the curriculum were, in fact, performed with the aid of maps and globes, so that the various notions imparted were “better imprinted in the mind” and, above all, the subject was made ‘attractive’.

Subsequently, the boarders were called upon to apply the knowledge learned, by drawing maps themselves, “in accordance with the principles of Geometry to make them more exact”, and indicating on these maps “the names of the kingdoms, capitals, and the peculiarities of the soil, climate, and production” (Società del Sacro Cuore, 1861, pp. 17-19).

The insertion of philosophy among the subjects of the “higher class” was a particularly significant innovation because, as is well-known, this subject was not traditionally included among those taught in colleges and boarding schools for women. The decision to provide teaching of a philosophical nature to the young girls who had finished the regular course of study and were preparing to “go back into the world” drew its main motivation from two sets of considerations: first, in fact, this subject was allocated the task of “perfecting the reason and judgment” of the pupils and “enriching (their) minds with many useful types of knowledge”. This would make them more adapted to life and work among educated and refined people; secondly and more specifically, philosophy was considered an effective means of forearming the young women of the upper classes “against the false and dangerous statements of unbelief” and religious indifference. The *Regulations and Curriculum* of the Sacred Heart stated that

“some years ago the study of philosophy was not appropriate (for women); but unfortunately, given that nowadays even the young women hear religion talked about irreverently, or (which perhaps is even worse) they have the opportunity to observe everywhere a spirit of indifference, they need this knowledge so they can acquire the true light that is to direct their steps and enable them to

know how deceived are those who deviate from the straight path of reason and faith” (Società del Sacro Cuore, 1861, pp. 21).

A very significant chapter of the curriculum developed by the elite women’s colleges opened in Rome by the French religious orders concerns the textbooks and, more generally, the suggested reading for the young boarders during their education.

Once again, unable to offer a complete overview of the manuals adopted for the various subjects and of the “libraries for the young female boarders” provided in each of the above-mentioned colleges, we will refer mainly to the provisions in the two Roman boarding schools of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

A first aspect worthy of attention is the texts on which the teachers of the different classes would have to base the preparation of their lessons. For example in relation to catechism, and, more generally, moral and religious education, the *Regulations and Curriculum* of the two boarding schools established in Rome by the Society of the Sacred Heart recommended that teachers use, together with the *Catechismo romano* (*Roman Catechism*) and Lhomond’s *Compendio della storia sacra* (*Compendium of sacred history*), Aymé’s *Catechismo sui fondamenti della fede* (*Catechism of the Foundations of Faith*), Feller’s *Catechismo filosofico* (*Philosophical Catechism*), Cardinal Gerdil’s *Breve esposizione dei caratteri della vera religione* (*Brief Exposition of the Origin, Progress and Marks of the True Religion*) and two famous texts by the Jesuit Paul Segneri: *L’incredulo senza scusa* (*The Doubter without Excuse*) and *Il cristiano istruito nella sua legge* (*The Christian Instructed*). Among the suggested readings for boarders, the following should be highlighted: Bellarmino’s *Dottrina cristiana breve* (*Brief Christian Doctrine*) and *Dichiarazione più copiosa della dottrina Cristiana* (*An Ample Declaration of the Christian Doctrine*), the *Compendio di storia ecclesiastica* (*Compendium of Ecclesiastical History*) for the use of the schools of the Society of Jesus and the famous *Catechismo di perseveranza* (*Catechism of perseverance*) by Abbé Gaume.

There was an equally rich range of handbooks on the teaching of grammar, rhetoric and Italian and French literature. The texts to be used by the teachers and pupils in the higher courses included, for example, the Italian grammar manuals of Father Soave, Centurioni and Corticelli, the French grammar of Noël and Chap-sal, Blair’s *Lezioni di retorica e belle lettere* (*Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*) in Francesco Soave’s Italian edition, Rambelli’s *Precetti di stile epistolare* (*Precepts of Epistolary Style*), the *Piccola guida allo scriver lettere* (*Short Guide to Letter-writing*) by Salvatore Muzzi, *Squarci di eloquenza* (*Excerpts of Eloquence*) taken from the Cavanis collection, selected prose of Bartoli, Segneri, Cesari and Bresciani, several compendia of literary history, including Cardella, Maffei and Corniani for Italian literature and Lefranc, Drioux, Noël and La Place for French literature.

Among the various texts suggested for the teaching and study of history and geography, the following are noteworthy: Bossuet's *Discorso sopra la storia universale* (*Discourse on Universal History*), Rollin's *Compendio di storia antica e romana* (*Compendium of Ancient and Roman History*), Paolo Barola's *Quadro cronologico della storia antica e moderna* (*Chronological Outline of Ancient and Modern History*), Feller's *Dizionario degli uomini illustri* (*Dictionary of Illustrious Men*), Balbi's *Geografia moderna* (*Modern Geography*) and a series of individual history texts on European and non-European States, taken from Cantù's *Universal History* and from other encyclopaedic works (Società del Sacro Cuore, 1861, p. 49).

In relation to mathematics and science texts (Società del Sacro Cuore, 1861, pp. 69-70), we limit ourselves here to mention of the almost ubiquitous compendia of arithmetic of Coletti and Soave, Ducoin-Girardin's *Trattamenti sulla fisica* (*Entertainments in Physics*), Bélèze's *Elementi di storia naturale* (*Elements of Natural History*), Sonzogno's *Letture elementari sulla Botanica* (*Elementary Readings on Botany*) and Desdoutis's *Lezioni elementari di astronomia* (*Elementary Astronomy*). For the texts by French authors, the *Regulations and Curriculum* recommended: "the books listed in this curriculum shall be read as far as is possible in their original version" (Società del Sacro Cuore, 1861, pp. 70).

The texts suggested for the study of philosophy in "higher course" classes are of particular interest as they reveal an unambiguous adherence to the philosophical doctrines of the Counter-revolution and, more generally, to the traditionalist and reactionary thought of the French Restoration. In order to provide the boarders with sufficient understanding of the most useful "notions of moral and religious philosophy" and the key "elements of metaphysics", the *Regulations and Curriculum* of the colleges of the Sacred Heart recommended that the teachers read for themselves, in addition to the *Istruzioni di Logica, metafisica, ed etica* (*Institutions of Logic, Metaphysics, and Ethics*) of father Francesco Soave (limited to the chapters of the second part, concerning "how to propose and demonstrate the truth"), a series of short works including "*L'arte di giungere al vero* (*The Art of Arriving at the Truth*) by Balmes, some passages by Mr De Maistre (excerpt from *Le serate di Pietroburgo, ovvero Trattenimenti intorno al governo temporale della Provvidenza - Evenings in St Petersburg, or Entertainments on the Temporal Government of Providence*), the abridged *Memorie del Giacobinismo* (*Memoirs of Jacobinism*) by Barruel, (...) *Studi filosofici* (*Philosophical Studies*) by Nicolas, and certain sections of *Fiore di storia Ecclesiastica* (*Essential Ecclesiastical History*) by P. Cesari" (Società del Sacro Cuore, 1861, p. 66).

If we now move from the manuals and textbooks listed for the development of the different parts of the curriculum, to the analysis of the publications collected in "libraries for the young girls boarding" at the two colleges of the Sacred Heart in

Rome, two aspects worthy of attention emerge: the conspicuous number of works of an ascetic-devotional and hagiographic character by French and Italian authors, and the equally numerous texts of a more modern bent dealing with non-religious subjects, specifically aimed at children and youth (Società del Sacro Cuore, after 1855).

With regard to this ascetic and devotional character, we should mention, alongside the writings of some “classic” authors of modern Catholic spirituality, such as Lorenzo Scupoli, Francis de Sales, Teresa of Avila and Alfonso Maria de’ Liguori, the rich range of ascetic treatises, collections of meditations, directories and guides for souls, comments on the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius written by Jesuit authors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as Alfonso Rodriguez, Louis Bourdaloue, Virgilio Cepari, Jean Crasset, Paolo Segneri, Giovan Battista Scaramelli and Carlo Ambrogio Cattaneo. There is also a notable collection of *Lives of the Saints* and other works of a hagiographic nature, both in French and in Italian, including the famous *Leggendario di alcune Santissime Vergini* (*Legends of some Holy Virgins*) and the *Raccolta delle Sacre Vite dei Santi* (*Legends of some Holy Virgins*) of father of the Order of the Oratory Carlo Massini (Società del Sacro Cuore, after 1855).

Among the latter works, the following are noteworthy: *Scuola delle fanciulle di Madama Le Prince de Beaumont, ovvero Dialoghi piacevoli tradotti dal francese* (*Madame Le Prince de Beaumont’s School for Girls, or Pleasant Dialogues Translated from the French*), the *Prime lettura di fanciulli* (*First Readings for children*) by Giuseppe Taverna, Salvatore Muzzi’s *Le cento novelline morali* (*One Hundred Moral Tales*), the famous *Moral Tales* of father Francesco Soave and the equally famous *Giannettino o racconti morali* (*Giannetto or Moral Tales*) by Abbot Luigi Alessandro Parravicini.

In light of what we have said above, there seems no doubt that, with respect to the education offered in the traditional convent boarding schools, the curriculum offered by the colleges of the new female religious orders was more in tune with the cultural and spiritual needs of the post-revolutionary society. This explains, in our view, the remarkable success enjoyed by these institutions which, within a few years, became the centres par excellence for the education of the young women of the aristocracy and the upper middle classes of the capital. The data for girls enrolled in the various colleges and boarding schools in Rome between 1840 and 1870 largely confirm this success. In this period, in fact, the number of boarders at the cloister-type schools remained almost constant and slightly above the levels of the second half of the eighteenth century—in the case of the Ursuline Institute (Anonymous, after 1688), for example, the available data are as follows: 1742: 20 boarders; 1776: 40; 1790: 39; 1802: 30; between 1802 and 1842 there were 115—, while in the schools run by the French orders there was a remarkable increase. In this context, there were only 16 boarders at the school of the Sisters of St Joseph in 1840 while

in 1870 the number had increased to 130 (Anonymous 1840; Anonymous, 1871); in the two Sacred Hearth colleges, the same years saw an increase from 77 to 135 (Anonymous B, 19th century; Anonymous, 1829-1911). Finally, the school of the Sisters of the Society of Mary Our Lady, had 19 pupils registered at the start of the 1840s and had reached 48 in the months immediately preceding the entry into Rome of the Italians (Anonymous, after 1841-1842; Anonymous, 1870).

But beyond mere numbers, it should be stressed that these colleges, as well as becoming privileged –and in some ways unique– places for the education of the female aristocracy of Rome and the other provinces of the Papal States (for example, the college of Trinità de' Monti, from the early 1830s to the late nineteenth century, educated young women of the Altieri, Colonna, Odescalchi, Ruspoli, Gabrielli, Caetani, Rospigliosi, Altemps, Santa Croce, Del Bufalo, Soderini, Lante, Theodoli, Pacca, Bofondi, Campello, Patrizi, Bandini, Ricci, Mattei, Bentivoglio, Bernetti, Polidori, Piccolomini, Ciccolini and Viti families, to name but a few) soon spread their reputation and their ability to attract pupils also from beyond the borders of the state. Within a few years they had become the benchmark for the youth of the Southern aristocracy, especially in Naples and Sicily; for example: Caracciolo, Ruffo di Scaletta, Bourbon del Monte, Pignatelli, Capece Galeotta, Pace, Cajanello, Bal-sorano, D'Ayala, Diano, Falconieri, Ruffo-Scilla, Tasca, Folicaldi and Dusmet (Anonymous, 1829-1911; Anonymous, 1835-1916).

This tendency saw a significant increase, especially in the aftermath of national unification, as a significant number of Southern aristocratic families started to send their daughters to the exclusive Roman boarding schools and colleges maintained by the sisters. Their choice was motivated not only by the undoubted effectiveness of the teaching methods and the notable breadth and quality of the civil and religious education the schools delivered, but also by ideological and political considerations, related on the one hand to identification with the uncompromisingly closed policy of the papacy and the Church towards the new Liberal State (and, at least for a time, to the much more modest and limited instances of Bourbon Legitimism) and, on the other hand, to the uncertainties and delays of the liberal governments, especially during the first forty years following unification, in addressing the problem of the instruction and education of upper class young women (Buonazia, 1873; Ministry of Public Education 1889, pp. 6-8).

In conclusion, we can say that it was an undoubted merit of the new teaching orders in Papal Rome that the education of women progressively phased out the older and obsolete eighteenth century methods, and put in place more modern arrangements with greater attention to the new tasks and responsibilities to which the women of the nobility were called in both society and the Church.

In this respect, it is not insignificant that after 1870 the ranks of the former pupils of the Roman institutes run by the French sisters were the source of the most active and engaged actors in that rich vein of women's organizations and societies that, within the context of the initiatives of the intransigent Catholic movement in the peninsula, devoted their main efforts to the promotion of works of devotion, charity and welfare and the Christian education of young people (Patrizi, 1875; Anonymous D, 19th century).

In the same way –and in this area, in the absence of specific studies and research we can only put forward hypotheses for verification– it seems to be the case that these colleges made a significant contribution to the changing culture and customs of aristocratic women, by promoting the emergence in Italy of a new leading role for upper class women and by laying the foundations for a more vibrant and effective presence of the nobility in the cultural and civil life of our country.

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