

POLLY THANAILAKI

CHERCHEZ LA FEMME. THE GENDERED BODY OF THE GREEK
AND ITALIAN FEMALE SCHOOLTEACHERS AS A CASE STUDY
(19TH-EARLY 20TH CENTURIES)

CHERCHEZ LA FEMME. GENERE E CORPO INSEGNANTE DELLE MAESTRE
GRECHE E ITALIANE COME CASO DI STUDIO (XIX-INIZIO XX SEC.)

Schooling has always played a significant role for people's invigoration and enlightenment. Greece gained its freedom from the four-century Ottoman rule with the 1821 Greek Revolution for Independence and shaped itself as a free state in 1832. With the Italian Unification (Risorgimento), the country also became a single state and formed the Kingdom of Italy in 1861. The 19th – century discourse on women's schooling in Greece was part of a more general ideology traced not only on the Greek Orthodox beliefs and on the national aspirations, but also on debated gender inequity and class discrimination. Likewise, in Italy during the same period, the question on education was a recurrent issue seeking to build a uniformity in its schooling system instead of being fragmented in various organizational types that existed during the period before the unification. The appearance of female elementary schoolteachers was a turning -point for women's employment in both countries as the teachers' profession opened new avenues for their emancipation and for obtaining civic rights. The purpose of the paper is to study the gendered body of the 19th to early 20th centuries – Greek and Italian female schoolteachers as a whole, and to explore the quest for an organized cycle of studies. Moreover, it seeks to compare the curricula of the Normal schools, as well as to study the social context within which women-teachers worked in the two countries, especially in the countryside.

La scolarizzazione ha sempre giocato un ruolo per il rinvigorimento e l'illuminazione del popolo. La Grecia ottenne la sua libertà dopo quattro secoli di dominio Ottomano con la rivoluzione per l'indipendenza del 1821, strutturandosi come Stato ibero nel 1832. Con il Risorgimento e l'unificazione nazionale anche l'Italia divenne uno Stato monarchico nel 1861. Il discorso ottocentesco sulla scolarizzazione femminile in Grecia fa parte di un'ideologia più ampia tracciata non solo sulle credenze della Chiesa ortodossa e sulle aspirazioni nazionali, ma anche sulla dibattuta disegualianza di genere e sulla discriminazione di classe. Allo stesso modo nello stesso periodo in Italia la questione dell'educazione era un tema ricorrente che cercava di costruire una uniformità nel sistema scolastico a differenza della frammentazione organizzativa precedente all'unificazione. La comparsa di insegnanti donne nella scuola elementare fu una svolta per le possibilità di lavoro e di impiego femminili in ambedue i paesi. La professione docente apriva nuove strade per la loro emancipazione e per ottenere diritti civili. Lo scopo del saggio è studiare genere e corpo insegnante delle maestre greche e italiane nel loro complesso fra '800 e inizio '900. Intende anche esplorare la ricerca per un ciclo organizzato di studi. Inoltre, l'articolo cerca di confrontare i curricula delle scuole normali, nonché di studiare il contesto sociale all'interno del quale le insegnanti donne hanno lavorato nei due paesi, specialmente in campagna.

Key words: Nineteenth to early-Twentieth centuries education, Greek and Italian female schoolteachers, Feminism.

Parole chiave: educazione, XIX sec., inizio XX sec., insegnanti donne di scuola, Italia, Grecia, femminismo.

Education and the establishment of Normal Schools during Nineteenth to early Twentieth centuries in Greece and in Italy: A comparison

Before the 1821 Greek Revolution for Independence and in the long four-century period of the Greeks' subjugation under the Ottoman rule, education and schools were associated with the Orthodox Church because the clergy was «the only recognized authority of the Orthodox Christians' that organized the schooling which mostly catered for the upper-ranked clerics» (Koliopoulos and Veremis 2002, 159). The Church enjoyed privileges because the Sultan had gradually granted the Patriarch in Constantinople with secular power and responsibilities to exert civic and judicial authority over the Christian peoples. So, schooling was in the hands of the priests who taught the rudiments of knowledge to young pupils. Because of the absence of schools and because of the fact that the Ottomans brutalized the enslaved populations, the legend has it that during the first two centuries of the Ottoman rule, the Greeks were denied access to literacy. This prohibition led to the myth-making of the so-called "hidden" schools. According to this national lore, the occupied people sent their children to monasteries, or churches at night secretly in order to receive lessons¹, so as not to be noticed – and eventually – killed by the Ottomans. There, the priest who had collected a small number of children, taught them the rudiments of knowledge. The long-lasting legend which is not historically documented on its real existence, aimed at emphasizing on the Christian people's deprivation of schooling, being also a narrative that originated and took shape mainly in the Nineteenth century Greek thought when the newly-shaped country started to get organized.

In the Italian peninsula, and by the Eighteenth century, schooling also lay in the hands of the Catholic priests, but there was a number of lay teachers who taught in towns or cities. In the countryside, those of the "simple" people who were able to read and write – and these were the cobblers, tailors, farmers and other artisans – instructed the children the "three rs" (Polenghi and Triani 2014, 9). Regarding the elite, by Nineteenth century the Italian noblemen attached a great deal of importance to religious "dimensions" for educating their children and a great number of them had hired priests in order to tutor their sons and daughters-the latter being instructed in some cases only. These "men of cloth" acted as teachers that the titled families hosted in their castles and trusted (Cardoza 1997, 138). During the enlightenment period educators and the learned men supported the view that the state schools were necessary to operate throughout the peninsula. But the secondary tier of state education was not organized. Before Italian unification, the Catholic priests still comprised the majority of the teaching staff, whereas lay teachers were the half of the total of teachers

¹ But the main answer to the question why these "hidden" schools operated at night was based on the argument that during the first period of the Ottoman occupation it was the fear which made the Greek parents send their children to these underground schools. The fear originated from the practice of the "devshirm" by the Ottomans which was the brutally enforced conscription of young Christian boys aging from eight to eighteen who were forced to convert to Muslims being obliged to serve in the Sultan's court (the Janissaries). For a refutation of this argument, see: Papageorgiou 2005, 112-114.

even in the Northern regions of Italy such as in Piedmont and in Austrian Lombardy (Polenghi and Triani 2014, 9). Therefore, the secondary level of education rested on the private sector that catered for the needs of the titled families, which, after 1848 had to make themselves adaptable to a new world regarding their son's schooling. In line to the new ideas, the asset of the noble birth had to be given up and to leave space to «certain standards of culture and civilization». So, there appeared a number of new “restructured” schools of higher studies which were private ones. These educational institutions «sought to replace the titles of nobility with others like the *laurea* or the diploma which granted privileges on those who acquired them». Though the secondary schools challenged the class of the nobles in general – at the same time – they offered the “hereditary nobility” a much-needed chance to build strong ties amidst these families, to create cohesion and to «inculcate traditional values and attitudes into the younger generations», apart from the competitive skills that they offered (Cardoza 1997, 139).

In independent Greece, the 1834 law (article 58) and the subsequent decree that regulated the operation of primary education, stipulated that the girls' schools- in cases where that would be feasible- had to be separate from those of the boys and that girls be instructed by female teachers only (Venthylos 1884, 13). In the same law and according to article 66, there were provisions made for the establishment of a Normal School aiming at the training of both male and female teachers. Though the Greek state planned to educate men and women teachers on an equal basis, the law was never enforced regarding its provisions. The main cause stemmed from the fact that the state did not have the sufficient resources to fund the training of both genders. Another reason was the element that the Greek society did not look favorably to the prospect of co- education. The first male Normal school organized by the Greek state was set up in 1834 in the city of Nauplion, in Peloponnesus, being the first capital city of the country. Later, it relocated to Athens as it was finally decided to be the seat of the Greek state. But its project designed to supply with the training of male teachers alone (Ziogou-Karastergiou 1986, 66). As a consequence, the operation of Normal schools for female teachers rested solely on the private sector until the first decades of 20th century. Under this frame of operation, the Greek government's provision for the training of female teachers was limited to conferring a number of scholarships to those of the young girls who graduated from the “Parthenogogeia” (girls' schools), on condition that they had completed a certain cycle of studies and had performed successfully. Such a girls' school operated in Nauplion and was managed by a European lady called Mme Volmerange. Another school of this type was set up in Athens and was managed by the American missionary protestant couple John and Frances Hill. A similar form of training was also supplied in the “Philelliniko Paidagogeio” [Philhellenic Normal School] based in Hermoupolis, the capital city of the island of Syros, and was managed by the protestant missionary F. Hildner. On the same island there was another school of this type operating, entitled “Anotero sxoleio Korasion” [Girls' Higher school]. After graduation from these schools, the girls were to be examined by a committee that conferred a teaching license to them depending on their competence

and performance. Because of the fact that the students who became teachers were very young, the Greek Ministry of Education issued a decree in 1835 according to which the female teachers had to be at least fifteen years old (Zacharakis 2014). Unfortunately, these attempts were fragmentary and the schools did not operate on the basis of an organized Normal School. By 1836, there was a big gap in the education of the Greek female teachers. According to the law, the women-teachers were licensed to teach on condition that they had completed their education of a “higher” level of girls’ school and that they had performed well. But these studies did not correspond to a comprehensive curriculum of the intermediate level, as it provided only a short cycle of studies that simply stood above the elementary school. That was the reason why the girls who obtained a teaching diploma, were very young. To the opposite, male teachers were eligible to study in the Normal school provided that they had attended classes up to the second grade of the “Hellenic school” which stood on the intermediary level of education (Ziougou-Karastergiou 1986, 78-79). This gap between male and female teachers’ training was filled by the *Philekpedeutiki Etaireia* (Society for the Friends of Education) two years later, in a quest for an organized cycle of female studies. The Society managed the *Arsakeion*² schools. The reason why the structure of the *Arsakeion* Normal school is studied separately, is the fact that it was the only accredited by the Greek State Normal School for female teachers that supplied a full-scale curriculum throughout Nineteenth to early Twentieth centuries. In 1836 the Society set up an elementary girls’ school and later a school for the intermediary tier of education, as well as a kindergarten. In 1842 the first Normal School for female teachers was organized by the Society in the absence of an equivalent state Normal school for women-teachers, as the demands for training female-teachers were strong and the conviction that a systematic education for girls was growing. Additionally, the teachers’ training had gained a hearty support on the part of the people in charge of education planning.

The structuring of the *Arsakeion* schools comprised the following levels. At the beginning, in 1838, the project targeted at providing the female students with an elementary level of education leading to a school of intermediate tier and then following suit to a Normal School. But this reform was never to be implemented. Therefore, after the girls had completed the elementary level of schooling, they attended a two-year cycle of “higher” studies, and after having passed examinations successfully, they obtained the schoolteachers’ diploma. In 1840 the school’s managing Society regulated³ the teachers’ training in a three-year cycle. Later, it was added one more year – thus-making the full attendance to four years, whilst in 1851 the cycle of studies provided the girls with five – year courses (Ziougou-Karastergiou 1986, 86-87). According to the Board’s regulations that were formulated in 1842, there was one type of school organized for a “two-fold” purpose. The first target was the teacher’s training, whilst the second aimed at providing a framework of general courses commonly-taught with the

² The school was called *Arsakeion* after the name of its Greek benefactor A. Arsakis, a wealthy man of the Diaspora who funded the building.

³ The Board’s resolutions on the cycles of studies, as well as of the subjects taught, were submitted to the Ministry of Education for official approval. The Ministry reserved the right to approve it or not.

“Parthenagogeion” and catering for the needs of those of the students who wished to receive a higher level of education, but not to work as teachers. So, the 1857 regulations stipulated the teachers’ training school not as a Normal School but as a “Parthenagogeion” (literally a school for educating the virgins), as this level of intermediate education provided schooling both to the future teachers and to those of the girls who wished to be supplied with a higher level of knowledge (Ziogou-Karastergiou 1986, 88). In 1861 the *Arsakeion* “Parthenagogeion” was officially recognized by the Greek state as the only accredited Normal School for female teachers of the country (Ziogou-Karastergiou 1986, 148). In line with the decree of its accreditation, after the candidates had completed a four-year training, they passed examinations in order to obtain the teaching license. The members of the examination committee were appointed by the Greek state.

In the long run, the Greek state made attempts for establishing Normal schools for female teachers elsewhere, but eventually these efforts were given up. More precisely, the drafts of Bills presented by the Minister of Education G. Theotokis (1889) and by the Minister A. Eftaksias (1899) in order to be discussed and pass in the Parliament, provided the operation of state Normal Schools for women – teachers. But the Bills remained on paper once more and were not enacted until early Twentieth century (Vacharoglou and Foukas 2010, 332-337) According to the Decrees of 1883 and of 1892, there were three branches of Normal Schools for female teachers in operation, all of them managed by the *Philekpedeutiki Etaireia*. These were the following: the *Arsakeion* Normal School for the full-boarders, and the corresponding department for day-students, both based in Athens. The third school was the *Arsakeion* Normal School operating in Corfu (Ziogou-Karastergiou 1986, 170) where the *Philekpedeutiki Etaireia* kept a branch on the island (Thanailaki 2013, 141-172). All Normal schools were fee-paying, but the *Philekpedeutiki Etaireia* also admitted students gratis for various reasons as- for example- national purposes, especially in war time. It also admitted students who had been granted with scholarships either by the state, or by the local authorities, or by the Church, or by other sectors⁴. This was the rule for the state Normal School for male teachers as well, as the school functioned on a fee-paying policy, too. But in most cases the male students attended the school for free because they had been granted with state scholarships on certain terms of condition⁵. By 1897, the “Parthenagogeion” schools offered a nine-year cycle of studies and the Normal school a two-year cycle. Later, the Royal decree that regulated the operation of the “Parthenagogeion” schools, stipulated that this type of girl’s schools of higher studies should supply the students with two cycles. One consisted of eight grades, and the other of two-thus- having ten years in total. Those of the students who wished

⁴ For example, the Bishop of Arta, in Epirus, sent a student to attend the *Arsakeion* Normal School on a scholarship granted to her by the local community and under the term to teach in the same region after her graduation. The Board of the *Philekpedeutiki Etaireia* admitted the student on the grounds that she was coming from «a Greek region still occupied by the Turks». See more in: APE 1879.

⁵ The terms specified that after their graduation and for three consecutive years, they were to accept the appointment of the teaching-post where the state had placed them, not having the choice of region (Antoniou 1987, vol. 1, 15-18).

to pursue further studies after they had completed the eight-year cycle, were eligible to take part in the entrance exams in order to be admitted in the Normal schools of the *Philekpedeutiki Etaireia* that now had extended its operation with another branch in Patras (Antoniou 1987, vol. 1, 35). Therefore, at the turn of Nineteenth century we see that the “Parthenageion” and the Normal School for female teachers had more clearly-defined targets.

In 1786 it was observed the first Normal School in Milan that was established by Joseph II, where the Felbiger’s didactic system was initiated, but the courses had a very short cycle which lasted for three months (Polenghi and Triani 2014, 9). During the Napoleonic Age the reformed Normal school in Lombardy spread across the country, whereas during the Restoration period the examinations for teachers became strict. Regarding female teachers, after the fall of Napoleon, the number of women-teachers in the municipal schools was low, and not adequately trained, especially in the rural areas (Polenghi 2013, 162). Female training started making a boost through the enactment of the Austrian school-law which was considered a novelty. After the Unification of 1861, the newly-shaped Italian state started facing the wide-spread illiteracy, so it was resolved to train schoolteachers rapidly. For this reason, the teachers’ studies were still short. Moreover, those of the female teachers who were called to teach in the elementary schools in the Italian countryside had to face adverse conditions. The reason was that the schooling-system was «plagued by a perennial budget of shortages and pervaded by a widespread unwillingness (on the part of the state) to spend on the schooling of the population of the lower classes» (Soldani 1993, 84).

As seen before, both in Greece and in Italy the decade of 1860s was a turning-point for the mobility and training of the teaching staff albeit the fact that they faced different challenges. Additionally, during these years the Normal School of the *Philekpedeutiki Etaireia* was accredited as the only Normal School for educating women-teachers in Greece. This is a fact that differentiated the cases in these two countries because the Greek female teaching staff rested solely on the hands of the private sector running on a fee-paying scheme, thus, making the studies unaffordable to a broad basis of social strata throughout Nineteenth to early Twentieth centuries. Conversely, in the Italian case, it was managed by the public sector as the courses were paid by the municipalities, or the state. But the rural centers did not have the facilities for operating schools. Moreover, in the Normal schools the supplied knowledge was mainly limited in transmitting the patriotic values to the students and not a broader syllabus, a case that was also encountered in Greece (For Italy, see more: Ascenzi 2012).

As applied to the case of Greece, in Italy there also seems to be left a gap between the four-year elementary tier of education and the Normal School. This void affected both genders. According to the Casati law that was introduced in 1859 and remained active until 1923, the schooling system comprised of a four-year elementary cycle of studies (only the first two being compulsory up to 1877) followed by a five-year grammar school (*Ginnasio*) and a three-year cycle of studies in the *Liceo* which was a high school focusing on “*humanæ literæ*” and catering for the needs of the sons of the noble class. Also, it provided the students the option to attend a six to seven year-

technical school that was mainly designed for the sons of the middle class. At a lower tier, the law set out a Normal School of only 2/3 years designed for the training of elementary-school teaching staff. The provision of the law left a gap between the elementary tier of education and the Normal school level as it did not foresee a “link” between the two tiers of schooling. As a consequence, those who wished to attend the Normal School had often to wait without having attended any other type of school or, they entered it after they had been rejected from the *Gimnasio*, or from the technical school. The Casati Law really «redefined the structure of the whole school system» and catered for the formation of the training of the primary school teachers (Covato and Sorge 1994, 23). The Casati Law was amended in 1877 by the Coppino Law that aimed at «enforcing compulsory attendance in the rural and most disadvantaged areas» of Italy (Cappelli 2015, 10).

The heterogeneity in the teachers’ training in Italy after the Unification was due to the fact that the main concern of those in charge of the education for supplying elementary schools with a sufficient number of teaching staff made them hastily organize training courses for the primary school teachers that lasted for only a few months with a limited number of lectures given to them. This mainly applied to the case of the new provinces that were annexed to the new state. In order to remedy the situation the state granted the municipalities with the outsourcing of teachers’ education. It was then when the feminization of the profession started taking roots as the younger pupils saw the women-teachers as a projection of motherhood. Additionally, the need for establishing primary schools and in line to Article 62 of the Casati Law, temporary teaching licenses were granted to teachers. This permit could v8alid for only one year. For the purpose, in 1862 there were established preparatory schools for teachers’ training in selected cities of the Central and Southern Italy. Hence there was a diversity in teachers’ education because of the lack of Normal schools including three months, one year or two years of training depending on local conditions. After the Unification teachers without license amounted to 55% while the situation was worse in the private schools (Ghizzoni 2010).

The dawn of Twentieth century found Italian education much debated on a continuous platform of discussions that challenged the old traditional methods of teaching as the demands for reconstructing the schooling system were growing (Montgomery 1919, 19). Despite the fact that the law and its progressive spirit passed in the Italian Senate, the Bill presented by Minister Berenini in 1918, found an “unexpected opposition” on the part of the Chamber of Deputies. More precisely the Berenini Project provided the following:

Purpose – The teachers’ institute (istituto magistrale) has the aim of preparing teachers for the elementary and popular schools. *It shall be for men and for women separate. If for men, it shall be for four years; if for women, seven years*⁶, the first two years to be counted as belonging to the istituti of the first grade, and the last five to those of the second grade.

⁶ The lines in italics of the above text have been done by the author of this paper.

Relation to the present normal schools – The existing normal schools for women, with the annexed practice schools, are to be transformed into women’s “istituti magistrali” of seven years; those without annexed practice schools are to be transformed into men’s “istituti magistrali” of four years, corresponding to the last four years of the seven-year type, particular details to be left to the ministerial decree. Existing provincial, communal, and other “istituti” for the training of teachers may secure rating as “istituti magistrali” upon conforming in all respects to the present law (Montgomery 1919, 20).

According to the spirit of this project, the training of the two genders was segregated. The first six classes of the women’s institutes encompassed a variety of subjects such as Italian language, literature, history and geography, general pedagogy and ethics, also French, mathematics, physical and natural sciences, domestic arts, drawing and penmanship, singing and physical education (Montgomery 1919, 21) The men’s curriculum included the same courses as with those supplied to women, with the difference that there was provision of teaching extra classes on agriculture, hygiene, and two years’ instruction in manual skills. In the senior classes all institutes supplied the students with the subjects of «History and methodology of pedagogy, hygiene, agriculture, singing, advanced physical education and practice teaching in the annexed elementary or popular school, or kindergarden». Moreover, the weekly instruction of the above subjects was planned not to exceed the number of twenty- four teaching periods per week (Montgomery 1919, 21). What is important to note is the element that the project’s framework made provisions for the teaching of the subject of “emigration” in those of the regions that such a social phenomenon occurred. The subject was to be supplied to the graduate students of the institutes «by qualified persons of the Government». Additionally, the subject of hygiene was also planned to be instructed by specialists, while that of agriculture to be given in the class by a «travelling instructor» (Montgomery 1919, 21). Regarding the admission policy of the Institutes, it regulated that «the first class of the women’s seven-year course shall be the same as that required for admission to the first class of the middle schools of the first grade; to all other classes by promotion examination» (Montgomery 1919, 21). Eventually, Berenini’s Project was never to be put into practice⁷ as the parliament term drew to its end in 1919 (Redi 1998, 134-157) According to its provisions that were modeled after Credaro’s project of 1914, there was going to be added one more year to the Normal school and that would make seven years for the female students and only four for the male students as the latter were supposed to have attended *gimnasio* or *scuola tecnica* before. The opposition on Berenini’s Project mainly came from the Catholic Church and especially from the Jesuits on the grounds that it hindered the progress of the private schools since the added last year was assigned for practical training and that was to be practiced in the state schools only (Ghizzoni 1997, 134-157) Although the project dropped, it became the stimulus for debate as it challenged the freedom of teaching

⁷ From this position I would like to thank Prof. Simonetta Polenghi (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore), for providing me with the bibliography on the matter.

and learning (Ghizzoni 1997, 79-80). Eventually, it was in 1923 when Gentile⁸ gave a full-scale reform to the Normal school.

Despite the fact that by the beginning of Twentieth century, the reforms regarding the operation of the Normal Schools remained only on paper in both countries, or they were not fully implemented as there was a fragmentary application in them, it is worth scrutinizing on the curricula of their studies and making comparisons. The reason is that the supplied courses reflected the spirit of education of this particular period. In both countries, the total number of teaching- hours per week did not exceed the twenty-three to twenty-four. As for the Greek curriculum of female teachers' Normal school, the Royal Decree of 6th July, 1902 provided the subjects of Religion, of the works of the Ancient Greek writers, also French, History, Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Geography and Pedagogy. Additionally, it encompassed courses on singing and instrumental music, calligraphy, drawing and painting, as well as domestic arts, physical education and textile- making (Antoniou, 1987, vol. 2, 210-215). The teaching of hygiene appears to be taught in the *Arsakeion* Normal school, as well as in the Italian schools. In *Arsakeion* it was taught by a specialized teacher (APE, 1912) But the subject of "emigration" was not included in the Greek curricula although the flow of persons migrating from their homeland to the USA had started since the first decades of the Twentieth century.

The dawn of Twentieth century signaled greater changes in both countries regarding female teachers' training. In the case of Greece, it is observed -for the first time- a clear image of an organized attempt for uniformity in the studies and for giving space to co-education. An example is the establishment of the first state Normal School for female teachers in Thessaloniki in 1914. Additionally, women were admitted to attend classes in the male Normal Schools operating on the island of Samos, also in Lamia that is situated in the country's mainland, as well as in the *Marasleion* Normal School in Athens (Skoura, 2011). According to the new spirit of education regarding the training of women-teachers, their education was not further linked to the "Parthenagogeia"⁹, but it was the responsibility of the Normal schools. So, their training targeted at being on an equal level to these of men teachers (Mavropoulou 2013, 40). In line with the new legislation, the female students who were eligible to be admitted to the Normal schools, were solely the graduates of the "Astika" schools, (Mavropoulou 2013, 40) a two-grade school of intermediate level following the four- grade elementary schools (Ziogou-Karastergiou 1986, 287). The overall training period for both male and female educators was twelve years. According to this project, one more year was to be added to the Normal schools of female students, contrasted to men's that was to be diminished by one. By order of Royal Decree, the Normal schools' establishment, accreditation, or even dissolution, were regulated in line to «the proposal of the council for education that stipulated the number of the Normal schools operating for both genders, their seats, as well as the number of submission for every year». They operated on a three-

⁸ Gentile was not in favor of Berenini's project.

⁹ The ending "a" denotes the plural number in the Greek language.

year cycle (Mavropoulou 2013, 40). Their syllabus included the subjects of Religious education, Philosophy and Pedagogy, the History and the current legislation of primary education, the Modern and the Ancient Greek language, the French language, the Greek History, Geography, Mathematics, Science, Hygiene and Nursing. Also, the classes of the Evidence of the Applicable Law and of the Political Economy were supplied to male students, while the Elements of the Domestic Economy were instructed to the females. Moreover, male students received classes on Elements of Agriculture, Gardening, Horticulture, Zootechnics, Beekeeping, Silk farming, Singing and playing on a four-stringed instrument, or on the Harmonium. Additionally, Church music, Drawing and Calligraphy, along with Crafts were supplied to female students, while men were instructed subjects on Home planning along with Gymnastics, as well as Military Drills and Shooting (Mavropoulou 2013, 40). In the Italian Normal schools for female teachers, the songs, sermons and religious teachings consistent with a Jesuit school were «interlaced with the narrative» (Bertucci 2008, 135). For the school year 1914-1915 there were fourteen three-grade Normal schools operating in Greece. Of them, seven were male schools based in Athens, one of them being the *Marasleion* Normal School.

In 1923 the co-education in the Greek Normal Schools was decreed, while one year later (1924) female teachers were admitted to attend Normal Schools operating throughout the country, but only as day-students. So, the enactment of the law broke the status quo of education. The following table (Skoura 2011) shows the ratio between male and female students in the *Marasleion* Normal School during the period 1920-1925.

<i>School Year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male students</i>	<i>Female students</i>	<i>Ratio of Female students on the Total</i>
1920-21	32	28	4	12,5%
1921-22	44	37	7	15,9%
1922-23	83	63	20	24,09%
1923-24	86	45	39	45,34%
1924-25	99	52	47	47,47%

In the Italian peninsula the Gentile Reform (1923) was initiated during the first term of Mussolini's government and it introduced major changes in the system of education. Its creator was the great philosopher Giovanni Gentile who also served as Minister of Education in the country. The dominant idea of this reform was its "idealistic philosophy" (Polenghi 2012, 142-143). In line to this law, the Gymnasium and the Lyceum played the most important roles as they provided a higher level of schooling for the gifted students. The school-system was "performance-oriented" including many intermediate examinations and-therefore – it was very selective. Compulsory education extended to the age of fourteen, while the Normal School was also restructured. Its name changed to "Istituto Magistrale", while its cycle of studies lasted for seven

years. Additionally, to its curriculum there were added new subjects such as Latin, Philosophy and modern languages. What is worth mentioning is the fact that by the royal decree of 9th December 1926, women were banned from teaching the subjects of literature, Greek, Latin, History and Philosophy, while another decree stipulated that women's wages were reduced by half if compared to men's (Gori 2004, 61). Gentile's reform had also another disadvantage as it was too theoretical, not providing any practical training because its creator based its theory on the idea that a good theoretical knowledge was sufficient. Gentile «inveighed against the positivist teaching which he rated as a mere technique». After the "Istituto Magistrale" the female students had the option to attend a four-year cycle in the Pedagogical College in order to become qualified teachers in the secondary school¹⁰. The high school teachers were teaching specialists who had to complete a cycle of studies in their field of specialization but without having received educational training in teaching. In this case the "exception" was women, as in 1875 the university "opened its doors" to them and from the decade of 1880s girls were admitted in the secondary tier of schooling. So, there was a growing demand for female teachers to teach in the girls' schools. In 1882 there opened in Florence and Rome girls' schools for future teachers of secondary education. Therefore, all women- teachers received pedagogical training. These girls' schools were not defined as lyceums or universities, but they stood on a level in between. The 1923 Gentile Reform transformed them into a four-year cycle pedagogical colleges, funded by the state with a status of university institutions (Polenghi 2012, 143).

Greek and Italian female schoolteachers in a social context

The teaching profession both in Greece and in Italy was considered particularly suitable to women's nature because it was viewed as a womanly dominion. Moreover, it served as a platform of debate for female emancipation and for economic independence. Although the job of a teacher was socially accepted in the Greek surrounding, the fact that women went out of the private sphere and onto the public one, was a disparate characteristic expressed on the part of conservative circles that held women responsible for undermining the nation's unity through emancipation. Greek periodicals such as *The Family* that addressed to female readers, railed against working- women – in general-warning that «If you [women] want to buy clothes [made] by French tailors [...], to dine in restaurants wearing bare-necked dresses in order to follow the fashion of the West, to smoke in order to be trendy, and to claim your electoral rights, then you do not have the right to be called Greek women» (Thanailaki 2008, 24). Similarly in Italy, Severina Cavallero – an educational journalist – strongly advocated the feminization of teaching, but staunchly criticized women's emancipation: «With this kind of emancipation, we would see women as men in skirts, exchanging the modesty of homemaking duties for public concerns, leaving the protection of the domestic

¹⁰ On Italian girls' process to access the secondary tier of education (Soldani 2004, 123-142).

roof for the office. We would find her in public discussing politics, science, and art with men, forgetting her womanly duties» (Pak 2012, 27).

Despite the fact that the teacher's job was the only socially accepted occupation as it was viewed as a projection of motherhood, female teachers faced dilemmas in their private life and they wavered between career and marriage. They had to decide whether to give up their job, get married and become devoted mothers, or to forget family life and become good professionals. The latter decision drove them to celibacy which was their own choice (Ziogou-Karastergiou 2006, 3) But this option turned out to be a negative characteristic for them because unmarried women were described as "neurotic", "loners", "unsatisfied" and – generally – as having been deprived of male sex. Being single and unmarried was the norm for the teaching profession throughout 19th – century Greece. Although the Greek state had not officially banned marriage to female educators, women- teachers were not usually married as the single ones were much preferred for a placement in a school. In cases when there were female married teachers, they constituted a small group belonging to the middle- class or to the upper middle class of learned women who were also examples of ground- breaking educators and pioneers in women's emancipation. In general, in the Greek state there was no official ban placed on female teachers not until 1911 when the Greek government -for a first time- enforced celibacy for female teachers. Based on this legislation, married women-teachers were dismissed, while those who had become widows, were not re-employed (Dalakoura and Ziogou-Karastergiou 2015, chap. 2, 243-244) Similarly in Italy during 19th century, though there was no official prohibition regarding marriage, individual schools had adopted their own policies regarding married teachers. The concern that a single woman would be the target of gossip and would scandalize the mores of the local community especially when they were young, newly -licensed professionals, was growing (Pak 2012, 35) Italian female writers wrote a lot of stories on women rural teachers portraying them as shy, also sweet and absent-minded. Matilde Serao (1856-1927) wrote a series of articles on the lives of female teachers. In her book *Unmarried Women: Stories* she spoke of the adverse conditions that the village women -teachers endured (Serao 2007)

Teaching served as a good means for women to earn their living especially when they were left to support themselves and the family disbanded. For example, the mother of the Italian writer Maria-Antonietta Torriani (1840-1920) had to work after the death of her husband. She found a placement in the "Canobiane" elementary girls' school where she taught a class of forty- eight girls. She earned the salary of three- hundred and fifty lire per annum having-at the same time- another job in order to supplement her income as she had to raise two children and pay off her debts. She taught there for six years (Mitchell 2014, 221). The teaching profession was a good occupation for poor women who wanted to escape family poverty. It seemed that the only female mobility in late Nineteenth-century Italy was the teaching job. Despite their meager stipend compared to that of their male colleagues, and despite the prejudices they faced in the backward rural Italian surroundings, these female professionals can be regarded as «unwilling pioneers of women's emancipation» (Benedetti 2007, 14) as they paved the way for the

opening of other careers for women in the future. Most of these young women, coming of humble origins, were sent to teach in far away villages where they became the targets of gossip and the prey of the village womanizers because they did not want to be factory workers and exhaust themselves in the factory labor, or servants in wealthy households (Benedetti 2007, 125) Italia Donati (Pak 2012, 38-45) applies in this case. Coming from a poor family she studied in order to become a schoolteacher and was sent to teach in a small village in Tuscany. She faced hostility and was “ostracized” by her fellow villagers on accounts of rumors blaming her that she was the mayor’s lover. She was also accused of having had an abortion. For this reason Italia committed suicide in 1888 at the young age of twenty-three leaving a letter and asking for an autopsy be performed on her body in order to clean her memory as she was innocent (Benedetti 2007, 125).

Conclusions

Concluding, we can say that the two countries shared similarities in female Normal schools, but they also had differences. The fact that Greece shaped itself as an independent country from scratch – it was occupied by the Ottomans for four centuries – did not allow for room of fostering the educational ideas of the western civilized world. Greeks had to fight hard in order to maintain their religion and culture towards a brutal conqueror who was not Christian. Therefore, they were much backward in the development of education and in an organized cycle of studies. Moreover, Greece was a land of peasants who were illiterate and much backward. To the opposite, Italy, was occupied and-therefore- influenced by the French and Austrian empires, stood more chances in initiating the novel didactic systems that dominated in Europe and in fostering the progressive ideas of the western world. Italy also hosted big trading centers, such as Milan where reforms in education saw rapid growth that spread quickly to the illiterate south. Moreover, the country had a noble class that catered for the higher education of their milieu with the aid of the Catholic Church. These two factors formed the basis for the building up of the education for a wider middle class. To the contrary, in Greece there were no noble or middle classes and no trading centers. The Greek traders held a dominant place but in the flourishing European ports and cities outside the country from where most of them helped their homeland through charities. So, Greece met the challenges of the advances in education at a very slow pace. But female teachers in both countries faced a lot of difficulties and seemed to share many common characteristics in their professional careers. For example, they were underpaid, compared to their male peers, they worked in adverse social conditions in the countryside, and they had to struggle against a lot of prejudices and social constraints imposed on them. But-by and large- the teaching job seemed to serve as a good means for women’s breaking- free of social restrictions in both countries. So, the presence of female elementary schoolteachers was a turning -point for women’s employment in both countries as the teachers’ profession opened new avenues for their emancipation and for obtaining civic rights.

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