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The Education in the countryside around Trnava in the Early Modern Period

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The development lines of the history of school education identical to the development of education in the whole Hungary can be observed in the countryside around Trnava in Early Modern Period. The bearers of the schooling in this environment were rural parish schools in many places even since the Middle Ages. These schools were constituted mainly for liturgical purposes. They were built primarily to teach children how to write, read and count, but also to master catechism in school. The mastering of literacy in doing so was primarily understood as a tool to master religion¹. The folk education largely shaped the cultural and educational level of the population not only in the Slovak cities but also in villages². In the Early Modern Period, particularly under the influence of ideas of Humanism and the Re-

1 Compare: PEŠEK, J.: *Měšťanská vzdělanost a kultura v předbělohorských Čechách*. (Všední dny kulturního života). Praha: UK, 1993, s. 40.

2 KOWALSKÁ, E.: *Štátne ľudové školstvo na Slovensku na prelome 18. a 19. stor.* Historické štúdie. Bratislava: Veda, 1987, s. 12.

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naissance and later on by spreading reformation ideas too, the interest in education was gradually growing, not only among Catholics and Protestants but also among the broader population layers who were gradually educated too. The Trnava Synod of 1560 ordered that each parish should appoint a teacher (*ludi magister*) and the poor parishes could connect with each other in order to be able to support the teacher from their incomes. Also the Protestant Churches were acting similarly and in the early 17th century many Protestant communities already had their schools³. Particularly the 17th century period, however, provides a picture of factionalism mainly in the terms of religious and ideological disputes not only in total unfavorable social-political situation, but also in the area of the education. Conversely, in the second half of the 18th century the emancipation is completed, the secularization of modern school systems begins and the professional and confessional restrictions to education slowly decline⁴. According to the preserved historical sources, there used to be a relatively dense network of schools, not only in cities but also in smaller towns and villages in the territory of today's Slovakia. We can also allege that in the territory of today's Slovakia there were at least 130 schools in the 16th century. Writing,

3 VAJČÍK, P.: *Školstvo na Slovensku v XVI. storočí*. Bratislava: 1955, s. 23; Compare: MÁTEJ, J. a kolektív: *Dejiny českej a slovenskej pedagogiky*. Bratislava: 1976, s. 41 a i.

4 KOMPOLT, ref. 1, s. 138-139.

reading, counting and religion used to be taught in the village elementary schools⁵.

The parish schools, the connection of which with the church was represented not only in the content of the teaching process, but also in the direct subordination to the administrator of the parish, were working as elementary schools until the introduction of educational reforms in the second half of the 18th century⁶. The elementary schools were therefore under the direct supervision of the clergy, which was led by various synods. None of the public authorities addressed a broader attention to the elementary schools until the end of 1860's. The first step towards the reform of folk education in Hungary was issuing an order of 26th May 1770, which included the instructions on keeping teachers. Following these instructions, all the residents of the village should sustain the teachers from their treasury. The administration of the county, dioceses and landowners had to monitor the keeping of the terms. The reforms in education have gradually led to the creation of the first comprehensive system of education at the elementary schools level in the territory of Hungary. The well known school reform "Ratio educationis" of 1777 contained the provisions regarding the folk education and its organisational system. According to this law the chief executives of the school district had to carry out the supervision of all the schools in their school district. The elementary schools inspectors, whose job was to monitor the work of teachers

and to create appropriate conditions for it were subordinated to them⁷.

The common folk schools in the countryside were regarded as the lowest type of school. Children in village schools were supposed to receive basic education, which meant learning to read, write and count. These schools, however, differed from each other in the number of classes, teachers and teaching content. The reform, however, did not have any impact in reality in most of the schools in the smaller towns and villages, where the low level of education remained⁸. The necessity to extend the reach of education and to make it more practical stimulated the reform policy on education of Joseph II. This was associated with paying primary attention to the folk schooling and its focus and content. The biggest changes in the development of folk education were brought by the 1781 Patent of Toleration. The non-Catholics, who had had until then only limited opportunity to establish their own schools and appoint teachers, could establish their own folk school in the municipality where there were at least 100 families and 500 people of non-Catholic religion. There was also the condition that teachers should master the prescribed teaching method⁹. According to another important provision of Joseph II regarding the development of folk education, not attending compulsory schooling was to be punished by a fine. The provision was justified by the argument that poverty of parents could

5 LENGYELOVÁ, T.: Školy a vzdelanosť v zemepanských mestách v 16. – 17. storočí. In: *Formy a obsah vzdelanosti v historickom procese*. Ed. V. Čičaj. Bratislava: VEDA, 1999, s. 56-57. Compare.: VAJČÍK, ref. 3, s. 12-13.

6 KOWALSKÁ, ref. 2, s. 15. a i.

7 Ratio Educationis 1777 a 1806 : prvá jednotná sústava výchovy a vzdelávania v dejinách našej kultúry. Translated: Ján Mikles a Mária Novacká. Bratislava: Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo, 1988, s. 34 – 260.

8 KOWALSKÁ, ref. 2, s. 13-14.

9 The translation of the patent is published in e.g.: *Pramene k dejinám Slovenska a Slovákov VIII.*, Bratislava: Literárne informačné centrum, 2007, s. 45-48.

not be an obstacle to full-time schooling since it was free. There were appointed visitors, who were in charge of the so-called visitation circles working as smaller territorial units, to supervise the folk schools. The visitors had to care only for folk schools in villages within a radius of their competence and their basic aim was to take over the whole network of these schools under state control. At each visitation of the particular schools the qualifications and the skills of teachers had to be verified. An important function was also that of the school inspector, which was in unified municipalities done by a priest¹⁰.

Trnava town, with its surrounding rural education being the object of our concern, as a free royal city, gained increased importance after the battle of Mohacs (1526), when it became a notable economic, social, religious and cultural center of the adjacent villages. It also won the strategic, particularly cultural and religious, importance on a national scale, having a positive impact on the surrounding rural localities. Since Trnava had been open for communication and located at the Little Carpathian foothills where a number of nationalities met each other and lived together, the appropriate conditions for the development of this region were met since the Middle Ages. The convenient location neighboring Moravia, the extensive vineyards and the fact that there were important trade routes passing this territory, were prerequisites for the development of handicrafts, wine and trade. A quite varied ethnic mix was formed in the territory of the Small Carpathian region. The indigenous inhabitants of this region were Slovaks, who already in the Middle Ages formed the majority. Besides Slovaks there were

also other nationalities, especially Germans, Hungarians and Croats. Quite a dense network of larger and smaller rural settlements was gradually created in this area. This economic expansion and development also required the existence of a well-educated social layer, whose creation and formation assumed a certain degree of education and culture in the Little Carpathian region.

According to the ancient port census of the 16th century, there used to be a parish elementary school in all the important rural settlements around Trnava: in Dolne Oresany and Horne Oresany, Smolenice, Trstin, Dechtice, Bohunice, Dolne Dubove, Dolna Krupa, Boleráz, Ružindol, Sucha, Bohdanovce, Špačince, Brestovany, Hrnčiarovce and Zavar¹¹. The canonical visitations is an important historical source, which offers us more details on the functioning of the rural schools in the vicinity of Trnava. In the year 1634 the visitor Juraj Draskovic found the parish schools in all sites of the parishes: in Dlha, Dolne Oresany and Horne Oresany, Smolenice, Nahac, Trstin, Dechtice, Bohunice, Dolne Dubové, Dolna Krupa, Boleraz, Ruzindol, Sucha, Bohdanovce, Spacince, Brestovany, Hrnčiarovce and Zavar¹². Besides that, there were three more municipalities with the status of subsidiaries with their own school and a teacher: Borová, Trstin and Horna Krupa¹³. In the other subsidiaries there was a teacher of the parish site. A teacher used to teach in the school

11 Film library of HÚ SAV, fotocopy of the portal register of Pozsony County, *Conscriptio Comitatus Posoniensis Anni 1567, 1575, 1578, 1588, 1593, 1598*. Compare aj KOMLÓSSY, F.: *Az esztergom főegyházmegeyi róm. kath. iskolák története*. Ostrihom, 1896.

12 Prímási Levéltár Ostrihom, *Archivum ecclesiasticum vetus*, Lib. 3., 108, *Districtus sub Montibus, Visitatio canonica per anno 1634*. These canonical visitations were published by BEKE, M.: *Pázmány Péter egyházlátogatási jegyzőkönyvei (1616 – 1637)*. Budapešt, 1994, s. 259.

13 Ref. 12.

10 KOWALSKÁ, ref. 2, s. 29-30.

house, which was more or less in a good condition in most municipalities, only the schools in Bohdanovce and Boleraz being in a poor condition.

We can say that in addition to his main occupation and mission, which was to teach children, the teacher used to do many other activities. He was the first priest's assistant at various church acts: he accompanied the believers in the worship and other devotions by singing and playing the organ, he assisted by reading and singing Holy Masses (and sometimes he served as an altar server to the priest), at funerals, rung church (and burial) bells, accompanied a priest to the sick and to the dying people, etc. In another words, besides the parish priest, the mayor and landlords, he was one of the most important representatives of municipalities. Very often teachers functioned as notaries too. According to the regulation from 1778 on the matter of keeping teachers and schools, determined by Ratio educationis, teachers should not been tasked with complementary functions¹⁴. The canonical visitation of 1782, however, shows us that in rural schools surrounding Trnava this regulation was not followed.

The visitations provide us with interesting data about teachers themselves. All teachers working in schools in the vicinity of Trnava were of Roman Catholic religion. An information about a teacher with higher education, specifically a graduate of high school (gymnasium) was recorded only of the parish Dechtice. There is interesting information from visitation of Boleraz that the village educators from the surroundings of Trnava (from those

villages close to Trnava, "literally a step") used to go to the College of the Society of Jesus. That could mean that they used to go there for some kind of learning, or speaking the day's language for external study. Unfortunately, the visitor does not mention anything more specific, but at least about Boleraz's teacher we can claim that he completed such a study. Only a teacher in Sucha had an assistant and used to give him a third of his income. He must have had a good income since he could afford to pay an assistant.

We cannot find information about the course of the educational process or the pupils in the canonical visitation of the Early Modern Period. In some schools the visitor mentions also numbers of students. According to those, most pupils were in a Dlha, Horne Oresany and Dechtice – about 10 or more. The teacher of Boleraz had "a very small number" of students. Although the number of schoolchildren is mentioned only in some visitation years (1634, 1694), in general we can say that the largest schools (in number of students) were the schools in Hrnčiarovce, Smolenice, Dechtice and Bohunice. Already at the time of the oldest canonical visitation, which also registers also the schools in the parishes (the visitation of 1634), there were schools in all parishes except Zavar. Although the level of particular teachers and schools certainly varied, it is gratifying and very interesting to find out about all the villages in the 17th century in the vicinity of Trnava. These were the parishes (in the church organisation they belonged to the so-called Deanship of Smolenice) and except for one they were schools, which continuously persisted in all the parishes until the late 18th century (and certainly even further). It shows us the maturity (in the context of that time) of the rural population

¹⁴ MV SR, Štátny archív v Bratislave, Župa Bratislavská I., AC, 1781, f. 2, č. 25; Porov. KOWALSKÁ, ref. 2, s. 25.

living in that territory. That was certainly caused by the proximity of Trnava (as the seat of Esztergom Archdiocese). It is obvious that the presence of schools in all the parishes did not automatically mean a guarantee of education of their people. It is practically impossible to deduce from the above information the extent to which the inhabitants of the municipalities were educated and literate. Although the numbers of pupils of some schools have been preserved, we cannot find out how many of the total number of children attended school and how they were able to use their knowledge in practice. In most of the village schools classes ran only during winter time and the program of study was not steady.

The main question was the sufficient and adequate substantial provision for a teacher as one of the most educated municipality leaders. Teachers' incomes can be generally divided into several categories. First there were perquisites which were to be received by all teachers. These included grain (delivered to the teacher in bundles or threshed out), must and wine¹⁵. Must and wine as perquisites were given only by villeins possessing the vineyards. Some teachers also received a basic salary from the village in cash – in Dolne Oresany (28 guilders), Horne Oresany (14 guilders), Smolenice (10 guilders), Ruzindol (12 guilders), Sucha (9 guilders), Bohdanovce (6 guilders from the village and 2 guilders from the priest), in Hrnčiarovce (6 denarii from each house)¹⁶, Zele-

15 The residents of some affiliated villages (e.g. Biely Kostol, Spacince, Losonc) were tasked to give a greater number of perquisites to the teacher than the parishioners. This was probably due to the effort of the teacher made by commuting to the affiliated branch and as a compensation for his carriage, eventually his refreshments.

16 Taking into account the number of houses in Hrnčiarovce – 50, the income of the teacher in cash was about 30 guilders. In: Primási Levéltár Ostrihom, Archivum ecclesiasticum vetus, Lib. 3., 108, Districtus sub

nec (4 denarii from each house)¹⁷. Therefore we can conclude that a teacher with more students also had higher incomes. By comparing this data with data from 1634, we find that the teachers of almost identical parishes received a cash salary and the amount of their cash salary did not change significantly until the late 17th century. As already mentioned, the teacher was not only responsible for teaching children, but he did various auxiliary services to help to the parish priest too. For these services he received a special income – so-called *caliscatio*¹⁸ and a third of the profits from offerings and carolings¹⁹. All the teachers in the vicinity of Trnava used to receive all these incomes. They also received charges for assistance by funeral (in extent 10-25 denarii), specifically for carrying the cross at the funeral (5 denarii), and allowances for singing at funeral holy mass (everywhere 10 denarii) from their parishioners. Some teachers received other specific fees too²⁰. We can find references in the late 17th century's canonical visitations that – probably for the improvement of their livelihoods – some teachers received small

Montibus, Visitatio canonica per anno 1634; BEKE, ref. 12, s. 259.

17 Taking into account the number of houses in Zelenec – 40, the income of the teacher was about 16 guilders. Presumably by the teacher in Horna Krupa the visitor had in mind this charge of one guilder yearly per each pupil since he wrote the teacher had the money from the pupils according to the custom. In: Primási Levéltár Ostrihom, Archivum ecclesiasticum vetus, Lib. 3., 108, Districtus sub Montibus, Visitatio canonica per anno 1634; BEKE, ref. 12, s. 226.

18 Caliscatio – full name of teacher's payment for singing during the major religious holidays. This definition is to be found in the canonical visitation of 1694. Primási Levéltár Ostrihom, Archivum ecclesiasticum vetus, Lib. 8., 87. (1694), Districtus sub Montibus, Visitatio canonica per anno 1694.

19 Caroling – income (in the form of monetary compensation and perquisites) for singing carols on the feast of Epiphany (January 6).

20 For example the teacher in Dolna Krupa used to receive 50 denarii yearly from the pub, 4 denarii for writing wedding announcements (before entering the marriage). In: Primási Levéltár Ostrihom, Archivum ecclesiasticum vetus, Lib. 8., 87. (1694), Districtus sub Montibus, Visitatio canonica per anno 1694, Parochia Also Korompa.

plots of land to be cultivated by themselves, and therefore they partly used to produce the food by themselves. For example a teacher in Smolenice, who used 3 morgens of land and a piece of meadow and the teachers in Horne Oresany and Dolne Oresany both made use of the vineyard. All the teachers had to look after the land by themselves.

According to the canonical visitation of 18th century every parish office in the vicinity of Trnava and two branches Borova and Horna Krupa had their own teacher. We can find some information about education of the teachers as well. In 1717 most often among the teachers we can find principists (3 teachers), grammar teachers (2 teachers), syntaxists (2 teachers), one rhetor, one logician and one poet. Only in the municipality Dlha we can find teachers without a proper education, as pointed out by the visitor himself, in today's language – unqualified teachers.

In the mid 18th century the canonical visitations paid close attention to the personalities of the teachers in the rural schools. All the teachers were Roman Catholic and had a proper education. Regarding their morals, all teachers are characterized by the visitor as obedient men with good manners. The teachers' obligations are summed up by visitors as follows: they were familiar with Roman Catholic rites and ceremonies, which was particularly important for the teacher when acting as a priest assistant at the various religious practices; further teachers devoted themselves to singing, playing the organ or ringing church bells (in the morning, noon and evening). Obviously, the main task of the teacher was to teach²¹. The

21 The teachers in some villages functioned as notaries too (the direct mention of it is in the visitation in Dlha, Hrnčiarovce, Horna Krupa, Nahac, Smolenice and Bohdanovce), as administrators of the church's watches,

data on the teacher's nationality, respectively on the type of his education occurs in the visitation notes only sporadically. Thus, for example, only the nationality of the teacher in Dlha ("pure" Slovak) and Smolenice (the Czech nationality) is mentioned. Regarding the education, the visitor informs us only about one teacher – the teacher in Bucany, who studied at grammar school. About the teacher in Dechtice we know that he had an average education. Two teachers – the one in Hrnčiarovce and the teacher in Dechtice had assistants called by a visitor "companus". The mentioned assistants, however, used to help the teachers only in teaching children which means that they did not represent the priest in his other functions.

The canonical visitation of 1782 offers the most detailed data on teachers, working in the vicinity of Trnava in 18th century. Regarding nationality, the majority of teachers were of Slovak nationality; two teachers were of Czech nationality (in Hrnčiarovce and Velke Brestovany), a Moravian nationality (in Smolenice), and the teacher in Dolne Oresany was seen by the visitor as having Hungarian and Slovak nationality. All the teachers were of Roman Catholic religion, all of them also had a competent education, as related to exercising the teacher's occupation. Most often the teachers were the graduates of rhetoric (the teachers in Dolna Krupa and Horna Krupa, Dechtice, Bohdanovce, Spacince), syntax (the teacher in Dolne Oresany, Nahac and Bohdanovce), logic

as organists and some teachers used to help in time of autumn gathering by assessing the required charges (mentioned in the canonical visitation of Dolne Dubove). Arcibiskupský archív Trnava, Archidiaconatus Posoniensis, Districtus Szomolanensis, 1756, sign. I./2.

(the teacher in Bucany), grammar (the teacher in Horne Oresany) and principistics (the teacher in Hrnčiarovce). Regarding the language skills, all of them could speak Slovak, which was basic for their acting in the territory inhabited mostly by Slovaks. Furthermore some teachers mastered Latin, others could communicate in Hungarian and most of them in German as well. Only two teachers – in Ruzindol and Bohdanovce – were noblemen, others were villeins, which means ignoble. Teachers in Trstin and Horne Oresany were designated by a visitor as libertines (free). The teachers in all the parishes in the times of this visitation were selected by a local pastor (only in Trstin the municipality representatives and the manorial officer participated in this choice). The teachers were also subjected to obey the priest²².

During the canonical visitation the visitor noticed, and also characterized in his visitation notes, the condition of the school house, its fencing and the accessories. The rural schools depended on the initiative of their own inhabitants, who were required to do a manual work and DIY in order to do repairs of the school buildings. The landlord of the particular village had the duty of providing the building materials²³. In all the parishes the visitor

22 The specific case in this regard took place in the parish Nahac, where the priest Juraj Fándly had big problems with the teacher acting in this affiliated branch. The fact that after the priest asked the teacher to leave his office he did not do it, caused a problem who was in the duty to teach in Dolne Dubove: whether the mentioned teacher (judging by the priest and visitor's statement a man with serious moral defaults), or a teacher of Nahac. According to the special benefits of the teacher in Nahac received for particular activities in the affiliated branch Dolne Dubove, we can conclude that it was a teacher of Nahac to act in Dolne Dubove. But it is possible that the teacher of Dolne Dubove taught some children privately or he performed other activities for some individuals. Arcibiskupský archív Trnava, Archidiaconatus Posoniensis, Districtus Szomolanensis, 1782, sign. II. Visitatio canonica Batthyaniensis Parochiae Nahacziensis.

23 Arcibiskupský archív Trnava, Archidiaconatus Posoniensis, Districtus Szomolanensis, 1782, sign. II. Visitaciones canonicae; Compare with: KOWALSKÁ, E.: Škola ako kamenná inštitúcia.: materiálny aspekt osvieten-

pointed out that the repair and maintenance of the school buildings, as well as the state of the school and school's parcels fencing, were the exclusive responsibility of the citizens of the municipalities – mainly parishioners, but the inhabitants of the affiliated branches were required to participate in these works (they used to emancipate themselves from these duties). For example, in the parish Dolne Dubove the parishioners were required to participate in these duties in two thirds and the affiliated parishioners in Radosovce in one third. The school houses in Sucha, Hrnčiarovce, Dolna Krupa, Bohunice, Trstin, Boleraz and Smolenice were according to the visitation of 1756 in a poor condition. Among them the schools in Boleraz and Smolenice were in the worst condition and the visitor even mentioned that the teacher in Smolenice is exposed to great danger because of the condition of the building. The parishioners in Smolenice were said to have got out of repairing the school house or participating in the works. The school house in Dolne Oresany was according to the visitor's opinion inappropriate also because a shoemaker and his family used to live there. Shortly before this visitation, the schools in Spačince and Nahac were repaired. The visitations from the late 18th century registered the condition of school buildings and the fences as well. In 1782 the schools in Nahac, Horna Krupa, Dolne Dubove, Velke Brestovany, Dlha, Borova, Hrnčiarovce and Bohdanovce were in very bad condition. The other schools were in a more or less good condition, only the school parcels in Trstin and Dolne Oresany were missing a fencing. Usually

ských školských reforiem. In: Formy a obsah vzdelanosti v historickom procese. Ed. V. Čičaj. Bratislava : VEDA, 1999, ISBN 80-224-0542-6, s. s. 147.

a small backyard and a small garden belonged to the school building.

In the 18th century we know the incomes of the rural teachers in considerable details. The significant income of the teacher, essential to fulfil his basic needs, were still the perquisites from individual parishioners and filialists. They were handed in from the parishioners according to the relevancy to the classification of villein population similarly as to the priest. From the peasants having the whole or the half farmhouse the teachers used to get the certain number of sheaves and a certain quantity of must, from the cottagers with a house or without a house also the sheaves of grain or threshed grain or cash benefits (ranging from 5 to 12 denarii). It depended on the local custom in the particular parishes. In the canonical visitations we cannot find the information about the teacher's income for his main activity – which was teaching. Only about the teacher in Trstin, Nahac and Smolenice the visitor registered that the mentioned teachers used to receive one guilder a year per each child attending the school. An important support for the teacher's sustenance was his cash salary. The best salary was the one the teacher in Smolenice received (17 guilders per year) and Horne Oresany (16 guilders per year). Other sources of income are identical with those of previous periods.

In the study we tried to bring closer the school network in the rural areas around Trnava in Early Modern Period, their level, condition, the person and the incomes of their teachers to the extent allowed to us by relevant historical sources. In the complex process of the self-recognition of the nation's education, which was in the Early Modern Period still a matter of the churches, it

has played an unchangeable role. The relatively dense network of the elementary schools in the studied area was undoubtedly related to the favorable condition of the economic development of this area. However, the content and certainly also the total level of teaching neither corresponded to the period nor to the requirements of the absolutist state. Only the enlightened monarchs showed more interest in education, which became part of their state cultural policy. The interest of the state in education and schooling was based on more recent theories about the function of the state, its political-economic and societal needs. The reforms the empress Maria Theresa, but especially her son Joseph II, tried to consolidate were the influence of the state in the church-political matters, thus weakening the power of the church in education. Their ambition was to make education available to the widest folk classes, because they were convinced that the cause of moral and material misery of the lower social layers is their ignorance. Therefore they tried to broaden and strengthen people's upbringing and education. In connection with the new reforms, the folk education gradually received a unitary line, its content was accurately prescribed and finally it was a subject of the regular state control. ■