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Zdeňka Marie Baborová: The First Female Doctor of the University of Prague

Streszczenie

Zdeňka Marie Baborová: pierwsza kobieta, która uzyskała doktorat na Uniwersytecie w Pradze

W monarchii habsburskiej po raz pierwszy umożliwiono kobietom wstąpienie na uniwersytety w 1897 r. – na wydział filozoficzny, a w 1900 r. – na wydział lekarski. Praga była na to gotowa i można powiedzieć, że to właśnie Praga bezpośrednio zainicjowała ten przełom. Od 1890 r. istniało tu żeńskie gimnazjum Minerva – pierwsze tego typu w Europie Środkowej – które systematycznie przygotowywało dziewczęta do studiów uniwersyteckich. Już w 1895 r. niektóre uczennice Minervy uczęszczały na wykłady uniwersyteckie jako studentki nadzwyczajne, dlatego pierwsza kobieta uzyskała stopień doktora w Pradze już w roku 1901 – Zdeňka Marie Baborová otrzymała doktorat z biologii. Jaki był jej dalszy los? Jakimi źródłami dysponujemy? I jakie były losy jej niektórych następczyń? Artykuł ten ma na celu odpowiedzenie na te pytania.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja kobiet, żeńskie gimnazjum, zatrudnienie kobiet, lekarka, emancypacja kobiet

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Abstract

In the Habsburg Monarchy, the first admission of women to universities was in 1897 for the faculty of arts and in 1900 for the faculty of medicine. Prague was ready for this, and one might say that Prague directly initiated this breakthrough. Since 1890, the Minerva girls' gymnasium had existed here, the first of its kind in Central Europe; it systematically prepared girls for university studies. As early as 1895, some of Minerva's female students attended university lectures as extraordinary students, so the first woman's doctoral graduation occurred in Prague as early as 1901, when Zdeňka Marie Baborová received a doctorate in biology. What was her subsequent fate? What sources do we have? And what were the fates of some of her successors? This article aims to address these questions.

Keywords: female education, girl's high school, women's employment, female MD, female emancipation

Civil society in the Czech lands in the second half of the 19th century still preserved elements of an earlier period, often characterized by the unequal status of men and women. Among the bourgeoisie, the situation still prevailed in which family status was determined by the occupation of the father or husband. In most cases, a woman was not permitted to make her own decisions. The standard of living of the whole family also was dependent on the income of the male breadwinner. It was only in cases where the breadwinner was absent that a woman, most often a widow, made decisions. In such cases she could make decisions for herself and her children. This social group in the second half of the 19th century was most responsible for the gradual emancipation of women in many areas of life – the establishment of a girls' grammar school and the acceptance of girls to study at university. In this group we include tax-paying families where the man usually held a lower or medium-level office or was a skilled craftsman with his own house or apartment and a workshop with a few employees. It also includes teachers, doctors, scientists, and lawyers. Also may be included were families who lived off the proceeds of their properties, wealthy businessmen, or successful private lawyers[1].

[1] M. Lenderová, *K hříchu i k modlitbě: žena devatenáctého století*, 2nd ed., Praha 2016; D. Marešová, *A přece mě ten krutý osud stihl... Ovdovělé pražské měšťanky ve druhé polovině 19. století v odrazu ego-dokumentů*, České Budějovice 2020, pp. 115–124; M. Bahenská, *Život měšťanské rodiny 19. století ve vzpomínkách žen*, "Museum vivum: sborník Valašského muzea v přírodě v Rožnově pod Radhoštěm" 2007, vol. III, suplementum, pp. 49–58; eadem, *Proměna ženského světa*, [in:] *Habsburkové 1740–1918: Vznikání občanské společnosti*, ed. I. Cerman,

In any case, one of the highest goals in life for such folk was to enter the nobility, or at least to become closer to the nobility, its status and lifestyle.

As regards the daily life of families – if the male breadwinner was alive – the public sphere was reserved for men, while women had their place in the private sphere, in the triangle of children-kitchen-church/church organization[2].

Teacher's institutes

By the middle of the 19th century, there was already a fairly large group of educated families who had considerable social prestige and a regular income from the breadwinner's profession of teaching, science, law, medicine, or clerkship. There were also often daughters in the family who nevertheless could not be provided dowries sufficiently large enough to enable them to enter into a 'good marriage'. The daughters were often interested in providing for themselves, were well-read, and some were quite well-travelled. Society would not accept them as employees, and probably as women they could not have entered a socially acceptable occupation.

Teacher's institutes were the first means of escape. Taking care of children was a given for women; it was a role assigned to them by society. However, becoming a teacher in a comprehensive or junior high school provided the opportunity to become independent of the family and not to be required to marry. On the contrary, in this field marriage was undesirable; compulsory celibacy for female teachers remained in force until the 1920s[3].

The capital set an example. The first Czech teacher's institute was a school created by the transformation of the first Prague main school, one which had the language of instruction as Czech,

Praha 2016, pp. 691–706; P. Vošahlíková, *Česká žena v politice a veřejné činnosti na přelomu 19. a 20. století*, [in:] *Žena v dějinách Prahy: sborník příspěvků z konference Archivu hl. m. Prahy a Nadace pro gender studies 1993*, Praha 1996, pp. 291–299; J. Machačová, *Žena v 19. století jako „přívěsek"?*, [in:] *Dějiny žen, aneb, Evropská žena od středověku do poloviny 20. století v zajetí historiografie. (Sborník příspěvků z IV. pardubického bienále 27.–28. dubna 2006)*, eds K. Čadková, M. Lenderová, J. Stráníková, Pardubice 2006, pp. 209–214; K. Palatová, V. Krausová, T. Havelková, *Žena pohledem právních norem habsburské říše druhé poloviny 19. století*, [in:] *Dějiny žen, aneb...*, pp. 501–514.

[2] M. Frankl, *Český antisemitismus 19. století*, Žďár nad Sázavou 2010.

[3] There were individual exceptions – personal permission to marry and not leave the teaching profession was already granted before the First World War.

established to teach boys at the convent of Piarists in New Town on Prague's Panská Street in 1848. Its first headmaster was Karel Slavoj Amerling (1807–1884), a well-known physician, pedagogue, and author of several philosophical works. He was the headmaster of the main school, where he began to organize one-year pedagogical courses, and it later developed into an independent pedagogical institute[4].

The first teachers' institute for girls was founded in 1863 by the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame at St. Anne's in Ječná Street, also in Prague's New Town, where most of the bourgeois families who were interested in such education for their children lived at that time. Teachers' institutes became more widespread after 1869, when the so-called Hasner Act, no. 62 of the Civil Code, was issued, regulating the conditions in the general schools and laying down firm rules for the education of teachers in them. Teachers' institutes were three-year, later four-year. They were abolished in 1948[5].

Women's Manufacturing Association of Bohemia

At the same time, women's societies began to emerge at the initiative of some women, eager for emancipation and able to support this form of education, intended to teach poor girls practical skills that would increase their value in the labor (and marriage) market. The most prominent of these was the Women's Manufacturing Association of Bohemia (Ženský výrobní spolek český). It was founded after the Austro-Prussian War, when there was

[4] L. Kořínková, *Karel Slavoj Amerling: věštec ve státních službách*, [in:] *Opomíjení a neoblíbení v české kultuře 19. století: úředník a podnikatel: sborník příspěvků z 26. plzeňského sympozia k problematice 19. století: Plzeň, 23.– 25. února 2006*, eds T. Petrasová, H. Lorenzová, Praha 2007, pp. 92–97; K. Konečný, *Prof. Dr. Karel Amerling – lékař, pedagog, politik*, [in:] *Andros probabilis: sborník prací přátel a spolupracovníků historika prof. PhDr. Miloše Trapla, CSc., k jeho 70. narozeninám*, eds J. Malíř, P. Marek, M. Moravská, Brno 2005, pp. 585–595; M. Strnadová, *Karel Slavoj Amerling očima jeho pokračovatelů (Amerlingův přínos v oblasti výchovy a vzdělávání osob s mentálním postižením)*, Praha 2014.

[5] M. Bahenská, *Cesta k nové ženské profesi: slečna učitelka*, "Česko-slovenská historická ročenka" 2014–2015, [published 2016], pp. 349–357; eadem, *Povolání: žena. K otázce vzdělávání lékařek a učitelek v českých zemích v 19. století*, [in:] *Ženy ve spektru civilizací. (K proměnám postavení žen ve vývoji lidské společnosti)*, ed. J. Tomeš, Praha 2009, pp. 53–62.

considerable material hardship, which fell most heavily on single mothers and poorer families with children. Its initiator was Augusta Opitzová (1817–1875), who drew the attention of the female writer Karolina Světlá (1830–1899) to the difficult living conditions of many families. The association was officially launched in 1871 and Světlá became its first head. It met in the apartment of Professor Ignác Jan Hanuš (1812–1869), whose daughter Dora Hanušová (1841–1920) was one of the most active members of the association. In 1871, in a room lent by the Prague municipality, the association opened a girls' school with two departments: commercial and industrial. The membership fee was set at only 1 Gulden. The other expenses were covered by external donations, proceeds from concerts, lotteries, bazaars, etc. Later on, the association received subsidies from the state, the country, and the Prague municipality. Světlá made every effort to ensure that as many pupils as possible received their education free of charge[6].

The monthly magazine "Women's Letters" ("Ženské listy") became the press organ of the association, which took it over in 1874. Its editor was Eliška Krásnohorská (1847–1926), from 1891 the head of the association. In 1880, the Women's Manufacturing Association moved to larger rented rooms, as the number of women interested in participating in the society's events increased rapidly. In 1894 Women's Manufacturing Association bought a building plot from the Prague municipality and in 1896 it moved into her own house in Resslova Street no. 1940-II. Several thousand pupils over time attended the social school, with an annual attendance of between 600 and 700 women and girls at the time of peak interest. The all-day trade school had three grades, and the graduates acquired a range of practical and theoretical skills. The industrial school taught handicrafts: sewing, cutting clothes and linen, embroidery, hat making, knitting, etc.; drawing, painting, singing, piano playing, Czech literature; and foreign languages: French, Russian, English, and German. In 1882 the school was granted the right of public education. Its first headmistress was Emilie Priknerová-Nešporová (1845–?) until 1885, when she was succeeded by Johanna Kuffnerová (1853–1911). For some

[6] M. Bahenská, *Ženský výrobní spolek český*, "Český lid" 2004, vol. XCI, no. 3, 253–271; M. Neudörflová, *České ženy v 19. století. Úsilí a sny, úspěchy a zklamání na cestě k emancipaci*, Praha 1999, p. 67.

time, the Women's Manufacturing Association also maintained its own laundry shop in Spálená Street, which further developed the girls' skills[7].

After 1918, the status of the Women's Manufacturing Association changed and it began to disappear among other, newer institutions engaged in similar activities. In 1926 "Women's Letters" ceased to be published. The Women's Manufacturing Association was disbanded by the end of the 1940s. At the end of the 1940s, after the Communist takeover, the Women's Manufacturing Association was administratively united with the Czechoslovak Women's Union, and with the onset of normalization in Czechoslovakia in 1972 it disappeared completely.

Since the 1860s there had also been numerous supportive social associations, benefitting charitable activities, offering jobs for women (not only those from the poorer classes), and also helping to organize exhibitions, collections, and generally supporting Czech culture. Thanks to the organizations and associations, but also thanks to the improved possibilities to disseminate information, middle-class feminists were able to have greater influence upon the conditions of women in the labor market. The St. Ludmila Society (Spolek sv. Ludmily), the American Ladies Club (Americký klub dam), the Ladies and Girls of Prague Gymnastic Association (Tělocvičný spolek paní a dívek pražských), and others were well known[8].

The path to university education for girls

In October 1879, Czech representatives returned to the parliamentary benches in Vienna, ending a period of passive resistance. One of the main demands that conditioned this return was the resolution of the question of the division of the University of Prague, instigated from the Czech side. This had been preceded by long debates in the Czech Provincial Assembly and polemics in the press, with the German side demanding the establishment of a new Czech university and the Czech side insisting on the division of the existing Prague university into two equal universities with different

[7] L. Heczková, *První léta časopisu Ženské listy. Co chtěla kritička Eliška Krásnohorská?*, [in:] *Dějiny žen, aneb…*, pp. 323–334.

[8] M. Lenderová, *Vstup žen do světa práce*, "Studie k sociálním dějinám 19. století 6" [Opava] 1996.

languages of instruction. This standpoint eventually prevailed, and as a result the Czechs retained the ability to claim the ancient Charles University as their alma mater.

On 11 April 1881, the highest imperial decision was issued to divide the former Charles-Ferdinand University in Prague into separate Czech and German universities, both with the same name, but with different languages of instruction. The heads of the institutes and departments could choose the language of instruction, and the whole section administered by them went with them to the Czech or German university. On 28 February 1882, the Imperial Council adopted Act no. 24 of the Imperial Act on the division of the University of Prague into two separate universities, with Czech or German as the language of instruction. From the winter term of 1882/83, teaching began at both Art and both Law faculties, and a year later at both Medical faculties. The Faculty of Theology was divided, due to the disagreement of the then Archbishop of Prague Bedřich Schwarzenberg, only after the academic year 1891/92; until then it remained under the German University[9].

At both universities, as at all other universities in the Habsburg monarchy, only boys were allowed to study. However, the time was approaching when this was to change, and steps were gradually being taken to do so. An important condition for girls to enter the universities was that they should be able to graduate in the same way as boys, i.e. to have girls' high schools with matriculation in the subjects that were prerequisites for university studies. The pressure to establish girls' colleges and the drive to get them into universities came exclusively from inside, from bourgeois society. Families enjoyed the recognition of the rest of society, but did not have the means to provide for their daughters, i.e. to provide them with a proper dowry for a good marriage. Therefore, they wanted to give them an education that would lead to work and rewards for work that would allow them a decent life and financial security even if they did not marry well.

A key role in this change in the Czech lands was played by Eliška Krásnohorská, an advocate of emancipatory efforts and the initiator of a petition for the establishment of a state girls' high school. She herself was one of the women, born into a large, not very wealthy family, who longed for education, but had to provide

[9] J. Havránek, *Zřízení univerzity*, [in:] *Dějiny univerzity Karlovy III, 1802–1918*, ed. idem, Praha 1997, pp. 183–188.

it more or less on her own, by reading, self-study, attending public lectures, etc. In addition, a health handicap from which she had suffered since adolescence, gout, made it increasingly difficult for her to function during her daily life. She concentrated all the more on literature, music, social activities, and the promotion of emancipatory ideas[10].

She found her great role model in Karolína Světlá, a generation older[11], who was intensely involved in the work of the Women's Production Association of the Czech Republic and who edited "Women's Letters". She was aware that girls also had ambitions to study at a university and to hold more responsible positions after graduation, so she promoted the idea of establishing a girls' high school. "Women's Letters" became an important tool for spreading the idea of a girls' high school. In the second half of the 1880s, she collected over 4,810 signatures on a petition to the Imperial Council for the institution of a (state) girls' high school. The indifferent attitude of the Viennese government and the lack of interest from the public and Czech journalists led her to found a private girls' high school. In June 1890, she drafted an appeal, "To Czech Education!" ("Vzdělanstvu českému!"), in which she announced the intended foundation of Minerva, an association for women's studies, which would operate this girls' high school[12].

The effort came to fruition with the formation of the Minerva Association, the permission to open the high school from the Governor František Count Thun on 16 July 1890, and the subsequent opening of the first private girls' high school in the Habsburg Monarchy on 27 September 1890[13].

The first 52 female students began their studies under the professors from the boys' high school, who attended the Minerva always with the supervision of an older woman in the classroom, as required by the good manners of the time. Her presence was to ensure that the male teacher would not be intrusive towards the girls. The subjects taught corresponded entirely to those of the

[10] D. Vlašínová, *Eliška Krásnohorská*, Praha 1987.

[11] L. Heczková, *"Má předrahá Johanko!" Karolina Světlá a Eliška Krásnohorská*, "Dějiny a současnost" 2009, vol. XXXI, no. 9, pp. 40–43; eadem, *Píšící Minervy. Vybrané kapitoly z dějin české literární kritiky*, Praha 2009.

[12] *Kronika prvního dívčího gymnázia v habsburské monarchii*, ed. M. Sekyrková, Praha 2016.

[13] In Vienna, the girls' gymnasium was opened until..., in Germany then in Karlsruhe on September 16, 1893.

boys' high schools. Latin and Greek (and Roman Catholic religion) were the most frequently taught subjects, and were granted special emphasis, since completion of those subjects was a requirement for admission to the university. Next on the agenda were history and geography, science, mathematics, physics, German, gymnastics, music education, as well as optional shorthand lessons. Classes ran from Monday to Saturday, with five lessons each day. It was not until much later, in 1908, that the Gymnasium was granted the right to issue diplomas. When girls reached their final year, they had to take their examination at the boys' public high school; their report forms had to be modified, since until then they had not planned on female students at all.

The first female graduates left the gymnasium in 1895, at a time when they could not yet properly continue their studies at the university. Nevertheless, at that time the Czech lands already had two female doctors, but they had studied abroad.

Bohuslava Kecková (1854–1911) came from a businessman's family and was the middle child of three. In 1870, at the age of 16, she graduated with honors from a higher girls' school in Prague and received extraordinary ministerial permission to continue her studies privately at a boys' high school. Here, on 24 July 1874, she passed the graduating exam, for which she prepared at home under private tuition. In October 1874 she matriculated at the medical faculty of the University of Zurich in Switzerland. She had excellent academic results there, and in her final year she was selected as an assistant in the women's ward of the internal medicine clinic of the Zurich hospital. On 4 August 1880, she graduated as Doctor of Medicine, the 22nd woman to graduate from the Zurich Medical School, and the first woman from the Czech lands. She defended her doctorate with a surgical thesis on the treatment of an enlarged thyroid gland, "Über Strumabronchotomien. Ein Beitrag zur Statistik". For two years she remained at the hospital, as assistant to Professor Edmund Rosehon in surgery and Professor Gustav Huguenin in internal medicine.

At home her medical diploma was not recognized and the only practice she was allowed was midwifery. She found employment at the level of her education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She opened a private practice in Mostar, where she treated Muslim women, as their religion forbade them to be examined by a man. She became an important educational figure. She taught women

reading, writing, and handicrafts. She guided the local population in healthy lifestyles and good hygiene. From the school year 1900–1901 she taught in the Croatian school. From 1900–1901 she taught health education in Croatian at the higher girls' school in Mostar. In January 1896 she had finally been appointed by the local government as the provincial doctor for Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, she also sat on the Mostar health commission.

She was in contact with Eliška Krásnohorská, read "Women's Letters" and other local periodicals, and contributed educational articles to some of them herself. Bohuslava Kecková's long-term efforts were eventually awarded with top awards. On 1 October 1899, she received a commendation from the Austro-Hungarian Ministry for her activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. After seven years of medical practice, she also received a regular stipend from the Austro-Hungarian government for her practice. Kecková had already earned respect in Mostar, but the commendation from Vienna was very important to her. Bohuslava Kecková spent 18 years in Bosnia. When she later became ill with diabetes, she used to travel to Karlovy Vary for treatment. She interrupted her last stay and went to her sister in her native Kostomlaty nad Labem, where she died on 17 October 1911.

At the same time as Kecková, another Czech woman, two years older than her, Anna Bayerová (1852–1925), was studying in Zurich. The two knew each other from lectures at the American Ladies Club in Prague; they moved to Zurich together, and enrolled in the medical faculty. Bayerová, who did not have as strong a material family background as Kecková, had not yet received her exam from high school, and was admitted on the condition that she would pass it soon. After three terms she moved to Bern, where living and studies were cheaper, continuing her studies there intermittently. On the last day of November 1881, she graduated as Doctor in Bern. Even then she could not practice her profession at home, so she chose Switzerland, where she opened a practice in Teufen near St. Gallen.

In the 1990s she followed Kecková's example and worked as a doctor in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, she longed to return closer to home, and so after a few years she returned to Switzerland. After long periods of working in many different locations in Switzerland, for a while in England, and even in Prague for a month, she returned permanently to Prague in 1909, where

she subsequently taught German at an industrial school and at the school of the Women's Production Association of Bohemia. In 1912–1913 she was briefly employed in nearby Dresden. The only way to avoid her peregrinations, imposed on her by the Austrian government, was to apply for the nostrification of her diploma in Bohemia, which was made possible by a law of 1896. However, in order to serve as a doctor, she needed to pass the graduating exam from a high school in Bohemia. Bayerová found this condition humiliating, as she had passed difficult exams in Switzerland and had extensive medical experience in various parts of Europe. In 1914 she obtained a position as a professor of hygiene at high school in Prague, and finally she was able to start a practice there as well, because Vienna, after many petitions from women's associations, recognized her medical diploma without further examination. She was then 60 years old[14].

Conditions surrounding female higher education in the Habsburg Monarchy began to change in the mid-1890s. The first graduates of Minerva, immediately after their graduation in 1895, began to personally visit individual professors of the philosophical and medical faculties in Prague and arrange to attend their lectures as auditors. In some places they succeeded; in others they met with vehement rejection. As early as the academic year 1895/96, some of them attended German and Czech university lectures. The situation was untenable if the monarchy intended to maintain a creditable position on this issue.

Therefore, by an imperial decision of 23 March 1897, girls were allowed to study at the philosophical faculties in the monarchy in the proper way, i.e. to aim for a doctorate. The Prague Faculty of Arts was then located in Klementinum on the Old Town side of the Charles Bridge. And the technical and sanitary facilities of the building were not prepared for women to attend there at all. The same was true of the medical faculties in Prague, where girls could begin studying on the basis of an imperial decision of 3 September 1900.

One of the first female attendees at the medical faculty (both German and Czech, with professors who allowed it) was Zdeňka Marie Baborová (1877–1937) in 1895/96. She was the middle of

[14] M. Bahenská, *Žena v medicíně: Anna Bayerová*, [in:] *Cesty k samostatnosti: portréty žen v éře modernizace*, eds P. Vošahlíková, J. Martínek, Praha 2010, pp. 70–90.

three children of the head teacher at the main school at St. Havel in Prague's Old Town. She was from a family where education was held in high esteem. She graduated from Minerva in 1896, when she was already attending lectures at the Czech Faculty of Arts, where she studied under such eminent personalities as zoologist František Vejdovský, geologist and paleontologist Jan Nepomuk Woldřich, botanist Ladislav Čelakovský, zoologist and paleontologist Antonín Frič, geographer Jan Palacký, chemist Vojtěch Šafařík, etc. At the same time she studied some theoretical subjects at the Czech Faculty of Medicine at the institute of neurologist Josef Viktor Rohon. She also attended lectures at the Faculty of Philosophy of the German University, in zoology with Berthold Hatschek and Carl Isidor Cori, and in botany with Richard Wettstein, Ritter of Westersheim, and Victor Felix Schiffner. She graduated on 30 July 1900 and on 17 June 1901 she was the first woman in the Czech lands to be solemnly elevated to Doctor of Philosophy in the Karolinum[15].

For several years she remained working in her field. She became an assistant at the Institute for Zoology, Comparative Anatomy, and Embryology of the Faculty of Philosophy of the Czech Charles-Ferdinand University. She contributed to some texts in the *Great Illustrated Natural History of the Three Kingdoms* (Velký ilustrovaný přírodopis všech tří říší) and prepared some entries for *Otto's Learned Dictionary* (Ottův slovník naučný). After her marriage to Stanislav Čihák and the birth of her daughters, she left her job and devoted herself to her family. The younger daughter died at the age of fourteen from the Spanish flu, which resulted in her mother's mental anguish distancing her from work even more. In addition, since her marriage she had lived outside of Prague, in Čelákovice, where her husband co-owned an agricultural machinery factory, making it more difficult for her to be employed as well.

She devoted herself much more to her field after graduation as the first female doctor to graduate from a Czech medical school.

Anna Honzáková (1875–1940) was born to a town and castle doctor in Kopidlno in East Bohemia. She studied at Minerva in Prague (as did her younger sister Albína, who later became a professor at Minerva after completing her philosophical studies), graduating

[15] M. Bahenská, *První žena v Karolinu*, "Studia Historica Nitriensia" 2021, vol. XXV, no. 2, pp. 453–465; E. Uhrová, *Anna Honzáková a jiné dámy*, Praha 2012, pp. 188–206.

in 1895. She attended university lectures as an auditor without the possibility of taking exams. After being allowed to study at the medical faculties for girls in 1900, she immediately enrolled to study and was admitted to all the courses she was allowed to take. She passed all three compulsory examinations in 1901 and 1902 with distinction, and graduated as Doctor of Medicine on 17 March 1902[16].

After her graduation, she joined Prof. Karel Maydl (1853–1903) as an assistant at the surgical clinic of the Czech Medical Faculty in Prague. After his untimely death, she lost her position at the clinic and for some time was unable to find other employment in the field. Eventually she managed to open a private gynecological practice in Prague[17]. She also became a school doctor at the Minerva high school. Honzáková was very active in the Czech women's emancipation movement during her lifetime. She was a friend of the first Czech female senator, Františka Plamínková (1875–1942), and was involved in the Minerva Association, the Women's Club of Bohemia, the Committee for Women's Suffrage, and, in the 1930s, the Women's National Council (Ženská národní rada). In 1930 she became a co-founder of the Association of Czechoslovak Women Physicians (Sdružení československých lékařek) and its first chairwoman. She invested her personal savings in the Anna Honzáková-Hlaváčová Fund, a fund for women unable to work due to old age or illness, named after her mother.

Olga Šrámková (1876–1956) was a classmate of Anna Honzáková at Minerva in the same class, starting her studies in 1890. She was born in Mladá Boleslav to a family of a financial commissioner, who soon afterwards moved to Karlín in Prague. After graduating from high school, she studied in the Faculty of Philosophy of the Czech University, specializing in classical philology. She completed her studies with a rigorous examination and the defense of her dissertation entitled *On the Attic Families and Nahrari. Treatise on Classical Philology and Ancient History*, which was directed by professors Jan Kvíčala and Josef Král. She graduated on 14 July 1903[18]. Three years later, in 1906, she married engineer Zdeněk Vincenc Fischer, a builder and co-owner of a brickyard, and left her scientific career. They had two sons, Josef (1907–1984),

[16] https://is.cuni.cz/webapps/archiv/public/book/bo/1662070835117222/96/?lang=cs (accessed 13 June 2024).

[17] Today, her memorial plaque is placed in Na Moráni street.

[18] https://is.cuni.cz/webapps/archiv/public/book/bo/1662070835117222/162/?lang=cs (accessed 17 June 2024).

an engineer, and Karl (1911–1954), a lawyer. She never returned to the school.

Girls' education at the high school and later at the university level became established not only in the capital. One of the first female Minerva students was Helena Tuskanyová (1873–1921), a native of Prague and one of the first graduates of Minerva. After graduating from high school, she began to study at the Faculty of Arts of the Czech University, and mathematics became her specialty. Already in 1899 she passed the examination for secondary school teachers before the Faculty Examination Committee for Gymnasiums and became one of the two first such highly qualified high school professors in the Czech lands[19]. She did not pass her doctorate, and on completing the prescribed semesters began teaching at Minerva. After two years, in 1902, she moved to Brno, where she taught at the first girls' high school in Brno, Vesna, until her death[20].

The woman who probably left the greatest mark in Czech history among Minerva's students, Alice Masaryková (1879–1966), was in the same class as Honzáková, Šrámková, and Tuskanyová. Alice was born in Vienna to Thomas (1850–1937), an associate professor at the Faculty of Arts of the Vienna university, and his American wife Charlotte (1850–1923) as their first child. Three years later, the family moved to Prague, where Masaryk was called to be an extraordinary professor of philosophy at the Faculty of Arts of the newly independent Czech university. After graduating from Minerva, Alice was a student at the Czech medical faculty (before girls were allowed to study medicine); then, due to her poor eyesight and unwillingness to wear glasses, she transferred to the Faculty of Arts as a full-time student. In 1903, she received the first female doctorate in the field of history on the basis of examinations and a dissertation on *The Origin and Meaning of the Great Card of Liberties Given by Jan Bezzemek in 1215*, directed by professors Jaroslav Goll and Josef Pekař[21]. Masaryková then attended

[19] https://ndk.cz/view/uuid:c0a4aca9-435d-11dd-b505-00145e5790ea?page=uuid:4fc7b050-18a8-11e9-a782-5ef3fc9bb22f&fulltext=tuskanyov%C3%A1 (accessed 21 June 2024).

[20] J. Hoffmannová, *Helena Tuskanyová, jedna z prvních středoškolských profesorek*, [in:] *Alis volat propriis. Sborník k životnímu jubileu Ludmily Sulitkové*, ed. H. Jordánková, Brno 2016, pp. 504–513.

[21] https://is.cuni.cz/webapps/archiv/public/book/bo/1662070835117222/157/?lang=cs (accessed 17 June 2024).

some courses at universities in Berlin, Leipzig, and Chicago and then taught at a high school in South Bohemia. During the First World War, she was imprisoned in Vienna for eight months when her father, by then already a member of parliament and chairman of a political party, went into exile (only to return to the new Czechoslovak Republic in 1918 as its first president).

After the establishment of an independent Czechoslovakia, Alice Masaryková de facto fulfilled the role of First Lady, because her mother was ill, treated for a long while in a sanatorium, dying in 1923. Alice became the founder of the Czechoslovak Red Cross in 1919 and was its first chairwoman for twenty years. She was a promoter of the field of social work as a separate branch of study and profession. She founded the first Czech nursing school and supported it financially, inviting more experienced nurses from abroad to Czechoslovakia to pass on their experience. She established the first Higher School of Social Work, whose graduates were diplomaed nurses, qualified for educational work and as well as work with individual patients. She was also present at the birth of the Czech branches of the YMCA and YWCA in the early 1920s. She spent World War II in the U.S. After the end of the war, she returned briefly to Czechoslovakia. Soon after the Communist takeover in February 1948 and the unexplained death of her brother, Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk, on 10 March 1948, she emigrated again to the U.S. where she died in 1966.

Girls had to wait until the establishment of independent Czechoslovakia after 1918 to achieve equal status at technical universities. Milada Petříková-Pavlíková (1895–1985) was the niece of Anna Honzáková, whose sister Marie was married to Josef Pavlík, a physician from Tabor. She graduated from the Minerva high school in Prague, which at the time of her studies had already been transformed into a Real high school, i.e. without emphasis on classical languages. If its graduates wanted to continue their studies at the university, they had to supplement their exams in Latin and Greek. Milada Pavlíková chose a different career path. In 1914, at a time when girls were not yet officially allowed to do so, she started her studies as an extraordinary student at the Czech Technical University in Prague, in the section the University of Architecture and Civil Engineering. During the First World War she attended a number of lectures and exercises as an extraordinary

student. After 1918 she completed her studies as a duly enrolled student and on 18 June 1921 she graduated as the first female architect in Czechoslovakia. Four days later she married Professor Theodor Petřík (1882–1941), also a native of Tabor and also son of a local doctor. The family gradually grew to include three sons. Petříková-Pavlíková nevertheless devoted herself to her profession and from the 1920s to the 1950s she designed a number of houses, the most famous of which is probably the house of the Women's Czech Club (Český ženský klub) in Ve Smečkách Street in Prague, from the first half of the 1930s, where today the famous Prague theatre – Činoherní klub – is located. After 1950, she worked as a rank-and-file architect in the state-owned enterprises Stavoprojekt and other buildings until her retirement[22].

Table

Comparison of the careers of the first female university graduates in Bohemia

Name	Born	Father	High School	Graduated at University	Career	Marriage/ Children
Marie Zdeňka Baborová-Čiháková	1877	Teacher at the Primary School in Prague	Minerva Girls' High School	**17 Juni, 1901 first graduated girl at CU**	Institute of Zoology at the University in Prague (until marriage)	Financier, banker/ 2 daughters
Anna Honzáková	1875	MD in Kopidlno (East Bohemia)	Minerva Girls' High School	**17 March, 1902**	MD – mostly private	no

[22] E. Uhrová, *Po stopách šesti žen*, Praha 2020, p. 326; J. Masnerová, *Vzpomínka na Paní Architektku*, "Pražská technika" 2006, no. 1, https://web.archive.org/web/20110228034847/http://sites.google.com/site/damskyklub-cvut/zeny-cvut/milada-petrikova-pavlikova (accessed 17 June 2024); eadem, *První studentky na pražské technice*, "Práce z dějin vědy" [Praha] 2002, vol. III, pp. 181–187; M. Platovská, V. Valchářová, *První architektky – studia a tvorba*, [in:] *Povolání: architekt[ka]*, exhibition catalogue, Praha 2003, pp. 50–53.

Alice Masaryková	1879	Prof. at the Czech University in Prague	Minerva Girls' High School	**22 June, 1903**	Teacher, social work, First Lady of the CR	no
Olga Šrámková--Fischerová	1876	Official of the finance guard	Minerva Girls' High School	**3 July, 1903**	Teacher at Minerva (until marriage)	Financier/ 2 sons
Helena Tuskanyová	1873	?	Minerva Girls' High School	**1900**	Teacher at Minerva and Vesna	no
Milada Petříková--Pavlíková	1895	MD in Tábor (South Bohemia)	Minerva Girls' High School	**18 June, 1921**	Architectress	Professor at Technical University in Prague/ 3 sons

Source: own study.

Conclusion

In the first twenty-five years after girls were allowed to study at the faculties of philosophy, medicine, and later at the technical university in Prague, several dozen women successfully graduated. For example, in the years 1900–1920, 62 female doctors graduated from the Czech medical faculties and 23 from the German university[23]. The number was significantly higher at the Czech university than at the German university, due in part to the different number of students at the two universities.

The first female graduates came from families where the father in most cases also had a university education and belonged to the social class of "*honorace*", i.e. not among the aristocracy, but among the recognized local elite. Most of the first female graduates had only a sister or sisters, a few of them also had a brother/brothers.

[23] I. Ebelová, M. Sekyrková, *První absolventky – lékařky židovského původu z pražských univerzit a jejich kariérní možnosti mezi světovými válkami*, "Acta Universitatis Carolinae: Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis" 2020, vol. LX, no. 2, pp. 23–35.

Many of the early female students also earned doctoral degrees in philosophy or medicine. They resolutely entered professional life, where they initially had to overcome many prejudices, such as that educated women do not make good mothers and wives. Not at first, but later on, most of them managed to reconcile their profession with their family, to return to work after the birth of their children, and to work successfully in the field of their diploma.

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