

## Historical Review

# Saint Sofia's Paediatric Hospital School of Diplomated Paediatric Nurses: A Beacon in Nursing Sciences

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## Abstract

Since its foundation during 1897, "Saint Sofia Children's Hospital", educated excellent trained nurses in paediatric nursing. It was at the end of the 19th century, when the pressing need for educated nursing staff in Greece for the newly paediatric hospitals, was firstly recognized by Queen Olga and Princess in succession Sofia. Two schools were founded, the "School of Nursing Sisters" of the "Evangelismos" hospital in 1875, and the "Schola for Diplomated Paediatric Nurses" inside "Saint Sofia Children's Hospital" during 1897. The "Saint Sofia's" school, as a specialized in children's nursing, soon became an important educational institute of the era. Distinguished nurses from abroad as well as a plethora of professors and physicians have taught at the school until 1926, when it was closed for new schools to be formed.

**Key Words:** Princess Sofia, "Saint Sofia Children's Hospital", "School for Diplomated Paediatric Nurses"

## Introduction

Since its foundation during 1897, "Saint Sofia Children's Hospital", (Figure 1) provides in Greece trained paediatric nursing staff, specialized in "Neonatal and Infant Nursing" (PIKPA, May 1939). Alongside with "Evangelismos Hospital" in Athens, are perhaps the only health care facilities in the Hellenic state, where one of their primary statutory objectives is *"The education of women nurses specialized for child hospitalization"* (Government Gazette, 1900, Evangelismos

Hospital Chronicles 1984), suffering from pathological, surgical or ophthalmological diseases (Archive of the Makkas Family, Athens, 1922).

In 1875 the Athenian Society for Women's Education established the first Nursing Training Programme in Greece with duration of studies limited to 4 months. Actually the need for trained nursing staff in Greece was initially met by the late Queen Olga (1851-1926) [Figure 2], who founded the "Evangelismos" hospital and here the

first School of Nurses started operating during 1884. Later the Princess in succession Sofia (1870-1932) [Figure 2], somewhere between 1896-1897 founded the "Saint Sofia's Faculty of Nurses". The faculty in "Saint Sofia Children's Hospital" operated in such a way so to educate and instruct the diplomated nurses who would be ready to take office, right after the launch of operations inside the paediatric hospital. Although it is rather unknown exactly where the school facilitated at first, it continued its purpose until 1926, as a training centre for paediatric nurses (Savvas 1900, Tsoukalas 2007, Tsoucalas et al, 2011).

The foundation of the first Hellenic specialised in Paediatric Nursing School in a country with thousands of years in caring sciences, only 36 years after the first founded by Florence Nightingale nursing school in St. Thomas Hospital in London (1860), should not be surprising. "Saint Sofia's Children's Hospital" school for nurses, was named "Schola for Diplomated Paediatric Nurses", and soon became the beacon to promulgate the ideal paediatric nursing (Tsoucalas 2007, Tsoucalas et al., 2011, Atewell 1998).

### **The first Hellenic "School for Diplomated Pediatric Nurses", ca 1897-1926**

In 1897, the first Hellenic "School for Diplomated Paediatric Nurses" was launched in the Athenian territory. There was an irrefutable need for trained nursing staff in order for the newly founded hospital to be operated. That is why professor of Hygiene and Microbiology Constantinos Savvas (1861-1929) [Figure 3] noted, "This hospital for children, apart from treating patients, wants to establish a Nursing School, because we believe, it will greatly contribute to the moral elevation of the class, since unfortunately in Greece it is considered from the public to be worthless and humble, and only after the founding of "Evangelismos Nursing School" started to accumulate their precise place in society, while in West Europe this was done a long time ago" (Savvas 1900, Tsoukalas 2007, Tsoucalas et al, 2011).

Unfortunately, the data existed to support the foundation, staffing, operation, and graduates of the school, are insubordinate, due to the fact that the records of the "Management Board" of the

hospital, from the time it was founded up to 1940, have been stolen. So, according to the opinion of the "Academic-Emeritus Professor of Pediatrics" of the "Medical School of Athens", Nikolaos Matsaniotis (1925-2010) [Figure 3], the year 1897 should be considered as the opening functioning year. The fact that the "Saint Sofia Children's Hospital", was also operating as a nursing school, was the result of the "Outlining of the Rules of Procedure of the Children's Hospital Saint Sofia", which was composed by the physician and "Hospital Director" Georgios Makkas (1877-1946) [Figure 3] in 1922 (Archive of the Makkas Family, Athens, 1922).

Inside those rules, the qualifications of the candidate nurses were noted, "The duties of the nurses for the Children's Hospital should be given to women, not in random but to the educated ones, of good social status, and not be over 20-26 years of age" (Tsoucalas 2007). The selection of the candidate students was made from the "Head Nurse" (Greek: Αρχινοσοκόμουν), meaning the headmistress of the nurses according to the existing regulation, "Chapter concerning the Head Nurse, the duties of a Head Nurse are. The attempt to hire as trial nurses young women who bear the best prospect of carrying out the work given". The attending course in the school was for a two year period, "preparatory program, the training of which should last for two years, in which period they would be called trainees or novices. After the period is over thought, those who succeed in the test, will be recognized as nurses" (Savvas 1900, Archive of the Makkas Family, Athens, 1922).

The education of the nurses in addition to the study period were also mentioned, "Section 2, paragraph b: The education of the nurses; Young, healthy as well as women, acquiring as the up to date experience shows, the education and experience needed to attend children, after a two year study and practical training, excluding in time the unqualified ones" (Archive of the Makkas Family, Athens, 1922).

The exact place where the school facilitated for the first time, or where the trainees premises were located, still remains unknown. Though since 1900, "The housing intended for the trainee nurses", became the ground floor of the "Syggrou pavilion" [Figure 1] (Savvas 1900, Tsoucalas

2007, Tsoucalas et al., 2011, Atewell 1998, Report of the Board 1902).

The Princess in succession Sofia provided the graduate nurses with a diploma and a medal (PIKPA, 1939). The school, for several years, stood as the educational nursery of hospital staff in Greece [10]. It is obscure for how long the school operated. It was probably functional shortly after 1922 (PIKPA, 1953), or maybe up to 1926 when the "Saint Sofia Children's Hospital" seized to be under the patronage of the "Patriotic Institution for Treatment", and felt to the jurisdiction of the Athenian University (Government Gazette, 1926).

Consistent with personal testimonies of the supervisory nursing officials of the "Saint Sofia Children's Hospital", the secretarial lounge of the second "Hospital School", an offspring of the first Hellenic school, is nowadays decorated with the baby clothing which were used by Queen Olga for the future king Konstantinos the 1st (1868-1923) (Personal interview, Charitou-Chatzopoulou Evgenia's Archive, 1995).

### Tutors

The first tutors came from abroad to enlighten the Greek pupils with all the newest international nursing protocols, "With the intention of educating the nurses, Her Royal Highness Princess Sofia had the idea to bring from England three distinguished nurses, to educate them with their teachings and illustrations" (Savvas, 1900). The names of those first three nurses, are still in the dark. We believe though that while teaching in the school, the English Miss Maud Calvert (1900) and Miss Jessie Parson (1900 – 1902) diplomated nurses from "King's College Hospital" (Report of the Board 1902), served as the first directors of both the school and the hospital. Moreover the following directors Kleoniki Klonari (ca 1872-1951) [Figure 4], diplomated nurse of the "Massachusetts General Hospital" in Boston USA, as well as M. Chrisanthakopoulou (Proceedings of the Board of Directors, 1921) served at the same post. Their duties were referred as such, "The duties of the Head nurse: Chapter 9<sup>th</sup>, The teaching of the trainee nurses in the preparatory program, the continuous guidance of the nurses on duty, and by pointing an example making suggestions on her work concerning the required love, subordination

and self-sacrifice" (Archive of the Makkas Family, Athens, 1922, Tsoucalas, 2014).

As teachers served the Directors of the "Department of Pathology" of the "Saint Sofia's Children's Hospital", as teaching was part of their duties. These were, Georgios Trochanis (Lecturer of Child Pathology) (National University. 1891), Nikolaos G. Makkas (1847-1935) (Prof. of Pharmacology, Nosology and Pathologic Clinic), Georgios N. Makkas (PhD Pediatrician, Director of the Hospital) [Figure 3] (Makkas, 1911), Markos Tzoumaras (former Curator of Pediatrics Clinic of the University of Athens, former Director of the Neonatal Department of the "Municipal Maternity Clinic of Athens", Former Director of the "Athenian Municipal Crèche") [Figure 3]. In addition, the physicians of the "Surgical Department" as it was declared in the regulations were also teaching at the school. Socratis Tsakonas, Dinitrios Kokkoris and apparently the Director of the Ophthalmological Department S. Antoniadis, offered their services. It is possible that the Curators of the Hospital as well as the Interns were also implicated. It is worth emphasizing that the trainee nurses were not only specialized in paediatric nursing but also in surgical (1901-1926) and ophthalmological nursing (1904-1912). Since 1907, the nurses as well as the "Assistant Director" of the hospital were constantly travelling to USA for further education [4]. Since 1908, nurses' groups were founded by the Professor and Director of the "Municipal Maternity Clinic of the University of Athens" Konstantinos Louros (1864-1957) [Figure 3], in order to attend courses and be acquainted with midwifery and neonatal diseases that required medical intervention. At the same period the "Director of the Hospital" Georgios N. Makkas, gave lectures on Pediatrics, which were attended apart from by the school's nurses (Tsoukalas et al., 2011).

### Conclusion

The first Hellenic "School for Diplomated Peadiatric Nurses" [Figure 4], provided high education for nurses for about 30 years. Major Greek medical figures offered their services during those years. It all started by a Queen to end up to a "royal" schooling in several fields of caring sciences. At the eve of the nursing

education, boosted by Florence Nightingale, the school became the point of origin for the future nursing institutes in Greece, while it represented a

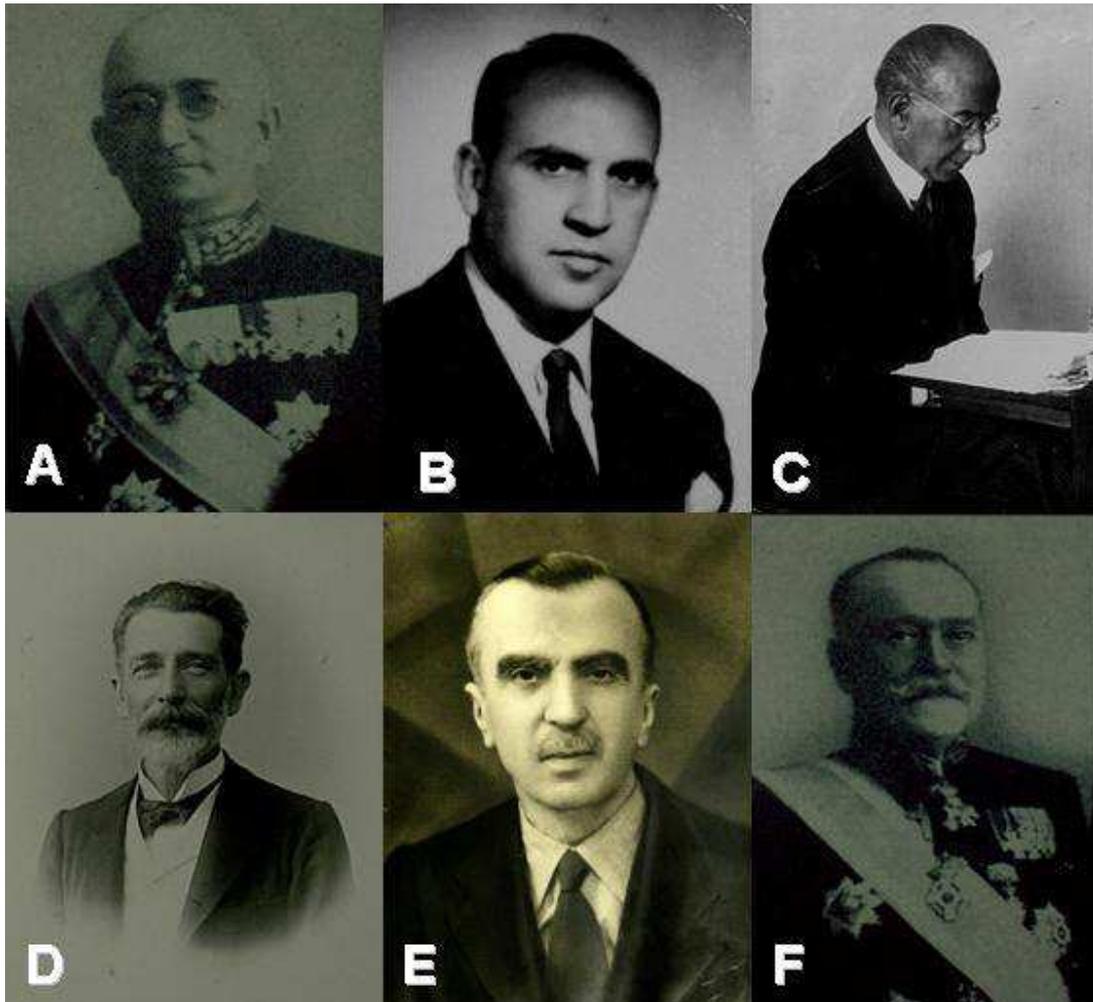
significant international mark for the amelioration of the nursing social purpose at the end of the 19th century.



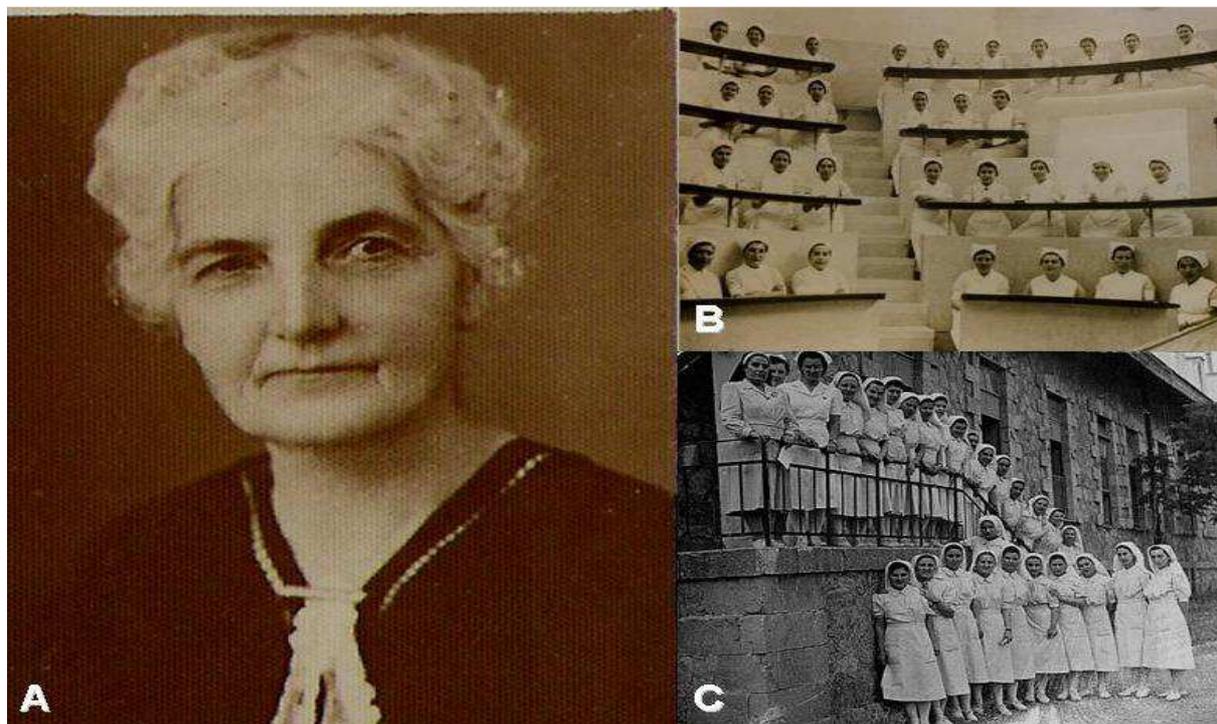
**Figure 1:** A & B & C: "Saint Sofia's Children's Hospital", late 19th century photographs. D: Syggrou Pavilion, nurses' residence. Tsoucalas Ioannis archives.



**Figure 2: A:** Queen Olga Constantinovna of the Hellenes(1851-1926), portrait by Georgios Jakobides (1853 -1932), 1915 (left side). Sophie Queen Consorts of the Hellenes, photograph as a young girl, ca 1885 (right side).



**Figure 3:** **A:** Constantinos Savvas (1861-1929), **B:** Nikolaos Matsaniotis (1925-2010), **C:** Georgios Makkas (1877-1946), **D:** Nikolaos G. Makkas (1847 - 1935), **E:** Markos Tzoumaras, **F:** Konstantinos Louros (1864-1957). Portraits, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.



**Figure 4:** A: Kleoniki Klonari (ca 1872-1951), B & C: "Schola for Diplomated Nurses". Tsoucalas Ioannis archives.

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